6.5. <u>Career Satisfaction</u>

Career refers to the work experience outcomes, such as status, promotions and salary that are objectively observable (Seibert and Kraimer, 2001). Traditional career research focused predominantly on objective measures of career success and satisfaction (Gattiker and Larwood, 1988). This focus was consistent with the predominance of hierarchical organisations where employees' career success was largely defined by promotion, rank and retention (Hall and Chandler, 2005).

While traditionally a career was considered to be confined to professionals or those who advanced through organisational hierarchies, today the term 'career' is more broadly applied and is commonly considered to be the lifelong sequence of role-related experiences of individuals (Hall, 2002). Building on this definition, 'career' can be defined as the "positive psychological and work-related outcomes accumulated as a result of one's work experiences" (Seibert and Kraimer, 2001)

6.5.1.Career Goal Satisfaction: This reflects that whether an employee's career goals have been met by the organisation and it also refers to if he has also planned for his career growth prospects and advancement for at least the next three to five years. Any employee will also be keen on the career progress he has made in the company. Most employees, if they spend a good number of years in the company, constantly check their job content, pay packet and designation with their other team or batch mates or colleagues who had the same kind of experience. This factor had the highest loading of close to12 % .

6.5.2.Mentor Satisfaction: All employees look upto to a senior employee from the same function as a mentor to guide him in difficult situations at the work place. Some, may also go in for a 'role model' whom they try to imbibe on most

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occasions and it is this role model / mentor motivates employee in helps him to achieve his goals. It is definitely preferable if the mentor is from the same work place and same function too, but, that may not always be the case. Any issues with regards to the job content, the employee goals, aspirations, career path and other related issues are often put upto the mentor/ role model for advice. This kind of an arrangement becomes extremely useful at a very nascent stage of one's career, wherein the employee does not know too much about the job content or even the career he has opted for .Not all employees have mentors at an early stage in ones' career.

6.5.3. Organisation Satisfaction: All employees need to feel satisfied when working in the organisation; this could be with reference with ones' job, career, monetary supervisor / boss or non monetary aspects. More than 68 % of employees in the phase 2, of the study voiced their opinion by indicating they 'would quit the organisation, if they are not satisfied with it '. The organisation must take keen interest in the employee's well being in terms of upgrading one skill set and enhancing the job knowledge required for superior performance. More than 56 % of the employees opined that 'my organisation regularly send us for training programmes' in order to upgrade our skills. Company sponsored seminars should also encourage employees to attend the same. An organisation should also involve the family on certain occasions and thereby build on this relationship. The organisation should also have employee engagement activities that will encourage the employees to take a break from the regular work routine. Promotions and good salary benchmarking must be practiced by all companies; salary parity must be maintained too.

6.5.4. Self Satisfaction: This is from the employee's point of view. An employee needs to 'feel a sense of personal and professional accomplishment in his career'. This was indicated by 47 % of the employees in the study in phase 2 .He needs to be happy with the facilities available in the organisation; this also includes the monetary and non monetary aspects of the same. When he awakes in the morning he should look forward to coming to work every day, his job content should be on interest to him, in order to keep him motivated right through the days, month and years that he spends there

6.5.5. Team Satisfaction: This reflects the satisfaction that one derives by working in a team, i.e. team or group cohesiveness. Some teams are fraught with problem performers, troublesome employees – all of this does affect the end result or deliverables of the team. At times the burden is on just couple of employees and others are least bothered about the deadlines for the particular assignment. 'I am happy when my group / team completes the assignment / project as per the deadline' were voiced by 58 % of the employees in phase 2 of the study. The workload needs to be evenly distributed to the team, keeping in mind their areas of strengths and improvement areas. All team members must get along with each other, there should be unity in the group. Colleagues must learn to cooperate with each other for the betterment of the group. In such a team effort, one person is automatically looked upto and he becomes the leader of the group too, wherein most team members look upto him for advice on regular basis.

6.5.6. Job Satisfaction: This refers to the satisfaction of the employees on the job or the particular 'role' or 'job content' that he is working on. It pertains to the work content in his current organisation. Autonomy is important for job satisfaction, freedom at work, rather than having one's boss hounding the

employee at regular intervals could become rather painful. He should be able to take decisions pertaining to a customer or client . All organisations should have a 'delegation of authority matrix' for all employees, so, each employee in the organisation knows their limits and where to draw the line and does not exceed what is expected out of his role. But, not more than 16 % of the employees indicated that their organisations had a formal delegation matrix. Normally, in Software organisations employees look forward to go overseas and work with clients on projects too. He should be equipped with all the information required for the job. At the end of the day, the employee should feel that he has accomplished what tasks he has in mind for the days and should feel a sense of fulfillment on his way home.

6.5.7. Superior Satisfaction: The employees should feel happy working under his boss and the boss/ supervisor should have a transparent working style. There should be no biases that creep in or else some employees do feel let down, if there are favourites in the team. The boss should be in a position to guide the employees in times of difficulty with regards to his work. The supervisor should value the contribution made by the employee .68 % of the employees indicated that they would quit the organisation if they did not have a good boss.

Nowadays, employees also value outcomes such as development of new skills, work-life balance, challenge and purpose (Gattiker and Larwood, 1988; Heslin, 2005). 68 % of employees valued this in our study in phase 2. Also, having achieved career success does not necessarily mean that people are satisfied with their career (Hall, 2002). Lastly, measures of career appear less relevant today, since organisations are more constrained in providing these opportunities (Heslin, 2005).

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Career success refers to individuals' evaluation of their career progress, accomplishments and anticipated outcomes, relative to their own goals and aspirations (Seibert and Kraimer, 2001). The change in focus to subjective career success, where the criterion for success is internal rather than external, is also consistent with the change in the career context where individuals are expected to self-manage their own careers rather than rely on organisational direction (Hall and Chandler, 2005; Hall and Marvis, 1995).

Subjective career success has most often been operationalised as job satisfaction or career satisfaction (Erdogan *et al.*, 2004; Heslin, 2003; Ng *et al.*, 2005; Seibert and Kraimer, 2001). For example, in a recent review of career success studies, 20 out of a total of 49 studies operationalising subjective career success included measures of career satisfaction and 11 studies included measures for job satisfaction (Arthur *et al.*, 2005). Alternatively, a recent meta-analysis included only studies measuring career satisfaction to operationalise subjective career success (Ng *et al.*, 2005). While there appears little general consensus about the relative merits of both measures, one perspective considers job satisfaction as an inadequate measure of career success, since subjective career success indicates career satisfaction over a longer time frame and wider range of outcomes, such as sense of purpose and work-life balance, than job satisfaction (Heslin, 2005).

Career satisfaction measures the extent to which individuals believe their career progress is consistent with their own goals, values and preferences (Erdogan *et al.*, 2004; Heslin, 2003; Seibert and Kraimer, 2001). Career satisfaction is often measured using the career satisfaction scale developed by Greenhaus *et al.* (1990). The vast majority of studies measuring career satisfaction use this scale. For example, of the 20 studies measuring career satisfaction in the review

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article referred to above, 14 studies used the career satisfaction scale (Arthur *et al.*, 2005) as we have done in our current research too .

In the present study, the variables that were examined in the study were years of experience the four industries gender differences, career anchors, career decision self efficacy. It was expected that tenure on the job would be significantly negatively related to career satisfaction. Morrow and McElroy (1987) found that satisfaction with promotions declined as organizational tenure and positional tenure increased.

In the present study, in phase 2, it was observed, that career satisfaction did reflect how people feel about their career role and their career success. The findings of this study show that organization-related factors like culture and human resource policies are especially important in fostering the career satisfaction for employees of this age group. For the managers, team leaders and supervisors, a challenging job and perceived support from their organization are associated with greater career satisfaction. The career satisfaction of such employees is also enhanced by a challenging job as well as the perceived efforts by their organization to retain its older managerial and professional employees.

The organization-related factors were examined included perceived efforts by one's organization to retain its managerial and professional employees, perceived support from one's organization, training opportunities provided by one's organization to managerial and professional employees, and perceptions of career plateauing. There is empirical evidence that organization-related factors influence career satisfaction. Burke (2001) and Burke and McKeen (1995) found that support and encouragement, training and development, and challenging jobs

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were significantly related to the career satisfaction of managerial and professional employees. Those who received more support and encouragement, who received more training and development and who were given more challenging work assignments were more satisfied and successful in their careers. However, these managerial and professional employees tend to be in the early rather than the late career stage. (Burke ,2001).

It was also found in phase 2 , that the managers, superiors and team leaders in this age, work life balance was one of the important factor. Those companies that had stressed on maintaining a balance between ones professional and personal life expressed greater satisfaction with their career than those employees whose companies did not stress on such activities. Perceived organizational support was significantly positively related to career satisfaction. These professionals perceived their organization valued their contribution, cared about their well-being and was committed to them expressed greater satisfaction with their career than those who lacked this support. Job content plateauing was significantly expressed by almost 70 % of the employees in the BPO/ Call Centre and Retail industries. These professionals who felt that their jobs were challenging and rewarding expressed greater satisfaction with their career than other mangers that felt that their jobs had become routine and boring (Burke, 2001).

Employees who had been with their organization longer reported less career satisfaction than those who had less tenure in the organization. Perceived effort by the organization to retain older managerial and professional employees was significantly positively related to career satisfaction (Morrow and

McElroy (1987). In our study 27 – 28 year olds were dissatisfied with their careers compared to the earlier age groups .

Marjorie A-Stassen, Sheila C. (2005) in their study found that employees who perceived that their organization was doing an effective job of retaining its older managerial and professional employees expressed greater satisfaction with their career than professional women who felt their organization's retention efforts were ineffective. The similar results were also found in Phase 2, of our study. Perceived organizational support was significantly positively related to career satisfaction. Employees who felt that their organization valued their contribution, cared about their well-being and was committed to them expressed greater career satisfaction than those who lacked this support. Employees who perceived their organization was providing them with opportunities for training and retraining expressed greater satisfaction with their career than those who felt their organization was not providing these training opportunities. Employees who felt their opportunities for advancement to a higher level were still possible expressed greater satisfaction with their career than those who felt their opportunities for future advancement were limited. Marjorie A-Stassen, Sheila C. (2005) . This was found in 85 % of our employees in phase 2 of the study on software and telecom industry and 55 % of the employees in BPO / Call Centre and Retail industry. They felt that their jobs were challenging and rewarding expressed greater satisfaction with their career than those who felt that their jobs had become routine and boring.

This suggests that organization-related factors have the most influence on the career satisfaction of managerial, supervisory and team leaders. For the employees, the important predictors of their career satisfaction were the belief that

their organization valued their contribution and was committed to them, having a job that provides challenge and an opportunity to continue to learn and grow, and having a company that believes in work life balance too. It was also found that the important predictors of their career satisfaction were their perceptions of their organization's efforts to retain its employees, and having a job that provides challenge and an opportunity to continue to learn and grow.

6.5.8. Gender Differences and Career Satisfaction

H12: There is a significant difference between Career Satisfaction of male and female employees.

As seen in the hypothesis testing of chapter V, the only exception being Superior Satisfaction where the differences between male and female employees were found **.** Males seemed to be slightly more career satisfied than the females in the study. Though males did face a higher level of quarter life crisis in comparison to females, they seemed to be more satisfied in their careers compared to the females. Some of the probable reasons could be due to the fact their hard work did reap the fruit of their effort and hence they were career satisfied and some amount of stress and crisis is also good for employees as they in turn tend to perform better at work.

6.5.9. Employee Age and Career Satisfaction

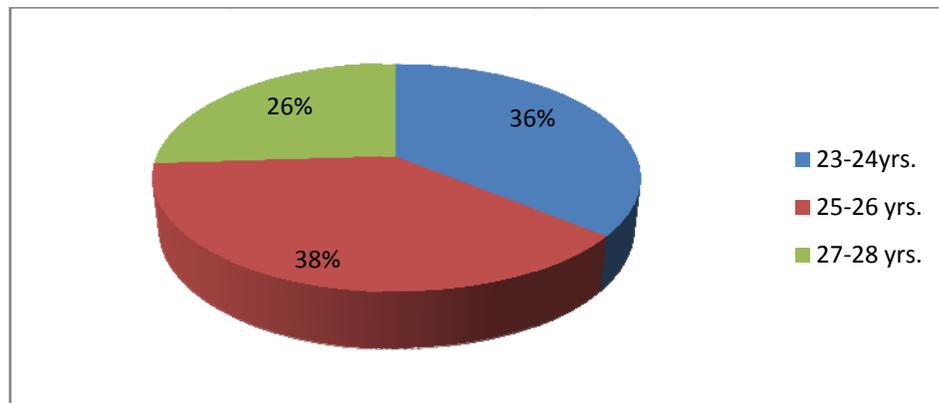| Employee Age Group and Career Satisfaction	
Employee Age	**Percentage**
23-24yrs.	36%
25-26 yrs.	38%
27-28 yrs.	26%

Table No. 6.13.

Figure No. 6.13

25 – 26 year olds seemed most satisfied in their career, then followed 23 - 24 yrs old followed next, the least to be career satisfied were the27 – 28 years .Here, also we can see that more the experienced the employees were the more they seemed to be career dissatisfied in the careers. 27 – 28 year olds seemed to be more dissatisfied compared to the younger lots, as one could attribute the same to the fact these employees were probably on the verge of reaching a mid life crisis and hence , seemed to be least satisfied .

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6.5.10. Years of Experience and Career Satisfaction

H5: There is a significant difference between Career Satisfaction of the employees with varying years of experience.

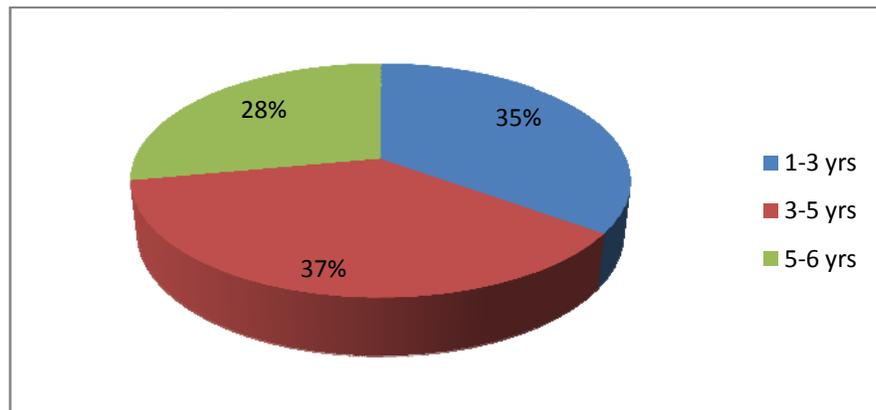| Years of Experience and Career Satisfaction	
Years of Experience	Percentage
1-3 yrs	35%
3-5 yrs	37%
5-6 yrs	28%

Table No. 6.14

Figure No. 6.14

As seen in chapter V, the hypothesis gets retained i.e. there is a significant difference between Career Satisfaction and employees with years of experience. Hence, it is clearly evident that there is a significant difference between Career Satisfaction and years of experience of an employee.

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3-5 years seemed to be highly satisfied, then followed the 1-3 years old, last were the 5-6 years of experienced professionals. It is quite obvious that in quarter life crisis the employees that just join an organisation would seems to be less satisfied with their careers compared to the ones that have more experience in the industry. There probably still seems to be huge gap between what is taught in college and management schools. Alternatively, many companies visit campus for placements and it is a known fact that the 'role' given to them during the placement and once they join the company vary to a great extent. As these employees settled in the company over the years, they seemed to be more satisfied in their careers. Then again , once the employee gain some amount of experiences ,they tend to get dissatisfied in their careers were the ones in the experience range of 5 - 6 years. This also supports the study done by other researchers . (Allen et al.*,* 1998; Allen *et al.*, 1999, Chay *et al.*, 1995; Gerpott and Domsch, 1987; Greenhaus *et al.*, 1990; Lee, 2003, Gattiker and Larwood (1988) and Lee (2003).

Older individuals with more tenure in the organization are more likely to be plateaued (Allen *et al.*, 1998; Allen *et al.*, 1999) and career plateauing has been found to be associated with reduced career satisfaction (Chay *et al.*, 1995; Gerpott and Domsch, 1987; Greenhaus *et al.*, 1990; Lee, 2003). Gattiker and Larwood (1988) and Lee (2003) found that people who had been in their jobs longer were less satisfied with their careers than people with shorter job tenure. Their therefore predicted that organizational and job tenure would be significantly negatively related to the career satisfaction.

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6.5.11. Sectors and Career Satisfaction

H16: There is a significant difference between Career Satisfaction across industries.

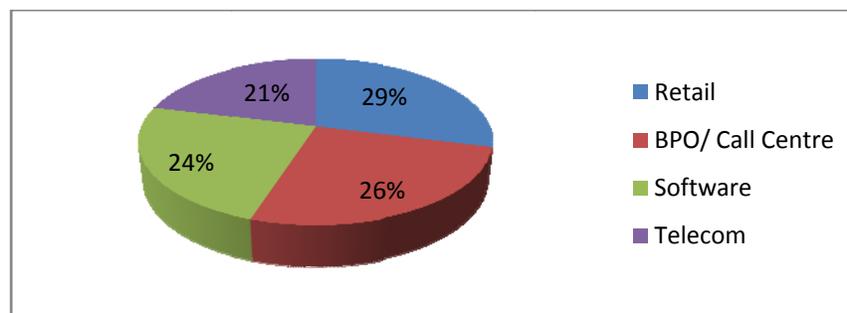| Industry	
Retail	29%
BPO/ Call Centre	26%
Software	24%
Telecom	21%

Table No. 6.15

Figure No. 6.15

As seen in chapter V, this shows that Career Satisfaction differs significantly across all the four industries. There is a significant difference between career satisfaction across industries. The industry that Career Satisfaction was the highest was found to be in Retail industry, followed by BPO/ Call Centre industry and then by Software industry and lastly by Telecom industry.

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Highest scores on career satisfaction was found in the Retail industry and then followed by the Call Centre. On the lower end it was the Software followed by the Telecom industry. Retail and Call Centre employees seemed to be more satisfied with their career, as probably most of them do not have very high career aspiration and do not look forward to challenging goals and roles in the organisation. On the other hand, Software and Telecom employees perpetually have then lust and need for achieving more and more. They also probably compare their current roles and compensation with their batch mates and it is here where the dissatisfaction arises. The compensation being one of the major influencers for career satisfaction, these employees perennially compare their scales with the others in their own company and in other companies, most salary ranges vary to a great extent from company to company even in the same industry, whereas in the Retail and BPO / Call Centre industry, their designations, career growth and compensation scales are far more structured than the Software and Telecom industry. Hence, there seems to be more career satisfaction in Retail and BPO / Call Centre industries than Software and Telecom industries.

Each industry has a different set of employees with a difference in qualification and experience, the organisation culture and human resource polices differing from each company to company and thereby industry to industry. Retail industry employees seemed to be more Career Satisfied, then followed by the BPO/ Call Centre employees, then by Software and last were the Telecom folks.

6.5.12. Discussion of Hypothesis No. 6

H6: There is a significant relationship between Quarter Life Crisis and Career Satisfaction of employees.

As discussed in chapter V, hypothesis testing. This clearly shows that there is a significant relationship between Quarter Life Crisis - Career, Job, Stress, Health and Lifestyle and Career Satisfaction. It is also evident that Quarter Life Crisis affects Career Satisfaction 47 % of the time. The crisis that one goes through does affect career satisfaction. At this stage of quarter life, employees are quite in a state 'of flux'. They have not yet charted out their career goals and they may experience uncertainty or discomfort if not mentored or guided well in the nascent stages of ones' career. Most of them area already on their first job, if not on the second one . Quite of few of the organisations contributions do aid in helping them in creating their career plans too. If one is happy at the nascent stage in the particular organisation than one generally tends to hold on to ones' career too . Many a times the organisation also helps the employee on this issue. He also needs to be accepted as a competency contributor to the organization.

6.5.13. Discussion of Hypothesis No.7

H7: There is a significant relationship between Career Decision Self Efficacy and Career Satisfaction of employees.

In relation to our study, this clearly shows that there is a significant relationship between Occupational Information, Goal Selection, Planning, Problem Solving, Self Appraisal and Career Satisfaction at an early stage of one's career. The

hypothesis gets retained. i.e. There is a significant relationship between career self efficacy and career satisfaction at an early stage of one's career. As each and every employee needs to educate themselves on the various fields that interest them and then narrow the same down to one or two of the areas which they would then take active interest and pursue. Career decision self efficacy affects career satisfaction 8 % of the time. This clearly reflects that the individuals belief that he can successfully complete tasks necessary for making career decisions and that it affects career satisfaction 8 % of the time.

The average person changes jobs at least five times during their life, and some change careers as many as three times (www. consearch.wordpress.com/2009) In today's whirlwind market, change is the rule, not the exception, and there are plenty of decisions to be made in between. There is one thing that employees should use time and time again to make good decisions regarding one's career, a fail-safe compass that will guide one through the maze of seemingly endless options and opportunities. That compass is ones' passion. In fact, it is better to make good decisions whilst one is in than before one graduates, because that's when many of the bigger career decisions are made, the ones that set a course for the future. There could nevertheless be some pitfalls for those who are planning the preliminary stages of their career. Peer pressure pitfall, Parental pressure pitfall and Paralysis pitfall –where there are choices and choices everywhere, one needs to start planning for the future using your passion as the guiding force. With reference to the sample in the study i.e . those that are working – employees get comfortable with the 'status quo', making hasty career or job decision and then repenting in leisure. At times, though we are miserable and our job 'sucks' we need to stay 'put' and have the patience to endure the same for a while .Some employees also very overconfident on most occasions and this could then lead to

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a down fall . Hence, making good career decisions are highly important for career satisfaction.

6.5.14. Discussion Hypothesis No. 8

$H_1$8: There is a significant relationship between Career Anchors and Career Satisfaction of employees.

The adjusted R square value is .261. This clearly indicates that Career Anchors influence Total Career Satisfaction 26 % of the time. With regards to Career Satisfaction and Career Anchors, it was found that there was no significant relationship between Security and Lifestyle anchors and Career Satisfaction. Technical / Functional, General Management , Entrepreneurial Creativity , there was a negative relationship with Career Satisfaction where as with Autonomy, Security , Service Dedication to a Cause and Pure Challenge it was a positive relationship. All the Career Anchors with the exception of Security and Lifestyle do not influence Career Anchors. Total Career Satisfaction will increase if Career Anchors like Technical Functional, General Management , Autonomy, Entrepreneurial Creativity, and Service Dedication to a Cause & Pure Challenge will increase or vice versa. Baroudi (1988) examined the relationship between career orientations and career satisfaction. He found that in five out of the nine correlations between career anchors and career satisfaction no significant relationships i.e. technical, security, service, managerial and identity were found where as in our study two out of the nine anchors there were no significant relationships.

Career satisfaction reflects how people feel about their career role and their career success. The findings of the present study show that organization-related factors are especially important in fostering the career satisfaction for employees in the quarter stage of their career. For them, a challenging job and perceived support from their organization are associated with greater career satisfaction. Supervisory support, mentoring or sponsorship, and access to information and resources are organization-related factors that have been shown to be related to career satisfaction in other populations (Greenhaus *et al.*, 1990; Seibert *et al.*, 2001) and could also influence the career satisfaction for employees at this stage .

For the sample in the present study, one of the most important ways of fostering the career satisfaction of employees in this age group is to ensure that they are challenged by their job, are required to extend their abilities and knowledge in performing their job, and have an opportunity to learn and grow in their job. In other words, these employees are less interested in advancing to a higher level and are more interested in what their job has to offer.

In the present study and based on the finding in phase 2 , the researcher has also suggested that enhancing the career satisfaction for employees in the quarter life will require different approaches tailored specifically to the two groups. For employees who are engineers and management qualified, demonstrating that the organization values their contribution is committed to them, and cares about their well-being is especially important to   their career satisfaction. The career satisfaction for the others for eg. agents, customer service executives etc is increased when their organization shows a commitment to them through its efforts to retain its older professional employees. The individual characteristics

and organization-related factors did account for a sizeable amount of the variance in career satisfaction, but other variables not included in the study may also influence the career satisfaction for such a sample. It is possible that the experiences of employees who have spent their careers in the private sector are quite different than the experiences of those in the public sector. Therefore, the findings of the present study could be generalized to other industries in the private sector but not to employees in the public sector.

Supervisory support, mentoring or sponsorship, and access to information and resources are organization-related factors that have been shown to be related to career satisfaction in other populations (Greenhaus et al., 1990; Seibert et al, 2001) and could also influence the career satisfaction for the current sample in the study.

In contrast to prior generations, today's employees are responsible for their own careers and can no longer rely on lifelong employment in one organization. In addition, even when being employed in one organization for a longer period of time, more changes in the job tasks and the environment are experienced than was the case for employees in the past. In terms of helping employees to achieve career satisfaction, in counseling, these aspects should therefore be of primary focus. Although careers are more in the hands of employees these days, employers may want to support their staff in their career development.

6.5.15. Why an understanding of career orientations is important to achieve career satisfaction in organisations?

The importance for organisational career management is the recognition that there are strong non-monetary factors which affect work and career satisfaction, and career orientations provide a way of understanding these motivators of career decisions. Many organisational career programmes assume that employees are motivated by the prospect of promotion, but while there is evidence to suggest that employees promotion aspirations are often underestimated (Herriot et al., 1994) there is also considerable evidence for differences in motivation (Holland, 1973).

Barth (1993) put forward the organisational benefits of recognising other motivators, as firstly, being a greater understanding of why quality staff choose to leave the organisation and secondly, the ability to target career management systems more effectively and increase career satisfaction through more constructive discussions with employees who might be dissatisfied. If employees remain in a job that is not congruent with their career anchor and repress their motivations, they seek to achieve the missing elements of their anchor through outside work interests or by withdrawing commitment, which has obvious implications for organisations.

Derr (1986) also suggests that organisations should analyse career orientations in order to determine which career interventions are most appropriate for each career orientation. For example, assessment centres are suited to getting ahead; career counseling to getting secure; career pathing to getting high and getting free etc. In addition to this, Schein puts forward the case for flexible reward systems, promotion systems and recognition systems to address the differing needs of individuals. For example, people with a lifestyle anchor are likely to place a high

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value on flexible benefits, where people with a security/stability anchor will be more biased towards pension schemes and steady incremental pay scales.

The career anchor literature suggests the importance of understanding non-monetary motivators of career satisfaction, depending on the employees motives, values and talents. It is also suggested by a number of writers (Barth, 1993; Derr, 1986) that a greater understanding of career anchors can help organisations to tailor and focus career initiatives more successfully. This research shows that cumulative career anchor information can be a good indication of the key drivers for career satisfaction and create an understanding of the overriding career culture. At first sight, this would appear to give an indication of whether the voluntary self development styled interventions currently favoured by many organisations are likely to be appropriate.

The importance of tailoring career development programmes to the culture of an organisation is well documented (Hirsh and Jackson, 1996; Mayo, 1991; Walters, 1992). By analysing career anchor data in this way, it is possible for an organisation to build up a picture of the key drivers of career satisfaction in the organisation, by providing a valuable insight into the career culture in existence. Furthermore, if more organisations begin to take this approach, benchmarking the success of career initiatives with other companies will have a greater relevance against this cultural backdrop.

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6.6. <u>Review of the Study</u>

This chapter concludes the study with an in depth discussion of results and based upon the same the researcher has provided the implications for human resource managers, career counselors and suggestions for future research in the next chapter .

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