CAREER SELF-MANAGEMENT IN ASCRIPTION CULTURE

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ABSTRACT

The main aim of this thesis is to investigate whether theories of career self-management, developed in the USA and Western countries, apply in cultures which are different, such as ascription cultures, giving an example of the Kingdom of Bahrain. Career self-management, here, is conceptualized based on independence and having control in organising career management through setting a strategy and collecting information about career opportunities to achieve personal goals. Although there is increasing emphasis on the 'new' career, very few studies offer systematic information about whether careers are perceived in the new or traditional form and which is more appropriate for people in developing countries (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain). On the other hand, scholars argue that although there is a need for career self-management the notion, yet, lacks critical evaluation where the promoting or limiting factors to its enactment lack research, particularly in developing countries (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain).

The country chosen for study is the Kingdom of Bahrain because its culture is characterised as 'ascription' and no career self-management research has been conducted in this context. The study adopts a qualitative approach to uncover the research questions. The semi-structured interviews are designed to collect and analyse data for two organisations (i.e. EWA and GARMCO) where each organisation's findings are compared with the other. To cover a fair population and sampling in a country small in size and population, two organisations in two sectors have been selected that are the main sectors in the Kingdom of Bahrain which consist of large workforce populations. Each organisation encompasses 19 managers from different departments and one Human Resources manager (total of 20 managers in each case). The forty managers from the two sectors are randomly selected, taking into consideration the managers' occupations and functions.

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Last, but certainly not least, a special appreciation goes to the participants from the two organisations (Electricity and Water Authority and Gulf Aluminium Rolling Mill Company) for accepting and taking part in this research.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the submission of this PhD dissertation is my own work exclusively. It is developed by me for the purpose of this program only and has not been published or written by another person. Some of these materials have been published by me in conference like:

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH AREA

1.1   Research Background

Career literature reports that there is a need to research career self-management which has been receiving greater attention from both individual and organisational perspectives. Career management has two perspectives: the conventional career which is sometimes called 'organisational'; and contemporary which is focussed commonly on the individual and is called 'new' or career self-management. In the past, both individuals and organisations worked within the bureaucratic framework of long-term career planning. However, in recent business environments, the construction of a psychological contract between employers and employee states that the employer no longer promises a career for life (Herriot and Pemberton 1995) and, as a result, the equilibrium between organisational and individual career management that existed previously (Orpen, 1994) has shifted towards a position of independence for the individual (Kanter, 1989). In addition, the trend in the last decades is increasing to incline towards the individualistic at least in developed economies (Baruch, 2006). In this vein Baruch and Peiperl (2000, p. 347) state:

> "The bulk of research in the careers area has moved beyond organisations to focus on more flexible, individual models."

Recent literature reports that the field of careers has moved beyond organisations to flexible and individual approaches such as the boundaryless, protean, post-corporate career and career self-management (Arthur, Inkson, and Pringle, 1999; Baruch and Peiperl, 2000; Hall, Zhu and Yan, 2002; King 2000). Although there is increasing emphasis on the 'new' career, very few studies are offering systematic information about whether careers are perceived in the new or traditional form (Gerber, Wittekind, Grote and Staffelbach, 2009) and which one is more appropriate for people in developing countries. On the other hand, scholars state that although there is a need for career self-management the notion still lacks critical evaluation (King, 2000) and the promoting or bounding barriers to its enactment lack research, particularly in developing countries. In addition till today, the application of career self-management has not been examined in some

countries particularly those that have different environmental aspects than the USA and Western countries, the place of its origin.

Furthermore, the interaction between individuals and culture should not be ignored when examining the application of career self-management. In developing countries (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain), ascription culture prevails where the societies ascribe certain members' higher status over others which is called 'ascription' culture. Individuals in ascription societies derive their status from birth, age, gender or wealth rather than status being accorded to them based on their accomplishments. In contrast to ascription culture is 'achievement' culture where status is based on wellbeing and individual accomplishments regardless of sex or family background. This culture prevails in developed countries, the place where career self-management theories initiated.

Despite the evidence that career self-management is appropriate for people in achievement cultures (for example, the USA and Western countries, the place of its origin), it might be appropriate for people in an ascription culture (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain) as well. The reason for people in ascription cultures (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain) possibly having no trust in placing their career management destiny in the hands of any institution or people of influence could be because they believe that opportunities will not be distributed fairly. Thus if people in ascription cultures (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain) do not receive fairness in terms of career employment or advancement opportunities, the career self-management approach will be an appropriate approach as an alternative option to organisational career management which is normally provided by the organisation. On the other hand, the application of career self-management in ascription cultures (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain) is not straightforward because there are different organisational and cultural factors between achievement and ascription cultures, and those either promote or limit its enactment. However, career self-management literature review reports a lack of these factors because most career self-management theories are constructed in the USA and Western countries and ignore developing countries.

1.2   Research Arguments

This thesis investigates whether theories of career self-management, developed in the USA and Western countries, apply in cultures which are different, for instance the Kingdom of Bahrain. It is based on three main arguments:

1.2.1   Conceptualisation of Career Self-Management in Ascription Culture

The new career emphasises individual responsibility (Arthur *et al.*, 1999) whereby people are free to determine their career success and accept making major change across occupational areas and fields (Brousseau, Driver, Eneroth and Larsson, 1996) and thus have the responsibility over their own career outcomes. Independent responsibilities indicate "achieve goals that are personally meaningful to the individual, rather than those set by parents, peers, an organisation, or society" (Mirvis and Hall, 1996, p. 138). The measure of success, here, means achieving marketability and employability (Viney, Adamson, and Doherty, 1995). The new career is sometimes called career self-management and is defined by Noe (1996, p. 119):

> "...by which individuals collect information about values, interests and skill strengths and weaknesses (career exploration); identify a career goal; and engage in career strategies that increase the probability that career goals will be achieved."

Lips-Wiersma and Hall (2007) argue that, contemporary writings are increasingly supporting the idea that the career field has moved beyond organisations to flexible and individual approaches (Arthur *et al.*, 1999; Baruch and Peiperl, 2000; Hall, Zhu, and Yan, 2002). However, despite the increasing interest in the individualistic career, career literature review lacks research on this topic and there are very few studies providing systematic information about whether people perceive their career in a new or traditional form (Gerber *et al.*, 2009) particularly in ascription cultures (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain). Simultaneously, although scholars emphasis the need for career self-management, the notion lacks critical evaluation (King, 2000) and organisational and cultural factors contribute to the lack of research particularly in ascription cultures since most research on this topic is conducted in achievement cultures (for example, the USA and Western countries). At the same time, this thesis assumes that career self-management behaviours might not be applicable in ascription culture (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain).

This assumption is built based on Trompenaars and Hampden-Turners' (1998) view, who argue that in an ascription culture individuals' status relates to who they are and in return individuals do not need to prove themselves to preserve their status. In this situation, individuals within ascription societies may not have trust in their society regarding career self-management because they are certain that the status is not ascribed fairly among them.

Thus the first argument concerns:

1.   Conceptualisation of career self-management in an ascription culture, for instance the Kingdom of Bahrain, is expected to be different from that in an achievement culture, for instance that in the USA and Western countries. In addition, career self-management theories conducted in the USA and Western countries (i.e. the place of their origin) are expected not to apply in the Kingdom of Bahrain, whose culture is characterised as an ascription culture.

1.2.2   Conceptualisation of Organisational Factors in Ascription Culture

The organisation is establishing different activities (i.e. support) where these may help in facilitating career self-management enactment. Since career self-management is related to independence of career development, individuals must be proactive in asking for organisational support. Studies in career self-management provide evidence of the significance of organisational support such as assistance with: management development (Noe, 1996), career management (Sturges, Guest, Conway and Mackenzie Davey, 2002; Sturges, 2008; Sturges, Conway, Guest and Liefooghe, 2005; Sturges, Conway and Liefooghe, 2010) and management interventions (Raabe, Frese and Beehr, 2007) for employees.

However, despite scholars placing great attention on promoting factors, our knowledge of the barriers to career self-management enactment lack research. Such of career self-management behaviours are: feedback seeking (London, 1993; Kossek, Roberts, Fisher and Demarr, 1998; King, 2001; Chiaburu, Baker and Pitariu, 2006), enhancing individual visibility for constructing career opportunities (Sturges *et al.*, 2002; Sturges, Conway and Liefooghe, 2008; Sturges, 2008; King, 2003), building networks (Emmerik, Euwema, Geschiere and Schouten, 2006; Forret and

Dougherty, 2001, 2004; Sturges, *et al.*, 2002), influencing the leaders (King 2001; 2003), building human capital (Sturges, 2008; King, 2004; Nabi, 2000), career plan implementation behaviour (Raabe *et al.*, 2007), and mobility preparedness (Sturges *et al.*, 2002; Sturges, *et al.,* 2005; Sturges *et al.*, 2008; 2010; Chiaburu *et al.*, 2006).

Finally, there are no studies addressing the negative behaviours towards the organisational limiting factors other than reversing the promoting factors that are mentioned in the career self-management literature. Possibly, one of the most important points, here, is that all studies that discuss organisational promoting/limiting factors and their consequent behaviours are conducted in the USA and Western countries which have different institutional organisational cultures than the Kingdom of Bahrain. Thus, the second argument concerns:

2.   The conceptualisation of organisational promoting/limiting factors and consequent behaviours towards career self-management enactment in an ascription culture, for instance the Kingdom of Bahrain, is expected to be different from that in the USA and Western countries (for example, achievement cultures).

1.2.3   Conceptualisation of Cultural Factors in Ascription Culture

The Kingdom of Bahrain is chosen because it is a developing country. Numerous conventional career studies have been criticised for constructing theories of career around post-industrial free market democratic institutions and values (Thomas and Inkson, 2007) and ignoring developing countries where careers in these countries are in need of critical investigation. Those authors suggest that to examine career, it is vital to take into account the career pattern and practices in which this career is legitimised through institutions of societies and how it specifies the culturally based attitudes, beliefs, perceptions and anticipations that individuals have regarding career. It is imperative when discussing any type of career theories (for example, career self-management) to place them in the social and national contexts because cultural differences cannot be ignored if assuming that most of these theories came from the USA and Western contexts (Ituma and Simpson, 2009).

The literature review discusses general theories of culture, for instance, Hofstede (1980), Schwartz (2008) and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998). It addresses career barriers that limit career development (Ituma and Simpson, 2009; Lent, Brown and Hackett, 1994). It also addresses labour market imperfection (Gunz, Evans and Jalland, 2000) and mentions the real career boundaries which are caused by different factors such as specialisation, industry, firm, occupation, educational level, experience, professional qualification and, to some extent, age, sex, and religion (Gunz, Evans and Jalland, 2002). It mentions that boundaries may be caused by prior career history, occupational identity, and institutional constraints imposed by leaders/top management to job opportunities (King, Burke and Pemberton, 2005).

However, all these studies discuss the cultural barriers to career in general, and the studies to discover the cultural barriers to enact career self-management lack empirical research. In addition, very few studies, if any, address the cultural promoting factors to career self-management enactment. Khapova and Kortovo (2007) argue that it is important to consider the differences between the countries in terms of career attributes (for example, career definitions, subjective career success, objective career success, etc.) and career environmental factors (i.e. economic, political, social factors) particularly outside the USA and Western region. Something which may work in Western societies may not be important to work in other parts of the world (Wasti, 1998). The main point, here, is that what has been approved in the USA and Western countries in terms of conceptualisation of career self-management is not necessarily similar in the Kingdom of Bahrain. At the same time, career self-management may assist people in an ascription cultures (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain) if they adopt it as an alternative option, particularly when they have no choice but to obtain conventional career management (for example, organisational career management).

At the same time the interaction between individuals and culture should be taken into account when examining career self-management behaviours. Such of these factors could be economic, political, geographic, nature of labour markets, etc. because these play a major role to either promote or limit the embracement of career self-management. As mentioned earlier, in developing countries (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain) an ascription culture (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1998) prevails where societies ascribe certain members' higher status over

others. Individuals in ascription societies derive their status from birth, age, gender or wealth and status is not accorded to them on the basis of their accomplishment. However, the emphasis on how individuals in this society (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain) behave to overcome such barriers resulting from ascription culture has not yet been found in career self-management literature review, particularly if individuals within this culture pursue control over career (for example, career self-management). Therefore the third argument concerns:

3. The conceptualisation of cultural promoting/limiting factors and consequent behaviours towards career self-management enactment in an ascription culture, for instance the Kingdom of Bahrain, is expected to be different from that in the USA and Western countries (for example, achievement cultures).

1.3 Research Aim and Objectives

To better understand the nature of career self-management, particularly in ascription cultures (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain), the aim of this research is to:

Discover whether theories of career self-management, developed in the USA and Western countries, apply in a culture which is different and characterised as 'ascription', for instance, the Kingdom of Bahrain. By so doing, it contributes to furthering the literature review which currently lacks research in the field of career self-management in a context other than the USA and non-Western countries.

To facilitate the aim of this research, the following objectives are pursued:

Objective 1: To critically review the career management literature and appreciate the area with a particular focus on the notion of career self-management.

Objective 2: To investigate the extent and ways in which Bahraini manager participants adopt the career self-management approach in a context (i.e. ascription) that is different from that in the USA and Western countries (for example, achievement cultures), for instance the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Objective 3: To investigate the organisational factors that Bahraini manager participants believe promote or limit their career self-management behaviours in a context (i.e. ascription) that is different from that in the USA and Western countries (for example, achievement cultures), for instance the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Objective 4: To investigate the cultural factors that Bahraini manager participants believe promote or limit their career self-management behaviours in a context (i.e. ascription) that is different from that in the USA and Western countries (for example, achievement cultures), for instance the Kingdom of Bahrain.

1.4 Some Methodological Considerations

The study adopts a qualitative approach to discover if participants adopt career self-management for their career management. In addition, it uncovers the organisational, cultural factors and consequent behaviours which either promote or challenge the Bahraini manager participants for embracing career self-management in a context that is different from that in the USA and Western countries, for instance the Kingdom of Bahrain.

This study applies an interpretive approach using qualitative tools. In the light of interpretive sociology, in-depth interviewing appears to be the most appropriate tool to grasp knowledge regarding the phenomena under the study that is 'career self-management' in a context called 'ascription'. Two entities (i.e. EWA and GARMCO) are selected to collect and analyse the data. The cross case analysis technique is adopted to find the similarities and differences between these two organisations for the purpose of providing comprehensive findings. The independent organisation (i.e. EWA and GARMCO) represents Bahraini managers at the middle management level of the organisational hierarchy structure.

The country chosen for the study is Bahrain because there is a lack of research on career self-management in this Kingdom. Thus, to cover a fair population sampling in the country which is small in size and population, two sectors have been selected that are the main sectors in Bahrain which consist of the largest workforce populations. Each case encompasses 19 managers from different departments and one Human R manager (a total of 20 managers in each case). The forty

managers from the two sectors are randomly selected, taking into consideration the managers' occupations and functions. For collecting the data semi-structured interviews in addition to organisation documentation reviews are adopted. For data analysis, three strategies are adopted such as Miles and Huberman (1994), Yin (2009) and Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis (NVivo9).

1.5 The Structure of the Thesis

This thesis consists of six chapters where Chapter 1 is Introductory.

Chapter 2 consists of several main areas. It sheds light on the historical overview of career-related theories, discusses the developmental theories of career self-management notions, definitions, behaviours and antecedents. It reviews the organisational factors that encourage or limit career-management behaviours. It also reviews the cultural factors that either encourage or limit career self-management behaviours. It discusses the nature of ascription culture and its conceptualisation within the context of career self-management and finally presents the study research questions.

Chapter 3 presents an overview about the Kingdom of Bahrain. It addresses the institutional setting in the Kingdom of Bahrain and explains the nature of Bahrain's labour market challenges.

Chapter 4 justifies the choice of research methods adopted from philosophical as well as practical perspectives. It consists of various issues such as presenting the research questions. It explains the research contribution. It addresses the methodological justification, discusses the strategy design and the research sampling; it also outlines the data collection methods by employing semi-structured interviews and discusses the data analysis approaches that have been constructed. The coding process, research confidentially issues and involvements are explained. The conduct of a pilot study for semi-structured interviews process is presented.

Chapter 5 presents an overview of the two organisations studied: Electricity and Water Authority (EWA) and Gulf Aluminium Rolling Mill Company (GARMCO). It presents the findings of the three research questions: the extent and ways in which Bahraini managers in the sample adopt

the career self-management approach, organisational factors which Bahraini managers believe promote or limit career self-management behaviours and cultural factors which Bahraini managers believe either promote or limit career self-management behaviours. The differences and similarities in findings between the two organisations are presented in tables at the end of each research question section. The justification behind the high similarities between the two organisations studied (i.e. EWA and GARMCO) is explained.

Chapter 6 outlines the research key contribution. It discusses and explains the three main research questions. Relative literature is discussed in order to draw comparison between what exists along with the study's findings. The chapter then outlines the research implications; the personal reflections on learning obtained from the research, the limitations of this research and a recommendation of the potential areas for future research in the field of career self-management.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVEIW

2.1 Introduction

As mentioned in Chapter 1 less attention has been made to career self-management theories in developing countries. The body of literature suggests that the findings derived from the study of career self-management application in countries other than the USA and Western countries (i.e. the place of its origin) may provide more understanding of the phenomenon of career self-management and enrich the knowledge of this field. However, we cannot generalise or apply career self-management without investigating the organisational, cultural and consequent behaviours in cultures characterised as ascription (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain), which are expected to be different from those in the USA and Western countries.

This chapter highlights the need to research into theories and perspectives of career in general and career self-management specifically, to further our apperception of career self-management practices of managers in the Kingdom of Bahrain. The literature reviewed in this chapter helps inform both the research questions and the methodology adopted in this study. The chapter consists of seven main sections. Section 2.1 summarises the structure of the literature review chapter. Section 2.2 is an overview of career-related theories. Section 2.3 discusses career self-management notion. Section 2.4 reviews the organisational factors that encourage or limit career-management behaviours. Section 2.5 reviews the cultural factors that either encourage or limit career self-management behaviours. Section 2.6 discusses the nature of ascription culture and its conceptualisation within the context of career self-management. Section 2.7 presents the research questions.

2.2 Overview of Career Related Theories

A significant amount of literature has been published on careers with various definitions and interpretations of 'career' being offered (Arthur *et al.*, 1999; Hall, 1996; Herriot and Pemberton, 1996; King, *et al.*, 2005; Mirvis and Hall, 1994; Peiperl, Arthur, Gofee and Morris, 2000). Arthur, Hall and Lawrence (1989) argue that the concept of career cannot be expressed in terms of any particular person or discipline, listing eight disciplines to which the study of careers benefits and contributes: psychology, social psychology, sociology, anthropology, economics,

political science, history and geography. Khapova and Kortov (2007) state that in Western career literature, the most cited career definition is:

> "The unfolding sequence of a person's work experiences over time." (Arthur, Hall and Lawrence, 1989, p. 8).

The term did not appear in academic literature until Frank Parsons wrote about it in his work in 1909 (McDaniels and Gyspers, 1992). Parsons (1909) used the terms 'occupation' and 'vocation' interchangeably and in the subsequent decade the term 'career' emerged in the literature. Parsons argued for an organised plan of vocational guidance, which is still present even now, after some modifications. He was an advocate of social reform, calling for fairness and equal opportunities. He advocated a number of actions or steps to help the individual to choose a career based on his tastes and aptitudes by giving him or her information on careers that were available within his or her community. In 1908 Parsons gave a lecture that had a significant impact on the development of vocational guidance and in 1909 published his famous book 'Choosing a Vocation'. He suggested three steps to help the individual choose a career:

- To know and understand one's individual aptitudes, abilities, dispositions, sources of power, boundaries and so on.
- To know the requirements and conditions for success in each profession or group of occupations, and the advantages and disadvantages, opportunities and benefits offered and so forth.
- To take a conscious decision based on the earning potential and the match between the facts learned from the first two steps.

A number of researchers and authors have recognised that these three steps proposed by Parsons have had a great influence on the way vocational guidance has developed. In addition, Parsons' views led to considerable interest in vocational guidance in the US.

Brewer (1922, p. 290) defines life career as:

"The occupation of a person; that which offers him opportunity for progress and satisfaction in his work."

The twentieth century witnessed a significant interest in the concept of career. The first to perceive career as a total life experience was the Chicago School of Sociology which focussed attention on career and attempted to explore it from a social perspective. They saw career as something beyond the conventional idea of employees working for pay, recognising it instead as a concept constructed by the individual (Hughes, 1937). Thus Hughes defines career as:

"The moving perspective in which persons orient themselves with reference to the social order, and of the typical sequences and concatenation of office." (Hughes, 1937, pp. 409-10).

The significance of time shapes this definition rather than any static work arrangement and it ignores any constraints regarding where people work and how different people characterise career success. It assumes that career success for any individual is about upward movement in an organisational structure within one organisation accompanied in each case by wider responsibilities. The concept embraces not only upward but horizontal and in some specific cases downward movement within familiar organisational, occupational, industrial or national contexts as well as movement between any of these contexts (Arthur, Khapova and Wilderom, 2005).

In the early 1950s, ideas such as career development and choice began to appear in the matter of professional growth and career choice and have contributed very significantly to the development of vocational guidance. One of these is Super Theory (Super, 1957) leading to an increased attention by researchers into vocational guidance and the conduct of numerous research projects in this field.

Whereas there are some variances of opinion on what constitutes a career, the aspect dominating most portions of career studies is the idea that career contains an external in addition to an internal dimension. Hughes (1937) states these two dimensions as the objective (external) career, and the subjective (internal) career. According to Hughes (1937, p. 404) internal career explains

the subjective career as "the moving perspective in which a person sees his life as a whole and interprets the meaning of his attributes, actions and the things that happen to him". However, Sparrow and Hiltrop (1996) argue that internal career is characterised based on career orientations, career anchors, balance or decisions between personal and professional life and advancement throughout psychological life stages. Derr and Laurent (1989) argue that internal career suggests people make a career, perceive career from psychological and personal standpoints, and concentrate on self-development, career orientation, motivation and psychological change that occurs and, finally, the main question for people who hold this notion is "What do I want from work, given my perceptions of who I am and what is possible?". The internal aspect is subjective and it is regarding the individuals' internal value and assessment of their career, observed against aspects that are significant to that individual (Van Maanen, 1977). Individuals have unalike career ambitions, and place diverse values on things similar to income, employment security, work location, status, success in various jobs, access to learning, and the balance of significance between personal life and the job (Van Maanen, 1977).

Hughes (1937, p. 404) argues that external career is objective. He defines the objective/external career as directly observable, measurable and verifiable by an independent third party. The external career concentrates on the objective, macro, institutional, or external realm. It relates the sequence of positions of offices which an individual occupies and is apparent by external observers (Hall, 1976). External career suggests that careers make people; it examines careers from sociological and organisational perspectives, concentrates on career paths, occupation streams, career stages within the organisations and the nature of occupations in society. The main question for people who hold an external career is "What is possible and realistic in my organisation and occupation, given my perception of the world of work?".

It is realised here that the discussion of Hughes (1937) regarding the impact of internal and external factors and what individuals want from it to meet their personal needs is obviously the pre-cursor to more emphasis on career self-management in very early years.

Other theories followed; for instance Holland (1985), contributing to an important theoretical framework which has been the subject of discussion in many symposiums and scientific journals.

It developed an occupational classification system that categorises six personality types: realistic (related to outdoor and technical interest), investigative (intellectual, scientific), artistic (creative, expressive in literary, artistic, musical or other areas, social (interest in working with people), enterprising (interest in persuasion, leadership) and conventional (enjoyment of detail, computation activity, high degree of structure).

The debate over the meaning of career continued on into the 1970s and 1980s, some scholars defining it as occupation, others arguing that it embraces almost all life's activities. The National Vocational Guidance Association (NVGA) constructed its own definition of career as:

> "Time-extended working out of a purposeful life pattern through work undertaken by the individual." (National Vocational Guidance Association, 1973, p. 7).

The significant shift was made by the beginning of 1970 when the boundary of time was breached and career was perceived as happening throughout the lifespan rather than in the occupational moment. Super and Bohn (1970, p. 115) distinguished between occupation "what one does" and career "the course pursued over a period of time". The major transformation of the concept of the career goes back to the 1970s when the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Arthur, 1994) tried to make a single definition of the term 'career' and put forward the notion of the career without boundaries. The objective was to create a definition of 'career' that would cover all types of worker. In combining 'Chicago' sociology (Hughes, 1958) and 'Columbia' educational psychology (Super, 1957), they applied four conditions to defining career (Arthur 1994). The first was that it be applied to all staff and all organisations; secondly, that it imply a time dimension, vital in the relationship between organisation and individual to reflect progress in the job for instance; thirdly, it establishes that a 'career' is not the personal property of anyone and that the study of careers must have an interdisciplinary dimension; and, finally it is the portrayal of a career from both a subjective and an objective perspective.

During the 1990s, writers began to see 'career' as something less driven by organisations and more as a universal 'given' aspect of human society. Mirvis and Hall (1994) argue that the 'new' concept of career is versatile and the 'new' concept of success is psychological. Their perspective

is to separate the notion of career from any particular organisation or even from being tied to paid employment but universally wide in scope, for example, 'boundaryless' (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996)**.** Since that time there has also been an advancement of the idea of career mobility which requires the individual to be proactive in managing his or her career. Those who constructed the concept of the boundaryless career believe that this type might encourage employees to be independent from their employer; to change their job or occupation to get experience through external networks or information; and to perceive career as something independent from the organisation (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996).

But, despite evidence that boundaryless career is replaced by organisational career, other subsequent studies found the opposite. For example, in the study conducted by Granrose and Baccili (2006) exploring the perceived psychological contracts between organisations and employees that are relevant to careers, they found that characteristics of a traditional psychological contract, job security and mobility up the career ladder are still important to these employees. These results are consistent with the McDonald, Brown, and Bradley (2005) findings that many managers in a sample of Australian managers still want job security and upward mobility. In a qualitative study of New Zealand managers, Walton and Mallon (2004) found that the primary career themes of their qualitative study of managers consisted of learning new skills, advancement, enjoyment, change, personal development and occupation identification; several of these are similar to the findings of the significance rating of the managers in the Granrose and Baccili (2006) study.

In addition, although the boundaryless metaphor has succeeded in informing researches and theories (Briscoe, Hall, and DeMuth, 2006), it is increasingly receiving various critiques (Gunz *et al.*, 2000; Pringle and Mallon, 2003; Arnold and Cohen, 2008; Rodrigues and Guest, 2010; Inkson, Gunz, Ganesh, Roper, 2012). Possibly, one major anxiety in this aspect is regarding the normativity that is associated with this notion (Arnold and Cohen, 2008; Gunz *et al.*, 2000). Career researchers, specifically, illustrate that boundaryless career is the best approach that helps people to succeed in their career and by so doing they ignore the possible disadvantage of physical mobility.

Gunz *et al.* (2000) argues that careers have not become boundaryless by any complete means. However, in contrast, the nature of career boundaries is becoming significantly more complex with multiple facets. They add that what has been occurring within the previous two decades has been raising permeability of organisational boundaries, resulting in dissimilar kinds of boundaries which become significant. They argue that pure boundarylessness is possibly better viewed as a unique case; a limiting condition which works perfectly under certain unique circumstances might not importantly work for others. They assert that boundaries of some sorts are inevitable; for instance, they are necessary if social actors are to create a sense of the world and their place in it. They argue that:

> "The trouble with the boundaryless hypothesis is that it is still just that: a hypothesis." (Gunz *et al.*, 2000, p. 27).

However, even if it can be established that organisational boundaries are evaporating, it does not mean that all boundaries are vanishing. Current arguments also turned the spotlight on the permeability of organisation boundaries, which fails to tackle the complexity of contemporary career (Rodrigues and Guest, 2010). Those authors argue that the postulation of collapse of the traditional career model is not supported by evidence and visible organisation boundaries are necessary and important to a career. Such a belief contradicts the notion that states that the 'boundaryless career' is one of the most important factors for a contemporary career. They added that boundaries are more important and complex at the present than in the past (Pringle and Mallon, 2003). Inkson *et al.* (2012) suggests limits to the value of the boundaryless careers concept. These are: 1) the employment of 'boundaryless career' as a label; 2) unclear and multiple definitions of boundaryless career; 3) overemphasis on personal agency in boundaryless career writing; 4) the normalisation of boundaryless careers; and 5) the deficiency of empirical support for the claimed prevalence of boundaryless careers. They also argue that although boundaryless careers studies have a great impact on pushing career studies towards the direction of innovation, they have been unsuccessful in defining their concept, have overvalued agency and undervalued the institutional effects, have ignored and derided organisational careers, and have assumed the prevalence of boundaryless careers where the evidence says something different. They add that they have been unsuccessful in theorising career boundaries sufficiently.

They suggest that career studies must take into consideration the sociology and social anthropology of work, which have much to supply in respect of facilitating the appreciation of the creation and crossing of career boundaries.

The protean career (Hall, 1976; 1996) is another notion of a contemporary career. The person-driven protean career concept constructed by Hall implies that individuals have control and freedom to select the career they desire. The individual endeavours to apply 'self-control and free choice' (Hall, 2002) relating to their own career but there is a much tighter connection between work, learning and career development than was considered 25 years ago. Hall comments, also, on the fact that individuals have reduced their attachment to a specific organisation or job with well-constructed associations to networks of different types, outside of work. The term Protean draws on the mythology of the Greek god Proteus, who could change his shape at will. In recent years, it has been applied to a career orientation that reveals the degree to which an individual espouses frequent changes to his or her career (Briscoe and Hall, 2006) and it is called Protean because it changes shape to accommodate the individual's personal and work circumstances (Mirvis and Hall 1996). Hall (1976, p. 201), defines the protean career as follows:

> "The protean career is a process which the person, not the organisation, is managing. It consists of all the person's varied experiences in education, training, work in several organisations, changes in occupational field and so on. The protean career is not what happens to the person in any one organisation. The person's own personal career choices and search for self-fulfilment are the unifying or integrative elements in his or her life. The criterion of success is internal (psychological success), not external. In short, the protean career is shaped more by the individual than by the organisation and may be redirected from time to time to meet the needs of that person."

The protean is a self-directed orientation to the career that represents independence from external influences; thus the term has dominated the career literature since 1976 (Hall, 1976). A protean career orientation is a must for the current generation of graduates (Sargent and Domberger, 2007). In a protean career orientation, individuals are self-directed and motivated internally by their own values as they experience education, training, employment, leisure and family life

(Hall, 2002; 2004). It is generated through subjective perception about which career offers direction toward more genuine definitions of self and success (Hall, 2002; Hall and Chandler, 2005). As a result, the organisational responsibility is to provide suitable opportunities for people to learn new skills and to form networks appropriate to their current jobs and that could help them find new jobs or achieve personal growth (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996; Hall and Moss, 1998). Hall (1996, p. 8) has this to say of the protean career in the twenty-first century:

> "The career is dead - long live the career! Such is the mixed message regarding careers that we are carrying into the next millennium. The business environment is highly turbulent and complex, resulting in terribly ambiguous and contradictory career signals. Individuals, perhaps in self-defence, are becoming correspondingly ambivalent about their desires and plans for career development. The traditional psychological contract in which an employee entered a firm, worked hard, performed well, was loyal and committed, and thus received ever-greater rewards and job security, has been replaced by a new contract based on continuous learning and identity change, guided by the search for what Herb Shepard called the '*path with a heart*'".

He concludes that the protean career is alive whereas the organisation career is dead. According to Hall (1996), a contemporary career contract is the primary factor for careers in the new millennium and he summarises the protean career in Table 2.1 below:

The Protean Career of the 21st Century
• The Goal: Psychological success
• The Career is managed by the person, not the organisation
• The Career is a lifelong series of identity changes and continuous learning
• "Career age" counts, not chronological age
• The organisation provides
o Work challenges
o Relationships
• Development is not necessarily:

- o   formal training

- o   retraining

- o   upward mobility

- Profile for Success:

- o   From know-how...............to learn-how

- o   From job security……………to employability

- o   From organisational careers……………to protean careers

- o   From the work Self……………to the whole Self

Table 2.1 Protean careers of the 21st century (Hall, 1996, pp. 8-16)

There are two points of view, one supports Hall's contention regarding career death and vice versa. Baruch (2006) states that; the two impressions about depicting career as traditional (for example, organisational career) and new (i.e. individual career) are unrealistic. For instance the first contention portrays past organisations as rigid hierarchical structures and operating within stable environments and thus careers are predictable, secure and linear. Conversely to the first contention is the one which assumes that the current organisations system is in a mode of challenge, all dynamic, total fluidity and therefore unpredictable, vulnerable and multidirectional. He argues that authors in both depictions are extremely exaggerated. He adds that although many organisations shift from traditional to new, many organisations still perform within a stable environment and adopt a traditional career system organised by the organisation. Gutteridge, Leibowitz, and Shore (1993) argue that the focus of career has shifted to the organisation which was, in the past, the major responsibility of individuals (Arthur *et al.*, 1989). More recently in this aspect for example Lips-Wiersma and Hall (2007) argue that organisational career development (i.e. career management organised by employer) is not dead. They point out that, during the organisational change, individuals take responsibility for career development and, at the same time, the organisation becomes more active in employees' career development. Those authors raise question like "Is the organisational career dead?" (Lips-Wiersma and Hall 2007, p. 771) and state that recent writing supports the idea that career field has moved beyond organisations to flexible and individual approaches like protean, boundaryless and corporate

careers (Arthur *et al.*, 1999; Baruch and Peiperl, 2000; Hall *et al.*, 2002). In this aspect Baruch and Peiperl (2000, p. 347) state that:

> "The bulk of research in the careers area has moved beyond organisations to focus on more flexible, individual models."

Being responsible means to achieve personal goals that are valuable to the individuals rather than those placed by organisations, parents or peers (Mirvis and Hall, 1996) where the measure of success is determined by employability and marketability instead of hierarchical progress in one single organisation (Viney *et al.*, 1995). It also finds that graduates who manage their own career receive more career help from the organisation (Sturges *et al.*, 2002). However, it is not obvious how elimination of traditional career management practice, in itself, creates this desired organisational outcome (Lips-Wiresma and Hall, 2007).

Briscoe and DeMuth (2003) find that managers in many companies are perceived to exhibit various characteristics of the protean career (for example, greater attention to personal values, greater emphasis upon work-life balance), while at the same time not exhibiting the mobility that is usually assumed to characterise a boundaryless orientation. Consequently, it becomes important for managers to appreciate boundaryless and protean careers because they have become a standard part of the new career language. Inkson (2006) argues that, while once considered radical, protean and boundaryless careers have ironically become a part of a new status quo. The boundaryless (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996) and protean (Hall, 1996, 2002) career concepts appear ideal for examining the advantages and disadvantages of different career orientations (Briscoe and Hall, 2006).

The term 'new deal' emerged to reflect how any psychological contract that may have existed between employer and employee has changed as the latter can no longer expect a career for life (Herriot and Pemberton, 1995). The foremost shift in the relationship between employers and employees was visible in the change of psychological contracts which emerged in the last decades of the 20th Century (Conway and Briner, 2005; Rousseau, 1995). A psychological contract is described as a set of "individual beliefs, shaped by the organisation, regarding terms

of an exchange agreement between individuals and their organisations" (Rousseau, 1995, p. 9). A psychological contract occurs when the employee believes that "a promise has been made and a consideration offered in exchange for it, binding the parties to some set of reciprocal obligations" (Rousseau, 1989, p. 123).

The common view of psychological contracts is that the 'traditional' promise of job security in return for hard work, or an organisational career in return for loyalty and hard work, has vanished due to organisational transformations, for instance downsizing, delayering and redundancy (Guest, 1998). The new psychological contract from the organisational standpoint is mainly a shift from providing careers attributed by a secure employment for all, to opportunities for career development only for those needed and matching their jobs (Herriot and Pemberton, 1995; Rousseau, 1995; 1996). Organisations and people change their expectations, therefore creating new psychological contracts (Rousseau, 1995; 1996). Individuals have a diversity of career options and paths and they navigate their careers instead of letting the organisation make a decision for them. However, many people still desire to keep the traditional psychological contract in terms of security (Granrose and Baccili, 2006; McDonald *et al.*, 2005). These new descriptions of 'career' have received greater attention in modern organisational research as the business environment has become more competitive, dominated by globalisation and the rapid advance of technology. Organisations have restructured, de-layered, merged and grown by acquisition, and in the process have demolished the foundations for a hierarchical 'career-for-life' for all but a few (Bridges, 1995; Handy, 1989). In this world view, responsibility for the initiation, development and maintenance of a career has shifted from the organisation to the individual (Arthur, Khapova, and Wilderom, 2005; Sullivan, 1999).

Recently Baruch (2004) has a different perspective about the notion of career which is called the balanced view:

> "Career belongs to the individual but in much, if not most, employment, the career will be planned and managed for the individual by the organisation. The organisational structure forms the (internal) 'road map', providing identifiable positions, interrelationships between these positions, the qualities necessary to fill them, and

moreover, mechanisms to enable people to navigate this road map. This way organisation can take a leading role and have control over career planning and management...the variety of definitions re-emphasises that career involves a process of progress and development of individuals, which is sometimes described as the life stories of people. Nevertheless there is in the careers domain a substantial overlap between individual and organisational roles" (p. 3).

In the same vein, another new notion of 'career' started to emerge; for instance Sturges (2008) states that individuals have to create their alternatives and prospects to achieve their career intentions. So it is imperative upon individuals to engage in a series of career self-management activities with the aim of positioning themselves in the organisation and persuading leaders/top management to permit access to the career outcomes they most want (King, 2004).

2.2.1   Summary

The literature reviewed previously stated that there are different definitions of careers where authors have differed in their viewpoints about its meaning (Arthur *et al.*, 1999; Hall, 1996; Herriot and Pemberton, 1996; King *et al.*, 2005; Mirvis and Hall, 1994). In earlier years, 'career' as a word had not yet appeared and the terms 'occupation' and 'vocation' were used interchangeably by Parsons (1909) to establish a guideline for vocational development. In the twentieth century, career was perceived as a total life experience and was explored from a social perspective. This notion recognises career as something unconventional and argues that people work not just for financial needs (Hughes, 1937). Career development choice started to appear in the early 1950s to investigate the vocational choices. Holland (1985) had contributed to constructing a framework to develop the classification of occupations which help individuals with particular personalities to choose the appropriate career. The National Vocational Guidance Association (1973) built its own definition which states that career embraces all of life's activities which contributes significantly to the field of a career.

The foremost transformation in career goes back to the 1970s when the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Arthur, 1994) attempted to make a single definition of the term 'career' and put forward the notion of career without boundaries. Additionally, their objective was to create a

definition of 'career' that would cover all types of workers. In combining 'Chicago' sociology (Hughes, 1958) and 'Columbia' educational psychology (Super, 1957), (Arthur 1994), they applied four conditions to defining career: first, that it be applied to all staff and all organisations; secondly, that it imply a time dimension, vital in the relationship between the organisation and the individual to reflect progress in the job for instance; thirdly, that it establish that a 'career' is not the personal property of anyone and that the study of careers must have an interdisciplinary dimension; and, finally, the portrayal of a career from both a subjective and an objective perspective (Hughes, 1958).

The boundaryless career (Hall, 1996) emphasises the apparently unbounded prospects that career could present and how realising the advantage of such prospects might guide to career success (Arthur *et al.*, 1999; DeFillippi and Arthur, 1996). The protean career (Hall, 1976, 1996) is one that emphasises a self-directed approach to the career, and a career that is driven by individuals' own values. Both of these career concepts have framed the view of academic and career practitioners in the last several years (Briscoe and Hall, 2002).

In the same vein, the term 'new deal' appears to mirror how any psychological contract that may have existed between employer and employee has transformed as the latter can no longer anticipate a career for life (Herriot and Pemberton, 1995). The notion of career self-management emphasises that an individual's responsibility for managing their career is a critical prerequisite for career success and this has received interest by many scholars (King, 2004; Seibert, Kraimer, and Crant, 2001, Sturges Sturges *et al.*, 2002; Sturges, *et al.,* 2005; Sturges *et al.*, 2008; 2010). A further new contemporary career has emerged which is called a 'balanced view' that emphasises the importance of coordination between individual and organisation in career management for both parties' positive outcomes (Baruch, 2004). Thus, the definition of career in general, and career self-management, entails a critical examination from different individuals' global perspectives. By so doing it will contribute to this field particularly in the region that varies from its built theories.

2.3   Career Self-Management Notion

This section is allocated to explaining the concept of career self-management including its historical developmental theories, various definitions, core behaviours and antecedent behaviours. It is worthy of mentioning that the reason for focussing on career self-management in this thesis is that what has been learnt from the literature review so far reveals that career trends are currently moving towards individual approaches such as boundaryless, protean, and balanced views. However, such theories mainly come from the USA and Western countries, and discuss their researchers' and practitioners' perspectives about it. Therefore, it entails examining the nature of the self-managed career further to understand the conceptualisation more fully and to determine the values and assumptions underpinning this approach. By doing so, it helps in advancing our understanding of where its theories have come from and their potential for application in alternative settings, for example, in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

2.3.1   Developmental Views/Theories of Career Self-Management

King (2000) argues that despite the term 'career self-management' being employed in these early accounts of careers, evidence can be found to propose approaches in which bureaucrats and managers behave as anything other than 'inert' and engaged in behaviour which endeavours to benefit, highly, their career results.   King's study provides extensive literature about the developmental view of career self-management, some of which (i.e. related ones) are discussed in this section.

Whyte (1956) conducts extensive interviews with the CEOs of major American corporations - for instance General Electric and Ford. He finds that Americans subscribe to a collectivist ethic rather than to the existing notion of rugged individualism. The key point is that people became convinced that organisations and groups could make better decisions than individuals and therefore serving an organisation became logically preferable to advancing one's individual creativity. He lists a number of examples of how individual work and creativity can produce better result than collectivist process. Whyte (1956) offers an explanation of the behaviour of male executives and managers whom he terms 'organisation men'. These men work over weekends, take work home and spend long hours at work. Whyte's executives believe that such behaviours (i.e. working outside office hours and working at home) are imperative approaches to

progress within their organisation. Whyte argues that there is a conflict between the individual as he/she desires to be and the task he/she is called upon to do in the organisation. To facilitate this conflict, executives manage people's impressions of them. Whyte's quotes about organisational men:

> "He wants to dominate, not be dominated. But he can't act that way. He must not only accept control, he must accept it as if he liked it. He must smile when he is transferred to a place or a job that isn't the job or place he happens to want. He must appear to enjoy listening sympathetically to points of view not his own. He must be less 'goal-centred', more 'employee-centred'. It is not enough now that he work hard; he must be a damn good fellow to boot." (Whyte, 1956, p.143).

King (2000) acknowledges that shifting between companies may take place even within organisational careers. Whyte (1956) admits this, arguing that, organisations' transfer policies habituated executives to being uprooted, making it simpler for them to jump ship. Whyte's study results of executives disclosed that only a third stayed with the same organisation they began with, and another study discloses that the chief reason for shifting between organisations was because advancement was blocked. Therefore moving between organisations appears to have been a career self-management strategy, even for Whyte's 'organisation men' (King, 2000).

The literature review under the heading 'management of one's career' undertaken by Sofer (1970) supports sensitivity to prospects and restraints in the environment, and adherence to the norms and values of the level to which one seeks and builds informal group membership for information. Sofer argues that during the executive's career in the organisation individuals perform two sets of tasks: getting a job completed; and building, reinforcing, and enhancing their own positions. A study conducted in the UK using a sample of 81 male managers and technical professionals under the age of 39, specified other career self-management strategies (Sofer, 1970). Based on the question "Is there anything you feel you can or should do to move in the direction you want to go?" (p. 56). Most participants report improving one's qualifications, improving interpersonal relations, choosing jobs that are stepping-stones, and doing one's job well.

In the same vein, Kanter (1977) conducts a study in a large corporation which she called 'Indsco'. She specifies the factors by which men and women advanced in Indsco and how they did so. She argues that progression is more probably in jobs on well-trodden career paths which provide prospects for development and training, special assignment, work outside one's department and a boss that made introductions. Those types of jobs are normally linked with power that offered access to resources, information, political support, visibility and access to informal networks. Even though access to such jobs was a function of the company's structure, culture and selection biases, the implication was that securing a place in one of these jobs, rather than a 'dead-end' job, was a tactical technique to manage a career. Sponsors recommended the placing of managers ahead for potential prospects and supplying signals to others in the form of reflected power.

There is different research conducted in earlier years regarding managers and executives which are called 'organisational' careers. Such research implies that although tenures may have been a significant criterion for promotion, there are many other aspects which individuals do to ensure organisational outcomes come out in their preference, for instance: self-nomination, seeking visibility with decision-makers, finding a sponsor, impression management and moving between organisations (King, 2000). It would be difficult to mention all these studies because of the specified space allotted in this thesis for doing so; however, some of related aspects are mentioned here. Table 2.2 (King 2000) gives evidence that career self-management behaviour is identified from earlier literature on organisational careers.

Career self-management behaviours	Identified by
• Extended work involvement	• Pahl and Pahl, 1971; Whyte 1956
• Self-nomination	• Hall, 1976; Jennings, 1971
• Exposure and visibility	• Hall, 1976; Heissler and Gemmill, 1978; Jennings, 1971; Kanter, 1977; Whyte, 1956
• Improving skills and qualifications	• Sofer 1970
• Building reputation	• Kanter, 1977
• Interpersonal relations	• Kanter, 1977; Sofer, 1970, Whyte, 1956
• Impression management	• Kipnis and Vanderveer, 1971; Sofer, 1970;

	Whyte 1956; Worturan and Linsenmeier, 1977
• Strategic choice of job moves	• Jennings, 1971; Kanter, 1977; Martin and Strauss, 1956; Sofer 1970
• Building informal relationships	• Dalton, 1951; Dill *et al.*, 1962; Granovetter, 1973; Mansfield, 1972
• Political manoeuvring	• Bass, 1968; Dalton, 1951; Gemmill and deSalvia, 1977; Mansfield, 1973
• Moving between organisations	• Jennings, 1967; Mansfield, 1973; Whyte, 1956

Table 2.2 Career self-management behaviour identified from earlier literature (Source: King 2000, p. 44)

2.3.2 Career Self-Management Various Definitions

King (2000, p. 21) comments that individual responsibility for career is referred to in a number of ways in the literature review encompassing: "managing one's career" (for example, Jackson 1996), "career self-management" (for example, Stickland, 1996), "career management" (for example, Greenhaus and Callanan, 1994), "career strategies" (for example, Gould and Penley, 1984) and "career self-reliance" (Byster, 1998). She adds that even though the employment of the term "career self-management" was discovered in earlier works (for example, Hall, 1976; Sofer, 1970), the first empirical study to examine it directly was the one conducted by Hammer and Vardi (1981) to study the locus of control effects on self-initiated job moves. They did not supply a definition of career self-management but, rather, operationalised it in terms of effort made by individuals toward obtaining required jobs, informing the supervisor when he/she is seeking a job movement, bidding for other jobs and attempting to prove to the supervisor that he/she is the right person for a job. Amongst non-supervisory employees in two industrial settings, they find no impacts of locus of control on effort or frequency of employment of career strategies, but that internals initiated more of their own job moves. In addition, employees who are working in environments that encourage career self-management reported higher employment of these strategies than people in limiting environments and these differences are more significant than the effects of locus of control. Thus this section addresses various

definitions of career self-management and its association with different aspects which will be discussed below:

2.3.2.1   Definition Related to Career Strategies Setting

The first definition is the one constructed by Gould and Penley (1984) who investigated the association between career strategies and career success. Career strategies according to these authors, is defined as:

> "behaviours which may be utilised by an individual to decrease the time required for and uncertainty surrounding the attainment of important career objective" (p. 244).

They argue that the successful utilisation of career strategies would result in the efficient achievement of careers and lead to career progression. For instance, seeking guidance from a mentor (one type of career strategy) may assist individuals to enhance their career by gaining valuable feedback and ideas, which would likely assist the individuals to subjectively succeed in their careers. Based on earlier studies (for example, Hall, 1976; Jennings, 1971; Wortman and Linsenmeier, 1977), Gloud and Penley (1984) develop an inventory of seven types of career strategies: creating opportunities, extended work involvement, self-nomination/self-presentation, seeking career guidance, networking, opinion conformity, and other enhancement. They conducted a study to involve a sample of clerical, professional and managerial employees in a USA organisation. They examine the impact of career strategies on salary progression and find that a strategy is significantly employed by managers versus non-managers. The study also finds that creating opportunities and extended work involvement are positively related to salary progression for all employees. Other enhancement is counterproductive for managers only, and opinion conformity is counterproductive for all employees.

Feij, Whitely, Peiro and Taris (1995) explore career-enhancing strategies in a longitudinal panel study involving younger workers employed in eight countries as machine operators and office technologists. They discovered that career-enhancing strategies (operationalised based on consultation behaviours, networking and skill development) are linked with work centrality and that deployment is linked with supportive relationships with supervisors and co-workers. In

addition, career-enhancing strategies contribute to the subsequent development of intrinsic work values, social relations and endeavours at job content innovation. They define career enhancing strategies as:

> "the development of work objectives and plans, seeking advice and information from others about training or work assignments to increase knowledge and skills, skill development by working on varied job assignments, working extra hours, and networking" (pp. 232-233).

Noe (1996) conducted a study in a state agency in the USA involving 120 employees and their managers. He examines the association between different aspects of the career management process and employees' developmental behaviours and performance. His study finds that employees supply information related to their personal characteristics, career management strategies, their manager's career development support and willingness to participate in developmental activities. Managers supply ratings of each employee's job performance and developmental behaviour. Position, support for development, environmental exploration and distance from career goal explicate importance difference in employees' willingness to contribute in development activities and developmental behaviour. Noe's study depicts career self-management as a process which consists of three stages:

> "by which individuals collect information about values, interests and skill strengths and weaknesses (career exploration); identify a career goal; and engage in career strategies that increase the probability that career goals will be achieved" (p. 119).

King (2001) suggests that career self-management consists of four steps: "charting the institutional landscape, identifying gatekeepers, implementing career strategies and evaluating the effectiveness of those strategies" (pp. 2-3). She regards career self-management as a recursive process in which the perceived effectiveness of a specific strategy influences the decision to deploy that strategy in the future. It is an active process as well, not encompassing simply a one-off execution of a discrete behaviour, but rather of continuing implementation of a set of co-occurring behaviours. Strategies may be employed continuously or at irregular

intervals, and in conjunction with one another or independently. She adds that a definition of career self-management will be drawn from three themes of behaviour: self-interest and enhancement to control. She defines career self-management as:

> "...deployment by an individual of behavioural strategies intended to exert a controlling influence over his or her career outcomes" (p. 27).

2.3.2.2   Definition Related to Collecting Information

The second career self-management definition is constructed by Kossek *et al.* (1998) who argue that this notion is related to collecting information which helps in problem solving and decision-making. Kossek *et al.* (1998) examine the effectiveness of training and intervention with the intention to maximise people's degree of career self-management. Their study includes several hundred salaried professionals in a US transport organisation. Career self-management is operationalised based on two behaviours: developmental feedback seeking and job mobility preparedness. They assess employees' career perceptions issues (for instance adaptability, career self-efficacy, or perceived competence to self-manage a career, attitudes to feedback-seeking and training motivation). The study discovers that the training has a negative result on career self-management behaviours as well as career perceptions six months after the intervention. The study proposes that this could result from the rhetoric of the training which does not line up with the reality that trainees encounter subsequently, when they attempt to gain responsibility for their careers in an environment which is disappointing and unreceptive, resulting in withdrawal because of unmet expectations. These authors state that employees endorsed with self-initiated career initiatives expect opportunities to transform in common and, more chiefly, for changes in employment. Career self-management, according to Kossek and his colleagues, is defined as:

> "the degree to which one regularly gathers information and plans for career problem solving and decision making. It involves two main behaviours: one related to continuous improvement in one's current job; developmental feedback seeking; and the other related to movement: job mobility preparedness" (p. 938).

2.3.2.3 Is Career Self-management Definition Related to Behaviour, Attitudes or Cognition?

There is some confusion about whether career self-management is related to behaviour, attitudes or cognition (King, 2000). King, in her study, indicates that some scholars point to behaviour or attitudes at a very general level; for instance Arnold's "attempts to influence the careers of one or more people' or Bridges' "looking at yourself as if you were self-employed" (p. 26). Others scholars, for instance Kossek *et al.* (1998), point to behaviour as specified in exact terms, that is developmental feedback seeking and job mobility preparedness. Some accounts identify the results of such behaviour, for instance, empowerment (Feij *et al.*, 1995) or self-direction (Hall, 1976). King states that even with these and other differences, some similar themes emerge from these writers. A first common theme is that career self-management is a behavioural phenomenon. The second common theme is that this behaviour is initiated at the individuals' behest and with their priorities in mind. A third related theme is the suggestion that the effective deployment of such behaviour enhances perceptions of control over one's career. Out of these definitions which have been offered, no one single definition can be considered to summarise all of these themes. King argues that the nearest conclusive definition is probably that of Feij *et al.* (1995), although the idea of enhancement to control is implied rather than made explicit. She adds that for this reason the operation of the definition of careers self-management will be drawn from these three themes of behaviour, plus self-interest and enhancement to control.

2.3.3 Career Self-management Core Behaviours

Career self-management consists of proactive behavioural approaches to the management/advancement of one's career. In the section below, using Sturges *et al.'s* (2010) study as an anchor in the literature (see Table 2.3 below), key career self-management behaviours are discussed.

2.3.3.1 Networking Behaviour

Networking is one behaviour in career self-management *(*Emmerik *et al.*, 2006; Forret and Dougherty, 2001; 2004; Nabi, 2000; Sturges *et al.*, 2002). It is aimed at cultivating influential contacts at work (Sturges *et al.*, 2002). It is perceived as an increased exposure to other people within the organisation, which for example may increase appreciation of organisational practices,

provide valuable job search information, etc. (Lankau and Scandura, 2002). It concerns the constructing and nurturing of personal and professional relationships to generate a system of information, contact, and support, and all together have a crucial impact on career and personal success (Whiting and De Janasz, 2004). Sturges *et al.* (2002) argue that this behaviour includes activities such as, getting introduced to people who could influence their career development and building contacts in areas where they would like to work. It can be employed to promote the career either within or outside the organisation and this relies on an individual's career strategy (Forret and Dougherty, 2001; 2004). There are two types of networking: one that focusses on 'formal' and another focussing on 'informal' (Emmerik *et al.*, 2006; Forret and Dougherty, 2001; 2004).

There are differences between formal and informal networks because engagement in formal networks may have dissimilar implications for organisational change than the engagement in informal networks (McGuire, 2000). Since formal networks are public, officially recognised within the organisation and with identifiable memberships and explicit structure, they will be more accessible for change policies to advance women's careers (Emmerik *et al.*, 2006). For example, an employee who is excluded from a formal network can refer to company policy or written job descriptions to argue that she or he has been treated unfairly (Emmerik *et al.*, 2006). Employees who are excluded from informal networks, in contrast, have little recourse because organisations do not take responsibility for informal work ties (McGuire, 2000).

Emmerik *et al.* (2006) argue that informal networks tend to be personal, voluntary, and have fluid boundaries. Participation in informal networks is not formally governed or officially recognised (McGuire, 2000). Informal social network activities are with organisational members who share, for instance, common social interests and are often used as a means to socialise among colleagues and to participate in activities they enjoy (Emmerik *et al.*, 2006). Formal networks or network groups are officially prearranged relationships among functionally defined groups that exist for the reason of achieving some organisational task (Ibarra, 1993). Formal networks are inclined to be public, official, and have clear boundaries, they tend to have an identifiable membership and clear structure and they are officially recognised by employers (McGuire, 2000). According to Emmerik *et al.* (2006) there are a number of networks that help

employees in different ways, for instance a network for young talent, or the diversity network. Those young talents usually meet several times a year and frequently include both times for socialising and formal agendas and programmes (i.e. providing career aid or information regarding company policies).

2.3.3.2   Visibility Behaviour

This gives account to work achievements and makes sure such achievements are acknowledged by influential senior staff and could be useful particularly to advance a career within an organisation (Sturges *et al.*, 2002; Sturges *et al.,* 2008). It also involves activity, for instance staying late at work and making sure that people maintain a high profile within their organisation (Sturges, 2008). Visibility means pushing to be involved with high-profile projects which makes an individual visible (King, 2003). Such behaviour has a significant impact in increasing a formal organisational career management support, for instance, training, a development plan and work designed to develop competences (Sturges *et al.*, 2002), which then contributes to furthering self-promotion at work (Sturges *et al.*, 2008).

2.3.3.3   Positioning Behaviour

This pursues valuable job prospects (King, 2003). It is a behaviour intended to ensure that one has the contacts, skills and experience required to accomplish one's desired next step, internal and external to the current employing organisation (King, 2003). This author mentions different positioning strategies that people exhibit in which this section mentions some of the related aspects: making colleagues outside the company conscious about career aspirations, building friendships in the company that will assist to advance career progression, developing skills that are required in future career positions in another company, making sure to gain broadly based experience in several various companies, accepting only jobs that will keep career choices open, developing skills that are required in future career positions in the current organisation.

2.3.3.4   Influencing Behaviour

This aims to influence the decisions of work superiors (King, 2001). According to King (2001) there are three types of influencing strategies each of which entails exhibiting certain influencing behaviour: the first is 'Self-promotion' that is manipulating gatekeepers' perceptions of one's

competence or merit. Secondly, is 'Ingratiation' that is augmenting gatekeepers' liking or perception of similarity. Thirdly, is 'Upward influence' that is convincing gatekeepers to grant specific outcomes by employing persuasion, bargaining or assertiveness or by invoking a sense of dependency or obligation.

2.3.3.5   Building Human Capital Behaviour

Building human capital is through training and education (Nabi, 2000; Sturges, 2008). King (2004) argues that human capital investments may be of generic value, such as MBA qualifications, or they could be of specific value to a particular firm, occupation or industry. She adds that people seek investments which are observed to be valued by gatekeepers, and which are willingly recognised by them. Sturges (2008) conducts a study in three UK-based organisations where each organisation is asked to nominate a number of professional and managerial staff aged 35 and under (i.e. young professionals). The study finds that the young professionals intended to build human capital through informal, on-the-job learning. Building human capital is informally found to be potentially time-consuming for two reasons: the new roles and tasks took longer to perform and such new roles and tasks could involve taking additional responsibilities which would facilitate learning and development (Sturges, 2008).

2.3.3.6   Validating Behaviour

This concerns the establishment of a professional identity (Sturges, 2008). According to Sturges (2008) validation is related to learning about and adhering to dominant professional and organisational behavioural norms, which are chiefly concerned with the amount of effort individuals are expected to dedicate to work in order to be perceived to be performing appropriately. This is not essentially regarded as how long it might actually take complete the job. Sturges (2008) points out validity behaviours are useful at earlier career stages because at the end of a career people may already have acquired their professional qualifications and successfully established their professional reputation.

2.3.3.7   Mobility-oriented Behaviour

Job mobility preparedness is the extent to which individuals prepare themselves to be ready to act on internal and external career prospects. For instance such behaviour might include pro-

activeness in gaining information related to job opportunities, developing internal and external networks of contacts who supply job information, keeping a current resume, and reflecting on the next position desired. Obtaining such information enables individuals to be ready for any possible movement out of one's current position, business unit or the firm (Kossek *et al.*, 1998). It is about making plans to leave the organisation (Chiaburu *et al.*, 2006; Sturges *et al.*, 2002). It is also related to getting into a position to leave the organisation if it would benefit the individual's career (Sturges *et al.*, 2002).

2.3.3.8 Work-non-work Boundary Management

Boundary management is an important aspect in career strategy implementation, for instance, by placing the work/non-work boundary in a way that favours the pursuit of work and career interests, by permitting the boundary to be permeable enough for work activities to be conducted in non-work time or space, and by making the boundary flexible to prioritise the work issue at the expense of the home issue (Sturges, 2008). According to the Sturges (2008) the boundary is defined as the physical, temporal and cognitive demarcation between the two domains. The management of it involves a range of cognitive and physical behaviours, which together comprise "the strategies, principles and practices ... through which we organise potentially realm specific matters, people, objects and aspects of self into 'home' and 'work'" (Nippert-Eng, 1996, p. 7).

2.3.3.9 Expertise Development

Expertise development involves the individual's motivation to develop skills and experience to expand career opportunities (Nabi, 2000). This author finds that work centrality is associated with networking and expertise development behaviours. Additionally, employees' use of career strategies is likely to stimulate developmental behaviour. For instance, employees who are actively using career strategies encompassing expertise development and networking are more likely to read technical reports and journals and attend courses and seminars, as these activities assist in maintaining and increasing their knowledge and skills and developing contacts in the organisation. Kanter (1977) observes that employees with optimistic perceptions about their career opportunities are actively involved at work to a greater extent than employees with low prospects for advancement. Gould and Penley (1984) argue that the development of job-relevant

skills and expertise (expertise development) are significant for creating career development prospects which lead to performance improvement, facilitate positive effects from managers and eventually attract organisational rewards.

2.3.3.10   Career plan implementation

According to Raabe *et al.* (2007) individuals monitor their environments, collecting information to help in planning a course of action and, as a consequence of goals and information, they develop plans. These authors indicate implementing the plan means to vigorously influence the environment on one's behalf, and the outcomes are feedback relating one's actions. Individuals who self-manage their career plans endeavour to influence the organisation to be further responsive in assisting their careers.

These authors add that organisational responsiveness encompasses organisational advancement efforts, for instance, supplying mentoring, training opportunities or skills-development, and informal networking that career self-management behaviours have a great influence on career success through how well a career plan is implemented. Individuals who self-manage their career plans receive a higher degree of organisational responsiveness. Organisational responsiveness has a positive impact on pay increments and, consequently, leads to career satisfaction.

2.3.3.11   Seeking feedback

Developmental feedback seeking is the degree to which one seeks feedback on performance and career development requirement (Kossek *et al.*, 1998). According to these authors, feedback is pursued from sources other than the boss, for instance peer and customer assessment of performance, because such resources play a vital role in re-engineering work places. Developmental feedback seeking includes behaviours that could expose one's weaknesses because they involve engagement in acquiring new knowledge, and improving performance and learning new skills Chiaburu *et al.*, 2006). According to these authors, employees with high levels of proactive personality and low public self-consciousness espouse more developmental feedback-seeking behaviours than employees with high levels of proactive personality and high public self-consciousness.

2.3.4 Antecedents of Career Self-management Behaviour

In career self-management behaviour, an individual practices at a specified time, and relies on a number of career-related factors. First, it is determined by the career goal that individuals are attempting to accomplish (Nabi, 2000; Noe, 1996; Sturges, 2008). Secondly, it relies on the career stage of the individual (Sturges, 2008), because differing types of behaviours might be more or less valuable at various career stages. Thirdly, it is decided by whether their career strategy is intended to advance their career within their present organisation or direct its management outside the organisation (Kossek *et al.*, 1998; Sturges *et al.*, 2002).

If individuals feel that their career will be bettered by altering their organisation, they employ career self-management behaviour externally focussed which involves planning and endorsing strategies that may help them to advance their career outside the organisation (Kossek *et al.*, 1998; Sturges *et al.*, 2005). Some types of career self-management behaviour, for instance visibility and influencing behaviour could be mainly practical to advance their career with the current organisation, while mobility-oriented behaviour (Sturges *et al.*, 2002) is mainly suitable when an individual is thinking to leave the organisation. Other kinds of self-management behaviour, for instance networking, can potentially be used to promote the career within and outside the organisation (Forret and Dougherty, 2001; 2004).

Various organisational and individual variables may influence individual engagement in career self-management behaviours. Research into organisational factors which may promote career self-management has highlighted the role of precise help that organisations supply for career management and development. The existence of such support has been positively associated to internally focussed career self-management behaviour, for instance internal networking, visibility behaviour, and implementation of career plans (Raabe *et al.*, 2007; Sturges *et al.*, 2002; 2008), and associated negatively to externally focussed career self-management, for instance, mobility-oriented behaviour (Sturges *et al.*, 2002).

Until today, few studies have investigated individual antecedents of career self-management behaviour. The findings of those studies provide evidence that such antecedents incorporate personality traits, work attitudes and gender. Self-esteem, extroversion, and pro-activity have been associated with career self-management behaviours encompassing networking, and seeking

developmental feedback (Chiaburu *et al.*, 2006) and mobility preparedness (Forret and Dougherty, 2001). Work centrality has been linked with networking and expertise development (Nabi, 2000). Lastly, the findings of two studies examining the impact of gender on networking are mixed. In one study, women were engaged more than men to employ networking behaviours (Emmerik *et al.*, 2006); in another the findings were reversed (Forret and Dougherty, 2001). Table 2.3 summarises career self-management antecedent.

Antecedent	Career Self-Management Behaviour	Author
Career variables Career goal Career stage	Validating behaviour Building human capital Positioning behaviour Visibility behaviour Work–non work boundary management	Sturges (2008)
Desire for control over career outcomes	Influencing behaviour Positioning behaviour	King (2003)
Advancement motivation	Expertise development	Nabi (2000)
Organisational variables		
Organisational career management help	Networking behaviour Visibility behaviour Mobility-oriented behaviour	Sturges *et al.* (2002) Sturges *et al.* (2002, 2008) Sturges *et al.* (2005)
Management support for employee development	Development behaviour	Noe (1996)
Organisational career management intervention	Career plan implementation	Raabe *et al.* (2007)
Individual variables		
Self-esteem Extroversion Work centrality	Networking behaviour Networking behaviour Networking behaviour	Forret and Dougherty (2001) Forret and Dougherty (2001) Nabi (2000)

	Expertise development	
Proactive personality	Feedback seeking Mobility preparedness	Chiaburu *et al.* (2006)
Gender	Networking behaviour	Forret and Dougherty (2001)
Gender	Networking behaviour	Emmerik *et al.* (2006)

Table 2.3 Career self-management antecedents (Sources: Sturges, *et al.*, 2010, p. 111)

2.3.5 Summary

One important objective of this thesis is to appreciate the notion of career self-management. The literature review revealed that there is a need for further career self-management examination. This need is reflected in the idea that organisations cannot provide employees with jobs for ever and, accordingly, individuals must be proactive in organising and managing their own career. In addition, the changing nature of the job markets makes it necessary for the individual to have control of their career and this can be achieved through career self-management behaviours.

Career self-management is related to individual behaviours like working at the weekends, taking work home and spending long hours at work as these behaviours are important for advancing careers within organisations (Whyte, 1956). It is about identifying a strategy to be executed by individuals to get a job completed and by others to build, reinforce, and enhance their own positions (Sofer, 1970). Obtaining jobs that provide individuals with opportunities (i.e. development and training, special assignment, work outside one's department and a boss that makes introductions), helps these individuals to access resources (for instance information, political support, visibility and access to informal networks) where this technique facilitates managing a career (Kanter, 1977). Career self-management has been firstly operationalised in terms of effort made by individuals toward obtaining required jobs, informing supervisors when they are pursuing movement, bidding for other jobs and endeavouring to convince the supervisors that they are the best people for the job (Hammer and Vardi, 1981).

While attempting to construct a definition for career self-management, scholars in this field relate it to strategy. For instance it is defined as behaviours that may used by people to decrease the time needed for, and uncertainty surrounding the attainment of significant career objectives (Gould and Penley 1984). Career-enhancing strategies are associated with work centrality and deployment is associated with supportive relationships with supervisors and co-workers (Feij *et al.*, 1995). Others define career self-management as a process which consists of three stages: collecting information about strengths and weaknesses; identifying a career goal; and employing career strategies that increase the possibility to achieve career goals (Noe, 1996). Career self-management is executed based on two behaviours: developmental feedback seeking and job mobility preparedness (Kossek *et al.*, 1998, p. 938).

Career self-management is related to exhibiting different types of proactive behaviours by individuals who endeavor to obtain the most benefit from career outcomes (King, 2000). It consists of four steps: 1) charting the institutional landscape, 2) identifying gatekeepers, 3) executing career strategies and 4) assessing the effectiveness of those strategies. It is an active process not simply consisting of a one-off execution of a discrete behaviour but, instead, it requires the regular executing of a set of co-occurring behaviours. Career self-management strategy entails individuals engaging in a series of career self-management activities with the aim of positioning themselves in the organisation and influencing key gatekeepers to provide desired career outcomes (King, 2004).

Career self-management has different behavioural types of which this thesis attempts to review some related aspects based on Sturges *et al.*'s (2010) study which is summarised in Table 2.3. These behaviours are: Networking (Sturges *et al.*, 2002); Visibility (Sturges, *et al.*, 2002; Sturges, 2008); Positioning (King, 2003); Influencing behaviour (King, 2001); Building human capital through training and education (Nabi, 2000; Sturges, 2008); Validating (Sturges, 2008); Mobility-oriented behaviour (Chiaburu *et al.*, 2006; Sturges *et al.*, 2002); Work-non-work boundary management (Sturges, 2008); Expertise development (Nabi, 2000); Career plan implementation (Raabe *et al.*, 2007) and Seeking feedback (Kossek *et al.*, 1998).

In the context of career self-management antecedents, there are three major aspects which may influence careerists' behaviours. According to Sturges *et al.* (2010) the antecedents include: Career variables (i.e. career goal, career stage, desire for control over career outcome and advancement motivation), organisational variables (i.e. organisational career management help, management support for employee development, organisational career management interventions) and individual variables (i.e. self-esteem, extroversion, work centrality, proactive personality and gender). Such antecedents may influence different behaviours such as: networking, visibility, positioning, influencing, constructing human capital, validating and mobility-oriented behaviours. Individual career self-management behaviour types are experienced at certain periods of time determined by different career related factors, for example: career goals which individuals are attempting to accomplish (Nabi, 2000; Noe, 1996; Sturges, 2008), career stage of the individual (Sturges, 2008) and the decision of whether the career strategy is intended to advance the career for those individuals within the present organisation or outside the organisation (Kossek *et al.*, 1998; Sturges *et al.*, 2002).

2.4   Organisational Factors Promote/Limit Career Self-management

This section reviews the organisational factors that have an impact on career self-management practice in either a positive or a negative stance. Career practices are carried out by organisations, where the organisation assists and supports all employees at all levels to meet their individual needs. As mentioned earlier, career self-management differs from organisational career management. Whereas the organisational career approach depends on the organisation to manage individuals' career, the career self-management approach depends on the individuals' pro-activity to demonstrate their initiatives to manage their own career (King, 2004). This encompasses various activities, for instance, gathering information about career prospects, searching for feedback about an individual's performance and competencies, and constructing career opportunities all the way through networking and actions for the reason of enhancing an individual's visibility (King, 2003; Sturges *et al.*, 2002; Sturges *et al.*, 2008). Organisational career management is related to the activities provided by the organisation to plan and manage their employees' careers (Baruch, 1999; Baruch and Budhwar, 2006; Sturges, *et al.*, 2002). It comprises an extensive variety of programmes and interventions concentrating on matching individual and organisational career needs which may take the form of more or less formal

activities, from training courses and assessment centres to mentoring and career advice (Baruch, 1999; Baruch and Peiperl, 2000). Career practitioners and scholars argue that if organisations provide particular support it may encourage career self-management behaviours and thus facilitate its practice.

2.4.1 Organisational Promoting Factors to Career Self-management and Consequential Behaviours

Despite the increasing importance of career self-management, there is a dearth in how organisations may provide the necessary support to influence career self-management behaviour. Such support could be through organisational commitment, leadership and management support, training and development, mentoring and so forth.

Sturges *et al.* (2002) examine the relationship between organisational and individual career management activities and organisational commitment. They conducted a longitudinal study to explore such relationships among graduates in the first ten years at work in the UK. According to this study the three variables are defined as the following: 1) Organisational career management is defined as "attempts made to influence the career development of one of more people" (Arnold, 1997, p. 19). Its activities could be formal such as training courses, assessment centres, etc., or informal activities such as mentoring and career advice. 2) Organisational career self-management activities are defined as "the degree to which one regularly gathers information and plans for career problem solving and decision making. It involves two main behaviours: one related to continuous improvement in one's current job; developmental feedback seeking; and the other related to movement: job mobility preparedness" (Kossek *et al.*, 1998, p. 938). 3) Organisational commitment is defined based on Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979) as "the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organisation" (p. 82).

The study found that: 1) High organisational commitment linked positivity with the practice of career management activities by graduates to advance their career within organisations and low organisational commitment is positively associated with behaviour aimed to advance graduate careers outside the organisation. 2) The graduates who manage their own career (self-

management) receive more support from their employers. The authors suggest that there may be a potential opportunity for employers to construct a 'virtuous circle' of career management in which both parties (employer and employee) complement each other. 3) The study shows the importance of aspects of career self-management for enhancing organisational help in career management. For instance, employees who do more networking appear to attract more informal help, while those who increase their visibility report increased formal career support. 4) The study confirms the negative association between organisational commitment and mobility oriented behaviour.

The study recommends that employers must be aware of how exactly to encourage graduates to behave in such a way as to promote their careers within rather than outside the organisation, if they wish to maximise retention early in the career without encouraging graduates to believe that they have a career for life. Any career management help given should focus more on informal activities, rather than formal training and development, if they wish to encourage graduates' career self-management activities.

The previous study (i.e. Sturges *et al.*, 2002) is longitudinal, thus it is continued in 2005. This time the relationship between various types of career management activities, the psychological contract and outcomes of psychological contract achievement are investigated. Sturges *et al.* (2005) discuss such relationships, which help to appreciate career management, organisational commitment and work behaviour. This study targets a new-media company in the UK and uses data collected in 2002 where the sample includes technology experts, journalists, and marketing specialists, many of whom had joined the organisation as young graduates with little previous work experience. The study uses the following five measures: 1) the psychological scale was modified from measures previously employed by Rousseau and Robinson (Robinson, 1996; Robinson and Rousseau, 1994). 2) Organisational career commitment is measured using items developed by the previous study conducted by Sturges *et al.* (2002). It comprises a six-item measure of 'formal' interventions (for example, given training to help develop the career), plus a four–item measure of 'informal' help (for example, being given career advice when needed). 3) Individual career management behaviour is measured using items developed by the previous study of Sturges *et al.* (2002). Two scales were used here to measure career management

activities aimed at furthering the career within and outside the organisation. 4) Affective organisational commitment assessment used Meyer, Allen and Smith (1993). Continuance organisational commitment was assessed using Meyer *et al.* (1993). 5) The information on job performance and subsequent absence and turnover were extracted from the company's study records.

The study found that: 1) both individual and organisational career management behaviours are associated to psychological contract fulfilment. 2) Organisational career management help is linked with affective commitment and job performance. 3) Psychological contract fulfilment plays a major role in mediating the association between career management help and such attitudes and behaviours. 4) Organisational commitment may mediate the relationship between psychological contract fulfilment and individual career management behaviour aimed at advancing the career outside the organisation.

Sturges *et al.* (2008) repeated the studies they conducted in the UK (Sturges *et al.*, 2002 and 2005) to explore career management behaviour, but this time in Iceland. Their main argument is that the nature of careers in Iceland differs from that existing in the UK and US. Data were collected through a longitudinal questionnaire survey with a sample comprising four Icelandic organisations. The study employed the following variables measured at both time points, for example: 1) organisational career management and individual career management were employed with measures developed by Sturges *et al.* (2002). 2) Affective and continuance organisational commitment was assessed using Meyer, Allen and Smith (1993). 3) Intention to quit was measured using two items taken from a measure developed by Seashore, Lawler, Mirvis and Cammann (Cook, Hepworth, Wall and Warr, 1981). 4) Job performance was assessed using a four-item measure (Conway and Guest 2002). The study explored if career deals - the existence of which had been found in the UK - are practiced in the Icelandic context.

Through the longitudinal questionnaire survey in a sample consisting of four Icelandic organisations, they found that: 1) certain dimensions of the contemporary career deal shown to exist in the UK are less apparent in the Icelandic context. 2) While a close reciprocal relationship between career self-management behaviour and organisational career management help does

exist, other potential aspects of the deal are absent. 3) In Iceland, individuals who obtain more help in managing their careers are more committed to their employer but this commitment does not imply that they will do more to manage their own careers with their current employer as a result. 4) In addition, no links were found between career management activities and job performance. 5) Finally, in Iceland, individuals do not engage in career self-management behaviour to any great extent and when they do, their behaviour does not seem to have the same kind of focus or meaning that has been shown in the context of the contemporary career deal that exists in the UK.

At the beginning of the study the authors suggest that the difference between the UK and Iceland could result from the different labour markets. Such differences may lead to differences in the practices of Human Resources Management (HRM) and career management behaviour. However, the study ultimately found that there are many factors leading to such differences, for example, country size, and type of organisation in which the participants work. For example, Iceland is one of the smallest countries in Europe and thus sustains a business environment where usually there is only one major organisation in each sector. This reason may affect the reduction in job mobility. Also there are differences in sample size between the two studies in the UK and Iceland. In the UK study people are younger because the study focusses on graduates in their earlier careers and they are well educated. In contrast the sample size in Iceland comprised participants who are older and less educated than UK participants. This means that age and educational background may have an impact on career attitudes and behaviour.

Interestingly self-management behaviours appear to have the strongest effect on career satisfaction (Raabe *et al.*, 2007). Career management intervention based on action regulation theory trained 205 white collar employees to engage in their own career building actively by increasing their self-knowledge, career goal commitment, and career plan quality. The authors proposed three variables (goal, planning and information collection) which are positively related to subsequent career self-management behaviour, which led directly and indirectly to career satisfaction almost 10 months after the interventions.

The study presented a model illustrating how employees can self-manage their careers within a single organisation and how the organisation can support their self-management. An action theory framework based on personal initiatives served as a basis for developing the intervention content and process (self-regulation). The authors explained how employees can enhance control over their career by engaging in various activities that help to increase career self-management. Also they clarified the role and importance of active career self-management for career building. Control in regulation theory meant that individuals steer their own activities in correspondence with some goals. Self-regulation theory argues that people transact with the environment and this allows individuals to steer their goal-directed activities over time and across altering circumstances. Interventions to employ self-regulation theory aid enhanced control and self-regulation, and they have been effective for very specific employees' short-term behaviours, for instance, job attendance, reduction of problems in workplace behaviours and sales.

The idea of self-regulation theory is based on the notion that goals, plans and feedback are relevant parameters for regulating individual actions where the action sequence includes the following steps: Goals, information collection, planning, execution, and feedback. People check their environments, gathering information to assist in planning a choice of action. As a result of goals and information, they develop plans. Executing the plan means to actively influence the environment on an individual's behalf, and the outcomes are feedback regarding the individual's actions. Therefore, personal initiative, characterised by people being self-starting, proactive and persistent in the face of barriers (Frese, Kring, Soose, and Zempel, 1996), serves as the underlying foundation for this study's intervention.

In terms of the antecedents to the execution of active career self-management behaviours, the study found: 1) the intervention leads to positive changes in goal commitment, self-knowledge and plan quality. 2) Goal commitment and self-knowledge are positively related to plan quality. 3) Plan quality mediates the relationships of self-knowledge and goal commitment to active career self-management behaviours. Related to consequences of executing active career self-management behaviours, the study found: 1) employees who executed more active career self-management were more satisfied with their career and progress. 2) Both organisational responsiveness and pay increase partially mediated the relationship between active career self-

management behaviours and career satisfaction. 3) Career plan implementation and speed in job transition did not mediate the path from active career self-management behaviours to career satisfaction.

To summarise, the study shows that action regulation theory (Frese and Zapf, 1994) can explicate employees' behaviours regarding the control of their own careers. It also clarifies the role and importance of career self-management behaviours for consequences related to career building. It is imperative that career self-management correlates to two objective factors of career building: pay increase (through organisational responsiveness) and speed in job transition (through career plan implementation). These findings show that self-managing an individual's career plan is a vital subject for future career research and that personal control of careers is, in fact, valuable for employees as well as organisations.

In respect of relationships between career self-management initiatives and individual expectation about organisational support, De Vos, Dewettinck and Buyens (2009) conducted a study using a sample of 491 employees in six large organisations in Belgium. They were asked to report on their career self-management initiatives, their expectations towards organisational support and their commitment and career success. This was complemented by information from their supervisors on career management support offered by Human Resources (HR) and line management to these employees.

The study revealed that organisational and individual career management initiatives are both important in explaining employees' results. Both have an important role in explicating the level of employees' commitment to their organisations as well as their career progress where career self-management increases career success also. The study discloses that individuals who take responsibility to manage their career expect more support from their organisations and this means that career self-management positively impacts affective commitment and perceived career success. Also, organisational career management has a positive relationship with affective commitment and career progress of individuals where the career self-management moderates the relationship of organisational career management with affective commitment and subjective career success. The findings also suggest that in explicating subjective career success, the career

support offered by the organisation plays a significant essential role for those employees who are less probable to engage in career self-management activities. This indicates that despite the notion of the 'new' career, such career support provided by organisations to their employees, is still a vital part of organisations' human resources policies.

From the discussion in this section, it shows that organisational support is a significant factor that encourages individual career self-management behaviour. Therefore organisational career management and individual career self-management complement each other (Sturges *et al.*, 2005); however, until today there is a scarcity of empirical research to explicate this complex relationship. Moreover if an organisation depends on career self-management initiatives without considering support it could create a gap between employees who are more focussed on career self-management and those who are more reactive toward their career development (De Vos *et al.*, 2009).

General types of organisational support, for instance, Perceived Organisational Support (POS) and Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) have encouraged employees' career self-management behaviours and send signals to the employees that they are worth investing in and retaining (Sturges *et al.*, 2010). Attributes, for instance, gender and locus of control (individuals believe that they are in control of their future) may influence how individuals manage their careers. These authors argue that although there is a growing call for professional self-development, few studies have highlighted the leader's development. Most focus on those individual characteristics that explain one's motivation to engage in self-development. They conducted a questionnaire distributed to employees of a new media company in operation in the UK for seven years. The UK organisation was chosen because it was thought to represent the 'new' career environment in that it had a flat organisational structure, few established career paths, and little formal organisational career management policy (Arnold, 1997). The result shows that a person having individual characteristics associated to mastery, work, and career-growth orientations displays more motivation to perform leader self-development and is more skilled at performing instructional and self-regulatory processes. The higher self-development motivation and skill resulted in greater reported self-development activities. Unexpectedly, organisational support reduced the importance of this association.

It is noticed in the literature review that there is an ongoing effort to identify whether there is a persistent preference for the conventional organisational career management over individual career self-management. In this context, King (2003) purports the idea that graduates accessing the labour market might have work experience approximating a 'new' career. She conducted a study in the UK, examining employees under the age of 36 and investigated their career preferences. The people under the study were asked about their career history and career preferences where those preferences were categorised into seven sub-dimensions:

1. Traditional career, the significance of protected employment and predictable progression within one company.
2. Employability, the significance of doing an assortment of jobs to gain a variety of experience, obtaining a diversity of skills and building up an individual's CV.
3. Multiple company careers, the significance of progression by moving between employers.
4. Balance, the significance of preserving a sense of balance between work commitments and home life.
5. Entrepreneurial career, the significance of achieving great entrepreneurship at a later stage in an individual's career.
6. Immediate gratification, the significance of instant job challenge and enjoyment over and above long-term career development.
7. Professional career, the significance of succeeding within a profession or expert field.

The study revealed that the graduates accepted the notion of the new career as long as employability is most imperative in their career preference. The results imply that graduates have believed in the notion of a new career (i.e. employability); however, they anticipate advancing in a more conservative way (i.e. progressing in one organisation). The study found graduates' preference according to the following sequence, where 'employability' is higher and 'multiple companies' is lower: employability, professionalism, balance, traditional, immediate gratification, entrepreneurial and multiple company.

One of the main arguments in King's study is that the traditional career still has significant value for both employers and employees and the decline of the traditional career is still premature. She concludes that the structure of a career development programme still has a useful outcome for employee and employer. The graduates are always anxious about their mobility but not to the extent of diminishing organisational commitment and loyalty. The study suggests that employers should consider the importance of employability issues to the graduates and realise that this can be experienced internally and externally. In addition, the employer must utilise this to its benefit by successfully recruiting and constructing leadership potential for the future.

In the same vein, King (2004) suggests a concept based on Crites' (1969) model of vocational adjustment which gives an excellent starting point for appreciating career self-management. King (2004) argues that people use three types of career self-management behaviour: positioning, influence, and boundary management to react to career development tasks. These behaviours are used by individuals to react to or reduce thwarting conditions or career obstacles and by so doing it will lead to vocational adjustment. Individuals also use various types of vocational behaviour within a selected occupation to remain economically productive, to remain with the speed of developments in technology and prospect, to maintain contact and connections, to move between employers and to maintain balance between work and the rest of their lives. Crites' model of vocational adjustment provides a more detailed test of what causes that behaviour to be made in the first place (incorporating aspiration for control, self-efficacy, and career anchors), and the consequences of embracing it (incorporating career and life satisfaction, secondary responses, and learned helplessness). A model of the causes and consequences of career self-management is portrayed in Figure 2.1. The larger box in the centre portrays the variety of career self-managing behaviours. During successful use of career self-managing behaviours over a sustained period, people master their development tasks and, as a consequence, attain their desired career outcomes.
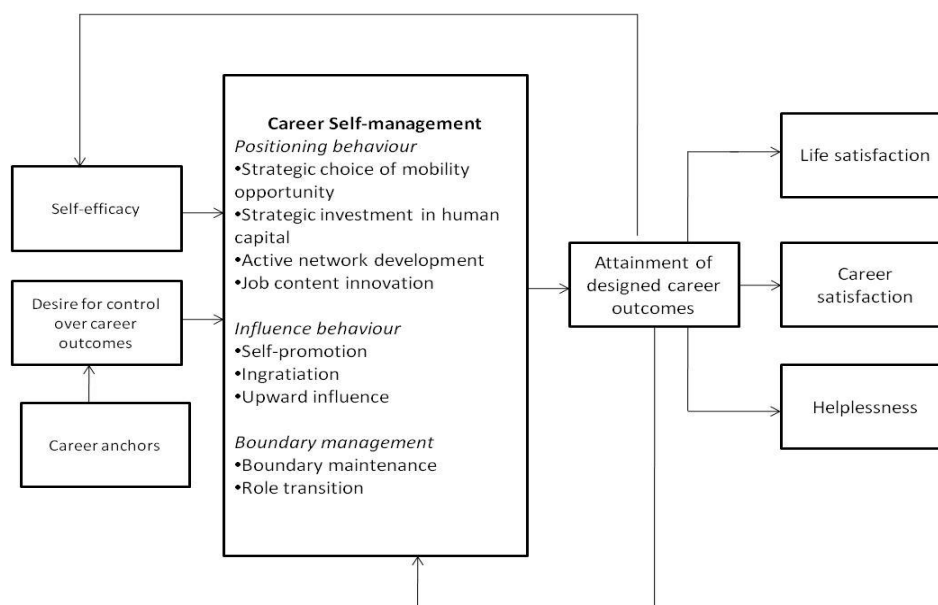
Figure 2.1 A model of the causes and consequences of career self-management (King, 2004, pp. 112–133)

Three behaviours such as self-efficacy, desire for control, and career anchors are suggested in order to enhance perceptions of control over the career, leading to career satisfaction; however, there is a possibility that career self-management is associated with negative outcomes and maladjustment. The framework is suggested to apply both to bounded organisational careers and to more flexible, improvised careers.

2.4.2 Organisational Limiting Factors to Career self-Management and Consequent Behaviours

In this area of the literature, researchers have sought to determine the variables that limit the enacting of career self-management. As the notion of career self-management seems to be a relatively new notion in the area of career, most of the literature review in this context discusses the positive impact where the barriers which may bounding it in practice demonstrate a lack of research. There could be many organisational factors that have negative impact on career self-management behaviours; however, this study will focus only on those which may link directly to career self-management. These factors are: organisational change, an ineffective HRM strategy, and organisational culture.

Organisational changes, for instance delayering in the organisational structure for pursuing flexibility, have impacted individual career progress and as a result have created employee resistance to change (Mills and Ungson, 2003). This implication could have resulted from the employees' perception that most organisations do not manage change well (Nilakant and Ramnarayan, 2006). Changes in organisational structures have an impact on the nature of careers (Brousseau *et al.*, 1996; Kelly, Brannick, Hulpke, Levine, and To, 2003). According to Lips-Wiersma and Hall (2007), the small number of studies that have associated career to change illustrate that, on the entirety, organisational changes are perceived to be threatening to career progress (Kelly *et al.*, 2003) and career security (Ogbonna and Wilkinson, 2003). Gunz (2000) points out that at the organisational level; career is related to the flow of people through the organisation. Therefore, altering the organisational structure probably leads to alteration in flow. One possible impact of changing in organisations illustrates that delayering reduces the career horizons of many managers which results in bounded career opportunities, reduction in expenditure, disappointment and low morale (Lips-Wiersma and Hall, 2007).

Ineffective HRM may have an impact on individual careers as well. It is a function within an organisation that focusses on management of the workforce or human resources. It includes many activities, for instance recruitment and selection, training and development, employees' assessment or performance appraisal, rewarding, employees' relationship, and so on. It is also responsible for ensuring that employees within organisations comply with the employment and labour laws. All the HRM activities if not managed or practiced in the right manner toward employer and employees' mutual benefit, will have a bad impact on individuals' careers. Budhwar and Baruch (2003) argue that practitioners as well as academicians in the area of HRM are increasingly investigating the importance of career planning management systems' appropriateness for organisations functioning in various countries. They argue that by so doing, this can assist the development of new management practices that may become significant, for instance, training instruments for expatriate managers and policy initiators. Authors like Hall, (1986) and Baruch and Peiperl, (2000) highlight the significance of career practices and activities (for example recruitment and selection) and the increasing endeavour endorsed by top management in several organisations. For instance, in Israel a study conducted by Tzabbar, Vardi and Baruch (2003) found that for taking decisions on promotion, the Human Resources

Management System tends to rely on particularistic criteria and evaluation programmes, and for managing promotion they rely on internal development programmes. This is because upward mobility opportunities are limited where many organisations pursue external labour markets to acquire managerial talent.

Mahdi and Barrientos (2003) found that employment and career development in Saudi Arabia segmented across nationalities. The essential factors forming Saudi Arabia employment and career development encompass employment policy, education and training, labour regulations and recent Saudisation policies that attempted to eliminate reliance on foreign labour by replacing non-Saudi employees with Saudi nationals. However, Saudisation encountered many barriers, particularly in the private sectors. Saudis are struggling to advance their career in the private sector because of high numbers of foreign labour, not having the right skills, low salaries in this sector and so forth. In Cyprus, differences have been found between staffing methods which are employed by small and large organisations in north Cyprus (Tanova, 2003). In addition, small organisations more probably rely on informal methods of recruitment and large organisations on more formalised methods of recruitment. Al-Hamadi, Budhwar and Shipton (2007) point out that HRM and Human Resource Development (HRD) were new phenomena in Oman and the foremost three factors that play major roles in everything including HRM in Oman are Islam, tribe and family. The argument here is that HRM should be practiced based on a strategy that should be placed for seeking the best practice and spending efforts to eliminate the factors that may have negative impacts such as culture, political, economic issues and so on. Namazie (2003) found that there is significant favouritism in recruitment and selection in the context of Iran and the development policies lead to staff retention and enable hierarchical careers development.

The last barrier to career self-management within the organisational context is organisational culture. Hofstede, Neuijen, Ohayv and Sanders (1990) sought to examine the organisational cultures in 20 units from 10 different organisations in Denmark (five organisations) and the Netherlands (five organisations) where data on task, structure, and control characteristics of each unit were collected separately. Measures of the cultures of the 20 units, when combined at organisation level, indicated that a large part of the variances among these 20 units could be

explained by six factors related to established concepts from organisational sociology, where organisational cultures have been measured across six independent dimensions. Distinctions between organisational cultures existed primarily at the level of practices as observed by members. The scores of the units on the six dimensions were partially explicable by organisational idiosyncrasies but were also significantly connected with the diversity of task, structural, and control-system characteristics of the units.

Based on this study, the authors classified manifestations of organisational culture into four categories: symbols, heroes, rituals, and values, as shown in Figure 2.2.
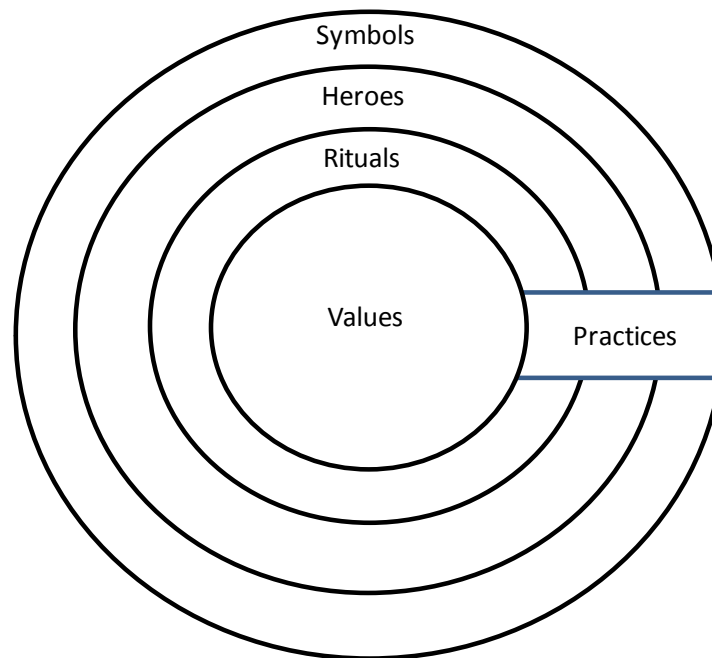
Figure 2.2 Manifestations of culture: from shallow to deep (Hofstede *et al.*, 1990, pp. 286-316)

Symbols are words, gestures, pictures, or objects that hold a specific sense within a culture. Heroes are persons, alive or dead, real or imaginary, possessing attributes highly valued in the culture and who therefore serve as role models or ideals of behaviour (Wilkins, 1984). Rituals are combined activities within a culture which are technically unessential but socially fundamental. Values are nebulous feelings about what is good and evil, beautiful and ugly,

normal and abnormal, rational and irrational; feelings that are often at the unconscious level and rarely discussable, that cannot be observed as such but manifest themselves in different kinds of behaviour. Hofstede *et al.*, (1990) found that in TKB (TKB is a 60-year-old production unit in the chemical industry) effective leaders had to engage with the patterns of social behaviour. Effective managers were accessible, fair and good listeners. Careers in TKB are built on social skills. No one should behave conspicuously, no one needs to be brilliant, but it is essential to be a good networker. Individuals should respect each other and in the organisation this is called 'the strict rules for being a nice person.' Hofstede and his colleagues found that the core of corporate culture is represented by the shared values. Differences in the values of employees were more based on the demographic criteria of nationality, age, and education than on membership in the organisation as such. They concluded that the values were shaped by the organisation's founders and key leaders and that the way these values affected the rank and file employees was through shared practices. Founders' and leaders' values become members' practices. The most important outcome of the research project is a six-dimensional model of organisational cultures (Factor 1: Process-Oriented vs. Results-Oriented, Factor 2: Employee-Oriented vs. Job-Oriented, Factor 3: Parochial vs. Professional, Factor 4: Open System vs. Closed System, Factor 5: Loose Control vs. Tight Control and Factor 6: Normative vs. Pragmatic), defined apparent common practices: symbols, heroes, and rituals which hold a precise meaning within the organisational unit.

Laurent (1986) points out that, managers in organisations embrace specific sets of assumptions, ideas, beliefs, preferences and values in the way to manage people to achieve organisational goals. Over time these ideas are translated into specific policies, systems and practices which, in turn, may support or revise the original ideas where the organisational members have their expectations related to those practices which also may support or alter the established policies. The mutual interaction between employee and employer and through this complex process, notions, actions, and a certain approach or way to manage people tends to develop in some organised method and this is called 'Human Resource Management'. He adds that if HRM and practices reflect managers' assumptions regarding how to manage people, it becomes very difficult to appreciate such assumptions in order to properly understand the meaning of exacting policies and procedures. The author expresses this assumption in the form of a statement within a standard questionnaire in order to obtain the respondents' agreement or disagreement with such

statements: 1) the main reason of having a hierarchical structure is that everyone knows his/her authority over whom; 2) most managers appear to be more motivated by attaining power than by achieving objectives; 3) it is imperative for any managers to have in hand the exact answers to most questions that their subordinates may raise about their work; 4) it is often essential to bypass the hierarchal line in order to have efficient work relationships; 5) most managers would be able to accomplish better outcomes if their role were less specifically defined; and, 6) organisational structures in which certain subordinates have two direct bosses should be eliminated at all costs. Across a sample of 10 Western national cultures, managers from Latin cultures (French and Italians) always observe organisations as social systems of associations supervised by power, authority and hierarchy to a much greater extent than their Northern counterparts. An 'instrument' view is held by American managers to perceive organisation as a set of tasks to be accomplished through a problem-solving hierarchy where positions are identified in terms of tasks and functions and where authority is based on functionality. A 'social' view is held by French managers to perceive organisation as a collective of people to be supervised through formal hierarchy where positions are determined in terms of levels of authority and status and where authority is more connected to individuals than it is to their offices or functions (Inzerilli and Laurent, 1983).

It is important here to draw a distinction between national culture (to be explained in detail in the next Section (2.5) and organisational culture. The difference in national culture can be found deeply rooted in values between countries, whereas the differences in organisational culture can be found in the practices that differ from one organisation to another (Hofstede, 1991). National cultures "...are acquired in one's early youth, mainly in the family and in the neighbourhood, and later at school. By the time a child is 10 years old, most of its basic values have been programmed into its mind...For occupational values the place of socialisation is the school or university, and the time is in between childhood and adulthood" (Hofstede, 1991, p. 182; see also Hofstede *et al.*, 1990, p.312). Organisational culture refers to the way the organisation is structured and run. It encompasses factors such as relationships between employees and management, behaviour types which an employer expects to receive from its employees and packages the organisation provides to employees. When organisations employ different people from different national cultures, it can be useful to create a unified organisational culture. Thus it

can be realised that many international organisations operating in different cultures have strong unified corporate cultures (Hofstede, 1991), for example IKEA, McDonalds', Zara and so on.

To conclude the point here is that organisational culture may limit career self-management enactment if the structure within the organisation is lengthy, because this entails the individual's obtaining approval for every single decision. It might also reduce people's creativity and limit them from reaching leaders who might facilitate that career development. If managers are in favour of attaining power over their subordinates, the conflicts are between individuals and manager in terms of achieving individual goals (Laurent, 1986). If managers fail to provide their subordinates with defined tasks, this may lead to difficulties in setting their own strategies and achieving their goals accordingly. Finally, career self-management experience could be bounded when the organisation's focussed attention is the process, job, parochial, closed system, tight control and normative rather than results, employee's satisfaction, professional, open system, loose control and pragmatic respectively while defining common practices such as symbols, heroes and rituals (Hofstede *et al.*, 1990).

2.4.3   Summary

Within this area of the literature, the central issue explored in this section is organisational factors that either support or limit individuals from embracing career self-management and its consequence behaviours.

First, we began with literature that provided evidence in which the support that an organisation provides has influence on career self-management behaviours. The studies in this area evidence that career self-management includes different activities, for example, gathering information about career prospects, searching for feedback about an individual's performance and competencies, and constructing career opportunities all the way through networking and actions for the reason of enhancing individual visibility (King, 2003; Sturges *et al.*, 2002; 2008). Although the importance of career self-management has increased, there is still a shortage in how organisations may offer essential support to influence career self-management behaviour. These types of support may be through organisational commitment, leadership and management support, training and development, mentoring and so forth.

The literature disclosed the different significant aspects of career self-management for enhancing organisational aid (Sturges *et al.*, 2002). Thus, employees who manage their own career (self-management) receive more support from their employers. Two types of support are found which either manifest in formal or informal support. In addition, there are behaviours exhibited in reaction to that support such as engaging in networking and visibility behaviours. Individuals who obtain more support with managing their careers are more committed to their employer but this commitment does not mean that they will do more to manage their own careers with their current employer as a result (Sturges *et al.*, 2008). This means that organisational career management has a positive impact on effective commitment and job performance.

The literature review reveals that there is a relationship between career management, organisational commitment and work behaviour (Sturges *et al.*, 2005). Both individual and organisational career management are related to psychological contract fulfilment. Psychological contract notion has shifted in its meaning from what is called a 'traditional' to a 'new' view. The psychological contract is a very important aspect in career self-management. From the organisational standpoint, the 'traditional' view means that the organisation promises job security in return for hard work, or an organisational career in return for loyalty and hard work. The 'new' psychological contract means that the organisation provides careers attributed by secure employment, and this for all; however offer of career development is only for those needed in which it matches their jobs (Herriot and Pemberton, 1995; Rousseau, 1995; 1996). In the 'new' view, individuals take decisions on not relying on the organisation in terms of searching for career opportunities that fit their needs and depend on themselves instead.

The literature review discovers that career self-management practice varies from country to country. For example in the UK people are more engaged in career self-management than people in Iceland (Sturges *et al.*, 2008). The differences between countries depend on many factors such as labour market, organisational leadership style, size of country, organisational sector and size, employees' educational background and age.

In terms of the behaviours of enacting career self-management there are two types. The first is considered as supporting and the other limits the enacting of career self-management. First,

career self-management literature discussed the promoting behaviours. In this vein, it found that there are certain behaviours that help individuals in having control over their career and ultimately enacting active career self-management (Raabe *et al.*, 2007). These behaviours are setting goals, information collection, planning, execution, and feedback. Such behaviours lead to executing more active career self-management that helps in satisfaction with career progress. Organisational responsiveness and pay increase are a part of the relationship between active career self-management behaviours and career satisfaction. Finally, career plan implementation and speed in job transition did not mediate the path from active career self-management behaviours to career satisfaction.

The literature review reveals that individuals who take responsibility to manage their career expect more support from their organisations, meaning that career self-management has a positive impact on effective commitment and perceived career success (De Vos *et al.*, 2009).

Common aspects of organisational support, for example perceived organisational support and leader-member exchange, encourage employees' career self-management behaviours (Sturges *et al.*, 2010). Characteristics such as gender and locus of control may influence how individuals manage their careers. The higher self-development motivation and skill result in greater reported self-development activities.

It has been realised in the literature review that there is a continuous endeavour to discover whether there is a persistent favourite for conventional organisational management over individual career self-management. In this perspective, King (2003) purports the idea that graduates accessing the labour market in the UK might have work experience approximating to a 'new' career; however, they expect to advance their career in a more conventional way. Employees that embrace career self-management behaviour prefer employability, but this does not need to be developed outside the organisation.

People use three types of career self-management behaviours, positioning, influence, and boundary management, to react to career development tasks (King, 2004). The causes of those behaviours, for instance self-efficacy, desire for control, and career anchors, lead to

consequences, such as career and life satisfaction, secondary responses, and learned helplessness. These behaviours and their cause are used to reduce thwarting conditions or career obstacles and consequently lead to vocational adjustment.

Secondly, the literature discussed the organisational factors that may limit career self-management behaviours, for instance organisational change, ineffective HRM strategy, and organisational culture.

The literature review indicates that organisational change, for instance delayering, has a negative impact on individual career progress (i.e. career self-management). Such change may affect the nature of a career (Brousseau *et al.*, 1996; Kelly *et al.*, 2003) and lead to threatening an individual's career progress (Kelly *et al.*, 2003) and career security (Ogbonna and Wilkinson, 2003). It may cause disappointment and low morale (Lips-Wiersma and Hall, 2007).

Ineffective HRM may have a negative impact on individual career progress (i.e. career self-management) particularly if not managed well. HRM is responsible mainly for managing people. In this context, Hall (1986) and Baruch and Peiperl, (2000) comment on the importance of career management practices and activities (for example recruitment and selection, training and development, employees assessment etc.) and how these activities, if not managed well, lead to limiting individuals' career development. Other studies discussed in the literature review support the above-mentioned contention, for example the ones held in Israel (Tzabbar *et al.*, 2003), Saudi Arabia (Mahdi and Barrientos, 2003), Cyprus (Tanova, 2003), Oman (Al-Hamadi *et al.*, 2007) and Iran (Namazie, 2003).

Managers from different organisational cultures hold different assumptions depending on the nature of management and organisation. These diverse sets of assumptions shape dissimilar value systems and become translated into diverse management and organisational practice which, in turn, support or review the original assumption. From what has been discussed it becomes apparent that different organisational factors may bound the practicing of career self-management, particularly when the organisations are focussed on: process, job, parochial, closed systems, tight control and normative rather than results, employees, professional, open systems,

loose control and pragmatism, respectively, while defining common practices such as symbols, heroes and rituals (Hofstede *et al.*, 1990). Hofstede and his colleagues found the most important results of their project was a six-dimensional model of organisational cultures (Factor 1: Process-Oriented vs. Results-Oriented, Factor 2: Employee-Oriented vs. Job-Oriented, Factor 3: Parochial vs. Professional, Factor 4: Open System vs. Closed System, Factor 5: Loose Control vs. Tight Control and Factor 6: Normative vs. Pragmatic), defining apparent common practices: symbols, heroes, and rituals which hold a precise meaning within the organisational unit.

Organisational process and procedure which the managers of organisations may embrace could build barriers for people who are passionate to control their career and prevent them from achieving their aspired goals. Additionally, organisational hierarchical structures, challenges in bypassing the hierarchy if there is a need for accomplishing efficient work, undefined roles and inefficient organisational structure (Laurent, 1986) could also play a vital role in limiting career self-management practices. Finally, all organisational factors that have been mentioned in the literature review in this section and its consequent behaviours on career self-management enactment help in understanding this concept in the place of its origin, for instance, the USA and Western countries. Although those theories are initiated in the USA and Western countries, which have different environmental and cultural factors from those in the Kingdom of Bahrain, this could be a threshold for understanding the concept broadly, and assisting in investigation of its applicability in different contexts, for example the Kingdom of Bahrain.

The next section reviews various cultural and contextual factors that may either promote or limit career self-management behaviours.

2.5   Cultural Factors Promote/Limit Career Self-management

Relevant to the literature examining culture, studies focus their attention on career across-culture, which has been long acknowledged in the study of career management. The prominent argument in this section is that there are different cultural and contextual factors which may either promote or limit career self-management behaviours. The career studies demonstrate a lack of research on the relationship between culture and career self-management not in the Kingdom of Bahrain alone but even in the USA and Western countries. Thus, one aim arising from this study is to

scrutinise the existence of such a relationship in order to contribute to the richness of the area concerning career self-management. In general, the systematic studies of career from a cross-culture or comparative perspective are immature and the literature review, in this area, is fragmented and lacks a rational framework to direct investigation (Thomas and Inkson, 2007). Several authors suggest that to describe and examine career, it is necessary to take into account both ways in which career is legitimised: career patterns and practices. This is through the institutions of society and how it specifies the culturally based attitudes, beliefs, perceptions and anticipation that individuals have regarding career.

Most career theory resources are in the modern societies and industries that embrace individualistic values and a high level of achievement motivation (Yang, 1988). These societies endorse career aspiration, hierarchical organisations and support bureaucracy status and separation of labour and professionalisation, supporting career specialisation. If the investigation of career experience departs to international borders, the differences in people perceptions and interpretations are expected to be greater (Thomas and Inkson, 2007). As a result, it is imperative to consider cultural differences when discussing career theories and research where the societal context in which it developed must not be ignored.

2.5.1   Cultures

In this area of the literature, attention focusses on cultural factors that influence career in general. Of particular interest is to examine the national factors that affect career practices. For example Thomas and Inkson (2007) argue that culture is vital for career theories and practices for three reasons. First: the economic, legal and political attributes of society are inevitably associated to its culture. Culture stems from the essential way in which a society learns to interconnect with the environment. The economic, legal and political systems that are expanded over time are essential factors of the shared culture meaning. Culture has an impact on the institutions of the society and the way they operate in addition to people that make policies and behaviours. Second: there are differences in economic, legal and political institutions. Thus culture is largely unseen and its impact (i.e. for the context of career) often ignored. Third: culture functions both through legitimisation in the institutions of society of career practices and patterns and through

the various attitudes, beliefs, perceptions and expectations that are offered to individuals about careers.

Culture is a societal-level assemblage existing within the knowledge system of individuals and shaped during childhood. Much appreciation of cultural differences has developed through the study of value. Value orientations are shared assumptions regarding how something ought to be or how one should behave (Rockeach, 1973). They result from resolutions that social groups have developed for dealing with the dilemmas that all people encounter. Such a value system has an impact on attitudes and behaviours that are associated to career.

House, Wright and Aditya (1997) adopt a more specific definition of cultures as:

> "*Cultures are distinctive normative systems consisting of modal patterns of shared psychological properties among members of collectivities that result in compelling common affective, attitudinal, and behavioural orientations that are transmitted across generations and that differentiate collectivities from each other"* (p. 538).

Culture is visible in two different ways. The first is as values, beliefs, schemas, and embedded theories usually held among members of a collectivity (society or organisation); these are differently called the attributes or content of culture. The second is as generally observed and reported practices of entities such as families, schools, work organisations, economic and legal systems, political institutions, and such like, which are usually regarded to as the process of culture (Dickson, Aditya and Chhokar, 2000). Gerhart and Fang (2005) argue that although countries can be different in many significant ways (for example, institutional and regulatory environments, labour-force characteristics such as education) an overriding focus of the international management literature is on national dissimilarities in culture, particularly cultural values (Hofstede, 1980).

2.5.2   Hofstede's National Culture

The influence of societal culture on people's behaviours is illustrated in Hofstede's (1980) study. He uses a sample of employees of a major multinational, from 52 countries around the world, to

characterise these nations in terms of four main dimensions. These dimensions have the most important potential impact on cultural issues affecting careers within institutions as well as what attracts individuals to careers; for instance individualism and collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance and masculinity and femininity. He constructs a large-scale study of industrial employees' work-related value patterns from 116,000 questionnaires sent to 50 countries and 3 regions at two separate points in time. The results suggest that half of the variation in these countries' mean scores can be illustrated by four basic dimensions: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism versus collectivism and masculinity versus femininity. The hypothesis was founded on the framework of these dimensions used in other cross-cultural organisation studies. These dimensions are associated with the way any society deals with issues, although different societies respond in different ways. These dimensions are described thus: dissimilar ways of structuring organisation, dissimilar motivations of people within organisation, and dissimilar issues people and organisations face within society. When the data were processed, studies in the countries were grouped into cultural clusters.

2.5.2.1   Power Distance

Power distance is the degree to which the exercise of power, for example, between boss and subordinate or between 'lower status people' and 'higher status people', is expected and tolerated. In the USA and most Western European countries, power distance appears to be slight. In societies where greater power distance is preserved by convention, standards, status and practice, the philosophy and understanding of career may be very different. The main issue concerns how a society deals with the fact that people are unequal in their physical and intellectual capabilities. In countries like Australia, Denmark, Ireland and New Zealand, where power distance is slight, people expect and accept an exercise of power that has more in common with counselling and is practiced democratically because the relationship between people is observed as equal in spite of their formal positions. In contrast, in countries with a great power distance, for instance Malaysia, India, Venezuela and the Philippines, the subordinates accept power relations that are autocratic or paternalistic because society reinforces formal and hierarchical positions. Hofstede argues that no society practices complete equality; some, however, are more unequal than others. The degree of 'Power Distance' in organisations is represented by the extent of centralisation of authority and autocratic leadership. Attempting to calculate slight against great 'Power Distance'

is no measure of the aims and objectives of a culture but rather the actual power distribution reflects the way that people in that society observe relative differences in the exercise of power.

2.5.2.2   Individualism Vs. Collectivism

Individualism vs. collectivism can be defined as the degree to which an individual's self-identity is defined by his or her own attributes or by the attributes of the groups to which one belongs and how important individual or group volition is in dictating the decisions that people make. This reflects the degree to which individuals see themselves responsible for their actions and strive to be independent and acquire individual rewards, as against feeling loyalty to the extended family and community and subjection to group norms. The USA and some Western European countries tend to be high on individualism. Very little attention has been paid in the career literature to how career success is defined in more collective societies, since most of the research has been conducted in either Europe or the USA. The main issue concerns the relationships between people and their associates. At the extreme individual end of the scale, these relationships may be too weak because people either look after their self-interest and possibly that of their immediate family. In highly individualist cultures people are expected to develop and exhibit their individual personalities and to select their own associates. Those in collectivist cultures describe themselves and act as a member of an enduring group, for instance family, religion, age and profession along with several others. Within such groups, everybody should look after the interests of the other members and should not express any opinions or beliefs other than those of the in-group because the in-group will provide the necessary support in the case of the member encountering any difficulties. It has been found that individualist societies are loosely, while collectivist societies are tightly, integrated.

2.5.2.3   Masculinity Vs. Femininity

The differences between typical male aims of achievement and female orientations of nurture and interpersonal harmony is, perhaps, best exemplified in the trade-off between looking for job promotion and having good associations with others. In the USA and Western countries the masculinity dimension is of above average importance and most career theories have been constructed mainly with reference to vigorous male employees. They have a noticeably masculine bias in their notion of career ambitions and the means of accomplishing them. Heslin

(2005) focusses considerable attention on the variation in 'masculine/doing-oriented' and 'feminine/being-oriented' definitions of career success. The main issue concerns the separation of the roles between the sexes in society. The only fact which is accepted by all societies is that half of mankind is female and the other half male. All societies around the world assign some roles to men and others to women and these are social rather than biological. In all societies the assignment of roles between men and women is almost totally subjective and the variations between one society and another disclose a widely different perception of the roles across all societies. Some have very strict demarcation between what are considered to be the roles of men and women and in these societies' men gain more opportunities to take assertive and dominating roles whereas the women are allocated service oriented and caring jobs. These societies could be described as male dominated, informally 'macho', and with a relatively subservient female social sex role division. The social values of a male dominated society reflect the importance of showing off or display, of visible achievements, of making money, of 'big is beautiful', while women who espouse such values would be discouraged or prevented from doing so. In contrast, what we might describe as 'feminine' societies are those where men and women share values of equality, where conspicuous display is disapproved, where people are considered more valuable than money, where quality of life and protecting the environment are treated as important and where those perceived as needing help are assisted; where 'small is beautiful'. In 'masculine' societies the successful achiever is a hero, the equivalent of superman. In more 'feminine' societies public accord goes to the anti-hero, the underdog. In a 'feminine' society individual brilliance is suspect. Academics who use Hofstede's work subsequently renamed this dimension 'Quantity of Life vs. Quality of Life'.

2.5.2.4   Weak Vs. Strong – Uncertainty Avoidance

This dimension reveals the degree to which culture influences the desire to decrease uncertainty and build stability. An example is having clear written rules and procedures or sound standards for the government of issues. The availability of work and its distribution would be seen as more essential in societies with a high desire for uncertainty avoidance. We can also expect the concept of boundaryless careers and the need for stability and structure in careers to be more evident in such societies. The main issue here is how society copes with the fact that time is linear and people must adapt from the past to the present and to the future. Humans must live

with uncertainty because the future is always unpredictable. A number of societies adapt to this uncertainty; people seem to accept each day as it comes, live with risks without mental or emotional trauma and do not work too hard. In such societies people will be moderately tolerant of behaviour and opinions different from their own since they do not perceive any threat from them. We might describe such societies as having 'Weak Uncertainty Avoidance'. On the other hand, there are societies where people are socialised into a constant attempt to forecast the future. These societies have significantly high levels of anxiety and people here exhibit nervousness and aggression. In addition, institutions in these societies are concerned to create barriers to risk and are preoccupied with security, for the creation of which technology is critically important. They depend upon laws, and in some cases, religion, to minimise risk. In societies with 'Strong Uncertainty Avoidance', people want clear and widely-applicable rules for example about religious practices, about food safety and formal structures that control actions. Here employees prefer a career with one employer. In cultures with 'Weak Uncertainty Avoidance', people prefer rules or procedures to be presumed and elastic and actions controlled informally. Here employees are likely to change employers more often.

2.5.2.5   Long-Term Vs. Short-Term Orientation

Bond (1988) and his associates subsequently established a fifth dimension which they call 'Confucian dynamism'. Hofstede then included this dimension within his framework. This dimension concerns a society's 'time horizon' or the significance attached to the future against the past and present. Societies with a long-term orientation value activities and attitudes that have an impact in the future such as persistence/perseverance, thrift, and shame. Short-term oriented societies value actions and attitudes that are driven by the past or the present such as normative statements, immediate stability, saving face, respect for tradition, and reciprocation of greetings, favours and gifts.

To conclude Hofstede (1980) specifies and validates four independent dimensions of national culture differences, with the fifth dimension added later. Those dimensions are: Small vs. Large power distance, Individualism vs. Collectivism, Masculinity vs. Femininity, Weak vs. Strong uncertainty avoidance and Long vs. Short term orientation. The Arab community tends to be high in terms of collectivism and power distance in contrast with gender equity and future

orientation which are low (Kabasakal and Bodur, 2002) and Bahrain is no different. Thus, it is worth investigating how these factors influence career self-management behaviours, which serve as evidence of its lack of research.

A critique of Hofstede's paradigm may be found in Gerhart and Fang (2005) who identify different assumptions of national culture than Hofstede's perspectives. They argue that for national culture to play a significant role in international management theory, there are definite assumptions that ought to be held. They emphasise the need to balance the focus on national differences in culture with a focus on organisational differences, the reason being that various apparent absences of cultural fit, for instance where mergers and acquisitions occur, might be due as much to a lack of fit to the organisational culture as to a clash with the national culture. Gerhart and Fang (2005) conclude that one should not assume the dominance of national culture without finding concrete evidence. They add that the essence of management means identifying and dealing with problems arising from national culture. It is necessary, however, to take into account that practicing judgment and building values may appear in a distinctive manner and therefore any management theories that exclude management discretion call for careful investigation. Hofstede's assumptions receive only weak support when country effects are evaluated using variance explained as an estimate rather than relying exclusively on statically significance tests. While national cultural differences can be important and must be understood, their role necessitates being placed in the context of other important contextual factors, including organisational culture.

Hofstede's legendary national culture research is also critiqued by McSweeney (2002). Crucial assumptions which lay beneath Hofstede's claim to have revealed the secrets of entire national cultures were challenged and the credibility of methodically causal national cultures was questioned. Hofstede treats culture as "implicit; core; systematically causal; territorially unique; and shared" (McSweeney, 2002, p. 91). McSweeney argues that Hofstede's findings are not correct and if so it has great impact for management across countries for nation states' futures including the prospects for greater European integration. He adds that on closer examination of Hofstede's study, it reveals essentially faulty assumptions and his national culture explanations are illogical and misleading. He concludes that:

"Extreme, singular, theories, such as Hofstede's model of national culture are profoundly problematic. His conflation and uni-level analysis precludes consideration of interplay between macroscopic and microscopic cultural levels and between the cultural and the non-cultural (whatever we choose to call it). Instead of seeking an explanation for assumed national uniformity from the conceptual lacuna that is the essentialist notion of national culture, we need to engage with and use theories of action which can cope with change, power, variety, multiple influences – including the non-national – and the complexity and situational variability of the individual subject" (McSweeney, 2002, p. 113).

McSweeney (2002) disputes Hofstede's study and argues that his assumptions show a fundamental fault while describing the national culture which, in his opinion, is irrational and ambiguous. He concludes that there is a need to engage with and employ theories of action which adapt with transformation, power, variety and multiple influences as well as the complication and situational variability of the individual subject rather than seeking the assumption of uniformity.

2.5.3   Schwartz's Seven Cultural Values

The study constructed by Schwartz (2008) presents seven cultural value orientations and adopts them to appreciate the associations of culture to important societal phenomena. Those seven values are useful for describing and comparing societies. He designed survey methods to develop an empirical validation of seven value orientations and of the structure of association between them. This was based on the analysis of data across 75 countries. Schwartz's   values explain the notion of what is good and desirable, the cultural principles. The author, in his study, argues that the rich complex of meaning, beliefs, practices, symbols, norms, and values widespread amongst people in a society are manifestations of the fundamental culture. He adds that all societies tackle certain basis issues in regulating human activity. A set of basic societal problems have been chosen by this author for their centrality for societal functioning to obtain dimensions on which to compare culture.

The first problem was to describe the nature of the associations and boundaries between person

and group.   He labels the polar locations on this cultural dimension 'Autonomy versus Embeddedness'. In autonomy cultures, people are depicted as autonomous, bounded entities. They are motivated to cultivate and convey their own favourites, feelings, ideas, and abilities, and discover meaning in their own exclusivity. There are two types of autonomy: 'Intellectual Autonomy' supports individuals to look for their own ideas and intellectual directions independently. Examples of important values in such cultures include broadmindedness, curiosity, and creativity. 'Affective Autonomy' supports individuals to seek affectively positive experience for them. Vital values encompass pleasure, exciting life, and varied life. People in the embeddedness culture are depicted as entities embedded in the collectivity. Life meaning here is anticipated to come through social relationships, group identification, participation in life and attempting toward achieving common or shared goals.

The second societal problem is about assurance that people behave in an accountable manner to conserve the social factors. People here have to do work essential to preserve society and are induced to consider the welfare of others, coordinate with them and handle inescapable interdependencies. The polar resolution labelled cultural 'Egalitarianism' pursues to encourage people to distinguish one another as moral equals who share basic interests as human beings. The polar substitute labelled cultural 'Hierarchy' depends on hierarchical systems of ascribed tasks for accountability assurance and productive behaviour. It describes the unequal distribution of power, roles, and resources as legitimate and even desirable; the socialisation of people through hierarchical distribution of tasks is granted, to obey the obligations and rules associated to their tasks, to differentiate unlike from superiors and unlike from subordinates. Values of social power, authority, humility, and wealth are highly imperative in hierarchical cultures.

The third societal problem is to control people's treatment of humans and natural resources. The cultural response to this problem labelled 'Harmony' describes appropriateness in the social and natural world, attempting to understand and accept rather than to alter, direct, or exploit. Significant values in harmony cultures embrace a world at peace, unity with nature, protecting the environment, and accepting one's portion. 'Mastery' is the polar cultural response to this problem. It motivates active self-assertion in order to master, direct, and change the natural and social environment to achieve group or individual goals. Values like ambition, success, daring,

self-sufficiency, and competence are particularly imperative in mastery cultures. To summarise, Schwartz's theory specifies three bipolar dimensions of culture that characterise alternative solutions to each of three problems that face all societies: Embeddedness versus Autonomy (Affective and Intellectual Autonomy), Hierarchy versus Egalitarianism, and Mastery versus Harmony. This means that the seven values at the cultural level are: Embeddedness, Hierarchy, Mastery, Affective Autonomy, Intellectual Autonomy, Egalitarianism and Harmony and the eleven values at an individual level are: Self-direction, Stimulation, Hedonism, Achievement, Power, Security, Conformity, Tradition, Spirituality, Benevolence and Universalism.

2.5.4 Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner Culture Dimensions

Along with Hofstede's (1980) work in relation to cultural dimensions, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998) developed a 'Seven Dimensions of Culture' model of differences in national cultures. Such dimensions could also influence career self-management behaviours. The model encompasses the seven dimensions which portray how people in dissimilar national cultures interact with each other. The data were collected by the authors over a period of ten years by using a method which depends on giving participants dilemmas or contrasting tendencies. Each dilemma provided two alternative answers which were interpreted as indicators for basic values and attitudes. They sent a questionnaire to over 15,000 managers in 28 countries and received 500 responses per country that allowed them to draw a distinction between national cultures. They recognised seven connected processes devised as dilemmas. Each culture differentiates itself by preferring one side of the dilemma's continuum. The seven dimensions are listed below:

2.5.4.1 Universalism Vs. Particularism

This dimension attempts to answer question like 'What is most important - rules or relationships?'. It distinguishes societies according to the significance they put on rules and laws as opposed to personal relationships. Universalism is regarded as discovering broad and general rules. When no rules fit, it discovers the most appropriate ones. The people in universalistic cultures share the belief that general rules, codes, values and standards take priority over the requirements and claims of relationships or friends. They believe that rules can be applied to everyone, should be used to decide what is right, and use precisely defined agreements and

contacts as the basis for the conduct of business. They also tend to define global standards for company policies and human resources practices and see that agreement and contract should be altered. Germany and the USA are examples of mainly universalistic societies.

Particularism is about discovering exceptions. When no rules fit, it judges the situation on its own benefits, rather than trying to force-fit an establishing rule. The people in pluralistic cultures perceive culture more in terms of human friendship and personal relationship than formal rules and laws. They put emphasis on friendships and seek to determine what is right or ethically acceptable. They believe that deals are made according to friendships and that contracts can be adjusted to fit the new needs in particular situations and permit local differences of company and human resource policies to adapt to altering needs. China and Russia would be examples of strongly particularistic societies.

2.5.4.2 Individualism Vs. Collectivism

This dimension attempts to answer question like 'Do we function as a group or as individuals?'. It is concerned with the extent to which people observe themselves functioning more as a community or more as individuals; societies are based on the relative weight given to individual versus group interest. Individualism is related to the rights of the individual. It allows individuals to grow or fail on their own, and perceives group-focus as denuding the individual of their rights. The principle of an individualism culture is to set people ahead of the community. The members in this society use the term 'I', 'on the spot' decisions are taken by representatives of the organisations, people preferably attain alone and presume personal responsibility, and vacations are taken in couples or even alone rather than as part of groups. Individual happiness, fulfilment and welfare are the most vital in individualist societies and members are more likely to take care of themselves first. The USA would be an example of a strongly individualist society. Conversely a collectivist society which places the group or community prior to individuals is called, sometimes, communitarian. This society is characterised by frequent use of the term 'we', decisions are refereed back to the organisations by representatives, people prefer to achieve objectives in groups and assume joint responsibility and vacations are made in organised groups or with extended family. It looks for placing the family, group, company and country ahead of the individual. It perceives individualism as selfish and short-sighted. Japan would be an

example of a strongly collectivist society. In contrast with the principle in individualistic cultures, people set the community over the individual. Therefore the responsibility is on the individual to serve the community. By so doing, individual requirements are mechanically attended to.

2.5.4.3   Affectivity Vs. Neutrality

This dimension attempts to answer question like 'Do we display our emotions?', the extent to which individuals exhibit their emotions. People in affective cultures exhibit their emotions and it is not believed necessary to conceal their feelings. This society is characterised by nonverbal and verbal exhibit of thoughts and feelings, transparency and expressiveness in discharge of tensions, simple flow of emotions sometimes effusively, vehemently and without reserve, the admiration and display of heated, vital, vigorous expression and fluent and dramatic delivery of statement. Mexico would be an example of a strongly affective society.

Conversely in neutral cultures, people are educated not to exhibit their feelings openly. In this culture, it is believed that individuals need to control their emotions and the exhibition of feelings should be minimal. This society is characterised by not displaying inner feelings, and the tension is only accidentally revealed in the face and posture, concealing emotions that may occasionally explode out. It is also characterised by cool and self-possessed behaviour and control over feelings, lack of physical contact, gesturing or strong facial expressions and a monotone oral delivery of written materials. Japan would be an example of a strongly neutral society.

2.5.4.4   Specific Vs. Diffuse

This dimension attempts to answer questions like 'Do we handle our relationships in specific and predetermined ways, or do we see our relationships as changing and related to contextual settings?'. It poses questions such as the extent to which responsibilities are either specifically assigned or diffusely accepted (i.e. the degree to which societal members keep their personal and working lives separate). The basic question here is 'How far do we get involved?' The people in a specific culture rely on facts, standards and contracts. The society members in this culture are apt to separate their personal and working lives very clearly and have an entirely different

relationship with authority in each social group because each member analyses all elements of their lives individually prior to placing them together and, therefore, it is not surprising that only a single component of a member's personal life can be entered at any one time and that interactions between members are well-defined. The USA would be an example of a specific society.

In contrast a diffusely oriented culture is where the members of this society perceive the individual elements of their lives as interconnected and therefore there is no obvious distinction between personal lives and work and the hierarchy of authority at work can be mirrored into social areas out of work hours. China would be an example of a strongly diffuse society.

2.5.4.5   Achievement Vs. Ascription

This dimension attempts to answer questions like 'Do we have to prove ourselves to receive status, or is status given to us?', the extent to which individuals show themselves to obtain status rather than the status simply being given to them. Achievement/ascription distinguishes societies on the basis of how they distribute status and authority and is more similar to Hofstede's power distance dimension. Members in the achievement culture obtain their status from what they have accomplished, and the characteristics of an achievement oriented society consist of the following: employment of title only when related to the competence carried with the task, respect for superiors in the hierarchy according to their preceding achievements, displayed adequacy of their knowledge and good performance of their jobs and companies where most senior managers are of various ages and genders and have gained their positions through accomplishments rather than simply seniority. The USA would be an example of a strongly achievement oriented society. Conversely with members in an ascribed culture, they derive their status from birth, age, gender or wealth. The status is not based on accomplishment but is accorded on the basis of the person's being. The ascription oriented society ascribes status on the basis of social, position, age, gender, wealth and similar factors and is characterised by wide use of titles, particularly when these elucidate status in organisations, respect for supervisors in the hierarchy and companies where most senior managers are male, middle-age and promoted according primarily to seniority. China and Russia would be examples of strongly ascription oriented societies.

2.5.4.6   Sequential Vs. Synchronic

This dimension attempts to answer questions like 'Do we do things one at a time or several things at once?', the extent to which individuals do things one at a time versus several things at once. Sequential/synchronic distinguishes societies according to whether members favour to do one thing at a time or work on dissimilar things at the same time. Members of sequential societies favour to accomplish one activity at a time and pursue plans and schedules firmly. Conversely members of synchronic societies believe time is flexible and intangible and are comfortable accomplishing different activities in parallel, loosely pursuing schedules and agendas and selecting existing activities based on the priorities among all of the individual activities that are in queues.

Cultures build up their own response to time. Time orientation has two features: the relative significance cultures assign to the past, present and future, and their approach to structuring time. Past oriented societies see the future as a repetition of past occasions and experiences and are distinguished by talk about history, origin of family, business and nation, motivation to rebuild a golden age, respect shown for associates, antecedents and older people, and everything is perceived in the context of convention or history. Present oriented societies do not pay much attention to either past or future and are distinguished by a sharp focus on present events and pleasure as being the most important, good planning and poor implementation, extreme interest in present relationships, focus on here and now, and evaluation of everything in terms of its modern impact and approach. Future oriented societies highlight future prospects and do not perceive the past as being important in specifying what is to come and are distinguished by much talk of prospects, potentials, aspirations, future achievement, enthusiasm for planning strategising, enormous interest in the young generation and future prospective and employment and utilisation of the present and past for future benefit.

2.5.4.7   Internal Vs. External Control

This dimension attempts to answer questions like 'Do we control our environment or work with it?', the extent to which individuals believe the environment can be controlled versus believing that the environment controls them. In the internal or inner directed society, members have mechanistic views of nature; nature is complex but can be controlled with the right proficiency.

Members in this society see that humans can dominate nature, if they make the effort. In the external or outer-directed society, members have an organic vision of nature. Humans are believed to be one of nature's forces and should therefore live in harmony with the environment. People for that reason adapt themselves to external conditions. It is not surprising that the people in internal societies have more dominating attitudes and do not favour change while people of external societies are more flexible, favour change and are more enthusiastic to negotiation in order to attain harmony.

Of the seven value dimensions of Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, two mirror strongly the Hofstede dimensions of collectivism/individualism and, to a slighter degree, power distance. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's communitarianism/individualism value orientation appears to be practically the same as Hofstede's collectivism/individualism. Their achievement/ascription value orientation, which portrays how status is accorded, is believed to be linked to Hofstede's power distance index, if one believes that status is accorded by nature rather than accomplishment, and that this mirrors a greater enthusiasm to accept power distances. It is, however, not an absolute match, as Hofstede's power index does not only relate to how status is accorded, but to the acceptable power distance within a society, an area that is not mentioned totally by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998).

Additionally, although many career scholars assert the usefulness of studying career across cultures (Hofstede, 1980; Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's 1998; Schwartz, 2008; Thomas and Inkson, 2007), very little empirical research has studied career self-management in different cultural settings. In order to have a holistic idea of the careers of Bahraini manager participants, this research explores the influence of cultural and contextual factors that may impact career self-management behaviours. Table 2.4 summarises the three cultural theories of Hofstede (1980), Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998) and Schwartz (2008).

Category Name	Hofstede (1980)	Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998)	Schwartz (2008)
Cultural Dimensions	1. Power distance 2. Individualism	1. Universalism vs. particularism (What is more	1. Embeddedness 2. Hierarchy

	/collectivism 3. Masculinity/ femininity 4. Uncertainty avoidance 5. Long term orientation	important, rules or relationships?). 2. Individualism vs. collectivism (Communitarianism) (Do we function in a group or as individuals?) 3. Neutral vs. emotional (Do we display our emotions?) 4. Specific vs. diffuse (How separate do we keep our private and working lives?) 5. Achievement vs. ascription (Do we have to prove ourselves to receive status or is it given to us?) 6. Sequential vs. synchronic (Do we do things one at a time or several things at once?)7. Internal vs. external control (Do we control our environment or are we controlled by it?)	3. Mastery 4. Affective autonomy 5. Intellectual autonomy 6. Egalitarianism 7. Harmony
Methods	Hofstede's work is based on a questionnaire designed to evaluate work values. He derived his culture dimensions from examining work	Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner gathered data over ten years using a method that relied on giving respondents dilemmas or contrasting tendencies. Each dilemma consisted of two alternatives that were interpreted as	From data collected in 63 countries, with more than 60,000 individuals taking part, Schwartz derived a total of 10 distinct value types (power, achievement, hedonism, stimulation,

	related values in employees of IBM during the 1970s. These ideas were first based on a large research project into national culture differences across subsidiaries of a multinational corporation (IBM) in 64 countries.	indicators for basic attitudes and values. The questionnaire was sent to over 15,000 managers in 28 countries. At least 500 usable responses per country were received, enabling the two authors to make substantiated distinctions between national cultures.	self-direction, universalism, benevolence, tradition, conformity and security) at an individual-level analysis.
Similarities	Of the seven value dimensions of Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, two reflect closely the Hofstede dimensions of collectivism/individualism and to a lesser extent power distance. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's communitarianism/individualism value orientation seems to be virtually identical to Hofstede's collectivism/ individualism. Their achievement/ascription value orientation, which describes how status is accorded, appears to be linked to Hofstede's power distance index, at least if one accepts that status is accorded by nature rather than achievement, and that this reflects a greater willingness to accept power distances.	
Differences	Hofstede suggested that the definition of national cultures is through recognition of wider historical, political and social factors in a country which may affect business values. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner suggested that national cultures vary in how their members solve	

	problems by identifying three major types: • The relationships with people – five major cultural differences were identified • Attitudes toward time – suggests that societies view time differently, as well as how the past, present and future interrelate. • Attitude towards the environment – relates to whether individuals are considered either a part of nature or separate from it; also how much individuals are a master of their fate.	

Table 2.4 Summary of cultural theories

2.5.5 Cultural Promoting Factors to Career Self-management and Consequent Behaviours

Cultural promoting factors in this study means any resources existing in a culture that would help people to become independent in managing career or embracing career self-management for instance, specialisation, experience, higher qualification, education obtainable, flexible labour market, sector diversity and so on. However, this study will discuss only factors of higher qualification and experience because of the following reasons:

2.5.5.1 Higher Qualification

King (2000) argues that human capital investments, possibly, are a common value, for example MBA qualifications, and at the same time they could be of specific value to a particular firm, occupation or industry. Individuals desire investments that are expected to be valued by leaders or top management without difficulty. In a study conducted in the UK with 81 managers and technical professionals under the age of 39 to identify their career self-management strategies, the study found that the most general answers included improving individuals' qualifications, improving interpersonal relations, choosing jobs which are stepping-stones, and performing one's job well. In contrast with King's study, there was evidence of graduates entering jobs which do not require a degree qualification, or doing similar work to non-graduates (Pearson, Perryman,

Connor, Jagger and Ashton, 1999). According to King (2000) the three elements that provide strategic choice to job move were: job move experience, qualifications and training to 'signal' competence.

Conversely, someone with a 'flexible' career orientation may anticipate progressing by obtaining suitable qualifications or expertise to smooth the mobility between employers. That person's leaders or top management could be external to the present employing organisation, and may need to be persuaded of his/her appropriateness for a job change through self-promotion strategy. Older people are more likely to obtain a degree or professional qualification when they reach a higher level in their organisation. Work experience was negatively associated with degree qualification, representing the additional career tenure obtained by people who began work directly from school, and positively associated with professional qualifications, suggesting that people tend to acquire professional qualifications as their career tenure increases. Individuals with Masters or professional qualifications reported higher positioning and influence in employment strategies; the attainment of such qualifications is in itself a positioning strategy, and may broaden people's preference or confidence to employ influence strategies to achieve their preferred career results (King, 2000).

2.5.5.2   Experience

Experience means number of working years. Based on human capital theory, investments in education, on-the-job training and work experience are useful because they have useful consequences in augmenting productivity, which in turn leads to augmented pay and status (Becker, 1993). Staw (1986) suggests that people who have diverse expectations of control rely on their autonomy, individual history of control and organisational experience. Work experience enlarges the chance for training and the attainment of firm-specific and common skills (Tharenou Latimer and Conroy, 1994). Changing organisations is a way to increase one's human capital by gaining a span of experience (Stroh, Brett and Reilly, 1992). Ng., Eby, Sorensen, and Feldman (2005) argue that gaining fundamental work experience is considered a human capital element which strengthens individuals' attractiveness in relation to obtaining promotion. At the same time people with superior work experience may attain recognition through organisation privileges and, as a result, gain more organisational support.

There are arguments regarding the experience differences between men and women in the workplace, and for that reason women have not yet received equality in the workplace (Lyness and Thompson, 1997, 2000). The differences in workplace experiences between women and men are reflected in work and career histories (Lyness and Thompson, 1997) and sex role attitude and gender stereotypes (Powell, Butterfield and Parent, 2002). In this aspect, Campion, Cheraskin and Stevens (1994) found that employees in early career were more concerned with job rotation; they interpreted it as an approach for obtaining experience that would be required for promotion. The importance of work experience is emphasised by Al-Dosary and Rahman (2005). In their study, conducted in Saudi Arabia, they attribute high unemployment in Saudi Arabia to the lack of experience and skills required from the Saudi labour force. They suggest that solving this issue would require the Saudi Arabian government to place emphasis on the development of skills through strengthening the educational system and vocational training. By so doing, Saudis will gain the right skills and obtain the required experience that will enable them to work in the private sector, which is at present saturated with foreign labour. The overall effect would thus be a reduction in the percentage of unemployment.

2.5.6 Cultural Limiting Factors to Career Self-management and Consequent Behaviours

This section examines cultural barriers which constrain individuals' (for instance Bahraini managers') ability to enact career self-management in this context (for instance Kingdom of Bahrain).

Career barriers have received greater attention and considerable interest from career counsellors and scholars because of their ability to interfere with the process of turning career interests into alternative goals and goal-directed behaviour (Ituma and Simpson, 2009). Those authors argue that despite this increased interest, this area has not been matched with empirical work. Swanson and Woitke (1997) conceptualised career barriers as "events or conditions, within the person or in his or her environment, that make career progress difficult" (p. 434).

Gunz *et al.* (2000) have a dissimilar perspective in describing barriers as "labour market imperfections driven by the reluctance of selectors to allow certain kinds of people to make

given moves*" (*p. 50). Common to these views is the notion that a career barrier is any factor that limits career development (Ituma and Simpson, 2009). Career barriers (for example, Farmer, 1976; Harmon, 1977; Powell, 2000) are composed of two key types: 'person centred' which is internal situations that make the accomplishment of career goals complex (for example, lack of confidence, low motivation) and 'situation centred' which is external situations located within the socio-cultural environment that make the accomplishment of career goals complex (for example, lack of access to education, sex stereotype, racial discrimination).

Social cognitive theory built by Lent *et al.* (1994) explains the influence of career barriers on career development. These authors propose that personal, contextual and experiential factors can mediate the association between turning career interest into career options related behaviour. It has been argued that "people are less likely to translate their career interests into goals, and their goals into actions, when they perceive their efforts to be impeded by adverse environmental factors..." (Lent, Brown and Hackett, 2000, p. 38). Gunz *et al.* (2002) argue that career boundaries encompass two dimensions: a subjective (perceived barrier to career progress) and an objective (real barrier to mobility) and that boundaries can "be imposed by specialisation, industry, the firm, occupation, educational level, experience, geography, professional qualification, organisational membership and to a lesser degree (although nevertheless real), age, race, ethnicity, sex, and religion" (p. 62) which this thesis explores. Likewise, King *et al.* (2005) argue that careers are bounded by prior career history, occupational identity, and institutional constraints imposed by leaders or top management to job opportunities. Barriers other than those mentioned have also been discovered which challenge career mobility and development and encompass: Education obtainable (Gomez, Fassinger, Prosser, Cooke, Mejia and Luna 2001); lack of social capital (Braddock and McPartland, 1987) and struggling to find a mentor (Friedman and Krackhardt, 1997). Ituma and Simpson (2009) argue that demographic factors such as women and ethnic minority workers also represent barriers faced by occupational groups and individuals in various national contexts.

2.5.7 Summary
The cross-cultural literature review is fragmented and has a shortage of empirical investigation and, accordingly, it requires a logical framework for exploration and examination. While doing

so, it is important to consider the ways in which career legitimises both career patterns and practices. This should be through the institutions of society and how this determines the culturally based attitudes, beliefs, perceptions and anticipations that individuals have about career (Thomas and Inkson, 2007). Most career theories are built to suit modern and industrialised societies and in attempting to validate such theories and practices outside the borders of modern societies, the interpretation widens because of many factors (i.e. hierarchical organisations, supporting bureaucracy status, separation of labour and professionalisation etc.). In consequence, cultural influences on career should not be ignored when discussing any career theories and practices.

In general, research into national culture confirms the existence of differences between countries. A number of studies have sought to address the various assumptions to identify the differences such as those adopted by Hofstede (1980). Within this body of research, Hofstede argues that his five assumptions validly apply to all countries in the world, these being: power distance, individualism vs. collectivism, masculinity vs. femininity, weak vs. Strong uncertainty avoidance and long vs. short-term orientation. However, Hofstede's work received criticism by Gerhart and Fang (2005). They point out that Hofstede *et al.'s* (1990) findings indicating that organisational differences are larger than country differences in cultural values suggest the requirement to balance the focus on national differences with a focus on organisational differences in culture. Gerhart and Fang (2005) argue that management practices that have emerged from the national culture should be considered and, although the national culture is important, the role of these policies requires putting them into a specific context including organisational culture. They add that any theories that exclude management discretion call for careful investigation. Hofstede's result was also critiqued by McSweeney (2002) who states that national cultural assumptions constructed by Hofstede are illogical and misleading. The argument put forward was that if those findings were correct, then they would have a significant impact on management practices across countries for the nation states' wealth, including European integration.

There is clear research evidence to indicate the existence of different dimensions that differentiate countries' culture such as those built by Schwartz (2008). His theory identifies three bipolar dimensions of culture that signify alternative resolutions to each of three problems faced

by all societies: embeddedness versus autonomy, hierarchy versus egalitarianism, and mastery versus harmony. A societal emphasis on the cultural orientation at an individual pole of a dimension classically accompanies a de-emphasis on the polar type with which it attempts to conflict.

Besides Hofstede's (1980) work relating to culture dimensions, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998) constructed a 'Seven Dimensions of Culture' model of differences in national cultures. The model encompasses the seven dimensions which depict how people of different national cultures communicate with each other. These seven dimensions encompass: universalism vs. particularism; individualism vs. collectivism; affectivity vs. neutrality; specific vs. diffuse; achievement vs. ascription; sequential vs. synchronic and internal vs. external control.

The literature review reveals that there are cultural promoting and limiting factors that influence career self-management behaviours. First, there are many cultural promoting factors, for instance specialisation, experience, higher qualification, education obtainable, efficient labour market, sector diversity and so on. However, this study only discusses factors that may relate to the Kingdom of Bahrain context, such as higher qualification (King, 2000, 2003; 2004) and experience (Campion *et al.*, 1994; Becker, 1993, Staw, 1986; Tharenou, *et al.*, 1994; Ng, *et al.*, 2005). Secondly, there are various cultural barriers that influence career self-management behaviours and set limits within and outside the firm. Career barriers will occur if states hinder individuals from turning career interest into career goals and goal directed behaviours and, ultimately, limit career development (Ituma and Simpson, 2009; Lent *et al.*, 1994).

Career boundaries include subjective (perceived barrier to career progress) and objective (real barriers to career mobility) such as labour market imperfection (Gunz *et al.*, 2000). Career barriers have two types: the first is person centred, for example, lack of confidence, low motivation; and situation centred such as lack of access to education, sex stereotype, racial discrimination (Farmer, 1976; Harmon, 1977; Powell, 2000). Secondly, the real career boundaries which caused by different factors such as specialisation, industry, the firm, occupation, educational level, experience, geography, professional qualification, organisational

membership and to some extent age, race, ethnicity, sex, and religion (Gunz *et al.*, 2002). In addition, boundaries can be caused by prior career history, occupational identity, and institutional constraints imposed by leaders/top management to job opportunities (King *et al.*, 2005). Other cultural factors could be education obtainable (Gomez *et al.*, 2001); lack of social capital (Braddock and McPartland, 1987) and struggle to find a mentor (Friedman and Krackhardt, 1997). Demographic factors such as women and ethnic minority workers also represent barriers encountered by professionals in different national contexts (Ituma and Simpson, 2009).

The literature review presents evidence that there is lack of research on the effect of national culture on career which has been discussed in this section. Also national culture studies are required as a sort of replication to examine their validity in various contexts outside the USA and Western countries. Thus, this section reveals the deficiency of investigation of cultural factors that challenge individuals and prevent them from enacting career self-management behaviour not only in developing countries but even in developed countries.

2.6   Career Self-management in Ascription Culture

The previous section in the literature review explained career management and career self-management within the context of organisational and cultural contexts in the USA and Western countries which are characterised as achievement-oriented culture. This section discusses career in ascription culture and to achieve this objective, different aspects in this regard will be explained below because these necessitate a critical appreciation.

Based on the literature review, the concept of ascription has basically been addressed at two levels. These are: societal (i.e. cultural) and institutional (i.e. organisational). Therefore, the discussion in this section focusses on the effect of ascription on the individual at these two levels. Whereas Linton (1936), Davis (1950), Parsons (1951) and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998) discuss the effect of ascription on the individual within the context of society (i.e. cultural), Reskin (2003) discusses the effect of ascription on the individual within the context of the institutional (i.e. organisational).

2.6.1   The Effect of Ascription on the Individual at Societal (i.e. Cultural) Level

2.6.1.1   Developmental View of Ascription Context

The first person to introduce the concept of ascription into sociology was Ralph Linton in 1936, meaning that, this concept is firstly perceived from a sociological perspective. The basic, position on ascription comprehensively accepted by Linton (1936), Davis (1950) and Parsons (1951) is that it is useful for society to ascribe functions in the division of labour so that socialisation for different roles can be effectively conducted (Kemper, 1974). In 'The Study of Man' anthropologist Ralph Linton (1936) deeded sociology three terms which have received almost universal approval: role, ascribe and achieved status.   The traditional critical view of ascription was provided by Linton (1936), Davis (1950), Parsons (1951), Mayhew (1968), and Scott (1972) (Kemper, 1974). Kemper discusses what is ascribed when ascription is experienced and considers the relationship between criteria for ascription and social relations antecedents and the effects of ascription.

Parsons (1951) adds his view that ascription in a father's work-role status to children is predictable, given the solidarity of the nuclear family. Kemper (1974) challenges Parson's argument and that of others supporting ascription in light of diverse reference points prescribed for ascription. Of these are: age and sex which are found to be a useful basis of ascription as they relate to performance capacity. Other reference points for ascription, for instance race, religion, ethnicity, residence, etc., are not intrinsically related to performance capacity and their employment for the purpose of ascription is better explained by power relations between ascriptive sub-categories. Likewise, Parson's (1951) treatment of kinship as a foundation for ascription to children of the father's status can further be seen in terms of the distribution of power between families.

Based on the Linton (1936), Davis (1950), and Parsons (1951) standpoint, the conventional view offers three dissimilar explanations for the experience of the ascription: 1) It assists socialisation for positions in the division of labour; 2) it is predictable, given the regular unity of the kinship unit and its articulation within the occupational system. 3) It prevails and persists because it is

an efficient and inexpensive way to solve certain problems of 'functional subsystems' in society (Kemper, 1974).

Linton (1936), Davis (1950), and Parsons (1951) are in favour of the socialisation logic core principle for ascription. For instance, Linton (1936) regards ascription of status as a way by which society can start to train individuals from their birth for their future functions relying on the notion that the earlier the training for a status commences, the more probable its success is likely to be. Linton anticipates that "in all societies the actual ascription of statuses to the individual is controlled by a series of...reference points which together serve to delimit the field of his future participation in the life of the group" (Linton, 1936, p. 116). These comprise age, sex, family relationships, and caste or class.

Davis (1950) views socialisation for future roles as the principal function of ascription but challenges the fact when society selects between principles of early training (ascription) and competitive excellence achievement), it is "an unconscious but difficult choice" (Davis, 1950, p. 96). According to Davis (1950) status is ascribed to the infant, as a result of the assignment of socialising agents (usually parents). "Such arbitrary connection of the child with persons who already have a status in the social structure immediately gives the infant membership in the society and a specific place in the system of statuses" (Davis, 1950, p. 97).

Parsons (1951), views ascription from the standpoint of socialisation, as long as ascription-achievement standards "define criteria of eligibility, and therefore in what roles ego may or may not appear vis-a-vis alter" (Parsons, 1951, p. 96). For Parsons the reference points for ascription are either 'primary' or 'secondary' and these are further divided into 'classificatory' and 'relational' aspects. The imperative primary-classificatory criteria of ascription encompass age and sex, as well as other 'somatic traits' for example, race. The significant primary-relational criteria of ascription comprise kinship, territorial location, and temporal location (Parsons, 1951).

Mayhew (1968) and Parsons' (1951) attention to ascription is to some extent in the nature of a family quarrel, and turns on the extent to which ascription will function in achievement-oriented societies (Kemper, 1974). Mayhew (1968) states that, "Ascription involves using an existent,

pre-established structure as a resource rather than creating a new specialised structure for the same purpose" (p 110).

Kemper (1974) summarises all the points of Parson (1951), Linton (1936) and Davis (1950). He indicates that Parsons (1951) used the term ascription to indicate the conferral of status, very much as Linton (1936) and Davis (1950) did. Mayhew offers a statement that: "For Parsons, ascription refers to **the fusion of intrinsically separate functions in the same structural unit.** Thus, if the family household is both the centre of child-rearing and basic kinship functions on the one hand, and the basic organised producing unit in the economy on the other, then we (sic) would speak of ascription" (Mayhew's, 1968, p. 106, bold appears in Parsons's 1951 original work). Mayhew's own discussion weaves together the earlier and later meanings. Kemper (1974) indicates that although Mayhew's (1968) original thesis refers to the value of ascription as a solution to 'functional problems faced by social systems' which, in context, appears to refer to societies, the examples provided by Mayhew are usually at the community, organisation or family level. Thus it is difficult to tell from Mayhew's evidence whether ascription is 'functional' for society, or only for limited sectors or sub-groups.

2.6.1.2   Association of Ascription with Status and Power

One of the challenges in analysing the concept of ascription is to find out precisely what is ascribed when ascription is experienced (Kemper 1974). According to Kemper's (1974) analysis, this necessitates a clear appreciation of the term status. He argues that status has been used to signify two empirically related, but analytically separate concepts. He adds that the first of these is 'functional status' and refers to a position in the division of labour and involves a set of technical activities which form a more or less coherent, interlocking contribution with the contributions of other positions in the division of labour. The second connotation of status is referred to as 'scalar status' and means association between actors regarding the amount of rewards, benefits and compliance they provide to each other, regardless of the status currency. In the scalar sense of status, some actors have more status than others, rather than simply a different status, compared to functional status practice. In view of the fact that power and status are alternative social relational modes of getting benefits and rewards from other actors, those who have power in society (i.e. whether individuals, groups, or social categories) and who attain, or

have the means to attain, benefits, rewards, and privileges from others by force, coercion, threat, etc., attempt to convert the power relationship into a status relationship so that the benefits they obtain from others will be provided voluntarily (Kemper, 1974). Kemper adds that the conversion of power into status is well appreciated in politics and statecraft. It is easier to govern with the approval of the governed than to have to use raw power on each occasion.

2.6.1.3 Association of Ascription with Efficiency

It has been argued that ascription is practiced and continues to be practiced as it is efficient for "functional subsystems" of society (Kemper, 1974, p.851). Mayhew (1968, p.100) argues that ascription as opposed to achievement is often "cheap". However, Kemper suggests that it is only cheap for the higher category or higher scorer on an ascriptive criterion scale and it is commonly not cheap for lower categories or scorers. Davis says "Ascribed statuses also give a feeling of security that purely achieved positions can never give. All of life cannot be thrown open to competition. One cannot feel that every person is a competitor for whatever status one holds" (p.116). Kemper (1974) suggests that when some sub-groups experience ascription because it is 'cheap' for them, there is a strong probability that it is costly to some other sub-groups. He adds groups of lesser power are more possible to pay the higher costs.

To summarise Kemper's (1974) analysis about the nature and purpose of ascription, only age and sex are found to deserve ascriptive treatment. Nonetheless race, ethnicity, religion, social class, place, blood and so on. (i.e. all associated to kinship, either biologically or by association) are employed as foundations for ascription, though they have no categorical bearing on performance capacity in the division of labour.

2.6.1.4 Critiques of Theories against Ascription Concept

Ascription analysis by Kemper (1974) of Mayhew (1968) and Scott's, (1972) original work received critical critiques by them (Mayhew and Scott, 1976). These authors indicate that their analysis of ascription does not deal with the matter of who can best use ascription for limited or private ends, or how ascription affects the interests of specific others (Mayhew and Scott, 1976). They state "Where functionalists have dealt with the question of how ascription works and why it persists, Kemper in effect asks 'cui bono?' - who benefits from it?" (p. 380).   They challenge

Kemper's (1974) three claims, which are: 1) ascription is efficient or cheap only for the higher strata, 2) his view of linking the family and ascription and 3) conception of the 'performance basis' of ascribable attributes. According to these authors, ascription frequently fails to serve the interests of those whose status it 'fixes', particularly when the status is low. They indicate that in addressing Kemper's (1974) analysis, it is obviously correct. But he is failing to observe that the 'cheapness' of ascription is universal (i.e. that it is cheap for the weak as well as for the strong) and to perceive how deeply rooted ascription is in fundamental elements of social organisation.

They propose that the elimination of all forms of ascription (save those based on age and sex) calls for a degree of social reorganisation of great magnitude: it would require the withering away not only of stratification but of most other forms of social differentiation. It is costly for employers to engage in affirmative action and cheap for them to depend on established channels of recruitment which regularly favour ascription, but the comparative costs are the same for their employees. It is expensive to search affirmatively for a job and cheap (as habitual and convenient) just to look for work that is close or exposed by family or friends. Those authors conclude that the most efficient way to institute achievement criteria in one aspect of social life is to work through the web of ascription that permeates other issues. While the collective level of ascription may be lower in some types of societies than in others, the cheapness of ascription works powerfully to improve its persistence in all societies.

In the vein of Kemper's (1974) conceptions about the distinction of 'performance-related attributes' and 'non-performance-related attributes', such conceptions receive critique by Mayhew and Scott (1976) as well. The latter attribute (i.e. age and sex apart from brute physiological aspects of reproduction, race, religion, ethnicity, social class, residence, place of birth, citizenship, nobility, legitimacy) do "not relate inherently to performance capacity...so far as is known" (Kemper, 1974, p. 848). These authors argue that Kemper (1974) must have in mind only necessary associations between these attributes of performance in individuals, because, as group rates and probabilities are concerned, these attributes cannot be ignored by any economizing actor who wants to minimise costs.

To summarise Mayhew and Scott's (1976) critique to Kemper's analysis, they indicate that Kemper's essay is not fundamental enough, at least in the literal sense: it does not go to the root of the subject. Its dormant mission is not so much to analyse ascription as to criticise it. It follows the moral vision of ascription as evil, because it is occasionally arbitrary and based on a calculating strategy of oppression, and thus is not capable of dealing with the more subtle, pervasive and systematic bases of the disadvantage which ascription can create. These authors indicate that they are familiar with ideologies which hold that the variables by which ascription creates social inequality ought not to matter in social organisations, but as sociologists they have to recognise the amoral fact that they do matter. Several forms of ascription that are general today may be radically transformed in future societies, and some, similar to feudal aristocracy, may altogether vanish. However, ascriptive processes common in some form or another are an unavoidable fact of social life. They indicate that no society and no organisation can afford to remove every relationship or procedure with an ascriptive component. No inexorable evolutionary force or societal transformation will do away with ascription. They state that if we desire to decrease the effect of some specific aspect of ascription to which we take opposition, we must go beyond the easy moralistic course of simple condemnation and pay the price for rational appreciation of what is veritably a basis of social process.

2.6.1.5   How Status is Ascribed in Ascription Cultures

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998) discuss ascription from the national perspectives. However, they also consider issues like achievement/ascription values where this is mostly related to power relations. Thus in this case they have also included a sociological understanding of the ascription concept in their work similar to Linton (1936), Davis (1950) and Parsons (1951). Ascription has been used by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998) to assess how work values differ across cultures and how they affect the process of doing international business and management. Ascription to these authors means that ″status is attributed to you, by birth, kinship, gender or age, but also by your connections (who you know) and your educational record ...″ (p. 9). These authors argue that whereas there are ascriptions that are not rationally associated with business effectiveness, such as masculine gender, white skin or noble birth, there are some ascriptions which do make good sense in predicting business performance: age and experience, education and professional qualifications. They indicate that education and

professional qualifications are connected to an individual's earlier schooling and training and are consequently not unconnected with achievement. They add that a culture may ascribe higher status to its better educated employees based on the idea that scholarly success will lead to corporate success.

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998) conducted a study in several countries including Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), which consisting of the polities of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998) state that in an ascription society or organisation, an individual's status relates to who they are and this status is derived from birth, age, gender, education, class, and family reputation. Individuals in ascribed societies do not need to constantly achieve or to prove themselves to preserve their status. In contrast to the ascription culture, an achievement culture prevails in the USA and Western countries where status is ascribed to people based on accomplishment. Ascription is perceived as a feature of countries either late to develop, or still underdeveloped. Ascribing status, according to the authors, is considered 'dangerous for your economic health'. To measure the degree of achieving versus ascribing orientations in dissimilar cultures, the authors employed two statements, inviting participants to mark them on a five-point scale (1 = strongly agree, 5 = strongly disagree). Figures 2.3 and 2.4 below, illustrate the percentage of participants who disagree with each of these statements.

A.   The first statement is:
"The most important thing in life is to think and act in the ways that best suit the way you really are, even if you do not get things done".

Egypt 4
Nepal 9
Uruguay 10
Argentina 12
Czech Republic 13
Spain 13
Cuba 15
Bulgaria 16
Hungary 19
Romania 20
South Korea 20
Poland 21
Indonesia 24
Ethiopia 25
Austria 25
Japan 26
Greece
China 28
Oman 28
Venezuela 29
Netherlands 30
Russia 30
Mexico
Hong Kong 32
Brazil 33
Philippines 33
Israel 33
Italy 33
France 33
Switzerland 34
Thailand 35
India 37
Singapore 37
Kenya 38
Portugal 39
Germany 40
Finland 41
Denmark 49
Nigeria 51
Sweden 54
UK 56
New Zealand 62
Ireland 65
Canada 65
Australia 70
USA 75
Norway 77

Figure 2.3 Acting as suits you even if nothing is achieved - percentage of respondents who disagree (Source: Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1998, p. 105)

Figure 2.3 shows the people in countries who disagree with the statement 'getting things done' generally represent ascription cultures and are ranked highly in this figure (i.e. Egypt, Nepal, and Uruguay). The people in countries that are in favour of getting things done even at the expense of personal freedom to live as you feel you should are ranked down (i.e. Norway, USA, Australia etc. ranked bottom). As it can be seen Egypt - one of Middle East countries - is ranked top and Oman – another GCC country - is above the middle.

B.   The second statement is:

"The respect a person gets is highly dependent on their family background".
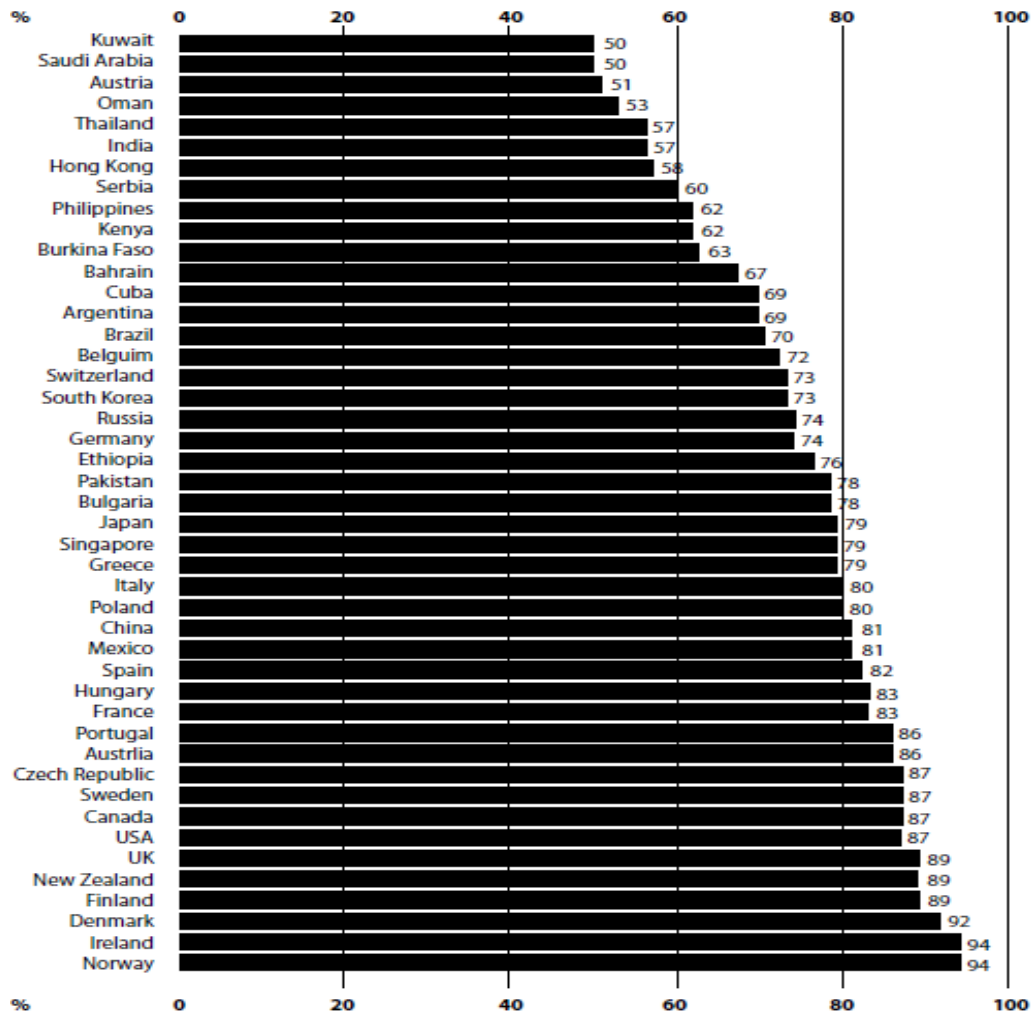
Figure 2.4 Respect depends on family background - percentage of respondents who disagree (Source: Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1998, p. 106)

Figure 2.4 shows that the USA is clearly a culture in which status is mainly achieved. Americans (ranked near the bottom) disagree that status depends mainly on family background. In contrast GCC, for instance Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Oman and Bahrain (i.e. ranked near the top), agree that status is ascribed based on family name instead of achievement.

2.6.2 The Effect of Ascription on the Individual at Institutional (i.e. Organisational) Level

Reskin (2003) has conducted a number of studies and explains why and how ascriptive inequality takes place at the institutional level. This is mainly because of an individual's motives, such as personal taste. Reskin states that, "Motives - the purposes prompting our actions - are often seen in the industrialised world as the cause of human behaviour" (p. 2). She argues that, when examining ascriptive inequality, employing 'Conflict Theory' shows that dominant groups utilise their control over resources to support their privileges and thus demonstrate motive-based explanations. Because 'tastes' can elucidate why employers are keen to pay higher wages to particular persons or groups as opposed to others, various actions of discrimination which lead to inequality take place regularly. It is not easy to provide evidence why ascriptive inequality takes place because motive based theories cannot be tested empirically, as people's motives cannot be observed. Motives do not have an isomorphic association to result. "Motive-based theories attribute motives wholesale to all members of an ascriptive group, precluding analyses that take advantage of the explanatory power of variation among allocators" (p. 7). Reskins suggests that if people are serious about elucidation of inequality, their theories and analytic models must contain indicators of causal mechanisms.

People have failed to make advancements on this topic because most of them are mainly focussed on 'why' ascriptively-defined groups vary in their access to societies rewards, rather than on 'how' variation is produced in ascriptive groups' access to opportunities (Reskin, 2003, p. 2). Regarding 'why' ascriptive inequality take place, in some theories the view of inequality can be observed as the result of separate individuals acting to advance their own interests. In these theories any dislike toward members of an unlike group might make intergroup contact psychically costly to prejudiced actors. This is experienced through mechanisms. Mechanism is "an account of what brings about change in some variable" (Reskin, 2003, p.7). It is the process that converts inputs or independent variables into outputs or dependent variables. The four types of mechanisms responsible for ascriptive inequality are: intrapsychic, interpersonal, societal, and organisational.

Intrapsychic mechanisms involve mental process and thus are not easy to observe. These mechanisms employ psychological theories, for instance social cognition and self-fulfilling, to create ascriptive inequality for the reason that these theories use the stereotypes of minorities to justify that they deserve unequal compensation.

Interpersonal mechanisms are the extent to which allocators base personnel decisions on an allocatees' age, sex, colour, accent, or apparent sexual orientation visibly contributes to ascriptive inequality in work settings. These mechanisms use the interactions between members of dissimilar ascriptive groups to determine the consequence. For the most time, the minority groups receive bad treatment as the majority member is perhaps more rude to the minority member, for instance in the interview situation.

Societal mechanisms comprise normative considerations within establishments' institutional communities, the expectations of their clients, collective bargaining agreements, public transportation routes, and laws and regulations. Social mechanisms are social measures that connect ascriptive group membership to prospects and rewards. Because people link certain stereotypes with members of an ascriptive group, for instance race, the in-group (people like us) and out-group (people unlike us) are formed. Members of a minority group, or out-group, are mainly observable to a majority group, and for the reason that society has already shaped and distorted the majority's perception; it leads them to act in ways that disadvantage minority group members.

Last of all, organisational mechanisms comprise the practices through which employers and their agents in some way associate workers' ascriptive characteristics to work outcomes. In some situations, employers base opportunities and rewards on workers' ascriptive statuses as a matter of policy, favouring some groups and ignoring or harming others. These organisational mechanisms can cause various levels of ascriptive inequality by requiring, permitting or preventing differential treatment through organisational practices, for instance dress codes. Reskin's (2003, p. 15) study concludes that although the most satisfying explanations address both why and how, as Whorf (1956) put it, "The WHY of understanding may remain for a long

time mysterious but the HOW...of understanding...is discoverable" *(p. 239, Capitalization in original).*

2.6.2.1   Ascription Effect on Sex at Organisational level

The study conducted by Reskin and McBrier (2000) examines the effects of organisations' employment practices on sex-based ascription in managerial jobs. Given men's initial prevalence in management, those authors argue that inertia, sex labels, and power dynamics predispose organisations to employ sex-based ascription when staffing managerial jobs, but that personnel practices can invite or limit ascription. Their results, which are based on data gathered from a national probability sample of 516 work organisations, show that specific personnel practices affect the sexual division of managerial labour. Based on those authors, ascription exists when a status, position, or opportunity is allocated at least in part on the basis of an ascribed characteristic (Parsons 1964; Mayhew 1968; Kemper 1974). Baron (1991) for instance, argues that employers practice ascription when employees' ascribed characteristics directly influence their jobs or rewards. Therefore, ascription includes differential treatment based on sex, race, ethnicity, and the like. Based on Reskin and McBrier's (2000) study, sex-based ascription does not essentially attract invidious intention; it can take place when custom shapes employers' personnel practices, when sex stereotypes or jobs' sex labels affect allocation decisions, when decision-makers have the discretion to act on their biases, or when they use sex as a proxy for productivity or employment costs. Motivation toward ascription may stem from organisational inertia, shared cultural understandings, intergroup dynamics, or even organisations' attempts at rationality.

Reskin and McBrier (2000) find that net of controls for the composition of the labour supply, open recruitment methods are linked with women holding a greater share of management jobs, while recruitment through informal networks increases men's share. Formalising personnel practices decreases men's share of management jobs, particularly in big establishments, most probably because formalisation checks ascription in job assignments, evaluation, and factors that affect attrition. Therefore, through their personnel practices, establishments license or bound ascription. Their study also reveals that recruitment is the first step in the process that determines the sex composition of an establishment's managers. The methods that establishments use to

recruit managers affect the sex composition of management. Open recruitment posting or advertising managerial jobs, recruiting through employment agencies, or promoting based on seniority, while it does not get rid of ascription, minimises it in the recruitment stage. Conversely, the more establishments depend on referrals to recruitment managers, the greater the men's share of managerial jobs. Utilising informal networks limits the recruitment pool to people with ties to a decision-maker, and people in social networks are apt to be similar to one another demographically. Utilising networks heavily in recruitment is difficult to fight because many managers think that members of their personal networks are more talented than outsiders.

Reskin and McBrier (2000) find that managerial selection and job assignment related to subjectivity, stereotyping, bias, and in-group favouritism introduce ascription. This means that minimising subjectivity in selection and job assignment increase women's share of managerial jobs. These authors measure formalisation taps procedures that should increase the objectivity of the personnel practices involving in hiring, job assignment and retention, such as written rules and procedures, written hiring and firing procedures, written job descriptions, written performance records, and written evaluations. The consequence of the sex composition of recruitment pools is partly an indication of ascription since the choice of a recruitment pool (whether by design or habit) is a personnel practice that has a high possibility to decrease or support ascription in managerial staffing, at least for establishments with access to recruitment pools whose sex composition differs. The consequence of the decision to recruit managers from outside by establishments whose industries are more male than their internal non-managerial labour force is ascriptive as well. Establishments' characteristics influence the degree of gender equality in organisations particularly when establishments' personnel practices considerably affect the sexual division of managerial labour. By recruiting through 'old-boy networks' and using personnel practices that are susceptible to subjectivity, employers decrease women's access to managerial jobs.

Finally, Reskin and McBrier (2000) disclose that competition in establishments' product or service markets, although not within establishments' control, motivates them either to look for the best accessible candidates without regard for sex, or given women's lower average pay to decrease their labour costs by depending greatly on female managers. In small establishments

particularly those whose managers are mainly male, however, changing personnel practices is unlikely to significantly change the sexual division of managerial labour. In these establishments, external pressure may be needed to oppose the forces that favour ascription.

2.6.3 Career Self-management in Achievement and Ascription Cultures Comparison

Based on Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's (1998) view, achievement means that we are judged on what we have recently achieved and on our record. Members in achievement society need to prove themselves through achievement to obtain status rather than just easy have it ascribed to them. Practices like promotion for recognised achievements and pay-for-performance distinguished individuals within the group seem to encourage career self-management behaviours. As discussed earlier the fundamental principles of career self-management are through exhibiting proactive behavioural approaches to the management/advancement of one's career (Sturges *et al.*, 2010) and exerting desire for control over career outcomes (King, 2003). If individuals in an achievement culture ascertain that they will be given a fair chance for career advancement and rewarded accordingly, career self-management behaviours (i.e. building human capital, building networking, influencing behaviours and so on) will be worthwhile exhibiting as a fast track to achieving career goals despite the barriers that exist in this culture. This means that, although achievement culture may not have a completely ideal environment for career self-management behaviours enactment, it could be better than ascription culture because, in achievement culture, control can be under the control of individuals.

In contrast with achievement culture, ascription culture ascribes status to individuals based on their, age, birth, gender or wealth. The status is accorded to individuals on the basis of the person's being rather than achievement. The ascription oriented society ascribes status on the basis of social, position, age, gender, wealth and similar factors and is characterised by wide use of titles, particularly when these represent status in organisations. Such cultural characteristics may not provide an ideal environment for exhibiting career self-management behaviours. If individuals in an ascription culture (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain) have no confidence about their right in terms of constitutions, legalisations, labour law etc., they may not be motivated to exhibit career self-management behaviours. The assumption here is that people have no confidence in putting their career destiny in the hands of a society which consists of

institutions, governments, influential decision-makers and so forth, where all these parties may interfere in people's career unhelpfully. Individuals in an ascription culture (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain) may feel discouraged because of inequality in terms of resources distribution and in return they might not bother to exhibit proactive behaviours for career advancement since the opportunities might go to people who do not deserve them. Obtaining control over career outcomes is unpredictable in this type of society because it is normally in the hands of influential parties (i.e. people or institutions). On the other hand, achievement-oriented organisations give reasons for their hierarchies by claiming that senior persons have "achieved more" for the organisation; their authority, justified by skill and knowledge, benefits the organisation. Ascription-oriented organisations give the reason for their hierarchies as "power-to-get-things-done" (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1998; p. 112), meaning that ascription culture might not provide an appropriate environment for career self-management enactment.

2.6.3.1 Transition from Ascription to Achievement Factors

Ozbolat (2012) conducts a study to find the factor of education in transition from ascription to achievement in the sample of 232 Gerdibi villagers in Turkey. The transition from ascription to achievement means here that socioeconomic status began to be determined by achievement through education rather than role of father. Besides the ongoing influence of socioeconomic and educational status, income, social capital and social network of parents, in this study the factor of education is emphasised in individual achievement, which is one of two dissimilar theories over gaining social status whilst the other is ascription.

According to Ozbolat's (2012) study, education is the fundamental tool to achieve status in modern societies. It plays a vital role in the construction of social space.   In the business market the condition has changed since the influence of parents is decreasing and they are less involved in their children's choice of profession and careers. Transition of status through the educational system is becoming less significant as well because the educational system is getting more meritocratic, influence of parents is beginning to decrease and direct transition of professions between generations is declining (Graaf and Kalmijn, 2001). Society is increasingly assembled based on meritocracy and achievement in placing individuals in positions in a process of globalisation. This hypothesis derives from the liberal theory which argues that there is a trend in

relation to functional necessities of industrial development. Ozbolat (2012) argues that while the effect of education on occupational status is increasing, the effect of father's educational and occupational status on occupational status of the son is decreasing.

His study finds that education is an effective factor in transition from ascription to achievement. He reveals that the differentiation of educational background, from parents to children according to education between generations, profession and socioeconomic status, also altered the professional status between generations and therefore, the explanation of the background of their current socioeconomic status altered as well. In illustration of the background of socioeconomic status, individuals who benefit from education in attaining status emphasised the effects of individual efforts, graduating from school, working hard, having a good education, etc. as an alternative to socioeconomic status of family, heritage and descending from a wealthy family.

2.6.4   Is Career Self-management Applicable in Ascription Cultures?

With reference to the literature review related ascription criteria, there might be two possibilities about career self-management enactment in an ascription culture (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain), one supporting and the second vice versa.

2.6.4.1   Assumption that Career Self-management Behaviours in Ascription Cultures are Applicable

This assumption assumes that people in an ascription culture (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain) perceive that career self-management behaviours are useful for achieving career success. This assumption is built upon the idea that ascription is reality and useful for society and, in return, this reality must not prevent people from achieving their goals through exhibiting career self-management behaviours. In contrast to studies that criticise the ascription culture (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1998; Kemper, 1974) other scholars have accepted the position of ascription culture (Linton, 1936; Davis, 1950; Parson, 1951; Mayhew and Scott, 1976). Based on Linton (1936), Davis (1950), and Parsons's (1951) standpoint, the conventional view offers three dissimilar explanations for experience of ascription: 1) it facilitates socialisation for positions in the division of labour. 2) It is inevitable, given the normal solidarity of the kinship unit and its articulation with the occupational system. 3) It prevails and persists as

it is an efficient and inexpensive way to resolve definite problems of 'functional subsystems' in society. Kemper (1974) argues that Parsons and others' arguments supporting ascription are observed in light of different reference points employed for ascription. Of these: age and sex are found to be a useful foundation of ascription as they relate to performance capacity. Other reference points for ascription, for instance race, religion, ethnicity, residence, etc., are not inherently linked to performance capacity and their employment for the purpose of ascription is better described by power relations between ascriptive sub-categories.

Mayhew and Scott (1976) indicate that the most efficient way to institute achievement criteria in one aspect of social life is to work through the web of ascription that permeates other issues. While the collective level of ascription may be lower in some types of societies than in others, the cheapness of ascription works powerfully to improve its persistence in all societies. They indicate that several forms of ascription that are general today may be radically transformed in future societies, and some, similar to feudal aristocracy, may altogether vanish. However, ascriptive processes common in some form or another are an unavoidable fact of social life. They add that no society and no organisation can afford to remove every relationship or procedure with an ascriptive component. This means that ascription criteria should not be considered as barriers that prevent people in an ascription culture (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain) from enacting career self-management behaviours.

2.6.4.2 Assumption that Career Self-management Behaviours in Ascription Cultures are not applicable

This assumption does not support career self-management behaviours enactment in ascription cultures (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain). It assumes that people (for example, Bahraini manager participants) in an ascription culture (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain) would not bother to exhibit career self-management behaviours because they would feel it is useless and would not help their careers at all, since career decisions are based on who you are, i.e. ascription culture (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain) and not what you know, i.e. achievement culture (for example, the USA and Western countries). This assumption is built based on Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's (1998) view that in ascription culture individuals' status relates to who they are and this status is derived from birth, age, gender, education, class, and family reputation,

and in return they do not need to prove themselves to preserve their status. In this situation, individuals within ascription societies may not have trust in their society regarding career self-management because they are certain that the status is not ascribed fairly among them. At the same time, they feel victimised and oppressed because of barriers that hinder their career progression and prevent them from achieving career goals. In addition, this situation makes them hopeless to exhibit any types of career self-management behaviours (for example, building human capital through training and development, expertise development, networking etc.) since status ascribes criteria based on ascription rather than achievement. Thus this means that ascription criteria are barriers for people (for example, Bahraini managers) who are living in an ascription culture (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain) and may prevent them from enacting career self-management behaviours.

2.6.5   Summary

The literature review reveals that the concept of ascription basically has two levels that are: societal (i.e. cultural) and institutional (i.e. organisational). These two levels of ascription are assumed to have an impact on the individual in terms of career self-management behaviours enactment. Whereas Linton (1936), Davis (1950), Parsons (1951) and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998) discuss the effect of ascription on the individual at a societal (i.e. cultural) level, Reskin (2003) discuss its effect on the individual at an institutional (i.e. organisational) level.

In terms of the effect of ascription on individuals at society level, Linton (1936) indicates that in all societies the actual ascription of statuses to people is controlled by a series of reference points which serve all together to restrict the field of their future participation in the life of the group. These include: age, sex, family relationships, and caste or class. Davis's (1950) essential discussion regarding ascription reveals that it includes criteria such as: kinship, race, citizenship, religious affiliation, community membership, and legitimacy. However, to Davis, the most prominent two criteria of ascription are namely age and sex, which are related to the child on grounds other than the statuses of the socialising agents. Parsons (1951) indicates that the essential primary-classificatory criteria of ascription include: age and sex, as well as other 'somatic traits' for example, race.

The main position accepted on ascription developed by the prominences like Linton (1936), Davis (1950) and Parsons (1951) indicate that ascription is useful for society to ascribe functions in the division of labour so that socialisation for different roles can be effectively carried out. Authors who support ascription observe it in light of different reference points used for experiencing it. Some of these reference points are: age and sex which found to be a useful basis of ascription, because they link to performance capacity. Other reference points for ascription, for example race, religion, ethnicity, residence, etc., are not inherently linked to performance capacity and their use for the purpose of ascription is better described by power relations between ascriptive sub-categories.

Linton (1936), Davis (1950), and Parsons' (1951) points of views, indicate that the conventional view supplies three dissimilar explanations for experience of ascription: 1) it facilitates socialisation for positions in the division of labour. 2) It is inevitable, given the normal solidarity of the kinship unit and its articulation with the occupational system. 3) It prevails and persists as it is an efficient and inexpensive way to resolve definite problems of functional subsystems in society.

Mayhew (1968) indicates that ascription means utilising an existent, pre-established structure as a resource instead of creating a new specialised structure for a similar purpose. Scott (1972) suggests that families are employed with the task of status placement through ascription for three reasons: 1) No new mechanism is required, as children are found in most families to begin with. 2) This fact obviates conflict between the family and the (unnecessary) other mechanism of status placement. 3) The family has the child first, therefore has the longest time to train him for statuses requiring lengthy socialisation.

The literature discusses the association of ascription with status and power. On this topic, Kemper (1974) argues that status has been used to signify two empirically related, but analytically separate, concepts: the first of these is 'functional status' and the second connotation of status is referred to as 'scalar status'. Ascription analysis by Kemper (1974) for Mayhew (1968) and Scott's, (1972) original work received critical critiques by them (Mayhew and Scott, 1976). They challenge Kemper's (1974) three claims that are: 1) ascription is efficient or cheap

only for the higher strata, 2) his view of linking the family and ascription and 3) conception of the 'performance basis' of ascribable attributes. According to these authors, ascription does certainly often fail to serve the interests of those whose status it fixes, particularly when the status is low.

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998) address ascription but from a national perspective. They also mention issues like achievement/ascription which are related to power relations and thus contribute to a sociological understanding of the ascription concept similar to that of Linton (1936), Davis (1950) and Parsons (1951). Ascription has been used by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998) to assess how work values differ across cultures and how they affect the process of doing international business and management. Ascription to these authors means that status is accorded by birth, kinship, gender or age as well as by connections. These two authors conduct a study in different countries including the Middle East and GCC countries. They find that in an ascription society or organisation, an individual's status relates to who they are and this status is derived from birth, age, gender, education, class, and family reputation.

In terms of the effect of ascription on individuals at organisational level, Reskin (2003) provides a clear explanation to why and how ascriptive inequality occurs. She argues that this mainly takes place because of an individual's motives like personal taste. Reskin (2003) suggests mechanisms or specific processes that link individuals' ascriptive characteristics to workplace outcomes.

The literature review in this section also provides some empirical studies that relate ascription's effect on sex and religion. In the vein of sex, Reskin and McBrier (2000) find that managerial selection and job assignment that relate subjectivity, stereotyping, bias, and in-group favouritism bring in an ascription. This means that minimising subjectivity in selection and job assignment increase women's share of managerial jobs.

Ozbolat (2012) conducts a study in Turkey and finds that education is an effective factor in transition from ascription to achievement. His study reveals that the differentiation of educational background from parents to children according to education between generations,

profession and socioeconomic status also altered the professional status between generations and therefore, explanation of the background of current socioeconomic status altered as well.

The literature review addresses the concept of career self-management within the context of achievement and ascription cultures and drawing comparisons between them to find out how these two cultural characteristics can fit with the fundamental principles of career self-management behaviours. For instance if individuals in an achievement culture (for example, the USA and Western countries) ascertain that they will be given a fair chance for career advancement, then career self-management behaviours will be worthwhile exhibiting as a fast track to achieving career goals (despite the barriers that exist in an ascription culture). In contrast if individuals in an ascription culture (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain) have no confidence about their rights in terms of constitutions, legalisations, labour law etc., they may not be motivated to exhibit career self-management behaviours since obtaining control over career outcomes is unpredictable because it is normally in the hands of influential parties.

Finally, the literature discusses whether career self-management is applicable in an ascription culture and provides two assumptions in this vein. The first one assumes that career self-management behaviours are applicable in ascription culture (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain). This is based on the idea which indicates that ascription is useful and no society or organisation can avoid it because it facilitates the division of labour (Linton, 1936; Davis, 1950; Parson, 1951; Mayhew and Scott, 1976). The second assumption assumes that career self-management behaviours might not be applicable in an ascription culture (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain). This assumption is built based on the view of Trompenaars and Hampden-Turners (1991), who argue that in an ascription culture individuals' status relates to who they are and in return individuals do not need to prove themselves to preserve their status. In this situation, individuals within ascription societies may not have trust in their society regarding career self-management because they are certain that the status is not ascribed fairly among them.

2.7   Research Questions

From the analysis of the literature review on the topic of career and career self-management, three research questions have been yielded:

1.   To what extent and in what ways do Bahraini managers adopt a career self-management approach?

2.   What are the organisational factors that Bahraini managers believe promote or limit their career self-management behaviour?

3.   What are the cultural factors that Bahraini managers believe promote or limit their career self-management behaviour?

The next chapter presents an overview about the Kingdom of Bahrain.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH CONTEXT

3.1   Introduction

The previous chapter focussed on some research issues for further exploration. The main research issues derived from Chapter 2 emphasise career self-management theories which describe individual self-direction and having control over career and the lack of research in this aspect in developing countries (such as the Kingdom of Bahrain). It also addressed the career self-management construct in ascription cultures.

The paramount argument in this chapter is that career self-management is shaped through planning by individuals. This should take place within a particular social context, influenced by organisational and cultural factors. Therefore, career self-management should not be considered primarily driven by the choices made by the individual, but rather it is impacted by different factors existing in society, such as organisational and cultural issues.

This chapter is arranged as follows: Section 3.1 is the introduction to the chapter. Section 3.2 presents an overview of the Kingdom of Bahrain. Section 3.3 addresses the institutional setting in the Kingdom of Bahrain. Section 3.4 explains the nature of Bahrain's labour market challenges. Section 3.5 summarises the whole chapter.

3.2   Overview of the Kingdom of Bahrain

The Kingdom of Bahrain is a country within the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), consisting of the polities of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia. Bahrain is an Arab, Muslim, independent country, fully sovereign, and its system of government is a constitutional monarchy (Kingdom of Bahrain Profile, 2013). All citizens, men and women, have the right to participate in public affairs and enjoy political rights, including the right to vote. The Kingdom of Bahrain is an archipelago comprising 40 islands, located centrally on the southern shores of the Arabian Gulf, 16 kilometres distant from the east coast of Saudi Arabia and 54 kilometres from the west coast of the peninsula of Qatar. The total area is 760 square kilometres and the total population is 1,281,332 which include 235,108 non-nationals. Islam is the official religion of the Kingdom and is embraced by the vast majority of the population. The Bahraini

dinar is the official currency, composed of units of 1000 fils. Following the discovery of oil in 1932, the Kingdom witnessed rapid development. Bahrain is considered one of the most modern countries in the Gulf, although people are expected to dress modestly according to Muslim requirements. As with other Arabian Gulf States, there is a mixture of people of different cultures and nationalities. Arabic is the official language although most Bahrainis can speak English (Kingdom of Bahrain Profile, 2013).

3.3   Institutional Setting in the Kingdom of Bahrain

The argument in this section is that individual career planning and development do not rely on the individual's option only; it is associated within a particular institutional setting. Such an institutional setting may affect Bahraini manager participants while attempting to enact career self-management. Thus institutional theory, constructed by Scott (2005), is adopted here and linked with the Bahrain intuitional setting.

Institutional theory focusses on "the processes by which structures, including schemas, rules, norms and routines, become established as authoritative guidelines for social behaviour" (Scott, 2005, p.460). Scott (1995, p.33) further argues that "institutions consist of cognitive, normative, and regulative structures and activities that provide stability and meaning to social behaviour". Such social behaviour may have an impact on career self-management enactment in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

3.3.1 Regulative Pillar

According to Scott (1995), there are three pillars – regulative, normative, and cognitive – that underpin organisational structures, thereby providing a solid foundation. The Bahrain National Charter issued in 2001 by the King of Bahrain, Hamad bin Issa Al Khalifa, represents the first institutional pillar that is 'regulative', which assists in shaping the career self-management behaviour of participants in this study. In Chapter 1, it states that the individual freedoms of quality, justice and equal opportunity are the core principles of the Kingdom of Bahrain society. A natural flow of Islam principles in the Kingdom of Bahrain states that all citizens are equal before the law in terms of rights and duties, without distinction of race, origin, language, religion or belief.

In addition, the Constitution of Kingdom of Bahrain (2002), issued in 1973 and amended in 2002, states in article (7) that:

> "The law shall regulate the various aspects of religious education and attention shall also be given to the strengthening of the citizen's personality and pride in his Arab Nationalism."

In terms of careers, the Constitution of Kingdom of Bahrain states in article (13) that work shall be the duty of every citizen, necessitated by personal dignity and the public good; to this end, every citizen shall have the right to work and to choose his type of work in accordance with public order and moral standards. In turn, the Kingdom undertakes the responsibility to ensure that citizens enjoy equal access to employment, and that discrimination is unacceptable. The imposition of forced labour is prohibited except in circumstances specified by the law for national emergency and with just remuneration, or as an implementation of a judicial decision. The regulation of relations between employers and employees is an aspect of law on economic bases (Constitution of Kingdom of Bahrain, 2002).

In the context of the Kingdom of Bahrain and career self-management, the regulative pillar grants Bahrainis the rights to choose the jobs they prefer; however, the concern is that there is a shortage of Bahraini skills that meet Bahrain's labour market requirements. One of the most important features of GCC countries is that its Member States possess approximately 45 percent of the world's proven oil reserves (Al-Qudsi, 2005). However, all these countries suffer from shortages in skilled and unskilled manpower (Achoui, 2009) and the Kingdom of Bahrain is no different. For instance, in a country that is small in size and population, it would be logical that unemployment would be low as the diversity of employment options broadens prospects for its citizens. The unemployment rate in the Kingdom of Bahrain is politically destabilising (Peterson, 2002) and represents a major challenge to individuals' careers because employers have a larger pool of 'talent' from which to choose. The reason for the high level of unemployment in Bahrain is that many jobs are not taken by citizens but expatriates, because of a structural preference for cheap, imported labour and a ruling bargain that, until recently, all but guaranteed well-paid public sector employment (Davidson, 2009).

Lowering the unemployment rate is a critical issue for most governments, not just those in the GCC countries (Harry, 2007). Harry also observes that, for a long time, the GCC governments were able to deal with unemployment by creating government jobs for their relatively few citizens, or had adequate income from oil exports to supply generous social allowances and could keep young people occupied in an undemanding education system. However, as populations have increased and the income from oil declined (at least until 2004) unemployment amongst citizens has risen to levels where 'real' jobs have to be created and many foreign workers sent away.

Thus, the regulative pillar does not fulfil its promise and may play a significant role. It is important to mention that most researchers, like those who wrote the Arab Human Development Report (United Nations Development Programme, 2002) and Al-Dosary and Rahman (2005) indicate there is a lack of dependable data in the region (even for those countries that provide some information) and this causes a government a problem in terms of willingness to distinguish the extent of the problem (Harry, 2007).

3.3.2   Normative Pillar

The second institutional pillar is called 'normative', which refers to "a prescriptive, evaluative, and obligatory dimension into social life" *(*Scott, 2008, p.54), based on social interactions, social obligations and a shared understanding of what is appropriate (Wicks, 2001). The second chapter of the Constitution of Kingdom of Bahrain covers thirteen articles defining the basic factors of society that are reflected in the normative pillar. In these articles, the Constitution has determined the political, social, and economic rights of its people. It is mentioned that the family is the basic unit of society and the laws pertaining to it should protect motherhood, childhood, and care for youth. It points out the role of the woman, her duties towards the family and her society.

The Constitution also assures that the State shall guarantee social insurance for its citizens in old age, illness, inability to work, widowhood, and unemployment. It stipulates the nature of social insurance services, and guarantees the right of inheritance. The State requires that Arab and Islamic heritage is represented the sciences, literature, fine arts, and ensures the inviolability of educational institutions. The law also regulates social individual rights, such as ownership,

capital, and labour. The Constitution adopts a moderate and humane approach which aims to achieve economic development while also providing for the general welfare of its citizens within the limits of law (Constitution of Kingdom of Bahrain, 2002).

In the same vein, public rights and obligations are represented in the same normative pillar. The Constitution of Kingdom of Bahrain designates a special chapter consisting of 15 articles for public rights and obligations. The Constitution assures people to a right to equality in human dignity. It grants citizens equalities in rights and obligations and the opportunity for a secure personal freedom. It guarantees individual family freedom, liberty of belief, and practice of religious rites. It does not differentiate between people on the basis of their race, origin, language, religion or belief. The law also upholds the freedom to form societies and trade unions based on lawful national goals through peaceful means. In accordance with the above, the Constitution also allows the right of private gatherings without the need of prior permission. While the Constitution grants these rights, it states that it is the duty of every citizen to defend the country, provided that the law regulates the conduct of military service. In order to do so, the Constitution makes a condition that such defence should be organised and specified only by or in accordance with the law.

With regard to career self-management, the normative pillar refers to obligations which should be mutually observed by citizens and their State. Thus, the State is liable for providing the ideal normative conditions and laws to protect the individual's right to work and the individual, in return, is obliged to help to contribute to developing the State's economy (Constitution of Kingdom of Bahrain, 2002). However, this does not represent the reality in the Middle East, including in the Kingdom of Bahrain, as many Middle Eastern countries represented ascription cultures (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turners, 1998). Nepotism, or personal connections (*wasta*), play a significant role in hindering people's careers for those who are qualified for specific jobs may not have the 'contacts' that will place them in those positions, leaving more 'connected' people to fulfil positions in a less competent manner (Al-Ali, 2008; Tayeb, 2005; Hutchings and Weir, 2006; Cunningham and). Sawalha (2002) contends that although wasta permeates the culture of all Arab countries and is a force in all significant decision-making, it is

not usually mentioned by most writers nor is it explicitly discussed by Arabs themselves, perhaps because it is a sensitive topic implying corruption and improper practice.

A survey conducted by the Arab Archives Institute in 2001 found that 87 per cent of participants emphasised the need to eliminate *wasta*, viewing it as disruptive and symptomatic of corruption, even though more than 90 per cent also responded that they believed they would be using it at some point in their lives. Analysis of the Arab nations suggests that, even with modernisation, *wasta* remains a significant part of business activities (Hutchings and Weir, 2006). Whereas Cunningham and Sarayrah (1993) argue that *wasta* has made life complex for conscientious officials who attempt to apply the law, they also suggest that in a complex economic era, the search for a *wasta* 'solution' becomes more extensive. It has been found that it is a significant factor in various HRM practices in GCC countries; nevertheless, despite its prevalence, there are very limited empirical data on its consequences (Al-Ali, 2008).

3.3.3 Cognitive Pillar

The third institutional pillar which might have an impact on career self-management in the Kingdom of Bahrain is the 'cognitive' pillar. It is reflected in gender role and how society perceives women. In the context of Bahraini women, the Kingdom of Bahrain National Charter (2001) provides women with empowerment rights and makes sure that they are protected from any discrimination they might face in the political and economic fields. Thus the Kingdom of Bahrain has constructed the Supreme Council of Women under the leadership of Sheikha Sabeeka bint Ibrahim Al Khalifa (the wife of Sheikh Hamad, the Kingdom of Bahrain) which is an obligation towards political and economic reform that the government has sought through pursing women's empowerment. The Supreme Council of Women plays a significant role in developing the role of women in the Kingdom of Bahrain. Metcalf (2007, p.61) states that:

> "Bahrain is...seen as an exemplar in its promotion of women's rights among Middle East states although there is an absence of data assessing women's professional role in business and the institutional relations that support or hamper their contribution to economic development."

In the same vein, the Bahrain Labour Law 1957, amended by Sheikh Isa Bin Salman Al Khalifa, the previous Amir of the State of Bahrain under the Amiri Decree No. 20 of 1976, provides women with employment rights through the following articles:

1. *No female shall be employed between the hours of 8 pm and 7 am except employment in infirmaries and other institutions for which the conditions of work therein shall be prescribed in an Order to be made by the Minister for Labour and Social Affairs.*

2. *It is prohibited to employ any female in industries or occupations which are dangerous or unhealthy for her unborn child. Such industries and occupations shall be prescribed in an Order to be made by the Minister for Health in agreement with the Minister for Labour and Social Affairs.*

3. *A female worker shall be entitled to maternity leave on full pay for forty-five days which shall not be deducted from her annual leave provided she produces a medical certificate attested by the Ministry of Health stating the expected date of her confinement. Such maternity leave shall include the period before and after confinement. Further, she may have an additional leave without pay for fifteen days.*

4. *When a female worker returns to her employment after maternity leave she shall be entitled to a period or periods of rest in order to suckle her newly born child and the total of such periods shall not exceed one hour each day and shall be in addition to the normal intervals of rest granted to all the workers.*

5. *No employer is permitted to terminate the service of a female worker on the grounds of her marriage or during her leave due to pregnancy and confinement.*

Despite the above mentioned statutory protections of women's rights, the percentage of participation of Bahraini women in Bahrain's work force is only 29 per cent (Labour Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA) 2004; 2007). In addition, the percentage of Bahraini women who hold leadership positions is low (Al-Rashed, 2008) and Bahraini women are no different to their

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counterparts in the Middle East in terms of discrimination, although there is an absence of confirmatory empirical research. In a study conducted in the Kingdom of Bahrain by Metcalf (2007) to assess how Islamic values have impacted women's work experiences and how Islam has shaped gender and HRM policies, 53 survey and 27 semi-structured interviews were gathered from women professionals participating in career development in workshops conducted in the Kingdom of Bahrain. The empirical data reveal that women experience career and development constraints on account of equal but different gender roles and that gender or equality aspects are highly absent from HRM organisation policy (Metcalf, 2007).

In the majority of Middle Eastern Islamic states where women's right to work is granted (for example, Bahrain National Charter 2001), the interpretations of labour laws are guided by *urf* (custom) and *Sharia* (Islam) law, which mirror the requirement to protect women and create a moral work environment (El-Azhary, 2003). The notion of *qiwama* (protection) relates to the significance of men's responsibility and care for women and family. Associated with the notion of the protection of women in the public sphere, it is normal for women to have to ask their husband for approval to work and this approval should be attained when the marriage is contracted (Metcalf, 2007). The Qur'an, although it promotes equality (Sura Joint Forces and Sura Scattering of Winds), does highlight dissimilarity (Sura The Family of Imran). The following extracts from the Sura suggest that all human beings can liberate themselves through Islam, and the precise naming of men and women, it is argued, is a key sign that men and women are both addressed in the Qur'an on equal terms (Roald, 2001):

> "For true me+n and women. For men and women who are patient and constant, for men and women who humble themselves, for men and women who fast (and deny themselves) for men and women who guard their chastity and for men and women who engage in much Allah's praise, for them Allah has prepared forgiveness and great reward.*"* (Sura Joint Forces, pp. 33- 35).

> "And the male is not like the female." (Sura The Family of Imran, p. 3-36).

"And everything we have is created in pairs that you may remember." (Sura Scattering of Winds, pp. 51-49).

This study suggests that some organisations in the Kingdom of Bahrain do not have formal equal opportunity policies, such as family-oriented and sexual harassment policies, although there is a shortage of research to prove this contention. The notion of an organisation obtaining a policy relating to maternity and returning to work was not regarded as it was presumed that women would naturally look after having children and leave work. Part-time working or flexible working practices were not supported, and the concept of an organisation providing child-care services or support is unlikely on account of the strong family networks that are established to help with child-care arrangements (UNIFEM, 2004). Child-care is perceived as a family responsibility (and primarily a woman's) not an organisation's (Adler, 2004). Based on Bahraini Labour Law (1976) women are eligible to eight weeks unpaid maternity leave and those who return to work are permitted a small reduction in their working hours (usually one hour per day).

The Kingdom of Bahrain and ILO (2002) joint report finds that there are embedded gender inequalities in training support. For instance at the Bahrain Training Institute, which links labour market needs with types of training provided, women are not encouraged to enrol in any jobs considered for men. Many technical schools in the Kingdom of Bahrain are exclusive to men. The reasons given for women's limited recruitment is that the private sector is not known for being 'woman friendly' (Kingdom of Bahrain and ILO, 2000, p. 32) and that job placements for women is more complicated.

The shortage of human resources policies that are concerned with equality issues reflects the equal but dissimilar philosophy underpinning Islam (Metcalf, 2007). According to Metcalf, labour market segregation is frequently linked with stereotypical female and male traits and their appropriateness for certain occupations. An Islamic standpoint of gender relationships in the work sphere is more complex. Many organisations in the Kingdom of Bahrain support, although unofficially, segregation policies and ascribe males and females as being different. In some organisations in the Kingdom of Bahrain, mainly in banking and petrochemical industries, there are sex-segregated work spaces (Metcalf, 2007).

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Thus it can be concluded that the institutions in the Kingdom of Bahrain which consist of cognitive, normative, and regulative structures and activities, do not provide stability and meaning to social behaviour (Scott, 1995).

3.4   The Nature of Bahrain's Labour Market Challenges

Based on statistics provided by the Labour Market Regulatory Authority (2008), the Bahrain labour market consisted of 531,249 employees in 2008, whereas the total number of Bahraini citizens was 134,468 (a mere 25.3 per cent of the total workforce), with the overwhelming balance being expatriates. The growth of employment in the Bahraini labour market between 2002 and 2008 came from the growth of non-Bahrainis which increased to 81.6 per cent representing a growth of 106.1 per cent. Consequently, Bahrainisation decreased from 34.2 per cent in 2002 to 25.3 per cent in June 2008.

According to Allen Consulting Group (2009) study, the Bahraini labour market is dominated by expatriates especially in the private sector in both skilled and non-skilled positions. Overall, there are a number of significant facts about the Bahrain labour market: the growth of employment is accounted for by non-Bahrainis; Bahrainisation has slowed down and the increase in work authorisation renewals indicates that foreign workers have taken on characteristics of resident workers, in terms of quasi-permanency. The Bahrainisation process is mainly driven by employing Bahrainis in the private sector where this sector accounts for 82 per cent of the foreign workforce. Foreign labours dominate the construction and heavy industry sectors by contributing the bulk of technical skills (70 per cent) and unskilled labour (over 65 per cent),

Another feature that distinguishes the Bahrain labour market from other GCC states is that of diversity. In coming decades, the Kingdom of Bahrain requires diversification to provide different mixtures of skills to supply the vocational sectors with technical and professional skills that can meet the knowledge-based service sectors and exploit the opportunities of the private sector (Allen Consulting Group, 2009). Bahrain's finance and banking sector accounts for approximately only two per cent of total employment, despite this being a very attractive employment sector for Bahraini citizens (Harry, 2007). To boost growth in those sectors, it requires the development of technical and professional skills where those skills are required to be transferable across all sectors (Allen Consulting Group, 2009).

3.4.1 Bahrain Labour Market Jobs Gap

In the Kingdom of Bahrain, Tamkeen has conducted many studies regarding gaps in the Bahrain labour market. Tamkeen commissioned the Allen Consulting Group in 2009 to conduct a comprehensive study to analyse current skills in Bahrain's labour market, as well as future and emerging skills requirements, and to assess any current or projected gaps and needs.

The market gaps identified by Allen Consulting Group (2009) are specified in terms of, first, sectors/sub-sectors that remain currently under-penetrated or under-serviced in comparison with market potential; and secondly, sectors/sub-sectors which are practically missing from the Bahraini landscape, although they could potentially exist, based on assessment of market viability and demand assessment. To determine and assess the market gaps in each sector, the study conducted a 'relative sub-sector prioritisation' to prioritise amongst the market gaps recognised, sub-sectors that are supposed to be relatively more attractive and are linked with a relatively higher degree of Bahrain willingness. The study's findings, within manufacturing, show that the Kingdom of Bahrain has a significant market in aluminium and aluminium products followed by petrochemicals; the country has an insignificant market in food and beverages; pharmaceuticals; textile and auto components and electrical and industrial components. The study highlights the important of workforce skills availability, capability and employee attraction and attention and how these issues are the drivers of business sectors across all industry sectors. The study emphasises the rise of complications in identifying the skills required as well as the need for flexible responses to emerging and altering skills.

3.4.2 High Dependence of Foreign Labour

The shortage in local labour in GCC countries began with oil exploration, which led to rapid economic development. This issue encourages governments in the GCC region to adopt a liberal policy related to the influx of foreign workers into these countries. To facilitate the construction of major infrastructure projects and to support the expansion and development of local businesses (despite the shortage in local labour), companies have been authorised to recruit foreign workers freely without any government intervention (Al-Waqfi and Forstenlechner, 2010). Nationals' low level workforce participation in many of the GCC economies represents an increasingly urgent conflict, not only to the respective governments (Al Lamki, 1998;

Forstenlechner and Mellahi, 2011) but to local and multinational organisations too (Budhwar and Mellahi, 2007; Rees *et al.*, 2007). Recent statistics (Rutledge, 2009) give the percentage of expatriates in the total labour force of the GCC countries at 61.7 per cent and can be as high as 83.1 per cent in Bahrain or 89.6 per cent in the UAE. Some of the reasons behind the high levels of expatriates in Bahrain are that there is a shortage of skilled labour because of a poor education system and that some employment sectors are rejected by Bahrainis (such as construction, hospitality, and tourism) (Allen Consulting Group, 2009).

Forstenlechner (2010) concurs that, until recently, the majority of expatriates in Gulf countries were labourers because construction and low-skilled labour was unattractive to nationals because Gulf citizens consider themselves to be a middle class for whom it would be 'inappropriate' to accept certain jobs. Additionally, because of wage expectations amongst nationals, it is prohibitively expensive to employ in such positions. However, at the upper end of the skills and experience requirements, 91 per cent of Gulf CEOs still depend on expatriates to fill key positions (Lootah and Simon, 2009). Another reason why GCC nationals including Bahrainis prefer not to work in the private sector is because of job insecurity and lower employment conditions compared to the public sector (Al-Ali, 2008).

The new reality in the labour market entails boosting nationals' employment in the private sector, which is governed by dissimilar rules and standards and is naturally subject to economic considerations (Al-Waqfi and Forstenlechner, 2010). According to those authors, this adds an additional complication of a cultural nature which classifies specific jobs as 'inappropriate' for citizens. In GCC countries, the type of work, sector of employment and social interactions determine the social status of a person (Mellahi, 2007), possibly to a greater extent than in other cultures (Al-Waqfi and Forstenlechner, 2010).

3.4.3   Poor Education System

The education system in most countries in the world is focussed on equipping young people to take a place in the employment market and contribute to the prosperity of their home country (Harry, 2007). The education system in GCC countries has mostly focussed on developing national identity rather than creating a productive workforce. The education systems therein have

not developed to create the advanced technical, professional and managerial skills needed by modern economies, despite huge financial investment and significantly increased numbers of students (Diwan and Girgis, 2002). Gardner (2003) and Ford (2003) indicate that, in the GCC region, students favour the study of religion, literature and arts or social sciences rather than potentially more demanding courses in engineering, medicine, teaching or business studies, which should lead to more job opportunities. As appointment to government posts and promotion after appointment does not depend on the subject studied or level of achievement, working hard to study a difficult subject or to gain high marks does not make sense to Bahraini students (Harry, 2007). As Al-Dosary and Rahman (2005) illustrate, neglecting education and vocational training results in the failure of any effort to decrease the employment of foreigners through localisation.

In the context of the Kingdom of Bahrain, since 1980, there has been growing interest in educational standards and, at the same time, a strong increase in the size and value of the services sector (Allen Consulting Group, 2009). However, the dependence on foreign workers in the private sector, even during this rapid educational growth, needs to be addressed as a matter of greater priority than has hitherto occurred. According to Allen Consulting Group (2009) study, the dependence on foreign workers has resulted from the mismatch between the skills needs of Bahrain and their fit with Bahrain's labour market. The main issues in the education system in the Kingdom of Bahrain include that a major contributor to education sector revenues in the Kingdom of Bahrain is secondary education, with most Bahraini labourers having either a secondary or post-secondary school degree. The GCC countries considerably lag behind regarding tertiary education and innovation, where Bahrain's investment is lower than the GCC standard in terms of education expenditure. The self-learning concept should be encouraged in the Kingdom of Bahrain through private schools because this may help to divert expenditure from the conventional teaching methods.

3.5   Summary

The chapter began with an overview of the study context, that is, the Kingdom of Bahrain. It has suggested that career self-management behaviours do not rely on an individual's options only, but are influenced by many challenging factors: institutional setting, the nature of the labour

market, and the education system in the Kingdom of Bahrain. Institutional theory implies the processes by which structures, encompassing schemas, rules, norms and routines, become established as authoritative guidelines for social behaviour (Scott, 2005). While discussing Scott's (2008) three pillars (i.e. regulative, normative and cognitive) and linking them to institutional settings in the Kingdom of Bahrain, it seems that they could play a significant role in career self-management behaviours. Therefore, appreciating these three pillars can help in understanding some of the challenges that may limit Bahraini managers from career self-management enactment.

For instance the first pillar, the regulative pillar, reflects the Bahrain National Charter issued in 2001, which it supports individual freedom, quality, justice and equal opportunity; however, in reality this is not the case. Despite the Kingdom of Bahrain being small in size and population, the unemployment rate is very high, resulting from a shortage of jobs, required skills availability, high levels of foreign labour, a poor education system, and so on.

The second institutional pillar, the normative, reflects the second chapter of the Constitution of Kingdom of Bahrain which covers thirteen Articles defining the basic factors of society. In these Articles, the Constitution has determined the Political, Social, and Economic rights of its people. It mentions that law protects the family, women, old age, illness, and inability to work, widowhood, and unemployment. The law recognises social individual rights, such as ownership, capital, and labour. The Kingdom of Bahrain provides ideal normative constitutions and laws to protect an individual's career but there is a substantial degree of *wasta* which is informally practiced and mirrors corruption, consequently hindering participants in this study from selecting jobs that fit their qualification and experience.

The third institutional pillar, cognitive, reflects the gender role and how society perceives women. The Bahrain National Charter provides women with empowerment rights and makes sure that they are protected from any discrimination they might face in the political and economic fields. In addition the Supreme Council of Women supports women's empowerment. Despite this, the percentage of Bahraini women in the Bahraini work force is only 29 per cent

(Labour Market Regulatory Authority, 2004; 2007). In addition the percentage of Bahraini women who hold leadership positions is low (Al-Rashed, 2008).

The Bahrain labour market has various challenges which may impact career self-management enactment. The first concern is its high dependence on foreign labour. The percentage of expatriates in the total labour market accounts for 83.1 per cent of residents (Rutledge, 2009). The private sector in Bahrain is the main contributor to this problem because influential people in recruitment in this sector usually prefer foreign labour over Bahrainis because the former accept lower salaries; Bahrainis reject such jobs because they cannot offer them a basic lifestyle.

The second challenge for Bahrain's labour market is its education system. In GCC countries, including the Kingdom of Bahrain, the education system is considered poor because it has mostly focussed on developing national identity rather than creating a productive workforce, particularly with regard to the advanced technical, professional and managerial skills needed by modern economies. Gulf Cooperation Council countries considerably lag behind other regions regarding tertiary education and innovation, and Bahrain's category is even lower than the GCC standard in terms of education expenditure.

The next chapter explores the various methodological perspectives which were required to select the appropriate tools to collect the data for this research. This helps to obtain the main objective of this study: exploring the nature of career self-management in an ascription culture.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH STRATEGY AND METHODOLOGY

4.1   Introduction

The previous chapter highlighted some challenges that exist in the Kingdom of Bahrain and may limit career self-management enactment. The main issues derived from Chapter 3 emphasise the deficiency in the structure of Bahrain's labour market and the education system.

The aim of this chapter is to describe and justify the choice of methodology used in this research. The nature of the thesis questions is more towards exploring rather than testing theories. In this sense it reflects the individual's (i.e. Bahraini manager participants') own values and behaviours in managing their careers. This study suggests if existing theories were tested, they would not help to discover how careers are conceptualised and managed in Bahrain's culture. In addition, the scarcity of research in this region requires in-depth analysis through semi-structured interviews to discover the organisational and contextual factors that influence career self-management behaviours. In order to determine these factors we need to acquaint ourselves with the nature of the contextual culture (Bahraini culture). With all these considerations in mind, open-ended and probing questions define this research.

The approach of this research relies upon using existing or assumed theoretical categories to target sampling criteria that would anticipate causes of the most phenomena under focus (i.e. encouraging and/or limiting factors) to differ or alter in vital (theoretical or practical) ways. In addition, the field in which participants work is very important to consider, because various fields may dictate certain behaviours; for example, operations managers may have different career orientations than procurement or recruiting managers. Such factors are imperative and more likely have an impact on influencing career self-management behaviour at organisational and cultural levels.

For that reason, the chapter is organised as follows: Section 4.1 summarises the structure of the research strategy and methodology chapter. Section 4.2 presents the research questions. Section 4.3 explains the research contribution. Section 4.4 explains the methodological justification. Section 4.5 discusses the strategy design. Section 4.6 explains the research sampling. Section 4.7 outlines the data collection methods by employing semi-structured interviews. Section 4.8

discusses the main questions in the interviews. Section 4.9 considers the approaches to the data analysis. Section 4.10 details the coding process. Section 4.11 reviews the research confidentially issue. Section 4.12 describes the researcher's involvement. Section 4.13 presents the pilot study for semi-structured interviews. Last but not least, Section 4.14 summarises the foremost issues that have been considered in this chapter.

4.2 The Research Questions

Three research questions were derived from the literature review, and guide the focus of analysis of this thesis. The questions are:

1. To what extent and in what ways do Bahraini managers adopt a career self-management approach?
2. What are the organisational factors that Bahraini managers believe promote or limit their career self-management behaviour?
3. What are the cultural factors that Bahraini managers believe promote or limit their career self-management behaviour?

4.3 The Research Contribution

This research is believed to contribute to the knowledge of the existing literature on careers in general and career self-management in particular. Until today little research reveals how people from diverse cultures, particularly outside the USA and Western countries, define their careers and how different existent factors such as political, economic, social and technological, and many other factors may affect their definitions. There are, however, some examples, such as in Russia (Khapova and Kortovo, 2007); Nigeria (Ituma and Simpson, 2009); Taiwan (Chen, Chang and Yeh 2004) and China (Song and Werbel, 2007). In addition, the studies on careers in general have not given sufficient attention to the career self-management notion, particularly in diverse cultures which anticipate being different from modern or industrial economies. As previously mentioned, the Kingdom of Bahrain has an ineffective labour market, high dependence on foreign labour and a poor education system (Allen Consulting Group, 2009), which may not be an ideal environment for career self-management compared to the USA and Western countries.

Secondly, studies that are related to career practices indicate a shortage of research, particularly in emerging economies in general, and the Middle East in particular. While most available data relates to the USA and Western countries, there is a paucity of information on organising career management policies and practices in the Middle East (Tzabbar *et al*., 2003). Most research in the field of careers in the Middle East has paid attention to career issues such as the impact of migration, foreign investment, gender and discrimination and other factors; no single study has discussed the topic of career self-management. Hence, it is essential to pay significant attention to factors such as organisational and cultural aspects while exploring the idea of contemporary career management in this region.

Thirdly, examining any concepts without referring to cultural barriers (such as ascription) would be neglectful. Therefore, exploring some developing countries' cultures (in this study, the Kingdom of Bahrain) in the field of career self-management would contribute to knowledge where career researches in this part of the world are very few. Moreover, Gunz *et al*. (2000) have called for a more qualitative approach in the study of career issues in order to develop 'thick' descriptions and make sense of the changing nature of careers.

4.4   Methodological Justification

This section outlines the philosophical standpoint of the research and the researcher's orientation. It is essential for researchers to appreciate the main research philosophies as this will help them to identify a suitable research approach. The two main research paradigms propounded in the literature are positivist/quantitative and interpretivist/qualitative paradigms.

The first approach is the positivist/quantitative paradigm. It advocates the application of methods used in the natural sciences to the study of social science in an objective and value-free approach (Bryman and Bell, 2003). Knowledge has its base derived from 'positive information' in contemplating that a combination of rationalism and a justifiable prerequisite of an assertion is capable of being scientifically attested or could possess a logical or mathematical proof (Walliman, 2001). A positivist/quantitative paradigm indicates that there is evidence about the social world which can be gathered and analysed independently from the experience of the people who gathered the data (May, 1993). Green and Thorogood (2008, p. 30) state that "If you

want to understand the perspective of participants, explore the meaning they give to phenomena or observe a process in depth, then a qualitative approach is probably appropriate". They apply rational reasoning so that accuracy, objectivity and rigour strengthen their approach, rather than subjectivity and intuitive interpretation (Collis and Hussey, 2009).

The researchers advocating the positivist approach assume that reality is objectively given and can be explained and measurable independently from researchers, observers or their instruments. In a quantitative approach the researcher tests hypotheses from theories to estimate a phenomenon size. This approach is suitable when collecting data related to the frequency of occurrence of a phenomenon. However, a quantitative approach is not suitable to adopt in this study because the research questions mainly focus on 'how' and 'why'. Such type of questions are not help in answering this study research questions because these mainly focussed on obtaining statistical and numerical data and may ignore the subjective part of phenomena (i.e. career self-management).

The second approach is the interpretivist/qualitative paradigm. Interpretivism has been interchangeably used with 'phenomenological' in the literature as a paradigm; however this research has chosen to stick to interpretivism to avoid confusion. Hussey and Hussey (1997) argue that although researchers prefer the phenomenological paradigm, it is advisable to consider the two paradigms as the two extremes of a continuum. The decision regarding whether to adopt a qualitative or quantitative approach relies on the study research questions that are guiding the study prior to beginning the research plan design and researchers' requirements related to their contribution (Edmondson and McManus, 2007). The interpretivist approach is unique in terms of its ability to address description, interpretation and explanation, whereas the quantitative approach is more appropriate to address research questions of prevalence, calibration and generalisability (Lee, 1999). In the vein of theory advancement, qualitative research looks for generated, elaborate, or testable management theories (Lee, 1999). At the same time qualitative research is significant for obtaining an appreciation of individuals' experience as well as how they interpret their experience. Therefore, qualitative and quantitative approaches together have strengths; however, employing one to the exclusion of the other, while efficient, does not offer sufficient coverage of any management phenomenon. When this is the case, the research

community should support re-examination of the phenomenon adopting the alternative methodology (Bluhm, Harman, Lee and Mitchell, 2011). While positivism is associated with deductive reasoning, interpretivism is associated with inductive reasoning. During the deductive phase, one tends to reason towards observation and during the inductive phase, one reasons from observations. Interpretivists believe that social reality is highly subjective, not objective, for the reason that it is shaped by people's perceptions (Collis and Hussey, 2009).

The fundamental objective of the interpretivist approach is a researcher's attempt to comprehend what is happening and why it is happening. Usually, there is an interrelationship between a researcher and the subject of the research; therefore it is impossible to split what exists in the researcher's mind from what exists in the social world (Smith, 1983; Creswell, 1994). As a consequence the act of investigating social reality is observed as having an effect on that reality. The interpretivist approach, otherwise referred to as 'anti-positivist' (May, 1993), rejects the main assumptions of a positivist approach that permanent laws exist in the social systems and that these laws can be taken and analysed in separation from the social system. The key point of the interpretivist approach is that attitudes and behaviours are specified by their social setting which are 'socially constructed', and as a consequence it requires the researcher to comprehend and interpret the phenomena in a specific localised setting instead of seeking universal laws with the intention of explaining them, without taking into consideration any context.

Since the aim of this research is to draw insights on 'career self-management' in the Kingdom of Bahrain, this study is informed by the constructivist philosophy which helps to interpret the outcomes. This means the research will:

> "Rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation being studied. The questions become broad and general so that the participants can construct the meaning of a situation, a meaning typically forged in discussions or interactions with other persons…they are not simply imprinted on individuals but are formed through interactions with others (hence social constructivism) and through historical and cultural norms that operate in individuals' lives." (Creswell, 2003, p. 8).

Social constructivism is usually integrated with interpretivism in which the researcher interprets the process of an individual's interactions with a concentration on the particular context in which those individuals live and work, with the aim to comprehend the historical and cultural settings of the participants. This indicates that, when the researcher adopts social constructivism, he/she recognises that his/her own background influences his/her interpretations of the diverse meanings that participants have about the subject being studied (Creswell, 2003).

It is important before we design our research to appreciate the main assumptions that are related to the selected paradigm. For that reason, this section will provide the main explanation of the terms used for the interpretivism paradigm. This revolves around the meaning of the lived experiences for participants (Bahraini managers) in a study about a phenomenon (career self-management). According to Collis and Hussey (2009), there are three assumptions and they are interconnecting. If someone has chosen a particular paradigm, the other two are complementary. The following assumptions are:

1. *The ontological assumption:* is related to the nature of reality. The interpretivist believes that the reality is subjective for reasons that are socially constructed. Therefore this research is applying this assumption where the researcher in this thesis believes that the phenomenon under the study (career self-management) is affected by the social factors in the Kingdom of Bahrain which ultimately has an impact on people (Bahraini Manager Participants).

2. *The epistemological assumption*: is related of valid knowledge and what we accept. In this assumption, the interpretivist attempts to close the distance between the researcher and what is being researched.

3. *The axiological assumption:* is related to the role of values. Interpretivists believe that researchers have values, even if they are not clear and these will assist in determining and recognising the facts and interpretation extracted from them. The domain believed by most interpretivists is that the researcher is involved with what they are researching.

4.   *The rhetorical assumption*: is related to the research language. It is imperative to write the thesis to correspond with the chosen paradigm and that which is acceptable to the research supervisor and external examiner. The ideal style in an interpretive study will reflect the immediacy of the research and researcher involvement. At the same time, the researcher should write in the third person using the present tense while writing the thesis.

5.   *The methodological assumption:* is related to the research process. Interpretivists examine a small sample over a period of time. Diverse methods will be used to analyse and examine the phenomena in order to seek what is happening in particular situations and pursue the patterns which could be repeated in other identical situations. Table 4.1 illustrates the research design.

4.4.1   Qualitative Paradigm

The literature review process gave rise to three research questions. It found that although there is a growing body of literature on contemporary career management, the focus is only on developed contexts with very few studies conducted in emerging economies such as the Middle East, giving the example of the Kingdom of Bahrain. Therefore, one aim of this thesis is to plug this gap by exploring the nature of career self-management within the context of ascription culture which, to some extent has similar characteristics to the Bahraini culture. It also pursues the literature in career theories that are related to organisational and cultural factors that have impacted career self-management behaviours. As was mentioned earlier, the literature review disclosed a list of three research questions which this thesis explores.

Yin (2009) states that if the research question concentrates mainly on 'what' questions, there might be two possibilities: 1) some of the 'what' questions are exploratory, justifying the rationale for conducting an exploratory study and any of five strategies can be used, for instance, an exploratory survey, exploratory experiment, or exploratory case study; and 2) the second type of 'what' question is a form of 'how many' or 'how much' line of inquiry and in this case the survey strategy or archival strategies are more favourable than other strategies.

An inductive exploratory research is important to adopt in this research to explore thesis questions. By so doing, this helps to investigate the characteristics of career self-management behaviours exhibited by Bahraini manager participants. The qualitative rather than quantitative approach is adopted in this research because the author in this thesis believes that this method is best suited for an exploration of the phenomena under the study, that is 'career self-management' exhibited by Bahraini manager participants in the sample and for the following reasons:

1.   There are few studies that address career management, particularly from a contemporary perspective in developing countries (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain). Hence, there is a shortfall in comprehending the nature of career self-management in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

2.   Little is known about the social factors (i.e. structural and organisational) that encourage and/or limit the embracing of career self-management of managers not just in the Kingdom of Bahrain but even in developed countries (Budhwar and Baruch, 2003).

The qualitative method has been used extensively in past decades. Its nature is exploratory and used for collecting, analysing, and interpreting human behaviour data. While both qualitative and quantitative methods are important, the selection of the appropriate method depends on the nature of the research questions. Since it is quite hard to use the whole tools and theories of qualitative methods, different methods are considered in order to justify the appropriate one that matches the purpose of this research. According to Collis and Hussey (2009) the following methodologies that are employed in qualitative paradigms are:

1.   The 'ethnography' methodology; this is derived from the study of people, their societies and their customs, focussing on world and observational data to study human behaviours and cultures. Ethnography exploits work-field, participant observation, and in-depth interviews in addition to other techniques to offer a descriptive study of various human cultures and societies. Consequently the main reason to justify this method is to assist in reviewing or improving existing dilemmas.

Such a method is appropriate for this thesis because this study attempts to explore the phenomena under the study (i.e. career self-management). This is because there is uncertainty about its existence in the context of the Kingdom of Bahrain.

2. *'Grounded theory'* was originally developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and can be described as a research method which uses a systematic set of procedures to develop an inductively derived theory about phenomena. In this method the theory is developed from the data itself and this means that there is transition from more specific to more general.

3. The '*hermeneutics*' methodology focusses on interpretation and understanding text in the context of the fundamental historical and social forces. This approach assumes that there is a connection between direct conscious descriptions of experience and the underlying dynamics or structures. The hermeneutics methodology was created by interpreting ancient scriptures. It is broadly applied in law; however it is still associated with interpreting historical texts.

4. *'Participative enquiry';* this makes participants entirely involved in a study that is conducted in their organisation or in their groups, including the involvement in collecting and analysing the data. The participants are also involved in determining the progress and direction of the research, which might allow the researcher to create questions and answers based on both participant/researcher experiences (Traylen, 1994). As a consequence of the imbalance in conventional research methods that have concerns about the unethical issues of participant involvements, this method has been developed.

5. *'Feminist, gender and ethnicity'* studies. Feminist studies are applied to investigate and interpret phenomena that concern the role of women in society as well as men. Gender studies are concerned about men and women. Ethnicity studies are used to examine the experiences of ethnic groups in society and mainly consider sexual or racial equality.

6.   *'Action research'* is a methodology employed in applied research to find an effective way of bringing about a conscious change in partly controlled environments. The main purpose in this type of research is to go into a situation, try to bring about change and to monitor the results.

7.   The *'case study'* is a methodology employed to explore a single phenomenon (i.e. the case) in natural settings using different methods to obtain in-depth knowledge.

4.5   Research Strategy Design

The subject of the research methodology is significant to any study. The appropriate link between the research paradigm, the type of data and the collection methods has important implications on the findings of any research. The aim is to investigate the organisational and cultural factors that are promoting or inhibiting the embracing of career self-management by Bahraini manager participants and consequently serves as a guideline in developing the argument of research design in this research.

Research design offers general guidance for the data collection and analysis of a study (Churchill 1979). The option of research design "reflects decisions about the priority being given to a range of dimensions of the research process" (Bryman and Bell 2007, p. 40), and accordingly this is expected to have significant influence on lower-level methodological procedures, for instance sampling and statistical packages. Consequently, it is considered to be a blueprint that permits researchers to discover answers to the questions being raised in any research. This research adopts a qualitative paradigm and employs semi-structured interviews for two organisations from both the public and private sectors because this is the foremost approach of enquiry. The researcher of this study therefore perceives reality as something developed through an interaction between dissimilar factors in the context.

It is believed that an integrative approach based on a multi-disciplinary review of the literature may assist in developing an in-depth appreciation of the phenomenon being researched. The preliminary findings from this review were necessary to close the gaps in knowledge in terms of both organisational and cultural factors which may promote or limit the potential for embracing

career self-management by managers in those two sectors and is thus considered a pre-requisite to building up theories and practices in this field. Additional mechanisms and the focal dimensions of the research strategy and design are summarised in Table 4.1 below.

Area of Study	Career Self-management in Ascription Cultures
Ontological and epistemological assumptions	Reality is the result of the interconnection between people (for example, Bahraini manager participants) and context (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain) rather than objectively developed.
Phenomenon analysed	Analysing career self-management practised by managers in ascription cultures, giving the example of the Kingdom of Bahrain.
Literature review	Reviewing literature about career-related theories in general and career self-management in particular. In addition, the literature regarding the organisational and cultural promoting and limiting factors of career self-management is discussed.
Type of the study	Theory modification and validation which is constructed in the USA/Western countries in order to build a new mechanism and model valid for individuals in developing countries.
Empirical inquiry approach	Semi-structured interviews in two organisations. The first organisation represents the public sector and the second represents the private sector in the Kingdom of Bahrain.
Research process	Two stages: the first is piloting and the second stage is mainly fieldwork.
Sample	Purposeful sampling selects one manager from human resources and absolute sampling selects 19 managers from different departments.
Research quality	Consider different aspects to preserve the quality of this research: trustworthiness (i.e. credibility in preference to internal validity; transferability in preference to external validity/generalisability; dependability in preference to reliability and conformability in preference to objectivity), and ethical considerations.
Data collection	Gathering the data through conducting semi-structured interviews with 40 managers.
Data analysis	Adopting a combination of Miles and Huberman's (1994) three steps and Yin's (2009) analysing technique.

Table 4.1 Research strategy and design

4.5.1 Research Quality

Quality in any research must be maintained through the research process, regardless of the paradigm being employed. Therefore this research takes into account different aspects to preserve quality: trustworthiness (i.e. credibility in preference to internal validity; transferability in preference to external validity/generalisability; dependability in preference to reliability and conformability in preference to objectivity), and ethical considerations.

4.5.1.1 Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (1985) argued that the basic issues of trustworthiness are:

> "*How can an inquirer persuade his or her audiences (including self) that the findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to, worth making account of? What arguments can be mounted, what criteria involved, what questions asked, what would be persuasive on this issue?"* (p. 290).

Those authors' constructs correspond to the criteria employed by the positivist investigator:

1.   Credibility (in preference to internal validity)
2.   Transferability (in preference to external validity/generalisability)
3.   Dependability (in preference to reliability)
4.   Conformability (in preference to objectivity).

- **Credibility (Internal Validity)**

According to Bryman and Bell (2007, p. 411), credibility can be accomplished by "ensuring that the research is carried out according to the canons of good practice and submitting research findings to the members of the social world who were studied for confirmation that the investigator has correctly understood that social world". Credibility is an assessment of whether the research findings reflect a 'credible' conceptual interpretation from the collection of original participants' data (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 296). To address credibility, this research applies different techniques to make certain that this research is credible for instance: peer debriefing, reflexivity and member checks.

First, peer debriefing is the process of involving colleagues in one's study as an external reviewer (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). It is believed that this process will have a great impact through obtaining different explanations and perspectives on the data after each research stage. This process not only facilitates data interpretation but further aids in resolving the issues that originate from an interpretation bias which may have resulted from the decisions taken by the researcher. The researcher of this study benefitted from PhD workshops conducted by Ahlia and Brunel Universities either annually or quarterly. Such events and activities usually help PhD students discussing research process issues with their colleagues and lecturers and, by doing so, help them to obtain a broad knowledge of various aspects of different research stages.

Secondly, considering the significant reflexivity aspect, takes into account that the researcher is a cause of bias which intervenes in the process of the research, and necessitates a strategy to track such reactivity because it weakens the credibility of the research (Maxwell, 2005). The researcher of this study was attentive to eliminating this issue, thus during the data collection stages the interventions and responses were tracked. The intention was to disconnect the researcher responses from participants' responses and consequently the data represents actual life and participants' practice truthfully and correctly. Consideration of the research process and its potential implication for validity of the major claims and conclusions of a study is one element of what is sometimes called reflexivity (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983). The researcher is expected to be a reflective practitioner, particularly concerning the role they play in the process and the consequences of this (Sapsford and Jupp, 2006).

A significant aspect of reflexivity is that the data collection and analysis should be made adequately clear for the reader to build a sensible assessment of the credibility of the findings. Furthermore, occasionally a reflexive description or natural history of the research will be obtainable and this may supply very helpful background information for assessing the claims made by the researcher (Sapsford and Jupp, 2006). The author of this research involved an external member who checked and reflected on the collected data. This entails the participants being able to amend, clarify and expand their appreciation of the data collected particularly after the interview. By considering the participants' experience, their feedback and comments will help

in maximising the credibility of research and confirm the accuracy of the data collected prior to moving forward with the project (Bryman and Bell, 2007).

The author of this study adopted this technique by sending the interview transcripts to participants after transcription. In addition, the primary data were sent to one of the authors whose theory was discussed in this research, for example Professor John Briscoe. Professor Briscoe is an Associate Professor in the Department of Management at Northern Illinois University, and has written extensively of contemporary career management issues, including boundaryless and protean careers orientations, which were discussed earlier in the literature review. He provided the author of this study with various comments which helped immensely. Such a technique helps the author clearly understand the participants' viewpoints.

- **Transferability (External Validity)**

Transferability is another word for external validity in qualitative research and it is defined as a process performed by readers of research who can judge the generalisability of the findings (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Readers make note of specific aspects in the research situation and then compare them to other specific situations that are familiar. If they are found to have adequate similarities, readers may be able to deduce that the result of the research would be alike in their own situation. This is the meaning attributed to readers who import the results of the research to another context. To achieve this effectively, the researcher of this thesis provided ample information to describe the search methods and situation. Results of any type of research method can be applied to other situations, but transferability is mainly pertinent to qualitative research methods, for example, ethnography and case study. Reports based on these research methods are comprehensive and precise. Nevertheless, since they often consider only one subject or one group, researchers who carry out such studies rarely generalise the results to other populations. The detailed nature of the results, though, makes them ideal for transferability.

In a case study, generalisability can be bolstered by the use of existing literature to indicate how widely the findings from the study can be applied (Eisenhardt, 1989). To smoothe the reader's task of judging and assessing the findings of this research or transferability, this study offers reliable research methods to exhibit and present clear criteria which appreciates the logical steps

and instruments which are adopted to produce a rational conclusion and recommendations. It is important to mention here that the purpose of this research is not population generalisation but rather to show that some of the theories which have evidenced its validity and application in certain contexts (for example, the USA and Western countries), can be applied in other contexts that attribute different characteristics in which those theories were initiated.

- **Dependability (Reliability)**

Dependability involves making certain that the trustworthiness criteria, the justifications behind the theoretical and philosophical underpinnings, and the process of the research are all consistent, accessible for auditing and can exhibit the reliability of the research (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Bryman and Bell, 2007). To ensure that this research is reliable and can be replicated, the author documented all research procedures to allow repetition of the process in the future, which is likely to lead to similar findings. To fulfil all these elements, the study recorded all the data collected and all the analysis. In addition, all the data collection processes were recorded and all analysis processes are accessible in case of any further or future investigation.

The meeting of the dependability criterion is not easy in qualitative methodology; however, researchers should endeavour to allow an external investigator or auditor to repeat the study. There is agreement between many scholars regarding the importance of validity and reliability (Robson, 1999, Punch, 1998). If researchers do not demonstrate that the methods are reliable and conclusions valid, the research will have little value (Silverman, 2002). The meaning of internal validity is concerned with the accuracy of information and ensuring that it matches the truth or reality (Merriam, 1988). To ensure validity, several sources are important to consider (for instance, interviews, company documents, and company databases), further establishing the conceptual framework of the study throughout the process of coding, analysis and providing comments and review for the internal informants' findings. Silverman (2002) states that, validity is another term of truth in which the findings represent the accuracy of the phenomena to which they refer. From that perspective, it is significant to ensure that the study is valid and reliable and that the findings rely on the crucial investigation of assessing the data by considering a number of steps: the data was revised thoroughly and methodically; for instance, the tape recordings were transcribed precisely to ensure that data was true.

To ensure the consistency in transcribing the interviews, all data was transcribed by the author of this research rather than using different transcribers. The tape recordings were also checked against the script to ensure data accuracy and nothing was missing. Moreover, in order to improve the internal validity of the qualitative study, the author in this study sought the help of other researchers to inspect the assessment of decisions made throughout the process of the research to validate their correctness and efficacy.

- **Confirmability (Objectivity)**

Patton (1990) links objectivity in science with the use of instruments which do not rely on human skills and perception. Confirmability means ensuring that the researcher is attentive to maximising the objectivity of the research, and provides findings that are developed from the collected data and not influenced by the researcher's personal values and theoretical proclivity (Bryman and Bell, 2007). The researcher must take different steps to ensure as much as possible that the research findings are the outcome of the experiences and notions of the informants, rather than the researcher's characteristics and preferences. In this vein, Miles and Huberman (1994) argue that a chief criterion for confirmability is the degree to which the researcher confesses their own predispositions. Thus the researcher must acknowledge their decisions about methods adopted within the report, discussing the reason behind preferring specific approaches over others and explaining the drawbacks of the techniques that have been adopted. Furthermore, the preliminary theories which are not developed by the data must also be mentioned. A data-oriented approach may be employed by some researchers and this illustrates how the data consequently leads to the shaping of the recommendations and processes followed during the study cycle.

4.5.1.2   Ethical Consideration

Ethical issues must be adopted in any type of research. The research process produces anxiety between the aims of research to create generalisations for the benefit of people and the rights of participants to preserve privacy. Ethics are principles associated with the avoidance of harm. By the implementation of appropriate ethical principles, harm can be reduced or eliminated. Hence, it is important to ensure that confidentiality is maintained to protect participants' personal information in any kind of research, so that they are not harmed by their participation. One of the

most sensitive aspects the author of this study found stemmed from the subject of the study, 'career', particularly in the current Bahrain political situation. Such issues make the job of convincing institutions and participants challenging. The author of this study has experience in this issue; therefore, preliminary information about the study was provided to the institutions as well as to the participants. This information encompassed the nature and the aim of the research, thus reducing participants' fears and encouraging them to be part of this study. The researcher of this study followed different ethical practices and procedures to resolve any problems that may have taken place, such as:

1.   The author sent the Ethical Request Form and other documentation to university Research Ethics Committee to obtain their approval (i.e. this form was presented to the institution under the study with the authorised committee signature).

2.   After the author received the approval letter, an initial call was made to the respective institutions to arrange interviews.

3.   The author sent the approval letter, research history and its aim to the respective person in each institution, asking that it be passed to participants in order to seek their voluntary acceptance for study participation.

4.   Since the political situation in the Kingdom of Bahrain was not stable at that time, conducting interviews was very challenging; therefore, the relationships and networks of the author were utilised to obtain approval for access to the institutions.

5.   To maintain confidentiality and privacy, the participants were informed prior to interview that the tape recordings would be deleted following interview transcription.

6.   The author was attentive to ethical issues which may occur during the analysis of the collected data. Therefore, the author of this study was attentive about maintaining objectivity in generating the data and avoided selectivity in the analysis stage.

Moreover, the institutions under the study were given the option to omit their names if they were not comfortable with that action.

7.   Finally, different ethical principles were considered by author of this study during the analysis process and suggestions made by Shamoo and Resnik (2009) were adopted, for example:

- o   Honesty practices in all sorts of communications, report data, results, methods and procedures, and publication status.
- o   Objectivity, by eliminating the bias in data analysis, data interpretation and avoiding revealing any personal information or any monetary interests that may affect research.
- o   Integrity, in terms of keeping the promises and agreements during any personal communication and endeavouring to maintain consistency through data collection and analysis.
- o   Care, to eliminate careless errors and negligence; carefully and critically examining the data through keeping excellent records of research activities, such as data collection, research design, and correspondence.
- o   Legality, through appreciating the pertinent institutional and governmental policies and laws.
- o   Human subjects' protection, by minimising harm and risks, maximising benefits and respecting human dignity.

4.6   Research Sampling

4.6.1   The Process of Sampling

Two organisations were selected to collect and analyse data by conducting semi-structured interviews with 40 managers. To obtain fair information about participants' career self-management behaviours, many Bahraini and non-Bahraini newspapers were read to extract the primary and secondary database required to design the sample. Various relevant websites were also viewed to become acquainted with Bahraini organisations' profiles such as the Labour

Market Regulatory Authority and other Bahraini Ministry websites. In addition, dissimilar conference materials were read, including, for instance, from the International Federation of Training and Development Organisations (IFTDO) and the Asia-Pacific's Leading International Training Organisation (ARTDO), to gain the necessary information, particularly the statistics regarding career management globally in general and in the GCC and the Kingdom of Bahrain particularly. Consequently, the author of this study chose two types of sampling: purposive sampling (i.e. HR manager in each case) and absolute sampling (19 managers from different departments in each case).

4.6.2   Purposive Sampling

Purpose sampling has been espoused for the reason that qualitative inquiry concentrates in depth on a small sample that has been selected for specific features and this differs from methods which focus on a large sample selected randomly (Patton, 1990). The criterion of choosing managers is based on the purposive sampling of selecting Bahraini HR managers (in EWA and GARMCO) to examine their career management orientations in the Bahrain context because this aligns with the main research objectives. In addition, HR managers are usually acquainted with the skills that relate to career and career development as this topic is considered one of the main issues in the human resource field. However, the author of this study was not be able to make comparisons between them and other managers because there are only two; if this had been done, they would be easily distinguished. They also emphasised the importance of not revealing their responses as they believed this may cause problem for them with their organisations' management.

4.6.3   Absolute Sampling or the Total Population

Absolute sampling, in this research area, would have required the study of all of the managers employed in the organisations studied, EWA and GARMCO. This type of sampling is used when the numbers of the people who represent the participants under the study are comparatively few yet would contribute to achieve the study objectives (Daymon and Holloway, 2002). The country chosen was the Kingdom of Bahrain because no studies had been conducted previously on career management within this Kingdom. To cover a fair population sampling in a country small in size and population, the research chose two sectors that are the main sectors in the Kingdom of

Bahrain which consist of large workforce populations. Each organisation encompasses 19 managers from different departments and one HR manager (total of 20 managers in each organisation). In the Kingdom of Bahrain, the 'government sector' represents 34 per cent, the 'private sector' represents 60.7 per cent and 'semi-government sectors' represents 6.3 per cent. By making this choice this research attempts to cover relatively fair portions of Bahrain's institutions (Labour Market Regulatory Authority, 2011). Below are two tables. The first (Table 4.2) shows the gender divide in Kingdom of Bahrain workforce. The second (Table 4.3) illustrates the number of employees in the public and private sectors by major economic activity and gender in 2006.

Sector	Bahraini		
	Male %	Female %	Both Sexes %
Government Establishments	19	15	34
Semi-Government Establishments	4.7	1.6	6.3
Private Establishments	45.3	15.4	60.7
Total	**69**	**32**	**101**

Table 4.2 Distribution of workforce (in thousands) by sector, gender and nationality (Labour Market Regulatory Authority, 2011)

Establishment Sector	Major Economic Activity	Both Sexes	Female	Male
Public sector	Government	34.0	15.0	19.0
	Semi-government	6.3	1.6	4.7
	Total	**40.3**	**16.6**	**23.7**
Private sector	Manufacturing	13.6	2.6	11.0
	Electricity, gas and water	0.5	-	0.5
	Construction	9.2	1.7	7.5

	Trade and repair	14.2	3.9	10.2
	Restaurants and hotel	2.5	0.9	1.5
	Transport, storage and communication	5.7	0.9	4.8
	Banking, insurance and finance	5.6	1.7	3.8
Private sector (Continue)	Real estate and business services	7.2	2.2	4.9
	Educational institutions	0.6	0.6	0.0
	Hospitals, health centres and clinics	0.6	0.4	0.2
	Community, social and personal services	1.1	0.4	0.7
	Total	**60.7**	**15.4**	**45.3**

Table 4.3 Number of employees in public and private sectors by major economic activity and gender in 2006 (Labour Market Regulatory Authority, 2011)

As the private sector represents 60.7 per cent of the total workforce, one organisation was selected to cover 20 managers (20 managers for each organisation). The semi government sector represents 6.3 per cent which is very small compared with private and public sectors, therefore no organisations were selected from this sector. The government sector represents 34 per cent of the total workforce; therefore another organisation was selected to cover 20 managers. Consequently 38 managers who are performing different roles were selected in two organisations in addition to two HR managers (total is 40 managers for the two organisations).

The 40 managers from two sectors were randomly selected, taking into consideration the managers' occupation and function. The type of occupations is worth considering because some occupations dictate certain behaviours. For instance, managers in engineering are probably dealing with machines most of the time whereas managers in human resources are most likely dealing with human beings. Such differences lead to different behaviours. Also most

organisations or government departments in the Kingdom of Bahrain are structured based on the departments or job functions. Thus occupation segmentation is easy to adopt because it will have a valuable impact. Although different criteria such as gender, age, and qualifications are important, it will not consider them because of the following reasons:

First, with regard to gender and age, to avoid gender bias, it is always good to consider both male and female when selecting the sample. Gender would appear to have an important impact upon both career self-management promoting and bounding behaviours because this helps to appreciate how men and women are socialised into playing life and career roles in different ways (Briscoe, Hall and Mayrhofer, 2011). However, considering various factors such as the smallness of society of the Kingdom of Bahrain and the newness of the era in which there are women in top managerial positions (Al-Rashed, 2008) justifies the non-acceptance of gender segmentation. In addition, the participation of women in Bahrain's workforce is already low, compared to men who cover only 29 per cent (Labour Market Regulatory Authority, 2004; 2007) of the total workforce.

Secondly, it is also imperative to consider age because people of dissimilar career stages represent dissimilar generations and different life stages (Super, Savickas and Super, 1996). Comparing different age groups within the same culture could provide valuable contrasts of comprehensive career self-management behaviours. However, because of issues such as the smallness of the Kingdom of Bahrain, it would be difficult to find different managers of different ages in each organisation. In the Kingdom of Bahrain, particularly in the public sector, managers do not reach management level unless they approach 40 years of age and above.

Thirdly, addressing qualifications is also required in order to discover whether this factor has influenced the perceptions and behaviours of Bahrain participants career self-management either in positive or negative ways. However, in the Kingdom of Bahrain many managers, mainly those who are over 40 years old, do not hold a master's degree and in some cases not even a bachelor's degree, particularly in the public sector. Therefore, this segment was not taken into account.

While the research aim is to obtain equal numbers of men and women, this was difficult particularly in Organisation No. 2 which represents the private sector. This is because in the Kingdom of Bahrain women who work in manufacturing fields (i.e. GARMCO) are very few. However, in the first organisation (i.e. EWA) the sample of participants is equal. Male and female managers ranged in age between 26-35, 36-44 and 45 and above, with an average tenure in the firm of 11 years. Different business units were represented in the male and female managers' sample (see Appendix 8).

4.7   Data Collection Method

4.7.1   Why Bahraini Managers have been chosen?

The main reasons for selecting Bahraini managers in the sample are as follows:

First, given the differences between general staff, managers and leaders in terms of career management issues, the author of this thesis decided to focus only on managers' career self-management by exploring specific constructs drawn from the literature.

Secondly, this research has selected managers and not leaders or employees at the beginning of their careers because the managers' category combines the attributes of both categories (i.e. employees and leaders). For instance, the manager could have five years' experience which would be sufficient to enable him/her to determine his/her career self- management behaviours. It is also highly likely that the manager has passed different career management stages in comparison with the employee at the beginning of their career. The reason for not selecting leaders is because of the likelihood that these leaders have reached their maximum potential, where career management is not as imperative for managers.

Thirdly, this research is interested in choosing managers because of the author's motivation to discover employees who are in the same position as herself - managers - and discover how these people think in terms of career self-management. By doing so, this could help her to contribute by adding new thoughts in the career management concept, particularly as there are very few studies, if any, in the Kingdom of Bahrain that tackle this concept.

Finally, the managers within the public and private sectors have been chosen to discover the practice of career management in the Kingdom of Bahrain because it is believed that those sectors cover most of the workforce in the Kingdom of Bahrain and, consequently, possibly constitute a fair population of managers' perceptions and experiences about career self-management. The aim is not a statistical generalisation but rather a theoretical one in that it endeavours to confirm that applied theories in certain conditions can be generalised to others (Collis and Hussey, 2009) if various structural and contextual factors are examined.

4.7.2   Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were adopted to address the research questions which surfaced from the literature review on the nature of career self-management in the Kingdom of Bahrain. Interviews can take different structures; however open-ended interviews are most popular where the researcher can ask participants about their views regarding events or facts of a matter. Participants are asked to draw on their insights into specific matters related to the topic (i.e. career self-management). Bryman and Bell (2007) agree with Yin (1994) and argue that interviews might be the most widely employed method in qualitative research. Thus the author is encouraged to employ semi-structured interviews as structured interviews hold too many limitations. One of these limitations is that pre-determined questions might not be appropriate to inform the research questions and consequently constrain the aim of the research. At the same time qualitative researchers usually adopt semi-structured interviews because the structure of the interview tends broaden flexibility, which is valued in qualitative research (Daymon and Holloway, 2002).

The qualitative interviewing approach attempts to be much less structured than the quantitative interviewing approach because it emphasises greater generality in forming the initial research ideas and relies on interviewers' own perceptions and points of view. In this approach 'rambling' or going off at a tangent is commonly supported where interviews can move away from any guide that is being used. It also tends to be flexible in responding to the interviewer's direction. The researcher with a semi-structured approach wants to have rich, detailed answers and therefore may tend to interview participants more than once. The researcher, in this approach, had a list of questions to cover particular subjects or topics, usually referring to them as a guide,

giving the interviewee flexibility in how to answer. The questions which are not mentioned in the guide may be asked as the interviewer picks up on issues talked about by interviewees (Bryman and Bell, 2007).

In fact, the qualitative interview can be viewed as a conversation where the aim of the interviewer is to garner knowledge about the respondent's world. It also assists the researcher to obtain a greater depth of the interviewees' experience and allows for reciprocal understanding between the interviewer and interviewee through discussion and negotiation of the meaning of the research aspect being studied (Alvesson, 1996).

In spite of all the semi-structured interview advantages, there is a few disadvantages; for instance, it is time consuming (Burns, 2000; Kumar, 2005). The author in this research was aware of such concerns, therefore three months were allocated to make contact with participants and gather the data for the two cases. It is believed that the above aspects justify the decision to employ semi-structured in-depth interviews to capture the extent and ways in which Bahraini manager participants adopt the career self-management approach and appreciate the organisational and cultural encouraging and/or limiting factors of enacting career self-management in the Kingdom of Bahrain, which has a unique culture that is probably characterised by ascription.

4.7.2.1 Interview Protocol

The author of this research employed different practices during the interviews, experienced in three stages in order to maximise the level of interview quality. Those stages are: practices prior the interview, practices during the interview and practices after the interview.

- **Prior to the Interview Preparation Stage**
    - Collect details and information about the cases, its purposes and goals.
    - Prepare all details about the ethical issues and confidentiality considerations for institutions and participants under the study.
    - Coordinate with the relevant human resources person recommended by the company to arrange participant appointments and locations.

- Prepare all the necessary instruments, for example the recorder, laptop and stationery (i.e. pen and paper).
- Confirm the appointments with participants one day before interview.
- Read the relevant information about the organisations such as: the institutions' history, the structure and the questions of the interview and other data that have been collected at that point in time.
- Attend the interview location 30 minutes prior to the interview appointment.

- **Practices during the Interview Stage**
  - Maintain strong eye contact.
  - Express gratitude to respondents because of their agreement to participate in this study.
  - Introduce the researcher, the study aims and objectives.
  - Elucidate the ethical considerations and what participation in this study involves.
  - Ask for official permission for interviewing and recording the interview by signing the university 'BBS form' which is created for this purpose.
  - Begin the interview and avoid leading questions.
  - Adopt diverse types of questions to extract a thorough discussion, for instance using: introducing questions; follow-up questions; probing questions; specifying questions; structuring questions; and interpreting questions.
  - Thank the participants for accepting to be part of this study and elucidate the next step, for instance sending the transcription for approval.

- **After the Interview Practice Stage**
  - Save data on the same day in the laptop and memory stick.
  - Call participants and thank them for their participation.
  - Transcribe data on the same day and add comments.
  - Save copies of transcriptions.

4.7.2.2   Semi-Structured Interview Design

This thesis adopted the use of semi-structured interviews, asking various types of questions of the Bahraini manager participants in each institution under the study. Questions concerning career management orientation, organisational and contextual encouraging and/or limiting factors that are assisting/preventing them from embracing career self-management behaviours were planned in order to obtain a wealth of information about the nature of career self-management in the Kingdom of Bahrain from their points of view. Some basic instructions need to be adhered to when preparing interview questions, according to Bryman and Bell (2007):

1.   Devise interview questions in a way that helps to answer the research questions.
2.   Try to use simple and understandable language that enables the interviewees to understand the questions being raised (i.e. translate questions into Arabic).
3.   Avoid leading questions since the research approach is a qualitative methodology.
4.   Prepare the 'face-sheet' information such as: name, age, gender, position in company, number of years in the sector and so on.
5.   Have a good recording device and microphone because qualitative researchers always need to record and transcribe their interviews.
6.   Conduct the interview in a quiet atmosphere and try to make the interviewee as comfortable as possible.

The interview data is collected to provide a vigorous analysis of the results. This approach is useful for collecting sensitive data and extracting information on sensitive subjects based on personal interactions. The Bahraini managers in the sample preferred to communicate face-to-face and this is in line with Eastern culture which is different from Western cultures that prefer e-technology in communication. In addition, interviews help to elaborate on questions if they are not clear and this works to obtain more precise answers. The interviewer (researcher of this thesis) allocated a duration of 90 to 120 minutes for each interview and applied all the interview protocol skills such as active listening, polished responses, summarising and probing to encourage a rich and fruitful discussion and a precise comprehension of what was revealed (Seidman, 1998).

Initial contact was made with human resource managers of two institutions in the Kingdom of Bahrain known by the author to gain preliminary permission. The second step was to send permission letters followed by telephone calls and visit the HR managers to obtain official permission to conduct the interviews. The names of those managers were provided by their institutions along with their business contacts. The permission letters, interview times, venues, manager business contact details, job title and level in organisation structure were obtained. As mentioned earlier, each manager was asked if he/she agreed to be recorded in order to take notes complemented by recording to ensure that no answers would be misinterpreted or missed. The author in this thesis made three categories in terms of interview questions where each category addressed each research question.

Considering any ambiguities that might arise from the wrong interpretation by participants, the English version of the interview questions was translated into Arabic. Although all managers in the two entities (i.e. EWA and GARMOC) speak English fluently, the author asked the questions in both languages, Arabic and English, to ensure that the meaning was clearly understood by the participants. Also the participants were asked to answer the interview questions in English or Arabic or switch between these two languages according to their choice. Some managers answered the questions by switching from Arabic to English and vice versa. Thus the answers of the interviews were sent to each respective participant in both languages. They were asked to read them carefully in order to amend, change or delete if they felt anything had been misinterpreted.

4.8   Main Questions of the Interviews

The main questions in the semi-structured interviews were devised to address the following: 1) the career management orientation of the Bahraini manager participants from their own perceptions; 2) the organisational factors that shape or constrain career self-management from Bahraini manager participants' points of view; and 3) the cultural factors that shape or constrain career self-management from Bahraini manager participants' points of view. The main questions of the in-depth interview were divided in three categories as follows:

- **Category 1: Managing Career**

Research Question 1: To what extent and in what ways do Bahraini managers adopt a career self-management approach?

Such a research question is broad and accordingly helps participants to talk more widely about career orientation. It is designed in this way because this structure avoids any mentioned predefinition of the term 'career' and allows them to adopt their own definition. The questions in the interview in this category have been extracted from King (2000; 2003) and Van Maanen (1977). This category includes four subcategories. The first ten are extracted from (King, 2000; 2003) and are concerned with: information about education and career history; attitude to career; and how people manage their career. The last one is extracted from Van Maanen (1977) and relates to career success (internal and external). Therefore, eleven questions were asked which focussed on exploring how Bahraini manager participants' manage their careers. By so doing it will help to answer the first research question.

o **Information about Education and Career History (King, 2000)**

1. What do you understand of the term 'career' and what does it mean to you?
2. Can you talk me through the information about your education history?
3. Can you talk me through what you've done since you left university and why, including the organisations you've worked for and the different jobs you've had?

o **Attitude to Career (King, 2000)**

4. Do you have a plan for how to achieve what you want from your career, or do you think you should just 'go with the flow '? Please explain.

o **How People Manage Their Careers (King, 2000 and 2003)**

5. Are there particular things you can do to 'get where you want to be going'? Please explain. For example, do you have a time table for progressing from one step to another and action plan?

6.   Is your career or are your career opportunities turning out any differently than you thought they might earlier in your career? Please explain. [If necessary – 'why do you think this is true?']

7.   Do you prefer to progress within one company or by moving from one company to another? Please explain.

8.   Do you prefer to acquire skills which can be used in one organisation or skills that can be used in different work contexts? Please explain.

9.   Do you have a sense of balance between work commitments and home life? Please explain.

10.   Do you prefer to have complete responsibility over your career development or to let your organisation share these responsibilities with you? For example, to select the training and development by yourself rather than sharing this task with your organisation?

o   **Career Success (Internal and External) (Van Maanen, 1977, p. 9)**

11.   What does career success mean to you? Do you think that it is achieved through the psychological/subjective aspects (for instance income, employment security, work location, status, success in various jobs, access to learning, and the trade-off of importance between personal life and the job), or through the achievement of tangible aspects/objectives (family situation, mobility, task attributes, income and job level)? Please explain.

•   **Category 2: Organisational Factors**

Research Question 2: What are the organisational factors that Bahraini managers believe promote or limit their career self-management behaviour?

This category consists of two sub-categories aimed to gain information about the anticipating factors that promote or limit career self-management behaviours from the perspective of Bahraini manager participants. Therefore the eight questions related to above-mentioned factors are recur in all of the interviews with the participants in order to find the answers related to research question 2.

o **Career Self-management Organisational Promoting Factors and Consequent Behaviours**

12.　What do you understand is the meaning of 'career self-management'?

13.　If asked to choose between organisational and self-directed career management what will you choose and why?

14.　Do you think that there are specific factors to which an organisation contributes to support individuals' career self-management strategy? If yes, please give an example.

15.　Do you support that the organisation must provide something (for example, commitment, leadership support, training interventions and mentoring and coaching etc.) to help individuals who are embracing a career self-management strategy? In case you support or do not support this please illustrate your opinion.

16.　Can you talk me through what should be the behaviour toward that support to enhance career self-management? (For example, gathering information about career prospects, searching for feedback about the individual's performance and competencies, and constructing career opportunities all the way through networking and actions for the reason of enhancing your visibility). Give specific examples of any incident in this regard.

o **Career Self-management Organisational Challenging Factors and Consequent Behaviours**

17.　Do you support job mobility? If yes or no please illustrate your opinion.

18.　Do you think that there are different organisational factors in your organisation that could challenge your mobility inside the organisation (for example, organisational hierarchical structure, top management's utilisation of power in making decisions, challenges in bypassing the hierarchy if there is a need for accomplishing efficient work, undefined roles and inefficient organisational structure, personal values, human resource development policies or something else)? If yes, please explain.

19.　Can you talk me through what should be your behaviour toward those factors? Give specific examples of any incident in this regard. For example, you built a network within and outside the organisation, you update your CV regularly, learn skills gather information about career prospects, searching for feedback about individual's

performance and competencies, and constructing career opportunities all the way through networking and actions for the reason of enhancing your visibility.

- **Category 3: Cultural Factors**

Research Question 3: What are the cultural factors that Bahraini managers believe promote or limit their career self-management behaviour?

This category includes three sub-categories.

o **Career Self-Management Cultural Promoting Factors and Consequent Behaviours**

20.   What does it take to get a job in Bahrain? Are there any specific factors you think that would enhance an individual's chances of getting a job in Bahrain? (Probe).

21.   Are there any common social factors that may help you to move from one job to another outside the organisation? If yes, please give an explanation.

22.   How do specific factors (for example personal connection, institutional corporate responsibility towards recruiting nationals, type of qualification and higher qualification etc.) help people to move from one job to another outside the organisation? Please give an explanation or an example.

23.   Do you utilise any of those factors? If yes, can you talk me through any events about what you've done to enhance your career? (Probe).

o **Career Self-Management Cultural Challenging Factors and Consequent Behaviours**

24.   Have you ever applied for a job in another organisation without being successful? If yes, are there any common social factors in Bahrain that limit you from obtaining the career you pursue? (Probe).

25.   How do common barriers (for example labour market skill requirements, labour laws, shortage of job opportunities and high level of foreign labour etc.) in Bahrain limit your mobility from one job to another outside your organisation? Please give an explanation or an example. (Probe).

26.   Can you talk me through what you've done to overcome such barriers? (Probe).

o   **Exploration of Bahrain's Culture**

27.   Do you think that we [Bahrainis] have to prove ourselves to receive status based on
        our achievement, or status ascribed to us based on different social factors? Whether
        you support this or not, please give an explanation. (Probe).

28.   Are there any factors that can help us to receive status other than achievement? If yes,
        please give an explanation.

29.   Do you think that we should prove ourselves based on our achievement or status
        ascribed to us based on common social factors (for example, personal connections,
        family name, wealth, tribe etc. or other specific social factors, such as religion,
        gender, race, age etc.)? Please give an explanation of your opinion. (Probe).

4.9   Data Analysis

4.9.1   Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis is challenging because it is difficult to manage a large amount of data.
One of these challenges is "no clear and accepted set of conventions for analysis correspond[s] to
those observed with quantitative data" (Robson, 1993, p. 370). In some published studies, it is
difficult to understand how researchers summarise and structure hundreds of pages of qualitative
data in order to reach their findings. Such challenges lead to criticism by researchers such as
Bryman (1988, p. 77) who argues that:

> "...brief conversations, snippets from unstructured interviews, or example of a particular
> activity are used to provide evidence for a particular contention...and the
> representativeness or generality of these fragments is rarely addressed."

In the same vein, Morse (1994, p. 23) states that:

"...despite the proliferation of qualitative mythology texts detailing techniques for conducting a qualitative project, the actual process of data analysis remains poorly described."

4.9.2   Use of a Qualitative Database Package

Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis (CAQDAS) tools can assist in analysing qualitative data. In some cases these tools may consume a lot of time and still create unsatisfactory results (Yin, 2009). It has been argued qualitative software support is becoming mature (Weitzman, 2000) and useful to analyse qualitative data such as interviews. Tesch (1989) recognises more compensation for using qualitative research databases such as a reduction in analysis time, elimination of hard work, the capability to make procedures more systematic and allowing flexibility and amendment in analysis procedures. Various types of beneficial instruments to support various qualitative approaches are now obtainable and such software use depends on the data collection method and convenience for the researcher. Different qualitative software supports have been tested in this research and finally the decision was made to use NVivo9. There are several advantages to utilising NVivo9, which included that all of the interviews were stored in one place, coded to assemble material into themes or nodes and these nodes then classified to gather descriptive information about people, organisations, age, qualification, job title and so on. Finally, customised queries were run to discover main themes in addition to new, emerging themes. The author believes that this software helps in saving time and protecting the data. However, for in-depth analysis, human intelligence is more useful and suitable than qualitative analysis software.

4.9.3   Analysis Techniques

This research is based on two strategies. The first is the general strategy adopts the instructions of Miles and Huberman (1994) and Yin (2009) for analysing qualitative data. The second is the technique designed by the author of this thesis for specific analysis purposes which cannot be obtained from the general analysis techniques. Table 4.4 below illustrates the data analysis design.

Approach	Data Analysis Strategies	Data Analysis Techniques Applied in this Study
Miles and Huberman (1994)	**General strategy:** Relying on three sequence steps: 1. Data reduction. 2. Data display. 3. Drawing/verification.	Relying on: 1. Pattern matching. 2. Conceptual-based coding.
Yin (2009) general strategy	1. Depending on theoretical propositions and other strategies. 2. Consider any five analytic techniques, using quantitative or qualitative data or both. In this study qualitative data has been used. 3. Explore rival explanations 4. Display data apart from interpretation	
Design by the author of this thesis	**Specific strategy:** The author of this thesis relied on Nvivo9 and Microsoft Excel to record, sort and retrieve the data. A specific strategy was designed to analyse the study data (i.e. findings).	

Table 4.4 Data analysis design

4.9.3.1 General Strategy

General data analysis design was based on recommendations and strategies developed by Miles and Huberman (1994) and Yin (2009).

4.9.3.1.1   Miles and Huberman Analysis Techniques

According to Miles and Huberman (1994), analysing qualitative data encompasses three steps which flow in sequence: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. The authors argue that it is important to be involved early in the analysis stage as this will assist the researcher to move back and forward between concept development and data collection. Such involvement may also assist in directing the subsequent data collection towards sources that are more helpful for tackling the specific research questions.

- **Data Reduction**

The first step is the need to organise the mass of data collected and significantly reduce it. Miles and Huberman (1994) describe this first element of qualitative data analysis as data reduction, noting that "data reduction refers to the process of selecting, focussing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the data that appear in written up field notes or transcriptions" (p. 10). Based on the principles of selectivity in qualitative analysis, the analyst makes decisions regarding what data is to be used solely for explanation or description. This entails both inductive and deductive analysis. While primary categorisations are formed by predetermined research questions, the qualitative analyst should continue to be open to suggestions of other implications or meanings from the available data. During the evaluation phase, data reduction should be directed mainly by the requirement to address prominent evaluation question(s). The phrases that form qualitative analysis correspond to actual people, places and events which are more solid than in quantitative data.

Data reduction mechanisms are similar to intra-case and cross-case analysis. Answering questions about respondents' knowledge contribution in a truthfully qualitative approach should go further than itemising a list of knowledge contribution elements. However, it is also necessary to probe the respondents' assessments of the relative value of these elements, and their reasons for considering why some of those elements are more valuable than others.

- **Data Display**

The second element or activity in Miles and Huberman's (1994) approach relating to qualitative analysis is data display. It is "an organised, compressed assembly of information that permits

conclusion drawing and action" (p. 11). Data display means transferring the reduced data into more significant categorisations. The display data can be a comprehensive text, diagram or chart which supplies a new approach of organising and understanding more written-embedded data. This strong data reorganisation eases confirmation of the findings and the conclusions of the research. Either data display diagrams or words assist the analyst to start distinguishing relationships and systematic patterns. Extra categories and themes may be developed in the display data stage which is more advanced than those uncovered through the data reduction process.

- **Conclusion Drawing/Verification**

This is the third stage in qualitative analysis according to Miles and Huberman (1994). Drawing a conclusion entails stepping back to think about the meaning of analysed data in order to evaluate their implications based on the research questions. Here, verification is very important; it involves revisiting data at different times to cross-check the emergent conclusions. "The meanings emerging from the data have to be tested for their plausibility, their sturdiness, their 'confirmability' that is, their validity" (p. 11). Validity in this vein includes whether the conclusions drawn from the data are credible, defensible, justified, and competent to provide optional explanations. Thus the final target in this stage is not only to reach conclusions through explanations, findings, causality or imitating the propositions since a "competent researcher holds these conclusions lightly, maintaining openness and scepticism, but the conclusions are still there, inchoate and vague at first, then increasingly explicit and grounded" (p. 11). Consequently, conclusions are obtained from matching theoretical predictions along with experimental findings.

4.9.3.1.2 Yin's Analysis Techniques

Four principles lie beneath all good social science research (Yin, 1994), being: analysis should attend to all the evidence; it should address if possible all major rival interpretations; it should address the most significant aspect of the case study; and finally researchers should use their own prior, expert knowledge in their case study. Yin (2009) argues that research analysis has a 'five phased cycle': 1) compiling, 2) disassembling, 3) reassembling (and arraying), 4) interpreting, and 5) concluding.

1. Compiling: The phase begins with compiling and sorting the field notes from the study fieldwork and other gathered data.

2. Disassembling: This phase means breaking down the gathered data in small fragments or pieces.

3. Reassembling: In this phase substantive themes (or codes or clusters of codes) are used to distinguish the disassembled fragments or pieces into different groupings and sequences which might appear in the initial notes.

4. Interpreting: This phase involves reassembling material to create a new narrative with pertinent tables and graphs.

5. Concluding: This is the final phase, which calls for drawing a conclusion from the whole study; the conclusion should be connected to the fourth phase and through it to all of the other phases of the cycle.

However, not all qualitative researchers attend similarly to the five phase model where the expert researcher should depart quickly from the three phases to arrive at the interpreting phase (Yin, 2009).

4.9.3.2   Specific Strategy

The author of this thesis utilises the two above techniques (Miles and Huberman, 1994 and Yin, 2009) with the help of NVivo9 to design the specific strategy to analyse the data. It is worthy to note that Excel Microsoft was utilised in this stage. The process began by obtaining 29 reports from NVivio9 where each report represents each interview question for all of the 40 participant managers. One Excel file was created and within this file 29 worksheets were created. The 29 reports created in NVivo were copied to Excel where each report was copied in each sheet. This meant that each worksheet contains information about each interview question (i.e. worksheet 1 named as 1.1 which represents the answers related the main research question number one and answers the first interview question). The answers for each interview question were copied

exactly in one column and, from that narrative the themes were developed. Table 4.5 illustrates an example of how each interview question was analysed and the developmental themes related to the first interview question, being: "What do you understand of the term 'career' and what does it mean to you?". Table 4.5 illustrates the summary of the first interview question. The full answers to the first interview question are placed in column six below. The summary of all of the answers for interview question number one were placed in column seven where the different themes related to answer one were emerged (i.e. different definitions of career which were either similar to or different from existing theories).

Code	Organisation	Gender	Age Range	Degree	Career Definition Defined by Participants - Q1. What do you understand of the term 'career' and what does it mean to you?	Summary
MFE4	EWA	Female	45 and above	Bachelor	Career is a goal which I want to reach to it. This goal should be cleared. Career should not be stabled but it should be developed or changed by individual over the time.	Boundaryless
MME7	EWA	Male	45 and above	Bachelor	The process by which individual set a future path including where time line, objectives, goals, outcome etc. It means the process that helps me to reach to my target.	career self-management
MME9	EWA	Male	45 and above	Bachelor	The process of self-development through setting my plan about where I am currently now and where I want to reach in future.	career self-management
MMG19	GARMCO	Male	36-45	Bachelor	It is a strategy which we need to employ through steps to reach to career success. I have to be proactive in develop myself and not depending on organisation only.	career self-management
MFE18	EWA	Female	45 and above	PhD	The process of self-development and this could be through setting individual plan, specifying my current position and deciding where to be reached in future.	career self-management
MFE5	EWA	Female	45 and above	Master	How to make myself better in my job. What I want to reach in future through reflecting my knowledge and skills in my field or profession.	New definition
MME13	EWA	Male	45 and above	Bachelor	Career it means the development to be conducted by individual to improve skills and competencies.	New definition
MME1	EWA	Male	45 and above	Bachelor	Be able to apply what we have study. Aspiration and to reach what we are looking for.	New definition

MME2	EWA	Male	45 and above	Bachelor	Career means to apply what you have studied in the academic stage based on the field that has been chosen.	New definition
MME8	EWA	Male	45 and above	Bachelor	Career is where you start and to where you want to be reached including all development stages that having been gone through in this journey. For example the training, development, the environment of learning and experience.	New definition
MFG3	GARMCO	Female	26-35	Master	Career is a specialisation in particular field where this specialisation is considered as a basis in our job. Career consists of two parts that is: study (qualification) and experience.	New definition
MMG1	GARMCO	Male	45 and above	Master	Is a path or period in which individual spent all his practical life in to perform specific tasks related his field.	New definition
MMG10	GARMCO	Male	36-45	Bachelor	Career is a job which consists of two parts: technical and management skills. Technical also consist of two: technical experience and technical skills.	New definition
MMG11	GARMCO	Male	45 and above	Master	Career is the development of individuals in the path that they follow through which allows them to develop skills, competencies, knowledge and experience in the fields which have chosen in order to reach the place where they aspire for.	New definition
MMG13	GARMCO	Male	45 and above	Master	Career is individuals working life, background or future and where you want to be in the future.	New definition
MMG14	GARMCO	Male	45 and above	Master	The skills and knowledge which individual must have in his/her job where those are varied from one job to another. The variation depends on the nature, location, skills, qualification, experience and requirement of the job.	New definition
MMG16	GARMCO	Male	45 and above	Bachelor	Career is individuals working life, background or future and where you want to be in the future.	New definition
MMG17	GARMCO	Male	45 and above	Master	It is about where I want to see myself in future to achieve my goals.	New definition
MMG18	GARMCO	Male	36-45	Master	Career is everything in my life is not just a work that I spent hours in it and at end of the day go home. It is including everything my aspiration, future, targets, status in the society, my family etc.	New definition
MMG20	GARMCO	Male	26-35	Bachelor	Apprenticeship and mastery in the profession which has been selected by individuals according to their fields which are selected.	New definition

MMG4	GARMCO	Male	45 and above	Master	Career is a job where the job is sacred thing. God Almighty says on that, the one who works for his children and family is like the one (Almujahid) who works for the way to Allah.	New definition
MMG6	GARMCO	Male	45 and above	PhD	Career is where you want to see yourself in future.	New definition
MMG7	GARMCO	Male	45 and above	Bachelor	Career starts when a person finishes his school with the intention about what he/she is going to be in his working life. In this stage person has ambition whether to continue his/her study at university or working directly or anything like that.	New definition
MMG9	GARMCO	Male	45 and above	Bachelor	Is the field which person is bias to choose and will spend his/her life working on it.	New definition
MMG8	GARMCO	Male	45 and above	Master	He did not know career definition.	Nil
MME3	EWA	Male	45 and above	Bachelor	Career is a job where individuals usually choose in life according to their preference. People must love their job in order to be succeeded in their career, be innovative and creative. For example if people study engineering they have to work in engineering field in order to satisfy themselves. It is also a specialisation which has chosen by people which allow them to become a creative or innovative.	Protean
MME16	EWA	Female	45 and above	Master	By in which individual choose a professional or typology which he aspires or wants in his life and it is not just a job and by so doing he can be creative and innovative in this field and his outcome will be very significant.	Protean
MFE17	EWA	Female	45 and above	Master	By in which individual choose a professional or typology which he aspires or wants in his life	Protean
MFE18	EWA	Female	45 and above	Master	Is a specialisation chose by people with the aimed at going on it successfully. People can change their specialisation if they see it would be better for them. They may also obtain more than one specialisation. For instance person can be an engineer and at the same time a businessman.	Protean
MME10	EWA	Male	45 and above	Bachelor	Career is a job. It is about which individuals start their professional or practical life until reach or achieve to what they are currently being and where they want to be reached or achieved at the end of their career path or before retirement.	Traditional
MFE14	EWA	Female	45 and above	Master	Career is a job that you put yourself in it in the rest of your life	Traditional

MFE17	EWA	Female	45 and above	Bachelor	Career is a job and where this job will drive me.	Traditional
MFE19	EWA	Female	45 and above	Bachelor	Career is what you do in your jobs or positions at to help you to accomplish your goal.	Traditional
MFE20	EWA	Female	45 and above	Bachelor	Career is what you do in your jobs or positions to help you to accomplish your goal.	Traditional
MFE6	EWA	Female	36-45	Master	Career is the development of individuals in the path that they follow through which allows them to develop skills, competencies, knowledge and experience in the fields which have by chosen in order to reach the place where they aspire for.	Traditional
MME10	EWA	Male	45 and above	Bachelor	Career is a sum of the whole jobs I have performed in my life.	Traditional
MME11	EWA	Male	45 and above	Master	Career is my field and what I want to achieve and what I need to do in order to reach my goals or destination.	Traditional
MME12	EWA	Male	45 and above	Bachelor	The typology or style that individual is choosing according to his/her personality or interest when choosing career. By choosing the job that is meeting his personality, he/she would be able to successfully progress in his/her career.	Traditional
MMG12	GARMCO	Male	45 and above	Master	Career is my job.	Traditional
MMG5	GARMCO	Male	45 and above	Bachelor	The typology or style that individual is choosing according to his/her personality or interest when choosing career. By choosing the job that is meeting his personality, he/she would be able to successfully progress in his/her career.	Traditional

Table 4.5 Example of interview question one analysis and developmental themes

When the themes for research question number one were developed, another table was drawn to illustrate the summary of the number and the percentage of managers in each theme. This process was repeated for each interview question until they were completed. Table 4.6 illustrates an example of summarising each interview question given an example of interview question number one.

Code	Organisation	Gender	Age Range	Degree	Summary	No. of Managers	Percentage of Managers
MFE4	EWA	Female	45 and above	Bachelor	Boundaryless	2	5%
MME7	EWA	Male	45 and above	Bachelor	Career self-management	4	10%
MME9	EWA	Male	45 and above	Bachelor	Career self-management		
MMG19	GARMCO	Male	36-45	Bachelor	Career self-management		
MFE18	EWA	Female	45 and above	PhD	Career self-management		
MFE5	EWA	Female	45 and above	Master	New definition	19	47.50%
MME13	EWA	Male	45 and above	Bachelor	New definition		
MME1	EWA	Male	45 and above	Bachelor	New definition		
MME2	EWA	Male	45 and above	Bachelor	New definition		
MME8	EWA	Male	45 and above	Bachelor	New definition		
MFG3	GARMCO	Female	26-35	Master	New definition		
MMG1	GARMCO	Male	45 and above	Master	New definition		
MMG10	GARMCO	Male	36-45	Bachelor	New definition		
MMG11	GARMCO	Male	45 and above	Master	New definition		
MMG13	GARMCO	Male	45 and above	Master	New definition		
MMG14	GARMCO	Male	45 and above	Master	New definition		
MMG16	GARMCO	Male	45 and above	Bachelor	New definition		
MMG17	GARMCO	Male	45 and above	Master	New definition		
MMG18	GARMCO	Male	36-45	Master	New definition		
MMG20	GARMCO	Male	26-35	Bachelor	New definition		
MMG4	GARMCO	Male	45 and above	Master	New definition		
MMG6	GARMCO	Male	45 and above	PhD	New definition		
MMG7	GARMCO	Male	45 and above	Bachelor	New definition		
MMG9	GARMCO	Male	45 and above	Bachelor	New definition		
MMG8	GARMCO	Male	45 and above	Master	Nil	1	2.5%
MME3	EWA	Male	45 and above	Bachelor	Protean	4	10%
MME16	EWA	Female	45 and above	Master	Protean		
MFE17	EWA	Female	45 and above	Master	Protean		

MFE18	EWA	Female	45 and above	Master	Protean		
MME10	EWA	Male	45 and above	Bachelor	Traditional	11	27.5%
MFE14	EWA	Female	45 and above	Master	Traditional		
MFE17	EWA	Female	45 and above	Bachelor	Traditional		
MFE19	EWA	Female	45 and above	Bachelor	Traditional		
MFE20	EWA	Female	45 and above	Bachelor	Traditional		
MFE6	EWA	Female	36-45	Master	Traditional		
MME10	EWA	Male	45 and above	Bachelor	Traditional		
MME11	EWA	Male	45 and above	Master	Traditional		
MME12	EWA	Male	45 and above	Bachelor	Traditional		
MMG12	GARMCO	Male	45 and above	Master	Traditional		
MMG5	GARMCO	Male	45 and above	Bachelor	Traditional		

Table 4.6 Example of summarising the analysis of interview question one (i.e. career definition)

The author of this study adopted thematic matching to draw the similarities and differences between themes. The study adopted cross-case analysis to analyse the semi-structured interviews of the two organisations without an intention to analyse the data in each organisation separately because there were few differences in answers, which can help the author to draw a comparison.

While analysing the data, extracts from these interviews were used. The research questions of this study were extracted from the existing literature on career self-management in order to close the gaps recognised in Chapter 2. The foundation of the research methodology, adopted based on the dispute about philosophical approaches to research, is identified as interpretivist. The analysis of the interview transcripts focusses on the discovery of three main aspects: the extent and ways in which Bahraini manager participants in this study adopt a career self-management approach, and the organisational and cultural factors that they believe promote or limit their career self-management behaviours. Therefore the interviews highlight Bahraini managers in the sample and provide understanding of the plausible reasons for their behaviour toward embracing career self-management.

It is worthy of mention that some of the tables above do not reflect the exact number of Bahraini manager participants who adopt career self-management (for example, 12 managers, 30%). This is because the participants did not necessarily appreciate the term at the beginning of the interview but later on, the following questions which were related 'how to manage career' made the term clearer to them. Consequently it was found from their narratives that 30% of them adopt this approach even if they do not appreciate the exact term (i.e. career self-management).

4.9.3.2.1   Problems and Puzzles Encountered During the Analysis Process

While analysing the data, many themes emerged and one of main concerns was the decisions that needed to be taken regarding the theme selections. In this situation the importance of themes is related to their potential to answer the interview questions and ultimately to inform the main research questions. For example, in an interview question such as: *"If asked to choose between organisational and self-directed career management what will you choose and why?"*, the answer relating to the preference of career management revolves around three themes: organisational, career self-management or combination of more than one approach. The concern is about the word 'why' at the end of the interview question. The participants mentioned various reasons related to their career preference which required critical examination and thus the selection of 'why themes' must be related to career management preference and ignore anything that diverted from this aspect. The other concern occurred when participants contradicted themselves and mentioned more than one issue where the question required only one. In the above question, for example, one of participants answered:

> "*I cannot choose only one career management preference as both of them are very important to me. However career self-management is more important to me*." (MME8)

The interpretation of such answer requires careful examination because the participant mentions first that both of them are equally important to him but later on contradicts himself and reveals that career self-management is the most important. In the same vein and related to answering the same interview question, one participant answered:

"It should be a combination of both. At the beginning of career you need organisation to set your goals and help you to manage your career. Now I prefer a career self-management because I reached to the experience and skills I need, therefore I can depend on myself." (MFE18).

In interpreting this quote, careful note should be taken of every single word as the participant also contradicts herself. For instance, she mentions that her preferences are adopting the combination of more than one approach; however, the most preferable one to her currently is a career self-management approach whereas in the past was organisational career management approach. Thus, three main themes emerged: organisational career management, career self-management and the combination of more than one approach. However, in each theme there are justifications of why participants favour one preference over the others.

The other concern is obtaining a very limited number of diverse themes. In this regard, there was more than one example, but this methodology addresses only one, as the principle applies generally. For instance, in a question such as *"Can you talk me through what you've done to overcome such barriers (i.e. barriers existed in culture)?"*, it was too difficult for participants to state their behaviours because they reported that anything related to culture is difficult to resolve. Some of the participants noted there is no solution to overcome personal connections (*wasta*) or the reduction of foreign labour because resolving them needed social responsibilities from government, institutions and nationals rather than individuals. Thus the themes that emerged are regarded as suggestions rather than behaviours and the interpretation of such themes is not providing sufficient information related consequent behaviours. For this question two themes emerged: improving Bahrain's labour market structures; and reducing the dependency on foreign labour which both of them are not within the control of participants.

Finally, while analysing the interview questions in the two organisations, there were few differences and many similar or identical answers from most participants. This study suggests that such similarities limit researcher interpretation because the probability for emerging new themes is reduced. For example, in interpreting the organisational and cultural factors and consequent behaviours the replies were mostly similar.

4.10   Coding Process

To compile the data derived from the semi-structured interviews, the primary and sub-themes were coded prior to gathering them in the NVivo9 software in order to smoothe the process. Table 4.7 below illustrates organisations' and respondents' codes.

Concept	Criteria	Concept	Themes and Sub-Themes	Codes
The extent and ways that Bahraini managers adopt a career self-management approach	Category 1	To what extent and in what ways do Bahraini managers adopt a career self-management approach?	1. Manage Career:	MC
			1.2 Education and Career History	MC:ECH
			1.2 Attitude to Career	MC:AC
			1.3 Career Success - Subjective or Objective	MC:CS
			1.4 How People Manage Their Careers	MC:PMC
Organisational promoting/ limiting factors to career self-management	Category 2	What are the organisational factors that Bahraini managers believe promote or limit their career self-management behaviour?	2. Organisational Factors:	OF
			2.1 Career Self-Management Definition	OF:CSMD
			2.2 Organisational Factors: Promoting Factors To Career-Self-management	OF:PFCSM

			2.3 Organisational Challenging Factors: To Career Self-Management behaviour.	OF:CFCSM
Cultural factors promoting/ limiting factors to career self-management	Category 3	What are the cultural factors that Bahraini managers believe promote or limit their career self-management behaviour?	3. Cultural Factors	CF
			3.1 Cultural Factors: Promoting Factors to Career Self-Management	CF:PFCSM
			3.2 Cultural Factors: Challenging Factors	CF:CFCSM
			3.3 Exploration of Bahrain's Culture	CF:BC
	Organisation 1	Public Sector	Electricity and Water Authority	C1
		EWA Male Managers	Manager 1 to Manager 20	C1MM1-C1MM20
		EWA Female Managers	Manager 1 to Manager 20	C1FM1 - C1FM20
	Organisation 2	Private Sector	Gulf Aluminium Rolling and Milling Company	C2
		GARMCO Male Managers	Manager 1 to Manager 20	C2MM1 - C2MM20
		GARMCO Female Managers	Manager 1 to Manager 20	C2FM1-C2FM20

Table 4.7 Organisations' and respondents' codes

4.11   Research Confidentiality

The author of this study obtained approval from university Research Ethics Committee to collect the data (See Appendix 1). The company letters (see Appendix 2) were sent to each institution's representative to address the importance of preserving any information about the institution and not to publish any articles without their permission. This letter also addressed the importance of institutions and participants confidentially during and after data collection. The companies were also asked to forward this letter to their managers if they agreed to participate in this study. After receiving acceptance from EWA (see Appendix 3) and GARMCO (see Appendix 4) another invitation letter was sent to individual participants who accepted the proposal to participate in this study; confidentiality issues were explained clearly to them (see Appendix 5). The university approval form which was designed to protect the rights and personal data of the participants (see Appendix 6) was also sent to them, explaining their right to withdraw at any stage if they felt at harm or risk. In addition, the form guaranteed that respondents' names would not be shown and would instead be replaced by codes. To identify the name of the institutions and participants, codes were utilised, as depicted in Table 4.7 above. Moreover, the interview transcripts were sent to participants within five days of the interview to ensure that what had been said was exactly transcribed; finally, the recordings were be given to them after the study ended.

4.12   Researcher Involvement

First, as a PhD researcher, there is a need to build a good network in order to assist in accessing the institutions from which the researcher will attempt to gather the data, particularly when using a qualitative approach and the interview method. In the Kingdom of Bahrain, access to a variety of networks facilitates the researcher's job in terms of gathering data, because there are many organisations in the Kingdom are unwilling to supply researchers with information that is related to their business or employees. Therefore the author of this thesis utilised membership of two societies in the Kingdom of Bahrain: the Bahrain Society of Training and Development; and the Bahrain Society of Management, to establish contact. These memberships were of great assistance in reaching Chief Executives of government departments and organisations, which facilitated the gathering of data.

Secondly, for all researchers, it is very important to know how to use the best software to collect and analyse the data (i.e. qualitative data gathered from interviews like NVivo9). Therefore, in this study, the author exchanged conversations with other PhD students and supervisors regarding the best software to serve this purpose.

Thirdly, in the context of ethics, while gathering the data, the author reviewed the 'University Standing Research Ethics' cited in the Brunel University website in order to take adequate precautions prior to gathering the data. Such applications involve detailed explanations of what is to be done at each stage of data gathering. Therefore, these are required to be completed and approved as early as possible because the researcher will not be allowed to deal with any participants or access any institution until guarantees are provided to protect such participants from harm.

Fourthly, the nature of this study implies that the researcher will be involved directly in the building of meanings during the interviews, in the interpretation and understanding of data throughout the analysis stages and in the approach by which the research is reported. Thus, it would not be possible for the researcher to stay completely separated and objective. However, validity and reality issues were adopted during the analysis stages and the position taken is not similar to subjectivity or empathy as might be supposed with a completely interpretive approach.

4.13 Pilot Study

The foremost objective of a pilot study is to test the clarity of the interview questions and the degree to which the interviewer's questions will contribute to answering the main research questions of the study (Yin, 2009). In addition, it also assists to reduce the vagueness that might occur from the translation of interview questions into Arabic. According to Yin (2009) a pilot case assists the researcher to refine data collection regarding the content of the data as well as the procedures to be applied and in this respect it is important to consider that the pilot test is not a 'pre-test'. The pilot study helps to develop pertinent lines of questions and could offer conceptual explanations for the research design. A pilot study was conducted with three managers working in a company called Batelco (Bahrain Telecommunications Company) in their offices in Arabic although some common English terms on the subject were used.

Thus three important issues should be considered in the pilot study, according to Yin (2009): the selection of pilot cases, scope of the pilot enquiry and report from the pilot case.

4.13.1 Selection of Pilot Cases

The pilot study is a useful tool to refine the conceptual model and key literature themes which direct the research. In this vein, the author of this study has chosen friends working in a company in which she worked previously and, therefore, it was easy to obtain their feedback and provide valuable opinions as external observers. The pilot studies were conducted in a formal manner to discover the questions that were not understandable and to rephrase them. Ultimately, the pilot study assisted in modifying and confirming pre-judgments and preconceptions. Moreover, it helped to identify how long the interviews would take and ensure that such timing would not exceed one and a half hours.

4.13.2 Scope of the Pilot Inquiry

Although the scope of the inquiry in the pilot study can be less focussed and wider than the final plan of the data collected, the enquiry can envelop substantive and methodological aspects. The conducting of pilot study should be parallel with a continuous review of literature so that the ultimate research design is informed by existing theories and a fresh set of empirical data. In this vein the author of this study devoted time to review the interview questions after conducting the pilot study because it was recognised that some were, to some extent, not informed research questions. This also entailed going back to the literature review either to delete or add interview questions.

4.13.3 Scope of the Pilot Inquiry

The report of the pilot study must be written clearly because it provides a clearer picture to the researcher and the external observer about the lessons learned from conducting the pilot study. Yin (2009) notes that the difference between a case study report and pilot study report is that the latter illustrates the lessons learned for research design as well as field procedures. The report can include the agenda for the ensuing pilot case.

4.13.4   The Pilot Study Findings

The semi-structured interviews began by explaining the study's major and secondary objectives. They also addressed the key goal which is to discover the nature of career management and self-management in the Kingdom of Bahrain using interviews as the main instrument for collecting primary data. The participants were given verbal assurance regarding anonymity and confidentiality as well as in writing. They were asked to sign the 'Brunel Participant Consent Form' before starting the interview. The participants were asked to give a brief overview about themselves and their actual duties and responsibilities as managers. Different aspects were found during the piloting practices which are worth mentioning, such as:

- Reconsidering the Arabic translation of some questions to make them more understandable.
- Some interview questions leading to repetitive answers.
- Certain interview questions requiring splitting into parts to become more than one.
- Some interview questions calling for the provision of examples to make them more obvious.
- Demographic data should be reconsidered to become as brief as possible.
- Raising the confidentiality issue prior to the interviews.
- Considering the quality of the recorder.
- Avoiding noisy places which may prevent the participant from understanding the questions clearly.
- Considering that the duration of the interviews should not exceeded more than one and a half hours each.

According to the observations made above, the author of this study made different changes to the interview questions and to demographic sections of the interview.

4.14   Summary

The foremost purpose of this chapter was to explain and present in detail the research philosophy and approaches adopted to address the fundamental aims and objectives of this research. The chapter reaches the conclusion that the qualitative paradigm is more suitable because it matches

the ontological and epistemological perspectives as well as more appropriately informing the research questions. Moreover, qualitative paradigms are found to be more applicable instruments to build an in-depth appreciation of contextually related problems and enquiries. To collect the data, semi-structured interviews were employed. Overall this chapter provided the underpinnings of the research study and presented the details of data sampling, data collection, data analysis and pilot study procedures.

The next chapter focusses on the main fieldwork findings which were developed from various sources and methods. The results from the data interpretations and analysis are presented; however, the adopted techniques for collecting data of this kind have already been discussed in this chapter.

CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

5.1   Introduction

In the previous chapter, the researcher justified and analysed the research methodology adopted in this thesis. A semi-structured interview methodology is adopted to investigate 'career self-management in ascription culture'. Earlier studies in the area of career self-management have been overwhelmingly quantitative in nature. Additionally, career self-management has not previously been explored in the Kingdom of Bahrain, either quantitatively or qualitatively; this research entails an in-depth investigation which is represented by a semi-structured interview research methodology to gain insight into this phenomenon. This research methodology tool will assist in appreciating the organisational and cultural factors that influence career self-management, in addition to people's consequent behaviours towards these factors. The findings in this chapter are derived from the interviews conducted in two organisations. Different techniques, as mentioned in Chapter 4, are adopted to narrow down the collected data.

Thus, this chapter is organised as follows: Section 5.1 introduces the structure of research analysis and findings chapter. Section 5.2 presents an overview regarding the first organisation considered in the study, the Electricity and Water Authority (EWA). Section 5.3 presents an overview regarding the second organisation under study, Gulf Aluminium Rolling Mill Company (GARMCO). Section 5.4 presents a summary about the three main themes which were derived from literature review and the semi-structured interviews. Section 5.5 presents the findings of Research Question 1: The extent and ways in which Bahraini managers adopt career self-management approach. Section 5.6 presents the findings of Research Question 2: Organisational factors that Bahraini managers believe promote or limit their career self-management behaviours. Section 5.7 presents the findings of Research Question 3: Cultural factors that Bahraini managers believe promote or limit their career self-management behaviours. Section 5.8 discusses the possible reasons for similarities in findings between the two organisations studied (i.e. EWA and GARMCO).

5.2   Organisation 1 - EWA

With aim of providing continuous help and support for serving Bahraini citizens, the Authority of Electricity and Water (EWA) contributes to smooth-running, sustained and highly reliable water and electricity to every area in the Kingdom of Bahrain. Various large projects have been constructed and designed for meeting the huge, growing demand for water and electricity in the Kingdom of Bahrain. In spite of the enormous challenges caused by increasing demands on these two services, the EWA has succeeded in achieving its main goals – serving Bahraini citizens with efficient utility provision (EWA, 2012).

5.2.1   Human Resources Management in EWA

The main responsibilities of the HRM division in EWA are to manage the organisation's workforce in an effective way, according to EWA strategy. It has other responsibilities and commitments towards its employees, such as providing rewards and benefits, training and development, assessment, recruitment and selection, ensuring compliance with employment and national labour laws, and staff welfare. In EWA the number of staff in the HRM division is 111 employees distributed among three divisions, as shown in Figure 5.1 below:

EWA Human Resources Division
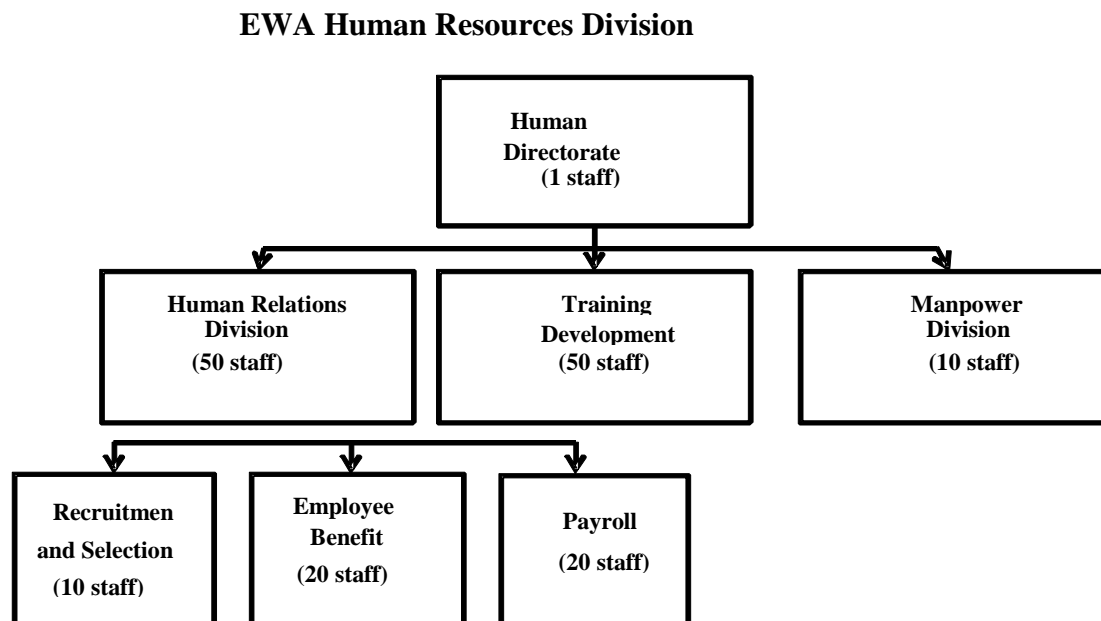
Figure 5.1 EWA Human Resources Structure

In EWA the HRM division structure is based on a long hierarchy where each profession or job has been distributed among different people. In managing staff, EWA employs human resources strategies, in professional and tactical way. This means that EWA coordinates each separate aspect (including recruitment, selection, training and development, rewards and benefits management, manpower and so forth) to complement each other in order to increase the organisation's productivity and employees' satisfaction, and achieve the organisation's outcome targets. Strategic human resources in EWA means to place the HRM division policy as top priority for making decisions when there is any attempt to initiate any significant projects. An example of this situation is when EWA attempted to open one of the biggest water stations in its third largest city, Muharraq, the HRM division was involved from the first stage of the project. The authority specified a budget for developing the manpower to run the operation in that station. Although human resources consists of 111 staff, coordination between them was considered high during that project. The overall EWA business strategy synchronises with the HRM division strategy; for example, since 2010, EWA has attempted to link staff performance with rewards and benefits. Thus human resources department is running a project called 'Balanced Score Card' to measure key performance quality standards and accordingly, all employees' performance 'inputs' must be assessed to determine if they accomplish stipulated 'outputs', thereby resulting in a balanced performance policy. However, this has not yet been implemented completely due to some challenges which resulted from the linkage of EWA with other Bahrain authorities and governments. The EWA human resources department has its vision and mission and its link with HR strategy but it was not written or known by all staff.

5.2.2   Training and Development in EWA

The main purpose of the Training and Development Department in EWA is to enable employees to meet the company's needs in the skilled performance of their job. It helps employees to develop their effectiveness to augment their fulfilment and accomplish their potential. It allows employees to develop skills and knowledge that qualify them for advancement and progress in their jobs in addition to other jobs within EWA. Finally, it offers significant advantages to employees through the possibility of improving personal and professional skills to preserve their general employability within EWA. The Training and Development Department consists of 50 staff working jointly with business departments to conduct training needs analysis. Training and

Development staff collect the training development needs (TDN) assessment from all business units and delivers suitable training and development initiatives to meet those needs. An additional source of information about training needs arises from the yearly appraisal or Career Development Plan (i.e. the programme designed for fresh graduates). In response to identified needs which are extracted from the above mentioned sources, internal and external training and development initiatives are delivered in an appropriate, cost-effective way. EWA has its own internal training centre which is equipped for professional training in certain fields. Technical, information technology and soft skills programmes are held in the centre. In terms of local programmes (held in the Kingdom of Bahrain), for instance English and other soft skills training, EWA sends its employees to various institutions in the Kingdom of Bahrain that normally have good quality standards and reputations. EWA sponsors and supports Bahraini candidates for higher education, for instance, master's, bachelor's, diplomas and professional certificates in fields such as human resources, accountancy, and information technology and so on.

In EWA the individual development plan is called the Career Development Programme (CDP) which consists of different phases. EWA normally recruits employees with a bachelor's degree in mechanical or electrical engineering and develops them to reach head positions. In the first phase an employee will be qualified to be an assistant engineer, in the second phase to become an engineer and in the third phase to become a senior engineer then to become a head of department. It sponsors some managers for a master's degree, but it is not a certainty that, upon successful completion of this degree, promotion to a higher position awaits these managers. However, managers who succeed in obtaining such degrees are noted as having taken steps towards improvement within their current job level, and every case is considered on its own merits. The following information explains the training and development statistics in EWA in 2011: The total number of staff in EWA in 2011 was 3,365 where 91 per cent were Bahrainis. In 2011, the number of employees completing different training programmes inside Bahrain was 1,822 trainees with a cost of BD182,000/-; and outside Bahrain 336 trainees with the cost of BD298,000/-. The total number of trainees attending training inside and outside Bahrain was 2,158. The training budget spent for training in 2011 was BD480,000/- (EWA, 2012).

5.2.3 Recruitment and Selection in EWA

The recruitment policy in EWA was established to regulate and manage recruitment; for instance, it attracts applicants who possess the right skills, knowledge, experience and attitude, in the most efficient and cost-effective manner. In EWA, the main corporate objectives are recruiting Bahrainis as the percentage of Bahrainisation reached 91 per cent by end of 2011. Regarding expatriate recruitment, it recruits them if there are no available Bahrainis to fulfil the targets, particularly in consultancy or technical fields.

The main service for EWA is providing electricity and water, therefore the field of engineering is the most preferable; however EWA is large in size, therefore, other fields such as accountancy, human resources, and marketing are required but to a lesser extent than engineering. Recruitment in EWA employs two approaches: 1) from the bottom up, 50 per cent; and 2) recruiting at all points of the hierarchy, 50 per cent. EWA is a very well established institution, thus recruitment is not vigorous compared with institutions that are newly established. In the first recruiting approach - bottom up - yearly, EWA recruits a group of graduates under a programme designed for them which normally extends to three years, at which point they reach the target job, which is either engineer or senior engineer. In the second recruiting approach, EWA recruits people for different jobs, whether these jobs consist of administrative or seniority levels. The process of recruitment includes publishing jobs internally within EWA; however, if they do not find a suitable candidate, they publish it for local Bahrainis as a second step and finally, if they do not find anyone at this stage, they go abroad as a third stage, in countries such as Arab countries, the Philippines, India and so forth. Since the EWA recruitment department consists of 10 staff, it is expected to undertake all recruitment and selection process and initiatives internally. They seek help from outside advertising companies for job advertising only (EWA, 2012).

5.3 Organisation 2 (GARMCO)

Gulf Aluminium Rolling Mill Company (GARMCO) was established in 1981 as a joint venture between the six governments of the Kingdom of Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, the Sultanate of Oman, Qatar, Kuwait and Iraq. Since then, it has grown to be a leader in the aluminium downstream sector with offices spread across the world in Australia, Europe, the Far East, Middle East and North America. The shareholders of GARMCO are: Kingdom of Bahrain (38.36 per cent), Saudi

Basic Industries Corporation (30.28 per cent), Industrial Bank of Kuwait (16.98 per cent), Gulf Investment Corporation (5.15 per cent), Republic of Iraq (4.12 per cent), Sultanate of Oman (2.06 per cent) and State of Qatar (2.06 per cent). The first 20,000 tonnes of rolled aluminium rolled out in 1986 (GARMCO, 2012).

5.3.1   Human Resources Management in GARMCO

The HRM division in GARMCO is responsible for three main activities: human resources administration (6 staff), employee relations (1 staff) and training and development (6 staff) including the head of human resources (1 staff). Human resources administration consists of four sub-activities: recruitment and selection, salary management, job evaluation and employee legal documentations as illustrated in Figure 5.2.

GARMCO Human Resources Division Structure
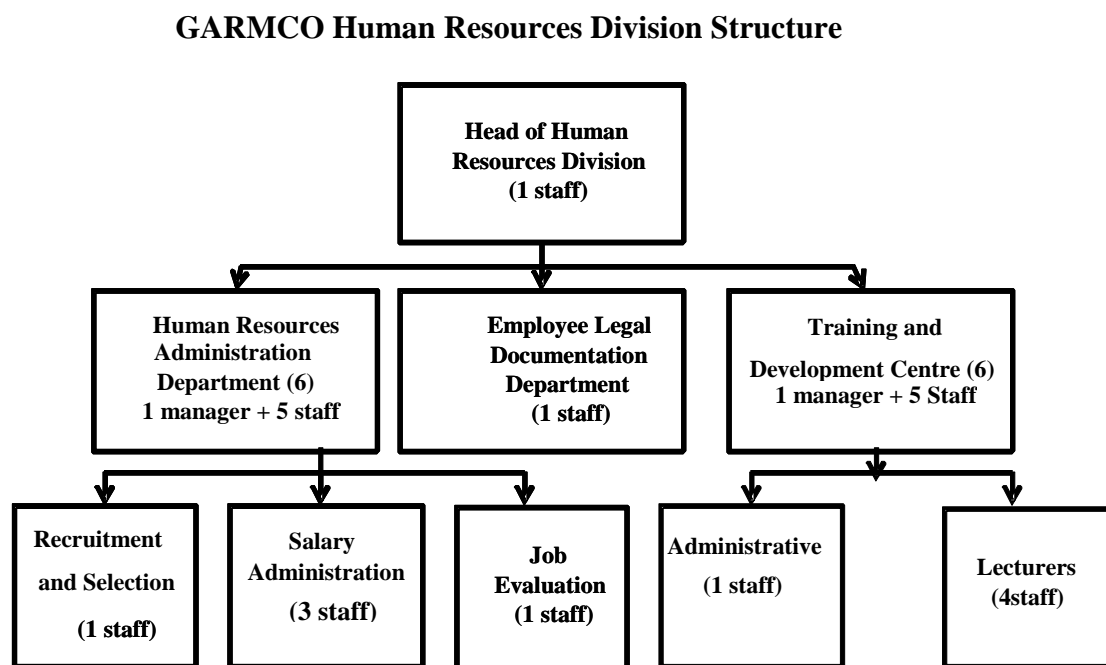
Figure 5.2 GARMCO Human Resources Structure

The total number of staff in the HRM division is 14; however, this is not abnormal because the total number of staff in GARMCO is 800 only; each member of staff in the HRM division is responsible for different professions. For example, there is only one staff member in the recruitment department; thus he is expected to perform all the interview arrangements in addition

to attending the interview as a compulsory member on the interview panel. The management of staff in GARMCO employs a very simple HRM division strategy. To some extent there is a contradiction within GARMCO's overall business strategy which aims to improve the production quality standard to reach a globally high standard and the strategy of cutting training and development costs. For example, how can someone assume improvement in the operation without investing in raising the skills of employees (i.e. employees that are working in factories with the latest technology and sophisticated machines) who are in need of very specific, unique experiences? There might be a mismatch between corporate business strategies and human resources strategy. The HRM division in GARMCO has its own strategy of staff reduction, key staff retention, improving productivity and so on; however, these are not written or clearly appreciated by all staff within the division. Although GARMCO focusses on key staff retention, it is currently experiencing staff reduction, particularly for surplus staff. Currently GARMCO faces issues of cost cutting because of the rising cost of aluminium, which is monopolised by the largest company in the Kingdom of Bahrain, ALBA. Given the consideration to the nature of the HRM division (i.e. small in size), coordinating between activities and employees is anticipated to be high. This means that if there is any project such as staff retention, all departments within the HRM division coordinate their efforts to accomplish this project successfully.

5.3.2   Training and Development in GARMCO

The GARMCO training and development department is framed to develop employees' skills and qualify them to become competitive human resources to enable them to cope with international organisations' standards. The process of training activities functions are based on the coordination between training and development staff with line managers from different departments to identify the employees' training development needs (TDN), which follows a similar process to that which EWA employs in this respect. Line managers present the training needs after sitting with their staff in the annual performance appraisal meeting. They then pass it to the training and development department to set a plan for a training budget. Having completed this process, the training and development department begins to deliver training for staff.

Another source of staff development is through the Career Development Programme (CDP), which is mainly focussed on qualifying the technicians for the workplace (i.e. factory) or the

development of those technicians to become engineers after getting experience. The Career Development Programme (CDP) consists of three phases for technicians who join the company with a diploma in mechanical, electrical or chemical engineering and develops them to be qualified as technicians so they can perform their jobs in the company factory competently. Other CDPs are arranged for engineers, consisting of four phases to qualify employees who are either technicians already working in GARMCO or fresh graduates who recently completed their bachelor's degree at university. This means that training for technicians and engineers could be either for people who already work in GARMCO or those newly graduated from universities who join GARMCO with no experience. Moreover, GARMCO sponsors potential employees for master's degrees, but this is only applied to employees who have potential to become managers or leaders. As mentioned above, GARMCO's total number of employees is 800, where 88.6 per cent are Bahrainis. The total number of employees who have completed different training programmes inside the Kingdom of Bahrain is 84 and outside Bahrain, 12. Various short vocational training was organised, which 67 employees from different departments in the company attended. The total training budget spent for training in 2011 is BD550,032/- (GARMCO, 2012).

5.3.3 Recruitment in GARMCO

The recruitment policy in GARMCO is framed to regulate and manage the recruitment function, for example, attracting potential talent, either those who are fresh graduates or those with solid experience. The company also focusses on attaining a diversity of skilful talents who are able to help GARMCO maintain its competitive advantage. The recruitment department in GARMCO consists of one staff member only who undertakes recruitment and selection activities. However, while selecting and interviewing candidates, respective line managers and one representative from human resources usually attend the interview in addition to recruitment department staff. The main focus for GARMCO is to recruit Bahrainis, mostly from engineering fields; however there are different fields such as human resources, accountancy, information technology etc. but to a lesser extent than engineering, as the main business of GARMCO is producing aluminium in the factory and such business requires engineers more than other specialisations. The corporate objective for GARMCO is to recruit Bahrainis; however, in some situations, expatriates may be required to set and sustain appropriate standards but only where Bahraini or GCC nationals are

not suitably trained, experienced or not directly available for employment. The HRM division has devised a plan for encouraging and qualifying Bahraini nationals to join the aluminium manufacturing industry. From its first year plan in 1986 until today, the HRM division has managed to elevate Bahrainisation in GARMCO from 77 per cent to 88.6 per cent, and plans to increase this percentage to 90 per cent by the end of 2012. The focus in GARMCO is to recruit from the bottom up rather than at all points because aluminium production needs very unique experience and skills, where the company cannot easily find people to join the company without being trained specifically within GARMCO factories (i.e. on the job training).

5.3.4 Similarities and Differences between EWA and GARMCO

In both organisations, there are two types of recruitment, internal and external. The objective of internal recruitment is to provide development and advancement opportunities for existing employees, while for external recruitment it is to bring in new skills and qualifications. In both ways each organisation sets a manpower plan which is organised by the business units and the recruitment department. This practice is set yearly in order to calculate the human resources needs against target jobs and the budget required. From that point, the recruitment department advertises the required jobs internally first; if they do not find any suitable candidates, they publish it through magazines or newspapers locally (in the Kingdom of Bahrain), then externally (outside the Kingdom of Bahrain). Potential candidates will be given an English and Maths test and only the candidates who pass the two exams will be allowed to enter the interview for the target job. All new recruits, as a result of external recruitment, have to sign an employment contract, which includes various employment terms and conditions to protect employment rights for both the employer and employee. Movement from one career level to another constitutes a progression plan; no increase in salary will be applied until the progression plan has been finished successfully. Finally, both organisations have a written human resources strategy. In terms of training and development, both organisations follow the same process to identify yearly TDN (see Sections 5.2.2 and 5.3.2). The differences between EWA and GARMCO can be seen in the type of sector, size, business model, turnover percentage and Bahrainisation, some aspects of the recruitment approach, human resources structure, function and strategies. Table 5.1 draws a comparison of HRM practices in EWA and GARMCO.

Subject	EWA	GARMCO
Differences		
Sector	• Public	• Private
Size	• 3,365 employees	• 800 employees
Organisation business	• Service provision: Water and electricity	• Products provision: Aluminium
Turnover	• 1%	• 5%
Bahrainisation	• 91%	• 88%
Recruitment approach	• EW focusses on both approaches: bottom up (50%) and all point levels in hierarchy 50%.	• Recruitment approach focusses on bottom up. Although they recruit at all level points their main focus is to train graduates to reach target job levels i.e. technicians or engineers.
Human resources structure	• Very long as HRM division consists of 111 staff.	• Short structure as HRM division consists of 14 staff.
Human resources functions	• Each function is performed by more than one staff member; for example, human relations department consists of 50, the training and development department consists of 50; manpower department consists of 10 staff.	• Each function is performed by one staff member; for example, human relations department has 6 including recruitment and selection, training and development department has 6, and manpower department has 1.

Human resources strategy	• While managing staff, EWA employs strategic HRM which links the corporate strategy with HRM division strategy.	• While managing staff, GARMCO employs very simple and basic HRM. In some situations there is a contradiction between corporate business strategy and HRM division strategy.
Similarities in Recruitment Approach		
Recruitment field preference	• Engineering, for instance electrical, mechanical, and chemical.	
Recruitment policy	• Emphasise the importance of the attraction, engagement and retention of suitably qualified and experienced employees. • Three stages in publishing vacancies. First, inside the organisation; secondly, locally in Bahrain; thirdly, outside Bahrain if there are no suitable candidates.	
Similarities in Career Approach		
Training approach	• Through internal/external in-house, local (in Bahrain) and overseas training in all areas with the main focus on engineering. • Follow a similar process in terms of collecting the employees' yearly training and development needs (TDN).	
Career development approach	• Provide career opportunities for its employees in order to meet the needs of the business for the right skills, knowledge and abilities to deliver excellent customer service and to meet the ambitions and aspirations of its employees in line with career progression. • This is through a career development plan/programme which consists of different phases.	

	• Career development and career management are supported through the practice of the yearly appraisal, the manpower planning and the recruitment processes.
Human resources responsibilities	• It is the responsibility of the HRM division to ensure that appropriate training and development activities are arranged and delivered in order to meet the needs of the business and to provide suitable opportunities for the personal and professional development of employees. • The training and development department will monitor and evaluate the quality and benefits of development activities provided by the company for employees and maintain records of the attendance and successful completion of development activities by employees. • In both organisations, the recruitment policy is initiated to regulate and manage the recruitment function; for instance, it attracts applicants who possess the right skills, knowledge, experience and right attitude for the company, in the most efficient and cost-effective manner.

Table 5.1 Variations in HRM practices in EWA and GARMCO

5.4   The Semi-structured Interviews' Analysis

The data was analysed using three main themes, which were derived from the existing literature discussed in Chapter 2. The main themes were divided into sub-themes, for instance:

5.4.1   Extent and Ways of Career Self-management Application

- Career self-management general activities approached.
- Career self-management enactment causes.
- Career self-management enactment consequences.
- Career self-management significant behaviours.

5.4.2   Organisational Promoting/Limiting Factors to Career Self-management Enactment and Consequence Behaviours

- Organisational promoting factors.
- Organisational limiting factors which contributing to ascriptive inequality.
- Behaviours towards the promoting/limiting factors.

5.4.3   Cultural Promoting/Limiting Factors to Career Self-management Enactment and Consequence Behaviours

- Cultural promoting factors.
- Cultural limiting factors which contributing to ascriptive inequality.
- Behaviours towards cultural promoting/limiting factors.

5.5   Findings on Research Question 1: Extent and Ways which Bahraini Managers Adopt Career Self-management Approach

Based on the findings of this section, twelve Bahraini managers in this study, representing 30% of the sample, endorse a career self-management approach and its associated behaviours. Career self-management refers to the strategy engaged by individuals in order to increase the probability of accomplishing personal career goals (Noe, 1996). Unexpectedly, twenty nine managers, who account for 72.5% of the total sample, indicate that this approach is useful and helpful in career progression, even though only twelve, representing 30%, approach it. Some participants did not appreciate the term although they embrace it in their actual career life. They indicate that their engagement in different individual career self-management activities helps them to advance their career within or outside their organisation, although they prefer advancing within their current organisations.

Thus, the findings in this section discuss the extent and ways which Bahraini manager participants adopt a career self-management approach through analysing four main areas: 1) career self-management general activities employed; 2) career self-management enactment causes; 3) career self-management consequences; and 4) career self-management exhibiting significant behaviours. Table 5.2 below depicts the main means by which Bahraini manager

participants adopt career self-management; please note that some managers indicate more than one activity, cause and behaviour.

Serial No.	Career Management Activities, Causes and Behaviours	Explanations	Total Managers	Percentage
1.	Career self-management general activities employed		**12**	**30%**
		• Learning new skills not related to the current job or organisation.	7	17.5%
		• Navigating and reading different resources about career opportunities.	5	12.5%
2.	Career self-management enactment causes		**12**	**30%**
		• Desire of control over career in challenging environment (King, 2003).	11	27.5
		• No trust on organisational career management because of unfairness.	10	25%
		• Career advancement motivation (Nabi, 2000).	8	20%
3.	Career self-management enactment consequences		**12**	**30%**
		• Career satisfaction (King, 2004).	9	22.5%

		• Achieving personal goals.	6	15%
4.	Career self-management exhibiting significant behaviours		**12**	**30%**
		• Building network (Sturges *et al.*, 2002).	10	25%
		• Influencing decision-makers (King, 2001).	7	17.5%
		• Involvement in challenging assignments.	4	10%

Table 5.2 Participants' means of adopting career self-management

5.5.1 Career Self-management General Activities

The study reveals that the most important activities on which participants (12 managers, 30%) are focussed and believe to be significant while managing career self-management are: learning new skills that are not job-related and navigating and reading different resources about career opportunities.

5.5.1.1 Learning New Skills Not Related to the Current Job or Organisation

Skills advancement to participants (7 managers, 17.5%) in this section means developing their skills to add value for their own career. They consider such individual activity as a key factor that leads to career progression. However, they emphasise the significance of identifying which skills are more required in the organisation, or even within the Bahrain labour market. There are many places where people can find out which skills are currently most in demand; for example, within the organisation, people can check with their direct supervisor, manager or even mentors, who can identify the types of skills that help career progression. Participants also mention outside organisation resources about skill requirements; for example, websites for job agencies

that normally indicate the most required skills for job vacancies. The evidence of this point is reflected in the following quotes:

> *"...learning skills continuously and updating our knowledge within or outside the field..."* (MFE19)

> *"Obtaining new skills at work relies to a degree on whether work provides a generous learning environment. It is related to individual actions in response to such environments and how to obtain maximum advantage from it. Individuals differ in their consciousness about their goals, ambition, motivation, personality, inter-personal skills and ability. They also vary in their understanding of learning opportunities and the ability to switch between different job contexts. Such aspects assist individuals to make decisions about most required skills that help in extracting any future career opportunity."* (MMG2)

Participants believe that work performance consisting of a complex combination of tasks and responsibilities may necessitate the development of higher levels of skills, knowledge and appreciation at work. Several work roles, including soft skills like advanced communications skills, complex decision-making, problem-solving, and employees' management responsibilities and so on, need the development of higher levels of skills, knowledge and appreciation. In addition, technical skills are also important particularly, when related to the essence of job technicality. Various interventions, for instance, judgment, creativity, teamwork, coaching and mentoring, need the development of higher levels of skills. Preparing oneself for unseen opportunity is mentioned in the following quote:

> *"...being self-directed at work in terms of taking advantage of learning is useful for individual development... This can entail readiness to engage in an extensive choice of activities, for instance extracting information, seeking mentoring from key people; attentive listening and reflecting; providing and receiving feedback, self-study and so forth."* (MFE5)

5.5.1.2   Navigating and Reading Different Resources about Career Opportunities

From participants' perspectives (5 managers, 12.5%), reading from different sources, for instance, newspapers, magazines, websites, etc. related to training, development and job opportunities, are vital as they provide guidance and support for career prospects, helping people to explore their alternatives and determine how they can be utilised in order to set the plan for their career and achieve their goals. Some participants mention the importance of reading updated research and studies about their fields as reflected in the following quote:

> *"I always read about studies and researches in my current career and this would always help me to widen my knowledge in my field and improve my skills, proficiencies and competencies in my current job."* (MFE6)

The study discloses that social media like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc. can be a vital source for searching and building a career. However, there is a need to explore high quality social media sites, as explained in the following quote:

> *"...there are huge social media sites in which people can navigate, but searchers require certain skills and experience to distinguish the differences between the reliable and unreliable ones."* (MMG11)

They also report that some sites – particularly those that specialise in advertising jobs or careers – are not dependable in terms of quality; therefore people should be attentive about navigating to the right sites. Social media sites as sources of career opportunities information play a significant role in career advancement and professional success, as shown in the following quote:

> *"Sites like LinkedIn are devised for professionals and career-related purposes. Utilising these sites as sources for job seeking can be useful for job seekers as well as organisations. Currently many organisations or recruiting agencies are accessing social media sites to check out job candidates. The vacancies in these sites are usually high quality and exploring them helps employees to get the job which may be desired."* (MME3)

5.5.2 Causes of Career Self-management Enactment

Participants in this section (12 managers, 30%) report that various general reasons influence their behaviours for enacting career self-management: a desire for control over their career in a challenging environment; no trust in organisational career management because of unfairness; and career advancement motivation.

5.5.2.1 Desire for Control over Career in a Challenging Environment

In this section participants (11 managers, 27.5%) comment that individuals should be capable of depending on themselves in directing their career through self-learning and development. Taking control over one's career means to become more flexible in their skills, accepting of transformation, and vigorous in shaping their life in work (King, 2003). Personal goals are not necessarily associated with organisational ones because career control should be in peoples' hands and not in the hands of anyone else. The evidence of this point is reflected in the following quote:

> *"I am performing very challenging projects which are not related to my current job such as the volunteer projects to be conducted in our societies because this will allow me to appreciate my abilities and obtain new competencies which I may utilise for any unexpected future career prospects."* (MMG16)

The aim of having control over one's career is not an easy objective, especially in the Kingdom of Bahrain, as one participant indicates. This is because of barriers that are deployed in society such as an inefficient labour market and high levels of foreign labour (Allen Consulting Group, 2009) as are illustrated in the following quote:

> *"The current situation in Bahrain is the reality which we cannot change...high levels of foreign labour... have helped me determine that a self-directed career is the best way for career goals... I should apply a strategy to enable me to succeed in my career regardless of any current situation."* (MME3)

The findings in this section disclose that favouritism in the two organisations under study occurs when decision-makers (i.e. probably a direct manager or leader) display preferential treatment towards those employees with whom they are socially connected, to the harm of other employees in terms of providing career opportunities. Different actions reflect the favouritism (*wasta*) which a participant illustrates in the following quote:

> '...some bosses give extra benefits and assistance for completion of the task to the favourite employees, especially those spending a long time in their offices or even socialising with them.' (MFE18)

Participants report that, in some situations, employees who are known to the boss or family members ignore different organisational policies and procedures like punctuality, attentiveness, working hard and so forth. They added that favouritism has to be eliminated by organisations because it has a negative impact on both the organisation and employees' reputation in the short and long term.

5.5.2.2   No Trust in Organisational Career Management because of Unfairness

It is also recognised that participants (10 managers, 25%) pay great attention to initiating self-development, being proactive in learning by themselves, utilising any conventional and unconventional training, and experience interventions such as e-learning, internet, mentoring, coaching and so on. Those notions are reflected in the following quote:

> "..I am a person who is always alert to any opportunities around me. I do not rely on classical training or development aids in learning or progressing. For example, I have completed different e-Learning courses and most of them were for personal development in general and not exclusively to help me in performing my current job but rather to develop various skills which may help in my future career... Creativity to me is to think outside the box and use various techniques that help me to explore unseen opportunities by realising the significance of diverse technologies." (MME9)

The main concern for participants is that they do not have trust in their employer to be the sole manager of their careers in terms of fairness and this situation encourages their self-directed behaviours. They report that, in some cases the advancement of career opportunities, for instance training and development, are not distributed fairly among the staff and waiting for career opportunities is a waste of time. They add that the initiative of self-learning is a vital approach for making career moves more quickly as can be seen in the following quote:

"...I was a senior engineer when I studied my MBA without knowing when the opportunity for a management job would occur. When the position for my current job opened, the most important requirement for that job was that the individual is an MBA graduate. I was certain that I should not wait for my organisation to sponsor my MBA because when you study yourself you keep yourself ready... Luckily I got my current position because of the MBA that I chose to complete myself." (MMG7)

Some participants report that career opportunities (i.e. promotion, training, development, rewards etc.) in their organisation are very challenging and therefore they need to develop collective solutions through informal self-learning, rather than depending on formal organisational career management which may not transpire.

5.5.2.3   Career Advancement Motivation

The reason behind the enactment of career self-management is the motivation for advancement (Nabi, 2000), as the findings in this section disclose. The encouragement to undertake critical evaluation of an individual's skills as they relate to their profession is mentioned by some participants (8 managers, 20%), as the following quote demonstrates:

"...evaluation of my skills and competencies occurs regularly and whether I am able achieve various challenging projects... If I fail to achieve my goals, I go back to my self-assessment skills strategy in order to keep myself on the right track. I have always compared myself with successful people, not particularly within our organisation, to explore the tools and mechanisms that they follow to reach their goals. Learning skills

from successful people through imitating their mechanisms assisted me to reach my goals." (MMG15)

Various sources of evaluation of individuals' skills are reported in this section, such as job rotation assignment, mentoring, skills assessment programmes, supervisor and employee coaching and so forth. The main cause of career advancement motivation behaviour, according to participants, is to obtain more opportunities to learn, practice and perform different tasks to increase human capital value. The study finds that being proactive in seeking feedback on performance and discussing mechanisms to develop and advance shortages of skills further lead to career advancement. Discussions about required skills should not be made exclusive to the direct line manager but even with a coach or mentor who is possibly a member of the organisation's top management. Participants believe that the causes of high self-motivation of career advancement are that career self-management reduces some of organisational limiting factors (i.e. unfairness in receiving equal opportunities for career advancement) and cultural limiting factors (i.e. personal connection/*wasta* and high level of foreign labour). The following quote is illustrative of comments made:

> *"...the initial stage of career advancement to me represents the first experiences and skills developed in the workplace. During this stage, individuals first establish core skills that help them advance their career. Once individuals establish their core skills, they start developing goals that will satisfy their sense of accomplishment and achievement... Thus we need to reconsider our career core skills advancement regularly to maintain productivity in the face of challenging factors existing either within the organisation, such as unfairness in distributing career advancement opportunities, or the ones existing in society such as* wasta *and high level of foreign labours."* (MFE19)

The findings also reveal that career motivation leads to work being performed in a professional way and, as a result, people become more confident in their ability to meet work goals or objectives, as can be seen in the following quote:

"Without a doubt, I need to be self-confident in almost all aspects of my career, I get pleasure from knowing more and performing better at various tasks which provide me with self-confidence... I want to obtain skills that meet my current work goals and qualify me for any future unseen prospects." (MMG2)

5.5.3 Consequences of Career Self-management Enactment

The two main career self-management consequences found in this section are: career satisfaction; and personal goal achievements.

5.5.3.1 Career Satisfaction

Inevitably, being aware of the desired goals assists people in identifying expectations about any career opportunities, as participants (9 managers, 22.5%) in this section report. Participants link job satisfaction with a satisfactory work/life balance and a career that has future possibilities. They mention that if people have control over their careers, they are more likely to have control over their social life and thus maintain a lifestyle balance, as one manager reports:

"A self-directed career helps in keeping our life and work in balance since you have the control rather than the organisation or someone else...you know what you want to achieve, when to achieve and how to achieve it... This reduces our stress". (MMG17).

Participants also link their financial security and age with career satisfaction, as one manager reports:

"...in this stage I am looking to prepare myself for retirement, thus I want to be secure financially. I intend, currently, to build my own new business and I will be satisfied if I achieve that. People have different career satisfaction as they get older. At the beginning of my career I was looking for opportunities even without financial outcomes and that made me satisfied. Currently monetary outcomes are very vital to me and this would be easier to achieve if I rely on myself in managing my career because as you get older the advancement opportunities are mostly gone to the younger people who have more energy and who are enthusiastic to learn... In most cases advancement has either short or long

term career financial outcomes and when this situation occurs old people like me try to protect themselves by taking control in career management rather than relying on an organisation." (MME3)

From another point of view, some participants link their career satisfaction with obtaining a variety of career outcome options, as the following quotes shown:

"People who are self-directed take responsibility for their own career management and by doing so, they perceive various career options that fulfil their needs for intrinsic job satisfaction and extrinsic financial rewards as well." (MME7)

"To me a fundamental motive for the interest in career self-management enactment is that such behaviour leads to job satisfaction..." (MFG3)

5.5.3.2   Personal Goal Achievements

Six of the respondents (15%) associate their goals with achieving their desired career outcomes, such as salary increments, promotion to high tenure and skills attainment. Goals, to them, should be definite and set to improve their skills and job performance. This study found that when participants are more focussed on career goals, they are more likely to engage in self-development activities which lead them to reach their goals. Participants indicate that they need to be aware of what sort of position they want to reach in future because such readiness helps them to identify the precise skills and competencies to obtain. They also associate their goals with the requirement of collecting information and setting plans for achieving it, as the following quote explains:

"We begin to determine our goals and what types of information we need to collect that facilitate the process of achieving them. The process includes determining the skills and competencies to be acquired, the time line for accomplishment and the barriers that may prevent achieving them." (MME9)

Goal commitment is also mentioned in this section, reflecting the effort placed on the pursuit of career goal achievement. According to participants, commitment includes a prior knowledge related to the management of their competences, in addition to appreciation of how to utilise those competence to determine their career plan. They add that the more there is self-development behaviour through self-training and development, the higher the possibility to achieve their personal goals. Findings in this section disclose that people need to understand the organisational and cultural barriers and opportunities which either encourage or limit the achievement of goals prior to setting their career plan, and that this more likely to take place during information collection at the planning stage.

5.5.4 Career Self-management Significant Behaviours

Although Bahraini manager participants (12 managers, 30%) mention more than one career self-management behaviour while embracing career self-management, the study reveals that the most important behaviours to them are: building networks; influencing decision-makers; and involvement in challenging assignments.

5.5.4.1 Building a Network

Networking behaviour (Sturges *et al.*, 2002) can be used to endorse careers within, as well as outside, the organisation and it depends on an individual's career strategy (Forret and Dougherty, 2001; 2004). Forret and Dougherty further assert that there are two types of networking: one that focusses on 'formal' networking and another focussing on 'informal'. This study found that Bahraini manager participants (10 managers, 25%) utilise both informal and formal networking to advance careers within their current organisations. Participants explain how social interaction between them and their leader, customers, and colleagues may enhance their career self-management and how this helps them to access significant resources which, ultimately, lead to career success. They report that such interaction helps them to obtain information for searching valuable jobs. Participants perceive networking as a significant tool for constructing relationships to produce a pool of human contacts that aid the gathering of information which leads to achieving personal goals. They distinguish the difference between the importance of 'informal' and 'formal' networking. Informal networks, to them, attempt to serve individual needs as they are personal and have unlimited restrictions. It is not officially controlled by the organisation. In

this vein they mention the impact of having dinner and social gatherings with clients for finding job opportunities outside the organisation. On the other hand, they express that although they have been offered these opportunities, they prefer to obtain job opportunities within their organisations. They also mention the importance of formal networks which attempt to serve their individual and organisational needs, although this is bounded by the organisation, as the following quote explains:

"*There is a business relationship between my organisation (EWA) and other electricity parties in Gulf Cooperation Council countries. I have utilised this relationship to learn so many skills which improve the way that I run my career. Now I have experience which may qualify me to work in those countries although I am not looking to work outside Bahrain. Such relationships also helped to build a network and increase my visibility. Our organisation provides many resources such as software which I utilise to improve my capabilities by myself.*" (MFE20)

Having interaction with an organisation's employees or colleagues from different departments is also indicated here because these help participants to understand different company policies and procedures. Interactions with company leaders are addressed here as this gives managers the opportunity to know more about organisational strategic goals.

The importance of family and friendship networks is mentioned by participants in this section. The findings reveal families' status and names in the Kingdom of Bahrain play significant roles in employment. If you are from a well-known family in which its members hold significant positions in big organisations or governments in the Kingdom of Bahrain, you more probably obtain jobs in those organisations or governments as participants indicate. One participant indicates the there are some recruitment departments in big organisations in Bahrain; they prefer to ask their employees, especially the key ones, to recommend candidates rather than referring to their curriculum vitae or archived application files. In this case those people recommend anyone from their family or friends even if they are not qualified for the required job. The finding in this section discloses that there are strong links between networking and personal connection (*wasta*)

in the Kingdom of Bahrain. People build a network for approaching people who might have influence or provide them with *wasta,* as the following quotes demonstrate:

> *"...some companies employ different members from the same family and the reason for that is there is one influential decision-maker who holds a high position bringing his/her family members or friends into the company even if they are not qualified."* (MFE20)

> *"In Bahrain relationships or* wasta *are very important to facilitate your life in general and not just career... I have many examples in our organisation in which people are not qualified for obtaining their current job but they have them because of their relationships."* (MFE17)

Family and friendship networks are not limited to recruitment only; they even extend to other employment opportunities - for instance promotion, rewards, training and development etc. - as one participant explains:

> *"...the worst case I have encountered in my career was when my colleague who is less qualified than me was given an opportunity for MBA sponsorship... This was because some influential people used their power to select that person for that training opportunity unjustly. Can you imagine how hard this is? But this is always the case in Bahrain in recruitment, selection, rewards, training etc."* (MMG13)

5.5.4.2   Influencing the Decision-makers

Participants in both organisations in this section (7 managers, 17.5%) report that they do not have complete autonomy in decisions about their career advancement; for example, promotion, reward, skills enhancement, reductions in working hours and so on. They suggest that to accomplish these results, they depend on people who occupy high positions in the organisation or in the social structure like leaders/top management (i.e. general managers, chief executive officer). They comment that such people normally have higher positions than them and have control to advance their career (King, 2001), as can be seen in the following quote:

"Influence to me is a mechanism to get people to see the value of what I am offering and to encourage them to take action. However if I want to be able to influence a decision-maker's behaviour, I need to prepare myself before approaching him or her. For instance, when my boss rejected my business trip three years ago, I gathered all facts, statistics, why and how this trip will have an impact not only on my current job but even on our organisation. I believe that this is the best way and the key to influencing managers." (MFE14)

They add that decision-makers within the organisation could be direct bosses or leaders/top management. Participants approach decision-makers when they want to show their distinctive achievements if they are ignored by their bosses. In an organisation, the level of power distance is related to the extent of centralisation of authority and extent of autocratic leadership (Hofstede, 1983). This means that the finding in this section considers that the relationship between people and their managers reflects a high power distance and this corresponds to Hofstede's (1980) finding classifying developing countries as places where the power distance is high.

Participants in this section report that although this practice is considered as bypassing, they have to experience it when there is no solution to be visible otherwise, particularly when they have accomplished significant projects. They report that bypassing a manager is against the rules and regulations in their organisation; however, it is not documented clearly. They add that although this action is unfavourable for the people who are bypassed because it may be seen that they are unapproachable, there are no established consequences in the EWA and GARMCO rules and regulations for managers who are thus characterised. Building a good relationship with decision-makers helps in advancing careers not only in the short term but also in the long term. Moreover, participants believe that decision-makers may play a significant role in mentoring and coaching, which are precious tools for advancing their careers, as the following quotes suggest:

"Building good relationships with bosses or management are useful for making them understand our career goals and helping us to achieve them... It helps us to make them understand our work and what types of projects improve our competencies... I still recall that I approached our General Manager to convince him to provide us with a bigger

budget for conducting very unique services and luckily our request was approved."
(MMG4)

"I was shocked when my line manager saw me in the office of his boss (i.e. our General Manager). I was afraid that this situation will be stored in his mind particularly when the time of yearly appraisal arrives. Unfortunately my boss mentioned that incident to me during my yearly appraisal and considered this experience inappropriate behaviour."
(MME13)

However, managers raise concerns such as the difficulties to reach decision-makers, particularly within their organisations for influencing their decisions.

"...if approaching decision-makers to remedy a problem is not working well, I will keep my curriculum vitae ready in order to leave when I obtain the required skills which qualify me to move somewhere outside the organisation." (MMG10)

The study finds it significant to build networks outside the organisation or in society. According to participants, such decision-makers could hold higher positions in other organisations or in government, as explained in the following quote:

"...even if you are against the idea of utilising the influential people, you see yourself need them in one situation or another. It would be impossible to obtain career opportunities without decision-makers' help in Bahrain..." (MME1)

It is worthy of mention that some managers indicate there are strong relationships between building networks and influencing decision-makers' behaviours because people mainly build networks of influential people or decision-makers. In addition, participants report that they exhibit more than one career self-management behaviour simultaneously.

5.5.4.3 Involvement in Challenging Assignments

Participants in this section (4 managers, 10%) reflect the significance of international demand in terms of skilled people who can execute diverse types of projects, such as those that are not related to their existing job description.

They report that such demands begin to increase noticeably in today's business environment because it has numerous advantages, as was pointed out in the following quotes:

> *"It helps my skills in relation to the tools, techniques used to effectively produce anticipated outcomes. It assists me to have plenty of opportunities for continued professional development, meeting others in my area of interest and sharing my knowledge and information with others."* (MME13)

> *"...it assists me to have a clear competitive career advantage over those who do not have previous skills and experience in starting and running a project and that I work in a profession that provides unlimited opportunities for growth and advancement."* (MFE20).

The finding discloses that one of the best ways to advance the self-directed career is to identify any organisational problem related to one's profession and propose a solution. By offering to implement the solution, the employee will not only increase their visibility as a problem-solver in the organisation, but they might also expand their current or future required skills. Involvement in assignments may increase job performance satisfaction and assist in achieving self-development, as participants' indicate:

> *"...everybody wants to be involved in interesting, challenging projects where we feel that we can make a genuine difference to our organisation as well as for us... This behaviour leads to enhancing our individual career development and makes our responsibilities more rewarding and inspiring..."* (MFG3)

"...this increases the depth of the job and allows people to have more control over their career." (MME2)

"I want to be challenged and feel that I can always do different things… The greater the obstacles I face, the more opportunities to learn how to overcome such obstacles which makes me proud of myself." (MME7)

However, performing challenging tasks requires skill variety and this could entail more autonomy in decision-making, and the freedom to choose how and when assignments need to be performed. In addition, this necessitates feedback after assignment accomplishment and recognition for performing the job well. Participants in this section raise some important aspects to be considered prior to exhibiting this behaviour:

"Volunteers need to assess the organisational need of such projects because there is no point in performing tasks which have no value or which make little difference. In addition, for any assignment, volunteers should understand the policies and procedures which are needed in order to accomplish the task." (MMG5)

"The risk of failure in a specific task or assignment should be studied thoroughly because you need to work hard to minimise effort and financial effort risks. The evaluation of such assignments, when accomplished, should be considered as this may provide more guidance for future assignment opportunities." (MFE5)

To conclude, the findings in this section reveal that career self-management approaches and behaviours share high similarities with the ones in career self-management literature review, as illustrated in Table (5.2). The only unique findings in this aspect are reflected in the following: Bahraini manager participants believe that navigating and reading different resources about career opportunities are important career self-management activities. The cause of employees seeking to manage their own careers is that participants do not have trust in their organisation's career management, which is unfair. They believe that career self-management leads to

achieving personal goals. Finally, they consider the involvement in challenging assignments is significant career self-management behaviour.

The similarities and differences between the findings in this study and the existing literature in terms of the extent and ways of career self-management embracement are explained in detail in Chapter 6.

5.5.5   Differences and Similarities between GARMCO and EWA

This study adopts across a case analysis which does not aim to distinguish the similarities and differences between the analyses of respondents; nevertheless, the author of this thesis recognises some significant issues regarding Research Question 1: *To what extent and in what ways do Bahraini managers adopt a career self-management approach?;* that is, participants from EWA and GARMCO share similarities in all career self-management approaches and behaviours such as: career self-management general activities employed, career self-management enactment causes, career self-management consequences, and career self-management significant behaviours exhibited. Table 5.3 illustrates the similarities between EWA and GARMCO in terms of how Bahraini manager participants engage in career self-management; please note that some participants employ more than one behaviour and activity.

Career Self-management	Similarities between EWA and GARMCO
Career self-management general activities employed	Participants from both organisations report that while adopting career self-management they employ the following behaviours: • Learning new skills that are not job-related. • Navigating and reading different resources about career opportunities.
Career self-management enactment causes	Participants from both organisations report that the causes of career self-management behaviours are: • Desire of control over career in challenging environment. • No trust in organisational career management because of unfairness.

	• Career advancement motivation.
Career self-management enactment consequences	Participants from both organisations report that the consequences of career self-management enactment are: • Career satisfaction. • Achieving personal goals.
Career self-management significant behaviours exhibited	Participants from both organisations report that the most significant career self-management behaviours to them are: • Building networks. • Influencing decision-makers. • Involvement in challenging assignments.

Table 5.3 Comparison of career self-management in EWA and GARMCO

5.5.6   Conclusion of Research Question 1 Analysis

Research Question 1 states that: *To what extent and in what ways do Bahraini managers adopt a career self-management approach?* To answer this question, four themes were recognised.

The four themes were found: 1) career self-management general activities employed (i.e. learning new skills that are not job-related, navigating and reading different resources about career opportunities); 2) career self-management enactment causes (i.e. a desire for control over career in a challenging environment, no trust in organisational career management because of unfairness and career advancement motivation); 3) career self-management consequences (i.e. career satisfaction, achieving personal goals); 4) career self-management significant behaviours exhibited (building networks, influencing decision-makers and involvement in challenging assignments).

5.6   Findings on Research Question 2 - Organisational Factors Impact Career Self-management Enactment

This section of the research findings discusses the organisational factors of career self-management enactment as it relates to answering Research Question 2: *What are the organisational factors that Bahraini managers believe promote or limit their career self-*

management behaviour? Three themes are noted: 1) organisational promoting factors; 2) organisational limiting factors contributing to ascriptive inequality; 3) behaviours towards organisational promoting and limiting factors.

5.6.1 Organisational Promoting Factors Impact Career Self-management Enactment

Organisations establish different activities to enhance employees' careers. However, it is important to distinguish the differences between organisational career management and career self-management. As mentioned earlier, organisational career management refers to depending on the organisation to manage individuals' careers whereas career self-management relates to the individuals' proactivity to manage their own career.

The main purpose in this section is to analyse the positive impact of promoting factors which the organisations under study provide and, in return, assist the self-directed employees to enact career self-management. In the previous section (5.5.2.2), participants report that aspects influencing them enacting career self-management (i.e. causes) are: desire for control over career in challenging environments; no trust in organisational career management because of unfairness; and career advancement motivation. In this section participants are asked to mention any factors within their organisations which facilitate achieving the above three objectives. In addition, the author of this thesis provided examples and stimulated participants to speak about any new notions on this topic.

The findings in this section demonstrate that the organisations in the study provide organisational support which is reflected in two factors, being: 1) monetary (Cappelli, 2004) and non-monetary aids (London and Bray, 1984); and 2) training and development programmes/plan provision. Such promoting factors help participants to have control over their careers, independent from organisational career management and career advancement. It is worthy of mention that some participants report more than one organisational promoting factor to career self-management. Table 5.4 illustrates organisational promoting factors. Table 5.4 illustrates organisational promoting factors.

Serial No.	Organisational Promoting Factors	Explanation	Number of Managers	Percentage
1.	Monetary (Cappelli, 2004) and non-monetary aids (London and Bray, 1984)	• Organisations refund self-studiers after completing their study. • Allow them to leave work early to attend classes. • Allow them to use the company internet.	26	65%
2.	Training and development programmes/plan provision	• Participants have authority to set their training needs yearly. • Training needs analysis held yearly by two organisations in the study lead to nominate potential staff particularly the ones who are proactive in learning and development to be in training and development programmes/plan. • Such programmes prepare those nominated with potential to occupy certain significant future jobs.	15	37.5%

Table 5.4 Organisational promoting factors in career self-management

5.6.1.1   Monetary and Non-monetary Aids

Twenty-six managers (65%) believe that monetary and non-monetary aids are the most significant organisational promoting factors to career self-management behaviour in their organisations. Cappelli (2004) finds that establishments with tuition reimbursement programmes lead to lower levels of employee turnover. According to manager participants in this section, they believe that their organisations provide monetary rewards or incentives (as a sort of obligation) for those who study by themselves, as illustrated in the following quote:

"If you obtain a master's degree you will gain one step and a PhD two steps and so on. In addition, our organisation may refund employees with self-study fees when they successfully complete their studies." (MME13)

There is a procedure in the two organisations studied of re-paying the money to individuals who take the initiative and study themselves. One manager noted that financial aid alone is not always the best motivator for career self-management:

"Organisations that manage employees badly probably fail to appreciate motivation drivers, for instance, financial aid. Unless it is to enable employees to achieve what they aspire to, such as advancement, enhancement and development of their career, not all efforts have positive outcomes. The financial aid should focus on fulfilling individual needs. An organisation must be aware of its employees' expectations in terms of career advancement and this could be achieved through continued effective communication, monthly staff meetings or yearly performance appraisal." (MME11)

In the same vein, the findings reveal that organisations in the study provide non-monetary support to self-directed employees, as pointed out by one manager:

"...providing time to the students who study by themselves and granting them with exam leave. If the study has entailed any requirements such as conducting a survey or case study, the organisation will facilitate this task for them. Self-studiers obtain support from the human resources department and such support increases if employees' study field is directly related to their jobs." (MMG14)

In addition, different types of non-financial aid are provided to self-directed employees, such as technological communication tools, as illustrated in the following quote:

"...online tools are considered crucial in today's business environment such as internet, intranet, and email. Those tools play a vital role in aiding employees during their self-studies... Our organisation always encourages us to use those technologies." (MMG1)

Academic help from colleagues, supervisors and other employees is manifested in some interviewee responses. The organisations in the study have training centres where part-time

students can meet and help each other in their assignments and exchange academic topic challenges. Some of these points are illustrated in the following quote:

"In big organisations, employees may find counterparts that share similar situations (i.e. self-study) and academic experience. Thus, exchanging knowledge with others helps self-studiers, particularly if the organisation encourages effective staff communication like our Authority EWA." (MFE6)

5.6.1.2   Training and Development Programmes/Plan Provision

Fifteen of the respondents (37.5%) report the imperative of training and development programmes/plan provision as promoting factors to career self-management behaviours in their organisations. Participants from both organisations emphasise the importance of annually identifying employees' training and development needs. Such practices lead to programmes called Career Development Plans in EWA and Career Development Programmes in GARMCO, as mentioned earlier. In this aspect some participants comment:

"...we are lucky to have such a programme ...not many companies can afford organising such an activity because it is costly and necessitates specialised people to manage it." (MFE16)

"...probably one of many reasons that encourages me to work hard, and being highly dedicated to my job is the availability of such a programme, especially if considering that the selection to such a programme is very highly selective." (MME10)

To some extent both organisations follow the same process in organising those programmes where the differences are reflected in the programme's name, period and the jobs targeted (see Sections 5.2.2 and 5.3.2). Participants in this section report that:

"...when our company observes employees' initiative, dedication and proactivity in learning and self-development, it selects them carefully for career development programmes to reach the ultimate positions set in that programme." (MMG19)

Participants suggest that selected people should show their interest and enthusiasm to learn, as noted by one manager:

"...proactivity in learning exhibited by us would give our organisation a signal that we are worthy people to invest in." (MME12)

The career development plan/programme in both organisations is a written plan that explains the employees' needs in terms of competencies to be applied for enhancing performance and how the developmental enhancement process will take place. Participants reveal that although the organisations take responsibility in managing these programmes, they are not selected unless they perceive they show initiative to self-study and proactivity to learn. They also determine that being in such programmes gives them further future career prospects and in return helps them to have the freedom to select the desired career and have control over it. Participants report that although the career development plan/programme is decided by the line manager, employees should show their dedication and proactivity in completing and amending it on a regular basis. They maintain that any changes in plan/programme should be agreed between the employee and his/her manager. They recommend different suggestions to be considered by employees who are selected for development plan/programme and which should be discussed with their line manager, as seen in the following quotes:

"...our bosses must ensure that what has been identified in this programme assists individuals to achieve personal goals rather than the organisational ones only." (MMG17)

"Individuals need to begin with setting their personal goal and making sure that it matches the organisation's goals normally identified by their bosses. The rationale for development should be clear and indicate the reason for improvement which will motivate individuals to expend extra effort and dedication for accomplishment. In most cases programme includes particular challenging projects that would help people for their future career progress..." (MMG18)

Participants comment that success for any organisation is in creating a culture that continually motivates and supports employees to set their own training and development needs, as the following quote demonstrates:

> "...there are many courses that are available on the internet where employees can search for those suitable and seek their manager's approval for attendance. Only proactive employees who ask about development and search for those activities get support from their managers." (MME7)

Setting such programmes is seen as important not only to some participants but to their organisations, as explained in the following quotes:

> "It assists us to appreciate the organisational strategies which include overall organisational missions and vision. This practice also helps us to set our plan to accomplish our goals which may match the organisational goals." (MMG19)

> "This programme assists organisations to line up employee training and development initiatives with its mission, vision and objectives and in return both employees and the organisation will benefit." (MME16)

It is worthy of mention that some participants address organisational promoting factors other than those mentioned above, but to a lesser extent: for instance, empowerment, restructuring and engineering and so forth.

Finally, the findings of this study reveal that the organisational promoting factors mentioned above are provided by the two organisations in the study as support to career self-management enactment (i.e. self-directed employees) whereas broader career literature review consider those organisational factors as a support to career management in general (i.e. to any employees).

5.6.2   Organisational Limiting Factors which Contributing to Ascriptive Inequality

The main purpose in this section is to analyse the negative impact of limiting factors which the organisations in the study have and, in return, limit self-directed employees to fulfil career self-management. Similar to the previous section (i.e. organisational promoting factors), participants are asked to mention any limiting factors existing in their organisation that prevent them from achieving the desired control over their career, independent from organisational career management and career advancement as well as contributing to ascriptive inequality.

As mentioned in the literature review, ascriptive inequality is related to inequality across groups defined by some ascriptive attributes, such as sex, race, or age (Reskin, 2003). According to Reskin's study, organisational mechanisms include the practices through which organisations and their agents in some way associate employees' ascriptive characteristics to work results. This study discloses that the two organisations studied (EWA and GARMOC) base opportunities and rewards in some situations on workers' ascriptive status and favour some groups and ignore or harm others. The finding in this section discloses that those factors are: 1) many layers in the organisational structure (Laurent, 1983; 1986); 2) human resources development policies and practices; and 3) utilising power in decision-making by top management, as illustrated in Table 5.5. However, this does not prevent the author from encouraging managers to provide factors other than those mentioned in the examples. It is worthy of mention that some participants report more than one organisational limiting factor to career self-management that contribute to ascriptive inequality.

Serial No.	Organisational Limiting Factors Contributing to Ascriptive Inequality	Explanation	Number of Managers	Percentage
1.	Many layers in organisational structure (Laurent, 1983; 1986)	• It limits the approach to top management. • Difficulties in accessing organisation resources.	18	45%

		• It is reflected in rigid organisation rules and regulation.		
2.	Human resource development policies and practices	Establishing policies and practices that encourage favourites causes ascriptive inequality. Inequality makes people not bother to exhibit career self-management because they ascertain that they will not receive equal career opportunities even if they develop themselves.	15	37.5%
3.	Utilising power in decision-making by top management	Top management experience their power in making decisions which are related to important issues to employees. Such action makes people not bother to exhibit career self-management because they are ascertain that they will not receive equal career opportunities even if they develop themselves.	11	27.5

Table 5.5 Organisational limiting factors which contributing to ascriptive inequality

5.6.2.1   Many Layers in Organisational Structure

Eighteen of the respondents (45%) report that establishing many layers in the organisational structure is a challenging factor (Laurent, 1983; 1986) which limits their career self-management behaviours. At the beginning, some of participants in this section start to discuss the advantages of the many layers in the organisation, as the following quotes explain:

> *"Many layers in the organisation structure may provide a clear division of work with boundaries to responsibilities, defining the hierarchy of authority well, helping the*

human resources department in recruitment, increasing employees' efficiencies, building impersonal relationships between employees, customers, establishing formal rules and procedures that help in governing the organisation operation." (MME3)

"It provides more jobs for unemployed people who are considered as a part of social national responsibilities towards recruiting nationals." (MMG10)

"...it is a good way to manage people as everyone appreciates who has authority over whom. It helps to define individuals' roles and responsibilities so if any default occurs, the organisation can call to account the responsible employees for that issue." (MFE5)

However, the participants above who discussed the advantages of many layers in their organisations contradict themselves and raise their concern about it, as seen in the following quotes:

"...nevertheless I think a long hierarchy in an organisational structure has a significant role in preventing employees from exhibiting career self-management behaviour... because it stops them from reaching or approaching the influential people. For example, in this type of environment you feel that those people at the top - like foreign people - you cannot communicate with them... Their offices are located separately from other offices and surrounded by quietness and are luxurious." (MME3)

"...however a flat structure is still more efficient for career self-management enactment because it facilitates communication among employees and helps in accelerating the process and improving operations... It encourages proactivity in terms of ideas provision." (MMG10)

"...but I still believe that a flat structure reduces the cost incurred from human resources." (MFE5)

Other than the participants above who address the advantages and disadvantages of there being many layers in the organisation, there are participants who strongly believe that the existence of many layers in the organisational structure limits their intention to enact career self-management as it stands as a barrier to reach their top management, who can support them in setting their goals, as explained in the following quotes:

"It prevents us from accessing organisation resources such as coaching, mentoring and any financial aid which is normally approved or provided by top management for self-studiers. For instance, it took me time to have a meeting with our general manager to take his advice regarding specific training which is not in my current field but it could help me in my future career." (MMG5)

"It delays decision-making, particularly when there is a necessity for immediate actions and accordingly this results in an overall system that is rigid and slow." (MME2)

"Many layers in the organisational structure can result in a certain amount of disconnection between different levels and different areas within the company and ultimately become a limiting factor... It leads to disappointment." (MMG17)

"...difficult for us to keep pace with developments and innovations in the market particularly if there is a need for any change in our particular processes or procedures as the approval must pass through various management levels... In some situations this reason limits people from being proactive in terms of creative ideas or new project suggestions." (MFE18)

"...with many layers, we may not be judged for what we can uniquely bring to our job, but by how well we fulfil our functions; this makes us feel helpless and passive... Such an environment makes us unable to achieve our desirable career outcome." (MMG1)

5.6.2.2 Human Resource Development Policies

Fifteen managers (37.5%) report that human resources development policies and practices in their organisations encourage ascriptive inequality and in return discourage them from exhibiting career self-management behaviour. Participants in this section believe that there is no point in enacting career self-management behaviours like building human capital, enhancing individual visibility etc., since career opportunities, ultimately, will go to people who do not deserve them. This point is explained in the following quotes:

"Human resources development policies in Bahrain organisations are not encouraging, particularly in publishing vacancies. For example, if there is any job promotion opportunity, all people are called to enter the interview and might be accepted for that job even if they are coming from different departments. So if you are working in the department where this opportunity is created, anyone from different departments can be promoted if he/she is selected in the interview. Such procedure prevents people from obtaining the job that they may wait for, for such a long time, within their department and specialisation... People within the department must be given the right and priority for obtaining such opportunities because they have more skills and experience about such jobs." (MFE4)

"...organisation sometimes set policies and procedures to protect themselves from government legal investigation. For instance, in publishing vacancies, they establish a policy that allows everybody to apply from all of the organisation's departments and such practice seems to be fair; however, at the end of day the decision-makers might not be always fair in selecting the suitable candidate because wasta *will play a significant role in the process of selection."* (MME9)

Other than human resources development policies' unfairness, is policy implementation exists, as commented upon by participants:

"...our organisations' policies state that every employee undertaking self-study and obtaining any kind of education related to their field, will be refunded if they succeed.

However, this kind of policy is not executed among employees fairly where each boss has the power and authority to either approve or not approve the refund obtainable." (MMG18)

In this vein, one participant reports about deficiencies in implementation policy consequences:

"This policy discourages us from studying on our own particularly if we see our colleagues, who finished successfully, do not obtain any refund." (MMG7)

However, other participants have different points of view on this, as explained in the following quote:

"...the unfairness in executing the policy of the financial support or education refund, will not stop me from studying by myself because I believe that at the end of the day what I obtain in terms of education will be my own property and no one even the organisation can take from me." (MFE17)

5.6.2.3   Utilisation of Power in Making Decisions by Top Management

Eleven of the respondents (27.5%) report that top management in the two organisations in the study experience power obtained from their jobs in making decisions which, in return, leads to ascriptive inequality. Participants perceive this action as unfair, making them feel discouraged from exhibiting career self-management behaviours. From their point of view, this experience takes place when there are conflicts between two parties' interest (i.e. managers and their bosses) in which bosses utilise their power for achieving their objectives and ignore employee concerns. The study reveals that this provides an adverse environment for career self-management behaviour enactment, as pointed out in the following quote:

"...my boss sometimes rejects my job transfer to another department within our organisation and makes me struggle to advance my career... I assume that my boss has his own objective which is totally contradictory with mine. Sometimes, for example, I want to apply for a job in another department but this action will put him under pressure

in terms of finding someone to perform my job or facing a shortage of staff; however, I do not care if the mobility will advance my career, he should appreciate my situation..." (MME1)

Another example of ascriptive inequality related to utilising power occurs when there are disagreements about personal values between managers and their bosses. Participants state that:

"...in some situations if I am working hard, my line manager will not allow me to move to another department because I think my boss aims to retain me under the assumption that the new employees who will occupy the vacancies might not have the experience and skills acquired by me." (MMG19)

"In my opinion, there is conflict in values between employees and their bosses; for example, if you are doing a good job they might not allow you to move to another job because they do not want to lose you. I suggest that there should be always mutual agreement regarding the objectives set between the employee and boss to achieve goals. This practice may deploy environments that encourage career self-management behaviours and make employees confident that achieving targets will lead to career advancement." (MFE4)

The organisational factors that contribute to ascriptive inequality and in turn lead to disappointment are exclusive to this study's findings because there is a lack of research that associates career self-management enactment with the consequences of ascriptive inequality factors.

The similarities and differences between this study's findings and existing career self-management literature in terms of organisational factors to promote or limit career self-management enactment will be explained in detail in Chapter 6.

5.6.3 Behaviours towards Organisational Promoting and Limiting Factors

The purpose of this section is to discover the participants' behaviours or actions to either utilise promoting factors or to overcome challenging factors to enhance career self-management behaviour within the organisation. The analysis of this interview question is built upon the answers of the previous question. Thus, the author asked participants to think about promoting/challenging factors (from the previous question) and choose examples (from this current question). They are also encouraged to provide any new ideas they thought to be vital to either utilise promoting, or overcome challenging, organisational factors.

Two behaviours are recognised in this section: 1) feedback seeking (London, 1993; Kossek *et al.,* 1998; King, 2001; Chiaburu *et al.,* 2006); and 2) building human capital (Noe, 1996; Sturges, 2008; King, 2004). Therefore those behaviours are exhibited by participants either to utilise promoting, or overcome challenging, organisational factors in order to have control over career, independent from organisational career management and career advancement. It is worthy to mention that some participants indicate more than one organisational factor in the Kingdom of Bahrain which contributes to ascriptive inequality, in turn leading to disappointment in career self-management enactment. Table 5.6 illustrates behaviours towards organisational promoting/limiting factors.

Serial No.	Behaviours towards Organisational Promoting/Limiting Factors	Explanation	Number of Managers	Percentage
1.	Building human capital (Noe, 1996; Sturges, 2008; King, 2004)	• Learning more skills and competencies. • Utilises any opportunity to learn new skills even without financial rewards.	23	57.5%
2.	Feedback seeking (London, 1993; Kossek *et al.*, 1998;	• Pursuing advice from experts (i.e. mentors or coach) or line managers regarding skill	17	42.5%

	King, 2001; Chiaburu *et al.*, 2006)	weaknesses.		

Table 5.6 Behaviours towards organisational promoting/limiting factors to career self-management

5.6.3.1 Building Human Capital

Twenty three managers (57.5%) report that building human capital (Noe, 1996; Sturges, 2008; King, 2004) is a significant behaviour to be exhibited towards promoting or limiting organisational factors. For instance, it was discovered that resolution of conflicts between employees and bosses in terms of achieving the individual's work goals or objectives (i.e. a limiting factor) necessitates that participants learn more skills and transfer to jobs even lower than the current job, as seen in the following quotes:

"Conflict is an inevitable part of our work life. It is caused by people's differences in terms of backgrounds, perspectives, values, needs, goals, expectations... To me, if conflicts relate to personal values between me and my boss, then building human capital through training and development can solve this issue. I know a colleague whose boss doesn't let him attend any courses during the work day because of work pressure and he always complains about this issue. I advised him to self-study during the evening as this will give him the opportunity to transfer to another department or obtain a job promotion." (MME12)

"...if any opportunity presents itself to learn new skills even without financial rewards, it should be utilised as the return will be there in the long term. This is because investment in learning and career advancement has long and short term positive effects. Building human capital prepares a person to apply for unexpected job vacancies." (MFE5)

"...to overcome the conflicting values between me and my manager, I must enhance the skills in my field which makes my job very unique and I become very skilful and therefore

the organisation could not afford to let me leave. Later on when the opportunity comes, the organisation will promote me even without asking for that." (MFE19)

The significance of working hard was also discovered as an action that helps managers to eliminate the deficiencies in human resources development policy (i.e. limiting factors), as shown in the following quote:

"...working hard is always helping me to overcome any barriers that prevent me from achieving my aim. For instance, if I struggle to get promotion or rewards because of the deficiencies in our organisation's human resources development policy (i.e. training and recruitment), then I have to continually learn new skills as these could help me to prepare myself for any unexpected opportunities outside my organisation. There are various mechanisms and tools that help me to depend on myself to achieve this goal for instance navigating various online courses." (MMG8)

Participants mention the specialisation concern and the importance of learning diverse skills to resolve this challenge.

"...I must learn different skills or even change my specialisation if I find that there are not many opportunities in this specialisation because obtaining more than one specialisation will always increase professional prospects. However, this is applicable only to those who are at the beginning of their career." (MMG17)

In addition, the desire to have control over one's career from participant perspectives is characterised by a strong aspiration to focus on keeping their career moving in a direction that fulfils self-satisfaction. This could happen through career development plans formed by the individual's need, wants and abilities, as shown in the following quote:

"Individual plans conducted by oneself should include short (i.e. training) and long (i.e. development) terms. In terms of training, GARMCO provides informal training such as career counselling where individuals and a counsellor sit to discuss any chance that may

be available now which could help in the future and the process to obtain this opportunity. In the aspect of informal approaches I believe that coaching, mentoring and feedback should be included with line managers on a daily basis to satisfy developmental career needs in addition to informal development through work experience which encompasses taking part in particular projects. In terms of formal training, GARMCO provides it through internal and external courses. It offers structured self-development learning programmes which agreed between us and our line managers, to enhance knowledge and obtain new skills in the job field." (MMG11)

With regard to career development which fulfils individuals' developmental needs in the long term, one participant points out that:

"EWA has a huge budget for higher qualifications, for example, master's degrees and higher national diplomas in engineering, and bachelor's degrees in electrical and mechanical engineering, in addition to different professional certificates in accounting, information technology, human resources and so forth." (MFE6)

Possibly, the most important points that participants want to convey are proactivity and fairness. The first possible point is proactivity for seeking the above mentioned opportunities (i.e. requesting a required programme). They report that unless an employee is proactive to develop himself or herself, it would not be easy to acquire any support or opportunity. They suggest that self-initiative in learning and development is important for giving an indication to the management that they are the best human capital in which to invest and retain. The following quote explains some of these notions:

"...I have an example of myself. Most of the training and development that I obtained I had asked for and I got my manager's support and acceptance. Currently I am encouraging self-directed employees to be proactive in searching for training and development which they need and do not depend on me as a manager, human resources or the training department. Such proactivity may increase career opportunities and qualify people to obtain any unseen prospect." (MFE16)

The second possible point is fairness, and in this aspect participants raised their concern about the unfairness in distributing opportunities that are related to obtaining sponsorship for some programmes and qualifications which are significant for career advancement, as the following quote demonstrates:

> *"...despite the existence of many developmental opportunities you can't obtain them all the time and they may be granted to people who are less qualified than us."* (MFE17)

5.6.3.2 Feedback-seeking Behaviour

Seventeen managers, representing 42.5%, report that receiving feedback is a significant factor in promoting or limiting organisational factors. This is labelled 'feedback-seeking behaviour' (London, 1993; Kossek *et al.*, 1998; King, 2001; Chiaburu *et al.*, 2006), which seeks to encompass behaviours that may expose individual weaknesses because they entail engagement in learning new skills, obtaining new knowledge, and enhancing performance. Participants comment that:

> *"Our experts like a mentor or coach are considered a major source of our feedback that may help in advancing our career in addition to our line managers. Last year in my annual review I was advised by my line manager that the cost for the material we ordered for the some equipment were high and bad in quality, which made me change the suppliers this year..."* (MME11)

However, the annual performance review is inadequate feedback, as explained in the following quote:

> *"...employees should not wait till the end of the year to receive feedback but instead it should be exercised daily, weekly, monthly and yearly. Feedback helps to advance careers and encourage self-management as it increases self-confidence if employees appreciate their performance level against expected standards."* (MFE5)

At the same time, participants in this category emphasise the significance of effective feedback based on mutual coordination between those who provide and receive feedback. To receive effective feedback, participants comment that:

"We should understand our duties and responsibilities, appreciate performance standards for our tasks, always ask for feedback and, finally, prepare ourselves mentally and physically for feedback, for instance at the proper time, in the right place and in the correct situation." (MMG16)

To provide effective feedback some participants suggest:

"Bosses or experts should have sufficient knowledge about the feedback subject, demonstrate feedback in a constructive and positive way rather than criticism, respect individual privacy, convey personal appreciation and exhibit effective feedback skills (i.e. eye contact, body language etc.) and finally schedule time for follow-up meetings to make sure that the person's issues have been tackled." (MMG11)

"...should focus on giving employees valuable information to resolve problems related to their work field and must be reliable and truthful for it to be helpful... I have learned from experts different tips for instance conducting constructive feedback." (MFE14)

It is worthy of mention that some participants address different behaviours from those above but to a lesser extent, such as building a network within and outside the organisation, updating curriculum vitae regularly, gathering information about career prospects and so forth. The findings of this study (i.e. in EWA and GARMCO) is that the behaviours towards organisational promoting and limiting factors of career self-management mentioned above are similar to those that were presented in career self-management literature review.

5.6.4   Similarities and Differences in Findings between Two Organisations

This section adopts the previous approach, that is, to draw comparisons between manager responses in EWA and GARMCO. The reason for that is to show the similarities and differences

related to organisational factors which either promote or limit career self-management and the consequent behaviours towards those factors. The analysis in this section reveals that organisational promoting factors (i.e. supportive) in both organisations are reflected in monetary and non-monetary resources and training and development programmes/plan provision. In terms of organisation limiting factors contributing to ascriptive inequality, participants in both organisations share the following: many layers in the organisation's structure; human resource development policies and practices; and utilisation of power by top management in making decisions. Such ascriptive inequality factors lead to disappointment for the enactment of career self-management behaviours like: building human capital; and feedback-seeking. Table 5.7 addresses these issues.

	Similarities		Differences	
	EWA	**GARMCO**	**EWA**	**GARMCO**
Promoting factors				
Monetary and non-monetary resources	X	X		
Training and development programmes/plan provision	X	X		
Limiting Factors Contributing to Ascriptive Inequality				
Many layers in organisational structure	X	X		
Human resource development policies and practices	X	X		
Utilisation of power in making decisions by top management	X	X		
Behaviours towards Promoting/Limiting Factors				
Building human capital	X	X		
Feedback-seeking	X	X		

Table 5.7 Variations in organisational promoting/limiting factors to career self-management behaviours in EWA and GARMCO

5.6.5   Conclusion of Research Question 2 Analysis

Research Question 2 states: *What are the organisational factors that Bahraini managers believe promote or limit their career self-management behaviour?* To answer this question, three themes are recognised: 1) organisational promoting factors of embracing career self-management; 2) organisational limiting factors contributing to ascriptive inequality; and 3) behaviours towards promoting/limiting factors to either enhance or overcome organisational barriers.

In the first theme, it was found that there are two organisational promoting factors that help Bahraini managers in the sample to enhance their career self-management. Those are: 1) monetary and non-monetary support; and 2) training and development programmes/plan provision. In the second theme, it was found that there are three organisational factors that limit career self-management behaviours of Bahraini manager participants and contribute to ascriptive inequality within the organisation. Those are: 1) many layers in the organisational structure; 2) human resources development policies and practices; and 3) the utilisation of power by top management in making decisions. In the third theme, it was found that there are two promoting/limiting factors exhibited to either utilise promoting or overcome limiting organisational factors: 1) building human capital; and 2) feedback-seeking.

5.7   Findings on Research Question 3 - Cultural Factors Impact Career Self-management Enactment

This section of research findings discusses the cultural factors that Bahraini manager participants believe promote or limit their career self-management behaviour. It answers Research Question 3. *What are the cultural factors that Bahraini managers believe promote or limit their career self-management behaviour?* It encompasses three themes: 1) career self-management cultural promoting factors; 2) career self-management cultural limiting factors contributing to ascriptive inequality; and 3) behaviours towards promoting and limiting cultural factors.

5.7.1   Cultural Promoting Factors Impact Career Self-management Enactment

The main purpose in this theme is to analyse the positive impact of promoting factors which exist in Bahrain's culture and, in turn, promote self-directed participants to enact career self-management behaviour. In the previous section (5.5.2.2), participants report that the promoting

factors towards career self-management enactment are: a desire for control over career in challenging environments; no trust in organisational career management because of unfairness; and career advancement motivation. Similar to the previous section (i.e. organisational factors), participants were asked to mention any factors within their culture that help them to achieve the above three goals. In addition the author of this thesis provided examples and stimulated the participants to speak about any new notions in this vein.

The findings in this section demonstrate that two promoting factors exist in Bahrain's culture: 1) Bahrainisation; and 2) contribution and participation in professional societies. Such factors assist participants to have control over their career, independent from organisational career management and career advancement. Thus all the cultural promoting factors mentioned above are considered as support for achieving the three career self-management goals. The findings also reveal that there are other promoting cultural factors but to a very small extent (i.e. qualifications, experience, family name, reputation, word of mouth, communication, religion, and specialisation). It is worthy of mention that some participants indicate more than one cultural promoting factor to career self-management. Table 5.8 illustrates cultural promoting factors.

Serial No.	Cultural Promoting Factors	Explanation	Number of Managers	Percentage
1	Bahrainisation (Dito, 2007; Allen Consulting Group, 2009)	• Implementing Bahrainisation strategy by Bahrain's government helps Bahrainis to obtain the required jobs and thus have control over their career outcomes.	21	52.50%
2	Contribution and participation in professional societies	• Very important to be a member of societies in Bahrain based on interest and specialisation. • Contribution to those societies offers more career prospects.	16	40%

Table 5.8 Cultural promoting factors to career self-management

5.7.1.1   Bahrainisation

Twenty one managers, representing 52.5% of the sample, report that Bahrainisation (Dito, 2007; Allen Consulting Group, 2009) is significant in promoting cultural factors. Bahrainisation is a government strategy seeking to replace foreign labour with nationals (Allen Consulting Group, 2009). The Labour Ministry forces companies in the Kingdom of Bahrain to offer a certain number of jobs to Bahrainis and thus reduce the unemployment rate which has increased yearly (Allen Consulting Group, 2009). The Bahrain government allocates a special budget for training Bahrainis through conducting different programmes in various fields where any qualified Bahraini can apply for those programmes (Dito, 2007). Most organisations in the Kingdom of Bahrain take advantage of this budget and train their employees since the education fund is the government's responsibility, not the organisations'. Those programmes are related to training and development, meaning that people can obtain degrees or professional certificates (Tamkeen, 2013). In this study, participants report that they can study individually and choose their desired fields since their organisations are not involved in the education, as is explained in the following quote:

"Proactive behaviour for self-study is important while choosing any programme conducted by Tamkeen because it is our responsibility to take advantage and apply for these programmes. These programmes are usually conducted during the afternoon when employees have normally finished their duties so they do not need permission from their organisations to attend the training classes. Obtaining diverse skills and attending various training, even that which is not related to our current job, increases our opportunities to obtain jobs in Bahrain with better prospects, particularly if our current job is not offering us what we are aiming for. Tamkeen helps us to be prepared for unexpected future career opportunities and aid in selecting the desired career that satisfies our ambition." (MME12)

Participants in this section agree that implementing this strategy could help Bahrainis to obtain the required job if Bahrainisation is implemented in proficient ways. The evidence of this notion is explained in the following quotes:

"In Bahrain the implementing of Bahrainisation is not yet a mature strategy, particularly if Bahraini organisations recruit people in jobs that are not suited to their qualification and experience..." (MMG5)

"...I have obtained my current job because I had applied to the Ministry of Labour after my university graduation. The Ministry as a part of its responsibility in employing fresh graduates, appointed me as a trainee in my current company. Subsequently I proved myself by working hard in order to reach my current position." (MMG18)

The perception held by participants in this part is that obtaining the appropriate job based on an individual's qualifications and field, increases career satisfaction and thus enables people to have control over career outcomes. This notion is evident in the following quote:

"Having a suitable environmental culture encourages us to exhibit career self-management behaviour, for instance established governmental legal and institutions ...protect labour rights and hence enable independence for managing a career." (MME3)

In this section participants hesitate in giving the author their examples. This could be attributed to their fear of losing their positions if they are honest on such a sensitive topic. Thus, the author made additional effort to make them feel comfortable about what they were about to say. Despite emphasising the importance of confidentiality prior to starting the interview, it is important to repeat this issue, particularly in the context of the current political situation in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

5.7.1.2   Contribution and Participation in Professional Societies

Sixteen of the respondents (40%) report that contribution and participation in professional societies is a significant promoting cultural factor. Professional societies are non-profit organisations aimed at helping members advance their careers within their job fields. Being a member of any professional society based on interest and specialisation is very important in the Kingdom of Bahrain, as the findings in this section reveal. Participants state that Bahraini

civilisation is fond of being associated to groups or working in groups, thus having a membership, and contributing to societies, offers people chances for their self-directed career:

"...a contribution to Bahrain's social societies is very important because this will allow us to know influential people and appreciate what they can do to help us. Being a member in those societies assists us in deploying our professionalism which in return widens our career opportunities... In addition, being a member in one of our professional societies will give us a sort of belonging with professional people in our field and expose us to them." (MME12)

"...socialising with people through societies provides an individual the opportunity to recognise their abilities and skills, particularly if those people have common interests with you... Those people may give tips for career progression and provide people with experiences that will improve their intellectual thinking and contribute to strengthening their skills. Participation in voluntary work through these associations helps to acquire various skills which may not have material impact but much further than that. Such practices assist us in gaining experience in different areas and expand human consciousness which, in turn, encourage us to perform more challenging tasks in future." (MME13)

Associate members may have various opportunities which may be uniquely appropriate to their stage of career development. They may have access to any training events and opportunities such as conferences, seminars, workshops, conducted quarterly or annually, as shown in the following quote:

"Nearly all societies in Bahrain have either one frequent local conference or workshop... For example, my membership in the Bahrain Training and Development Society allowed me to attend many conferences and workshops which are conducted yearly because they offer different free seats to people who help organise those training events. Such development helps me to advance my career and have control over it since my organisation is not involved in providing those training interventions." (MMG11)

Participants report that societies provide their membership with different advantages such as:

"...the option to participate in different research studies and in return we become self-independent in seeking any opportunities within our professions. It also assists us to perform various activities such as organisation training events that are related to our societies' areas. In addition, membership in professional societies is a useful source of employment information and job leads." (MMG14)

Professional societies in the Kingdom of Bahrain provide career services to their membership which includes posting resumes, various company profiles etc., as the following quote explains:

"Societies keep us up-to-date in our field through knowing the guest speakers, memberships... It help us to identify critical new directions in our professions. It gives us information about hiring trends, qualification requirements, and salary ranges of our specialisation..." (MFE19)

The main point that participants want to convey in this section is that obtaining different types of career opportunities outside their organisation influences their career self-management behaviour and helps them to become self-directed. Therefore, obtaining such opportunities increases participants' possibilities to have control over their career, independent from conventional or organisational career management and career advancement.

It is worthy of mention that fourteen participants (35%) report that there are different cultural promoting factors but to a much lesser extent such as qualifications, experience, family name, reputation, word of mouth, communication, religion, and specialisation.

Finally, all the cultural promoting factors found in this section are considered new findings which help career self-management enactment because the existing career self-management literature lacks research in this area.

5.7.2   Cultural Limiting Factors which Contributing to Ascriptive Inequality

The main purpose in this section is to analyse the negative impact of limiting factors which exist in Bahrain's culture and, in turn, limit participants to enacting career self-management. Similar to the previous section (i.e. cultural promoting factors), participants are asked to mention any factors within Bahrain's culture that limit them from achieving the desired control over their career, independent from organisational career management and career advancement motivation goals (i.e. causes of career self-management behaviour). The participants were given examples about what cultural challenges mean because it was believed that this could provide a clearer picture about their actual meaning. In addition, they were stimulated to speak up about any new notions in this vein.

As mentioned in the literature review Chapter 2, ascriptive inequality is related to inequality across groups defined by some ascriptive attributes, such as sex, race, or age (Reskin, 2003). According to Reskin's study, society mechanisms include the practices through which societies and their agents in some way associate people's ascriptive characteristics to work results. Thus the findings in this section disclose that those limiting factors which contribute to ascriptive inequality are: 1) high level of foreign labour; 2) personal connection or nepotism (*wasta*); and 3) discrimination which is reflected in religious denomination, age and gender. Such cultural ascriptive inequality factors lead to disappointment in terms of exhibiting career self-management behaviours. Table 5.9 illustrates cultural limiting factors contributing to ascriptive inequality.

Serial No.	Cultural Limiting Factors Contributing to Ascriptive Inequality	Explanation	Number of Managers	Percentage
1	High level of foreign labour (Rutledge, 2009; Allen Consulting Group, 2009; Lootah and Simon, 2009; Forstenlechner, 2010; Al-Waqfi and	• Foreign labour is preferred under the perception that they come with ready skills and experience. • The shortage of skilled labour is a result of	25	62.5%

	Forstenlechner, 2010; Mellahi, 2007; Al Lamki, 1998; Forstenlechner and Mellahi, 2011)	different aspects. • Foreign labourers accept many lower jobs with lower salaries, particularly in vocational jobs and construction. • Bahrainis cannot afford to work in certain jobs because those jobs cannot offer a basic lifestyle. • Foreigners have networks and they help each other.		
2	Personal connection or nepotism (*wasta*) (Al-Ali, 2008; Tayeb, 2005; Sawalha, 2002; Hutchings and Weir, 2006; Cunningham and Sarayrah, 1993; Haajenh, Maghrabi and Dabbagh, 1994; Common, 2008; Namazie, 2003)	• This phenomenon is considered as a barrier for career self-management behaviour and society could not do anything other than adapt to it. • It causes disappointment to career self-management enactment since career opportunities are not distributed among people fairly.	32	80%
3	Discrimination in: 1. Religious denomination	Three types of discrimination found are: 1. Religious discrimination: • Some institutions in Bahrain are dominated by the leaders/top	22 20	55% 50%

		management that came from certain denominations and have influence to reject applicants that differ from their denomination.		
	2. Age discrimination (Wood, Wilkinson and Harcourt, 2008)	2. Age discrimination: • Preferring younger ages over older. • Perception that younger generations are healthier and physically stronger than older.	14	35%
	3. Gender (Baud and Mahgoub, 2001; El-Ghannam, 2001; Mostafa, 2003; 2005; Askar and Ahmad, 2003; United Nations Development Programme, 2003; World Bank, 2003; Abd El-Latif, 1988; Dechant and Al Lamky, 2005)	3. Gender discrimination: • The favouritism of male candidates over females in some jobs. • The perception about females' ability to lead men.	6	15%

Table 5.9 Cultural limiting factors which contributing to ascriptive inequality

5.7.2.1   High Level of Foreign Labourers

Twenty five managers, representing 62.5% of the sample, report that a significant factor hindering them from career self-management enactment is the high level of foreign labour

(Rutledge, 2009; Allen Consulting Group, 2009; Lootah and Simon, 2009; Forstenlechner, 2010; Al-Waqfi and Forstenlechner, 2010; Mellahi, 2007; Al Lamki, 1998; Forstenlechner and Mellahi, 2011) in the Kingdom of Bahrain. They indicate that:

"The high level of foreign labourers who come ready with skills and experience, represents a big concern for us. All GCC countries suffer from shortages in skilled and unskilled manpower, including Bahrain. This distinctive situation in terms of shortage skills has made these GCC countries depend on foreign labourers." (MFE14)

The study discloses that the shortage of skilled labour results from various aspects, such as:

"...a poor education system, cultural issues such as tradition, values, religion etc. In addition the private sector in Bahrain favours foreign labourers over nationals and this results from the mind-set that they come with ready skills." (MME10)

"Most organisations in Bahrain have a mind-set that foreigners do not need any development or training to do the required job, compared with Bahrainis who need more spending on time and money to prepare them for new jobs...I do not agree with such a mind-set because I know many cases where foreigners come without the skills required to perform their jobs and Bahraini organisations spend time and money to train them..." (MMG6)

"*Foreign labourers in Bahrain accept many lower jobs with much lower salaries particularly in vocational and construction jobs because Bahrainis cannot afford to work in those jobs because of the low salaries which cannot offer them the basics that life demands."* (MMG12)

On the preference for foreign labour over Bahraini some participants comment that:

"...Bahraini institutions should distinguish between 'good and expensive' with 'bad and cheaper' strategies when select Bahrainis for particular jobs." (MME2)

"...the current organisation system, which is contract-based, is reducing creativity and productivity since foreign labourers feel that their contract will be finished within a specific period. Thus, Bahraini institutions should take into account the quality of work that Bahrainis confer compared with foreign labour." (MMG10)

Finally, foreign labourers in the Kingdom of Bahrain have a network and they help each other in recruitment:

"Foreign labourers always prefer their nationalities over Bahrainis if they are in positions of decision-making in recruitment because they consider themselves as minorities in a society that needs to help each other." (MFE20)

5.7.2.2 Personal Connections (*Wasta*)

Thirty two managers, representing 80%, report that *wasta* (Al-Ali, 2008; Tayeb, 2005; Sawalha, 2002; Hutchings and Weir, 2006; Cunningham and Sarayrah, 1993; Haajenh, Maghrabi and Dabbagh, 1994; Common, 2008; Namazie, 2003) is the most significant cultural factor contributing to ascriptive inequality. It is obvious to observe that personal connections appear in many sections in this study. *Wasta* has a similar meaning to personal connections or 'favouritism' and is a heritage of the national culture of the Kingdom of Bahrain. Participants indicate that:

"Wasta *manifests itself in various HRM practices in Bahrain, such as recruitment, training and development, rewards and incentives and so on.* Wasta *is a heritage in our culture and the experience of this phenomenon prevails in most of the countries in the Middle East, not just in Bahrain."* (MME19)

Participants reveal that *wasta* is a reality which requires people to adapt to it, rather than spending effort on finding a solution for it. They associate personal connections with networking, as is explained in the following quote:

"...if you know influential people through networking, they will help you to achieve individual goals even if you are not qualified. Wasta *entails coping with it, rather than*

wasting your time and thinking of changing it...unfortunately wasta *discourages qualified people who should receive equal treatment opportunities with their counterparts who have similar skills and experience except that the latter have* wasta. *This is particularly noticeable in receiving any employment opportunities such as recruitment/selection, training and development, incentive and rewards etc."* (MME15)

Participants comment that there is little difference between the private and public sector in Bahrain in terms of personal connections, as reflected in the quote below from a manager in the public sector:

"...in Bahrain the impact of wasta *should not be ignored. I think this phenomenon is deployed widely in the public sector and it is to a lesser extent in the private sector. In the private sector the aim is always to focus on generating revenue and maintaining competitive advantage, thus companies in the private sector are focussed on highly skilled and experienced candidates. Those companies probably operate based on performance appraisal systems rather than favouritism. In the public sector the situation is different because most public sector institutions are non-profit organisations where corruption in recruitment and selecting are manifested obviously. I think that Bahrainis should not give up and be self-independent in improving and developing their skills and competencies and not rely on* wasta *for career progression."* (MME7)

On the topic of *wasta*, one participant in the private sector states:

"In Bahrain, regardless of where you are or in which company you are working, appointments to higher and significant positions strongly depend on the personal connection because this action is considered first choice for decision-makers." (MMG17)

Participants raise a very interesting point in this aspect, that is:

"...many people in Bahrain talk about the negative impact of personal connections; however, they use it even without feeling. This is the social fabric that is inherited in

Bahrain culture but because it is practiced unofficially, no one is looking to resolve it seriously." (MFE18)

The following are narratives showing how personal connections prevail in Bahrain's culture:

"When the opportunity appeared in my organisation for higher qualification I was sure that I was a suitable person to get it because of my excellent performance appraisal and excellent employment records ...but I did not expect that someone who was lower than me will take this opportunity. Unfortunately this person has personal connections which helped him to achieve what he aimed for whereas – me – I haven't. However, this has not stopped me from obtaining the higher qualification because after a while I decided to study by myself and at my own expense." (MMG13)

"...I do understand how hard it is for people not being selected for the job which they believe they deserve, but this is a reality in Bahrain which we cannot do something about other than changing people's mind-set in this regard." (MME8)

"I have one of my friends who was working in the engineering sector but because of his wasta*, now he moved to the financial sector where it is not easy to find an opportunity differing from your field in Bahrain. This means that if you know influential people definitely they will help you to move even to a different sector than yours...and thus achieve your desired career goals."* (MFE20)

To summarise the findings in this section, *wasta* is a factor that exists in Bahrain's culture and leads to ascriptive inequality among people who have similar qualifications and experience. The main message which participants want to convey in this section is that *wasta* is the main factor that reflects ascriptive inequality and leads to disappointment. Failing to receive fairness in terms of career opportunities prevents people from exhibiting career self-management behaviour. However, a few participants believe that experiencing disappointment as a result of unjust decisions based on *wasta* should encourage Bahrainis to be more determined to succeed and to develop self-directed behaviours. In this regard one participant argues that:

"...be confident and trust your abilities rather than depending on others because what you get easily you may lose easily." (MME1)

5.7.2.3   Discrimination

Twenty two managers, representing 55%, report that other cultural factors contribute to ascriptive inequality, such as discrimination. Such factors prevail in Bahrain's culture and cause disappointment. This phenomenon can occur in three ways: 1) religious discrimination; 2) age discrimination; and 3) gender discrimination.

- *Religious Discrimination*

Participants in this section define religious discrimination as treating or valuing people (candidates or employees) unfairly because of their religious beliefs. Twenty managers, representing 50%, report that religious discrimination contributes to ascriptive inequality. According to participants, religious discrimination in the Kingdom of Bahrain is because the majority of the population is of a particular religious sect, but they are governed by individuals from a minority sect. This is recognised in most managers' responses in this section such as:

"Most people in Bahrain embrace Islam. The law in Bahrain forbids discrimination in any facet of employment, including hiring, firing, pay, and training. In Bahrain's society there is no restriction to practise religious rituals; however, the deficiency is from people themselves and this phenomenon unfortunately prevails extensively in most of the Islamic world and it increased after the Arab Spring Revolutions." (MFE17)

"...religious discrimination in Bahrain prevails as a part of social culture which is not deployed formally (as in the government has to have control over it). It is reflected in the employment process that makes us hopeless in advancing our career or to having control over it. I feel frustrated to exhibit any career self-management behaviours because I believe that doing so, will not help them in obtaining any fairness in terms of career advancement." (MMG14)

There are many narratives in this vein, some of which will be mentioned:

"I have been rejected in the job that I applied for twice. The first time the one who interviewed me was Sunni and rejected my application because he thought I am Shiite and the other time the interviewer rejected my application because he thought that I am Sunni." (MMG10)

The study reveals that some institutions in the Kingdom of Bahrain are dominated by leaders/top management who came from certain denominations and exercise influence to reject applicants who differ from their denomination.

"...it would waste your time if you are thinking to obtain jobs in particular institutions in Bahrain if you come from a certain denomination... It is very strange in Bahrain if the institution is led by a person from a certain religion denomination, as most of employees in that institution would be from the other denomination..." (MME15)

The relationship between the influence of leaders/top management and religious discrimination is recognised in this section where it has a potential role in changing the career destiny of people. The following is a story told by a participant in this vein:

"After getting the job in my previous company, I started as a part timer, then, I became a full-timer. I worked hard and I had seven members of staff under my supervision. I was promised a promotion...but the problem is my name (i.e. not from the preferred denomination)... I waited for such a long time and nothing happened to me at all. I wrote a complaint letter and I did not receive any reply. I decided not to accept the reality. I left that company and joined my current organisation." (MME3)

- ### *Age Discrimination*
 Age discrimination is one classification of discrimination (Wood *et al.*, 2008). Fourteen managers, representing 35%, report that age discrimination contributes to ascriptive inequality. It limits individuals or groups of people to achieve goals because of their age. One of participants defines age discrimination as:

"It is a collective of beliefs, attitudes and values employed to legalise age based discrimination. In Bahrain age discrimination is manifested in national culture." (MMG13)

The interview sample comprises managers, almost all of whom are over the age of 45. They emphasise their concern about discrimination that they face in terms of employment opportunities. The study reveals that when participants apply for certain jobs within or outside their organisation, for example information technology, they prefer young people, under the perception that the older generation cannot compete, as is illustrated in the following quote:

"Young people in Bahrain are perceived to be smart and have novel ideas which are preferred over the older generation. Currently I am 50 years old. I don't believe that any company will even give me chance to enter any interview... They are searching for young people who are able to work for long hours. Unfortunately my field is IT which most companies in Bahrain prefer the new generation to be employed in. I know that young people these days are very smart but it doesn't mean that an older man like me does not have smart ideas as well. In my company I have invented very important system processes and many IT solutions cannot be resolved without my advice..." (MME3)

Participants report the causes of age discrimination:

"In my opinion age discrimination occurs when there is a belief that the younger generation are healthier and stronger physically; and can perform better than old people. This notion could be true but not in all cases. Some jobs necessitate experienced people who spend a fair time in certain fields, particularly in consultation and education professions." (MME12)

"Employers in Bahrain believe that the young generation can learn faster, thus they will be able to have diverse skills compared to the old generation. They ignore the value of old generation as those can be a great mentor for the new graduates. Those people have

skills that are accumulated through their long employment journey and they are very precious." (MMG17)

- ### *Gender Discrimination*

Six women managers, representing 15%, report that gender discrimination (Baud and Mahgoub, 2001; El-Ghannam, 2001; Mostafa, 2003; 2005; Askar and Ahmad, 2003; United Nations Development Programme, 2003; World Bank, 2003; Abd El-Latif, 1988; Dechant and Al Lamky, 2005) contribute to ascriptive inequality. Bahraini women have an important contribution to advance business and the economy in Bahrain (Metcalf, 2007). Women managers in the two organisations under the study show their expertise and proficiency in performing their management jobs very highly. Those managers are very educated with qualifications varying from bachelor's degrees to doctorates in their fields. They have obtained various professional certificates, skills and competencies over the course of their careers. They point out that although they face difficulties to manage and balance studies with family commitments while obtaining higher education, they achieve success in managing their ultimate success, as the following quotes illustrate:

> *"Studying and working at the same time, is a very tiring aspect particularly for women. During the exam period, I applied for leave as this made me study in the morning and teach my children in the evening in addition to the other responsibilities entrusted to me in the house."* (MFE5)

> *"I had a new baby when I was studying for my master's abroad; this challenged my career advancement because I had more responsibilities such as housekeeping and children." (MFE6)*

One form of gender discrimination that causes ascriptive inequality in the Kingdom of Bahrain is favouritism related to the preference of male candidates over females in some jobs. In this vein, one Bahraini women manager participant recounts a short story:

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"...I entered an interview for an engineer position with more than ten men before joining my current job. After I reached the last stage of selection, they selected men. When I asked why this decision had been made, the informal answer was the job is better suited for men. Later on I discovered that they allowed me to attend the interview because they wanted to prove to the Bahrain Ministry of Labour their fairness towards the employment from both sexes, men and women." (MFE17)

The perception about women's ability to lead is another example of gender discrimination that causes ascriptive inequality. One female participant emphasises that men in some situations do not believe in women's capability to lead men, so they are reluctant to support her success.

"My staff is reluctant to obey my decisions since I have been employed in my current management job but I did not see them behave the same with the manager who occupied my job before I came." (MFG3)

Some women participants comment that Islam gives Muslim women many rights but Muslims in general do not interpret Islam as it should be. One female participant comments that:

"In Islam there is equality between men and women which is stated in Holy Quran. However, Muslimism sometime interprets Islam according to their benefit. The importance of women's roles should not be limited to taking care of family but to be extended beyond that." (MFE16)

To summarise the findings regarding the discrimination factors that cause ascriptive inequality in Bahraini culture, participants report that they have no actual difficulties in undertaking career self-management behaviours but they feel that even if they do, the result will not be to their advantages. Participants in this section believe that there is no point in expending effort in exhibiting different career self-management behaviours, such as building human capital, networking etc., since religious beliefs, and issues of age and gender are experienced negatively towards women in terms of obtaining fair career opportunities.

It is worthy to mention that some participants indicate more than one cultural factor in the Kingdom of Bahrain which contributes to ascriptive inequality, in turn leading to disappointment in career self-management enactment. The cultural factors that contribute to ascriptive inequality which are mentioned above are exclusive to this study finding because the existing career self-management literature lacks research in associating those limiting factors with career self-management enactment. Finally, the similarities and differences between the findings of this study and existing literature in terms of cultural factors to promote or limit career self-management enactment will be explained in detail in Chapter 6.

5.7.3   Behaviours towards Promoting and Limiting Cultural Factors

The purpose of this section is to discover the participants' career self-management behaviours towards promoting or limiting factors that exist in Bahrain's culture. The analysis of this interview question is built upon the answers of the previous question. Thus, the author of this thesis asked participants to think about promoting/challenging factors (from the previous question) and choose examples (from this current question). They were also encouraged to provide any new ideas they thought to be vital either to promote or overcome challenging cultural factors. Participants in this section hold a perspective that the existing cultural promoting factors are not very promising in the Kingdom of Bahrain. Thus they were unable to address their behaviours in this vein and mentioned only behaviours towards overcoming culturally limiting factors.

Two behaviours are recognised in this section: 1) improving the Bahrain labour market structure; and 2) reducing the dependency on foreign labour. Therefore these behaviours are exhibited by participants to overcome challenging cultural factors in order to have control over their careers, independent from organisational career management and career advancement. Table 5.10 illustrates the participants' behaviours towards culturally limiting factors.

Serial No.	Behaviour toward Cultural Limiting Factors	Explanation	No. of Managers	Percentage
1.	Improving Bahrain labour market structure (Allen Consulting Group, 2009; Economic Development Board, 2004)	• Link the education system output (i.e. schools and universities) with Bahraini labour market demand.	30	75%
2.	Reduction in dependency on foreign labour (Allen Consulting Group, 2009; Al-Ali, 2008; Abdelkarim, 2001; Freek, 2004; Achoui, 2009; Forstenlechner, 2010)	• Bahrainis should have self-confidence of their abilities and compete with foreign labour if there are any job opportunities. • They should continually learn new skills and update their global knowledge and technologies.	20	50%

Table 5.10 Behaviours towards cultural limiting factors to career self-management

5.7.3.1   Improving the Bahrain Labour Market Structures

Thirty of the respondents (75%) believe that improving the Bahrain labour market structure (Allen Consulting Group, 2009; Economic Development Board, 2004) is the most important career self-management behaviour to be exhibited to overcome the challenging cultural factors. Participants point out that:

> *"In Bahrain there is a weak link between the education system output and the needs of Bahrain's labour market which entails reframing the structure of this authority and*

considering what private and public sectors require in terms of skills and professional labours." (MME3)

"The Bahrain labour market should be improved through social responsibilities of Bahrain's universities and the Bahrain Labour Market Authority to coordinate their effort to qualify Bahrainis, particularly the fresh graduates for the labour market prior to their graduation..." (MFG16)

"...although such a barrier is not controllable, we can all work collectively to find solutions even if we need to employ the experience of successful modern countries like Germany, Scotland, Britain etc." (MMG17)

5.7.3.2 Reducing the Dependency on Foreign Labour

Twenty managers, representing 50%, believe that reducing the dependency on foreign labour (Allen Consulting Group, 2009; Al-Ali, 2008; Abdelkarim, 2001; Freek, 2004; Achoui, 2009; Forstenlechner, 2010) is the most important career self-management behaviour to overcome barriers existing in Bahrain's culture. Participants report different suggestions:

"Bahrain's is unique in its dependence on expatriate labour. The strategy to replace expatriates by nationals (localisation) via Bahrainisation seems useful if implemented efficiently. Such a strategy should consider the individuals' needs and labour market structure and human capital development." (MFE4)

"Bahrainis should have self-confidence in their abilities and compete with foreign labour if there are any job opportunities. We should continually learn new skills and update ourselves with global knowledge and technologies because our competencies and qualifications qualify us to compete with others confidently." (MMG6)

"...If I want to have control over my career, I have to compete or enter in competition with expatriates and not simply accept the reality in terms of foreign preferences. I have to acquaint myself with the skills and competences that the labour market requires and be

prepared to apply for any future opportunity, particularly for institutions in the private sector." (MME15)

The findings demonstrate that the behaviours towards cultural promoting/limiting factors to career self-management enactment are exclusive to this study finding because there is no single study that associates those behaviours with career self-management enactment.

5.7.4   Similarities and Differences in Findings between the Two Organisations

This section adopts the previous approach of Sections 1 and 2 that draws comparisons between manager participants in EWA and GARMCO to illustrate the similarities and differences related to cultural factors which either promote or limit career self-management and the consequent behaviours towards those promoting and limiting factors. The participants in this section share similarities in all three main aspects: cultural promoting factors; cultural limiting factors contributing to ascriptive inequality; and behaviour towards promoting/limiting factors. First, the cultural promoting (i.e. supportive) factors which help participants to enact career self-management in both organisations are: contribution and participation to societies; and Bahrainisation through institutional corporate responsibility towards recruiting nationals. Secondly, the participants in both organisations share similarities in perceptions regarding cultural limiting factors that contribute to ascriptive inequality and cause disappointment: high level of foreign labour; personal connections; and discrimination that is reflected in religious beliefs, age and gender. Third, they share similarities in terms of behaviours exhibited to utilise or overcome cultural limiting factors that include: improving the Bahrain labour market structures and reducing the dependency on foreign labour. Table 5.11 addresses these issues.

	Similarities		Differences	
	EWA	**GARMCO**	**EWA**	**GARMCO**
Promoting factors				
Contribution and participation to societies	X	X		
Bahrainisation (through institutional corporate responsibilities towards recruiting nationals)	X	X		
Limiting factors contributing to ascriptive inequality				

High level of foreign labour	X	X		
Personal connection	X	X		
Discrimination (i.e. religion, age and gender)	X	X		
Behaviours towards limiting factors				
Improving the Bahrain labour market structures	X	X		
Reducing the dependency on foreign labour	X	X		

Table 5.11 Variations in cultural promoting/limiting factors to career self-management behaviours in EWA and GARMCO

5.7.5   Conclusion of Research Question 3 Analysis

Research Question 3 states that: *What are the cultural factors that Bahraini managers believe promote or limit their career self-management behaviour?* Three themes have been discovered: 1) career self-management cultural promoting factors; 2) career self-management cultural challenging factors contributing to ascriptive inequality; and 3) behaviours toward promoting and challenging cultural factors. The first theme is career self-management cultural promoting factors. It consists of promoting factors such as: 1) contribution and participation to societies; and 2) Bahrainisation through institutional corporate responsibility towards recruiting nationals. The second theme is career self-management cultural limiting factors contributing to ascriptive inequality and consists of: 1) high level of foreign labour; 2) personal connections (*wasta*); and 3) discrimination that is reflected in religious beliefs, age and gender. The third and last theme is the behaviours towards promoting and challenging cultural factors: 1) improving the Bahrain labour market structures; and 2) reducing the dependency on foreign labour.

5.8   Possible Reasons of Similarities in Findings between EWA and GARMCO

Referring to Tables 5.3, 5.7 and 5.11 that summarise the similarities in findings of the three research questions in EWA and GARMCO, it is obvious that the findings of these three research questions in the two organisations studied are similar in terms of the extent and ways in which Bahraini managers adopt a career self-management approach, organisational and cultural factors that participants believe promote or limit their career self-management. The study discloses that despite the differences in EWA and GARMOC (see Table 5.1) in terms of sector, size, and

product/service and so on, the HRM practices towards career self-management are similar. Such findings raise two points: the influence of national culture on an organisation's management practices; and the influence of national culture on organisational culture at least in the two organisations in the study.

5.8.1   National Cultural Influences on Organisation Management Practices

Religion and Islam have resulted in an inheritance of behaviour, attitudes and beliefs that have a profound and continuously evolving impact on the society's culture. Culture impacts government policies, social norms, consumption patterns, business transactions, management practices and labour relations (Alyousif *et al*., 2010). The authors argue that the literature contains significant empirical research on the management-culture relationship. For example, Horii, Jin, and Levitt (2005) conducted a study and observe that team performance is better when management practices are harmonised with national cultural values.

Weir (2000) argues that there is a 'Fourth Paradigm' that characterises management experience in the Middle East region. Much of the uniqueness of this paradigm is obtained from the Islamic culture and Arab influence of the population and demography, which are the overriding patterns of belief and social organisation. Badawy (1980) discovered that organisational characteristics and management practices are strongly influenced by the native culture in the Arab region. Dadfar (1993) identifies tribalism, Islam, Westernisation and government intervention as major factors influencing Arab management practices. Ali (1990) categorises Arab management into three groups: Westernised, Arabised and Islamised. Despite the availability of such valuable studies in the Arab Middle Eastern countries, the literature has a shortage of empirical studies that focus on specific culture-related management dimensions and organisational cultures that differentiate management practices in this region from those of the rest of the world (Alyousif *et al*., 2010).

In the findings of this study, it has been revealed that national culture influences organisations' management practices. For instance, *wasta*, which characterises Bahraini culture, influences the recruitment practices within an organisation as people who have *wasta* obtain more opportunities within the organisation than those who do not. In addition, people who deliver *wasta* favour

employees who sit with them over long hours in their offices and favour them in terms of training and development provision. Moreover, people who receive *wasta* abuse the human resources policies and procedures in terms of absenteeism. This means that in some situations cultural factors influence HRM practices, despite differences in organisations' characteristics, such as size, sector, service/products provision and so forth.

5.8.2 National Culture Influences on Organisational Culture

Whereas Hofstede (1980; 1991) hold the perception that national culture has a greater impact than organisational culture on employees, other argues to the contrary (Gerhart and Fang, 2005). The findings of this thesis support the study by Hofstede *et al.* (1990) that compared the size of national and organisation differences in cultural values and note that:

> "...the questions on values, country differences explain more variance than organisation differences... The ANOVAs across countries explained a much larger share of variance than the ANOVAs across organisations." (Hofstede et al., 1990, pp. 296-297).

In the same vein, Adler (2002) states that:

> "...within a single culture certain behaviours are favoured and others repressed... A cultural orientation describes the attitudes of most people most of the time, never all of the people all of the time. Accurate stereotypes reflect societal or cultural norms." (Alder, 2002, pp. 18-19).

In this thesis, it has been found that national culture in the Kingdom of Bahrain has more impact than organisational culture, at least in the two organisations studied. For instance, discrimination that is reflected in gender, age and religion which prevails in Bahrain culture has an influence on participants in EWA and GARMCO to a similar extent. Females in both organisations address different cases where men are favoured over women in obtaining job opportunities. In addition, males in both organisations raise concern about the favouritism of young people over them in obtaining job opportunities. Moreover, participants in the two organisations raise the issue of religious domination and believe that it would be impossible for applicants to obtain jobs in

either private or public sectors if influential people or decision-makers are from different religious dominations. Such findings lead to the possibility that what exists in the culture influences organisations that operate in this culture, regardless of its characteristic differences.

Thus the discussion above shows that national culture has a great impact on participant responses regardless of differences in an organisation's characteristics.

The implications of the results drawn from this chapter will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6: RESEARCH DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented an overview of the two organisations under the study (i.e. EWA and GARMCO). It reports the findings of the three research questions: the extent and ways in which Bahraini managers adopt a career self-management approach; the organisational factors that Bahraini managers believe promote or limit their career self-management behaviours; and the cultural factors that Bahraini managers believe promote or limit their career self-management behaviours.

This chapter discusses the findings of these research questions in detail. As mentioned in the Introduction Chapter 1, the main purpose of this research is to discover whether theories of career self-management, that are primarily developed in the USA and Western countries, apply in a culture which is different and characterised as 'ascription', for instance, the Kingdom of Bahrain. To address the aim and objectives of this research, the study adopted qualitative methods to gather and analyse the data related to the above three research questions.

The chapter consists of nine main sections: Section 6.1 summarises the structure of this chapter. Section 6.2 outlines the research contribution. Section 6.3 addresses and discusses research questions. In the discussion of the three research questions the relative literature establishes, where suitable, comparable and contrasting structures to the study's findings. Section 6.4 considers the possible reasons for similarities between ascription (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain) and achievement (for example, the USA and Western countries) cultures. Section 6.5 explores the research implications. Section 6.6 addresses personal reflections on learning obtained from the research. Section 6.7 describes the limitations of this research. Finally, Section 6.8 recommends potential areas for future research.

6.2 Research Key Contributions

Attention in this section turns to the key contribution of the study. It discusses the three arguments presented in Chapter 1 (Section 1.2). Each argument contributes significantly to each research question. The three arguments state that the conceptualisation of: career self-

management, organisational and cultural factors that promote or limit career self-management behaviours in an ascription culture (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain) are expected to be different than in achievement cultures (for example, the USA and Western countries).

The topic of career self-management is important because in the current business environment the psychological contract between employers and employees indicates that employers find it difficult to promise employees a career for life (Herriot and Pemberton, 1995). Thus, the equilibrium between organisational and individual career management that existed before (Orpen, 1994) has shifted towards a position of independence for the individual (Kanter, 1989). Additionally, the trend in the last decades is increasingly inclining towards the individual, at least in developed economies (Baruch, 2006).

Moreover, the literature makes it evident that the career field has moved beyond organisations to a flexible and individual approach, for instance, boundaryless, protean, post-corporate career and career self-management (Arthur *et al.*, 1999; Baruch and Peiperl, 2000; Hall *et al.*, 2002; King, 2000). However, although there is increasing interest in the individualistic career, the career literature review demonstrates a lack of research in this vein and there are very few studies providing systematic information about whether people perceive their career in a new or traditional form (Gerber *et al.*, 2009), particularly in ascription cultures (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain). Simultaneously, although scholars' emphasise the need for career self-management, the notion lacks critical evaluation (King, 2000) and organisational and cultural factors contribute to the lack of research, particularly in ascription cultures (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain) since most research in this vein are conduct in achievement cultures (for example, the USA and Western countries).

6.2.1 Research Contribution Related to Research Question 1
Conceptualisation of Career Self-management in Ascription Cultures

There is a shortage of studies to discover how people in an ascription culture manage their career and whether they adopt career self-management while managing their career. In addition career self-management literature review lacks an appreciation of the extent of career self-management

application, the way it is adopted and the type of behaviours needed to exhibit that it has been adopted, particularly in countries characterised as having an ascription culture (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain).

In Chapter 1 (Section 1.2.1), the first main argument states that the application of career self-management theories, developed in the USA and Western countries whose cultures are characterised as achievement-oriented, expect to be different in contexts characterised as ascription, given the example of the Kingdom of Bahrain. The argument also states that career self-management constructed in achievement cultures (for example, the USA and Western countries) is expected not to apply in ascription cultures (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain).

However, the findings of the first research question regarding career self-management indicate otherwise. Despite the differences between the two cultures (for example, the USA/Western and the Kingdom of Bahrain) behaviour and practices share great similarities and slight differences. The findings also show that career self-management can be applied successfully in an ascription culture, at least in the two organisations under study. Career literature review in Chapter 2 has argument that is: The career is dead - long live the career! Such is the mixed message regarding careers that we are carrying into the next millennium. The business environment is highly turbulent and complex, resulting in terribly ambiguous and contradictory career signals. Individuals, perhaps in self-defence, are becoming correspondingly ambivalent about their desires and plans for career development" (Hall, 1996, p. 8). The study provides support to this argument, which conceptualises a career as contemporary and assumes that career management should be controlled by individuals.

In career self-management in ascription cultures, there is evidence that the endorsement to this approach by Bahraini managers in this study is very limited (12 managers, 30%), yet most of them believe it to be very useful (29 managers, 72.5%). There are not many differences between ascription (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain) and achievement (for example, the USA and Western countries) cultures regarding what this approach means, its general activities, causes and consequences. To managers in this study, career self-management means having control over their career and self-development and not depending on organisational or conventional career

management. General career self-management activities in ascription cultures (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain) are reflected in learning new skills which are not job related, and navigating and reading different resources about career opportunities. The reasons for participants adopting career self-management include the desire to have control over their career outcomes in challenging environments, a lack of trust in organisational career management because of unfairness, and career advancement motivation.

In ascription cultures (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain) and based on this study, managers prefer not to change their employer, even though doing so may widen their employability and is a significant behaviour in career self-management. Job mobility entails taking risks because there are many barriers inherited in an ascription culture which make people hesitate to move from their current job to jobs outside their organisations. Such barriers for instance, include high level of foreign labourers, personal connections or *wasta*, discrimination and so on; these barriers will be discussed in detail in Section 6.3.3.2. However, these challenges did not stop some participants from seeking movement within their organisations.

The main differences between achievement cultures (for example, the USA and Western countries) and ascription cultures (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain) relates to the reason for adopting career self-management (i.e. causes) as a desire to have control over career outcomes in challenging environments where *wasta* obviously prevails. In addition, some Bahraini manager participants have no trust in organisational career management as a result of unfairness where influential people or decision-makers favour one person over another. This type of environment forces participants in this study to depend upon themselves rather than trust anyone to manage their career. The experience of career self-management behaviours in the Kingdom of Bahrain leads to career satisfaction and achieving personal goals. Career self-management behaviours in ascription cultures (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain) are mirrored in building networks, influencing decision-makers and involvement in challenging assignments. It seems, here, that there are no differences between achievement (for example, the USA and Western countries) and ascription (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain) cultures in terms of career self-management behaviours; however, in-depth analysis in this area reveals that exhibiting those types of behaviours differs slightly. For instance, in ascription cultures (for example, Kingdom of

Bahrain) the use of networking is linked with *wasta* or personal connections, as well as influencing decision-makers. People in ascription culture (for example, Bahraini manager participants) build networks with people who may have influence to favour them if there are any future career opportunities even if they do not qualify for those opportunities.

Thus, the first argument in Chapter 1 (Section 1.2.1) stated:

1.   Conceptualisation of career self-management in an ascription culture, for instance the Kingdom of Bahrain, is expected to be different from that in an achievement culture, for instance that in the USA and Western countries. In addition, career self-management theories conducted in the USA and Western countries (i.e. the place of their origin) are expected not to apply in the Kingdom of Bahrain, whose culture is characterised as an ascription culture.

The findings of this study disclose that career self-management can be applied in ascription cultures (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain) but to a limited extent where its application, causes, consequences, and general behaviour share high similarity and slight differences from that in achievement cultures (for example, the USA and Western countries).

6.2.2   Research Contribution Related to Research Question 2

Conceptualisation of organisational promoting or limiting factors and consequent behaviours towards career self-management enactment in an ascription culture

In Chapter 1 (Section 1.2.2), the second main argument states that: the conceptualisation of organisational promoting or limiting factors and consequent behaviours towards career self-management enactment in an ascription culture (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain), is expected to be different than in achievement cultures (for example, USA and Western countries). However, the finding of the second research question provides evidence that there are some similarities as well as differences between these two cultures.

In analysing the literature review in Chapter 2 (Section 2.4.1) in respect of organisational promoting factors to career self-management, it becomes apparent that support is mainly

reflected in three aspects: first, organisation management support for employee development (Noe, 1996); in which line managers provide their subordinates with advice, feedback about performance to help them in developing their careers. Secondly, organisational career management (Sturges *et al.*, 2002; Sturges *et al.,* 2005; Sturges *et al.,* 2008; 2010) in which organisation provides their employees formal interventions such as training to help them in developing their career and informal help such as given employees career advice when they needed. Thirdly, career management interventions (Raabe *et al.,* 2007) in which organisation helps their employees to improve their self-knowledge, goal commitment and plan quality that needed. All these forms of support are provided by organisations help people to enact career self-management approach and behaviours.

The findings of this study demonstrate that EWA and GARMCO provide organisational support in two ways: first, they provide employees with monetary and non-monetary aids (i.e. refunding self-studiers' fees after they finish their degree and give them time to attend their classes during their duty). Secondly, they provide potential employees with training and development programmes/plan (i.e. programmes that are customised to nominated employees to engage in, and thus reach, specific target jobs). Thus, there are differences between what was discussed in career self-management literature review in Chapter 2 (for example, the USA and Western countries, which reflect an achievement culture) and the findings of this study (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain, which reflects an ascription culture) in terms of organisational promoting factors to career self-management enactment.

The literature review, Chapter 2 (Section 2.4.2), discussed studies concerning barriers to careers in general such as: 1) organisational change (Lips-Wiersma and Hall, 2007); 2) ineffective human resources management policies (Laurent, 1986; Budhwar and Baruch, 2003; Baruch and Peiperl, 2000; Budhwar, 2000; Tzabbar *et al.,* 2003; Mahdi and Barrientos, 2003; Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1998; Al-Hamadi *et al.,* 2007); and 3) organisational culture (Hofstede *et al.,* 1990). No studies specifically discuss organisational barriers that limit the practice of career self-management other than to propose reversing promoting factors. For example, training and development is a promoting factor but if the organisation is not offering this support (i.e. training and development) it could have a negative impact (i.e. limiting factor) on enacting career self-

management; this example can be applied for the rest of the promoting factors. In addition, all the organisational challenging factors mentioned above relate to the barriers to careers in general and not exclusively to career self-management. The literature review in Chapter 2 (Section, 2.6.2) also explored the effect of ascription on individuals at an institutional or organisational level (Reskin and McBrier, 2000; Reskin, 2003).

The findings demonstrate that the organisations in the study have challenges that limit people from career self-management enactment and contribute to ascriptive inequality, reflected in three aspects: first, many layers in an organisational structure prevent people from accessing organisation resources; this barrier can be seen in organisations' rules and regulations. Secondly, human resource development policies and practices (for example, recruitment and selection, training and development activities) in the two organisations studied are not employed fairly among all staff. Thirdly, the utilisation of power by top management in making decisions related to career advancement is reflected in the favourable treatment of some people over others, and the unfair treatment of particular people or groups of people.

Also, in some situations more than one barrier is mentioned that limits career self-management enactment. Thus, these organisational limiting factors are considered real challenges for achieving three career self-management aims which have been called 'causes' (i.e. having no control over a career, independence from organisational career management, and career advancement). Various factors are found as barriers but to a lesser extent, for instance, empowerment, restructuring and re-engineering and so on. Therefore it is irrational to assume that there are either similarities or differences between achievement (for example, the USA and Western countries) and ascription (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain) cultures in terms of organisational limiting factors to career self-management enactment because career self-management lacks research in this regard. Therefore the organisational limiting factors to career self-management found in this study contribute significantly to this field.

The literature review in Chapter 2 (Section 2.3.3) discussed different career self-management behaviours such as: 1) networking behaviour (Sturges *et al.,* 2002); 2) visibility behaviour (Sturges *et al.,* 2002; Sturges *et al.,* 2008); 3) positioning behaviour (King, 2003); 4) influencing

behaviour (King, 2001); 5) building human capital behaviour (Nabi, 2000; Sturges, 2008); 6) validating behaviour (Sturges, 2008); 7) mobility-oriented behaviour (Chiaburu *et al.,* 2006; Sturges *et al.,* 2002); 8) work-non-work boundary management (Sturges, 2008); 9) expertise development (Nabi, 2000); 10) career plan implementation behaviour (Raabe *et al.,* 2007) and 11) feedback-seeking behaviour (Kossek *et al.,* 1998).

The findings of this study disclose that Bahraini manager participants exhibit two behaviours: first, they undertake feedback-seeking, which is related to seeking advice or feedback about an individual's performance from their direct boss or specialised people, customers and colleagues. Secondly, they are building human capital, which is related to learning new skills and competencies that assist participants to resolve work-related problems and utilise any learning opportunities, even if financial rewards are not given. Some participants exhibit more than one behaviour and some career self-management behaviours are found to be important but to a lesser extent, such as work-non-work boundary management, expertise development and so on.

This means all career self-management behaviours related-promoting factors to career self-management found in this study are similar to what exists in career self-management literature reviewed in Chapter 2. However, there are no studies addressing the negative behaviours towards the organisational limiting factors other than reversing the promoting factors that are mentioned in the career self-management literature. Finally, the promoting or limiting behaviours that are found in this study are exhibited by participants to utilise promotion or overcome challenging organisational factors in order to have control over their career, independence from organisational career management, and career advancement (i.e. career self-management causes).

To summarise the study finding and discussion regarding the second argument built in Chapter 1 (Section 1.2.2):

2.   The conceptualisation of organisational promoting/limiting factors and consequent behaviours towards career self-management enactment in an ascription culture, for instance the Kingdom of Bahrain, is expected to be different from that in the USA and Western countries (for example, achievement cultures).

The study reveals various differences and similarities between ascription (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain) and achievement cultures (for example, the USA and Western countries), in terms of the conceptualisation of organisational promoting/limiting factors, consequent behaviours towards career self-management enactment and organisation factors that lead to ascriptive inequality.

First, there are similarities in terms of organisational promoting factors and consequent behaviours towards career self-management enactment. Secondly, it is irrational to draw a comparison between the two cultures in terms of organisations' limiting factors and factors leading to ascriptive inequality because there is a shortage of research on this topic.

6.2.3   Research Contribution Related to Research Question 3
Conceptualisation of cultural promoting or limiting factors and consequent behaviours towards career self-management enactment in an ascription culture

In the Introduction (Section 1.2.3), the third main argument states that the conceptualisation of cultural promoting or limiting factors and consequent behaviours towards career self-management enactment in an ascription culture, for instance the Kingdom of Bahrain, is expected to be different from the USA and Western cultures (for example, achievement culture). The findings of the third research question regarding the conceptualisation of cultural factors to career management indicate that there are some similarities and differences.

When discussing the literature in Chapter 2 (Section 2.5.5) on cultural promoting factors to career self-management, it becomes apparent that support is reflected in two aspects: first, higher qualifications (King, 2000; 2003; 2004; Pearson *et al.,* 1999) are related to obtaining qualifications or professional certificates in a certain field, making people more favourable in a labour market. Secondly, experience (Becker, 1993; Staw, 1986; Tharenou *et al.*, 1994; Stroh *et al.*, 1992; Ng *et al.*, 2005; Lyness and Thompson, 1997, 2000; Powell *et al.*, 2002; Campion *et al.*, 1994; Al Dosary and Rahman, 2005) is related to obtaining diverse skills and sufficient work experience in certain fields. It is obvious; therefore, that the wider career self-management

literature lacks research in terms of cultural promoting factors to career self-management enactment.

The finding of this study demonstrates that culture in the Kingdom of Bahrain, characterised as an ascription culture, provides two promoting factors to career self-management enactment: 1) Bahrainisation, which is related to the strategy held by the Bahrain government to assist Bahrainis to obtain the required job; and 2) contribution and participation in professional societies is related to being a member of societies based on interest and specialisation as this helps in obtaining future career opportunities. In addition to these two cultural promoting factors, other factors are found such as higher qualifications and experience (i.e. similar to cultural factors existing in achievement cultures or existing career self-management literature). However, such factors receive little agreement in this study because they apply in most countries and cultures and are not exclusive to the Kingdom of Bahrain. In addition, it is not logical to assume that there are similarities or differences in this vein because career self-management is under-researched with regard to cultural promoting factors to career self-management enactment. All the promoting factors mentioned in the literature review in Chapter 2 addressed the general promoting factors to careers and not exclusively career self-management. Thus, the finding of cultural promoting factors to career self-management enactment in ascription cultures (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain) contributes considerably to this field.

The literature review in Chapter 2 (Section 2.5.6) discussed the wider literature concerning career cultural barriers (i.e. not only those barriers related to career self-management) and this study proposes that such cultural barriers may contribute to ascription inequality. The cultural career barriers that are addressed in Chapter 2 (for example, in the USA and Western countries) are: labour market imperfection (Gunz *et al.*, 2000), specialisation, industry, occupation, educational level, experience, professional qualification and, to some extent, age, sex, and religion (Gunz *et al.*, 2002). The literature review addresses general theories of culture, for instance, Hofstede (1980), Schwartz (2008) and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998), career barriers that limit career development (Ituma and Simpson, 2009; Lent *et al.*, 1994) and career history, occupational identity, and institutional constraints imposed by leaders/top management to job opportunities (King *et al.*, 2005). Finally the literature review in Chapter 2

(Section 2.6.1) discussed various factors related to the impact of ascription on individuals at a cultural level (Linton, 1936; Davis, 1950; Parson, 1951; Mayhew, 1968; Scott, 1972; Kemper, 1974; and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1998).

The finding in this vein demonstrates that there are barriers in ascription culture (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain) limit people from career self-management enactment and in return lead to ascription inequality. These barriers are: 1) high level of foreign labour in Bahrain's labour market that is related to the preference of foreign labour over nationals; 2) personal connections (*wasta*), which are reflected in preferring some people over others even if they are not qualified for various career opportunities; and 3) discrimination, which is reflected in aspects such as religious denomination, age and gender. Thus, it is not logical to assume that there are similarities or differences in this vein because the wider literature lacks research on cultural limiting factors to career self-management enactment. What has been found in career literature review in Chapter 2 discusses the general limiting factors to careers and not exclusively to career self-management. Thus, the finding related cultural limiting factors to career self-management enactment in ascription cultures (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain) contributes considerably to this field.

The finding of this study reveals that the participants' consequent behaviours resulted from cultural promoting or limiting factors are more likely to look like recommendations or suggestions. The study discloses that Bahraini manager participants cannot do anything to resolve issues that are inherited in culture because doing so is a social or corporate responsibility of government, institutions and nationals. Those corporate behaviours are: 1) improving the Bahrain labour market structure through linking the education system output such as schools and universities with the Bahrain labour market; 2) reducing the dependency on foreign labour through increasing individuals' self-confidence, abilities and diverse skills, thereby enabling Bahrainis to compete with foreign labour, particularly in the private sector. As can be seen, career self-management literature lacks research in terms of consequent behaviours towards cultural promoting or limiting factors in achievement cultures (for example, the USA and Western countries). Therefore, it cannot be assumed that there are similarities or differences in this vein (i.e. similar to the above cultural promoting and limiting factor assumptions).

Therefore, the finding related to the consequent behaviours towards cultural limiting or promoting factors to career self-management enactment in ascription cultures (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain) contributes significantly to this field.

To summarise the study finding and discussion regarding the third argument built in Chapter 1 (Section 1.2.3):

> The conceptualisation of cultural promoting/limiting factors and consequent behaviours towards career self-management enactment in an ascription culture, for instance the Kingdom of Bahrain, is expected to be different from that in the USA and Western countries (for example, achievement cultures).

The study reveals that there could be various differences and similarities between ascription (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain) and achievement cultures (for example, the USA and Western countries), in terms of the conceptualisation of cultural promoting/limiting factors and consequent behaviours towards career self-management enactment. However, this study did not find significant support for this contention because career self-management lacks research in this vein.

6.3   Discussion of Research Questions

6.3.1   Research Question 1 Discussion
To what extent and in what ways do Bahraini managers adopt a career self-management approach?

As pointed out in Chapter 2 (Section 2.3) career self-management includes different aspects such as definitions, causes and consequences, activities and behaviours. The findings of this study in Chapter 5 (Section 5.5, Table 5.2) reveal that Bahraini managers in this study adopt career self-management but not to a great extent as only 12 manager participants' (30%) adopt it. However, 29 managers, which accounts for 72.5% of the total sample, indicate that this approach is useful and helpful in career progression.

Therefore the discussion in this section highlights the extent and ways that Bahraini managers in this study adopt a career self-management approach. By doing so, it helps to appreciate the nature and practices of this approach and behaviours in a culture that is different than the USA and Western countries, namely, the Kingdom of Bahrain which is an ascription culture. The discussion includes its general employed activities, enactment causes and consequences and finally its significant general behaviours. It also discusses that despite the existence of a challenging contextual environment, as discussed in Chapter 3 (i.e. institutional setting, nature of labour market and poor education system); these are not preventing some of manager participants in this study from enacting career self-management.

6.3.1.1 Career Self-Management General Activities Employed

The career self-management literature review in Chapter 2, indicates that there are two different types of career self-management activities, one aimed at advancing a career within an organisation, for instance getting to know influential people, seeking out career advice, and drawing attention to achievements, and one focussed on advancing a career outside the organisation, for instance making plans to leave if the organisation can no longer offer a fulfilling career (Kossek *et al.*, 1998; Sturges *et al.,* 2002; Sturges *et al.*, 2008).

The most significant activities which Bahraini managers in this study believe to be vital while managing career self-management are: learning new skills not job related, and navigating and reading different resources about career opportunities. Both activities are focussed on advancing careers within the organisation. For instance navigating and reading different resources about career opportunities means reading different types of newspapers, magazines, and websites, related to training, development and job opportunities. Such activities provide Bahraini manager participants with self-awareness, guidance and support for future career prospects, helping them to explore their alternatives and assisting them to set their career plans to achieve their career goals. The significance of reading up-to-date research and studies related to their career fields is also valued by Bahrain managers in this study. Social media like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, are also significant sources for searching various career opportunities, building careers and updating curriculum vitaes.

However, for participants there is a need to explore high quality social media, especially in today's business environment where many online information sources may be inaccurate. One important issue for Bahraini manager participants is the need to be attentive about regular navigation through very selective, high quality sites that specialise in advertising jobs in their industries or fields. To them, social media sites are sources of career opportunities and information which play a considerable role in their career advancement and professional development. This finding is akin to London's (1989) contention, that developmental behaviour and activities (for example, attending courses, reading journals or initiating new projects) are designed to enhance personal and professional growth. Navigation activity is to some extent close to career exploration, which is based on the theory of exploratory behaviour developed by vocational psychologists (Noe, 1996). Exploratory behaviour consists of activities which elicit information about oneself or the environment (Jordaan, 1963).

The literature review indicates that there are two different types of career self-management activities, one aimed at advancing the career within an organisation, for instance getting to know influential people, seeking out career advice, and drawing attention to achievements, and one focussed on advancing the career outside the organisation, for instance making plans to leave if the organisation can no longer offer a fulfilling career (Kossek *et al.*, 1998; Sturges *et al.*, 2002; Sturges *et al.*, 2008).

Bahraini manager participants mainly focus on activities that help them to advance their careers within their organisations. This is because in ascription cultures (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain) there is a risk of job mobility resulting from the current economic situation in Bahrain (i.e. generally characterised by uncertainty, insecurity, high levels of foreign labour, and labour market inefficiency). This means that although the main career self-management theories focus on job mobility, which entails collecting information about new career opportunities (Hall, 1991) in order to leave a current employer, Bahraini managers in this study exhibit similar behaviour in terms of collecting information or navigating different career resources but for different reasons, such as enhancing their current job or to move to new jobs within their organisations. This perception conforms to the view of Kossek *et al.* (1998), who argue that career self-management involves behaviour for collecting information for the enhancement of the current job. Such

information is also vital for Bahraini managers in this study because it helps them to develop realistic assessments about their talents and career plans (London and Mono, 1987).

6.3.1.2 Career Self-management Enactment Causes and Consequences

Bahraini manager participants who approach career self-management do so because they have no trust in organisational career management (i.e. organised by organisation). They suffer from the effects of *wasta,* which is deployed in ascription cultures (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain) and believe that they need to exert much more effort to manage their career through self-development, particularly if they do not receive equal opportunities compared to their counterparts.

One of the main arguments in this study is that individual career planning and development (i.e. career self-management) in ascription cultures (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain) do not depend on an individual's choice only, but rather is associated with a particular institutional setting, as mentioned in Chapter 3. Institutional theory focusses on "the processes by which structures, including schemas, rules, norms and routines, become established as authoritative guidelines for social behaviour" (Scott, 2005, p.460). Scott (1995, p.33) further argues that "institutions consist of cognitive, normative, and regulative structures and activities that provide stability and meaning to social behaviour". Such social behaviour may have an impact on the career self-management enactment of Bahraini manager participants.

For instance, the Bahrain National Charter, described in Chapter 3, states that individual freedoms, equality, justice and equal opportunity are core principles of the society. A natural flow of Islam's principles in the Kingdom of Bahrain (for example, an ascription culture) states that all citizens are equal before the law in terms of rights and duties, without distinction of race, origin, language, religion or belief. However, the institutions in the Kingdom of Bahrain (for example, an ascription culture) which consist of cognitive, normative, and regulative structures and activities do not provide stability and meaning to social behaviour. Those social behaviours influence Bahraini managers in this study to undertake career self-management because they have no trust in the institutions in the Kingdom of Bahrain. In ascription cultures (for example,

the Kingdom of Bahrain), inequality/unfairness is reflected in different issues such as gender, religious domination and age, which will be explained in detail in Section 6.3.3.2.

The literature review points out that career self-management enactment helps employees to have control over their careers (King, 2003; 2004) and motivate career advancement (Noe, 1996; Nabi, 2000). To some extent, such causes, which were discussed in the literature review, conform to the findings of this study. For instance, reactance theory (Brehm and Brehm, 1981) argues that the motivation to attempt to exert control is elicited by a particular event, which provokes a perceived loss of control over important outcomes. Crites (1969) explains one probable type of adjustment mechanism is control or manipulation, where a worker manipulates the environment so that it no longer presents a problem to achieving what they want. Individual dissimilarities in the desire for control determine the degree to which people attempt to obtain control over their career outcomes (Greenberger and Strasser, 1986). Bell and Staw (1989) dispute that differences in the desire for control result from personality, and Seibert, Crant, and Kraimer (1999) demonstrate that a proactive personality is associated with career initiative behaviours.

The result of this study show that the enactment of career self-management leads to career satisfaction and the achievement of personal goals (i.e. consequences). For instance, Bahraini manager participants believe that exhibiting career self-management behaviours leads to achieving the desired career outcomes, such as salary increments, promotion to higher positions, and skills attainment. This finding corresponds to the contention by Greenhaus (1987) that career goals are related to a career-related outcome, such as a promotion, salary increase or skills acquisition that employees desire to attain. However, Bahraini managers in this study believe that their goals should be determined precisely and their skills and competencies should be set prior setting their goals (Noe, 1996). The commitment to achieve goals is also significant to them, which entails gathering information related to their professional obtained skills' obtain. Thus, understanding the challenges in the environment should be appreciated prior to establishing a plan and this should be created prior setting their goals. Appreciating individual strengths and weaknesses, related skills and competencies is important to Bahraini manager participants and this is akin to that proposed by Hall (1996, 2004), who states that the ability to

steer one's career is dependent upon self-awareness and adaptability because higher self-awareness helps people to find their career direction

6.3.1.3   Career Self-management General Significant Behaviours

As the findings from the interviews suggest, the Bahraini managers in this study exhibit different general career significant behaviours such as building networks, influencing decision-makers and involvement in challenging assignments. To Bahraini manager participants, building networks involves social interactions between them and their leaders, customers, and colleagues that enhance their career self-management because this helps them to access significant resources which, ultimately, lead to career success. While the literature review mentioned that networking behaviour is important to be utilised inside and outside the organisation (Forret and Dougherty, 2001, 2004), Bahraini managers in this study prefer to utilise networking behaviour to advance their career within the organisation.

Building networks in an ascription culture (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain) is, to some extent, different from that experienced in achievement cultures (for example, the USA and Western countries), as the findings in this study reveal. For instance, Bahraini managers in this study tend to build networks because they feel it is difficult to have control over their career without seeking help from influential people who can facilitate those careers. They link building network behaviour with influencing decision-makers' behaviour and both of them are related to personal connections/*wasta*. Whiting and De Janasz (2004) argue that building networks means constructing and nurturing personal and professional relationships to generate a system of information, contact, and support, and all of these have a crucial impact on career and personal success. This means that the networking behaviour found in this study conforms to the evidence in the literature review but it differs in the way it is practised and the intentions behind exhibiting it. Whereas the two types of networking behaviours, for instance formal and informal, are equally important (Emmerik *et al.*, 2006; Forret and Dougherty, 2001; 2004) in ascription cultures (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain), informal networking is exhibited rigorously because this tends to serve individuals' needs without any restriction from their organisations. Bahraini manager participants believe that participation in informal networks is neither formally governed nor officially recognised (McGuire, 2000) and this corresponds to the view of

Emmerik *et al.* (2006), who argue that informal networks tend to be personal, voluntary, and have fluid boundaries. To Bahraini manager participants, informal networking could be through activities like socialising with organisational members, particularly those who share, for instance, common social interests, and as well as participating in activities they enjoy (Emmerik *et al.*, 2006). In association networking behaviour with *wasta*, Bahraini managers in this study believe that through networking they can obtain various career opportunities, like promotions, rewards, training and development etc., whether they deserve such opportunities or not.

The result shows that influencing behaviour is also important to Bahraini manager participants. This means influencing the decisions of people who occupy high positions in the organisation or in the social structure, like leaders/top management (i.e. general managers, chief executive officers) and approaching them to help in career advancement. In this case, influencing behaviour assists Bahraini manager participants to construct and nurture personal and professional relationships to generate a system of information, contact, and support, to have a vital impact on career and personal success (Whiting and De Janasz, 2004). It also facilitates being introduced to people who could influence their career development and building contacts in areas where they would like to work (Sturges *et al.*, 2002).

Involvement in challenging assignments is another important behaviour that is valued by Bahraini managers in this study. To them such behaviour means to identify any tasks they believe have a greater impact on their career as well as the organisation, such as volunteering to undertake a challenging assignment. The result shows that Bahraini manager participants always attempt to find a way to be recognised by influential people in order to attract attention to their abilities and be considered for promotions that had not been anticipated previously. This behaviour was also found to increase formal organisational career management support, for instance training, a development plan, and work designed to develop competences (Sturges *et al.,* 2002) which then contributes to furthering self-promotion at work (Sturges *et al.*, 2008). Involvement in challenging activity is to some extent similar to expertise development (Noe, 1996) that attempts to exhibit interpersonal strategies to develop skills and competencies critical to the success of the work unit.

This behaviour helps Bahraini manager participants in terms of enhancing their career strategy. Such a strategy refers to voluntary or additional roles that are not part of the formal job description specified by the organisation (Feij *et al.*, 1995; Noe, 1996). Nabi (2000) states that, many career theorists and practitioners agree that the use of career-enhancing strategies, like building a network of contacts and developing work-related expertise and skills, are beneficial to effective positive career outcomes (Aryee, Wyatt and Stone, 1996; Gould and Penley, 1984; Greenhaus and Callanan, 1994; Noe, 1996). Greenhaus and Callanan (1994) admit that the employment of career-enhancing strategies can be characterised as an indicator of effective career management and that these indicators could be influenced by the organisational environment and mainly the motivation of individuals to accomplish their advancement goals. Finally, Bahraini manager participants believe that challenging assignments have a positive effect on the development of job-relevant skills (i.e. expertise development) and this is crucial to creating career development opportunities that improve performance, facilitate positive effect from managers and consequently attract organisational rewards (Gould and Penley, 1984) even if those assignments are not directly related to their job field.

6.3.1.4   Summary of Research Question 1

This question concerns the extent to which Bahraini manager participants have endorsed career self-management. The analysis of this research question provides evidence to suggest that the endorsement of career self-management in ascription culture (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain) is limited because only 12 managers represent 30% approach it. It is noted that most participants (29 managers, 72.5%) believe that it is useful for their career progression. Participants in this study who acknowledged the significance of making sure that they have marketable skills did not essentially either want or expect to move frequently between companies. Employability to them appears to be observed not as an alternative to traditional career or organisational career but rather to develop and consolidate professional expertise within their current organisations.

The literature review indicates that there are two different types of career self-management activities, one aimed at advancing the career within an organisation and one focussed on advancing the career outside the organisation (Kossek *et al.,* 1998; Sturges *et al.*, 2002; Sturges

et al., 2008). The study found that the most significant activities which Bahraini managers in this study believe to be vital while managing career self-management are: learning new skills that are not job-related and navigating and reading different resources about career opportunities. Both activities are focussed on advancing a career within the organisation.

Secondly, in career self-management behaviours, some behaviours which are mentioned in the literature review correspond to this study's findings, like building networks and influencing decision-making although the practice and the intention behind exhibiting them may be different. Other career self-management behaviour like involvement in challenging assignments is exclusive to this study finding. The result reveals that important behaviours to career self-management such as visibility, positioning, validating behaviours etc. are either absent or not found in the Kingdom of Bahrain context (for example, an ascription culture).

Thirdly, related to the need (i.e. causes) for career self-management enactment, the literature review and findings of this study share similarities in terms of: desire for control over one's career (King, 2003; 2004); and career advancement motivation. At the same time, the difference is reflected in the fact that Bahraini manager participants approach career self-management because they have no trust in organisational career management as a result of unfair practices. The result of this study shows that the enactment of career self-management leads to career satisfaction and personal goal achievement (i.e. consequences).

6.3.2   Research Question 2 Discussion

What are the organisational factors that Bahraini managers believe promote or limit their career self-management behaviour?

The literature review, Chapter 2 (Section 2.4), discussed the various organisational factors that either promote or hinder the enactment of career self-management. The findings in this study, in Chapter 5 (Section 5.6), reveal that there are two promoting factors (Table 5.4, Chapter 5), three limiting factors that contribute to ascription inequality (Table 5.5, Chapter 5), and two behaviours towards these organisational promoting/limiting factors (Table 5.6, Chapter 5).

6.3.2.1   Organisational Promoting Factors to Career Self-management Enactment

The discussion in this section focusses on the conceptualisation of organisational promoting factors towards career self-management enactment in an ascription culture (for example, Kingdom of Bahrain). As discussed in the literature review, Chapter 2 (Section 2.4.1), the support organisations provide has a great impact on enhancing career self-management behaviours. The studies in career self-management have noted the importance of organisational support for employees, such as management development help (Noe, 1996); career management help (Sturges *et al.*, 2002, Sturges, 2008; Sturges *et al.*, 2005; Sturges *et al.*, 2010); and management intervention help (Raabe *et al.*, 2007).

The findings of this study in Chapter 5 (Section 5.6.1, Table 5.4) reveal that Bahraini managers in this study receive support from their organisations and, in turn, encourage them to enact career self-management behaviours. Such support is reflected in various aspects, such as: 1) monetary (Cappelli, 2004) and non-monetary aids (London and Bray, 1984); and 2) training and development programmes/plan provision. These factors include help provided to self-directed people to increase their control over their career, independence from organisational career management, and career advancement. The difference between the existing literature on this topic and the findings of this study is that the literature focusses on the support provided to employees to facilitate their career management in general (i.e. not exclusively career self-management) whereas this study's findings consider the support provided to employees to facilitate their career self-management enactment specifically.

The importance attached to monetary/financial support (Cappelli, 2004) in this study is essential for triggering Bahraini manager participants' career self-management behaviours. Such support is offered to them after they successfully reach completion of their degree. Financial support in this study was found to serve people and helped them to manage their careers in the short term; this finding was expected to be valued in ascription cultures (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain). In some situations, people in ascription cultures prefer short-term assistance which places more value on activities that have an impact in the short term rather than the long-term, as is the case in societies such as the USA and Western countries (Hofstede, 1980).

Although Bahraini managers in this study aspire to take the initiative for self-study, they seek to obtain time and resources while they study which, in some situations, is more important to them than financial support. This non-financial support could be through accessing organisational information, knowledge and resources such as the internet, attending programmes that facilitate self-study, or even having a quiet environment such as a library in which to complete assignments. This result seems to be closely matched to London and Bray's (1984) findings, who report that career motivation is higher when the situation offers support for career development (for example, if the organisation provides a fast-track advancement programme). Career motivation, according to those authors, could be mirrored in aspects other than monetary or financial rewards as this study discovered.

Training and development programmes/plan provision is valued by Bahraini managers in this study, where organisations arrange unique programmes for potential employees, allowing them to reach a targeted position that was created for them. This support is considered as motivation for self-directed people to take more responsibility to learn new competencies, particularly when their organisations provide a commitment to promote them to higher positions. This type of support is not specifically mentioned in the literature review as a promoting factor to career self-management. However, support for development programmes/plan provision, is to some extent, similar to organisational employees' management development help (Noe, 1996). The only difference is that Noe (1996) mentions that general development programmes that target how general employees promote career self-management behaviours, whereas this study reveals that customised development programmes targeting self-directed employees promote career self-management behaviours.

Organisational commitment that creates strong feelings in employees towards their organisational identification is not found in the Kingdom of Bahrain. For instance, support like "perceived organisational support" (Sturges *et al.*, 2002, Sturges, 2008; Sturges *et al.*, 2005; Sturges *et al.*, 2010) was not discovered in this study. However, such findings must not be generalised to other countries that have ascription cultures. For instance, in Taiwan (i.e. characterised as an ascription-oriented culture), organisational career management which mirrors career development and is considered commitment from the organisation to employees' careers,

plays a significant role in increasing the level of satisfaction and reducing the intention of turnover (Chen *et al.*, 2004). In addition, the affective component of organisational commitment of Kuwaiti employees depends on competence development practices, information sharing, and fair rewards. The commitment and intention to stay in the one organisation in Kuwait occurs when human resources practices create a feeling of autonomy and competence to employees (Zaitouni, Sawalha and Sharif, 2011). This gives an impression that the findings in this study (for example, Kingdom of Bahrain) contradict the findings of some ascription culture countries (for example, Taiwan, Kuwait etc.) although they are in one category based in a study by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998).

Management intervention which encourages employees to develop their own goals, collect information prior to setting plans and plan generation/execution (Raabe *et al.*, 2007) which is discussed the literature review as organisational encouragement support for career self-management enactment, is absent in the organisations studied in the Kingdom of Bahrain. In ascription cultures, for instance Saudi Arabia, training interventions focus on employees' advancement for improving their performance (Ramlall, Al-Amri and Abdulghaffar, 2012) rather than enabling employees to develop plans that help them to be independent and self-directed employees. The findings of the Saudi Arabia study are akin to this study's findings (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain) where organisations under the study (i.e. EWA and GARMCO) are not fully aware of the impact of self-career management on organisations and employees in long term period.

6.3.2.2 Organisational Limiting Factors Contributing to Ascriptive Inequality

The literature review, Chapter 2 (Section 2.4.2), discussed the various studies concerning barriers to careers in general such as organisational change (Lips-Wiersma and Hall, 2007), ineffective human resources management policies (Laurent, 1986; Budhwar and Baruch, 2003; Baruch and Peiperl, 2000; Hall, 1986; Budhwar, 2000; Tzabbar *et al.,* 2003; Mahdi and Barrientos, 2003; Al-Hamadi *et al.*, 2007), and organisational culture (Hofstede *et al.*, 1990). Gunz *et al.* (2002) argue that career boundaries include two dimensions: subjective (perceived barriers to career progress) and objective (real barriers to mobility). King *et al.* (2005) contend that careers are bounded by

different aspects such as earlier career history, occupation identity, and institutional restrictions imposed by top management to obtain job prospects.

However, it is important to mention that despite scholars in the field of career self-management placing great attention on promoting factors that support the enactment of career self-management (Noe, 1996; Sturges *et al.*, 2002; Sturges *et al.*, 2005; Sturges *et al.*, 2010; Raabe e*t al.*, 2007), knowledge of the barriers to career self-management enactment in particular is very limited. In addition, all organisational barriers which exist in the literature review and mentioned above explain the barriers to employees' career management in general and not exclusively to career self-management enactment. The literature review, Chapter 2 (Section, 2.6.2), also discussed the effect of ascription on individuals at an institutional or organisational level (Reskin and McBrier, 2000; Reskin, 2003). Therefore, the discussion in this section focusses on the conceptualisation of organisational limiting factors which contribute to ascriptive inequality and impact career self-management enactment in an ascription culture (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain).

The findings of this study, in Chapter 5 (Section 5.6.2, Table 5.5), show that the barriers which exist in the organisations studied lead to ascriptive inequality and impact career self-management enactment negatively. These barriers are: 1) many layers in organisational structure; 2) human resource development policies; and 3) power utilisation while making decisions regarding career advancement opportunities.

The existence of many layers in the structure in the two organisations has a negative impact on Bahraini managers in this study as this restricts them from career self-management enactment behaviours within their organisations. With the existence of many layers, Bahraini manager participants have difficulty in controlling their career because they need to break through many layers to reach influential people. The lengthy structures may be depicted in company rules and policies which may entail obtaining approval for different transactions from several concerned people placed within that structure. In addition, policies and procedures in both organisations prohibit bypassing superiors in the structure while pursuing access to any organisational resources, such as coaching, mentoring, and financial aid, which are normally provided by top

management. Moreover, a lengthy structure is criticised by Bahraini manager participants because they hold a perception that in today's business environment people should have freedom and responsibility about their performance because overbearing direction and monitoring reduce creativity and innovation and, consequently, limit career advancement. Some of the identified perceptions by them regarding the limitation of organisationally lengthy structures correspond to Laurent's (1983) assumptions in this respect. A flat structure is efficient for career self-management because it facilitates communication between Bahraini manager participants and their management and in return contributing in the development of process and operation. The inefficient use of organisational structure may play a vital role in limiting individuals' careers (Laurent, 1986) because lengthy structures prohibit people from making their own decisions without referring to their superiors, which may lead to deficiencies in operation.

However, there is a divergent point of view held by some Bahraini manager participants, who support the establishment of hierarchical levels in the organisation structure. They believe that a lengthy structure may provide a clear division of work with boundaries for responsibilities, defining the hierarchy of authority well, helping the human resources department in recruitment, increasing employees' efficiencies, building inter-personal relationships between employees and customers, and establishing formal rules and procedures that help in governing the organisation operation. The lengthy structure is a good way to manage people as everyone appreciates who has authority over whom. It helps to define individuals' roles and responsibilities so if any default occurs, the organisation can call to account the responsible employees for that issue. Such perceptions are akin to Laurent (1986, p. 94), who finds that French and Italian managers "consistently perceived organisations as social systems of relationships monitored by power, authority, and hierarchy to much greater extent than their Northern counter-parts did". Across a sample of ten Western national cultures, managers from Latin cultures (French and Italians) observe organisations as social systems of associations supervised by power, authority and hierarchy to a much greater extent than their northern counterparts.

The interview data suggest that some Bahraini managers in this study believe that their organisations (EWA and GARMCO) establish human resources development policies that limit their career self-management behaviours and contribute to ascription inequality. Those policies

are mirrored in recruitment, employee relations and training and development. In recruitment there are policies that allow all Bahraini manager participants to apply for any job vacancies in the organisation. Such a policy seems fair and logical but in reality it discriminates against people who have worked for a long time in their departments when the job vacancy appears, particularly if these people do not have enough employable skills or competencies (i.e. specific organisation competencies, knowledge and skills). At the same time the influence of decision-makers is not always fair in selecting the suitable candidate because *wasta* plays a significant role in the process of selection in ascription cultures (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain).

The findings in this aspect correspond to some of the study's findings in countries where cultures are characterised as ascription, for instance, in Thailand and Iran. In Thailand, at the local level, it appears that recruitment and selection functions barely disguise the inept procedures that occur in reality. These are grounded in actions regarding recentralisation, local-cronyism, and nepotism, that have traditionally underpinned Thai local administration in the area of personnel administration (Rohitarachoon and Hossain, 2012). At the same time a study conducted in Iran (Namazie, 2003) finds that due to economic and political pressures, recruitment and selection in many Iranian companies is based more on nepotism and companies prefer to employ people who are known to them rather than people who they do not know and who they do not trust. In addition, when there is an advertisement in the paper for a specific organisation most applicants are relatives of this organisation's staff.

The finding also confirms that the Kingdom of Bahrain is a country characterised as having an ascription culture. For instance, Metcalfe (2007) conducted a study in the Kingdom of Bahrain with Bahraini women. The women reported that job appointments and training opportunities are often not based on personal qualification and competencies, but on an individual's relations and family networks (i.e. *wasta* and *naseeb*). Weir (2000) investigates human resources management processes related to the business culture in Arab societies. The political economy in the Middle East is recognised by Sheikho-capitalism (Ali, 1995) which includes the influence and control of government administration in everyday business decisions (Metcalfe, 2007).

In some situations, ascription inequality takes place because a clear policy has not been established to protect human rights in terms of job selection. For instance, there is no policy in the two organisations in the study that holds influential people accountable for their actions when they use their influence and favour some people over others in job selection. One possible concern in the Kingdom of Bahrain is that many practices (for example, employment rules and regulations) are experienced informally so it is difficult to account for people who do not apply them fairly. Accountability is most likely to reduce ascriptive bias when allocators recognise they must communicate evaluations to candidates and justify their decisions to superiors (Blalock, 1991). In other words, the transparency of allocation processes and their outcomes conditions the impact of accountability in ascriptive bias (Blalock, 1991).

In the context of career advancement or development opportunities, there is a policy to refund Bahraini manager participants after self-study is successfully completed; however, this is not implemented fairly either. This implies that in the Kingdom of Bahrain, the importance is not simply in establishing policies but in making sure that people comply with policies by implementing them fairly and appropriately. As Reskin (2003, p.14) notes, even how policies are applied makes a difference; "for instance, California Personnel Board encouraged state agencies to integrate all jobs, but threatened budget cuts for only those agencies that failed to increase women's and minorities' presence in specific targeted jobs". The targeted jobs became more integrated, but the non-targeted jobs became more segregated (Baron, Mittman, and Newman 1991).

Finally, the finding of this research raises important issues related to the utilisation of power in making decisions by top management. Bahraini managers in this study believe that top management in their organisations experience power obtained from their jobs in making decisions which, in return, leads to ascriptive inequality. They perceive this action as unfair, making them feel discouraged from exhibiting career self-management behaviours. This experience occurs when there are conflicts between two parties' interest (i.e. managers and their bosses) in which bosses utilise their power for achieving their objectives and ignore employee concerns. Such action provides a dreadful environment for career self-management behaviour enactment and leads to discouragement in advancing self-directed careers. This limiting factor is

closely matched with the contention made by Reskin (2003) that ascription within organisations takes place because of an individual's motives such as personal taste. She adds that dominant groups use their control over resources to support their privileges and, in turn, demonstrate motive-based explanations. Bahraini manager participants believe that their bosses also experience ascription because of their desire to prefer people or groups of people as opposed to others. Occasionally employers base opportunities and rewards on workers' ascriptive status as a matter of policy, favouring some groups and ignoring or harming others (Wilson and Brekke, 1994).

6.3.2.3   Behaviours towards Organisational Promoting and Limiting Factors

As pointed out in the literature review, Chapter 2 (Section 2.4.1 and 2.4.2), there are various studies which provide evidence regarding the behaviour towards organisational support and challenges which may have a great impact on either facilitating or limiting career self-management enactment such as: networking behaviour (Sturges *et al.*, 2002); visibility behaviour (Sturges *et al.*, 2002; Sturges *et al.*, 2008); positioning behaviour (King, 2003); influencing behaviour (King, 2001); building human capital behaviour (Nabi, 2000; Sturges, 2008); validating behaviour (Sturges, 2008); mobility-oriented behaviour (Chiaburu *et al.*, 2006; Sturges *et al.*, 2002); work-non-work boundary management (Sturges, 2008); expertise development (Nabi, 2000); career plan implementation behaviour (Raabe *et al.*, 2007) and feedback-seeking behaviour (Kossek *et al.*, 1998).

The findings of this study presented in Chapter 5 (Section 5.6.3, Table 5.6) reveal that Bahrain manager participants exhibit different career self-management behaviours towards promoting/limiting organisational factors such as: 1) building human capital (Noe, 1996; Sturges, 2008; King, 2004) and 2) feedback seeking (London, 1993; Kossek *et al.*, 1998; King, 2001; Chiaburu *et al.,* 2006).

For instance Bahraini managers in this study believe that, building human capital behaviour exhibit through career goal setting (Sturges, 2008) and training and education (King, 2004) and this is experienced to overcome the barrier that results from human resources development policies and procedures, many layers in the organisation and so forth. They believe that

organisational knowledge sources increase the probability of having control over one's career, raise self-satisfaction and build individual capital. In addition utilising such knowledge turns them into valuable human capital in which their organisation can invest and, accordingly, convince top management to provide any opportunities that meet their aspirations (Noe, 1996; King 2004).

There is also another behaviour exhibited by Bahraini manager participants when promoting factors are provided by their organisations: feedback-seeking (London, 1993; Kossek *et al.*, 1998; King, 2001; Chiaburu *et al.*, 2006). The meaning of feedback in the ascription cultures (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain) is to receive information about an individual's performance strengths and weaknesses. The results of interviews reveal that feedback occurs when a direct boss or expert gives employees information that contributes to their knowledge and helps them to learn new skills, consequently assisting them in advancing their careers. This study's findings show that for providing effective feedback, the person who provides feedback should have enough knowledge and clear career goals for the person who will receive feedback. This suggestion is consistent with London (1993) who argues that career development includes performance feedback provision and reinforcement. Feedback behaviour appears to be linked with career resilience in an ascription culture (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain), such as accepting criticism about individuals' strengths and weaknesses and it is useful for setting up sensible career goals, as this study reveals. The findings of this study reinforce the suggestions by Chiaburu *et al.* (2006) and Kossek *et al.* (1998) regarding the positive impact of feedback. The former authors suggest that feedback-seeking includes behaviours such as engagement in learning new skills, obtaining new knowledge and improving performance which helps to portray individuals' limitations in career development. The latter authors suggest that job mobility preparedness and developmental feedback-seeking are strongly recommended behaviours to attain career outcomes.

Finally, it is important to point out that the findings of this study did not prove the existence of some significant career self-management behaviours such as: mobility preparedness (Sturges et al., 2002, Sturges et al., 2005; Sturges et al., 2008; 2010; Chiaburu *et al.*, 2006) and career plan implementation behaviour (Raabe *et al.*, 2007) towards promoting factors (i.e. organisation

support). The possible reasons for not exhibiting mobility preparedness behaviour may be attributed to the nature of the ascription culture (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain) where such behaviour entails taking risk, which Bahraini managers in this study cannot afford to take, particularly in the current unstable economic situation. At the same time, the findings reveal that there are shortages of job vacancies in particular fields in the Bahrain labour market.

6.3.2.4　　Summary of Discussion of Research Question 2

This question concerns the organisational factors that Bahraini manager participants believe promote or limit their career self-management behaviour. The analysis of this research question provides evidence to suggest that Bahraini managers in the sample report different organisational promoting factors (i.e. monetary and non-monetary aids and training and development programmes/plan provision). At the same time, they report different barriers within their organisations limit career self-management and lead to ascription inequality (i.e. many layers in the organisation structure, human resources development policies and practices and utilising power in making decisions regarding career advancement opportunities). Bahrain managers in this study believe that to utilise the organisational promoting factors or overcome limiting factors they need to exhibit certain behaviours (i.e. feedback-seeking and building human capital) in order to manage their self-directed careers successfully.

First, the findings in this study that relate organisational factors that promote career self-management activities are exclusive to this research. For instance, the majority of Bahraini managers in this study believe that monetary and non-monetary aids and training and development programmes/plan provision are important aids which their organisations provide in return help them to exhibit career self-management. To some extent, development programmes/plan provision is similar to organisational employees' management development help (Noe, 1996) which is discussed in the literature review. The difference is that Noe (1996) mentions that the general development programmes targeting general employees help in promoting career self-management behaviours whereas this study finding discovers that customised development programmes to self-directed employees promote career self-management behaviours.

Secondly, three limiting organisational factors found in this study to limit Bahraini manager participants and prevent them from career self-management enactment and contribute to ascriptive inequality are: many layers in the organisation, human resources development policies and practices and utilising power in making decisions regarding career advancement opportunities by top management. All these limiting factors are exclusive to this study finding because career self-management literature in general lacks research on this topic.

Thirdly, there are similarities and differences between that which exists in the wider literature on career self-management and the findings of this study that relate the behaviours towards organisational promoting factors for career self-management enactment. The two behaviours towards organisational promoting factors that are discovered in this study are similar to that which exists in the career self-management literature: feedback-seeking and building human capital. However, it is important to mention that the practice of these behaviours is not completely similar to that which has been discussed in the literature review in this vein. There is an absence of some career self-management behaviours such as mobility preparedness and career plan implementation behaviours, etc., in these study findings. Simultaneously, there is a shortage of research in career self-management on behaviours which exist in the organisation and prevent people from enacting career self-management (i.e. limiting factors).

6.3.3   Research Question 3 Discussion

What are the cultural factors that Bahraini managers believe promote or limit their career self-management behaviour?

The literature review, Chapter 2 (Section 2.5), discussed the various cultural factors that either promote or hinder the enacting of career self-management. The findings in this study, Chapter 5 (Section 5.7), reveal that there are two promoting factors (Section 5.7.1, Table 5.8), three limiting factors that contribute to ascriptive inequality (Section, 5.7.2, Table 5.9) and two behaviours towards these cultural promoting/limiting factors (Section 5.7.3, Table 5.10). It is worth mentioning that the literature review discussed cultural promoting and limiting factors to careers in general and not exclusively to career self-management because there is a paucity of research on this topic.

6.3.3.1 Cultural Promoting Factors to Career Self-management Enactment

The literature review Chapter 2 (Section 2.5.5) provides evidence of existing cultural promoting factors to enhance career self-management and, specifically, increase the probability of mobility outside the organisation such as: higher qualifications (King, 2000; 2003; 2004; Pearson, *et al.*, 1999) and experience (Becker, 1993; Staw, 1986; Tharenou *et al.*, 1994; Stroh *et al.*, 1992; Ng *et al.*, 2005; Lyness and Thompson, 1997, 2000; Powell *et al.*, 2002; Campion *et al.*, 1994).

The findings of this study confirm the existence of similar factors like higher qualifications and experience as promoting factors to career self-management in the Kingdom of Bahrain but to a slight extent. Bahraini managers in this study believe that these two factors are not unique or exclusive to Bahraini culture, but to any culture and it could be applied to any country. In addition mobility outside the organisation as a factor to encourage career self-management behaviour is not preferred by Bahraini managers in the sample. One possible reason for that is that individuals in this context are more concerned with holding onto their jobs, rather than risking their careers by moving into the labour market without a guarantee of getting a job (Ituma, 2005). The new cultural promoting factors which are exclusively found in this study in Chapter 5 (Section 5.7.1, Table 5.8) are: 1) the strategy adopted by a country's government to help nationals obtain the required job and have control over their career (i.e. Bahrainisation) (Dito, 2007; Allen Consulting Group, 2009); and 2) contribution to and participation in professional societies.

In the Kingdom of Bahrain (an ascription culture) and according to this study's findings, there is a strategy that helps nationals to obtain required jobs and it is called Bahrainisation (Dito, 2007; Allen Consulting Group, 2009). However, two divergent views are held by Bahraini manager participants concerning this strategy: one advocates it and the other is against it. Those advocating it suggest that the intention of this strategy is good because it helps to reduce the unemployment issue, if the implementation is examined seriously. Moreover, this strategy involves social responsibilities and coordination between institutions and the respective authorities (such as the Ministry of Labour and Labour Market Authority). This could be through the improvement of Bahraini skills and knowledge and greater preparation for joining the Bahrain's labour market. Therefore, in this case, the Bahrainisation strategy could be a factor that

encourages Bahraini manager participants to select various career choices and hence employ career self-management behaviours.

The other point of view is against this strategy. There is evidence in this study of the lack of implementing a Bahrainisation strategy because many institutions have not seriously attempted to amalgamate nationals into the workforce but have resorted to programmes that make them look good for external stakeholders when presenting their statistics to the government. To some extent this is close to the findings of the studies conducted by Mellahi (2007) and Forstenlechner (2008). Based on the findings of Fernandes and Awamleh (2006) this behaviour takes place as a result of the lack of effort to recruit and maintain nationals by organisations which attempt to evade possible sanctions. It also confirms the suggestion of Wadeea (2000), who argues that the maintenance of localisation in GCC countries should not be on a one-to-one basis but needs a strategy and policy that takes into consideration labour market structure and human capital development.

It is interesting to find that contributions to and participation in societies is an important factor in the Kingdom of Bahrain to promote career self-management behaviour. Being a member of any type of society may increase the opportunity to obtain a job inside or outside the current organisation. Communications with people who have common interests make Bahraini managers in this study visible and expand awareness about their experience and profession. Knowing some members of societies, particularly those in senior positions in their tenures, has a positive impact because they may contribute to employment in their companies if any unpredictable opportunity occurs and thus increase their control over their careers (i.e. the cause of career self-management behaviour). Such a finding is akin to the study conducted by Hofstede (1980), who finds that Middle Eastern countries, including the Kingdom of Bahrain, are societies that are inclined to be collectivist, in which members provide the necessary support to each member if he or she encounters any difficulties. It also confirms the study by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998), which characterised the Middle East including the Kingdom of Bahrain as a collectivist society where people prefer to achieve objectives in groups through socialisation with each other. In general all the cultural promoting factors discovered in this study do not encourage companies to promote employees' careers purely on merit, and this could be attributed to one possible

reason, that is: Bahraini manager participants do not strongly believe that there is a satisfactory environment in the Kingdom of Bahrain which encourages people to be self-dependent; instead they believe that this discouraging environment (i.e. limiting factors such as *wasta*, Bahrain labour market inefficiency, high level of foreign labour etc.) makes it hopeless to depend on Bahraini society or institutions and consequently exhibit career self-management behaviour and steer their own careers.

6.3.3.2   Cultural Limiting Factors Contributing to Ascriptive Inequality

The literature review, Chapter 2 (Section 2.5.6), addressed general theories of culture, for instance, Hofstede (1980), Schwartz (2008) and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998). It reviewed career barriers that limit career development (Ituma and Simpson, 2009; Lent *et al.*, 1994). It also addressed labour market imperfection (Gunz *et al.*, 2000) and mentioned real career boundaries caused by different factors such as specialisation, industry, the firm, occupation, educational level, experience, professional qualifications and, to some extent, age, sex, and religion (Gunz *et al.*, 2002). It mentioned that boundaries may be caused by prior career history, occupational identity, and institutional constraints imposed by leaders/top management to job opportunities (King *et al.*, 2005). In addition, the literature review, Chapter 2 (Section 2.6.1), discussed various factors related to the impact of ascription on individuals at a cultural level (Linton, 1936; Davis, 1950; Parson, 1951; Mayhew, 1968; Scott, 1972; Kemper, 1974 and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1998).

The findings of this study in Chapter 5 (Section 5.7.2, Table 5.9) have emphasised that which was found in the literature in two respects: there is a lack of studies that associate career self-management with culture, and a shortage of career self-management theories in both contexts (for example, the West and the USA, and the Kingdom of Bahrain countries). The findings of this study reveals that there are different cultural factors that hinder Bahraini managers in this study from career self-management enactment and contribute to ascriptive inequality such as: 1) high level of foreign labour (Rutledge, 2009; Allen Consulting Group, 2009; Lootah and Simon, 2009; Forstenlechner, 2010; Al-Waqfi and Forstenlechner, 2010; Mellahi, 2007; Al-Lamki, 1998; Forstenlechner and Mellahi, 2011); 2) personal connections or nepotism (*wasta*) (Al-Ali, 2008; Tayeb, 2005; Sawalha, 2002; Hutchings and Weir, 2006; Cunningham and Sarayrah, 1993;

Haajenh, Maghrabi and Dabbagh, 1994; Common, 2008; Namazie, 2003); and 3) discrimination, which is reflected in religious denomination, age (Wood, Wilkinson and Harcourt, 2008) and gender (Baud and Mahgoub, 2001; El-Ghannam, 2001; Mostafa, 2003; 2005; Askar and Ahmad, 2003; United Nations Development Programme, 2003; World Bank, 2003; Abd El-Latif, 1988; Dechant and Al Lamky, 2005). These factors are not limiting Bahraini managers in this study from enacting career self-management physically but rather psychologically.

It is also important to mention that such barriers (i.e. found in this study) are not stopping some participants (30%) from enacting career self-management behaviours; although these barriers lead to disappointment for others. Feelings of disappointment discourage some participants from bothering to exhibit career self-management because they believe that career destiny, at the end of the day, will not be in their control but, rather, in that of influential parties. These cultural barriers to career self-management enactment contribute to ascriptive inequality. Such barriers confirm the result of many studies either in ascription (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain and Middle Eastern countries) and achievement (for example, the USA and Western countries) cultures. However, none of these studies mention any of these factors as barriers to career self-management behaviours specifically but rather they are mention as barriers to career management in general.

For instance, high levels of foreign labour in ascription cultures, such as GCC countries including the Kingdom of Bahrain (Rutledge, 2009; Allen Consulting Group, 2009; Lootah and Simon, 2009; Forstenlechner, 2010; Al-Waqfi and Forstenlechner, 2010; Mellahi, 2007; Al Lamki, 1998; Forstenlechner and Mellahi, 2011), is a significant barrier that prevents Bahraini manager participants from obtaining their desired career and having control over it. Some of the main issues that encourage companies or institutions to prefer foreign labour over nationals are: foreign labour accepts lower jobs and salaries; a shortage of skills demanded by the labour market, particularly the ones that are related to expending physical effort; and, in some situations, foreign labour has networks which allow them to connect and help each other as a minority group in society. The findings of this study demonstrate that the high level of foreign labour is a barrier to career self-management enactment, supporting the findings of many studies held in the USA and Western countries. According to Van Oudenhoven, Ward and Masgoret

(2006), immigrants represent 19 percent of the total population in Canada, 25 percent in Australia, 13 percent in the USA, 20 percent in New Zealand, and a considerable percentage of the population and workforce in various other Western countries. Accessibility to a comparatively cheap pool of skilled foreign labour places downward pressure on wages and, as a result, decreases the incentives for citizens to participate in several sectors of the economy (Bremmer, 2004), which leads them to search for employment in the public sector (Al-Waqfi and Forstenlechner, 2010). As a result, this leads to extremely segmented labour markets with low flexibility for substitution between national and foreign workers (Fasano and Goyal, 2004). According to the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), over the years 2006, 2007 and 2008, the number of foreign nationals working in the UK has increased from 1.66 million to 2.32 million (Bowcott and Booth, 2009). Those authors indicate that in 2005 the total employment was 28.96 million; by 2008 it had risen to 29.53 million where the largest increases in foreign workers were in manufacturing, finance, distribution and construction.

It is important to mention that this study does not attempt to draw a comparison between the Kingdom of Bahrain and the USA and Western countries with regard to the frequency of career self-management behaviours because the sample size of this study includes only Bahraini managers. In the Kingdom of Bahrain (for example, ascription cultures) factors such as *wasta* or personal connections/nepotism are repeated consistently by Bahraini manager participants during the interview (i.e. 32 participants, representing 80%, agree about its existence and adverse impact on career self-management enactment). This is not surprising because this phenomenon prevails extensively in the Arab culture (Al-Ali, 2008) and GCC countries are no different. *Wasta* has a significant role in organisational behaviour specifically related to allocation of jobs openly or secretly. The experience of personal connections is an important feature in ascription cultures (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain), particularly Arab cultures, which is articulated in organisational settings (Tayeb, 2005). As mentioned earlier, although *wasta* permeates the culture of all Arab countries and is a force in all significant decision-making, it is not usually mentioned by most writers, nor is it explicitly discussed by Arabs themselves (Sawalha, 2002). The analysis of the Arab nations suggests that even with modernisation in the Arab World, *wasta* continues to play a significant part in business activities (Hutchings and Weir, 2006). It is

experienced heavily in various human resources management practices in GCC countries and, despite its practice, there are very limited empirical data on its consequences (Al-Ali, 2008).

The results of this study show a strong relation between *wasta*, networks and the influence of leaders/top management because the person who is receiving *wasta* has to have a network with influential people or leaders/top management in order to receive what they seek. According to Al-Ali (2008) a person who is delivering *wasta* influences a potential employer on behalf of the job applicant and this is consistent with the findings of this study. Employers and employees in ascription cultures (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain) have a negative impact on *wasta*. Whereas employers lose the opportunity to obtain the best productive candidate who is discriminated against the qualified employees who fail to receive the *wasta*, the well-qualified employees or citizens, will leave to search for better, more transparent and satisfying jobs in developed countries, as evidenced by the study conducted by Haajenh *et al.* (1994). Various studies in GCC countries reveal that *wasta* has a negative impact on GCC nationals; for example, *wasta* in the Emirates produces negative social capital, acting as a barrier to reform and good governance. In addition, a study conducted (Common, 2008) in three countries, Bahrain, Jordan and Oman finds that the prevalence of *wasta* and *naseeb,* emphasising informality in working relations, in addition to supporting strong family connections. *Wasta* is found in non-Arab countries, although it is located in the Middle East region and represents an ascription culture, for example Iran. The significance of nepotism or *wasta* was found in recruitment and selection which appeared even when job advertisements required broadening the field of applicants (Namazie, 2003).

Last but not least, gender discrimination, which is manifest in ascription cultures (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain) is evident in this study. Two types of gender discrimination are found: men are favourable candidates for some jobs over women, and there is a disbelief in women's ability to lead men. Discrimination against Bahraini managers in this study is a barrier that discourages them from career self-management enactment. It limits them from having control over their careers since unfairness and discrimination will be experienced if any careers opportunities appear.

In the vein of preferring male candidates over women, the findings support many studies in other countries whose cultures are characterised as ascription, such as those in the Middle East, including GCC countries. For example, Baud and Mahgoub (2001) indicate that 21 percent of women report that they had experienced discrimination in obtaining job opportunities for promotion. The majority of men in the Arab world believe that household and domestic activities are more appropriate for women and they educate their sons rather than daughters on the assumption that boys are a greater economic asset than girls (El-Ghannam, 2001). The United Arab Emirates (UAE) society's attitudes towards women managers were examined by Mostafa (2005) who observes that UAE students have significantly different attitudes towards women managers from the attitudes of older generations. The difference between male and female perceptions towards women's roles and participation in society is significant. Abd El-Latif (1988) finds that in Egypt there is a negative attitude towards women managers and women in top managerial and leadership positions. In addition, Mostafa (2003) finds that Egyptian students have very similar attitudes to those of older generations towards working women. There are also considerable dissimilarities between males' and females' views towards women's roles and participation in society in Egypt. In contrast to these studies, a positive attitude towards women managers is found in Kuwait. The study conducted by Askar and Ahmad (2003) reveals that Kuwaitis are supportive to women in supervisory positions.

International development reports (United Nations Development Programme, 2003; World Bank, 2003) in the Middle East on gender and employment suggest that gender roles are formed by four elements: 1) family centrality instead of individuals as the main unit in society; 2) recognition that the man is the main source of family income; 3) a code of modesty that rests on family dignity and the reputation of the woman; and 4) an unequal balance of power in the private sphere that is anchored in family laws.

A study of ten Arab women from Bahrain and Oman entrepreneurs made by Dechant and Al Lamky (2005) reveals the similarities to those of their counterparts from other parts of world with few distinct variations. Bahraini and Omani women are similar to their counterparts in developed countries in terms of being motivated by a need for achievement and self-fulfilment and a desire to improve society. Additionally, Dechant and Al Lamky (2005) find that despite the

women in their sample having higher levels of education, they lack experience of the real business world, and are deficient in the key managerial skills required to run a business, which is similar to entrepreneurial women in developed countries. The similarities also include pursuing low-growth, high-quality strategies in producing and distributing their products and services. The most fascinating results, however, relate to the barriers encountered by Bahraini and Omani entrepreneurs in launching and running their businesses, not so much to the barriers themselves but the reasons behind them. Those reasons are altered because of the distinctive socio-cultural context of the Arab Muslim environment in Oman and Bahrain. The Bahraini and Omani women did not quote gender discrimination problems either in establishing or operating their businesses despite facing many of the very same problems of their female counterparts elsewhere. Those authors conclude that while it was obvious from the women's stories in their sample that they are indeed impacted to a greater or lesser degree by certain gender related norms, values and traditions deeply rooted in Arab society, they do not perceive themselves as victims of discrimination.

However, even in the USA and Western countries (for example, achievement cultures) women face career discrimination and this barrier might affect career self-management enactment in those countries although there is a shortage of research in this vein. Researchers in achievement cultures (for example, the USA and Western countries) concur that women have more difficulty in obtaining senior positions despite having similar educational levels, years of service and job performance (Burke and Nelson, 2002; Powell, 1999; Tharenou, 1999). Kumra and Vinnicombe (2008) find, in their study of professional service firms in the UK, that the promotion to partner is certainly gender-biased. In addition, women are not chosen for conventionally male roles because of a risk of their failure (Heilman, 1983), and they are less probable to report possession of job characteristics required for high-level male-dominated organisational positions (Ohlott *et al.*, 1994). According to a survey conducted by the American Women's Society of Chartered Public Accountants (Heard, 2001), women in the profession observe a lack of gender acceptance to be a key barrier to senior positions obtainable within firms.

Becker (1971) formulated one of the first systematic theories of employment discrimination. He claims that the strength of employers' taste for race or sex discrimination is expressed in the

above-market wages they pay whites or men to avoid having to employ minorities or women. Kanter (1977) provides an explanation for women's absence from managerial positions before the 1980s. In filling jobs involving uncertainty, she argues, corporate managers - virtually all white men - prefer "ease of communication and hence social certainty over the strains of dealing with persons who are 'different'" (Kanter, 1977, pp. 49, 58). Kanter theorises that managers' desire for informal communication motivates them to exclude members of some ascriptively-defined groups (Reskin, 2003). The literature review in the USA and Western countries also provides some empirical studies that are related to the ascription effect on gender. Reskin and McBrier (2000) find that managerial selection and job assignment relating to subjectivity, stereotyping, bias, and in-group favouritism bring in an ascription aspect. This means that minimising subjectivity in selection and job assignment increases women's share of managerial jobs.

From what has been discussed regarding discrimination, this study reveals that the Kingdom of Bahrain has an ascription-oriented society where status and authority are distributed based on social, position, age, gender, wealth, religion, family name and so on. This society affirms the wide use of titles, and respects superiors in organisations and top hierarchy where most senior jobs are occupied by males. Thus, this finding supports the findings by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998) of 'Achievement vs. Ascription' where the Kingdom of Bahrain is more similar to China, an example of a strongly ascription-oriented society and extremely opposite to the USA and Western countries (for example, achievement culture).

To summarise the discussion above, different factors exist in the Kingdom of Bahrain's culture that contribute to ascription inequality. These factors may not prevent people physically but rather lead to disappointment (i.e. psychologically) in exhibiting career self-management behaviours. One possible reason is that individuals in ascription cultures (for example, Bahraini manager participants) are convinced that equality is not distributed fairly among people, particularly in terms of obtaining career opportunities. This reason makes them reluctant to exhibit career self-management behaviours because they know that opportunities may go to people who are undeserving. Contrary to participants who embrace such a belief (i.e. feelings of disappointment for enacting career self-management), few participants are determined to exhibit

career self-management behaviour because they do not have trust in society or organisations in managing their career and they refuse to put their destiny in the hands of any influential people. In this situation they increase their desire to have control over their career destiny through career self-management behaviour.

6.3.3.3 Behaviours towards Cultural Promoting and Limiting Factors

There is a lack of research in discussing the consequent behaviours towards the factors that exist in cultures which either promote or limit the individual's career self-management behaviour. Therefore, the discussion focusses on the study's findings in Chapter 5 (Section 5.7.3, Table 5.10) which related the behaviours towards cultural promoting and limiting factors such as: 1) improving Bahrain labour market structures (Allen Consulting Group, 2009; Al-Ali, 2008; Achoui, 2009; Economic Development Board, 2004); and 2) reduction in the dependency on foreign labour (Allen Consulting Group, 2009; Al-Ali, 2008; Abdelkarim, 2001; Freek, 2004; Achoui, 2009; Forstenlechner, 2010).

The improvement of the labour market structure is found in the analysis of this study where Bahraini managers recommend a solution to overcome that by making a link between labour market requirements, and public and private sectors in terms of skills requirements. Thus, this result incorporates the findings of many studies in ascription cultures, for instance GCC countries. For instance, Allen Consulting Group (2009) suggests various actions to be taken to improve the Bahraini labour market and focusses on areas such as: improving the education system; reducing the level of unemployment; increasing the number of nationals in the workforce; utilising women's participation in the workforce; replacing expatriates with nationals, particularly in the private sector; amendment of the Bahrain labour manager policies and procedures; focussing on apprentices and vocational jobs; and enhancing the tourism and hospitality sectors. There are also similarities between the findings of this study with that found in the Emirates (Al-Ali, 2008). Al-Ali suggests different solutions to improve the Emirates' labour market through: launching a well-established programme of awareness for encouraging Emiratis to accept realistic job proposals; encouraging the government to pay companies differential compensation amounts to equal the public sector pay rates for selected job categories and encouraging in-house programmes for Emiratis; not giving any projects to organisations

which are not compliant; creating a special unit accountable for the recruitment and development of Emiratis; offering more technical and language training throughout employment; encouraging wok placements for Emirati students from schools and colleges; and making sure to deploy cultural awareness equilibrium in the workforce.

The Saudi government report (Achoui, 2009) reveals that one of the most important challenges that Saudi Arabia faces is its failings in the higher education system because the structural features of unemployment in the country are characterised by a mismatch between the output of the education and training system and labour market requirements, particularly in the private sector.

To summarise the discussion regarding the behaviours towards cultural promoting and limiting factors, it has been difficult to discover the real behaviours towards cultural promoting and limiting factors to career self-management enactment because Bahraini manager participants believe they could do nothing regarding the barriers that are embedded in the culture unless efforts are exerted by other influential parties such as institutions, governments and, even, nationals. Bahraini manager participants believe that such solutions could be achieved through social responsibilities in coordinating the effort between the country's labour market and institutions and educating nationals regarding the fields that are mostly required. Such a solution might not directly contribute to career self-management behaviours but rather indirectly. For instance, those solutions may assist the Kingdom of Bahrain in general to have better and sufficient career opportunities, exercise control over their career outcomes and career advancement motivation (i.e. causes of career self-management enactment).

6.3.3.4   Summary of Discussion of Research Question 3

This question concerns the cultural factors that Bahraini managers in this study believe promote or limit their career self-management behaviour. The findings and discussion of this research question provide evidence that Bahraini managers in this study report different cultural promoting factors (i.e. strategies to help nationals obtain the required job, ´Bahrainisation' and contribution to and participation in professional societies). At the same time they encounter different barriers in their culture which prevent them from career self-management and

contribute to ascription inequality (i.e. high levels of foreign labour, personal connections or *wasta* and discrimination that is reflected in religious domination, age and gender). They believe that to utilise cultural promoting factors or overcome limiting factors, they need to exhibit certain behaviours (i.e. improving the Bahrain labour market structures and reduction of dependency on foreign labour) in order to manage their self-directed career successfully.

The study also provides evidence that the culture in the Kingdom of Bahrain is characterised as ascription where status is ascribed based on religious denomination, age and gender rather than achievement (for example, as is found in the USA and Western countries). Therefore, people in this culture may have no trust in their organisations or societies in managing their career and a good option for them is to adopt a self-directed approach to have greater control over their career, self-development and reduce dependence on the organisation.

First, there are similarities and differences between that discussed in the literature review and this study's findings in terms of cultural promoting factors in Bahraini participants' career self-management enactment behaviours. The similarities are reflected in factors like higher qualifications and experience. The differences are reflected in factors such as a strategy that helps nationals to obtain the required job (i.e. Bahrainisation), and contribution to and participation to societies which are exclusive to this study's findings.

Secondly, relating cultural limiting factors to career self-management enactment and in contributing to ascriptive inequality, there are some similarities between that in the literature review and the findings of this study, such as high levels of foreign labour and discrimination. There are also differences such as: personal connections which prevail more in ascription cultures (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain). It is important to mention that the extent of cultural barriers in the Kingdom of Bahrain could be higher than the USA and Western countries (i.e. if it is considered that those countries have better elements such as advancement of technologies, better labour, laws and regulations, open labour markets). However, this study does not attempt to draw comparisons between the Kingdom of Bahrain and the USA and Western countries related to the extent of employing career self-management behaviours because the sample size of this study includes only Bahraini managers. The discussion also reveals that even

within the USA and Western countries there are barriers like labour market efficiency, discrimination against women etc., which vary from country to another and which depend on the nature of the culture and organisation within context.

Thirdly, relating the behaviours towards cultural promoting and limiting factors to career self-management enactment, Bahraini managers in this study recommend some solutions; in reality these are not behaviours but rather solutions to make the Bahrain labour market much more efficient. They believe that they could do nothing about cultural limiting factors that exist in Bahrain culture because these are not under their control; rather it is a social responsibility for the country's government and institutions, as well as citizens.

6.4 Possible Reasons for Similarities between Ascription and Achievement Cultures

The discussion in this section focusses on findings related to the high similarities between ascription (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain) and achievement (for example, the USA and Western countries) cultures in terms of barriers to career self-management enactment. It highlights the contention that, despite the differences between the two cultures, the barriers that exist in both are, to some extent, sharing high similarities. It is important to mention that the aim of this study is not to discover the high or low extent of similarities but rather to address the barriers to career self-management enactment in general. Despite the probable existence of many barriers to career self-management enactment, the study addresses only those that have received higher agreement of the participants of this study such as: labour market imperfection and female discrimination.

6.4.1 Labour Market Imperfection

Beginning with labour markets within Western countries, it is found that they are varied in terms of nature, size, challenges and so on. Sturges (2008) reports that there are differences in labour markets between the UK and Iceland (i.e. both of these countries are in Europe) as the former labour market is larger in size, it is guided by a comparatively unconstrained labour market and low levels of government regulation concerning the management of people at work. In the USA, despite common employment stability, research emphasises compositional changes in patterns of career mobility which have a great impact on workers (Rodrigues and Guest, 2010). Those

authors indicate that job stability is varied between countries, for instance, Europe, Japan and the USA where job tenure and turnover have remained relatively stable in those countries. This gives rise to speculation that the differences in labour markets could exist even within achievement cultures (for example, the USA and Western countries).

Whereas, the differences in labour markets between ascription (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain) and achievement cultures (for example, the USA and Western countries) are reflected in common aspects such as technological advancement, political stability, business environment, size of country, labour rights, skills and job availability, differences in sector size and type etc., this would be the same case within both cultures. Organisational careers in Western developed economies have been greatly impacted by the expansion of the large organisations that have grown significantly. If industrial focus is low, organisations are not large enough to sustain internal labour markets of any complexity (Gunz *et al.*, 2000). This situation could be experienced in any country whether developing or developed (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain or the USA and Western countries).

The findings of this study reveal that the Kingdom of Bahrain (for example, an ascription culture) has high amounts of foreign labour; however, such cases also exist in other Western countries and the USA (for example, achievement cultures). Although the percentage of foreign labour in GCC countries (temporary immigrants) represents half or more of the total workforce of each country (Al-Waqfi and Forstenlechner, 2010), this does not mean that the USA and Western countries are not facing similar issues as a consequence of this phenomenon.

6.4.2   Discrimination towards Women

Discrimination against women is found particularly in ascription cultures (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain). The findings of this study provide evidence that women in the study (for example, ascription culture) received slight discrimination in terms of career opportunities and this could be because of the small sample size of this study. However, even in achievement cultures (for example, the USA and Western countries) women face career discrimination, although it could be to a lesser extent than ascription cultures (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain). Researchers in achievement cultures (for example, the USA and Western countries)

concur that women have more difficulty in obtaining senior levels despite having similar educational levels, years of service and job performance (Burke and Nelson, 2002; Powell, 1999; Tharenou, 1999). Kumra and Vinnicombe (2008) found in their study of professional service firms in the UK that promotion to partner is certainly gender biased. Their study finds that the self-managed nature of the career development process necessitates a proactive approach towards career management, due to the prevailing model of success, which is a masculine model. They provide evidence that the disadvantages women face in relation to promotion to partner arise from a combination of corporate and societal factors. They conclude that the self-managed nature of the career development process found within the firm in their study poses definite problems for women who have been socialised to collaborate rather than compete, and who are more used to advocating on behalf of others than functioning from an individually self-interested position.

Work in this area indicates that women are not chosen for conventionally male roles because of a risk of their failure (Heilman, 1983), and women are less probable to report possession of the job characteristics required for high-level male-dominated organisational positions (Ohlott *et al.*, 1994). A survey specifically made by the American Women's Society of Chartered Public Accountants (Heard, 2001) reports that women in the profession observe lack of gender acceptance to be a key barrier to senior positions obtainable within firms. Respondents in that survey believe that access to high visibility job assignments was unfairly shared with the majority of such assignments being assigned to men. Such discussion gives evidence that women in achievement cultures (for example, the USA and Western countries) suffer gender discrimination and this factor does not only exist in ascription cultures (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain).

Therefore, the discussion above regarding the barriers to a self-management career, provide evidence that there are differences in cultural barriers not only between the USA and Western countries (for example, achievement cultures) and the Kingdom of Bahrain (for example, ascription culture), but also within the countries characterised as achievement or ascription cultures. The literature review reveals that even within achievement culture (i.e. the USA and Western countries), there are barriers in labour market efficiency, discrimination against women

etc. which vary from country to another and depend on the nature of culture and organisational contexts. Thus, this gives rise to the assumption that achievement cultures (for example, the USA and Western countries) and ascription cultures (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain) are not functioning as they should, meaning that within achievement cultures, the labour market could be inefficient and discrimination could be experienced. It is difficult to generalise that career self-management can be embraced highly in ascription cultures because of the small sample size of this study.

6.5   Research Implications

6.5.1   Implications for Organisation

- The findings of the research recommend that the human resources departments in the organisations in the study should play significant roles in building human capital through training and development for employees' skills enhancement which will enable them to embrace career self-management and have control over their career rather than relying on organisational developmental interventions solely.

- Data reveals that one possible way for the organisations in the study to save time and effort in building knowledge, a better business environment and achieving competitive advantage, is by providing suitable support to self-directed employees. The organisations in the study then would have more time to focus on strategic business issues, instead of wasting time for providing training and development to employees who are likely to know more about their needs than their organisations.

- This study proposes practical guidelines and milestones that can help policy-makers in the organisations under the study to predict and anticipate the possible developmental approach and accordingly reduce the stresses that may occur from identifying employees' developmental needs. Thus, top management and leadership should provide primary support and guide employees to set a self-development strategy to fulfil their needs.

- The implications for the organisations in the study are, therefore, that if they desire to take advantage of the available talent pool or self-directed employees, they need to ensure that they offer them the necessary support in order to help them to enhance their knowledge and skills within the organisation. Failing to do so will lead to misplacement of those talents when they feel desperate and take the decision to resign and work for another company.

6.5.2 Implications for Individuals

- The study results are significant in assisting participants of this study in relying on themselves while managing their career in their workplace and maintaining a competitive advantage.

- In terms of career self-management mechanism, it is vital upon Bahraini manager participants to engage in a sequence of career self-management activities with the endeavour of positioning themselves in the organisation and persuading leaders/top management to permit access to the career outcomes they most desire (King, 2004). By so doing, participants of this study can reach ultimate career success.

- The behaviours that were discovered in this study, such as building a network within and outside the organisation, building human capital and seeking feedback about an individual's performance, may play significant roles in overcoming organisational barriers to career self-management enactment. In addition, understanding how to seize promoting behaviours that may be granted by organisations (for instance, commitment, leadership support, training interventions and mentoring and coaching etc.) will have a great impact on participants in terms of career enhancement and progression.

- Appreciating the barriers to career self-management enactment, for instance, organisational hierarchical structure, human resources development policies and personal connections or *wasta,* are important for career self-management enactment, because this will help to overcome them. Thus, the findings of this research answer

the questions; in so doing, they help participants to enact career self-management in a proficient manner.

- Cultural or contextual factors have a great impact on manager participants' decisions regarding adopting career self-management behaviour, thus it must be recognised. Participants should be made aware of both promoting and limiting cultural factors in order to help them in reacting appropriately either to overcome or seize them. Promoting cultural factors, for example contributions to and participation in societies and institutional corporate responsibility towards recruiting nationals (i.e. Bahrainisation) should be seized. In addition, the limiting cultural factors, such as high levels of foreign labour, Bahrain's labour market requirements, shortage of job opportunities, and a mindset towards Bahraini labour, personal connections and discrimination which are inherent in Bahrain's culture should be overcome. Moreover, employing the best practices, for instance, improving Bahrain's labour market structures, effecting a reduction in the dependency of foreign labour and changing the mindset of low level jobs, are necessary in helping Bahraini manager participants to take decisions easily about enacting a career self-management approach to advance their careers.

6.6   Personal Reflections on Learning Obtained From the Research

During the study of this PhD, different aspects have been learned and it would be useful to reflect on some, as follows:

- When I started, the biggest concern for me was finding gaps in field work (i.e. career self-management) and by doing so I ignored the significance of appreciating the reason why I want to fill those gaps. After that, I realised that the necessity of filling the gaps is not as important as understanding why the gaps need to be filled, the process that must be taken to do so, the most appropriate mechanisms (i.e. method) to be adopted to achieve those objectives and, ultimately, what the impact would be in filling these gaps in knowledge in academia and practice.

- Personal feelings should be avoided in terms of obtaining the findings. In some situations researchers have an expectation about the findings before they begin and this issue could lead to a personal bias towards the results. In this regard I have learned that while analysing the data, the researcher must begin with a fresh mind and dig deeply to obtain results which may not surface obviously. The researcher must step back to see the wider picture of the findings; this may be through different techniques such as constructive and critical reflection, in addition to reading between the lines to find the results which, indeed, help to enrich the knowledge of the field work.

- Because English is not my first language, I have learned that academic writing requires continuous reading and writing in order to be better acquainted with academic vocabularies in general and in addition to the ones for the subject of the research (i.e. career self-management). It is important to make sure that the language being used is understandable, clear and grasps the reader's attention. The researcher should not give up reaching a level in writing that can easily communicate the idea seamlessly.

- If the PhD study is not full-time, communication with other PhD students, either full- or part-time, is vital. Exchanging knowledge and experiences about the PhD process in general helps the student immensely. However, caution should be taken when listening to students' experiences as nothing should be taken blindly. All knowledge obtained should be read by the individual and be rational in selecting any methods that are suggested by others. The aim of the research and the type of research questions will always inform the method to be adopted.

- Finally, obtaining the PhD is not an easy objective. Thus, the student should not focus on many extraneous issues while undertaking this academic qualification. For example, put all effort in completing the study with dedication, rather than thinking of other issues at work such as promotion or something else. There is no way that a person can focus on many things at the same time and when he/she does, the ultimate

result will not be as expected because human beings have limited abilities and capability. Therefore, these issues should be taken into account; further, comparing oneself with others is self-destructive as people vary in their intellectual and physical abilities.

6.7   Limitations of this Research

Although this research provides extensive knowledge about career self-management, no research is free from limitations. Thus, the author believes that it is vital to highlight them:

- Data were collected from two institutions in one single country that represents a developing country (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain). Thus, the findings cannot be generalised to other developing countries without taking into consideration different contextual and structural factors in those countries.

- Literature or studies on careers are considered very rare in the Kingdom of Bahrain and no official studies have been conducted to identify whether Bahraini managers adopt career self-management in their career management. The few studies provided are those that were conducted by the Allen Consulting Group (2009), which focus on employment gaps in Bahrain's labour market. Therefore, this study relies heavily on very limited secondary data about careers from inadequate resources.

- During the sampling process it was difficult to find equal sample sizes from both males and females, particularly in the private sector. This is because one company in the study (GARMCO) is an industrial organisation where very few females have reached management levels or positions in this sector.

- Small samples were used in Organisations 1 and 2 (i.e. 40 interviewees) to discover the career self-management organisational/cultural factors that either promote or limit participants from embracing career self-management behaviours. Thus, the semi-structured interviews adopted an in-depth evaluation in order to obtain a better appreciation of this phenomenon (i.e. career self-management in the Kingdom of Bahrain).

- Some interview questions asked the managers to provide information about their career histories. This can be problematic in terms of findings because some people may have better memories than others and this could lead to inaccurate findings. To overcome this issue, the author sent the answers of the interviews to the interviewees and asked them to add or amend any information they felt was not clear.

- This research was conducted at a period in time when the Kingdom of Bahrain was experiencing political turbulence. This may have affected the responses which the author received from the various participants, borne out of a fear that their jobs would be threatened should they reveal certain information.

6.8   Recommendation for Future Research

The findings of this research recommend a number of directions for future research:

- It would be useful to conduct quantitative research to find the relationship between the promoting and limiting factors and their impacts on embracing career self-management.

- The findings of this research determined different limiting and promoting factors for enacting career self-management. However, the relative power of each factor on a manager's career choice between organisational and career self-management in the Kingdom of Bahrain is not fully appreciated. Therefore, future studies should adopt a quantitative approach to examine the strength of each of these factors on the career choice of Bahraini managers in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

- In light of the fact that the research sample for this research has been obtained primarily from one country (i.e. the Kingdom of Bahrain), the generalisability of the research findings is limited. Therefore, it is vital that future research be undertaken with a larger sample of managers drawn from various parts of the GCC countries in order to expand academic knowledge of the career field in general and career self-

management, in particular of managers in countries that share similar contextual characteristics.

- A future study could utilise the research questions and examine them at different employee levels, for instance, specialists, engineers, senior managers and so on.

- This research was conducted at a period in time when the Kingdom of Bahrain was experiencing political turbulence, as mentioned earlier. Consequently, this may have affected the managers' responses which resulted from a fear of losing their jobs if they were honest in all of their answers. In future, this research may be conducted again, in less troubled times, and may be able to bring to the surface more issues, thereby supplementing the findings of the current research.

- Some factors were found as promoting social factors but to a very limited extent such as family name, luck, professional certification, good communication skills, loyalty to government, strong personality and spoken English proficiency. Future research is suggested to expand and understand these factors, particularly in developing countries.

- Very little is known about careers in other national contexts where the legal and economic institutional systems are different from those in the USA and UK. This might make someone anticipate that the career environment will be altered as well (Sturges *et al.*, 2008). Future research may tackle contexts in developing countries other than the Kingdom of Bahrain.

- For the reason that the notion of career self-management appears to be a relatively new notion in the area of careers, most of the literature reviewed in this context discusses positive impacts; where there are barriers which may be found in practice there is a lack of research. Thus, future research could be useful to consider the factors limiting its embracement, particularly in developing countries.

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8.   APPENDIXES

APPENDIX 1

Research Ethics Committee Approval Form

Brunel
UNIVERSITY
WEST LONDON

Brunel University, Uxbridge,
Middlesex, UB8 3PH, UK
Telephone +44 (0)1895 274000
Web www.brunel.ac.uk

Brunel Business School
Research Ethics Committee

12 July 2012

STATEMENT OF ETHICS APPROVAL

<u>Proposer</u>: Masalek Alhaddad

<u>Title:</u> Career Self-Management in Ascription Culture

It should be noted that, the Brunel Business School's research ethics committee has considered the above named proposal. Acting under a delegated authority, the committee is satisfied that there is no objection on ethical grounds to the proposed study. Approval is given on the understanding that the applicant will adhere to the terms agreed with participants and to inform the committee of any change of plans in relations to the information provided in the application form.

Should you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Tillal Eldabi
Member BBS Ethics Committee
Brunel Business School

APPENDIX 2

Interview Protocol

Invitation to Participation

Date:

Dear sir/madam,

Subject: A Study of Career Self-management in Ascription Culture

I am a doctoral researcher at the School of Business and Management, Brunel University, United Kingdom under the supervision of Dr. Savita Kumra. The objective of my PhD research is to investigate the extent and ways in which Bahraini manager participants adopt a career self-management approach, organisational and cultural factors that they believe promote or limit their career self-management in a ascription culture (for example, the Kingdom of Bahrain) that is different from that in the achievement culture (for example, the USA and Western countries).

As practitioner, you are kindly requested to answer the in-person interview questions which will last approximately 1-2 hours. The one page briefing about the purpose of my research will be sent to you prior to my interview and this will be the basis of our interview discussion. To collect the exact information from you, the interview will be audio-taped and transcribed and be assured that interview information will be strictly confidential and will be used for academic purposes only. In addition, no participant names will be recognised. After analysing the results of the interview, an executive summary of the result will be sent to you.

Please inform me if you would like to participate in this research. If so, an email will be sent to you along with the briefing about the purpose of this research. In so doing I will contact your

institution Human Resources manager and schedule the time, date and place for the interview according to your convenience.

I would be very pleased to confer my research purpose to you before taking any final decision regarding your participation. Should you require more information you can call me on 39600 300 or email me on: Masalik.Al-Haddad@brunel.ac.uk.

Thank you for your assistance and cooperation; I am looking forward to receiving your participation agreement.

Yours sincerely,

Masalek Alhaddad
Doctoral Researcher
School of Business and Management
Brunel University

APPENDIX 3

Company Confidentiality to Organisation 1 - EWA

Brunel
UNIVERSITY
L O N D O N

Brunel Business School
Research Ethics
Company Confidentiality Form

This is to confirm that the research project Career Self-Management in Ascription Culture of dissertation undertaken by Masalek Al-Haddad (0821574) in part fulfilment of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy will be viewed for assessment purposes only, by the Brunel Business School from 1st October 2008 until 12th December 2012 and then participant information will be kept confidential.

Date:
                    1st February 2012

Signature of Contact in Organization: Mohammed Shaheen
                          Electricity & Water Authority

Signature of Student: Kingdom of Bahrain

Signature of Supervisor:

APPENDIX 4

Company Confidentiality to Organisation 2 - GARMCO

Brunel
UNIVERSITY
L O N D O N

Brunel Business School
Research Ethics
Company Confidentiality Form

This is to confirm that the research project Career Self-Management in Ascription Culture of dissertation undertaken by Masalek Al-Haddad (0821574) in part fulfilment of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy will be viewed for assessment purposes only, by the Brunel Business School from 1st October 2008 until 12th December 2012 and then participant information will be kept confidential.

Date: 1st February 2012

Signature of Contact in Organization: KHALID MAJID ALMASTD

Signature of Student:

Signature of Supervisor:

APPENDIX 5

Interview Protocol

Invitation to Participants after Participation Acceptance

> Brunel University
> School of Business and Management
> Uxbridge
> UB8 3PH
> United Kingdom

Dear potential participant,

Thank you for accepting my request to participate in this research project on the '**Career Self-management in Ascription Culture'**. I would like you to complete read the summarise information about this project prior to our meeting. The information include here will be used as a foundation for our conversation during the interview. I would like to assure you that that the results of the interview will be remained strictly confidential. I hope to have a reflection on your career history and I look forward to talking with you about your career experiences.

Please, do not hesitate to contact me if you have any enquiries. Again, thank you very much for and your participation is highly appreciated.

_____

Masalek Al-Haddad

Masalik.Al-Haddad@brunel.ac.uk.

Participant Information Sheet

Brunel Business School
Research Ethics

1. Title of Research: Career Self-Management in Ascription Culture

2. Researcher: Masalek Al-Haddad on Doctor of Philosophy, Brunel Business School, Brunel University

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4. Purpose of the research: This thesis investigates whether theories of career self-management, developed in the USA and Western countries, apply in a culture which is different and characterised as 'ascription', for instance, the Kingdom of Bahrain. By so doing, it contributes to furthering the literature review which currently lacks research in the field of career self-management in a context other than the USA and non-Western countries.

5. What is involved: Participants will be asked to answer the interview questions through semi-structural interview methods. Three research questions organised in three categories to inform the research purpose that are: the extent and ways in which Bahraini manager participants adopt the career self-management approach and appreciate the organisational and cultural encouraging and/or limiting factors of enacting career self-management in the Kingdom of Bahrain, which has a unique culture that is probably characterised by ascription.

6. Voluntary nature of participation and confidentiality. I will conduct a meeting with organisation Human Resources manager and emphasise the importance of given the participants the option to participate and no one will be forced to participate. In addition to that the form will be sent to them later to mention that their participation in this research is totally voluntary and they can withdraw if they feel that they will encounter with any risk. I will also guarantee the participants that the records of this research will be kept private and in any sort of report that the findings of this research are published, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify their names or identities as participants. Research records and audio tapes will be kept in a locked file, and will be used only for research purposes.

APPENDIX 7

Interview Participants Profile

Introduction:

I would like to begin by thanking you for your participation in this research. Your input is very important to me and I am excited about being here to talk to you today.

Part 1-Demographic Information

Please answer the following questions regarding your personal information. Your response will be treated as highly confidential.

Name (Optional):_____

Age in Year: _____

Email (Optional):_____

Gender: _____

Educational qualification: _____

Current position: _____

Name of current organisation: _____

Tenure in the organisation: _____

APPENDIX 8

Details of the study sample

Manager Code	Company Name	Gender	Status	Age Range	Degree	Range of Years in company	Job Title
MFE6	EWA	Female	Married	36-45	Master	Above 11	Head Of Computer System Development
MME11	EWA	Male	Married	45 and above	Master	Above 11	Chief Planning And Materials
MFE16	EWA	Female	Married	45 and above	Master	Above 11	Chief Of Project
MME3	EWA	Male	Married	45 and above	Bachelor	Above 11	Chief Of Computer System Development and Maintenance
MFE4	EWA	Female	Married	45 and above	Bachelor	Above 11	Head Of Computer System Development and Maintenance
MFE19	EWA	Female	Married	45 and above	Bachelor	Above 11	Head Of Materials
MFE5	EWA	Female	Married	45 and above	Master	Above 11	Head Of Cable Project
MME10	EWA	Male	Married	45 and above	Bachelor	Above 11	Head Of Construction Contracts
MME9	EWA	Male	Married	45 and above	Bachelor	Above 11	Chief Of General Purchasing
MME12	EWA	Male	Married	45 and above	Bachelor	Above 11	Head Of Electricity Lightening Maintenance

MME13	EWA	Male	Married	45 and above	Bachelor	Above 11	Chief Street Lightings
MME10	EWA	Male	Married	45 and above	Bachelor	Above 11	Chief Of General Accounting
MME1	EWA	Male	Married	45 and above	Bachelor	Above 11	Head Of Services and Installation
MME2	EWA	Male	Married	45 and above	Bachelor	Above 11	Head Of Construction
MME7	EWA	Male	Married	45 and above	Bachelor	Above 11	Head, Employee Relations and Performance Management
MME8	EWA	Male	Married	45 and above	Bachelor	Above 11	Chief Of Electricity Transmission
MFE18	EWA	Female	Single	45 and above	PhD	Above 11	Head Of Engineering
MFE20	EWA	Female	Single	45 and above	Bachelor	Above 11	Head Of Operation Planning and Studies
MFE14	EWA	Female	Married	45 and above	Master	Above 11	Head Of Street Lightening
MFE17	EWA	Female	Married	45 and above	Bachelor	Above 11	Head Of Engineering Services
MFG3	GARMCO	Female	Married	26-35	Master	Above 11	Head Of HR Administration
MMG15	GARMCO	Male	Married	45 and above	Bachelor	Above 11	Primary Process Manager
MMG2	GARMCO	Male	Single	45 and above	PhD	Above 11	Head Of Training
MMG18	GARMCO	Male	Married	36-45	Master	Above 11	Production Planning And Control
MMG8	GARMCO	Male	Married	45 and above	Master	Above 11	Shift Manager
MMG1	GARMCO	Male	Married	45 and above	Master	Above 11	Office Manager

MMG10	GARMCO	Male	Married	36-45	Bachelor	Above 11	Cold Rolling Manager
MMG11	GARMCO	Male	Married	45 and above	Master	Above 11	Head Of Training Manager
MMG12	GARMCO	Male	Married	45 and above	Master	Above 11	Production Planning Contract And Shipping
MMG13	GARMCO	Male	Married	45 and above	Master	Above 11	Technical Manager
MMG14	GARMCO	Male	Married	45 and above	Master	Above 11	Customer Business Relation Manager
MMG16	GARMCO	Male	Married	45 and above	Bachelor	Above 11	Shift Duty Manager
MMG17	GARMCO	Male	Married	45 and above	Master	Above 11	Process Development Manager
MMG19	GARMCO	Male	Married	36-45	Bachelor	Above 11	Technical Sales Manager
MMG20	GARMCO	Male	Married	26-35	Bachelor	Above 11	Shift Manager
MMG6	GARMCO	Male	Married	45 and above	PhD	Above 11	Chief Medical Officer
MMG7	GARMCO	Male	Married	45 and above	Bachelor	Above 11	Shift Manager
MMG9	GARMCO	Male	Married	45 and above	Bachelor	Above 11	GM Operations
MMG4	GARMCO	Male	Married	45 and above	Master	Above 11	Safety And Security Manager
MMG5	GARMCO	Male	Married	45 and above	Bachelor	Above 11	Shift Manager