FACTORS AFFECTING CAREER DEVELOPMENT
OF MARA UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY LECTURERS
AT SAMARAHAN CAMPUS

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ABSTRACT

Strategic interventions are required to keep talented and highly qualified lecturers to serve in UiTM in order to gain competitive advantage in the educational world. Many factors affect and contribute to lecturers' motivation, satisfaction and their career development. This study makes use of survey methodology which aims to discover factors that have significant influence on lecturers’ perception towards career development in UiTM. The factors under study are top management support, training and development opportunities, flexi-working hours, recognition, status, job security, job fit and demographic characteristics. The results indicated that top management support, training and development opportunity, and job security are highly correlated and dominant predictors to lecturers’ career development.
ABSTRAK

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The psychological contract, what employees and employers want and expect from each other, has been changing dramatically in recent years (Jean-Marie, 1995). As a result of all sorts of pressures and trends on both sides, such characteristics of corporate employment as stability, permanence, predictability, fairness, tradition and mutual respect are out. In, are the new features of self-reliance, flexibility, and adaptability.

Today's workers realize that the only source of employment security is the security they create for themselves, by becoming self-reliant and career resilient (Brown, 1996). Continued employment is tied to lifelong learning and ongoing skill development, practices that enhance career growth and the potential for career advancement and mobility. This trend towards career independence is reflected in the new breed of independent contractors and temporary workers who move from job to job and project to project, marketing themselves for temporary assignments in a variety of organizations rather than seeking permanent jobs (Brown, 1998).

One of the biggest challenges today's employers face is creating an organization that attracts and keeps talented people (Pink, 1997). The search for lecturers of high quality amongst the local universities as well as private universities have created competitive demand on qualified lecturers. The increasing demand has a great impact on the psychological contract. Hence, the loyalty, commitment and retention become questionable.

In order to remain competitive, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Samarahan Campus must plan ahead and create a positive and conducive working environment for its lecturers. The management must take the initiative to uncover the factors that may influence how these lecturers perceive their employment and career development within the organization. This is necessary because as employees' career prospects disappear, the psychological contract comes under strain, (Tyson and York, 1996).

The following statistics show that the percentage of lecturers who resigned from UiTM Samarahan Campus is increasing. 11 lecturers resigned in 2000 compared to 6 in 1999 and only 3 in 1998. The percentage increase shows clearly the upward trend from 2.54% in 1998, to 4.88% in 1999 and 7.10% in 2000.

Table 1.1.1: Number of Lecturers who resigned.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>No. of lecturers</th>
<th>No. of lecturers resigned</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oct 2000</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 1999</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 1998</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.54</td>
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For UiTM Samarahan Campus to be competitive in the long term, the most important and valued asset: its human resources, the lecturers, must be retained. It is the management's
greatest challenge, responsibility and top priority to ensure the lecturers’ loyalty, commitment and motivation to serve the institution.

1.1.1 Introduction of UiTM

The history of Institut Teknologi MARA (ITM) and now Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) began in 1956 with the establishment of Dewan Latihan RISDA (The Rural and Industrial Development Authority). an experimental center offering preparatory courses for rural youths who were English educated. In 1976, the ITM Act was passed by Parliament and ITM was placed under the Ministry of Education.

ITM takes pride in its branch campuses in various states in the country. It has 13 campuses: one in every state except the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur and Labuan. The existence of the branch campuses provides excellent opportunities for the Bumiputras to pursue higher education and attain higher economic and social development. This gives them a competitive edge in the race for scientific and technological advancement.

The Akta Institut Teknologi MARA (Pindaan) 1996 put ITM on par with all the universities of the country. For functional purposes ITM was given all the powers of a University. Its historical name was retained until August 26, 1999. As a university, it has a mission of:

To develop a generation of Bumiputra Professionals who are knowledgeable, innovative competitive, religious conscious and capable development leaders.

UiTM Sarawak Branch at Kuching was established in July 1973 with cooperation from the Sarawak State Government, Sarawak Foundation and ITM. The campus operated temporarily at the Batu Lintang Teachers’ College, Kuching occupying part of the premises such as lecture rooms, library, administrative building and hostels. The first academic session at the Sarawak Branch started on 1st August, 1973 with a student body of 100 taking various Diploma courses.

With the help of the then State Minister of Agriculture YB Abang Haji Abdul Rahman Zohari Tun Abang Haji Openg, ITM Sarawak moved to the Agriculture College at Semenggok which was vacated by UPM when they moved to their new campus in Bintulu. At the same time, ITM Sarawak’s permanent campus at Semariang was being developed. In June 1989, ITM Sarawak moved to Semariang. In 1997, it moved to the present permanent campus in Kota Samarahan.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

With the upgrading of ITM to UiTM: from an institute to a university, it is crucial for all the lecturers to have a paradigm shift and upgrade their academic quality and research capabilities accordingly. The appropriate and adequate training and development programs for lecturers’ career development and career advancement must be planned and carried out effectively.

Some lecturers may perceive the change as opportunity for career development. The others may look at it negatively as a threat to their career stability in the institution. It is the responsibility of the top management to assure them by providing them with necessary
According to an organization as perceived by lecturers will be beneficial for the management in deciding appropriate human resource development intervention.

Career mobility and advancement in UiTM are limited. In the management level, the capable and high performers can only be promoted to Course Tutors or Coordinators (32 posts), Deputy Provosts (2 posts) or the Provost (1 post). In academic, lecturers' commitment and involvement in research and development are limited by facilities, thus the aim to pursue for associate professorship or professorship is jeopardized.

In recent years, as the government encourages the setting up of private and public universities, more and more universities were established. The demand and competition for quality lecturers become an issue. The UiTM's management must ensure the commitment and loyalty of the existing lecturers besides attracting new lecturers. The sound and attractive career development programs could become dominant factors in the competitive market.

Although most career development programs were designed to promote employee development, a research study by Wick and associates (Wick & Weinberg, 1998) suggested that organizations using training programs and promotional moves as career development strategies may be failing to encourage and maximize employee potential. The study indicated that only 11% of the promotional or development of employee potential for their contributions came from a job promotion. Only 7% of the employees listed training experiences offered by an organization as a way to promote development.

According to Rouda & Kusy (1995), career development is now the primary responsibility of individuals in organizations. Their study indicates that the top management of the organizations consider career development to be their least important function. This correlates with recent trends of disappearing corporate career paths and job security. Just as the responsibility for employee retirement planning is no longer a corporate function, the responsibility for career development has been downloaded to the individual employees.

The changes mentioned above can have significant impact on the lecturers' career development in UiTM. Thus, this study intends to answer the following questions.

1. What is the lecturer's perception towards career development in UiTM?
2. What is the lecturer's perception on factors such as top management support, training and development opportunity, flexi-working hour, recognition, status, job security and job fit?
3. Is lecturer's perception towards career development influenced by factors in (2)?
4. Is lecturer's perception towards career development influenced by their demographic characteristics?
1.3 Research Objectives

The main objective of this study is to determine factors that affect lecturers' perceptions on career development in UiTM Samarahan Campus. The identification of these factors are important for the management to introduce appropriate human resource activities to its lecturers in the future. Specifically, the objectives of this study are as follows.

1. To describe the demographic characteristics of the lecturers.
2. To determine if there are any significant differences in lecturers' perceptions towards career development of different gender, age group, length of service, marital status, number of children, education level and income group.
3. To determine lecturers' perceptions towards factors affecting career development such as top management support, training and development opportunities, flexi-working hours, status, recognition, job security and job fit.
4. To determine the relationship between lecturers' perceptions towards career development and the factors identified such as top management support, training and development opportunities, flexi-working hours, status, recognition, job security, and job fit.
5. To determine which factors mentioned above have the strongest influence on lecturers' perceptions towards career development.

Based on the objectives above, the research hypotheses are developed.

1.4 Conceptual Framework

The focus of this study is the lecturers' perceptions on career development, as the dependent variable. Seven factors that are expected to affect lecturers' perceptions were selected as independent variable. The factors are top management support, training and development opportunities, flexi-working hours, status, recognition, job security and job fit.

Lecturers' demographic characteristics are also investigated as independent variables. Among these variable are gender, age, length of service, marital status, number of children, educational level and income.

DeSimone & Harris (1998), Hall (1986), Walton (1999), Walter Story (1976), and Holley & Jennings (1983) all agreed that effective employees' career development require close cooperation between employees and the organization. The conceptual framework below shows interconnection of individual factors as well as organizational factors, and the actual relationship specifically applicable to UiTM are going to be determined.
1.5 Research Hypotheses

The hypothesis of this study stated in null form are as follow:

Ho1 : There is no significant difference between male and female lecturers in terms of their perceptions towards career development.

Ho2 : There is no significant difference between lecturers of various age groups in terms of their perceptions towards career development.

Ho3 : There is no significant difference between lecturers of various length of service in terms of their perceptions towards career development.

Ho4 : There is no significant difference between married and single lecturers in terms of their perceptions towards career development.

Ho5 : There is no significant difference between lecturers with different number of children in terms of their perceptions towards career development.
Ho6: There is no significant difference between lecturers of various education levels in terms of their perceptions towards career development.

Ho7: There is no significant difference between lecturers of various income groups in terms of their perceptions towards career development.

Ho8: There is no significant relationship between lecturers’ perceptions towards career development and the top management support.

Ho9: There is no significant relationship between lecturers’ perceptions towards career development and the organization training and development opportunities.

Ho10: There is no relationship between lecturers’ perceptions towards career development and flexi-working hour.

Ho11: There is no relationship between lecturers’ perceptions towards career development and Status.

Ho12: There is no relationship between lecturers’ perceptions towards career development and recognition.

Ho13: There is no relationship between lecturers’ perceptions towards career development and job security.

Ho14: There is no relationship between lecturers’ perceptions towards career development and job fit.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This research aims to discover factors that contribute to the positive perception of career development among the lecturers in UiTM. The findings provide first hand information from the lecturers themselves to the top management or the human resource development strategist, which is critical for effective formulation of policies, training and development programs.

The factors identified will act as a benchmark to the top management and reveal what the institution is lacking and what they have neglected in their past practices. With this information, the top management should be able to provide more appropriate training and development programs: according to lecturers’ needs as well as the institution’s vision and mission. It can also act as a guide in policy making, administrative procedures and maintaining a conducive working environment.

DeCotiis & Jenkin (1994) stated that when the employees were given more career development opportunities, their commitment to their organization will be further enhanced, thus retaining and maintaining not only skilled workers, but also committed ones. If the management efforts enable the lecturers to perceive the career development positively, most probably they will perform their duties more effectively and efficiently.
Gutteridge, Leibowitz & Shore (1993) in one of their survey reported that:

1. Organizations, managers, and employees all view career development as important.
2. Career development is related to the business needs of the organization.
3. Supervisors play an important but problematic role in career development.
4. Career development has many of the positive effects generally associated with it but not the negative ones.

1.7 Operational Definitions of Terms

1.7.1 Flexi-working hour

The lecturers are free to determine their working hours. They are free to “punch in” and “punch out” according to their hours of lectures. However, all lecturers need to be in the campus for a minimum of 24 hours per week.

1.7.2 Status

Status refers to a person’s social or professional position in relation to others in the society. It is concerned with the perception of the general public towards lecturing as a profession.

1.7.3 Recognition

Pitts (1995) claimed that recognition is “the demonstration of appreciation for a level of performance, an achievement or a contribution to an objective”. McAdam (1996) stated that recognition plans in organizations are powerful ways to say thank you in a manner that is positively reinforcing and lifts the persons spirits, self esteem and probability of confirming on a positive path.

Recognition in this study refers to the management’s acknowledgement and gratitude to deserving lecturers for their contribution to UiTM as well as the society. The recognition given may be in the form of verbal praises or in the form of certificates, souvenirs or title.

1.7.4 Job security

A job that provide life long employment with financial assistance in the form of fixed monthly salary, housing loan, car loan, pension and other benefits.

1.7.5 Job fit

Mondy and Noe (1996) defined a job as a group of tasks that must be performed for an organization to achieve its goals. It refers to one or more tasks that an individual performs in direct support of the organization’s production purpose (Schermherhorn, Hunt & Osborne, 1991). According to Stumpf (1997), job fit is the extent to which a job meets the individual’s skills, abilities and expectations.

Job fit, in this study refers to how the management, course tutors or coordinators assigns jobs or tasks to the lecturers based on their academic qualifications, knowledge, skills and abilities.
1.7.6 Perception

Perception is defined as a process on how the lecturers interpret an event in their working environment. It has the same meaning as defined by Johns (1992), which stated that perception is the process of interpreting the messages of our senses to provide order and meaning to the environment.

In this study, perception refers to lecturers’ interpretation and impression of career development in UiTM. It is constructed based on lecturers’ background knowledge and other related factors. The lecturers’ perception is classified as either positive or negative.

1.7.7 Positive Perception

Lecturers with positive perception interpret working environment and factors that affect career development being studied favorably. They are also responding to either ‘Strongly agree’ or ‘Agree’ with the statements in the Questionnaire.

1.7.8 Negative Perception

Lecturers with negative perception interpret working environment and factors that affect career development being studied unfavorably. They are also responding to either ‘Strongly disagree’ or ‘Disagree’ with the statements in the Questionnaire.

1.7.9 Career

Greenhaus (1987, p.6) described career as “the pattern of work-related experience that span the course of one’s life”. In this study, career is defined as a sequence of separate but related work activities that provide continuity, order, and meaning in a person’s life.

1.7.10 Career Development

Career development is defined as “an ongoing process by which individuals progress through a series of stages, each of which is characterized by a relatively unique set of issues, themes and tasks” (Greenhaus.1987, p.9). Career development involve a deliberate process of:

(i) becoming aware of self, opportunities, constraints, choices and consequences.
(ii) identifying career-related goals.
(iii) programming work, education and related development experiences to provide the direction, timing and sequence of steps to attain a specific career goal.
(iv) preparing, implementing and monitoring career plans undertaken by the individual alone or in concert with the organization careers systems (Story,1976. cited in Hall.1986).

In this study, career development is defined as a plan of interaction between an individual and an organization over time in which the person’s aim is to move up in status, salary, recognition, professional autonomy, or level of responsibility.
1.7.11 Perception towards Career Development

This refers to lecturers’ interpretation and impression of career development constructed based on lecturers’ background knowledge and other related factors. The lecturers’ perception is classified as either positive or negative.

1.7.12 Top Management Support

Top management in this case study refers to the higher ranking official in the UiTM management structure which have the authority and influence over the lecturers. Top management support refers to the level of effectiveness and willingness of these official's involvement in lecturers' career development process. Among the expected supports from the management are career counseling, career information system and career pathing.

1.7.13 Training and Development Opportunity

Mondy & Noe (1996) defined training and development as planned and continuous effort by management to improve employee competency levels and organizational performance. Training is designed to permit learners to acquire knowledge and skills needed for their present job whereas development involves learning with a long-term focus, that is, it prepares employees to keep pace with the organization as it changes and grows.

Training and development opportunity in this study refers to the effort provided by the organization for the lecturers to acquire and improve their knowledge and skills, for the enhancement of their performance at work. These include on-the-job training and off-the-job training such as pursuing master degree or doctorate degree.

1.8 Limitation of the Study

This research is a case study. It is conducted only in Universiti Teknologi MARA Samarahan Campus, one of the thirteen branches throughout the country. Hence, the findings may not be generalized to any other campuses. The other campuses may have different background as well as differences in their daily operation.

The survey method used in this study as the research methodology, the accuracy, validity, and reliability of the findings are dependent on the respondents’ sincerity and honesty in expressing their views and opinions. There are many factors affecting the lecturers’ perceptions on career development. However, in this study only certain factors are considered as mentioned in the conceptual framework. These factors are considered the most relevant to the current situation in UiTM Samarahan Campus.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter covers related topics and issues of past literature written by overseas as well as local authors. The related theories on career development, definition and concepts of career development will be introduced first. This is then followed by literature review on relationships between career development and demographic characteristics. Finally, the review on factors that affect career development will be presented.

2.1 Review on Career Development

(a) Related theories on Career Development

Some of popular types of career development theories include the following.

1. Trait and Factor Theories
2. Life-Span Theories

The basis of trait and factor theories is the assumption that there are unique traits that can be reliably measured and that it is possible to match individual traits to occupational requirements. Holland identified six types of occupations which theorized that people seek work environments and occupations that match their preferred traits. The six types are realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising and conventional.

Trait and factor theories tend to deal with career issues at one point in time while life-span theories take a long-term developmental perspective. The most widely known life-span theory is Super’s Theory of Vocational Choice, which suggests that individuals pass through stages of vocational development involving developmental tasks at each stage. It also considers the performance of multiple roles and their interaction across the life-span (Stitt-Gohdes, 1997).

Super considered self-concept and vocational maturity to be important determinants in occupational choices.

Social Cognitive Career Theory identified the interaction of personal attributes, external environmental factors, and behavior in career decision making. It focuses on the influence of self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations on goals and behavior (Stitt-Gohdes, 1997). That is, if individuals believe in their ability to undertake an endeavor and have an expectation of the outcome of that behavior, they will behave in a way that will help them achieve their goal. However, self-efficacy beliefs may have been undermined by racial or sex-role stereotypes. Therefore, individuals may foreclose career options that they are not truly open to them (Sharl, 1997). The fact that some individuals have been able to persist and achieve in a nonsupportive environment is in some cases attributable to their high self-efficacy expectations (Farmer, 1997).
(b) Concept of Career Development

Career development as defined by Mondy, Noe & Premeaux (1999) is a formal approach used by the organization to ensure that people with the proper qualifications and experiences are available when needed. They also defined career planning as an on-going process whereby an individual sets career goals and identifies the means to achieve them. The effective career development should result in a competitive advantage to an organization. They believe that career planning together with career development benefit both the individual and the organization and must therefore be carefully considered by both.

DeSimone and Harris (1998) distinguish career development as two sets of activities: career planning and career management. Career planning is a process of becoming aware of self’s strengths and weaknesses, identified own career goals and steps to achieve the goals. Whereas career management is an on-going process of preparing, implementing and monitoring career plans undertaken by the individual alone or in concert with the organization’s career systems (Hall,1986).

According to Hall (1986), various career development activities fit along the career planning career management spectrum as shown in Figure 2 below. These activities vary along the spectrum based on:

(i) the amount of influence by the individual.
(ii) the amount of information provided to the individual.
(iii) the amount of influence by the organization.
(iv) the amount of information provided to the organization.

However, effective career development must involve commitment from both the employee and the management or the organization.

Figure 2 : Spectrum of Career Development Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employee centered : Career planning</th>
<th>Mutual focus: Manager-employee</th>
<th>Organization centered : Career management</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-directed workbooks and tape cassettes</td>
<td>Company-run career-planning workshops</td>
<td>Corporate seminars on organizational career</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Corporate employee career discussions</td>
<td>Manager-employee career assessment centers with feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Development</td>
<td>Corporate talent inventories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Corporate succession planning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More and more individuals are now, of necessity, being forced to determine their own career development (Walton, 1999). The reasons are partly because fewer organizations offer a job for life, and even where they purport to do so, downsizing and delaying in the 1990s have reduced employees’ confidence in such prospects. It is also partly associated with the increasing emphasis being put on people taking more responsibility for their own learning and development.

Walton (1999) proposed the idea of partnership in career development as shown in Figure 3 and the effectiveness and attainability of individual’s career development dependent on cooperation between them.

Figure 3 : Partnership in career development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effective career development requires that the organization, the manager and the employee accept their responsibilities.....</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The employee must:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Take responsibility for career development...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Obtain and use feedback on career options and realistic potential...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Communicate career interests and discuss developmental needs with manager.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The manager must:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Support employees in their career development responsibilities...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provide organizational career information and realistic feedback on employee career aspirations...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Encourage and support implementation of the employee’s developmental plans...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The organization must:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Communicate business mission, objectives and strategies so that realistic development can occur...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provide employees with the resource necessary for development, to include on-the-job experiences training and education...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Evaluate and recognize managers for their role/success in employee career development.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Strategic Human Resource Development by Walton (1999), (p.217).*

Storey (1976), one of the pioneers of organization career development put more emphasize on the role of the managers in career development. He describes the role of managers as helping people with career planning by developing a climate that encourages committed, productive, and effective people. For this, the managers require understanding of some rules for dealing with employee career development. the agenda that employees bring to the managers and the agenda that managers may take to employees.
According to Storey, the role a manager may take could be depicted on a continuum, ranging from ‘not interfering’ to ‘supporting and facilitating’ career development for employees as shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Continuum of Appropriate Roles for managers’ involvement in employee career development.

The minimum expected of a manager may be to ‘get out of the way’, so that employee career development can happen. The other end of the continuum exists when a manager is well versed in the options for employees, has excellent skills in discussions of career issues and options with employees and believes that it is the role of a manager to promote the career development of employees in every way possible. This manager supports and facilitates career development.

According to Holley & Jennings (1983), career planning and career development activities occur at two levels: organizational and individual. Organizational career planning focuses on future organizational needs, career paths, assessment of employees’ potential and interconnection between organizational needs and individuals’ opportunities and desires for advancement. Individual career planning focuses on the individual employee’s skill, abilities and desires for the future. It involves employees’ awareness of their abilities and interest, their plans to achieve their goals, and the designing of career paths for their advancement.

They also assert that for career planning and career development to be effective, the individuals involved need to know and understand the following:

1. The employee’s interest, values, achievements, objectives, abilities and skills, and competencies.
2. The employee’s future work opportunities in the organization.
3. Ways of obtaining information within the organization, such as through skill inventories, job posting, getting nominated for promotions, and organizational politics.
4. The external labor market, the status of job opportunities, the probabilities of the closing out and opening up of new opportunities, the impact of new technology and so on.
5. The opportunities available for personal and professional growth.

The organization’s responsibilities in career planning and career development programs are:

1. To be informed of the strategic goals and current capabilities of employees.
2. To communicate career-related information to employees – open-position listings, self-nomination procedures, catalogues of educational programs and opportunities for career discussion.
DeSimone & Harris (1998), Hall (1986), Walton (1999), Walter Story (1976), and Holley & Jennings (1983) all agreed that effective employees' career development required close cooperation between employees and the organization. Cheryl (1989) also commented that employers are motivated to establish career development programs because:

1. such programs are seen as an effective response to various personnel problems.
2. top managers prefer to promote existing employees and ensure a good fit between the work and the worker, and
3. employees have expressed interest in career development as a benefit.

Above all, “most organizations adopt career development programs in response to pragmatic human resource concerns and because they believe it will help ensure a continued supply of qualified, talented personnel” [Gutteridge, 1986, p.58 cited in Cheryl (1989)].

Cheryl (1989) in the article “Career Development in the Workplace” concluded that “career development is now viewed as the shared responsibility of employee and employer”. Similar results were also reported in a survey conducted by Gutteridge et al (1993) which stated that respondents view career development as:

- 51% employee’s responsibility
- 25% manager’s responsibility
- 24% organization’s responsibility.

2.2 Demographic characteristics and Career Development

2.2.1 Gender

Kerka (1998) pointed out in ‘Career Development and Gender, Race and Class’ that as career development theories are tested by research on various populations, a complex picture emerges, suggesting that career choice and development are influenced by multiple factors: personality (including vocational interests), how individuals perceive themselves and the world (self-concept, racial/cultural identity, world view), socialization; resources (financial, information, role models, social supports), experiences of sexism, racism, and classism and the salience of various life roles and identity.

According to Mavin (2000), the understanding of women’s career requires the acknowledgement that women have fundamentally different experiences and find themselves in different situations when developing their careers compared to men. Marshall (1994) argued that women have had less orderly careers because they have followed their husbands’ career paths, they have had family and domestic responsibilities and have been subjected to male managers’ prejudice.

Marshall (1994) and Henning and Jardim (1997) agreed that women have been forced to adapt to limited opportunities by becoming job rather than career oriented, focusing on the immediate intrinsic rewards of the task rather than the long-term benefit.

Mavin (2000) asserts that women are far less committed to work than men and far less able to undertake a full-time career. She argues that when it comes to career, given a choice between a man and a woman with equal qualifications, the employer will frequently view the woman as the greater risk.