PERS 311    WOMEN AT WORK

(A conceptualisation of factors
 affecting female career commitment)

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CSIR Special Report PERS 311 (pp i - v;  1 - 54 )
UDC 396 (680)

Johannesburg, Republic of South Africa, July 1980.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## SUMMARY

Continued female labour participation is necessary to maintain the economic growth rate of the Republic of South Africa. White women in particular have the necessary educational sophistication and work skills to meet the anticipated manpower needs of the future, but statistics show that women tend to be selective in their vocational preferences.

This report provides an assessment of research literature on factors affecting female work and career involvement and proposes a research model to assist in analysing the implications of gender-role identity, motivational factors and life experiences as these affect adult working women in meeting different role demands.

Research on female career aspirations and work commitment has examined different psychological and environmental factors as either/or predictors in determining barriers to their vocational achievement. The proposed research model is based on a systems approach and emphasises the reciprocal interaction which takes place between internal and external factors particularly significant to individual women at different life stages.

Knowledge of the cognitive assessment of different variables made by women to enable adjustment to situational demands, expectations and needs, can assist in the development of more successful educational and vocational counselling and professional training programmes for women.

# 1. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Productive skills and potential life-time earnings of workers can be
increased through formal education and on-the-job training. The concept
of investment in man (or human capital) is therefore relevant when analysing
educational plans and manpower development models which aim at optimal
utilisation of manpower. Although the concept of human capital is well-
known, analysis of literature on this subject shows that investment in
education has almost exclusively been evaluated in terms of the education
of males. The probability of marriage and expected family commitments of
women resulted in researchers neglecting the analysis of women's education
as a form of investment (Schultz 1970, Woodhall 1965).

The lack of evaluation of women as human capital is not because of lack
of labour involvement by women. The need for economic growth, experienced
during the last few decades, has contributed to an increased labour
participation by women. This increase, experienced world wide, has involved
women of all educational levels, skilled and unskilled, married and
unmarried. South African labour statistics are comparable to the rest of
the world in that they show a consistent increase in female labour
participation, and a continued demand for White female labour in particular
is expected (Terblanche 1978, Vermaak 1975). Manpower projections for
South Africa emphasise that during the 1980's a particular need for
professional, semi-professional, technical, managerial and administrative
personnel will be experienced. It is expected that the existing White male
labour force will not be able to meet this demand and the skills available
amongst males of other population groups are also expected to be inadequate.
White female labour however can serve as a potential reserve force for the
projected manpower needs, particularly because of the level of education
and skills which they can offer. The jobs to be filled require higher
educational qualifications and professional expertise and White women not
only have access to all career training opportunities at Universities and
Technicons, but they also have the abilities and aptitudes necessary to be

developed comparable to men to meet the manpower needs of the country
(Terblanche 1978). The increasing number of White working women and the
aspirations of women to succeed at higher level jobs, furthermore
challenge the assumption that all women are not motivated to work or
are not career orientated (van der Merwe 1979).

Analysis of University enrolment figures shows that White women are well
represented in a variety of study disciplines. The continually increasing
number of women entering Universities also emphasises their interest in
obtaining higher educational and professional qualifications and underlines
the country's investment in them as human capital (Coetzee 1977).

Women's contribution to the national income, in terms of their level of
education, their productive skills and potential earnings is however
affected by different factors. These are discrimination in the work-place;
potentially conflicting home and work roles and so-called psychological
barriers which affect women in developing their own potential.

A well-documented factor affecting utilisation of womanpower stems from
sex-discrimination in the work-place (van der Merwe 1978, 1979, Smith 1978,
OECD report 1960). Sex discrimination continues to be operative in the
allocation of wages, training and opportunities for promotion to senior
positions. Women are often globally viewed in terms of Freud's dictum
that anatomy is destiny and the traditional value system of woman's place
in society conflicts with the hierarchical and competitive achievement
orientated realities of the work-place. A further, particularly inhibiting
factor for work involvement by professionally qualified women is found in
the present South African taxation system for married couples (Smit 1978).

Another factor which affects the utilisation of womanpower in the labour
market emanates from their child-bearing and child-rearing roles. Combining
these roles with a work role place specific demands on women's time and
physical strengths. Handling of conflicting demands made by home and work
may furthermore contribute to the stereotyped viewing of women as a
temporary work force; women as less work dependable than men due to higher
levels of absenteeism and labour turnover; and women being less interested
in long-term career planning and work involvement than men. It is clear

that labour force participation by women, particularly married women, pose specific problems for which no standard answers exist. Each problem requires analysis in terms of its collective and individual implications, because of different economic, socio-cultural and personal situations.

A factor which has attracted little research attention relates to women as individuals who, within themselves experience conflicts or barriers caused by being a woman in the male working world. Men accept as an integral part of their life that they need to work or to develop a career in order to earn a living and to meet marriage and family commitments. Women generally expect to get married at some stage of their lives, but in this case marriage presupposes a different life role which may exclude a work role to a greater or lesser extent. Women, accepting the dual roles of work and marriage are confronted by a life style and life demands that differ from the demands made on married working men (van Dusen and Sheldon 1976, Zytowski 1969). Current adult personality research is still focussed largely on male life roles and on hierarchical and competitive constructs of life experiences. Assessment of achievement also depends on society's scale of values which differs in terms of masculine mastery and feminine deference criteria. Female motivation to succeed at responsible work can be affected by the need to meet dual role commitments and to resolve conflicts between personal needs and ascribed role demands. This may have implications in terms of the organisation of personality variables within the individual and the manner in which she deals with work and life patterns at different adult life stages. Little information is available on the life experiences of adult women, particularly as these influence their personality and work motivation.

In planning the optimal utilisation of available manpower to meet the expected labour demands of the 1980's, particular attention needs to be directed to the factors affecting the full realisation of our womanpower potential. This includes analysis of discriminatory practices in the work-place. However, the choice of a career and the choice to achieve or not to achieve in the work-place, in final analysis rests with the individual and her will to progress. Analysis of potential or real psychological barriers within women themselves, which keep them from developing their potential and from realising the investment made in their potential productive skills is

necessary to enable improved guidance and counselling of women at different stages of their lives in relation to career development. A clearer perspective on the implications of discriminatory practices and on factors internal to women themselves which may inhibit their potential development to meet professional level job demands can assist personnel practitioners in assessing possible conflict stages affecting working women in their work tenure and work commitment.

The aim of this study is therefore:  a) to analyse socio-psychological factors which may affect White working women in terms of the conflicts and choices with which they are confronted at different life stages, b) to assess the effect which this may have on their work involvement and, c) to construct a theoretical framework according to which training approaches can be developed to assist women in meeting the job demands of the future.

## 1.2    WHITE FEMALE LABOUR IN THE RSA

According to statistics published by the Department of Labour in 1977 (Survey 12) a total of 523 924 White women and 990 385 White men were economically active during 1977.  Women were represented in all categories of work albeit in varying distribution.

For the purpose of the present study a sample analysis was made of four work categories, namely those in which White women are more generally represented, including those requiring a minimum of ten years of formal school education.  These work categories represent those in which future manpower demands may become most pronounced.

A distribution of White labour during 1977 is given in Table I for the categories of Professional, Technical, Managerial, Executive, Administrative, Clerical and Sales jobs.

TABLE I : WHITE MALE/FEMALE LABOUR DISTRIBUTION IN 4 WORK CATEGORIES

| Category | | Males | Females | % Females |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | Professional/Technical | 173 177 | 97 121 | 35,93 |
| B | Managerial/Executive/Administrative | 122 853 | 15 535 | 11,23 |
| C | Clerical | 127 907 | 284 599 | 68,99 |
| D | Sales | 73 321 | 71 738 | 49,45 |

Whereas it may appear that women are well represented in Professional/ Technical, Clerical and Sales work categories, a more detailed study of the survey results indicates a strong trend for women to gravitate towards a few types of jobs within these broad categories. A further analysis of some of the jobs falling within these categories is therefore necessary.

## 1.2.1 CATEGORY A JOBS

Analysis shows that 75,92% of the total number of women included in the Professional/Technical category function in occupations traditionally categorised as 'female' occupations, namely nursing, teaching, etc.

A sample distribution is given in Table 2.

TABLE 2 : WHITE MALE/FEMALE LABOUR DISTRIBUTION IN SOME CATEGORY A JOBS

| Occupations | Males | Females | % Females |
|---|---|---|---|
| Nursing | 1 072 | 316 129 | 99,66 |
| Teaching | 22 813 | 38 160 | 62,59 |
| Para-medical Professions | 238 | 3 343 | 93,63 |
| Librarians, Archivists | 254 | 1 391 | 84,56 |

Women's representation in Professional/Technical jobs therefore does not fall in the categories where future manpower shortages are expected like engineering, technology and pure sciences.

## 1.2.2 CATEGORY B JOBS

Included in the 15 535 women who are classified under this heading are many who function as Secretaries of clubs or schools, or women who function as Managers of hotels and shops.

A sample distribution of jobs held by White women under this heading is given in Table 3.

TABLE 3 : WHITE MALE/FEMALE LABOUR DISTRIBUTION IN SOME CATEGORY B JOBS

| Occupations | Males | Females | % Females |
|---|---|---|---|
| Managing Director | 12 230 | 694 | 5,37 |
| General Manager | 6 700 | 266 | 3,82 |
| Credit Manager | 3 118 | 578 | 15,64 |
| Manager Hotel/Shop | 17 200 | 5 049 | 22,69 |
| Secretary Club/School | 1 122 | 1 703 | 60,28 |
| Company Secretary | 3 414 | 621 | 15,39 |

The expected manpower shortages projected for the next decade relates in particular to the jobs of senior management, in which women are at present under-represented.

## 1.2.3 CATEGORY C JOBS

White women represent 68,99% of all White job incumbents in clerical jobs. They are largely employed by Banks, Building Societies and Government and function in a variety of clerical and semi-clerical positions. Also included in this category of jobs are typists and reception clerks.

A sample distribution is given in Table 4.

TABLE 4 : WHITE MALE/FEMALE LABOUR DISTRIBUTION IN SOME CATEGORY C JOBS

| Occupations | Males | Females | % Females |
|---|---|---|---|
| Bank Clerks | 6 587 | 16 702 | 71,72 |
| Book-keepers | 2 681 | 12 557 | 82,41 |
| Cashiers | 4 001 | 15 993 | 79,99 |
| Reception Clerks | 817 | 12 142 | 93,70 |
| Typists | 207 | 42 808 | 99,52 |
| Office Machine Operators | 1 387 | 14 718 | 91,39 |
| Clerks: Committee | 14 414 | 22 619 | 61,08 |
| Clerks: General | 30 221 | 49 754 | 62,21 |

Category C jobs represent the type of work into which educated personnel of other race groups can be expected to move. This is already the case with cashiers, machine operators, general clerks, etc., where a steady increase in numbers become evident, particularly amongst Coloured and Black females.

1.2.4 CATEGORY D JOBS

White women in this category function mainly as shop and counter assistants and as demonstrators.

A sample distribution is shown in Table 5.

TABLE 5 : WHITE MALE/FEMALE LABOUR DISTRIBUTION IN SOME CATEGORY D JOBS

| Occupations | Males | Females | % Females |
|---|---|---|---|
| Shop Assistants | 14 259 | 46 590 | 76,57 |
| Demonstrators | 16 991 | 15 868 | 48,29 |

## 1.2.5  OTHER TRENDS

Women from other race groups show a marked increase in job involvement in the work categories C, D and in Nursing.  It can be expected that this increase will continue in the future and that White women may be replaced by both males and females from the other races who aim at improving their status in life.

It also seems that White women tend to follow a restricted and traditional trend in the type of work they do.  Terblanche (1978) emphasised that women tend to "keep their eggs in a very limited number of baskets".  Nursing, Teaching, Clerical and Sales jobs form 83% of all job opportunities estimated for women (p.2).

The high percentage of women employed in a restricted number of jobs can lead to oversupply and redundancy in these areas of activity.  Redundancy in the clerical field can result e.g. from competition by candidates of other population groups.  Redundancy in the teaching field can however also be caused as a result of a decrease in birth-rate of White children which is now becoming evident in lower school enrolment figures (Sadie 1980), leading to both smaller teaching classes and less teachers being required for White schools.

Female work involvement trends (1960-1970) indicate a particular increase in work participation by women in the 24-49 year age groups, with the largest increase being in the 40-44 age group (Vermaak 1978).  Many mature married women with home responsibilities thus seem to continue to hold down jobs and it can be expected that this trend will continue due to economic and other reasons (Vermaak 1978).

Vermaak (1978) in a projection of labour demand and supply in 1980 estimated a shortfall of 60 000 White women.  Of this number an estimated 41 500 would have to meet an educational requirement of matric.

The need for increased labour participation by White women is also emphasised by a possible escalation of unrest on the country's borders which in turn results in men being withdrawn from the labour market. Economically this withdrawal of men could also affect the 2-4% increase in White workers estimated to be required to maintain a 5% growth rate of the Gross Domestic Product in order to ward off an increase in the unemployment rate (Economic Advisor 1977).

In 1977 Maj.-Gen. Neil Webster stated that the RSA does have people available and they do have the brain-power to fill top and middle management positions. However half of the population suitable to do this consists of women. He emphasised that women should be trained both in civilian and in military life to enable them to meet management job demands before the middle 1980's (Smit pg. 40).

Research done since 1964 by the South African Human Sciences Research Council indicates that women have no need to limit themselves to training for the traditionally 'feminine' occupations only. When compared to boys who had similar passes to girls in Standard X, girls were found to be no different from boys in terms of their cognitive abilities. No reasons, i.e. in terms of intellectual abilities, could be found which should keep girls from training in scientific fields such as medicine, engineering, etc., (Roos 1977, Terblanche 1978).

It is obvious that if women are suitable to fill the projected shortages of different categories of jobs, particularly in the professional, technical areas, then the country as a whole could benefit. The investment in University education for women is already considerable and realisation of this investment could benefit both the individual and the economy of the country.

## 1.3    FEMALE UNIVERSITY ENROLMENTS

The need for qualified manpower to maintain the South African economy was stressed as early as 1966. (1961 Education Panel.) It was then recommended that Universities should aim at providing 200 000 places for students in 1980 to keep pace with anticipated manpower demands.

During the period 1964-1974 the number of White students at residential
Universities nearly doubled (Coetzee 1978). This increasing trend
continues and the van Wyk de Vries Commission (1974) estimated that 90 000
White students would study at residential Universities during 1990.

The cost of University training for both the student, and indirectly for
the tax-payer has however consistently increased over the years. The per
capita expenditure of White students at residential Universities in 1974
was R1 434 per student (Malherbe 1977). This rose to R1 964 per student
in 1976 (Race Relations 1978) and with the inflationary spiral of the recent
times these costs can be expected to continue to increase. The cost
effectiveness of such training therefore also needs attention.

The financial value which can be expected from a University education can
be analysed in terms of different criteria, such as differences in income
between graduates and non-graduates (school leavers); and the years of
tenure which can be expected from graduates after completion of their studies.

Both these aspects are of relevance when analysing the ratio of male/female
students at residential Universities. Women, on average earn substantially
less than men in the labour market and women are often seen as short-term
work risks.

The total number of White students at residential Universities increased
nearly fourfold during the period 1960-1979. Actual enrolment figures for
three time periods, including the total number of White students studying
at UNISA is given in Table 6.

TABLE 6 : ENROLMENT FIGURES : WHITE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

| Year | Residential University Students | Total: Students Including UNISA |
|------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1960 | 31 739 | 39 662 |
| 1974 | 68 608 | 95 589 |
| 1979 | 80 193 | 118 199 |

Sources: (Malherbe 1977, Survey of Race Relations 1979,
Comments from Universities 1980)

The ratio of White male/female students at residential Universities show a decrease, namely from 2,58:1 in 1960/64 to 1,98:1 in 1974 (Coetzee 1977). This change in ratio is ascribed to an increase of 8,8% per year of White female students enrolling as against an increase of only 5,9% per year for White male enrolment. This change in ratio is emphasised even more by UNISA enrolment figures. The ratio of male/female enrolments at this University dropped from 5,93:1 in 1960/64 to 2,38:1 in 1974. Female student numbers increased at an average growth rate of 18,2% per year during the period 1960 to 1974, while a growth rate of only 9,4% per year for males was registered (Coetzee 1977).

Analysis of women's choice of study show that they predominantly prefer studies in the Human Sciences, although analyses of the years 1964-1974 does show an increasing trend in females studying in the pure sciences.

The success rate of University students at White residential Universities show that women on average perform better than men (Coetzee 1977, Gouws 1961). Women also seem to prefer continuing with studies after obtaining a first degree. Whereas men still outnumber women in obtaining further qualifications, statistics show that their total numbers decrease whereas the number of women increases (Coetzee 1977).

## 1.4    ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS OF UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

The increase in White student enrolment at Universities cannot be expected to continue substantially.

Population growth rate figures for Whites show a decline in birth-rates which in 1978 reached a level of 2,12 births per woman's reproduction period. It is projected that the average births per year of approximately 76 000 in 1975/80 will rise to 78 200 in 1980/85 and 86 000 in 1990/95 whereafter the numbers will stabilise and then start to decline (Sadie 1980).

The implication of these statistics is that women can re-enter the labour market at an earlier age if they so wish because less of their life-years are spent in child-bearing.

An expected lower White population group also creates further opportu-
nities for increased utilisation of other population groups and White
women can expect competition for opportunities in lower level jobs.
At present women can offer a high level of educational sophistication
which places them in a better bargaining position in the labour market.
This should be seen as a temporary advantage and White women who
anticipate a future work role need to be more selective in the kind of
training they obtain.

Universities experience a measure of competition to attract students in
order to maintain their government subsidies. The increasing number of
White women enrolling at University is therefore welcomed. Analysis is
however necessary to determine the economic relevance of the study courses
followed by students, particularly in terms of the longer-term financial
benefit of such study and the actual longer-term career motivation of
women.

Analysis of the ratio male/female enrolments at Technicons show that more
men than women prefer to study at these institutions. Women seem to prefer
a University training. Coetzee (1977) states that: "Dames stel blykbaar
minder as mans daarin belang om vir 'n beroep afgerig te word. Hul primêre
doelstelling met tersiëre opleiding is blykbaar nie uiteindelike beroeps-
beoefening nie maar eerder persoonlike vorming". (p.125).

The decrease in male enrolment at Universities coincides with an increase
in Technicon enrolments by males. Possible reasons for this is sought in
the greater career orientated training given at Technicons and comparable
salaries eventually paid for both University and Technicon qualified workers
(Coetzee 1977).

The 1970 census showed that 106 170 Whites who were economically active had
a University degree. This constituted 7,1% of the then economically
active labour force. Wessels (1974) discusses the increase in the total
number of White married women active in the labour force and cites that
27,9% worked in 1970. It must however be accepted that not all of the
graduate White women who are married are economically active. There are
many reasons for non-participation in paid work such as family commitments,
personal preference and redundancy of skills. Personal taxation, which is

high for professionally qualified women is also highly relevant. The participation rates of divorced women in 1970 was 71,3% and of widows 23,5% according to population census reports. No statistics are available on the number of divorcees and widows who are graduates but higher professional qualifications can serve as economic benefit when women are forced to become breadwinners.

Malherbe (1977) estimates that women, on average should work 13 years after graduation to make good the amount involved to train for a first degree at University, plus income foregone during training, before they can positively contribute to the country's economy (p.647). Such training may have non-material and indirect value in terms of family and community improvements, but the country's need for certain skilled levels of labour and the actual labour involvement of women emphasises the need to look at the cost effectiveness of such training again.

Higher education, based on social priviledge or mere personal interest, instead of increased productivity may be poor investment of the country's money. It can in effect affect the economic growth of the country negatively instead of aiding it.

Increased utilisation of graduated female labour in productive work should therefore be encouraged and the cost effectiveness of the present system needs to be analysed. Such an evaluation would necessitate analysis of the labour force demands and the measure in which Universities can meet these requirements. In addition, the elimination of discriminatory practices affecting women in the labour market requires attention and there is a need to analyse the problems encountered by women in handling dual role life commitments. With regard to the latter aspect, specific attention is required to determine factors particular to women themselves which could serve as psychological barriers inhibiting them from developing their full potential in the labour market. After all, the motivation to succeed ultimately resides in the individual and not in the environment.

Coetzee (1977) states that women's future objectives cannot be separated from their biological role. Wessels (1975) emphasises the implications of women's sex role when she states that ".... men are (still) building their lives around their work, while women (still) tend to build theirs around their men".

The relevance of these statements, in so far as they affect women, particularly with regard to their work involvement needs further analysis.

## 2.    BEING A WOMAN

### 2.1    INTRODUCTION

Theoretically modern woman is a liberated being with a choice of life roles. She can choose to be a home-maker, a career woman, a community worker or she can accept any combination of roles at different stages of her life.

In practice, however, modern woman is not so free, nor is her choice in every respect rational. For many women no clear-cut choice between being a home-maker or career woman exists. Through necessity women may have to combine different roles, or the preferred role of home-maker has to make way for a worker role because of not getting married, becoming divorced, widowhood, or other economic reasons.

In our culture, marriage is still seen as an important aspect of every woman's life. The role of home-maker therefore forms part of the future perspective of most women. Marriage by implication includes the possible discontinuation of work involvement for longer or shorter periods of a woman's adult life. Tradition and social and cultural norms still guide women's actions and reactions, particularly in the handling of work and home commitment. Women consequently can expect to be confronted with a choice and possible conflict between meeting home and family demands, work demands or personal needs at some stage of their lives (Coser and Rokoff, 1971).

Norms are rules of behaviour, and roles are patterns of norms associated with social positions. Roles are associated with positions in that they specify the kinds of behaviour that are expected of people in those positions.

Roles also specify the rules by which occupants are to govern their
behaviour in relation to occupants in other roles, or in relation to what
traditionally or socially is expected. Within different roles however,
there still remains the possibility of a personal 'Gestaltung' which, in
the case of women, can result in experiencing conflict between dual sets
of interrelated choice patterns (Theodore 1971). Women may, for instance
have to make a choice on the relative weight which they would like to
give to getting professionaly qualified as against getting married. Or
if professionally qualified or working, what weight they should give to
developing themselves in the work or in a professional role compared to
their marriage and family roles.

Personal behaviour in any situation is determined jointly by the character-
istics of that situation (as the individual perceives them) as well as by
the particular behavioural dispositions of the individual at that time
(Lewin 1935, Magnusson 1978, Jersild 1978). To understand individual
behaviour of women, it is therefore necessary to determine both personality
or behavioural dispositions and role demands as they interact. Role
expectations and their relationship with actual behaviour is furthermore
affected by the sanctions which members of society, or the individual self,
may place on them. Sanctions relate to the approval or disapproval which
is placed on any specific behaviour pattern. The bases of sanctions can
reside in the cultural norms governing any particular behaviour roles and/or
they can be internal to the individual. Where the external norms conflict
with the needs and norms of an individual, some measure of compromise is
required between the cultural or social requirements and the personal impulses
and ideals. Personality and role variables do not operate in isolation
from each other. Where discrepancies occur between personality needs and
role demands, conflict occurs which must be resolved. This can result in
behaviour which either conflicts with role demands or submitting the needs
of the 'self' to the demands of society. Whichever approach is followed
depends upon the personality of the individual, the situation and the strength
of the personal needs involved.

To be a woman therefore not only requires the realisation that normative
behaviour is expected relating to different roles associated with different
social positions like marriage, and motherhood but it also involves the
integration of different roles like being the breadwinner or working to make
ends meet according to either personal needs or societal criteria.

By changing from one role to another, or by integrating different role demands, the individual may experience a change in self-perception (Mead 1964, Mead, 1970). This requires a reorganisation of the structure of the self in relation to others and to different situations (Foa and Foa 1974). The way in which 'others' categorise the individual is important in that it affects the appraisal of the self and contributes to the development of a personal identity. The perception of who you are is a cognitive product and consists of different constructs which serve to assist in organising the experienced environment. The degree of congruence between what a person is expected to do and what she personally wants to do, directly influences her appraisal of the self, the manner in which a possible conflict is resolved and the motivation to achieve results (Lecky 1945, Jersild 1978, Maslow 1954).

Women are at different stages of their adult lives confronted with choices, closely related to the different roles they have to fulfil. The implications of the choices made, in terms of social requirements and personal needs, depend on the individual's self perception and internal sanctions as these relate to societal expectations (Smelser 1961). Being confronted by a choice which could satisfy a personal need, but which would clash with expectations held by society would cause conflict in women whose self perception depends heavily on acceptance from the 'others' in the environment.

In analysing factors which could affect women in their work commitment it is therefore necessary to be aware of the different roles expected of women during their adult lives. Of particular relevance are the biological and gender roles, as these affect the socialisation process of women. The implication of the socialisation process on female personality development also needs to be assessed.

## 2.2    BIOLOGICAL ROLES

The biological processes of the human being is complex and extensive. For the purpose of this study the biological implications of being a woman will of necessity therefore only be briefly discussed in terms of specific organic developments as it may affect her in an emotional/psychological and work sense.

The fundamentally different functions that males and females perform in the reproductive life cycle form the core of differentiation of humans into two sexes. These structural and functional differences are also popularly presumed to cause mental and behavioural differences between males and females, although this has not yet been proved conclusively.

The greatest single structural difference is found in the two X chromosomes with which a woman starts life. While genetic sex is established at fertilisation, early embrios are female since the effect of sex genes is only felt at about the fifth or sixth week of fetal life (Sherfey 1972). During the first few weeks all embrios are morphologically female. Only when the primordial germ cells stimulate the production of androgens, which induce a male growth pattern, does the genetic male pattern of XY chromosomes develop.

Until about seven years, boys and girls are essentially the same in their endocrinological and physiological functioning. They produce and excrete comparable amounts of oestrogens and androgens, the so-called sex hormones.

After the age of approximately seven years differentiation in the sex endocrine functions start and girls begin to produce more oestrogen than boys do. The increased oestrogen function leads to the development of sex characteristics like the rounding of hips and the development of breasts found in girls of about ten to twelve years old.

The first differentiation of biological male and female role behaviour occurs with the beginning of puberty which for girls usually occurs between twelve to fifteen years of age. The monthly cycle of hormonal variation which girls then start to experience emphasises the specific structural and functional difference between the sexes. These experiences differ markedly from the physiological experience of boys of a comparable age.

During a menstrual cycle hormonal changes occur involving metabolic activities and the secretion of oestrogen, which can lead to symptoms like headaches and feeling bloated. With ovulation a further sex hormone, progesterone, comes into effect, which in combination with oestrogen can result in physiological changes and symptoms of tension. Personality changes like emotional instability, depression, irritability, etc., are not uncommon during these periods in a woman's life (Hordern 1978).

Puberty not only causes hormonal changes, but it also heralds the beginning of woman's potential role in human reproduction. The reproductive period normally lasts until the beginning of the forties. During pregnancy and the nine months of gestation a woman is again subject to changes in physiological symptoms and functions which eventually results in the birth process. The behavioural implications to women of the gestational and birth processes are extensive and involve both bodily and psychological experiences. Pregnancy and child-bearing has also implications regarding a woman's work involvement.

A third stage experienced specifically by women involves the climacteric or menopause period. Changes occurring during this stage are unique to females in the sense that they reflect the end of their productive role. It normally occurs at the age of fifty and leads to further physiological changes which follow the decline of the ovarian function. The ovarian production of oestrogen drops, as does the metabolic changes maintained by the oestrogen function. In an effort to stimulate a continued oestrogen function of the ovary the pitiutary gland increases the production of hormones. The adrenal gland which, throughout the years has produced androgenic male hormones now lack the feminizing influence of oestrogen and contributes to variable degrees of emotional instability, irritability and depression which women may experience. Overstreet (1963) states that an aggravation of neurotic components of a woman's personality is possible during this period of her life.

The Freudian statement that anatomy is destiny has been challenged by researchers like Sherfey (1966), Bardwick (1971), Masters and Johnson (1966), Weisstein (1971), Mednick and Tangri (1972), Maccoby (1966), Maccoby and Jacklin (1975). Bardwick however emphasises the need to recognise the importance of female physiology in determining emotional and motivational components of personality which could affect intellectual functioning and choice of life style. She also discusses the possibility of developing new or alternative roles around the biologically determined demands made on women.

Carlson (1972), while accepting that Freudian theory failed to include advances made in biological knowledge, emphasises that psychological sex differences have deeper roots than any socio-cultural environment. He

stresses that personologists could contribute to determining sex differences by analysing the meaning of psycho-biological facts in terms of the development, behaviour and experiences of individuals.

The contributions of genetics, hormones and social influences on behaviour is however still an open topic for debate (Block 1976). Further research is needed to determine precisely which sex differences are genetic/biologically based and which are environment/experience based.

Bernard (1975) states that we are back to the nature/nurture controversy, but, due to increase in knowledge, at a more sophisticated level than in the past. The currently accepted view is that the role-relevant traits are the result of socialisation and that the best evidence concerning sex differences can only come through the examination of social and learning processes.

Bardwick (1974) also suggests that the nature/nurture and behaviour relation-ship should be viewed as a two-way interactional process. Physiology causes changes in behaviour which in turn causes changes in physiology of a structural or durable nature. Bardwick cites research done by Levy and Seidan (1971) Rosensweig, Bennett and Diamond (1972) as examples of interactional effects of behaviour and physiology with behaviour being a function of body matabolism and behaviour in turn modifying brain chemistry.

Bardwick's conceptualisation of an interactive physiological-behavioural model needs further research but evidence cited by her indicate the complex interactive processes involved in human behaviour which includes physiological and socialisation inputs.

## 2.3   SOCIAL SEX ROLES

The handling of variable life roles requires a personal flexibility to enable adjustment to be made to different role demands. Furthermore, an integration of personality and role demands is required to achieve productive work behaviour from women functioning according to the demands of our times. To achieve such an integration requires clearer insight into the socialisa-tion influences which affect the development of sex roles, as well as the implications which historic socialisation may have on adult life experiences.

Being a woman is not only determined by her physical structure and physiological functioning. It is also determined by her attitudes and behaviour. In becoming a woman the individual must learn to think and behave according to cultural and social norms. Psychologically she becomes feminine through experiences encountered while growing up in a social and cultural milieu.

The traditional sex roles of women have deep roots and relate to women being seen as the nurturer and the submissive partner of the male. The organisation of a community is based on the sharing of roles by different members and in traditional society woman's role was limited to meeting the family's needs.

As the bearer of children her time was occupied by her duties as mother and home-maker. This included feeding and clothing family members and seeing to the education of the children.

Although times have changed, women are still regarded as central to the smooth running of the home while men are expected to interact with the outside world in the process of earning a living.

The unmarried woman's role is seen as temporary, because it is expected that she will marry in the future. Women who remain single, as well as those who are widowed or divorced are often regarded as 'marginal' because they do not fit into a traditional social sex role.

The female sex role and the implications thereof on employment invariably centres on problems encountered by married women, particularly working mothers. In this respect the perception of the women's role was influenced by e.g. the fact that large families required all the mother's time and efforts. Mortality rates were high and few women exceeded a fifty-year life-span. Whereas this tended to be the case at the turn of the century this does not hold in our present age

The educational demands made on mothers have also changed because children between the ages of six to eighteen years attend school for the greater portion of the day. Technological developments have also influenced the traditional female role. Through technical progress the production side

of a woman's work at home has become less. Household tasks have become easier and the mass manufacturing process of most products has replaced the housewife's need to produce own foods. Economic needs, like buying a house, a car or other capital goods now contribute to women entering the labour market for longer or shorter work periods. Women often rationalise this deviation from the traditional social sex role as being a different kind of 'production' assistance to meet the needs of the family. The increased level of education which women of today obtain also contributes to a change in their traditionally accepted social role. As the need for certain skills arise in the labour market, women are reminded of their obligation to the community as a whole, to offer their skills in the work-place.

The contradictions found between the traditional viewing of a social sex role and the present-day expectations of accepting women as part of a working community can result in an ambiguous attitude towards female employment, and ambivalence experienced by women themselves. The fact that mothers accept employment outside their homes is traditionally seen as the cause of a rising divorce rate, increase in juvenile delinquency, poor school performance of children, etc. (Wessels 1960, Nye & Hoffman 1963, Klein 1965). Although no link has been established between female employment and family problems scientifically, accusations in this respect can contribute to feelings of guilt and apprehension in women (Darley 1976, Zellman 1976, Broverman et al 1972, Parsons et al 1976). .

Changed circumstances lead to the conclusion that women's employment can no longer be seen as temporary and that they will eventually return to the traditionally accepted social sex role. Female labour is a necessary complement of the labour market and economic needs may encourage more women to take up positions commensurate with their training and abilities. The continued academic training of women also contributes to their increased expectation of personal development outside the home environment (Epstein 1969).

The role conflicts which women may experience depend however on how they define their roles according to personal values and on the degree to which they perceive any incompatibility between the two normative systems of home and work. Sex role dilemmas are experienced by women of different

educational levels, different work levels and even by women who do not
work but who feel that women should be more than just a housewife
(Rogers 1979).

The disadvantaged position in which women are placed with regard to the
possibility of getting married furthermore affects their certainty on
occupational involvement until the question of marriage has been resolved.
Traditional marital ages coincide with the years spent at University while
preparing for a profession. Unclear role expectations and uncertainty
about the future can affect the self concepts and achievement needs of
young women. Marital ambitions may also affect women's motivation to
follow professional training (other than in traditionally female jobs) or
to continue to achieve in a professional career which requires personal
dedication and a potential long-term work involvement (Bailyn 1970,
Nye and Hoffmann 1963).

Women's internalised feelings about their social sex role are rooted in
their past experiences and each woman has to take personal responsibility
for creating environments appropriate to her own needs. Many women have,
without any question accepted the traditional social sex roles and assumed
a passive, often less satisfying way of life for themselves, due to the
limited objectives which they set themselves (Neugarten 1972). This can
result in weak self-concepts and become evident in expressions of guilt and
rationalisation, especially among highly educated women who have retired
from occupational life or in women who underestimate their own abilities
and lack confidence in making decisions to re-enter the labour market
(Theodore 1971).

The process by which an individual selects a career and becomes committed
to it differs between individuals and between the sexes. Women are conti-
nuously confronted with a dual set of interrelated choice patterns involving
the relative importance of work as against marriage, and the importance of
developing a career as against holding down a job which can be combined with
family demands. These kinds of decisions are influenced by marital status
and other situational circumstances at different periods in the life cycle
and by the personality of the individual. The personality formation is
related to socialisation experiences which guide women in terms of behaviour
criteria expected in differing life roles (Marini 1978).

## 2.4    SOCIALISATION AND PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT

Socialisation can be seen as the process whereby the individual learns to perform various roles.  This includes developing role expectations which involve individual beliefs, attitudes, behaviour, motives or values as these relate to different situations; and as custom and society directs. Socialisation can also relate to processes initiated by the individual personally.  Self-initiated socialisation can exert a strong influence on adult personality formation, particularly with regard to the work environment (Maslow 1954).  Initiation of own socialisation can be experienced as a slow changing in personal expectations which may affect behaviour, motives and beliefs and which only becomes evident over time. Life experiences are important change agents in effecting self socialisation change and must be considered as an on-going process.

Adults may experience conflicts between personal preference and socialisation demands.  Little information is however available to guide them in resolving possible conflicts because research on adult life experiences is of fairly recent origin and the implications of such experiences on personality is largely unknown.

Viewed from a sociological perspective the life cycle as a whole can be described as a succession of social roles with personality being the product of changing patterns of socialisation (Neugarten 1972, Emmerich 1973, in't veld-Langeveld 1969).  From a psychological perspective the socialisation processes involved in life experiences is accepted as being complex and interrelated with individual maturational processes.

In an effort to develop models of socialisation psychologists have analysed behaviour from different perspectives.  Looft (1973) in an analysis of the different conceptualisations socialisation influences concludes that two main groups of theories exist, namely those that attribute structural properties to personality and those accepting the social environment as the organising factor.  Riegel (1973) furthermore emphasises the need to recognise interactions related to ontogenetic and historical change.

Looft and Riegel however both suggest that a new psychological model must be developed to account for the complexity of change which takes place

between and within individuals and society. Human, social and mental development must be seen as the result of many interrelated and changing systems and subsystems which include biological, social, cultural and historical inputs. A transactional model, involving both individual and situational influences is required. The assessment of personality in terms of life experiences and life situations is necessary. The forming of a clear sex role identity in childhood is for instance important, but it may be just part of a series of identity formations or adaptations required in adult life. Such adaptations may have different implications for the sexes (Erikson 1950, Neugarten 1969). Neugarten et al (1973) also observe that we speak about sex-role identity but we neglect to emphasise the importance of age-role identity. To investigate human behaviour different personality theories and models are necessary. Of the many available models particularly two seem suited to the aims of assessing female work involvement in terms of a life-span perspective. These are the multivariate-trait model proposed by Cattell (1946, 1950) and an adaptation of the social learning model proposed by Bandura and Walters (1963). Both theories aim at assessing personality as it inter-relates with given situations and both approaches fit into an analytic research approach. Wiggins (1973, p.457) conceptualises the analytic approach as follows:

Accept ← 7 → Reject

| | Evaluation of congruence | |

| 1 | 2 | 3 | | 6 |
| Situational analysis | → Role requirements | → Target model | | Diagnostic council |

| 4 | 5 |
| Psychological tests | → Diagnostic testing |
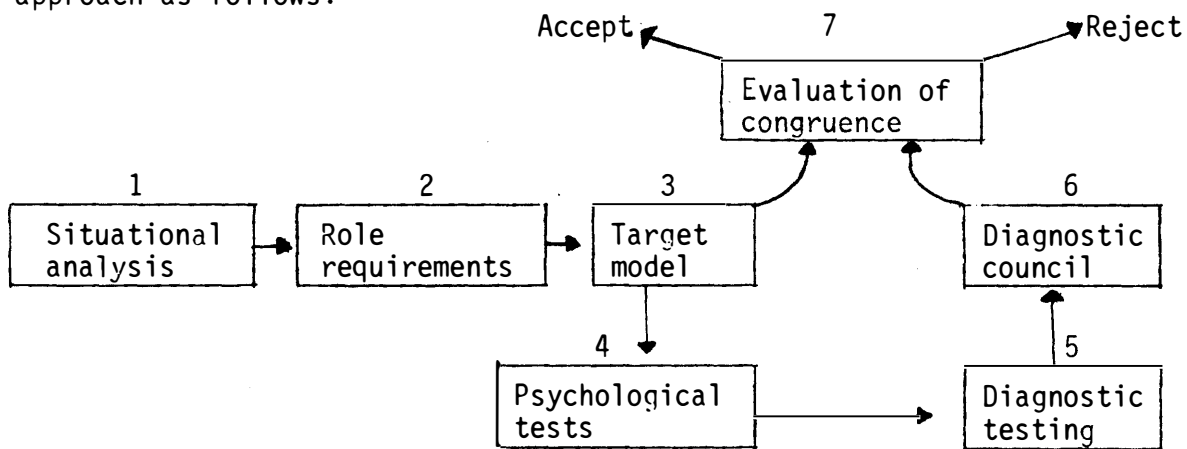
The value of the analytic approach is particularly evident in that it enables prediction across samples of both individuals and situations and the possibility of revision and modification of the model in the light of validation evidence.

The impact of the socialisation process on female personality can be far-reaching. Through sex role typing an individual preceives the qualities characterising male and female in a particular culture. Stereotyped images of masculine and feminine traits are accepted by children to be accepted and required gender identities (Eichler, Erhardt & Money 1974).

Feminine traits typically are accepted to comprise a nurturant cluster, implying that women are passive, lacking aggression, dependent, emotional, dedicated and lacking a spirit of competitiveness. These characteristics are furthermore assumed to be biologically pre-determined (Terman and Tyler 1954, Bernard 1976). Qualities like ambition and initiative are typically ascribed to men and they consequently are accepted as more suitable than women to fulfil senior or executive job demands (Henning & Jardim, 1978). These traditional assumptions about typical male/female traits are questioned (Bem 1974, Herlbrun 1978) and research is done to determine the implications of gender-role identity and work involvement (Mednick 1979).

School and test performances show girls and women to be equal to boys and men in key intellectual abilities (Torrey 1973, Terblanche 1978).

The process of socialisation and its impact on female judgements and beliefs in terms of appropriate life roles is varied. It involves inter alia fear of success (Horner 1972); fear of loss of femininity (Tangri 1972, Epstein 1971); viewing feminine traits and abilities as inferior (Broverman et al 1972, Goldberg 1968); need to avoid failure (Mehrabian 1968). It can also result in female acceptance that the traditional life role is fact, rather than opinion or possibility. Women can thus accept restrictions placed on their self-development as normal and unchangeable (Bem and Bem 1970). Maier and Burke (1967) proposed that cultural factors influence problem-solving response tendencies and Maccoby (1970) suggests that the ability to think analytically may be related to traits usually ascribed to males, namely independence, assertiveness and initiative.

Wohlwill (1973) stresses that behavioural development does not occur in isolation or in bits and pieces. It is a simultaneous development across many dimensions including biological, social and personal experiences as they interact with each other. Female role perception thus must affect

personality development. Hjelle and Butterfield's (1974) statement that
women differ in terms of their adherence to traditional role attitudes
are in line with research results indicating a relationship between
achievement motivation, academic performance, psychological well-being
and how women perceive the female role (Rand 1968, Wessels 1975, Gump 1972).

The development processes through which individuals go during their life-
span include personal attitudes, values, beliefs, preferences, etc. It
requires the integration of social structural perspectives with personality
structure concepts (Brim 1976). The individual's perception of own
competence at different life stages and her frames of reference for such
evaluation, coupled to objective feedback obtained from the environment all
contribute to the development of a personal self-concept. The actual
impact which socialisation has on female self-concepts as regards sex-role
stereotypes, is however difficult to evaluate (Hoffman 1972).

## 2.4.1  SELF-CONCEPT AND ROLE DEMANDS

The term 'self-concept' is often used interchangeably with identity, self-
esteem and ego-strength (Wylie 1961). Gardner Murphy (1947) simply stated
a view of the self to be "the individual as known to the individual". The
construct 'self-concept' is also not very precisely defined and knowledge
about the consistency or inconsistency of the self-concept across the life-
course is still in its infancy.

Classic theories emphasise the importance to the individual of her perception
of how others see her (Mead 1934). Coupled to this perception is the
salience of the self to the individual, i.e. the implications to the self
of other peoples reactions to herself and her behaviour. If the individual
must relate to herself as an important part in a situation and she is unsure
of what she is like, then she lacks a basis of stability. This can affect
her action and decision-making processes. Insecurity can affect the
individual's total positive or negative attitude toward herself (Lecky 1945,
Wylie 1961).

When conflicts are experienced between perceptions of the self and perceptions
held by others, the individual will evaluate and try to balance such
conflicting views. Festinger (1957) postulated that the drive for such

evaluation is a force acting on people because they need to belong and associate with other people. The subjective feelings of correctness of one's own opinions and the evaluation of one's own performance is found in association with other people. When discord is introduced into one's perceptions of the world and one's own role in it by observing or experiencing events that are markedly at variance with expectations, attempts will be made to reduce such variance. This is an important motivating agent behind human behaviour (Festinger 1957) and it is important to identify factors, like social pressures and interpersonal conflicts which could cause dissonance, particularly in occupational involvement amongst women (Hilton 1962, Hershenson & Roth 1966).

Women can experience conflict when faced with a choice between different life roles at different stages in their lives, particularly where they cannot control all variables, e.g. not getting married when others do, or not having children. To achieve personal equilibrium a re-evaluation of attitudes after a decision has been made may serve to make relevant decisions more consistent with the choice behaviour and thus lead to anxiety reduction. Typically women can reduce anxiety caused by role conflicts when stating that economic needs force them to go out to work when they would prefer to stay at home and care for the family, or when they prefer being a career woman instead of a housewife. People are however reluctant to perceive themselves as victims and present-day role demands can cause women to feel caught in a web which is not always of their own making. An important component of the self-image, from a life-span perspective is the sense of the degree to which one feels in control of one's life (Brissett 1972). Staats et al (1974) indicate that a sense of internal control is more common for men than women. This may relate to the different kinds of roles which women have to fulfil.

Sarbin (1968) differentiates between two kinds of roles which people may expect, namely ascribed and achieved roles. These roles differ primarily in terms of the degree of choice exercised on entering them. Ascribed roles are obtained through inherent characteristics or through relation-ships with others such as being a woman, being a wife or mother. Achieved roles are gained through training, personal effort, etc. Sarbin hypothesises that ascribed roles are evaluated according to more ambiguous standards than are achieved roles. The salient role for women is an ascribed role

and the standards they therefore have to meet will be more ambiguous than
the standards set for men, whose salient role is an achieved one.  The
implications for women, who follow a dual career is that correct performance
in one role may imply wrong performance in the other.  Because the role
requirements are contradictory, women can become caught between two
reference groups with conflicting values and standards of self-appraisal.
As such a woman can either be rejected by one of the groups or be viewed
as deviant within each of the role reference groups (Schachter 1951).
Women therefore have to compare their performance in a social context which
includes personal evaluation of socialisation implications and demands.
The duality in adult personality becomes particularly evident in Bakan's
(1966) terms of agency and communion.  Bakan states that: "Agency manifests
itself in self-protection, self-assertion and self-expansion; communion
manifests itself in the sense of being at one with other organisms" (p.15).
Agency is ascribed masculine and communion as feminine bases.  Erikson (1959)
emphasises the implications of unclear social definitions and expectations
in determining a self-definition. A crisis is experienced in the struggle to
achieve a stable sense of self and the status ambiguities experienced by
the adolescent, heightens his self-uncertainty in making major decisions
about future roles.  Similar ambiguities can be experienced by women,
either in terms of career versus marriage, or meeting family demands at
a cost of personal development and career fulfilment.  Osipov (1968)
emphasises that theories of vocational psychology are inadequate to predict
and explain women's career choices and the current career counselling of
women can be inappropriate and limiting due to lack of factual, theoretical
and attitudinal knowledge.  Due to a combination of attitudes and role
expectations women can be expected to experience difficulties in accepting
vocational challenges commensurate with their abilities, particularly
at certain stages in their adult lives.

Goode (1960) proposed that a role relationship could be seen as a transaction
or bargain in which the individual allocates scarce resources among
various role obligations.  Such allocation could relate to expected rewards
or penalties which the individual anticipates from role partners or from
society.  In terms of a woman's ascribed and achieved roles, she may
experience conflict in allocating resources to express her actual self, her
potential self, or her ideal self, particularly where her conception of who
she really is, conflicts with what society expects of her, or with what she
personally would like to do.

The aspiration-achievement-expectations discrepancies which women can experience require that she deals with environmental demands, as they interact with personal needs, according to the personal resources available at any given time. A married working woman with family commitments therefore may wish to develop in the work situation but has to place her work role subidentity subordinate to a family-role subidentity, etc.

## 2.6    SELF AS INTEGRATED WHOLE

Most definitions of personality imply the organisation of personal elements resulting in a characteristic way of behaving both consciously and unconsciously. The reality of human behaviour emphasises the modifying influence of both the environment and the individual self in their reciprocal interaction (Sarason 1977, Bandura 1978).

In reacting to a situation the individual gives evidence of the self as she is prepared to be identified by others. The self can therefore be assessed in terms of a public identity and a personal identity. The self can also be classified according to the following three considerations:

(a)    the public identity or persona (Jung 1931) which represents a compromise between the actual self and the pressures of the social situation;

(b)    subidentities which relate to that aspect of the total identity with which an individual is engaged while behaving in a given role; and

(c)    the core which refers to the organising part of different sub-identities (Miller 1963).

Miller proposes that each person can have a number of subidentities, which can be her own creation, but which relates mainly to specific roles. While the role represents the social stimuli in terms of expected behaviour, the subidentity represents the individual's perceptions of her unique responses to the social stimuli. The total identity can thus be seen as comprising of various components which differ from each other, and each of which represents different aspects of role relationships. Role and sub-identity are similar in that both have attributes which are interpreted in

terms of group norms, but role and subidentity can also differ in different ways. Whereas a role refers to specified attitudes and behaviour according to which a person is required to perform within a specific environment the subidentity represents a cluster of different attributes found within an individual. While a role can be played by a number of people, a sub-identity is unique to each individual. A role exerts pressure to conform but a subidentity consists of personal traits and describes what the individual is like and how she is prepared to function, etc.

A subidentity is limited by the boundaries of a role and the more the traits of an individual's subidentity permits expression within the limits of a role, the more compatible the role is with the subidentity. Conversely, however, where role and subidentities are not compatible an individual can experience conflict and feel that she is being pulled in opposite directions. The core (consisting of various subidentities) integrates personality traits, subidentity needs, etc. The size of the core depends on the measure of compatibility which exists between different subidentities and personal needs.

Women can experience a degree of integration between the subidentities of being a woman and being a student because being a student is to a certain extent a culturally accepted female role. Study is often seen as an interim step to marriage or as a safeguard for economic survival in case of divorce or widowhood. Some conflict can however occur when women study in fields not traditionally sanctioned as being female work.

In recent years an occupational subidentity has also become evident for women. It is accepted that women, prior to marriage or starting a family will function in some kind of job. The development of a career subidentity however differs from a work subidentity. A career-role involves a long-term internalised role conception which requires purposeful and individual efforts to succeed (Levinson 1959). Success in a career also includes experiences of having personally made an impact on one's life-space (Allport 1955, Rogers 1961). The traditional female subidentity, involving acceptance of ascribed roles, can conflict with the purposeful involvement required in the achieved role of career-development. Research shows that women, including professionally trained women, tend to relate to a 'job' instead of a work career (Theodore 1977).

Gouldner (1959) emphasised that identity aspects like sex role and self-image are important in terms of behaviour organisation, particularly of individuals in a work environment. Due to socialisation processes each individual develops a certain system of values according to which she feels comfortable and which guides her in presenting her public identity in the work place. However, adjustment and satisfaction with being a woman, student, or worker need not necessarily be related. Socialisation processes can influence a woman's sex role identity or work role identity, particularly as these relate to an age role identity. A woman can consequently experience dissatisfaction with a specific sub-identity which she has developed or is forced to develop, due to her unique circumstances. Thus an unmarried woman of mid-thirty with a strong need to marry and care for a family can experience work dissatisfaction, irrespective of any success which she may have had as worker. To obtain an acceptable degree of congruence between her ideal life role (female subidentity) and her actual life role (work or career subidentity) certain choices will have to be made. Such choices would relate to individual self-awareness, self-esteem, socialisation values, etc., and willingness to search for acceptable alternatives (Woodward 1970).

Self-insight is important in resolving subidentity conflicts caused by differing life roles and life expectancies, particularly in terms of adaptation aimed at achieving subidentity role fit. The process through which conflicts are concentualised by the individual, that is, how she interprets and attaches meaning to the conflict has a significant influence in terms of ultimate behaviour (Thomas 1976).

The perception of the situation is based on experiences obtained in the process of social development and reactions are primarily aimed at maintaining internal balance (Lawrence and Lorsch 1969). The individual organises her experiences into cognitive schemes which relates to her current stage of development. Schein (1965) states that the level of self-insight and value/need sets of individuals can vary with age and experience. This emphasises the complexity inherent in female self-image and subidentity integration. A subidentity during any one life stage is the product of traits learned during previous stages and of roles adhered to in relation with significant others. Subidentities of one stage do not necessarily

integrate with subidentities of a next stage.  Integration would depend on the similarities of the stages, the people with whom the individual relates, the type of relationships, the subidentities involved and the circumstances within which the individual finds herself (Miller 1963).

The need for internal balance guides the individual to seek situations where self-esteem will be increased and situations of personal conflict can be avoided.  If the esteem of the self is high the individual may seek personal improvement and success.  If the self-esteem is low she may try to protect her sense of competence and avoid failure (Bennis, Schein, Steel and Berlew 1968, Schein 1968).

Adjustment does not necessarily mean satisfaction, because the situation and subidentity may not be valued by the individual.  Circumstances may force the individual into accepting the situation.  Because she wants to integrate her sense of self, she has to choose a mode of behaviour which will lead to more personally acceptable outcomes.  This involves reference to personal values, life goals, etc.  The extent to which she experiences herself as a person who can effectively influence her environment, to that extent she can also experience greater measure of congruence, increased self-esteem and psychological success (Lewin 1936, Argyris 1964, Hall 1971).

Little is known about the impact which personal experience has in its interaction with personal characteristics.  Inkeles and Levinson (1954) emphasised that research on personality development should recognise the relevance of adult roles,  the stages of socialisation and environmental influences.

The life-style restructuring required by adult women involves the integration of all aspects of their lives to enable the 'self' to guide in developing life patterns.  Thus, to enable identification of female developmental needs and to determine factors affecting their work involvement, analysis is required of the implications of role demands and subidentity needs as these affect female experiences of psychological success at different life stages.

## 3. THEORIES ON ADULT LIFE EXPERIENCES

The term 'adult' defies specific definition.  A person can be adult enough
to drive a car at 16, to vote at 18, to sign legal contracts at 21.  Adult
derives from the latin 'adolescere' which means to grow up and thus suggest
a process rather than a specific status.  Most images of adulthood relate
to the middle years of life ($20^+$ - $50^+$ years).  Adulthood, however, does
not only include biological age, it also involves psychological qualities,
social values and cultural norms.  As a social concept, adulthood can be
determined in terms of what is expected at certain ages, e.g. retirement
age, marriage age, child-bearing age, etc.  As a psychological concept adult-
hood is viewed as a maturational process, continuing throughout the life-
span and affected by both what has happened in the past and what is
expected in the future.  The maturational approach is concerned with both
psychological and biological development and change and it recognises the
influence of different roles expected of individuals.  At different life
stages different roles are expected of people, and although the stages do
not follow a fixed chronological set, it is assumed that the different
life stages are dependent on each other.  Different life stages can also
follow a hierarchical pattern (Erikson 1959).

Various researchers proposed different conceptualisations of the changes
experienced in different life stages.  Early conceptualisation that life
follows identifiable stages came from Hall in 1922 and Jung in 1931 (Rogers
1979).  Both emphasised the need to adapt to a changing personal environment
particularly in terms of experiencing aging and old age.

Bühler (1935, 1959) conducted pioneering work in this field and tried to
determine which general principles of change hold true over the life-span
and what typical shifts are found in motivations and needs.  According to
her results the concepts of the self, intentionality in behaviour, goal
seeking and goal restructuring stood central.  She then ventured to describe
the basic experiences of the life cycle as firstly a period of growth,
then a period of stationary growth, aimed at personal stabilisation or
integration which then is finally followed by a period of decline.  Each
stage can in turn be subdivided into phases aiming at self-orientation and
setting of life goals (intentionality).

Erikson (1950, 1959) formulated developmental stages, involving inter-
personal commitment, moving from dyadic to broader interpersonal levels.
He delineated eight stages in the life cycle, each of which represents
a choice or a crisis for the expanding ego. Along the continuum of human
developmental experiences the individual can experience personal integrity
(wholeness) at the one end of a scale, or despair (personal disgust) at
the other end. (Erikson accepts the need to develop intimacy with someone
else in early adulthood (merging with another); generativity in middle
adulthood (investing products of own creation and identifying with the
future); and ego integrity in late adulthood (one has made your own life
and it can be accepted as meaningful) as important. He proposes that
adaptation to one's own life cycle is an essential task of life because
there is no opportunity for new beginnings.

Neugarten (1969) emphasises the need to determine the continuities and
discontinuities of psychological issues which affect a person's life-span.
She suggests that people change as a result of the accumulation of
experiences, according to which they interpret new events and re-organise
old knowledge. In this manner a unique new future is determined. Neugarten
et al (1973) also propose that a social clock, superimposed on the
individual's biological clock, assists in producing orderly changes in
individual behaviour and self perceptions. The individual's self-concept
has the elements of a personal past contained within it, and a person thus
relates to the self in terms of where she comes from, who she is and who
she wants to be.

Social expectations regarding age-appropriate behaviour affects an individual's
interpretation of events and timing of behaviour. In studying the adult
life cycle it therefore is important to focus attention on things that are
of importance to the individual being studied, at any specific age period.
According to Neugarten (1968) adaptation over the life-span only becomes
necessary when expected events occur 'off-time' instead of 'on-time' (e.g.
marital age, unexpected widowhood, etc.). Persons of different social
classes also seem to have different perceptions of the timing of adult life
periods while older adults tend to perceive time in terms of time left to
live rather than time already lived.

In general, research on adult life experiences has focussed on either determining whether the life-span constitutes a continuum or whether major transition periods representing meaningful life-time units can be identified.

Kohlberg (1973) criticises a 'stage theory' on the grounds that structural concepts inherent in stages form an invariant and irreversable order, hierarchical arrangement, qualitative difference, etc., which is not found in real life experiences.

Havighurst (1972) thus utilises the concept of developmental tasks as indicative of life-span changes.  Some of these tasks relate to biological maturation, others to social role change.  Within each task biological, psychological and sociological components are to be found.  The tasks are not invariant nor necessarily hierarchical, but failure to master each task can interfere with the resolution of the next.

Lowenthal (1971) and Lowenthal et al (1973) researched the relationship of personality to adaptation.  They propose that personality traits can be an important predictor of personal adaptation approach. The predictive traits may however differ at different ages due to environmental and cultural factors.  Lowenthal (1975) also stresses that sex differences seem to be of higher magnitude than life stage differences and that the needs, goals and problems of men and women not only do not develop parallel to each other, but at points seem to threaten collision (pg. 8).

Whereas traditionally the field of human development has involved concepts primarily orientated to either a psychological or sociological approach, the present trend combines into a psycho-social approach according to which the individual is seen as proceeding through developmental phases within a sociocultural framework.

Research on adult development done by Levinson (1978), Lowenthal et al (1975), Havighurst (1972), Gould (1972, 1975), Sheehy (1976), has therefore attempted to delineate different psycho-social life-phases in a descriptive framework of different stages which people experience for further study.  Age has

been accepted as a significant differentiating factor and has assisted
in achieving a measure of orderliness in dealing with the richness of
psychological information experienced by adults in their day-to-day
lives. Age has not, however, been accepted as a biological determinant
of boundaries or stages of human behaviour. The actual research approach
required in studying adulthood is complex. Longitudinal research is most
effective in the sense that it can contribute to identify continuities
across the life-span. Discontinuities can then be analysed and explained.
Longitudinal research has however the inherent problem of length of time
required to do research, costs, potential dropout of subjects, researchers,
etc. The most common research approach is therefore a cross-sectional
approach. Comparisons are thus made of behaviour at different ages but
within comparable chronological age cohort samples.

The complexity of human behaviour involving relationships between personality,
adaptation, and different life transitions, emphasise the value of focussing
attention upon issues which are of concern to individuals. In this respect
a research approach involving the person as both a reporting and predicting
agent (what she selects as important in her past and present and what she
expects from the future) may well assist in obtaining more 'objective'
perspectives of adult experiences. This requires analysis of empirical
data, which could involve questioning of modest samples, aimed at identifying
potentially useful building blocks toward the eventual development of a
science of adult development.

The research at hand also follows a cross-sectional approach, involving
women of different ages, differing marital status and family commitments.
By means of psychological instruments analysis of inter-individual
differences can be done. In addition semi-structured, in-depth interviews
will serve to obtain reporting and predictive information on an intra-
individual basis.

## 4. DEVELOPMENT OF A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Any given individual can be thought of as a more or less integrated set of
social selves (identities) which is organised around a basic image or
concept of the 'self'. Variables like the person's basic temperament,

intellectual potential, learned patterns of feeling, expression and
psychological defences underlie and assist in determining her self-image
and affect the social selves which the individual constructs for herself
to assist her in dealing with her environment. We individually learn
to construct different subidentities to deal with the different kinds
of situations we have to handle and the different roles we have to fulfil.

The changes which occur in us during the course of life, and which are the
result of adult socialisation or acculturation are changes involving the
integration of our subidentities. This does not mean changes in basic
personality structure, but change due to the developing of new attitudes
and values, new competences and new images and new ways of conducting
oneself. As a person, as a woman, one constructs and re-constructs one-
self to meet new role demands.

Adjustment to social changes is, however, affected by the level of rigidity
of belief or attitude of one or more of our subidentities. People are
also assigned age roles by society which may emphasise different need
levels experienced by men and women, particularly in terms of work
situations and adaptation thereto. Being a worker has different meanings
for different people. For some it forms the core of their identity while
for others it is only of marginal interest. Little is known about the
degree to which age stereotypes and age expectations determine the nature
of anticipated action or the required interaction with existing socialisa-
tion influences, particularly as regards female life experiences and work
commitments.

Emmerich (1973) emphasises the need for a joint analysis of person and
environment-centred attributes to explain sex role behaviour, particularly
as this evolves from cognitive-developmental considerations.

The theoretical conceptualisation for the proposed study hypothesises that:

4.1   factors affecting women in their work involvement result from:

    4.1.1  within themselves (state of the individual)

    4.1.2  the environment (external demands)

4.2   The state of the individual is affected by:

    4.2.1  the level of integration of the self (subidentities and size of core)

    4.2.2  the influence of socialisation processes

    4.2.3  the basic personality structure

4.3   The external demands include:

    4.3.1  life roles

    4.3.2  life context (e.g. married, not married)

    4.3.3  work context (e.g. level of job demands)

4.4   Life satisfaction and development depend on:

    4.4.1  different life roles experienced and personal needs

    4.4.2  the measure of integration existing between the self and (subidentities) and the environment

    4.4.3  the choices made in the process of adjustment between personal needs and environmental needs

4.5   Age role expectations and personal life situation will differently influence:

    4.5.1  married women

    4.5.2  unmarried women.

## MODEL    FACTORS AFFECTING FEMALE LIFE AND WORK EXPERIENCES

Internal factors:
State of the indi-
vidual

External factors:
Life context Work
environment/Demand

Biological
Age

Age role
Expectations

Personality          Values          Needs

| Role 1 | Sub-identity e.g. wife |
| Role 2 | Sub-identity e.g. mother |
| Role 3 | Sub-identity e.g. worker |

Integrated
Core 3
Stable
Core 2
Unstable
Core 1

| Sub-identity e.g. student | Role 4 |
| Sub-identity e.g. career woman | Role 5 |
| Sub-identity e.g. volun-tary worker | Role 6 |

Adjustment Requirements

| Choice | Adjustment Mechanisms | Results |
|---|---|---|
| Helplessness | Dependence | No growth | Core 1 |
| Circumstances direct | Status Quo | Meeting demands of circumstances (Adapting) | Core 2 |
| Accepts personal responsibility for life direction | Autonomy | Personal Planning and growth | Core 3 |

Core 1 = Unstable core

Core 2 = Cognitive stabilisation of core, though not necessarily according to needs

Core 3 = Cognitive integration of subidentities to best meet personal needs.

The proposed model infers therefore that:

(a)     the state of the individual is influenced by

>   1.1     personality
>   1.2     values
>   1.3     needs
>   1.4     biological age
>   1.5     age role expectations.

(b)     The individual interacts with the external factors, namely
        life context and work environment, in an interacting systems process.

(c)     The reciprocal interaction which occurs between the individual and
        her environment is related to the different roles which she must/or
        wants to fulfil and results in the number and size of the sub-
        identity(ies).

(d)     The responses which a woman brings to bear on a situation are
        influenced by her normative concepts, the implications of biological
        as well as social events, and personal needs.

(e)     The integration of the different variables (personality, needs,
        values, roles, situations, etc.) require cognitive assessment to
        determine possible adjustment requirements.

(f)     The choice of adjustment relates to the state of the individual,
        environmental situations, age role expectations and biological age.

(g)     The size of the core and thus integration of the subidentities into
        a whole self-concept relates to individual adjustment choice and
        mechanisms applied (coping strategies).

(h)     The coping strategies aim at minimising or elimination of psycholo-
        gical threat or stress (Lazarus 1966) particularly where the life
        event is in conflict with the individual's current values, goals,
        behaviour, etc.
        The degree of stress depends on the individual's assessment of the
        threat of the situation and possible mediating factors (Festinger
        1957).

5.    <u>CONCLUSIONS</u>

Highly qualified womanpower is available to assist in meeting the manpower
needs of the RSA and research has also shown that women have the potential
to develop to meet high level job demands.  University enrolment figures
show an increasing number of women who obtain higher level qualifications.
Education continues to be seen as a necessity for improved work involvement
and the cost/benefit implications of education is a real economic issue.
Work can result in a life-long process of involvement and growth for men,
but the educational and vocational choices of women need to be considered
more carefully in terms of their expected adult life roles.  Many
decisions in terms of continuing education do not necessarily result in
life-long careers or work involvement by women and thus may result in
individual frustrations and economic wastage of the country's resources.

Greater insight is required into factors affecting female self-concept at
different life stages and the implications which this may have on the
transactions which take place between individual and environment in dealing
with changing experiences.  In a systems approach the individual serves as
processor of input information which results in eventual behaviour.  The
traditional expectations of male achieved and female ascribed role demands
may cause differences in  the manner in which men and women assess vocational
and educational choices.

It is accepted that men may identify with a chosen career in adolescence,
which guides in defining a self-concept and a preferred life-style.  The
picture for women is not so clear.  They tend to seek their sense of
identity firstly in a reflection of home and family roles and thus accept
reflected or ascribed roles.  Only at a later life stage may the focus of
identity become more internal and can a personal self-identity develop.
The self-concept is accepted as a guiding force in career behaviour
(Osipow 1968) and the interdependence between personality variables, and
environmental conditions, as these affect vocational decisions suggests
that career behaviour should be viewed from a systems approach with the
individual serving as mediator between various inputs and eventual outputs.

Career development has been accepted as a process of maturation (Super and Kidd, 1979) which not only applies to adolescents but also appears to be applicable to adulthood (Havighurst 1972). The concept of life stage as it interacts with career development is of particular relevance in terms of mid-career decisions and retirement demands. Two life stage theories have primarily served as frame of reference for the process of adult career development, namely those of Bühler (1935) and Erikson (1959). Bühler's theory has contributed to work done by e.g. Crites (1969) and Super (1957) while Havighurst (1972) and Munley (1977) have developed Erikson's thoughts further.

No real consensus exists however on a theoretical approach which integrates all career development aspects and overall human development. This is particularly true for women, in terms of the traditional one life, one career imperative and the more typical male life pattern which predominates in life stage theorising. The need exists to develop a perspective whereby social factors, personality development and economic demands can be integrated with female life patterns and work involvement. The changing role of women requires adaptation of values and needs of both men and women if better utilisation of womanpower is to be achieved. For this reason a more comprehensive model has been developed to serve as basis for investigating the development of female work and career commitment.

The counselling of adults who wish to change their work career or women who wish to re-enter the labour market is already accepted as a challenge by the NIPR and a limited service in this respect is being provided (Raubenheimer 1979). However, to assist in career counselling of women more information is necessary on their self-concepts and the implications which life expectations have on vocational decisions required at different life stages. This type of information requires cross-sectional research to determine both inter- and intra-individual differences and their relationship with different life stages and life experiences.

The present NIPR research on female career commitment will report on the inter-relationships between personality, work commitment and life phase experiences as found amongst a sample of graduated working White women. and aims at increasing understanding of the social-psychological processes involved in pursuing career goals.

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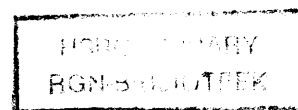
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