

## CHAPTER VII

### VARIABLES OF IMPORTANCE IN ATTITUDE RELATED RESEARCH

#### 7.1 INTRODUCTION

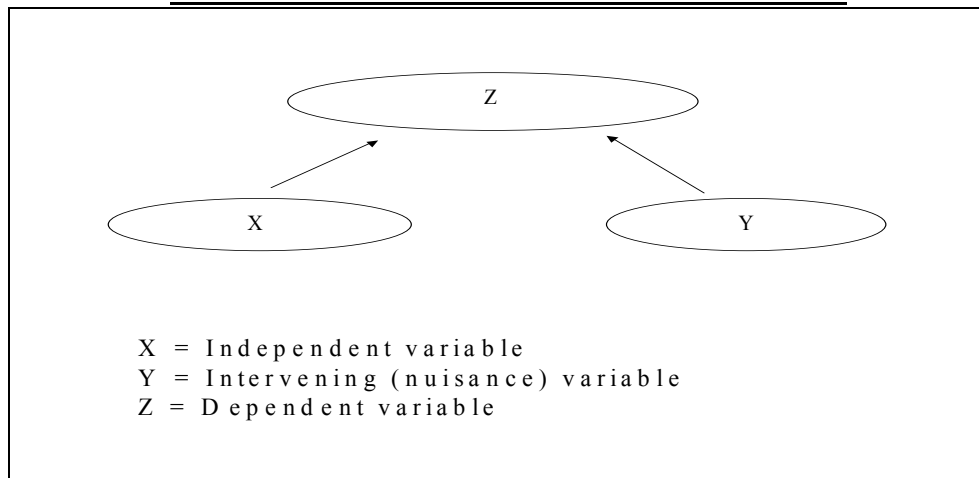
In this chapter the important variables in research related to attitude are extensively discussed. On the basis of a literature survey, eight (8) independent variables have been selected to explore the relationships among the dependent variables (work motivation needs, internality, externality, autonomy, and the transformation factors). The main independent variables that may be responsible for differences in the dependent variables are gender, religion, language, educational qualifications, income, age, occupational level, and geographical area employed in. These variables may all have an important bearing on the perceptions, work-related attitudes and work-related needs of the different individuals and groups within this changing organization. The concept “nuisance variable” and the control thereof are focused on.

#### 7.2 EXPLORATION OF POSSIBLE NUISANCE VARIABLES

Mason and Bramble (1989:433) define variables as characteristics of persons, objects, groups, and events to which qualitative and quantitative values can be assigned. However, De la Rey (1978:11) offers a more elaborate description of a variable. He sees it as “any psychological attribute, quality, characteristic or feature, or norm of judgement on which people tend to differ”. Variables have to differentiate between people. De la Rey (op.cit.) views research as generally successful only when the observed changes in behaviour can be attributed to the Independent Variable (IV). However, it would not be possible for a psychologist to control all factors and variables that may have an influence on the results of the research. Variables that may have an unwanted effect on the findings of the research are called nuisance variables (also called intervening variables or extraneous variables) (De la Rey, 1978:12; Mason *et al.*, 1989:63). Psychologists try to control these variables that may contaminate and obscure the results of research. If it is impossible to control these nuisance variables while planning the research, psychologists may control the intervening variables statistically by means of analysis of covariance. A nuisance variable is also known as a covariate (De la Rey, 1978:12). These covariates may intervene between an independent variable, and dependent variable, affecting the direct relationship between input and output variables (Baker, 1988:289). Nuisance variables may contaminate the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable (De la Rey, 1978:12) and

psychologists try to control these nuisance variables to minimize the effects on the results of experiment or survey (Mason et al., 1989:69). Baker (1988:464) views such a control variable as a third variable in a trivariate analysis. The relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variable is examined under each condition of the control variable. The relationship between the independent and dependent variables and the nuisance (control) variable intervening between them is diagrammatically presented in Figure 7.1.

**FIGURE 7.1: AN INTERVENING RELATIONSHIP OF VARIABLES.**



(Source: Healy, 1990:342)

Figure 7.1 shows a trivariate relationship with the intervening variable occurring between the independent and dependent variables. As previously stated the psychologist controls the nuisance variable statistically by means of analysis of covariance. Tabachnick and Fidell (1983:14) consider analysis of covariance as an analysis of variance which includes one or more extraneous or control variables in addition to the independent variables and a single dependent variable. The analysis of covariance is based on the possibility of a linear correlation between covariates and the dependent variable. This relationship is or can be evaluated by statistically testing the effect of covariates as a source of variance in the dependent variable (Tabachnick et al., 1983:178). The researcher contemplates to control for possible nuisance variables in order to ascertain the true relationship between the dependent and independent variables.

### 7.3 MAIN INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

Individual differences, group differences, and organizational systems variables all impact on work-related attitudes and organizational behaviour. The main variables that may be responsible for group differences in survey data are gender, religion, language, educational qualifications, income, occupational level and geographic area. These variables would be discussed next.

#### 7.3.1 GENDER

Gender and gender role differences might impact on socialization, work values, perceptions, work-related attitudes and needs, as well as organizational behaviour. Gender and gender role differences will be discussed next.

Men and women are equal in terms of learning ability, memory, reasoning ability, creativity, and intelligence (Ragins, Townsend and Mattis, 1998:28-42). Because men and women are treated differently from birth, their worldviews might differ. The impact of religion and culture on gender role stereotypes (men are the breadwinners, women are the caretakers), the way people were socialized in South Africa and some practices like job reservation (or the glass-ceiling effect), might lead to assumptions, stereotyping, and prejudice of gender groups. But there is no evidence that men or women are better job performers (Gibson *et al.*, 2000:96). In a society where equal opportunity and fair treatment are becoming more important, the genders' work behaviour would become more alike, but we still need to respect and value all the diversity components in the organization. This implies that individuals should be respected and valued for their differences, and be treated equally, as long as the treatment is fair as well. Many managers perceive and treat all people alike, even though men and women might differ on issues like work-related needs, locus of control orientation, and work-related attitudes. With this background the other main variables are discussed next.

#### 7.3.2 RELIGION

Adam and Moodley (1986:44) see religion as related to the origin of the uncertainty avoidance syndrome; and high uncertainty avoidance cultures have pragmatic or introvert, meditative religions. The authors further note that Catholicism is seen as a more masculine form of religion than Protestantism of which certain currents allow women as clergy. Religion has played a decisive role in South Africa in the mobilization for ethnicity. Afrikaner nationalism achieved its goal of securing control of the South African state

through a skilful manipulation of the group's symbolic resources, e.g. language and religion. Ethnic entrepreneurs used religion to create a relatively strong sense of unity and forged a sense of identity among Afrikaners (Adam and Moodley, 1986:44).

The Dutch Reformed Church with its earlier strong Calvinist orientation has given Apartheid its religious basis. It seems that from 1935 onwards, the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) made little attempt to base its views and policies on the Scriptures when formulating its stand upon social issues. Instead, it took traditional Afrikaner norms as motivation for its decisions. "It believed that God created nations and shaped their destinies: the course along which a nation was guided, in other words the 'traditional', was an expression of God's will and was thus in accordance with the Scriptures. As Afrikaner nationalists, the church leaders believed in Apartheid and used scattered texts and the history of Israel to provide some moral justification for their actions" (Giliomee and Schlemmer, 1989:46). Religion is also far more important to the Afrikaans group and has a strong influence on their behaviour. Although the church has occupied a central place in the social values of the Afrikaans people, there are signs that the Calvinist tradition is losing its grip. English speakers do not attach the same importance to religion as the Afrikaans group in the sense that they do not entertain a Calvinist view of themselves as "a chosen people" (Hanf, Weiland and Vierdag, 1981:166-169).

Black theology with its emphasis on material, political and spiritual suffering has been seen as an unifying religious bond. But religious Black theology does not have an united pervasive church as Latin American liberation theology has in the Roman Catholic Church. It does not encourage a separate religious ethnicity. On the contrary, Black theology laments the behaviour of fellow brothers and sisters who are failing in their Christian duty. It advocates initiatives fundamentally at odds with the world view of the adversary just as Afrikaner Calvinism perceived Anglican, Catholic and Jewish faiths (Adam and Moodley, 1986:49-50).

### 7.3.3 LANGUAGE

Afrikaner nationalism also used the Afrikaans language as a symbolic resource to forge Afrikaner identity. Language has been a primary contributor to ethnic prosperity once the Afrikaner was able to use the state to further Afrikaner occupational opportunities (job reservation) in the public service as well as in spreading state capitalism. The Afrikaans language was the mobilizing and unifying force in channeling the displaced and impoverished Afrikaans people away from socialism into the ethnic fold by providing

protective employment and status in a racial caste system (Adam et al., 1986:44). Black people, however, do not have a single unifying language.

The African tradition of communalism fosters close kinship ties and reinforces ethnic solidarity in African society. The mutual social obligations within the particular tribe or clan establish cohesive bonds and are backed by a much higher degree of state organization and group awareness than among Whites. But heritage of language is not a unifying force among the different clans or tribes forging a particular identity on the Blacks. To insist on Zulu or Xhosa or Sotho to communicate in an interdependent industrial setting would bar Africans from jobs, education and occupational opportunities that depend on a mastery of official languages.

“The indigenous language (be it Xhosa, Zulu or Sotho) was used as a medium of resistance, a secret underground code during the struggle for equality (many non-black people still have this perception), but it is not the language of material success. These oppositional modes of African expression are however not perceived as in need of rescue from the danger of Anglicisation, let alone absorption into Afrikanerdom” observe Adam et al. (1986:47-50). A language struggle was not necessary to save the indigenous languages from extinction, unlike the Afrikaans-speaking people who had to fight for the preservation of their language and language rights against the British.

Black students, regardless of ideological outlook, prefer to be educated in English, but without giving up their linguistic heritage. Contrary to Afrikaans and English, the indigenous languages only retain regional importance but are insignificant in the arena of national or international politics. As Black consciousness includes awareness of the three designated racial groups of Africans, Coloureds and Indians, and is based on the common political factor of discrimination and not common cultural affinities, the emergence of a single African language as a unifying cultural symbol would alienate Africans using other African vernaculars as well as the Coloureds and the Indians who have little historical relationships with African culture (Adam et al., 1986:48-49).

The legacy of “apartheid” might still cause resistance and antagonism of people on the basis that they speak Afrikaans. The perception of previously disadvantaged and oppressed people in South Africa (Africans, Coloureds and Indians) might still be that Afrikaans is the language of the “oppressor”, which can lead to unnecessary stereotyping or labelling of

Afrikaans people. It is of vital importance to understand that the perceptions, attitudes, and needs of people are different, and that people can be prejudged just because they are different. This could be true for Afrikaans speaking South Africans as well as-people who can and will make a valuable contribution to transformation, but through prejudice are not allowed to do so. The other side of the coin should be taken into consideration as well-the legacy of Apartheid can still show its ugly face of “better than”. The feelings of superiority displayed by some Afrikaans people are still evident in many organizations, specifically during transformation and affirmative action initiatives. The “better than” syndrome was very evident in the racist society of the old South Africa, but could still influence some people who have internalized that they are “better than” or “less than”.

#### 7.3.4 EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

There is a close relationship between educational qualifications and the abilities, skills, and competencies needed for job performance. Illiteracy and the lack of basic knowledge and skills can impact on the quest of organizations to move forward (Luthans, 1998:62).

From 1948-1992, when the National Party ruled, an education policy of Christian National education has been in place in South Africa. The Christian principle of this policy means that education should be based on the Bible while the Nationalist principle demands that for all ethnic groups the educational system should inculcate love of “their own”, love for their country, language, history and culture<sup>1</sup>. Religion was thus linked to education to foster certain desired value systems.

However, in the case of African education a close link was advocated between schooling and the so-called “homelands” (Gilomee *et al.*, 1989:52). The whole system of Bantu education (as it was known) has led to immense dissatisfaction among the African people. The system rejected preparing black students for incorporation into industrial society. This education<sup>2</sup> system was based on the principle that the black child had to be “trained and conditioned in the Bantu culture ... The schools must also regard the fact that out of school hours the young Bantu child develops and lives in a Bantu community and when he reaches maturity he will be concerned with sharing and developing the life and culture of that community”. Blacks viewed this education system as “second class”, designed to give them

---

<sup>1</sup> Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurvereniginge. 1948. *Christelike Nasionale Onderwysbeleid*. Johannesburg: FAK. <sup>2</sup> Report of the Commission on Native Education. Eiselen Report, UG 53/1951, paragraphs 773-774.

an inferior training” (Hanf *et al.*, 1981:274). The Black youth also regarded this educational system as evil and a symbol of the whole hated system of Apartheid. Black schools were, and in most cases still are overcrowded which subsequently lowered the quality of teaching and increased pupils’ fears for the future (Hanf *et al.*, 1981:274).

A growth in Gross Domestic Product, an increase in personal wealth and dispensable income, the attainment of a higher standard of living and national economic growth, and the competitive position of Blacks in the labour market demanded an education, grounding the South African population in the basic components of literacy and technical training. The economy has specific and compelling needs of its own. Economic growth can only be attained and sustained if the necessary schooled manpower is delivered through an advanced education system combining human resources planning and educational reform, making education and training more relevant and realistic (Bethlehem, 1988:224-225).

Again the legacy of Apartheid could impact on the work-related needs, perceptions and attitudes of different people, specifically during transformation.

#### 7.3.5 INCOME

Income is strongly correlated with inequality in society in the areas of social status and wealth distribution. In South Africa there is a concentration of wealth in the White population and widespread poverty among Blacks that implies a close relationship between income level and ethnicity. This relationship underlies the charge that the essence of Apartheid has been exploitation and labour control. Ethnicity and class overlap to a high degree in South Africa. According to Giliomee *et al.*(1989:103) the Apartheid order spawned a whole set of policies which favoured White over Black groups and the Afrikaners over the rest of the Whites. As a result of these policies, the income distribution and the distribution of status and prestige of Whites and Black groups remained badly imbalanced. Apartheid was the common platform on which all the classes within Afrikanerdom joined forces with the common purpose to advance Afrikanerdom’s interests.

Successive Nationalist governments expanded public and semi-state corporations to promote Afrikaner economic progress. The agricultural sector of which 80% were Afrikaners, were economically enabled by marketing boards, agricultural cooperatives and other forms of

---

governmental intervention. The small Black bourgeoisie consists mostly of professional people but only a few of its members possess substantial independent wealth. Adam *et al.* (1986:16-17) formulate the income problem lucidly: “An emerging Black bureaucratic middle class is achieving salary parity but is still frustrated by indignities of status. For a long time the few Black businessmen operated under so many severe restrictions that to all intents and purposes a free-enterprise system did not exist for them. Likewise, the Black labour market is constrained by influx control and bureaucratic tyranny... Historically shortages in the local labour market have been filled by immigration from Europe rather than by training the indigenous subordinate population. With such a history of inequality, discrimination and neglect, it is not surprising that few cross-cutting ties and interests between the same strata in the different groups have developed to blunt the collective perceptions of another”. Many of these facts highlighted by Adams *et al.* (1986) are in the process of change (labour legislation, skills development and NQF), but despite those changes the perceptions still exist among Black people that inequality, discrimination and neglect are still in existence. The fact is Apartheid might cause South Africans to suffer for many years to come.

The legacy of Apartheid still impacts on educational levels and income levels, which in turn could explain differences in the work-related needs, perceptions and attitudes of different people, specifically during transformation.

#### 7.3.6 OCCUPATIONAL LEVEL

According to Theron (1992:309) interesting differences in regard to occupation and type of work existed in South African society until 1992. Afrikaans speaking people were over-represented in the primary sector, transport and the civil service. English speaking people formed the bulk of employees in industry, commerce and banking and were heavily represented in the upper strata of the private sector. Black people formed the bulk of semi-skilled and unskilled labour. Very few black people were found in managerial and executive positions. This is still very much the situation, as there is an unsatisfied demand for competent people from the previously disadvantaged groups. Hofstede (1980a:105) finds that lower education and lower status occupations tend to produce high Power Distance Index (PDI) values. The opposite is true for the higher education and higher status occupations. Occupational level is also associated with Uncertainty Avoidance in the sense that stress differences can be identified due to occupation. For example, Friedman and Rosenman (in Hofstede, 1980a:163) have created a distinction between persons showing



Type A and Type B behaviour. The Type A person tries to do more things in less time and is seven times more likely to develop coronary heart disease. Hofstede (1980a:242-246) also finds two factors by means of principal axis factoring with varimax rotation, comprising work goals across occupations. He calls the first factor intrinsic/extrinsic and the second social-ego. The intrinsic variables are on the positive side and refer to job content while the negative pole (extrinsic) refers to job context. The social pole of the social-ego factor refers to nurturance while the ego pole refers to assertiveness. High scoring occupations on the first factor are departmental managers, divisional managers and headquarter managers. Low scoring occupations are semi-skilled and unskilled workers.

Occupational level could have an impact on the work-related needs, perceptions and attitudes of different people, specifically with affirmative action initiatives and organization transformation.

#### 7.3.7 AGE AND YEARS OF SERVICE

Age and years of service are other important independent variables, which may have a significant influence on results. Employment stability is a function on the average age of its incumbents – the older they are, the more stable they would be. Young white people are supposed to become more liberal and young black people more militant (Theron, 1992:310). Differences in values among respondents of different ages may be due to maturation, seniority, generation and/or zeitgeist. Maturation implies that the respondents' values change as they grow older. Seniority effects occur when people become more senior in their organization and have acquired greater commitment, greater frustration, or perhaps a lower market value elsewhere. Generational effects mean that values are fixed in youth and stay with their age cohorts over its lifetime. Drastically different conditions during youth may lead to different generations having different fixed values. Zeitgeist refers to drastic system-wide changes in conditions that cause a shift in everyone's values (regardless of age) (Hofstede, 1980a:344-345).

South African organizations discriminate against people on grounds of their age. During transformation and retrenchments it is easy to utilize a uniform principle to “get rid of” staff because of their age. The first-in-first-out (FIFO) principle discriminates against older people with more experience. The last-in-first-out (LIFO) principle discriminates against younger people with less experience. These practices are not carefully thought through. The loss of human capital is not an asset to any organization, and these principles, uniformly

applied, and is in conflict with valuing of workforce diversity. Any practices of discrimination based on age are not only illegal but does not make business sense. With this background it is clear that differences in age, and years of service could impact on perceptions, work-related attitudes, and work-related needs, specifically during change and down-sizing.

#### 7.3.8 GEOGRAPHICAL AREA

Geographical area is another independent variable, which may have a significant influence on results. Despite the Head Office of the organization, located in Pretoria, staff at all twenty-four Branch Offices were included in the research. They are:

- Beaufort West;
- Bethlehem;
- Bloemfontein;
- Calvinia;
- Cradock;
- Ermelo;
- George;
- Heidelberg;
- Cape Town;
- Kroonstad;
- Lichtenburg;
- Middelburg;
- Nelspruit;
- Mokopane;
- Pietermaritzburg;
- Polokwane;
- Port Elizabeth;
- Potchefstroom;
- Pretoria;
- Rustenburg;
- Tzaneen;
- Upington;
- Vryburg, and
- Vryheid.

From the list it is evident that a diversity of areas and possible subcultures have been covered in this study. Every branch office has its own leadership climate, power and politics, communication, decision-making, competencies, values, attitudes, and perceptions. These geographical areas, which can be very unique, might indicate significant differences in the work-related needs, perceptions and attitudes of people.

#### 7.4 CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, the independent variables applicable to this research were discussed. Gender and gender role differences might impact on socialization, work values, perceptions, work-related attitudes and needs, and organizational behaviour. Differences among subjects of different ages and years of service may be due to maturation, seniority, generation or zeitgeist. Values shift as the subjects grow older. Different generations may also have different fixed values that also influence work-related attitudes and needs. But events may also occur which lead to drastic value shifts regardless of age. The language split in South Africa is still a hot political issue. It is emotionally charged and is a result of historical events. Religion is another variable of importance in this time of change, which may have a profound influence on subjects' value systems, work-related attitudes, and work-related needs. Educational qualifications, abilities, competencies, income, occupational levels, and geographic area researched all have a bearing on work-related needs and attitudes.