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**STUDENT EXPECTATIONS OF FUTURE LIFE ROLES**

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**COMPULSORY DECLARATION:**

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works of other people has been attributed, cited and referenced.

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Abstract

Work and family are the two most significant life domains for most individuals (Greenhaus, Collins & Shaw, 2003). Compositional and structural changes in the work and family domains over the past few decades such as: dual-earner couples and single working parents, the decline of traditional gender roles and a movement toward egalitarian family structures have rendered increased understanding and reconciliation of family and working life (Steil, 2007). Such work- family considerations, however, are not only important for adults within the workforce, but also for young adults who are in the process of making future family and career decisions, and are about to enter the workforce (Westring & Ryan, 2011). The purpose of this study was to explore how students understand and distinguish between different life roles, and therefore gain insight into the expectations they have of their future life roles. Using Kelly's Repertory Grids Technique, qualitative data was obtained through fifteen interviews with postgraduate students from the University of Cape Town. The data was analysed using a combination of thematic analysis and frequency counts. The reliability of the results was ensured by conducting two sets of reliability checks. Following thematic analysis, eight dyadic themes emerged: self-interest- selflessness, demanding- relaxing, collaboration- independence, freedom- restriction, affective- unaffectionate, boring- enjoyment, structured- flexible, and personal satisfaction- obligation. These themes revealed values and attributes students perceive as significant in the construal of their future life roles. The results were interpreted and discussed in light of existing research and literature in the field.

*Keywords:* work-family interface, life role salience, emergent adulthood, future expectations

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## **Chapter One: Introduction**

Work and family are the two most significant life domains for most individuals (Greenhaus, Collins & Shaw, 2003). While the balancing of personal and work lives has always been an issue of interest for both researchers and organisations, dramatic changes in the demographic composition of both work and family, along with increased international trends regarding employee well-being have sparked increased interest in the interaction of these two domains (Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1999). These changes in the work and family domains include: changes in the structure of the workplace, an increase in the percentage of dual-earner couples and single working parents, the decline of traditional gender roles and a movement toward egalitarian family structures (Clark, 2001; Gareis, Barnett, Ertel & Berkman, 2009; Swody & Powell, 2007). In addition, advancement in information technology has also prompted further changes in the structure of the workplace such as flexible working hours and working from home (Potgieter & Barnard, 2010). Consequently, the increase in competing pressure to support a family, have a fulfilling career, become an active member of a community and earn an income have become a challenge for most men and women who are currently fulfilling these life roles, as well as for young adults who have expectations around these future life roles (Byron, 2005; Westring & Ryan, 2011).

As indicated by research, the plans of adolescents and young adults also manifest anticipated active participation in both work and family roles (Peake & Harris, 2002). As a result, most adolescents within developed economies dedicate their formative years to education and relationships in order to prepare for their future life roles (Cinamon, 2010). Consequently, the expectations and understanding that young adults attribute to a future roles, will have a large influence on how a set of adult roles will be managed balanced once they are acquired. In addition, young people's occupational choices are also influenced by the way in which they prioritise their work and family roles (Smithson, 1999). However, there is little empirical evidence as to the attitudes of young people towards the management of the work and family domains (Loughlin & Barling, 2001; Smola & Sutton, 2002).

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Compositional and structural changes in the work and family domains have also been accompanied by changing attitudes and perceptions towards work and family roles (Patel, Govender, Paruk, & Ramgoon, 2006). In the past, role identity importance and expectations about role priorities were determined primarily by gender (Novack & Novack, 1996). Contemporary young adults, however, anticipate more varied involvement in work and family roles (Willinger, 1993). Men no longer define themselves exclusively by their work, and the home role is no longer assumed by women alone (Amatea, Cross, Clark, & Bobby, 1986). Moreover, more men are taking on household and parenting responsibilities in addition to their work responsibilities, and for many women, pursuing a career and not having children or having them later in their life has also become a viable option (Rothbard & Edwards, 2003). As a result, traditional gender roles within a family setting have shifted so that family responsibilities are equally shared between couples. Such shifts in responsibility may influence young adults' attitudes and expectations towards gender roles, thereby affecting their involvement, commitment or salience attributed to work-and-family roles (Friedman & Weissbrod, 2005).

Furthermore, with increased concern for work-life balance and well-being, researchers are also turning their attention to life roles beyond the work and family domains, such as the leisure and community roles (Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman & Lance, 2010; The Social Report, 2010). As indicated by research, non-work activities are being progressively perceived as important by both individuals in the workforce and those anticipating to go into the workforce (Saxbe, Repetti & Gracesch, 2011; Peake & Harris, 2002). For instance, leisure activities have become one of the primary ways which working individuals use to recover from multiple role demands and longer working days (Saxbe et al., 2011). Correspondingly, research indicates that young adults anticipating to go into the workforce are placing increasing importance on work-life balance and leisure activities, than for traditionally defined career success involving high salaries, prestigious job titles, and intensive work hours, than their predecessors (Twenge et al., 2010). Consequently, young adults are also becoming increasingly focused with choosing an occupation that allows sufficient time and flexibility for non-work activities and interests (Bond & Friedman, 1993).

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In addition to increased participation in leisure, research has also indicated increased participation in community involvement through volunteering and social conversation, among both working individuals and students (Clutterbuck, 2003; Coimbra, Andrade & Fontaine, 2003; Needleman, 2008; Trudeau & Devlin, 1996). As a result, increasingly more organisations are reporting high levels of employee activity in communities through internal and external volunteering programmes (Clutterbuck, 2003). Similarly, research also indicates that schools and universities are more committed than ever, to developing engaged citizens with an appreciation for diversity and concern for the understanding of welfare of others, by providing programmes and opportunities for students to discern an understanding of their responsibility to the larger community (Clutterbuck, 2003; Trudeau & Devlin, 1996). This shift towards increased leisure participation and community involvement therefore highlights an increased need for understanding the expectations' young adults have of these roles, as well as the plans they have for integrating them with potentially demanding work and family lives (Potgieter & Barnard, 2010). To echo this point, Greenhaus and Powell (2006) also emphasise the fact that life roles are interconnected and interdependent, and should be viewed simultaneously when researching the work-family interface (Cinamon & Rich, 2002b; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006).

Ultimately, the extent to which men and women continue to engage in caring within families, participate in paid employment, participate in community activities and pursue leisure activities renders increased understanding and reconciliation of family and working life (Steil, 2007). Such work- family considerations, however, are not only important for adults within the workforce, but also for young adults who are in the process of making future family and career decisions, and are about to enter the workforce (Westring & Ryan, 2011).

The critical period of emergent adulthood, the period between the late teens and early 20s, when young persons are exposed but not yet committed to different jobs and intimate personal relationships is a critical period in addressing potential work-family issues (Cinamon, 2006). The personal expectations young adults have of different life roles during this period affects their plans not only for role acquisition, but also role balance and conflict, and ultimately influences how they will fulfill their

responsibilities in organisational roles (Cinamon & Rich, 2002b; Greer & Egan, 2012). However, current research indicates a gap in the understanding of young adults' expectations of the work-family interface (Brott, 2005). Research also indicates that much of the extant work-family literature on multiple life roles predominantly on work-life conflict and work-life balance, focusing primarily on women issues, gender differences and dual career couples (Brott, 2005). Less emphasis however, has been placed on young people and their attitudes and expectations towards the management of the work-family family domains. Furthermore, it is unarguable that university students at this critical stage in their lives and careers may be closer to the reality of issues facing the workers, than high school students (Dally-Trim & Alloway, 2010). However, research indicates that more attention has been given to examining the attitudes and expectations of adolescents, rather than on university students (Dally-Trim & Alloway, 2010), many of whom are just about to enter their first period of full-time employment and are making decisions about family roles. Moreover, Greene, Wheatley and Aldava (1992) also assert that university students show a reasonably higher convergence with regards to expectations than adolescents, as older students appear to have a better shared vision of adult life. Finally, research further indicates that, to date, much of the research on multiple roles research has been predominantly descriptive, leaving a further gap in work-family research (Greer & Egan, 2012). Consequently researchers are awakening to the significant need to assess individual life roles in way that reveals personal meaning and builds awareness within the individual through the use of qualitative methods such as interviews (Brown & Brooks, 1991).

Thus, the goals of this research are to explore how young adults understand and distinguish between different life roles, and thus gain insight into the expectations these young adults have of their future life roles. This study aims to contribute to the limited research on university student's expectations of the work-family interface as a means of bridging the gap between expectations and lived experiences upon assuming work-family roles. The findings of this qualitative exploration are hoped to complement the results of existing quantitative studies, and thus provide further insight into the anticipated interrelations between work-and-family domain.

### **Structure of the Dissertation**

Chapter one of the dissertation provides an introduction to the research by providing a context for the study and affirming the importance of the study. Chapter Two presents a comprehensive literature review of relevant theoretical background and current and past research findings. Chapter three describes the overarching methodological framework of the study, along with detailed information on the research design, the participants, the data collection process and the data analysis techniques used. Chapter four presents the results of the qualitative data analysis. The final chapter, Chapter Five discusses key findings that emerged from the study, with reference to the existing literature in the area of work and family. In addition, the final chapter discusses recommendations for future research and practical and theoretical contributions of the study.

## **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

This chapter presents a focused review of the relevant literature on the multiple role theory of the work-family interface. This chapter begins with a description of the literature search methods used to gather literature on the theoretical framework, life role salience and expectations of the work-family interface. Following that, the chapter is organized into three main sections. First, the chapter provides an introduction of the theoretical framework for the work-family interface as explained by role theory. To provide an improved understanding of the work-family interface, the second section provides a conceptualisation of role salience, while the third section focuses on the expectations work-family interface.

### **Literature Search Procedure**

The primary literature search was conducted over a period of six months (February – July 2013). A computer-based search was conducted within the following databases: PsycINFO, PsycARTICLES, ERIC, Academic Source Premier, Business Source Premier, Afriwide Information Science Direct, Emerald and Jstor. Due to limited research on the anticipated work-family interface, a broad range of search terms were used so as to not exclude any potentially relevant studies. The search terms included “work”, “family”, “community” “civic role”, “leisure”, “career” “conflict”, “balance”, “interface”, “role salience”, “role acquisition”, “self-identity”, “role investment”, “self-efficacy”, “expectations”, “anticipated”, “future”, “students”, “college”, “parental influence”, “role involvement”. These terms were entered using multiple combinations with reference to the thesaurus provided by the database. The Boolean search option was used to reduce the exclusion of relevant journals from the literature search based on the variation of the search words. Following the initial search, secondary searches were conducted every month to scan for updates on the databases.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Role Theory**

Research on multiple role occupancy has primarily been explained in terms of the role theory perspective (Barnett & Gareis, 2006). The role theory perspective attempts to explain the interactions between individuals in organisations by focusing on the roles they play in and out of the organisation. According to this theory, the world can be metaphorically described as a theatre stage in which all the men and women are merely players: they all have their exits and their entrances, and one individual in his life time plays many parts (Super, 1980). This theory therefore considers most of everyday activity to be the acting out of one or more socially defined categories or roles, such as being a mother, doctor or friend (Turner, 1956). In acting out these socially defined roles, role theory argues that the behaviour of individuals in each of these roles is guided by a collection of expectations, norms, beliefs, rights and duties that a person has to fulfill (Turner, 1956). Each role has its own corresponding set of expectations norms, beliefs, rights and duties, which can be held both by the individual occupying the role, and by other people (Gordon, 1976). Consequently, roles connect us to culture and motivate us to behave a particular way in particular situations (Gordon, 1976). Although the same roles have been repeatedly played in different cultures throughout history Turner (1956), every society has its own norms regarding how the roles should be fulfilled.

Furthermore, roles are best understood as not fixed but as something that is constantly negotiated between individuals (Greer & Egan, 2010). As a result, individuals will often change their beliefs and attitudes to correspond with their roles (Gordon, 1976). It is therefore important that roles not be viewed as separate and distinct units, but maybe somewhat porous and therefore affected by other roles (Greer & Egan, 2010). Ultimately, role theory asserts that in order to change behaviour it is necessary to change roles.

### **Scarcity Perspective**

Much of the extant work-family literature adopts a scarcity perspective (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). The scarcity perspective is informed by the Role Stress Theory which assumes that conflict within a role (intra-role) and conflict from multiple roles (inter-role) can result in undesirable states (Barnett & Gareis, 2006; Goode, 1974). According to the scarcity perspective, individuals have limited time and energy, the more time and energy a person invests in a particular role, the less time and energy the individual will have for other roles (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Ocholla, 2002). Consequently, adding extra roles and responsibilities often creates tensions between competing demands and a sense of strain and inter-role conflicts (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Furthermore, multiple roles are interconnected not only within, but also across individuals (MacDermid, Leslie, & Bissonnette, 2001), therefore if the multiple roles are not managed effectively, the individual's total role obligations may ultimately become over demanding resulting in negative work-family outcomes (Randall, 1988; Rossi & Rossi, 1990). Examining young adults' attitudes and expectations regarding multiple roles may therefore assist individuals in avoiding negative work-family outcomes such as work-family conflict and role strain, and help facilitate positive outcomes associated with multiple role participation (Conlon, 2002).

### **The Expansionist Perspective**

The recent shift in focus from negative organisational behaviours and outcomes toward a more positive stance provides a fresh perspective through which to view the work-family interface (Seligman, 2000). Critics of the role scarcity theory have questioned the idea that work and family always are competitors and have instead highlighted the possible benefits of occupying multiple roles (Barnett & Hyde, 2001). This notion of positive benefits to occupying multiple roles has therefore given increased popularity to the expansionist perspective (Marks, 1977). Informed by the Role Accumulation theory, the expansionist perspective argues that the rewards associated with multiple roles such as self-esteem and recognition; may possibly counterweigh the negative outcomes of multiple roles (Marks, 1977). Ultimately, the expansionist perspective asserts that resources and rewards gained from participation in multiple roles may provide satisfaction and gratification, and positive outcomes

which assist with the participation in these roles (Sieber, 1974).

In light of the above perspectives, it can be argued that there are many interpersonal differences regarding how individuals combine life roles and view the roles they occupy (Cook, 1994). Multiple roles can therefore be a source of gratification or a source of strain or conflict in an individual's lives, either serving to enrich or interfere with one another (Seligman, 2000). Understanding the expectations young adults have of their future life could therefore assist them not only in managing and integrating these various life roles successfully, but also to reap the benefits associated with occupying different life roles once they are assumed.

### **Role Investment**

According to Marks (1977) roles invested with importance are more likely to be enacted with energy and excitement, while other roles are perceived to be interfering with the major role. This phenomenon is known as role investment and can be defined as the attitudes and behaviours associated with a person's devotion to a role (Greehaus & Beutell, 1985). In researching the work-family interface, it is important to understand what motivates individuals to invest in certain roles and not others, or invest in certain roles more than others (Greehaus & Beutell, 1985; Winkel & Clayton, 2010). While investment in a particular role increases performance within that role, investment can also cause conflict between roles, in that investing in one role often makes it difficult to fulfil the demands of other roles (Greehaus & Beutell, 1985). Therefore work and family investments are central to role performance and are often the driving forces underlying the conflict between work and family (Rothbard & Edwards, 2003). Consequently, the process of investment in work and family roles has significant implications for work-family research and organisations, yet, it remains an area of research that is poorly understood (Lambert, 1990).

Researchers have presented various competing approaches to explain how individuals invest in different roles (Lobel, 1991). Two competing approaches are discussed in this literature review, namely, the Utilitarian Approach and the Social Identity theory (Lobel, 1991; Tajfel & Turner, 1985). These two perspectives provide

fundamentally different explanations for why a person chooses to invest in a particular role. The Utilitarian perspective argues that people choose to invest in roles that provide pleasure and produce pain or displeasure (McAllister, 1953). In contrast, the identity perspective asserts that investment in a role is not based on hedonistic concerns, but rather on the strength of one's identification with a role (McAllister, 1953). Both identity and utilitarian motives have been found to be significant predictors of time investment in work and family roles (Rothbard & Edwards, 2003). Researching students' expectations may therefore shed insight on role investment decisions of young adults, and thus provide important information on how organisations can attract, retain and motivate young adults who are about to enter the workforce.

**Utilitarian perspective.** The utilitarian approach to role investment is distinguished by the emphasis it places on role rewards and costs in determining levels of role investment (Lobel, 1991). This approach argues that since an exchange process occurs between the individual and the environment, an individual's investment in a particular role is dependent on the environment's ability to provide meaningful rewards and minimise costs (Homans, 1976). The utilitarian perspective is typically associated with short-term behavioural choices and relies on basic hedonistic and approach/avoidance arguments, suggesting that humans seek pleasurable experiences and avoid painful ones (McAllister, 1953).

According to this approach, individuals invest in roles that are pleasurable or rewarding and avoid investing in roles that are displeasurable or costly (Lobel, 1999; Scanlan & Simons, 1992; Podilchak, 1991). As such, people invest in roles that provide a favourable balance of rewards to costs. Individuals increase their involvement in roles that they find pleasurable and decrease their involvement in roles that they find displeasurable (Lambert, 1990; Podilchak, 1991). Thus, an individual's investment in a role is likely to increase when he or she perceives his or her important needs and values to be satisfied by the rewards tied to that role (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984). For example, if an individual values wealth and pleasure, the individual is likely to invest in a role that he/she perceives as most likely to meet those needs. Conversely, an individual's investment in a role is likely to decrease when he/she perceives a lack

of opportunity for rewards that correspond to his or her values (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984). In extreme situations, the individual may even be tempted to withdraw and seek rewards in another role or domain.

The utilitarian perspective relies on hedonistic and approach/avoidance arguments, therefore it does not distinguish between whether pleasure and displeasure are derived from intrinsic or extrinsic sources. Rather, it focuses more generally on positive and negative effect, whereby pleasure is defined as positive affect associated with a role and displeasure as negative affect associated with a role (Elliot & Thrash, 2002). Moreover, it is argued that the notions of pleasure and displeasure that characterise the utilitarian approach do not lie on opposite ends of a continuum but instead are independent in dimensions of emotion (Watson & Tellegen, 1985) such that people in a highly volatile work or family role could experience both high negative and positive affect. Following the utilitarian perspective, individuals who receive pleasure from a role would devote more time to the role because they have a preference for engaging in enjoyable roles and activities, and, conversely, individuals who received displeasure from a role would choose to devote less time to the role because they have a preference for avoiding roles and activities that are displeasurable. Like identification theory, utilitarian considerations associated with one role affects investment in another role.

**Identity perspective.** The Social Identity Theory is another approach that has been commonly used to explain role investment (Tajfel & Turner, 1985). The social identity theory approach makes use of the concept of identity salience to explain the role investment choices that people make (Stryker & Serpe, 1994). Role identity salience is the meaning that one attributes to himself or herself by virtue of occupying a particular role in a social structure that he or she subsequently views as descriptive of oneself (McAllister, 1953). According to the social identity theory, increasing identity salience with a particular group predicts increasing investment in the associated role, investment in life roles is therefore based on the strength of the connection to one's identity (Rothbard & Edwards, 1982; Stryker & Serpe, 2003). This theory argues that individuals classify themselves as members of various social groups and as a result develop multiple identities from their interactions with others within these social

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groups such as mother or manager (Tajfel & Turner, 1985). By virtue of one having multiple identities, he or she has more than one role, which he or she also arranges hierarchically according to their importance (Stryker, 1968). People can have equal or unequal identification with work and family roles, and as the importance attributed to a role increases, the participation and commitment to that role also increases (Rothbard & Edwards, 2003). Consequently, these multiple roles may either conflict due to competing demands or they may enrich one another (Ashford & Mael, 1989; Reitzes & Mutran, 2002; Super, 1980).

The identity perspective also assumes that the salience we attach to our identities influences how much effort we put into each role and how well we perform in each role (Stryker & Serpe, 1982). The more a person identifies with a group, the more he or she will identify with attitudes and behaviours linked to particular roles (Stryker & Serpe, 1982). For example, if an individual identifies mostly with his or her family, it is most likely that he or she will invest in roles associated with that particular social group such as parental, marital or homecare roles. The extent of identification with each role, however, varies across individuals and is a function of factors such as shared goals (Turner, 1984). The identity perspective further suggests that people might invest more in a role they identify with because it provides them with a source of self-esteem and the opportunity for self-actualization (Kanungo, 1979).

Moreover, the identity perspective argues that once individuals define themselves or are defined by others as members of a social group, there will be strong motivational pressures for them to assume that its characteristics are positive, and even reinterpret as positive the those characteristics designated as negative by outsiders (Turner, 1982). Essentially, the individuals will choose to spend more time in certain roles with the purpose of fulfilling the expectations and responsibilities associated with the more salient identity (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Unlike the Utilitarian approach which asserts that people invest in roles that yield more rewards than costs, the social identity theory does not view a favourable cost-benefit ratio as a necessary condition for identification with a role (Turner, 1987). In fact, in some instances, identification with a social group may even be enhanced more by costs than rewards associated with

group membership.

While utilitarian and identity approaches are important in the attempt to explain the psychological process underlying work and family investment, research indicates that there are other factors that also influence life role decisions (Rothbard & Edwards, 2003). Life role values have long been viewed as important determinants of behaviour (Super, 1990). Cultures and social groups transmit value orientations to their members which mediate the group members' beliefs, assumptions, time orientation, relationship with nature, activity orientation, problem-solving modes, and decision-making processes (Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961; Triandis, 1995). Life role values have therefore been highlighted as a useful decision making aid, particularly when making decisions regarding work, education, relationships and leisure. While considerable evidence suggests that values influence career and other life role decisions, they nevertheless, have not received enough attention from researchers, particularly among young adults (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984; Feather, 1992).

### **Life Role Values**

Life role values can be defined as the system of values an individual holds regarding the work and family domains based on what the individual believes to be important to, central to, or a priority in his or her life. They are an individual's basic convictions about which specific mode of conduct is personally or socially preferable (Rokeach, 1973). As such, values are standards that not only guide the behaviour of the individuals who hold them, but serve as a basis for judging their behaviour of others. As indicated by research, values motivate action and are the basis from which individuals define their roles, making them central to the selection of, and subsequent satisfaction with life roles (Schwartz, 1994). Life role values also determine the way needs are met in the family, at work, and in the community, and therefore have significant implications for how work and family roles are managed. Furthermore, not only do life values provide individuals with a basis for judging the appropriateness of their behaviour in the present, they provide individuals with a sense of what ends they would like to attain in the future. Once life role values are developed, they become the

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primary basis for goal setting and represent the needs, aspirations and goals which are important to individuals and which they seek to fulfill in the future (Adejunmobi & Odumosu, 1998). Consequently, the expectations young adults have of their future life roles are often underpinned by the life role values they have identified as important to them (Dose, 1997).

More often than not, more than one role is required to satisfy values (Brown & Crace, 2002). The salience of values in the value systems shifts dynamically as the person moves from role to role because of the expectation that different values will be satisfied in different roles (Dose, 1997). Values underlying the expectations of young adults can be personal or social, for example, creativity, spirituality, ability utilization, physical activity, achievement, prestige, material success, life style, authority, self-control, social interaction, altruism and autonomy (Loo & Thorpe, 2000). For example, individuals who value altruism or selflessness place importance on making a contribution to society, helping others, caring for others, comforting, sharing, cooperation, and even sacrificing individual needs and desires for the greater good or the welfare of others (Duffy & Sedlacek, 2007; Eisenberg & Mussen, 1989; Howe & Strauss, 2000; Lokan & Esdaile, 1994). In addition, researchers also distinguish between traditional value systems which are typically individualistic in orientation, comprising of autonomous, agentic and personal achievement-oriented individuals who construe the self as independent (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Trandis, 1995). This differs qualitatively from a collectivistic cultural value orientation in which dependent, communal, and in-group oriented individuals construe the self as interdependent (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

When individuals develop values, they store them in their memories as interrelated, hierarchically arranged entities that are dynamically re-organized depending on environmental circumstances (Anderson, 1984; Chusmir & Parker, 1991). Values with high priorities are the most important determinants of choices made, provided that the individuals have more than one alternative available that will satisfy their values (Schwartz, 1992). If this is not the case, people will make choices on the basis of the option that least conflicts with their values. In the event that values

are not fully crystallized or the outcomes are not fully known, choices will be made that leave final decisions open. Furthermore, life values are usually fairly stable, however, they may also change as an individual moves through life. For example, when an individual starts his career, success – measured by money and status might be a top priority. However, after having a family, work-life balance may be what the individual values more. The simultaneous pursuit of different values may lead to conflict for most people, (Schwartz, 1992; Smelser, 1998).

Due to the diverse sources of information and experiences that influence values development, it is likely that each person will have values that conflict (Schwartz, 1992; Smelser, 1998). For example, if a single working mother values time with her children, but is forced to spend more time than she would like at work in order to support her children, work-family conflict may arise. At the same time, an important value not sought in work might reveal its importance in being sought in homemaking, or in community service, in studying, or in leisure activities (Super, 1984). Therefore, considering the value system or life role values of individuals may help organisations to better respond to the needs of their future employees (Carlson & Kacmar, 2000). However, to date, most research has simply considered the situation of the individual and not the values the individual holds regarding the work and family domains (Feather, 1992).

### **Life- Career Rainbow**

Many work-family researchers credit their understanding of life roles to Donald Super. As a Career Development Theorist, Super (1980) recognised that while workers are busy earning a living, they are also busy living a life. In his Life- Span, Life-Space approach Super (1980) uses his Life- Career Rainbow model to link social role theory to career development. Super (1980) argues that one's life career is composed of a series or combination of roles occupied over one's life span, and advances the notion that there is no separation between an individual's career and the rest of one's life roles. Super (1980) emphasised that the work role must be addressed in the context of other roles thus providing researcher's with a key contribution to understanding the work -family interface.

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In explaining career development Super (1980, 1990) conceptualized how individuals develop their career through multiple role involvement based on two concepts known as Life-span and Life-space approach. The Life- Span describes a person's life stages and the various roles that they occupy as they move through these life stages. To depict this, Super (1980) developed a model that refers to five life stages, namely the Growth (childhood), Exploration (adolescence), Establishment (young adulthood), Maintenance (middle adulthood), and Decline (old age) stages (Super, 1990). In this model, Super (1980) identified nine primary life roles which individuals may engage in or fulfill at varying degrees of involvement, across these life stages, namely: child, student, worker, partner/spouse, parent, citizen, homemaker, leisurite, and pensioner. Although presented in approximate chronological order in the model, Super (1980) argued that roles are influenced by social and psychological factors, they can be occupied at multiple points in an individual's life and their sequence and duration may vary.

Super (1980, 1990) also theorised that people have different life-spaces due to personal factors such as needs, values, interests and aptitudes and situational factors such as family, neighbourhood, country, economic policies and racial biases. Life-space indicates the affective commitment and value that is invested and attributed to these roles over time (Super, 1990). According to Super (1990) as new roles are acquired and activated, a reduction of affective commitment towards those roles may occur, or alternatively, participation in both roles may provide additional satisfaction. For Super (1980) roles may decrease or increase in importance depending on the value assigned and the developmental task that needs to be accomplished (Super, 1980).

Supers' model, the Life-Career Rainbow, is based on the Life-span and Life-space theory. The model is based on the concept that careers are "the combination and sequence of roles played by a person during the course of a lifetime" (Super, 1980, p.282). The Life- Career Rainbow as depicted in Figure 1 illustrates the synthesis of the life space, life span theory and describes how roles can increase or decrease with importance across various life stages (Super, 1980). As a person moves through their life stages, which are indicated around the top of the model, their role identity,

interests and abilities change and develop (Nevill & Super, 1988). As individuals move through these life stages they begin to occupy new roles, as they do additional layers are added to the rainbow. The second dimension indicating life-space which is the individual's role salience is illustrated by the shaded areas within the life roles (Super, 1990). The model creates a visual representation of multiple role involvement based on attributed importance toward these roles. Super indicates that the more salient a role is the more individuals invest in these roles over their life-span (Super & Nevill, 1984).

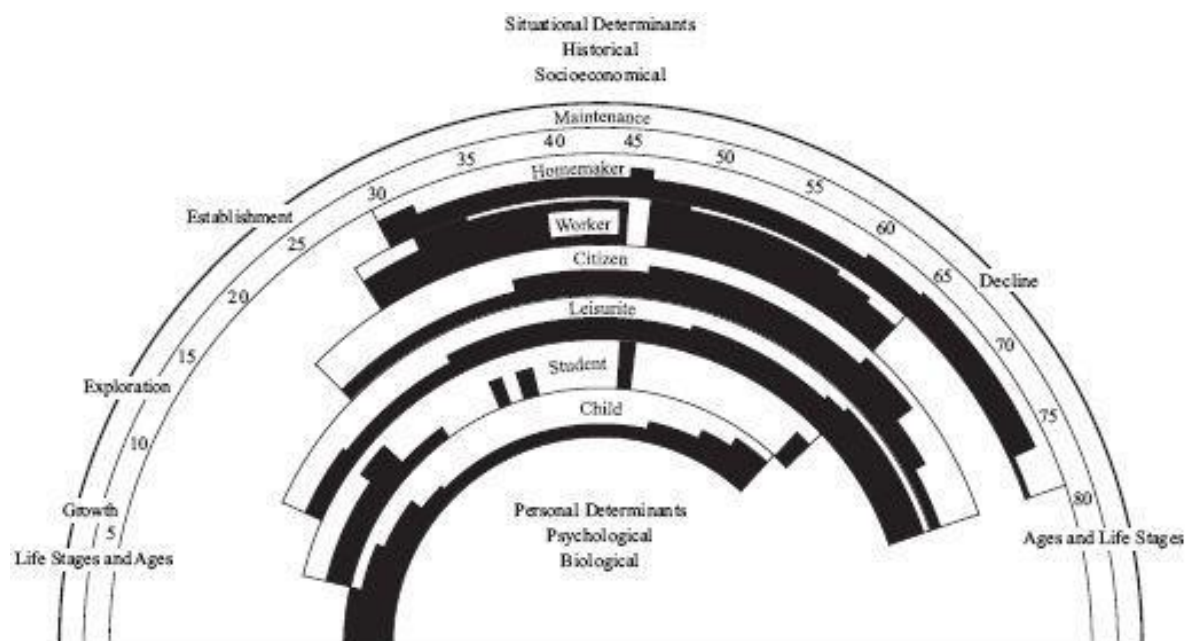


Figure 1. The Life-Career Rainbow model by Super (1980, p.289).

### Life Role Salience

Life role salience is defined by Super (1980) as the degree of importance an individual places on a particular role at a particular point in time. Super (1980) asserted that although multiple roles are important in our lives, at various times in our lives, we may give priority to specific life roles. To represent this notion that there are individual differences in the way people attribute importance to roles, Super (1980) coined the term Life Role Salience. Furthermore, role salience is viewed as a reflection of the importance and value that people place on roles they determine to be central to

their lives and identities, and by how detrimental the loss of the role would be to his or her self-concept (Stryker & Serpe, 1994; Super, 1980). Within role identity theory, role salience has been used to explain decision-making and behaviour in the salient roles (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Stryker & Serpe, 1994). Highly salient roles are associated with heightened levels of personal meaning and a commitment of resources towards that role (Bagger, Li & Gutek, 2008). Role salience offers a reliable glimpse into individual goals and values of individuals, and may fluctuate depending on the amount of time required by a role or desired to give to the role, or emotional involvement during a particular life stage. For instance, giving priority to one's job when there are few or no demands from the parental role is easier than when the demands from both one's job and family are concurrently high.

In the extant literature, the role salience construct has often been mistaken for, or deemed interchangeable, with other constructs such as role centrality, importance, or involvement (Stryker & Serpe, 1994). The conceptual definitions of these constructs however, suggest them to be distinct constructs that do however, make certain references to each other (Stryker & Serpe, 1994). For instance, role centrality refers to the relative importance of a particular role in defining one's self-identity (Mo Wang, 2012). Similarly, role importance refers to the extent to which an individual psychologically identifies with a particular role, and the extent to which the role is personally meaningful and worthwhile to the individual (Mo Wang, 2012). While role involvement has been conceptualised as an individual's behavioural commitment to a role in terms of the number of hours spent in role participation (Mo Wang, 2012). As a result, life role salience can be argued as encompassing of all these constructs, making it similar yet unequal to them.

Role salience, according to Stryker and Serpe (1994) is also distinguished from other similar constructs by the fact that none of these other constructs reflect the relative importance or value of each of a person's life roles. These other constructs merely reflect person's choice to participate in the role, assuming a level of self-awareness that is not inherent in life role salience (Stryker & Serpe, 1994). For example, it is possible for a person to be unaware of his or her role salience structures until a role conflict forces him or her to choose between roles. This has significant

implications for role balance and role conflict, and thus emphasises the need for life role salience to be researched in conjunction with the anticipated work-family interface. For example, if a father found out that a work meeting was scheduled for the same time as his son's soccer game, the activity he chooses to participate in would reveal something about his role salience structure. Therefore, an individual with high family salience is more likely to select to participate in family activities; whilst an individual with high work salience is more likely to participate in work activities (Powell & Greenhaus, 2006).

No longer defined by their traditional roles, men and women are increasingly ambitious and committing to multiple roles simultaneously (Amatea et al., 1986). As a result, deciding which role takes priority over another is has become more difficult than in the past, especially for young adults who are making decisions about future life roles. Evaluating life role salience among young adults is therefore very important as it serves as a predictor of the decisions that people will make when the expectations and responsibilities of two or more roles are not compatible (Super, 1980). Increased salience to a particular role will influence the person's expectations and in turn these expectations will affect their role behaviour (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). By definition, life role salience therefore focuses on fundamental frictions between life roles and individual behaviours and decisions to establish a hierarchy of roles (Powell & Greenhaus, 2006). However, role salience is not a static hierarchy, and will likely shift to adjust to an employee's particular life phase (Super, 1980). As new roles are added, participation in and affective commitment to other roles may be reduced. For example, when woman becomes a mother, her commitment to work might decrease (Super, 1982).

The theory of life role salience assumes a scarcity perspective and argues that the more salient a role is to an individual, the more time and energy that person will invest in it, and the less time and energy the individual will have for other roles (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Consequently, role salience was found to be the main predictor of variance in work-family relations and is regarded as key in predicting the degree involvement in particular roles, as well as explaining role stress for individuals anticipating and those currently engaged in various life roles (Frone, 2003).

### **Life Role Salience as a Multi-dimensional Concept**

Super (1982) presented life role salience as a three dimensional concept, consisting of one behavioural and two affective components. Participation, the behavioural component refers to the amount of time spent in the role (Super & Nevill, 1986). Commitment, the first affective component, describes the importance of a role to the individual's self-concept (Super & Nevill, 1986). Whilst values expectation, the second affective dimension addresses how well the individual is able to express personal values within a role (Super & Nevill, 1986). As a multi-dimensional concept, role salience therefore accounts for how a person may perform a great deal in a role (for example, work long hours) and want much from it (for example, receive good pay and benefits) yet not feel particularly invested in the role (for example, would give it up for a life of leisure, family and community activity if it were not perhaps for the money) (Grzywacz & Demerouti, 2013). For greater understanding of role salience and the work-family interface, it is therefore essential that the contributions of each of the three components of role salience: participation, commitment, and values expectations are examined.

### **Contextual Factors Influencing Life Role Salience**

To address the fact that people differ regarding which roles are most salient for them, researchers have attempted to look at various predictors of life role salience (Cinamon & Rich, 2002). Research in this area has, however, been very limited (Greer & Egan, 2012). Predictors of life role salience include demographic data such as age, socio-economic status, individual differences, cultural differences and sex gender differences and parental factors (Cinamon & Rich, 2002). Of these previously mentioned variables, two have attracted the most attention within life role salience research, namely cultural differences and gender (Friedman & Weisbrod, 2005).

**Culture and gender.** It is imperative that life role salience and values be viewed within specific developmental and cultural contexts (Niles & Goodnough, 2011). Cultural orientations and the changing nature of work can interact to influence individual's levels of role salience and thus constrain role viability (Richardson, 1993). Individuals often simply inherit patterns of life-role salience that are passed on from

the dominant culture (Niles & Goodnough, 2011). For example, if an individual's culture values the role of father as a provider, it is mostly likely that men will have a high salience in the worker role, as it helps him meet the expectations of his culture (Richardson, 1993). In the same way, culture also functions in such a way that it only makes a range of behavioural role options available to its members. For example, if it is not expected that a man should be actively involved in the homecare role in a particular culture, it is likely, that the man will not see that role as a viable option for him. With time, culture not only influences individual levels of role salience, but has the ability to change role perceptions entirely (Richardson, 1993).

Cultural orientations also emphasise different values in life roles and therefore transmit different expectations about social role behaviour (Pines, 1989). To support this, researchers have consistently identified differences between men and women that coincide with traditional sex-role expectations in life-role salience (Niles & Goodnough, 2011). For example, many women within different cultures continue to be socialised into believing that being a wife and raising a family should be their number one priority, and that financial independence and career advancement are secondary (Pines, 1989). Correspondingly, life role salience studies have found women participating more in home and family, and expecting more from this role than men (Pines, 1989). Moreover, women with demanding careers continue to invest more hours in home activities than do their male colleagues (Cinamon & Rich, 2002).

Cultural inheritances can therefore be problematic when they are embedded with beliefs based on gender and racial stereotypes (Hartung, Lewis, May & Niles, 2002). For example, women who have high salience for the worker role are placed at an obvious disadvantage in the work force by such stereotypical expectations. Similarly, men often limit their opportunities for participating in the home and family when they adhere to traditional expectations for life-role salience. Therefore, by raising our awareness of the influence of the dominant culture of life role salience, it becomes less likely that beliefs reflecting racist and sexist attitudes will influence our beliefs about life-role salience (Hartung et al., 2002). Examining cultural influences of role salience and values, therefore presents a vital research need (Hackett & Watkins, 1995).

Furthermore, research indicates that young adults' exposure to their parents' work-and-family involvement can be influential when they are forming their attitudes about these future life roles (Basuil & Casper, 2012). Young adults' expectations about family roles are likely to closely reflect the example of their parents. Therefore, a young adult who has observed his or her mother perform traditional household responsibilities and has heard her articulate that her role is appropriate will be more likely to express traditional gender-role values and expect the same behaviour in his or her spouse. Likewise, if the young adults' parents share childrearing and disciplining duties, he or she will be more likely to expect an egalitarian marriage. Nowadays, many young adults engaged in tertiary education have grown up in households where both parents are employed and the family responsibilities are more equally divided than in the past (Kaufman, 2005). Correspondingly, current research indicates a shift towards egalitarian values and attitudes among young adults, whereby male and female partners equally absorb work; responsibilities household tasks and looking after the children are shared equally (Kaufman, 2005; Fisher, McCulloch & Gershuny, 1999). Such shifts in responsibility may influence young adults' attitudes towards gender roles, thereby affecting their commitment or salience attributed to work-and-family roles (Friedman & Weissbrod, 2005).

While culture continues to have a strong influence on role perceptions, empirical evidence suggests that younger couples are increasingly beginning their relationships with more flexible ideas about gender and work. (Hartung et al., 2002). Researchers have consistently identified differences between men and women that coincide with traditional sex-role expectations in life-role salience (Niles & Goodnough, 2011). In (1984) Super and Nevill found that males in high school were more committed to their future work roles than to a family role, more often than females. The opposite was true for females who were more committed to their future family roles than to their work role more often than males. Similarly, Archer (1989) found that men expect to focus mostly on their career roles and form a sense of identity through their careers, while women expected to focus mostly on their family roles. However, a review of more recent research indicates a gradual increase towards equal commitment to future work-and-family role across gender (Gaffey & Rottinghaus,

2009; Hartung & Rogers, 2011; Kaufman, 2005; Super & Nevill, 1984; Spade & Reese, 1991; Watson & Stead, 1990). A study by Super and Nevill (1988) found that women completing their undergraduate degrees were more committed to both their future work and home roles than their counterparts, while a South African study by Watson and Stead (1990) found that females had a higher worker-role salience than males.

While research indicates progressive convergence between male and female role expectations, Niles and Goodnough (1996) also argue that findings may reflect a realistic acceptance of the traditional division of labour, as women continue to be socialized into believing that being a wife and raising a family should be their paramount priorities and that financial independence and career advancement are secondary. A study by Peter (1991) on the career development of women found that among university women work is an important life role, yet home and family is the area in which university women perceive more opportunities to express their values. Similarly, Niles and Goodnough (1996) found that despite their greater commitment to work, university women expected to realise fewer values through the work role than did men. The women also reported more participation, were more committed, and expected to realise more values through the home than did men. As a result, women seemed to place more importance on family duties and expected to work less than males. Correspondingly, Cinamon and Rich (2002a) also reported that even women who have demanding careers invest more hours in home activities than do their male colleagues. Peter (1991) also found that work salient women planned to have significantly fewer children and begin child rearing at a significantly older age than women who were not work salient.

In more recent studies, Tinklin, Croxford, Ducklin and Frame (2005) found that there was no difference between genders in role salience or role aspirations of young adults. Similarly, Gaffey and Rottinghaus (2009) also found no differences across gender relating to future work-and-family role salience as well as, Hartung and Rogers (2011) who found no difference between male and female medical students' work-and-family role commitment. Researchers argue that these findings demonstrate a truer sense of gender equality (Tinklin et al., 2005). Furthermore, research also indicates

that young adults are increasingly assigning equally high salience to both work-and-family roles (Spade & Reese, 1991), and the parenting role, was reported by Most and Michael (2008) to be the most salient of the family roles. Contrastingly, Cinamon (2010) found in her study among college students that low levels of importance were attributed to both work and family roles. For Cinamon (2010) this was important to note as college students may not have the commitment, participation or knowledge that would allow them to attribute importance to these roles. Therefore, understanding role salience levels among young adults is important for research as it permits insights into the different role salience patterns that may emerge overtime.

### **Expectations of the Work-Family Interface**

#### **Emerging Adulthood**

Young adults, aged between 18 and 25 typically go through a process of identity exploration and experimentation, a period often referred to as the period of emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2000). For young persons, this is a period classified by perpetual changes and the pressure to make decisions to reach their adult aspirations (Arnett, 2000). Correspondingly, Salmela-Aro, Aunola, and Nurmi (2007) found that young persons in the phase of emergent adulthood, disengaged from goals related to education, friends, traveling, and engaged in goals related to work, family and health. During this period, preparation for taking on adult family roles includes participating in different social groups, exploring romantic relationships, and renegotiating relationships with parents (Arnett, 2000; Nurmi, 1991). As such, experiences during this period provide a context for the development of expectations, which serve as powerful motivators of current decisions and future goals (Nurmi, 1991).

During emergent adulthood, young adults go through a three-stage development phase (Arnett & Tanner, 2009). The first stage is characterised by the recentering of individuals relationships and roles. These relationships and roles which formerly identified them as dependent, as the recipient of guidance support and resources undergo a shift in dynamic towards relationships in which power is shared, mutual, and responsibility for care and support in reciprocity (Arnett & Tanner, 2009). The second stage involves individuals engaging in the developmental experiences of

emergent adulthood. During this stage the young individuals also participate in an exploration stage of a series of commitments to inform them of the opportunities that are available in both love and work (Arnett & Tanner, 2009). The exploration is then followed by stage three, the making of commitments to enduring roles and responsibilities of adulthood such as careers, marriage and partnerships, and commitments to the parental role. Therefore, if young adults are still exploring and not yet committed to particular roles, this is an opportune time to research their current expectations and attitudes, and perhaps address potential work-family issues (Cinamon, 2006).

### **Expectations of Future Life Roles**

Role expectations refer to the individual's assumptions regarding what a particular role entails (Gerdes, 1988), these expectations are based on the individual's hopes, fears, beliefs and imaginings as well as the objective knowledge of what others expect. Amatea et al. (1986) also conceptualise expectations as an individual's internalised beliefs and attitudes about the personal relevance of a role, standards for the performance of the role, and the manner in which personal time, money and energy resources are to be committed to the performance of the role. Consequently, individual's expectations portray beliefs for what will be done in a particular role and therefore affects their role behaviour of the individual in that role (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985)

Expectations about anticipated adult roles are formed as a result of the socialisation process, and influenced by psychological and social factors prior to role entry (Arnett, 1995). Individuals are socialised differently to hold different beliefs and values, and to behave in different ways when it comes to occupational roles, marriage, and parenthood. Dean (1982) identified four major sources of expectations, these include societal stereotypes, childhood experiences and professional training. The personal role expectations young adults have are important to understand because they are a key variable in explaining predicting the degree of involvement in particular roles (Amatea et al., 1986). Pre-role entry attitudes and expectations also influence the transition into, and subsequent management of adult life roles once they are acquired.

Continuous changes within the societal context and workplace have been associated with career and family altering strategies among young males and females (Cinamon, Most & Michael, 2008). In support of this, Twenge (1997) found that changing attitudes and expectations over the past decades have been most evident among studies of college students, with college student's attitudes toward women being more liberal over time. Young adults are choosing to get married later in life in order to pursue a career (Arnett, 2000; Kirkpatrick-Johnson, Oesterle & Mortimer, 2001), prolong starting a family to pursue a career (Cinamon & Rich, 2002; Westring & Ryan, 2011), have fewer children (Barnett et al., 2003), participate shared child-rearing and household responsibilities (Kay, 2001), and give preference to cohabitation over marriage (Kirkpatrick-Johnson et al., 2001; Reed, 2009). As a result, researchers are increasingly emphasising the need to research the expectations of young adults with regards to the work- family interface.

Research indicates that it is becoming increasingly difficult to separate expectations of young men and women regarding work and family. There is strong empirical research suggesting that young men and women are increasingly placing a high value on both work and family rather than on one or the other (Smithson, 1999). In Bronzaft's study (1991), 85% of first-year university students anticipated that their lifestyles would include a career, a committed relationship and a family. In agreement, Kaufman (2005) and Barnett et al. (2003) found that the majority of male and female college students anticipated getting married, having children and working full-time. More recently, Basuil and Casper (2012) found that three out of four young adults that are planning on entering the world of work in the near future expect to balance a career and a family. As a result, most young adults in economically developed countries devote the years from their late teens through to their twenties to preparing for mutual participation work and family roles (Arnett, 2000, 2004; Peake & Harris, 2002). However, although we continue to see a drastic convergence between the expectations of men and women, research also indicates that even though career goals of women are becoming similar to those of men, in most cultures women are still expected to put their families first (Riggs, 2005). Consequently, with young women continuing to place more value on family, they are likely to make different career decisions than man (Riggs, 2005).

Research has also indicated an increase in egalitarian expectations among young adults, whereby both male and female partners equally absorb work; responsibilities household tasks and looking after the children are shared equally (Baxter, 2002; Kaufman, 2005). In support of this, Greene et al. (1992) found that women expect rapid engagement in both work and family roles. Correspondingly, Hallett and Gilbert (1997) found that more young men are expecting to engage in home-care and child rearing roles, and make career sacrifices in order to have family lives. However, Cinamon and Rich (2002a) also argue that despite growing egalitarian values, for many young adults, the homemaker-role is likely to become increasingly redundant as students often have domestic assistance through hired help. Moreover, domestic support in many countries is easily and affordably available which purports less reliance on spousal support with regards to the home-care role (Goodnow & Bowes, 1994).

There is also strong empirical support indicating that male and female adolescents and university students foresee a more balanced lifestyle, inclusive of work, family and leisure. In a study of values among young people in four European countries, Lewis, Smithson and Kugelberg (2002) found evidence that achieving work-life balance was of high importance to you university students. Correspondingly, Diderichsen, Andersson, Johansson, Verdonk, Lagro-Janssen and Hamberg (2011) also found that Swedish medical students intend to balance work not only with family but also with leisure activities. Thus, Diderichsen et al. (2011), suggests more adaptive work conditions to accommodate young working adults in organisations. Furthermore, a study by Honeycutt and Rosen (1997) found that young adults' expectations for their future involve flexible work hours for family, maintaining relationships and their health. In light of this shift in values, Zemke, Raines, and Filipeczak (2000) argues that increased anticipated participation in leisure may also be a reflection in the reduction in the pressures of domestic work and changes in domestic technology.

Realistic pre-role expectations have consistently been associated with multi-role adjustment, job satisfaction and life satisfaction (Cook, Dick, Jones & Singh, 2005). However, research suggests that although young adults foresee the first ten years after graduation as a time to fulfill their life goals (Barnett et al., 2003), they

often have unrealistic plans as to how to combine their future work-and-family roles (Peake & Harris, 2002). These unrealistic expectations often lead to incongruent results or unmet expectations when individuals eventually assume their chosen roles. In addition Schein (1978) stated that adjustment to these multiple new roles relating to work, family and community is often simultaneous, resulting in potential implications for psychological well-being of young adults. Understanding student expectations' is therefore critical facilitating young adult's formulation of realistic expectations, therefore minimising the harmful effects of engaging multiple roles.

### **Aims of the Study**

1. To explore the ways in which postgraduate students at UCT compare and contrast the various future life roles.
2. To investigate how postgraduate students construe the significance of potential future life roles

### **Chapter Three: Method**

The purpose of this research was to explore the expectations that young adults have of their future life roles. In light of this objective, this chapter presents the methods and procedures used to fulfill the particular purpose of the study. This chapter has been divided into five sections which describe the: Research paradigm, personal construct theory, Kelly's repertory grid technique, sampling strategy, participants, data collection, Kelly's repertory grid procedure, and the data analysis technique, respectively. Due to the qualitative and exploratory nature of the research, this section is discussed in significant depth so as to thoroughly contextualize the method.

#### **Research Paradigm**

A paradigm provides a general perspective from which the researcher can see and understand the social world (Maxwell, 1996). It also allows the researcher to identify her role in the research process. This study was conducted within a constructivist paradigm. This paradigm was chosen specifically because the data collection method, Kelly's repertory grid, is rooted in constructivism. The constructivist paradigm is focused on understanding the world from the point of view of the individual or groups of people interacting in and with it. In this study, this paradigm was useful in understanding how the postgraduate students construct their understanding of their potential future life roles as a collective.

A qualitative approach was adopted to achieve the objective of this research (Maxwell, 1998). The overarching interest of a qualitative study lies in gaining an understanding of the meaning that people have attached and constructed to their realities (Maxwell, 1998; Neumann, 1997; Strauss and Corbin, 1990). The intent of qualitative research is also to understand the particular or the unique by focusing on individual motives and shared meanings (Jones, 1998) emphasizes that. In this study, the qualitative paradigm therefore allowed the researcher to obtain a more in-depth understanding of the participants and expectations by focusing on the subjective meanings, definitions, and descriptions of specific cases (Neuman, 1994). As stated by Neuman (1994), qualitative approach has a way of capturing aspects of the social world that one would be unable to achieve quantitatively. Jones (1998) shared this

sentiment by suggesting that human life is at times too complex to reduce to a few independent and dependent variables. In this study, this was very much evident in the way individuals construed their future life roles.

Taking the context of the situation into account is a main feature of qualitative research. Qualitative researchers believe that meaning can only be given to social action and behaviour by taking the context in which it occurs into account (Neuman, 1994). Neuman stresses that disregarding the context would allow for social meaning to become distorted and would imply that all people experience events, situations and behaviour in exactly the same way. Another useful quality of qualitative research is that it makes an allowance for each research study to grow and flow in its own style, requiring the researcher to be open to whatever emerges (Chenail, 1992, Norman & Lincoln, 2000). Since the use of Kelly's repertory grid technique was explorational in terms of investigating this particular topic, the flexibility of qualitative research proved to be very beneficial, allowing the research to develop and evolve its own style and unique characteristics.

Based on the above, qualitative research does not involve generalization, nor is its main focus to try to predict what will take place in the future (Neuman, 1994). Rather, it is concerned with exploring personal understandings, perceptions and experiences as they are lived by people in their natural setting.

### **Personal Construct Theory**

Rooted in constructivism, Kelly's (1955) personal construct theory provided the theoretical framework and the overarching methodology for this study. In his personal construct theory, Kelly (1955) used the metaphor "man the scientist" to explain the manner in which people make sense of their world, through developing personal constructs which they use to test out their explanations of their world. According to this theory, individuals develop their own personal constructs that enable them to make sense of new events, predict future events, and guide their behaviour and attitudes (Kelly, 1955). Personal constructs can be understood as an individual's idea about the world, a single dimension of meaning for a person that allows him/her to differentiate between elements by specifying the ways in which some elements are

alike and yet different from others (Fransella, Bell & Bannister, 2004). For example, based on an individual's experiences with people, an individual may come to understand people as shy and others as outgoing. Therefore, when the individual meets new people, he or she may consciously or subconsciously categorize them according to that construct. Simply put, constructs are qualities or attributes that people use to differentiate between different elements such as people, objects, events and activities. Bi-polar in nature, constructs provide us with dimensions of personal meaning and the poles of a construct are the limits of its dimension. Constructs have a profound effect on how individuals come to view and understand the world and the elements in it (Kelly, 1955).

According to Kelly (1955) constructs are bi-polar in nature as it is only possible to assign meaning to something when it is compared with something else. For instance, the concept of black can only be understood in relation to the concept of white or concept of rich can only be understood in relation to that of poor. An example by Fransella et al. (2004) states that by construing Mary to be an 'honest' person, we are also saying that she is not a 'crook' or whatever the opposite would be of the construct honest for Mary. Fransella et al. (2004) further outline that it is often the opposite pole of a personal construct, called the implicit pole, which provides a clear meaning of the construct, whilst the emergent pole describes how two or more things are alike. Furthermore Kelly (1955) also asserts that although constructs manifest themselves as opposites, bi-polar constructs are not necessarily direct opposites. What influences the participant's perception are not only the attributes of elements being compared, but also how the participant understands the construct labels (Kelly, 1955). For example, an individual might construct their perception as committed to motherhood verses committed to career. For Fransella et al. (2004) it is this inherent bi-polarity that distinguishes a personal construct it from a 'concept'.

Kelly (1955) further hypothesised that each individual has his or her own unique set of constructs that are important to that person. Each individual's constructs are organized and prioritised in his own particular way. Therefore, whether a new person is shy or outgoing might not be important to you in your categorization scheme, but it might be very important to someone else. According to the personal construct

theory, it is these differences in people's construct systems contribute to our different perceptions of the world and our behaviour in it. Furthermore, it is this inherent difference in construct systems between people that introduces bias in research.

Constructs can be expanded with new ideas and that they build to make up a complex and unique personal construct system (Kelly, 1955). People are constantly challenging and growing their construct systems, but those systems remain unique to the individual, and the sum of each person's experiences shapes them. According to Stewart and Stewart (1981), since our construct systems reflect our past experience, they also influence our expectations and behaviour. The function of a personal construct system therefore is to interpret the current situation and to anticipate future events. This makes the personal construct theory a useful lens through which to understand personal expectations (Kelly, 1955). However, since it is neither possible nor desirable to try and capture the complete construct system of an individual, Kelly (1955) developed the repertory grid technique as a tool to help guide a person to talk about a particular aspect of his or her thinking.

### **Kelly's Repertory Grid Technique**

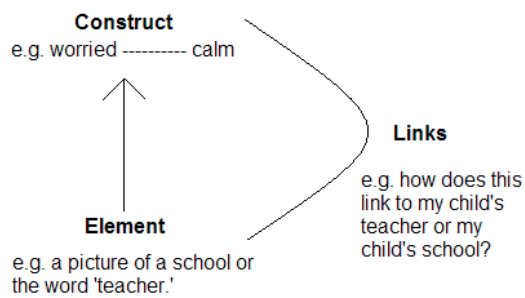
The choice of data collection technique requires consistency with the research objectives, purposes and strategy employed in any study (Neumann, 1998). In this particular study, Kelly's Repertory Grid Technique was selected as the method of data collection (Kelly, 1955). Kelly's repertory grid technique can be defined as a qualitative method in which statistical approaches may be used to investigate and explore the structure and interrelations between constructs (Fallman & Waterworth, 2010). Consequently, the repertory grid's qualitative nature is derived from the elicitation process of the personal constructs through a form of structured interview; and the quantitative nature is derived from the rating system embodied in the grid (Beail, 2005).

For the purpose of this study, Kelly's repertory grid was used solely as a qualitative method of data collection, with the goal of exploring personal understandings and perceptions using the participants own words, with minimum influence from the researcher (Beail, 2005; Stewart & Stewart, 1981). As a qualitative

data collection method, the repertory grid technique served as a useful means of entering the subjective world of an individual, in an attempt to stand in the other's shoes, to see the world as they see it (Fransella & Bannister, 1977). By systematically extracting personal constructs that were important to a participant, in respect of the phenomenon of interest, Kelly's repertory grid, therefore allowed the researcher to identify the ways that a person construes (understands/gives meaning to) future life roles (Fransella et al., 2004). Understanding the sample group's constructs also assisted the researcher in identifying how students construe their future life roles and therefore understand what kind of expectations they have about these future life roles. Furthermore, since the ratings information is not taken into account in qualitative analysis, some of the grid information is lost in the process, however, a qualitative analysis is often enough to develop a good understanding of the constructs that are important to the target audience (Hawley, 2007)

A repertory grid in itself is a table, a matrix, whose rows contain constructs and whose columns represent elements (the phenomena under investigation) (see Appendix A for repertory grid example). The Repertory grid contains three primary components: elements, constructs and links (see figure 2 below). Elements are defined by Kelly (1955 p.137) as 'the things or events which are abstracted by a construct and are seen as one of the formal aspects of a construct'. Elements are the objects used for eliciting the individuals constructs, they are specific, concrete examples that will be used to help the participants to identify their own constructs or perceptions regarding the particular research topic that is being considered and can be presented in many different formats such as photographs, pictures, lists people or objects (Ryle, 1967). "Personal constructs are bipolar dimensions which each person has created and formed into a system through which they interpret their experiences of the world" (Fransella, 2004 p.16). The constructs represent the research participants' interpretations of the elements. Finally, the links are the ways of relating the elements and the constructs. Linkages are the way in which each element is described in term of each construct. In simple grids, the linkage may be just a tick or cross, which makes grids visually easy to compare. In more complex grids, it could be a rating, for example, out of five or seven (or four or six if the researcher prefers to avoid a neutral mid-point). Or, it could be a ranking of elements against each construct.

## STUDENT EXPECTATIONS OF FUTURE LIFE ROLES



*Figure 2.* Pictorial representation of the three components of the RGT.

The use of the repertory grid presents a number of advantages. First, the repertory grid allows for an in-depth exploration of a person's perception (personal constructs) obtained from their own words. Second, unlike standard approaches to research, such as questionnaires and interviews, the repertory grid can elicit people's constructs without influencing them by the researcher's preconceived questions. The repertory grid is therefore a useful means of surfacing people's perceptions, attitudes or concepts in an uncontaminated way (Hawley, 2007). In addition, the repertory grid is also efficient in that with a limited number of interviews, the method elicits the true range of relevant constructs in a particular context (Dunn, 2001). Hawley (2007) also argues that a richer set of data can be obtained using a repertory grid than is the case in questionnaires with closed questions. Thirdly, since repertory grids also embody a rating system used to quantitatively relate each element in relation to the qualitative constructs, the grid technique can also provide quantitative data for statistical analysis, complementing the qualitative nature of the method (Zuber-skerritt & Roche, 2004).

Originally developed for use in clinical psychology, this method has evoked an interest in diverse fields of study including education, management, marketing and consumer research, social work, nursing and organisational psychology to name a few (Banister, Burman, Parker, Taylor & Tindall, 1994). This method has proved itself to be a reasonably flexible and useful in investigating or reveal attitudes and beliefs (Honey 1979d, p. 452), concepts, assumptions (Honey 1979b, p. 358), perceptions (Honey 1979c, p. 407), and self-insight or reflection (Honey 1979a, p. 358), that is, understanding and cognition (Tan & Hunter, 2002). Now widely accepted as a useful

research tool, Kelly's repertory grid technique can be used as a standalone methodology, in preliminary studies for further qualitative or quantitative investigation, or as a complement for validating or deepening results obtained with other methods (Beail, 2005).

### **Sampling Strategy**

Under circumstances where researchers cannot study all the circumstances, events, or people related to a particular phenomenon intensively and in-depth, samples are selected (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). Sampling is therefore a process of systematically selecting cases such as individuals, groups or organisations for the inclusion in a research study (Neuman, 1997).

The sample population consisted of all young adults attending tertiary education within Southern Africa. However, due to time constraints the sampling frame was reduced to students attending the University of Cape Town (UCT). A non-probability sampling approach was used to select the research participants. This sampling approach was chosen because it allowed the researcher to select the research sample according to the needs of the research and not according to external criteria (Neuman, 2000). The sample was obtained through convenience sampling. This sampling technique was most suitable as it allowed the researcher to select the participants according to their availability and willingness (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006).

From this sampling frame postgraduate students were selected. Apart from being accessible, it was assumed that postgraduate students were uniquely appropriate in fulfilling the particular needs of this study. At this stage in their lives, postgraduate students are most likely to have been part of a family unit for over eighteen years, and in university for four or more years. As emerging adults, they are about to enter world of work, with many possibly planning to start their own families in the near future, thus providing an ideal sample for a study of the anticipated work-family interface. Furthermore, it was assumed that postgraduate university students will show a

reasonably higher convergence with regards to expectations, as older students appear to have a better shared vision of adult life (Greene et al., 1992).

### **Participants**

The research participants in this study consisted of postgraduate students from the University of Cape Town (UCT), in South Africa. All UCT postgraduate students were considered for participation regardless of their age, gender, race, cultural background or choice of study. Since this particular study was an exploration of how postgraduate students construe future life roles, demographic variables were not critical in serving as a basis for exclusion. To accommodate the qualitative and quantitative nature of the repertory grid, a relatively small sample consisting of 15 Master's students in the Engineering, Humanities and Science faculties was used. The sample consisted of 6 males and 9 females, with ages ranging between 22 and 25. However, demographic information was collected in order to help the researcher better describe and understand the sample group. The study did however require the participants to be unmarried and not have children. This restriction was placed because it was important that the participants still be anticipating to go into the life roles being researched, and not already be engaged in them. Part-time work however, was not included as a criterion for exclusion. This was because although many students are active in this role, it is mostly for monetary reasons and not necessarily career purposes. Furthermore, to ensure that important ethical considerations were met, participation in the study was voluntary and informed consent was sought from the participants (see Appendix B). The participants were also informed of their right to withdraw at any point during the study, if they felt the need to do so.

### **Data Collection**

The research participants in this study consisted of postgraduate students from the University of Cape Town. With the goal of extracting personal constructs about future life roles, 15 repertory grid interviews were conducted. Although data was collected from all 15 participants, the researcher did however notice that the data started to reach saturation point, from the twelfth participant, as not many new constructs were being elicited. Although this development had no negative impact on

the study, it did however support the proposition that when conducting repertory grid interviews, a small sample is sufficient to reach redundancy (Young, 1995). According to Young (1995) redundancy is usually noticeable between 10 and 15 interviews.

Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006) identify a number of ethical considerations when conducting a research study. These considerations include issuing official letters to seek permission to do the study, as well as informing the organisation of the intended study before proceeding with data collection. As a result, prior to conducting the study, ethical clearance was obtained from the Commerce Faculty Research Ethics Committee at the University of Cape Town. Furthermore, permission was requested from the gatekeepers within the organisation, the Director of Student Affairs, in order to attain access to the students. Data was collected over a period of two weeks, and two pilot interviews were conducted before proceeding with data collection.

A pilot study was conducted with two postgraduate students from the University of Cape Town, to uncover any problems in the design of the repertory grid, as well as give the interviewer an opportunity to get familiar with the interviewing technique. To ensure the uniformity of the approach, a script was used by the researcher to introduce the technique to each participant (see Appendix D). Based on the feedback obtained, two amendments were made to the grid technique. Firstly, the researcher received the feedback that the rating grid was slightly confusing for the respondents. As argued by Rogers and Ryals (2006) the process of the repertory grid rating differs from answering conventional fixed choice questionnaires, the process of grid rating might be confusing for the respondents and thus require detailed explanation. As a result amendments were made to the instructions of the rating grid to provide greater clarity. The first page of the questionnaire was therefore devoted to the presentation of a simple example, aimed at clarifying the rating process. The researcher went through this example with each participant prior the rating phase.

Secondly, the researcher also received feedback that the elicitation process was too long and tiring for the participants. According to Rogers and Ryals (2006) the large number of possible triad combinations and the rating of numerous elements across an

unlimited number of constructs is often too long causing them to lose patience during the process. In order to accommodate the participants and respect their time, the interviews were kept at a maximum length of an hour. To achieve this, the researcher made the decision to restrict the triadic card sorting to a minimum of 10 triad combinations (10 constructs-dyads), and a maximum of 15 triad combinations (15 constructs-dyads). Generally, the participants used a mean of 11 triads before running out of new constructs, with a single participant reaching a maximum 14 triad combinations.

All the repertory grid interviews were conducted face-to-face, taking approximately 45- 60 minutes to conduct. The interviews were conducted in two parts. Part one involved the construct elicitation phase whereby the interviewer conversationally elicited constructs from the participants about the elements. Part two involved a rating phase whereby the participants rated their constructs on the elements provided by the researcher. At the beginning of each interview, a briefing session was conducted by the researcher in order to establish rapport with the interviewee, as well as familiarise him or her with the interview procedure. Moreover, since Kelly's repertory grid was an unfamiliar interview technique for all of the participants, the briefing session was found to be very useful in putting the interviewees at ease. The complete interview grid schedule can be found on Appendix C.

The interview documents included a cover letter which the participants had to sign, as well as a blank rating grid for the quantitative part of the interview (see Appendix C). On the cover letter, the participants were provided with an explanation of the objectives of the study, as well as a brief explanation about the confidentiality of the interview. On the blank repertory grid, respondents were provided with detailed instructions on how to complete the rating grid and the researcher was on standby to clarify any questions that the participants had about the rating. To ensure that a full record of the grid elicitation interview was kept, each participant was asked for his or her permission to be recorded. Fortunately, all the participants had no objection to this request. This made the interview process more natural and interactive for both the researcher and the participant.

To ensure that the participants were comfortable during the interview process, each participant was interviewed at their place of convenience. Consequently, the interviews were conducted at a variety of locations, including the UCT library and individuals homes. Although this came with the benefit of using a familiar space, we were however open to interruption at times during the some of the interviews, and complete privacy was sometimes not guaranteed.

The interviewing process was fun and interactive for both the interviewer and the interviewees. Some of the participants however, found the process rather stressful and requiring much intellectual tension at times (Rogers & Ryals, 2006). For example, at times, some of the participants experienced difficulty in separating some of the family roles. To address this, the participants were encouraged to take their time and think out loud if they so wished. A positive comment from one of the interviewees was that the interview provided them with an opportunity to evaluate the different life roles in a way that they never had before.

**Procedure for Kelly's repertory grid technique.** The repertory grid has three main components: elements which define the area of construing to be investigated, constructs which are the ways in which people differentiate between the elements, and the 'linking mechanism' which shows how each element is judged on each construct (Beail, 2005). Repertory grids can be elicited in individual and/or group sessions (Zuber-skerritt & Roche, 2004). In this particular study, to ensure anonymity and confidentiality, each participant was interviewed independently, and individual repertory grid tables were constructed for each participant. Repertory grids can be generated, scored, and analysed manually or by a computer program (Zuber-skerritt & Roche, 2004). In this particular study, to attain the element of engagement, the grids were generated and analysed manually.

***Selection of elements.*** The first step when conducting a repertory grid interview is to select elements that will be used in eliciting constructs from the participants (Zuber-skerritt & Roche, 2004). Elements are examples of people, objects or ideas that are representative of the topic under study (Beail, 2005). There is no theoretical limit to the number of elements that may be used, although between 6 and 12 is thought to provide a sufficient discriminatory yet practical range (Hawley, 2007).

Furthermore, Kelly (1955) asserts that the choice of the elements should also be representative of the topic area being investigated and also include items which will encourage the person to think of the contrast.

Elements can be elicited from the participant or supplied by the researcher depending on the purpose of the investigation (Fransella et al., 2004). In this particular study, the elements were supplied by the researcher and all the participants were provided with the same set of pre-selected elements. This type of repertory grid is known as a fixed elements grid (Caputi, Viney, Walker & Crittenden, 2011). The strategy of pre-defined elements ensures a comparable operationalization of the area of interest (Schmitt & Altstötter-Gleich, 2010).

In this research study, the elements selected by the researcher consisted of six future life roles that most students are planning to engage in: namely the worker role, spousal role, parental role, home-care role, community role and the leisure role. These specific elements were selected to represent six of the nine primary life roles identified by Donald Super in his Life- Span, Life-Space theory (Super, 1980). The parental role relates to childbearing responsibilities whereas the spousal role indicates marital commitments and support toward one's spouse. The homemaker role comprises of responsibilities towards creating and maintaining a home. The community role relates to any time and energy spent volunteering in community activities such as recreational groups, neighbourhood associations, religious groups, political parties and trade unions. The leisure role relates to any time and energy spent in spare-time activities, such watching television, pursuing hobbies, taking part in sports, traveling, being with family and friends or idling/loafing. The community and leisure roles however, have received very little attention in the work-and-family interface. After selecting the elements, the next step was to elicit the participant's constructs of the elements. In this study, this was done through a process known as triading (Bannister & Fransella, 1986).

**Triading.** Triading is a classic elicitation method used to elicit constructs about specific elements from the participants, without introducing bias from the researcher (Bannister & Fransella, 1986). While there are a number of different variations in the construct elicitation methods, triadic cards are the most commonly used method,

particularly when dealing with adult research participants (Fransella & Banister, 1977). Other methods of construct elicitation include the dyadic method, which is commonly used among children, and the Full Context Form, which involves the use of more than three elements (Fransella & Banister, 1977). During the triadic process, each element is written on a card and presented to the participants in sequential sets of three, with the question: In what important way are two of these alternatives similar, yet different from the third? Having specified the first pole of a construct, clients are then asked how the third alternative differs, to elicit the contrasting pole (Fransella & Banister, 1977).

In this particular study, the researcher commenced the triading process by explaining the process to the participant, and reassuring him or her that the interview was not a test. The researcher then presented the participant with the six elements written on six separate cards. For the purpose of this study, the elements were presented as words printed in white ink, on strips of laminated black paper to ensure uniformity across all elements and therefore reduce any bias towards certain grouping of elements. After showing the participants the cards, all six cards were shuffled and three cards were then drawn at random by the participant. The participant was then asked to say in what way two of the three chosen elements are similar, and in what way do they differ from the third. The distinction provided by the participant was considered a valid construct (Beail, 2005). Furthermore, Schmitt and Altstötter-Gleich (2010) noted that asking for the opposite of the elicited pole of a construct may mean that the rating is more likely to be extreme than if the person was asked to state how the third element was different and the spread of ratings may not be as wide. Once the participant had identified a construct, or how two examples are different from the third, he or she was then asked to name polar opposite of the construct. Both the construct and the contrasting pole were then written on the participant's repertory grid sheet, by the researcher, along with any additional comments that the participant may have made.

For example, if a participant drew the elements: parental role, leisure role and work role, he or she was then asked to state what ways two of the three chosen elements were similar and in what way they differed from the third. In this case, the

participant might have said that the parental and leisure role are similar in that they are “fun” roles to be involved in, whereas work is different because it is more “routine”. How the participant discriminates between these roles is considered a valid construct. Therefore, in this specific example, “routine” would be the construct, and “fun” or even “spontaneous” might be provided as its contrast pole. The contrasting poles would then be written at the opposite ends of a row on the blank grid, and the elements being compared would form the columns on the grid.

After eliciting each construct, the interviewer also made it a point to check back with the participant to ensure that the two pole names reflect exactly what the participant meant. Following that, the cards were then shuffled again, another three elements were selected, another construct was elicited, and the participant then provided contrasting pole for that particular construct. In this particular study, this process was repeated until the research participant produced a minimum of 10 different constructs, no new constructs were forthcoming, or the participant was tired. According to Beail (2005) it is important for researchers to end the elicitation process when participants become “saturated”, as the participants may start producing superficial responses.

Although the triading process went relatively well, the researcher did however encounter two minor problems which called for a slight adjustment in the interviewing process. After a few interviews, the researcher found that the shuffling process was not completely efficient as it often resulted in the participants getting the same triad combination over and over again. In addition, triadic combinations became increasingly difficult to recognise after a while and the researcher had to constantly refer back to her notes to see whether a particular triad combination had been used. This slowed the triading process down. To address these two issues, the researcher added a triad combination checklist on the participants’ documents allowing the participant to randomly pick triad combinations. Moreover, the checklist also provided the researcher the opportunity to be able to easily tick off a combination once it has been used.

The key point of the triading process was to elicit a wide range of constructs, without any suggestions from the researcher (Hawley, 2007). During the process, the

researcher was permitted to ask probing questions and ask the participant to think aloud. However, suggesting dimensions for constructs was prohibited as it introduces the very bias that the method seeks to avoid (Hawley, 2007).

**Rating.** Following the triadic process, the third step in conducting a repertory grid interview is to rate each element along the polar constructs that have been elicited from the participant (Zuber-skerritt & Roche, 2004). Grid rating is useful in examining the links between the elements provided by the researcher and the constructs elicited from the participants (Morgan, Griego & Gloeckner, 2001).

In this research study, once the elements and contrasting poles for the constructs were elicited and noted on the grid, they were cast into a blank grid with the elements along the top and the constructs along the side. The individual was then asked to rate each element on each construct. For the individual repertory grids, a five-point rating scale was used to indicate how strongly the participant perceives each element's association with the contrasting poles (Morgan et al., 2001). Using the same example as above, if the element provided by the researcher was "worker role", the participant would then be asked to rate the "worker role" on the contrasting poles: "fun" and "routine". The grid began to emerge as each element was rated on each construct. In this particular study, to provide structure for the participant during the rating process, the participants were asked to complete the grid on a row-by-row basis. Every participant was asked to rate the first element on the first construct and then rest of the elements on the first construct and so forth.

It was however observed by the researcher that the rating grid was confusing to some of the participants. In light of this, the researcher came to the conclusion that the main problem associated with the rating process was that the respondents tend to associate "positive poles" of the constructs such as fun, happy, loving with higher ratings, while "negative poles" such as boring, sad, cold were associated with lower ratings. However, in repertory grid rating, this is not always the case as "positive" and "negative" statements are mixed. In such cases, the researcher had to be thorough and patient in explaining the rating process to the participants.

Furthermore, in order to elicit constructs that were more meaningful to the participant, Kelly's repertory grid was supplemented with the laddering technique (Hinkle, 1965). Kelly's repertory grid and laddering techniques have been proven to work effectively together (Gordon 1999). During the interviews, participants tended to provide more than one construct or supply a construct that needed further clarification or at times provide superficial responses. "Laddering up" was used to identify core constructs, especially when more than one construct was provided. "Laddering up" was achieved through the use of questions such as "why?" "Laddering down" was used to get more detail about a construct the participant had given. "Laddering down" was achieved through the use of questions such as "can you explain more about..." The grid questionnaire therefore also provided space for the jotting down of notes, as well as the laddered constructs.

### **Data Analysis**

While qualitative data is usually voluminous, an advantage of the repertory grid technique is that requires simple answers from the participants, therefore ensuring economy in data recording (Patton, 1990). The responses to each triad may be as little as one or two words, and usually no more than a sentence (Fransella & Bannister, 1977). The qualitative outcome of the repertory grid interview is therefore a range of bi-polar constructs recorded in such a way that the results of a study can be quickly understood by the reader. As stated by Stewart and Stewart (1981 p.27) "there is very little waffle" when it comes to repertory grids, however, the technique can generate a substantial list of statements. For example, a study by Young (1995) conducted with 50 participants resulted in over 5,000 statements. This was primarily because the participants were permitted to repeat constructs. However, to avoid working with so many statements, Frost and Braine (1967) proposed that when participants are not permitted to repeat statements, responses would generally range from 10-30, with a mean of 18. In this particular study, the 15 participants were permitted to repeat statements/constructs, however they had to provide at least 10 different constructs before discontinuing the interview. The 15 participants generated a total of 144 constructs, with a mean of approximately 10 constructs per participants. Generally, the participants used a mean 11 triads before running out of new constructs.

Boyle (2005) suggests four techniques in which repertory grid data can be compared and analysed to determine individual or common themes. These common techniques include frequency counts, content analysis, visual focusing, and statistical analysis. In this particular study, a combination of frequency counts and thematic content analysis was used to analyse the qualitative data. The initial research findings were further reviewed and revised using reliability checks until a reasonable system of categories was identified. The researcher was able to reduce the data from 134 constructs-dyads, into eight final construct-dyad themes.

**Transcription.** Transcribing the interviews was the first step towards analysing the interviews. This process entailed reading and re-reading the data, jotting down initial ideas and transferring it into written form in the format of a list (Seidman, 1998). In transcribing the interviews, the researcher generated a comprehensive list of all the construct-dyads provided by the participants. The list was arranged into alphabetical order for ease of reading and the total number of construct-dyads elicited was counted. At this stage of the analysis, construct- dyads was tallied once, regardless of how many times it was elicited from different participants. The frequency was noted separately, and kept for later use. Excluding the frequency count, the total number of construct-dyads decreased from 145 to 134 (see Appendix E for construct dyad list). Furthermore, in order to allow for ease of sorting during the content analysis process, the list of 134 construct dyads was further transcribed into individual pieces of paper. Each construct was numbered in order of appearance on alphabetical list. In this research study, transcription served as a good way for the researcher to familiarise herself with the data, allowing for a better and more comprehensive understanding of the emergent themes.

**Frequency counts.** Transcription was then followed by a frequency analysis of the construct dyads. A frequency count is a simple data analysis technique where the number of times a particular element or individual construct is mentioned is recorded (Robson, 2002). Frequency counts are an easy and accessible method of analysing data. In this research study, frequency counts were used to provide the researcher with some data about which construct dyads we elicited most commonly from the participants. In this research study, frequency counts were achieved by counting the

number of times a construct-construct was elicited across participants. For example, the construct dyad “Relaxation-Hard work” was elicited four times across participants, indicating some commonality between the participant’s responses. However, since constructs represent the unique way in which each participant perceives and interprets the world, elicited constructs are highly individualistic. As a result, in this research study, most of the construct-dyads were elicited only once from the participants, which is why frequency counts were used alongside thematic analysis in this particular study

When conducting frequency counts it is important to consider the fact that is that participants may apply a different meaning to a particular construct. Therefore, in order to better understand a participant’s intended meaning, constructs should always be understood in relation to their implicit or contrasting pole (Fransella & Bannister, 1986). For example, a participant that supplies the construct-dyad “Fulfilling- Boring” illustrates a completely different meaning to the participant that supplied the construct-dyad “Fulfilling - Obligation”. Therefore, while construct- dyads may sometimes share a construct pole, the contrasting or implicit pole provided by a participant may give a construct-dyad a completely different meaning to what was intended by another participant. In order to avoid making premature judgments about meanings, construct-dyads sharing a construct or contrast pole were counted as stand-alone. Following the frequency count, the construct dyads were then grouped in terms of similar meaning using thematic analysis (Boyle, 2005). While frequency counts are useful in indicating commonality between participants, for the above mentioned reasons, they tend to be difficult when analysing constructs and detailed information can be lost through this method (Robson, 2002). According to Boyle (2005) frequency counts are primarily effective for identifying elements from free response questions (where the elements are not specified by the researcher). Thematic analysis is recommended when analysing elements or constructs that are not well defined (Stewart & Stewart, 1981).

**Thematic analysis.** Thematic analysis was used as the primary method of data analysis in this research study. Thematic content analysis involves developing a series of categories that elements or constructs may fall into and then assigning the elements or constructs to a specific category (Boyle, 2005). This process also followed an iterative process of reviewing and adapting these categories until a reasonable system

of categories was identified and all associations were assigned to a category (Reynolds & Gutman 1988). Since construct dimensions are elicited in discrete chunks, repertory grid data lends itself naturally to content analysis. In repertory grid research, each construct-dyad is your basic unit of analysis, as well as both the content unit and the context unit (Jankowicz, 2004). This eliminates the necessity to unitise the text, which is usually a difficult first step in content analysis of narratives. In this particular study, thematic analysis was used to identify emergent patterns (themes) within the elicited construct dyads, by grouping them into groups of similar meaning. The identified recurrent themes or categories were then expanded on and then pieced together to form a broader understanding of the participant's collective experience (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006).

Jankowicz's (2004 p.171) Core- Categorisation procedure was used to thematically analyse the 133 construct-dyads. This procedure involved grouping the elicited construct-dyads into themes where there appeared to be commonality in wording. What was of interest in the content analysis procedure was the commonality of responses, rather than the idiosyncratic statements (Bowler & Warburton, 1986). The first construct from the list was put in a separate category. If the second construct had a common meaning with the first one, it was put in the same category with the first one. If the meaning was different, the construct formed a separate category. The same was done with all constructs, until all items were put into separate categories. In addition, a category for miscellaneous constructs was also formed for constructs that did not seem to fit into any of the categories

In conducting the frequency count and content analysis, the researcher ended up with approximately eight themes. Each of the eight themes assisted the researcher to better understand how young adults construe their future life roles, and the expectations they have of these future life roles. Furthermore, two reliability checks were included in the analysis to ensure that themes were recognisable to other people either than the researcher. Since the ratings information is not taken into account in qualitative analysis, some of the grid information is lost in the process, however, Hawley (2007) emphasises that a qualitative analysis is often enough to develop a good understanding of the constructs that are important to the target audience .

**Reliability.** The interpretation of qualitative data is a both a critical and creative process, with no fixed rules (Patton, 1990). As a result all content analysis is largely subjective, as the categories that are devised are simply the researcher's opinion or the researchers own way of construing the interviewee's constructs. Other people might not see the same kinds of meanings in the constructs. Therefore, in order to ensure that the results of the content analysis make sense to other people either than the researcher, it is recommended that researchers always incorporate a reliability check (Jankowicz, 2004). In this research study, in line with a suggestion by Whyte and Bytheway (1996), the researcher conducted two sets of reliability checks using more than one expert to confirm the groupings. Following each reliability check, the themes and groupings were reviewed and revised accordingly until a reasonable system of categories was identified.

## **Chapter Four: Findings**

The purpose of this research study was to explore the values and attributes students perceive as significant in the construal of their future life roles, and thus understand the expectations they may have of their future life roles. In relation to this objective, this chapter presents a detailed description of the research findings. Using thematic content analysis and frequency counts, the researcher highlights eight prominent themes that capture something important about the research question, as well as represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Each theme is identified and explained. To ensure that the present study remains true to the views expressed by the participants, where appropriate, quotations indicative of the theme being discussed are provided. These quotations act as reflections of more than one participant's views, and serve to enhance the reader's understanding of the interviewer's interpretations of the findings. Furthermore, this chapter also describes the reliability checks conducted to reduce researcher bias and increase reliability within the qualitative data set.

### **Initial Themes**

Using the Core- categorisation procedure, eleven initial themes were identified by the researcher: Demanding- relaxing; independent effort- collaboration; freedom- responsibility; self- interest- societal contribution; authority- teamwork; time-consuming- less-time consuming; enjoyment- responsibility; flexible- structured; personal satisfaction- obligation; personal expectations- external expectations; monetary- non- monetary. A summary of the themes and content analysis is found on Table 1 below. Following the initial analysis, two reliability checks were also conducted as a means to reduce researcher bias and increase the reliability of the results (Whyte & Bytheway, 1996). Following the reliability checks, the initial themes/categories were reviewed and adapted until a reasonable system of categories was identified and all associations were assigned to a category (Reynolds & Gutman 1988).

## STUDENT EXPECTATIONS OF FUTURE LIFE ROLES

Table 1

*Summary of Researcher's initial themes*

| <b>Category</b>                             | <b>Definition</b>  | <b>Examples of Constructs in cluster</b>  |
|---|--|---|
| <b>Demanding -Relaxing</b>                  | <p>Demanding: requiring intensive skill, effort (mental or physical effort; hard work), time, attention or patience; requiring more than usually expected or thought due</p> <p>Relaxing: decrease or relief from work, effort or concentration; affording physical or mental rest; rest or engaging in an enjoyable activity so as to become less tired or anxious.</p>   | <p>Hard-easy; effort-less effort; demanding- less demanding; hard work-relaxation; stressful-relaxing; tiring- relaxing; strenuous- less demanding; Active-relaxing; constant attention-relaxing</p>                                      |
| <b>Independent effort- Collaboration</b>    | <p>By or for one person; proceeding from a single person, concerning one person exclusively; not requiring or relying on something or someone else; not subject to influence or control by others</p> <p>Collaboration: to work together for a common purpose; team-up, join forces; to cooperate with or willingly assist others in a joint effort</p>  | <p>Individual power-shared power; individual responsibility- shared responsibility; individual responsibility-teamwork; personal responsibility- interactive; personal interests-shared interests</p>                                     |
| <b>Freedom- Responsibility</b>              | <p>Freedom: the absence of or release from ties or obligations; free from confinement, hindrance or restraint; an absence of undue restrictions and an opportunity to exercise one's rights, powers, choice desires, and the like; free will.</p> <p>Responsibility: the state or fact of having a duty to deal with something or of having control over someone; the state or fact of being accountable for something; a duty, obligation, or burden;</p> | <p>Enjoyment-responsibility; fun-responsibility; exciting – confining; Fun- limiting; less responsibility – more responsibility; relaxation- responsibility; exciting responsibility; fun- challenging; adventurous - responsibility;</p> |
| <b>Self-interest- Societal contribution</b> | <p>Self-interest: the act or an instance of pursuing one's own interest; concern for your own advantage; interests and welfare</p> <p>Social contribution: the part played by an person in advancing the lives of others; of or pertaining to the life, welfare, and relations of human beings in a community, adding</p>  | <p>For self- for others; for self- helping others; personal focus- contribution to society; personal focus; selflessness; personal comfort- societal contribution; personal investment- societal investment</p>                           |
| <b>Time-consuming-Less time-consuming</b>   | <p>Taking up or involving a great deal of time; a task or activity that takes time and patience;</p>   | <p>Daily attention-Non-daily attention; Time-consuming —Free time; Time-consuming-Less effort; Time- consuming -Less time-consuming</p>   |

## STUDENT EXPECTATIONS OF FUTURE LIFE ROLES

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <b>Boring- Enjoyment</b>                            | <p>Boring: Uninteresting; arousing no interest or attention or curiosity or excitement; so lacking in interest as to cause mental weariness.</p> <p>Enjoyment: the act or condition of receiving pleasure, joy, satisfaction, delight; gratification from something; a feeling of pleasure caused by doing or experiencing something you like</p>  | <p>Boring-Adventurous; Boring-Enjoyment; Boring –Fulfilling; Boring- Fun; Boring-stimulating; Drag—Fun Boring–Inspiring; Limiting- Fulfilling; Passive-Stimulating; Fun-tedious; Fun- dull; Fun- Redundant; Run- repetitive; Boring- Energizing;</p> |
| <b>Flexible- Structured</b>                         | <p>Flexible: Responsive to change; adaptable; able to adjust easily to altered circumstances or conditions; capable of being changed.</p> <p>Structured: construct or arrange according to a plan; give a pattern or organisation to, highly organized, precise or fixed</p>   | <p>Exploratory –Routine Flexible- Non-flexible Fluid –Structured Freedom-Rules; Informal – Formal Relaxed-Strict; Spontaneous- Systematic; Spontaneous-Restrictive; Spontaneous –Planned</p>   |
| <b>Fulfillment- Obligation</b>                      | <p>Fulfillment: satisfaction or happiness as a result of fully developing one's abilities or character.</p> <p>Obligation: a moral, social or legal requirement such as a duty, commitment, or promise that compels one to follow or avoid a particular course of action; a course of action imposed by society, law, or conscience by which one is bound or restricted</p>  | <p>Fulfillment –Duty; Fulfilling-less fulfilling; Fulfilling-Less rewarding; Fulfillment – Obligation; Love –Responsibility; Personal growth –Obligation; Self-rewarding-Duty; Self value giving –Duty; Personally meaningful- requirement.</p>      |
| <b>Personal expectations- External expectations</b> | <p>Personal expectations: one's own expectations, expectations belonging to, concerning or set by individual, these expectations are not influenced by someone's opinion and require no approval from others</p> <p>External expectations: coming or originating from the outside, expectations that exist independently of the individual; the state of being expected</p>  | <p>Self-directed Expectations; Self –driven- Expectations; Voluntary-Compulsory</p>  |
| <b>Authority- Teamwork</b>                          | <p>The inherent power or right in a particular job function to give orders, make decisions, enforce obedience, control, judge, or prohibit the actions of others; the ability to influence or direct the actions or thoughts of others.</p> <p>Teamwork: the process or act of working collaboratively with a group of people in order to achieve a goal; the act of working together, with each person doing a part but all subordinating personal prominence to the efficiency of the whole; Cooperative or coordinated effort on the part of a group of persons</p> | <p>Authority –Partnership; Authority- Subordination; Leadership –Teamwork; Leadership – less authority; Authority- submission</p>  |

## STUDENT EXPECTATIONS OF FUTURE LIFE ROLES

acting together as a team or in the interests of a common cause

### **Monetary-Non-Monetary**

Materialistic: interest in and desire for money, possessions etc. rather than spiritual or ethical values; excessively concerned with physical comforts or the acquisition of material things rather than spiritual, intellectual, moral, or cultural values

Materialistic-People; Money –Love; Monetary -Non-monetary; Costly- Less costly; Requires finances-requires less finances; Expensive-less expensive

### **Reliability**

**Reliability check one.** The first reliability check involved two groups of UCT Masters students each consisting of three individuals. The aim of this reliability check was to see extent to which the two groups would at the same conclusions about the grouping of the constructs and the labelling of the themes. This is known as reproducibility (Jankowicz, 2004). To achieve this, the two groups were asked to independently repeat Jankowicz (2004) Core categorisation procedure initially used by the researcher.

To conduct the first reliability check, the researcher commenced by explaining the categorisation procedure to each of the groups, as well as addressed any questions that the collaborators had. The two groups were asked to allocate the 133 construct-dyads provided by the participants into categories, and supply themes for each category that has been identified. During this process, each group had to come to a consensus about the meaning of the categories, as well as agree about where each construct belongs. The groups were also advised to have a category for “other” to place all the construct dyads that did not seem to fit into any of their identified categories. To ensure that the groups had enough time to discuss and clarify confusion, no time limit was placed for this activity. The results of all three content analysis are illustrated on Table 2 below.

## STUDENT EXPECTATIONS OF FUTURE LIFE ROLES

Table 2

*Researcher, group 1, group 2 themes*

| <b>Researcher Initial themes</b>               | <b>Group 1 themes</b>                             | <b>Group 2 themes</b>                           |
|--|---|---|
| 1 Boring- Enjoyment                            | 1. Boring- Fun                                    | 1. Boring- Fulfilling                           |
| 2 Self-interest- Societal contribution         | 2. Personal Gain -Societal contribution           | 2. Individual- Collective                       |
| 3 Individual effort- Collaboration             | 3. Leadership- Teamwork                           | 3. Individual – Teamwork                        |
| 4 Personal expectations- External expectations | 4. Intrinsic expectations- Extrinsic expectations | 4. Personal expectations- External expectations |
| 5 Freedom- Responsibility                      | 5. Enjoyment- Responsibility                      | 5. Adventure- Responsibility                    |
| 6 Monetary- Non-monetary                       | 6. Monetary- Non-monetary                         | 6. Materialistic- Non-materialistic             |
| 7 Demanding- Relaxing                          | 7. Demanding –Relaxing                            | 7. Stressful –Relaxing                          |
| 8 Fulfillment- Obligation                      | 8. Self-fulfillment- Obligation                   | 8. Emotive- Non-emotive                         |
| 9 Time-consuming- Less time consuming          |   | 9. Time-consuming- Less effort                  |
| 10 Flexible- Structured                        |   | 10. Draining – Rejuvenating                     |
| 11 Authority- Teamwork                         |   | 11. Optional- Non-optional                      |

The results from the first reliability check indicated a reasonable amount of agreement between the researcher’s initial themes, and the two collaborating groups (see Table 2 above). However, the researcher concluded that there was still opportunity to further increase inter-rater agreement. Using the results from the initial content analysis and the two groups results, the themes were further reviewed and revised by the researcher. Some categories were redefined, other categories were merged, and other categories were discarded. The themes: Personal expectations- external expectations, monetary- non-monetary, and authority- teamwork were discarded from the study. The primary reason for this was because the researcher felt that the themes were not distinct or dominant enough and could be merged with other themes. For example, the theme personal expectations-external expectations was reflected within the theme personal satisfaction- obligation. Similarly, *authority- teamwork* was

reflected in the theme *independent effort- collaboration*. As a result the number of themes decreased from eleven to eight dyadic themes. A Table of the revised themes is provided on table 3 below.

Table 3

*Revised themes*

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**Themes:**

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1. Boring- Enjoyment
2. Independent Effort- Collaboration
3. Freedom- Responsibility
4. Demanding – Relaxing
5. Personal satisfaction- obligation
6. Structured – Flexible
7. Time-consuming- non-time consuming
8. Self- interest- Selflessness

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**Reliability check two.** In order to confirm whether the eight revised categories were reliable and recognisable to an individual other the researcher, a second and final reliability check was conducted on the revised themes. A UCT Master’s student was engaged as the collaborator for this reliability check.

The second reliability check was centred on carefully analysing areas of disagreement, and tightening up the meanings or definitions of the categories. To achieve this, the collaborator was supplied with the eight revised themes and a miscellaneous category. The task of the collaborator was to independently allocate each construct- dyad into a category theme, and identify category themes or names that she did not agree with. While the majority of the categories and themes were recognisable to the collaborator, some differences were noted and agreement was sought between the researcher and the collaborator. At this stage, the final revision of

the themes was conducted. Again, categories were redefined, other categories were merged, and other categories were discarded. During this revision process, the main changes included discarding the time-consuming- non-time consuming theme. Again, it was concluded by the researcher that this theme would essentially be reflected in the theme *demanding- relaxing*. Furthermore, a new theme affective-unaffectedive was also added to the findings. This particular theme had emerged at the beginning of the study in the form “emotive-non-emotive”, and after careful consideration of the participants responses, the researcher concluded that it was a significant theme in the study. Following the revision process, a total of eight final categories remained. The final agreed upon categories are believed to eliminate overlap among the categories, whilst also allowing as many constructs dyads into the categories as possible. These eight final themes are discussed in the section below.

### **Final Themes**

The content analysis and reliability checks revealed eight final dyadic themes that tell us something about how students understand and distinguish between their future life roles. These themes also tell us something about the values and qualities or characteristics students see as significant in each life role. The themes that emerged in this study were: self-interest- selflessness, demanding- relaxing, collaboration- independence, freedom-restriction, affective- unaffectedive, boring- enjoyment, structured- flexible, and personal satisfaction- obligation. The eight themes were mentioned by seven or more of the fifteen participants that were interviewed. Each key theme is identified and explained below. First, a summary table of the final themes is presented on Table 4 below.

## STUDENT EXPECTATIONS OF FUTURE LIFE ROLES

Table 4

*Summary of Final themes*

| Category                              | Definition  | Examples of Constructs in cluster  |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| <b>1. Self-interest- Selflessness</b> | <p>Self-interest: the act or an instance of pursuing one's own interest; concern for your own advantage; interests and welfare</p> <p>Selflessness: Having, exhibiting, or motivated by no concern for oneself; the quality of unselfish concern for the welfare of others; denial of your own interests in favor of the interests of others.</p>   | <p>“For self-for others”, “for self-helping others”, “self-focused-caring for others”, “Personal investment-societal investment”, “self-serving-self-sacrificing” and “personal focus-selflessness”.</p>                                 |
| <b>2. Demanding -Relaxing</b>         | <p>Demanding: requiring intensive skill, effort (mental or physical effort; hard work), time, attention or patience; requiring more than usually expected or thought due</p> <p>Relaxing: decrease or relief from work, effort or concentration; affording physical or mental rest; rest or engaging in an enjoyable activity so as to become less tired or anxious.</p>                    | <p>Hard-easy; effort-less effort; demanding- less demanding; hard work-relaxation; stressful-relaxing; tiring- relaxing; strenuous- less demanding; Active-relaxing; constant attention-relaxing.</p>                                    |
| <b>3.Collaboration- Independence</b>  | <p>Collaboration: to work together for a common purpose; team-up, join forces; to cooperate with or willingly assist others in a joint effort</p> <p>By or for one person; proceeding from a single person, concerning one person exclusively; not requiring or relying on something or someone else; not subject to influence or control by others.</p>                                    | <p>Shared responsibility- individual effort”, individual responsibility- teamwork”, “personal responsibility -interactive”, “individual-partnership ”, “personal goals-shared goals” and “personal interests – shared interests”</p>     |
| <b>4.Freedom- Restriction</b>         | <p>Freedom: the absence of or release from ties or obligations; free from confinement, hindrance or restraint; an absence of undue restrictions and an opportunity to exercise one's rights, powers, choice desires, and the like; free will.</p> <p>Restriction: imposing restrictions or limitations on someone's activities or freedom; limiting or controlling someone or something</p> | <p>Enjoyment-responsibility; fun-responsibility; exciting – confining; Fun- limiting; less responsibility – more responsibility; relaxation-responsibility; exciting responsibility ; fun- challenging; adventurous – responsibility</p> |

## STUDENT EXPECTATIONS OF FUTURE LIFE ROLES

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <b>5. Affective-Unaffectedive</b>          | <p>Affective: Relating to, arising from, or influencing feelings or emotions; Concerned with or arousing feelings or emotions; emotional</p> <p>Unaffectedive (unemotional): involving little or no emotions.</p>  | <p>Love –Loveless; Emotive-Non-emotive; Emotionally draining – Emotionally Replenishing; Emotionally invested- Not emotionally invested; Connection-Detachment; Love--Money; Love-Need for Personal Achievement; Love-Serious</p>                    |
| <b>6. Boring- Enjoyment</b>                | <p>Boring: Uninteresting; arousing no interest or attention or curiosity or excitement; so lacking in interest as to cause mental weariness.</p> <p>Enjoyment: the act or condition of receiving pleasure, joy, satisfaction, delight; gratification from something; a feeling of pleasure caused by doing or experiencing something you like</p>  | <p>Boring-Adventurous; Boring-Enjoyment; Boring –Fulfilling; Boring- Fun; Boring-stimulating; Drag—Fun; Boring–Inspiring; Limiting- Fulfilling; Passive-Stimulating; Fun-tedious; Fun- dull; Fun- Redundant; Run- repetitive; Boring- Energizing</p> |
| <b>7. Structured- Flexible</b>             | <p>Structured: construct or arrange according to a plan; give a pattern or organisation to, highly organized, precise or fixed.</p> <p>Flexible: Responsive to change; adaptable; able to adjust easily to altered circumstances or conditions; capable of being changed.</p>  | <p>Exploratory –Routine; Flexible-Non-flexible; Fluid –Structured; Freedom-Rules; Informal –Formal; Relaxed-Strict; Spontaneous-Systematic; Spontaneous-Restrictive; Spontaneous –Planned</p>  |
| <b>8. Personal satisfaction-Obligation</b> | <p>Personal satisfaction: the fulfillment or gratification of one’s own desires, needs, or expectations; A source or means of fulfillment or contentment</p> <p>Obligation: a moral, social or legal requirement such as a duty, commitment, or promise that compels one to follow or avoid a particular course of action; a course of action imposed by society, law, or conscience by which one is bound or restricted</p> | <p>Fulfillment –Duty; Fulfilling-less fulfilling; Fulfilling-Less rewarding; Fulfillment –Obligation; Love –Responsibility; Personal growth –Obligation; Self-rewarding-Duty; Self value giving – Duty; Personally meaningful-requirement.</p>       |

### **Selflessness - Self-interest**

The first central construct- dyad theme to emerge in the study was that of *selflessness -self-interest*. In this study, it was found that 10 of the 15 participants construed their potential future life roles as characterised or motivated by self- interest or selflessness. In light of the participants’ responses, roles that were perceived as

requiring one to sacrifice one's individual needs and desires for the sake of others were construed as selfless, while roles that were focused on pursuing one's own interests and advantage, were construed as self-interested. To demonstrate this theme, participants provided construct-dyads such as: "for self- for others", "for self- helping others", "self-focused- caring for others", "Personal investment- societal investment", "self-serving- self-sacrificing" and "personal focus- selflessness". As suggested by this finding, the majority of the participants perceived some of their future life roles as incorporating the value or desire to work with others and help others; even to the extent of sacrificing one's own needs and desires. In such roles, the emphasis was therefore on the greater good, rather than on individual needs. On the other hand, other roles were perceived as motivated by personal gain and the desire for personal advantage.

In this study, the construct *selflessness* was primarily associated with three particular life roles, namely: the parental role, the community role and the worker role. To illustrate this theme, the parental role was described by the participants as involving "caring for others", and taking "responsibility for others". For the majority of the participants, the parental role was perceived as selfless with one of the participants describing it as a "self-sacrificing role".

The community role was described by the participants using constructs such as "societal investment", "love for others", "making a difference to society" and "concern for others". Similarly, the worker role was also described using constructs such as "social service" and "contribution to society". For the majority of the participants, both the community and worker roles were perceived as providing an opportunity for "helping" and "giving back", as well as an opportunity for "interaction with others".

Other hand, the role most commonly associated with *self-interest* was the leisure role. For the majority of the participants, this role was described as "for yourself", "personal enjoyment", "self-rewarding", "selfish" and "self-focused". As suggested by this finding, the leisure role was perceived by the participants as a role in which one can pursue their own interests and goals, and be free from the responsibility of being concerned for others. To emphasise this point, participants also described this

role as comprising of “no expectations” and providing individuals the opportunity for “personal attention”.

### **Demanding- Relaxing**

The second dyadic theme to emerge from the data was that of *demanding – relaxing*. In this particular study, it was found that 8 of the 15 of the participants construed their potential future life roles as either *demanding or relaxing*. For the majority of the participants, roles that were perceived as requiring a great deal of attention in terms of time, skill and effort (mental or physical) were construed as demanding, while roles that were perceived as enabling one to engage in an enjoyable activity so as to become less tired or anxious or providing relief from effort were construed as relaxing. In light of this theme, construct-dyads such as “effort-effortless”, “relaxing-hard work”, “relaxing-stressful”, “demanding- less-demanding”, and “time-consuming- less time consuming” were provided by the participants.

In this particular study, the construct *demanding*, was predominantly associated with two roles, namely, the parental role and worker role. To illustrate this point, the parental role and the worker role were described by the participants using the constructs “daily attention” “time-consuming”, “hard work”, “challenging” “effort”, and “tiresome”. As suggested by this finding, the participants in this study perceived the worker and parental role as requiring much time and physical and mental effort. Moreover, some of the participants also described these two roles as “stressful” and “anxiety provoking”, suggesting that the participants also perceived the worker and parental roles to be emotionally demanding as well.

On the other hand, the role most commonly associated with the construct *relaxing* was the leisure role. To demonstrate this point, the leisure role was described by the participants as “relaxing”, “effortless”, “easy”, “less demanding”, and “less mental effort”. As suggested by the participant’s responses, the leisure role was perceived as the primary role in which individuals get an opportunity to relax and unwind, as well as get the opportunity to pursue individual hobbies and interests that the individual finds personally enjoyable and relaxing.

### **Collaboration- Independence**

Another significant theme that emerged in this study was that of *Collaboration-independence*. In this study, it was found that 8 of the 15 participants construed their potential future life roles as characterised by collaboration or independence. For the majority of the participants, roles which were perceived as requiring working together with one or more persons for a common purpose were construed as collaborative. In contrast, roles which were perceived as exclusively concerning the individual and free from the influence of others were construed as independent. To demonstrate this theme, construct dyads such as “shared responsibility- individual effort”, individual responsibility- teamwork”, “personal responsibility-interactive”, “and individual-partnership ”, “ personal goals-shared goals” and “personal interests – shared interests” were elicited from the participants. Some roles were perceived as comprising of goals and interests that require joint effort, while other roles have goals and interests require a more independent effort. As suggested by this finding, the majority of the participants perceived collaboration as a value in some of their potential future life roles, while independence served as a value in others.

In this particular study, the roles most commonly associated with *collaboration* were the spousal role, the home-care role, the parental and the community role. As indicated by this finding, collaboration was found to be a value shared across all three family roles. To demonstrate this, participants used constructs such as “shared responsibility”, “teamwork”, “partnership”, “shared interest”, and “shared goals”. As suggested by this finding, partnership and the equal sharing of role responsibilities were highlighted as key points.

The community role was also construed in similar terms using constructs such as: “shared responsibility”, “shared power”, “shared goals” and “support”. As suggested by this finding, working together and subordinating personal prominence to the efficiency of the whole was perceived as an integral part of engaging in the community role.

On the other hand, the role most significantly associated with *independence* was that of leisure. To illustrate this point, participants provided constructs such as

“Individual responsibility”, “personal goals”, and “concerns individual” to describe this role. For the majority of the participants this role was perceived as the primary role in which individuals have the opportunity to choose their own goals and activities and work independently towards those goals. As suggested by this finding, the leisure role was perceived by the participants as providing greater a sense of autonomy and self-direction, distinguishing it from the other life roles.

### **Freedom- Restriction**

Another prominent theme that emerged in this study was that of *freedom-restriction*. It was found that 8 of the 15 participants construed their potential future life roles as either freeing or restricting. As suggested by the participants’ responses, freeing and restricting roles were distinguished based on the amount of demands and responsibilities perceived to be associated with a particular role. The more demands and responsibilities perceived to be associated with a role, the greater the sense of responsibility associated with that role, and the more restricting the role was perceived to be. Conversely, the less demands and responsibilities perceived to be associated with a role, the less the sense of responsibility associated with that role, and the more freeing the role was perceived to be. To illustrate this theme, participants provided construct-dyads such as “responsibility-adventurous”, “responsibility- relaxation”, “responsibility- fun”, “responsibility- enjoyment” and “responsibility- less responsibility”, “responsibility- less responsibility” when distinguishing between life roles. As suggested by the participants responses, freeing roles were associated with an absence of or release from ties or obligations, thus enabling individuals to pursue their own desires and interests, while restrictive roles associated with the state or fact of being accountable for something, a duty, obligation, or someone, therefore imposing limitations on the individual’s activities or choices. Furthermore, freeing roles were also perceived by the participants as providing a sense of enjoyment or excitement, whereas restricting roles were suggested to lack this excitement.

In this research study, apart from the leisure role, which was associated with freedom, all of the anticipated life roles were associated with restriction. To illustrate this point, participants described the leisure role as “adventurous”, “exciting”,

“spontaneous”, and comprising of “freedom”, while the other roles were described as involving “responsibility”. As suggested by this finding, the leisure role was perceived by the majority of the participants as a role that provides individuals with the opportunity to be released from obligations and responsibilities, giving them the freedom to pursue their individual interests and goals, and the excitement associated with these roles.

### **Affective- Unaffective**

Another significant theme to emerge in the study was that of *affective-unaffective*. In this particular study, it was found that 8 of the 15 participants construed their potential future life roles as either affective or unaffective. In light of the participants responses, affective roles were construed as emotionally involved or arousing feelings or emotions, while unaffective or unemotional roles were perceived as roles that were not emotionally loaded or arousing no particular feelings. To illustrate this theme, participants used construct-dyads such as “love- loveless”, “affection- results focused”, “emotive-non-emotive”, “connection-disconnect”, and “emotionally invested- not emotionally invested”. As suggested by this theme, participants distinguished between roles that are perceived as providing space for individuals to experience emotions and feel more emotionally involved, and those that involve little or no emotions or are not emotionally rewarding.

In this particular study, the role most associated with the construct *affect* was the spousal role. This role was described by the majority of the participants as “emotive”, “emotionally replenishing”, and characterised by “affection”. As suggested by this finding, the spousal role was perceived to have a strong emotional dynamic in relation to the other life roles. Moreover, the spousal role was not only associated with affect, but also with positive affect, with four participants specifically providing the construct “love”. Also in relation to this, two of the participants also construed the spousal role as a “need” and “want”, respectively. When asked to elaborate on this construct, the participants commented on the desire for love and companionship associated with the spousal role.

*Unaffective*, on the other hand, was most commonly associated with the worker role. To illustrate this theme, participants used the words “loveless”, “less connection”, “not emotionally invested” and “non-emotive” to describe this role. Moreover, participants also described the worker role as highly focused on “output” and “delivery”, further emphasising the lack of emotional involvement perceived to be associated with this role.

### **Boring- Enjoyment**

The sixth theme to emerge in this research study was that of *boring- enjoyment*. In this study, 7 of the 15 participants highlighted *boring- enjoyment* as a key distinguishing characteristic between different life roles. To illustrate this theme, the participants used construct-dyads such as “boring- fun”, “enjoyable- routine”, and “fun- redundant”. As suggested by the participants’ responses, *boring* roles were perceived by the participants as arousing no curiosity or excitement, or lacking in interest. Enjoyable roles, on the other hand, were perceived as roles in which one is able to receive pleasure, joy and satisfaction.

In this research study, the roles most commonly associated with *enjoyment* were the spousal and leisure role. To demonstrate this point, enjoyable roles were construed by the participants using the constructs: “enjoyable”, “stimulating” and “fun”. Furthermore, enjoyable roles were generally perceived as related to one doing or experiencing something the individual liked such as spending time pursuing interests or hobbies or spending time with one’s spouse.

*Boring*, on the other hand, was most commonly associated with the home-care role. For the majority of the participants, home-care or house-work was described as “drag”, “repetitive”, “routine” and “uninteresting”. As suggested by this finding, boredom was perceived by the participants as related to doing or experiencing something the individual did not like, deemed as unnecessary or habitual. Moreover, the lack of variation and significance associated with the home-care role was highlighted as key in this finding.

### **Structured- Flexible**

Another prominent theme to emerge from the data was that of *structured-flexible*. In this study, it was found that 7 of the 15 participants construed their future life roles as *structured or flexible*. In light of the participant's responses, roles that were perceived as highly organised and fixed in terms of time, activities and responsibilities were construed as structured, and roles that were perceived as adaptable and responsive to change in terms of time, activities and responsibilities were construed as flexible. To relay this point, participants used construct-dyads such as "rules-freedom", "formal-informal", "relaxed-strict", "structured-fluid", "rigid-flexible" "accommodating- inflexible" and "expected-time- available time". As suggested by this finding, the majority of the participants distinguished between roles that are accommodating of other life roles, and those that are less accommodating.

In this research study, all of the potential future life roles were perceived as having some form of flexibility, apart from the worker role, which was associated with structure. To demonstrate this point, participants used constructs such as "strict", "rules", "systematic", and "formal", while the other life roles were described as "flexible", "spontaneous", "informal", "accommodating" and "fluid". To further reiterate this point, one of the participants also used the word "professionalism" to distinguish between the worker role and other life roles. As suggested by is finding, structured roles were perceived as somewhat "restrictive" with very little room for adjustment, whereas flexible roles were perceived as accommodating and helpful, particularly in ensuring that individuals are able to balance demands and responsibilities of different life roles.

### **Personal satisfaction- Obligation**

The final construct-dyad theme to emerge in this study was that of *personal satisfaction- obligation*. In this particular study, it was found that 7 of the 15 participants construed their future life roles motivated by either personal satisfaction or obligation. Roles perceived as involving activities and responsibilities followed by the fulfilment or gratification of one's own desires, needs or expectations, were construed as motivated by personal satisfaction. Whereas, roles perceived as consisting of

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activities and responsibilities imposed by society or one's own conscience or morals, for example, a duty, commitment or promise, were construed as obligatory. To illustrate this theme, participants provided construct-dyads such as "fulfilling-duty", "fulfilment-expectations", "fulfilling- obligation" "self-rewarding- duty", "own expectations - others expectations", and "personal growth-obligation". As suggested by this finding, participants distinguished between roles that are able to provide a sense of fulfilment and satisfaction, and those that compel the individual to follow or avoid a particular course of action, rather than one's own convictions.

In this study, the role most commonly associated with obligation was the home-care role. To describe this role, participants provided constructs such as "duty", "expectations", "obligation", "requirement" and "responsibility" to describe this role. For the majority of the participants, engagement in the home-care activities was perceived as an obligation towards ones family and spouse. As suggested by this finding, despite the fact that one might have other things to do or have other things one would rather be doing, housework remains a priority.

Personal satisfaction, on the other hand, was predominantly associated with the spousal role. In this study, the spousal role was described by the participants using the constructs: "personal fulfilment", "fulfilling", "satisfying", and personally meaningful", "personal growth and self-value giving. As suggested by this particular finding, the majority of the participants in this study perceived this role as meeting some form of need, desire, or expectation that result in feelings of fulfilment and satisfaction.

## Chapter Five: Discussion

This research study was aimed at providing insight into the internalised attitudes and beliefs students have about their future life roles, and therefore understand the key expectations they have of these future life roles. In light of this objective, this chapter includes a critical discussion of the findings of this study. The findings are interpreted and discussed in light of prior research and literature in the field, as is outlined in the literature review of this document. This is important, as the theoretical context of this research is vital to understanding the meaning of the results obtained in this study. This discussion is structured according to the eight construct-dyad themes that emerged from the study, namely: selflessness- self-interest, demanding- relaxing, collaboration- independence, freedom-restriction, affective- unaffectionate, boring- enjoyment, flexible- structured, and personal satisfaction- obligation.

### Selflessness- Self-interest

In this study the first theme to emerge was that of *selflessness- self-interest*. As indicated by the findings, the majority of the participants distinguished between roles motivated by selflessness or altruism, and those motivated by self-interest or selfishness (Lokan & Esdaile, 1994). This finding is supported by research studies that have found altruistic or selfish values to form an important part of individual's value system (Lokan & Esdaile, 1994). As suggested by this finding, students are likely expect to model altruistic values and behaviour within some roles, while tending to model more individualistic and selfish behaviours others. Individuals who value altruism or selflessness place importance on making a contribution to society, helping others, caring for others, comforting, sharing, cooperation, and even sacrificing individual needs and desires for the greater good or the welfare of others (Howe & Strauss, 2000; Lokan & Esdaile, 1994). In contrast, individuals who value self-interest or selfishness place greater concern on ones owns own interest above the well- being or interests of others (Howe & Strauss, 2000).

In this research study, three particular roles were associated altruism, namely: the parental role, the worker role, and the community role. This finding ties in well

with past research which has indicated altruism to be an important work and family value, as well as a significant motivation for volunteering in community work (Coimbra, Andrade & Fontaine, 2003). This finding also ties in with a cross-study of values and role importance by Lokan and Esdaile (1994) who found altruism to be a top value among Canadian university students. According to Eisenberg and Mussen (1989) altruism is a value largely learnt from ones parents which prompts and sustains involvement in particular roles and activities.

In line with literature and research, this study revealed altruism or selflessness to be an important value in the construal of the parental role. In this study, the parental role was perceived as altruistic because of its inherent requirement to care for and take responsibility for one's children. Research indicates that the survival of one's offspring depends on the amount of parental investment undertaken by both parents (Farrelly, 2013). Consequently, child-rearing has often been associated with altruistic decisions and behaviours, and the preference of parents to sacrifice their own needs and desires to ensure the current and future welfare of their children (Eisenberg & Mussen, 1989). Parents often make sacrifices in terms of hobbies, free time, careers, and quality of life to raise their children and ensure their wellbeing. Furthermore, recent studies suggest altruism to be an indicator of good parenting, as well is important for long term relationships such as that of parent and child (Farrelly, 2013).

Altruistic values have also been linked to social contribution (Duffy & Sedlacek, 2007). In this study, societal contribution was perceived as an important factor in the construal of the worker or employee role. This finding is therefore congruent to research which has found study by societal contribution to be an important work value among university students in the in many countries (Duffy & Sedlacek, 2007). As an altruistic work value, social contribution has been found to be a form of pro-social behaviour in the workplace, promoting behaviours such as helpfulness and supportiveness, at times at a cost to oneself. In support of this Cardwell (1996) also asserted that the main drive for altruistic behaviour can be seen as a desire to improve the welfare of another person and not having any expectation of getting a reward or have any other reason that may indicate some level of self-interest. As suggested by this finding, the worker role is construed as more than just a way to

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earn an income, but as a way to help and serve others and society through work. Consequently, students who hold more altruistic work values are inclined to expect more inclusive, cooperative and helpful work environments, as well as jobs and careers that offer social worth (Needleman, 2008).

This study also revealed selflessness to be important in the construal of the community role. As a finding therefore congruent with research which has found altruism to be an important motivation for students when participating in volunteer work and societal issues (Needleman, 2008). According to Trudeau and Devlin (1996), altruistic values lead individuals to seek additional human involvement through platforms such as volunteering and social conversation. For altruistic individuals, the community role is often seen a good way in which to gather social stimulation and affiliation (Trudeau & Devlin, 1996). Consequently, with community engagement now having formed an integral part of higher education, research indicates that increasingly more organisations have introduced extensive volunteer programs that allow employees the opportunity to do volunteer work on the company's time, as to attract younger employees (Needleman, 2008).

Although altruism or selflessness is still viewed as a traditional virtue in many societies and culture, increased concern for individualistic values and happiness and well-being has contributed to a shift in values among emerging employees (Twenge, 2004). Consistent with the above, this research study revealed self-interest to be important in the construal of the leisure role. For the majority of the participant, the leisure role was viewed as the primary role in which individuals can follow their own interests and satisfy own personal desires. According to Choa (2005), while older generations put a high priority on their careers when they were young, research indicates that young adults today are more interested in the pursuit of individual goals than their predecessors. Consequently, research has indicated a rise in leisure values over the past few decades (Smola & Sutton, 2002). Furthermore, Zemke et al. (2000) suggest that with this shift towards individualism, students are increasingly less inclined to make sacrifices in terms of leisure or family time for the sake of their jobs. In addition, the increased value placed on leisure also mirrors the desire and expectation among young people for work-family balance. It is therefore important for

new policies that address the health and wellbeing of employees to reflect the changing values and demands of young adults (Zemke et al., 2000).

### **Demanding- Relaxing**

Juggling the high demands of work and family roles has become a challenge for many men and women who are currently fulfilling these life roles (Steil, 2007). As a result, current research indicates an increased concern for work-life balance and non-work activities among current employees, as well as young adults who have expectations around these future life roles (Saxbe et al., 2011). Consistent with the above, the findings in this research study revealed that the majority of participants distinguished between demanding and relaxing life roles. Roles that were perceived as requiring a great deal of time, skill, and mental or physical effort were construed as demanding, and roles that were perceived as providing relief from effort or enabling one to engage in an enjoyable activity so as to become less tired or anxious were construed as relaxing. Consistent with research, this finding further emphasises the view that individuals are increasingly engaging in non-work activities as means of achieving work-life balance and recuperating from these multiple role demands (Saxbe et al., 2011).

In light of this theme, this study also revealed that high demands and pressure were most associated the worker and parental role. For the majority of the participants, the worker and parental role were perceived as demanding on one's time, emotions, and on one's mental and physical energy. This finding is therefore congruent with research which has indicated that over the past few decades working days have become longer (Saxbe et al., 2011), and parental has become increasingly important to parents with researchers observing a steady rise in the average time spent in child-related activities (Fisher et al., 1999). Moreover, research studies have indicated a relationship between perceived demands and the time an individual is willing to spend on a particular role. As a result, the above finding may suggest that students are likely to expect to spend more time and put in more effort into the roles that they perceive as demanding. However, this contrary to research studies which have noted a steady

increase in leisure values over the generations, while work centrality has declined (Twenge et al., 2010).

On the other hand, this research study also revealed the construct *relaxing* as significant in the construal of the leisure role. As suggested by this finding, students perceive the leisure role as the primary role in which they can take the opportunity to unwind and recuperate from the pressures of being involved in different work and family activities throughout the day (Iso-Ahola & Mannel, 2004). This finding therefore coincides a study by Saxbe et al. (2011) who found that individuals are increasingly engaging in leisure role activities as means of recovering from multiple role demands and longer working days. However, Fisher et al. (1999) also suggests that the increased anticipated participation in leisure may also be a reflection in the reduction in the pressures of domestic work and changes in domestic technology. The above finding therefore suggests that leisure time may become even more important for students who desire psychological and physical recovery from the high demands of work and family roles. Furthermore, this finding, again, emphasises young adults desire a desire to reconcile their various life interests through work- life balance (Peake & Harris, 2002)

### **Collaboration- Independence**

Multiple roles are interconnected not only within, but also across individuals (MacDermid, et al., 2001). For example, balance between work and family is sometimes accomplished by one person in a couple focusing more on paid work, while the other focuses more on unpaid domestic work, caregiving, and tending to the emotional and social aspects of family life. However, women today are no longer solely defined by the family role, and men are increasingly participating in child-rearing and household activities indicating a move away from the traditional homemaker/breadwinner type of household towards a more egalitarian structure (Kaufman, 2005). Traditional gender roles within a family setting have therefore shifted so that family responsibilities are equally shared between couples. Consequently, research indicates that the majority of young adults engaged in tertiary education have grown up in households where both parents are employed and the family responsibilities are more equally divided than in the past (Kaufman, 2005).

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Consistent with research, this study revealed that students distinguished between collaborative and independent roles. In light of this finding collaborative roles were perceived as comprising of joint effort with one or more persons, while independent roles were perceived as characterised by individual effort and autonomy. Congruent with literature, collaboration was found to be significant in the construal of the three family roles, namely, the spousal, household and parental roles. For the majority of the participants, the family roles were perceived as roles in which the spouses work together as partners to provide for the family, take care of the children as well as carry out the household duties. This finding is therefore in line with current research, providing further support for the shift towards egalitarian values and attitudes among young adults, whereby male and female partners equally absorb work; responsibilities household tasks and looking after the children are shared equally (Kaufman, 2005). Furthermore, this study also found collaboration to be important in the construal of the community role. As stated by (Clutterbuck, 2003) the community role inherently involves the process of people working together to address issues that are important to them. The ability to collaborate and partner effectively with other individuals or organisations is therefore an integral part of the community or civic role (Clutterbuck, 2003).

*Independence*, on the other hand was most significantly associated with the leisure role. In this research study, the leisure role was perceived as the primary role in which individuals could be autonomous and self-directed. Leisure time often entails individuals pursuing their hobbies and interests of choice, as well as taking time off to relax and unwind (Peake & Harris, 2002). This finding is very much consistent with literature, which suggests leisure to be a time when people can do what they want to do, away from form and other commitments (The Social Report, 2010). Consequently, leisure has been found to play an important role in work and family balance and wellbeing, providing individuals with a sense of identity and personal autonomy (The Social Report, 2010). As young adults, increasingly intend to balance work not only with family but also with leisure activities, Saxbe et al. (2011), suggests more adaptive work conditions to accommodate young working adults.

As suggested by the above findings, students are likely to emphasise egalitarian values and expectations, and anticipate equal division of labour when it comes to family responsibilities such as housework and looking after the children, as well as community work (Novack & Novack, 1996).

### **Freedom- Restriction**

Coimbra et al. (2003), highlight the phase of emergent adulthood is a time of freedom and exploration and being without responsibilities. During this time young adults are freer than they ever were in childhood, or ever will be once they take on the full weight of adult responsibilities (Arnett, 2000). As a result, commitment to family and work less attractive for young people, and the road to adulthood has become longer (Coimbra et al., 2003). Furthermore, most young adults today view adulthood and its obligations in a different light when compared to their predecessors. Correspondingly, research indicates that young adults do not marry, become parents, and find a long-term job until at least their late twenties (Arnett, 2000). In light of the above, this study revealed that students distinguished between freeing and restricting roles. Roles perceived as releasing one from ties or obligations, and enabling one to follow one's interests desires were construed as freeing, and roles perceived as comprising of responsibility, and hindering the individual from exercising free will were construed as restrictive.

In this study, the findings revealed that all of the future life roles were associated with *restriction*, except for leisure role, which was associated with *freedom*. For the majority of the participants, all of the family roles, along with the worker and the community role were perceived as imposing certain restrictions on the individual. This finding therefore echoes Arnett and Tanner (2009) view that young people see marriage, home and children are seen by most of them not as achievements to be pursued but as perils to be avoided. The leisure role on the other hand, was construed as freeing, and perceived as an opportune time to lay family and work responsibilities aside and pursue other activities that the individual finds as enjoyable and relaxing. This finding corresponds well with Kelly (1972) who stressed that freedom of choice is the central element when it comes to leisure. This finding on leisure also correlates

with an Australian study by Lokan and Esdaile (1994) that reported that students who value freedom and prefer to “free spirits”, scored significantly higher in participation in leisure and commitment to leisure.

Ultimately, for most young adults, although adulthood and its obligations offer security and stability, they also represent a closing of doors—the end of independence, the end of spontaneity, the end of a sense of wide-open possibilities (Arnett & Tanner, 2009). As suggested by this finding, student’s expectations of their future may therefore involve a later commitment to family and work roles. Having an acute awareness about the changes that come with assuming adult roles, students may resort to prolonging the period in which one is free to pursue excitement and adventure. Moreover, to ensure that they are able to allocate the maximum time possible to leisure, students may expect to work less hours, hire domestic help or even decide to have less children. As previously mentioned, students may be less willing to sacrifice their leisure time to fulfil work or family responsibilities.

### **Affective- Unaffected**

In this study, it was also found that students construed their future life roles either *affective- unaffected*. In light of this finding, students perceived some roles to be emotionally involved, and characterised by feelings such as love, while other roles were construed as unemotional and arousing no particular feelings. The role most associated with affect was the spousal role. This finding largely correlates with the assertion by Ocholla (2002), who suggest that affection constitutes one of the significant aspects of interpersonal family interactions. Ocholla (2002) further suggests that nowadays there is a fight for time available to the individual; the time is to be shared between the work and the family among other things, thus reducing the time and opportunity to share affection with loved ones.

*Unaffected*, on the other hand was associated with the worker or employee role. For the majority of participants in this study, the worker role simply focuses on getting the task done. This rings true with past research which has found some jobs to be more emotionally engaging and personally demanding than others (O’Connor, 2008).

As suggested by the above findings, students expect to have different levels of emotional involvement when it comes to the different life roles. Despite the blurring of boundaries between work and family life, affection with loved ones remains one of the primary distinguishing factors between the work and family domain. More focused on meeting the demands of the role, students expect very little emotional involvement when it comes to the worker role. Consequently, students may expect their need for love and affection to be met in the family domain, while the work takes a more results focused approach.

### **Boring- Enjoyment**

With happiness and well-being being major concerns within work-family research and policy making, research into lived experience, work, leisure, and enjoyment has become central to our understanding of work-family domain (Haworth & Hart 2007). Consistent with the above, the findings of this study revealed that students distinguished between boring roles and those that provide enjoyment. Boring roles were perceived as arousing no interest, curiosity or excitement, and enjoyable roles were perceived as associated with feelings of joy and satisfaction, particularly when doing or experiencing something one likes.

This study revealed that *boring* was most commonly associated with the construal of the homecare role. For the majority of the participants, this role was perceived as uninteresting and redundant. This finding is therefore consistent with Goodnow and Bowes (1994) who suggested that the home-care is often considered repetitive and unimportant, and needs some special kind of conditions such as motivation or love. Furthermore, recent research suggests that women are spending less time on housework. According to Baxter (2002) women are spending less time on housework not only because the men are picking up the slack and assisting with household responsibilities, but because less housework is getting done overall. This Similarly, Cinamon and Rich's (2002a) argued that young students often have domestic assistance through hired help, making the home-care role increasingly redundant. This finding therefore suggests that students expect to express very little value through the home-care role, which could potentially result in minimum

participation in this role. This finding therefore ties in well with the utilitarian perspective which assumes that individuals who received displeasure from a role would choose to devote less time to the role (McAllister, 1953).

*Enjoyment*, on the other hand, was found to be most associated with the spousal and leisure roles. For the majority of the participants enjoyment was associated with feelings of pleasure and gratification as a result of doing or experiencing something the individual likes, such as spending time with one's significant other or engaging in leisure (Podilchak, 1991). While the researcher found very limited research on the relationship between the spousal relationship and enjoyment, enjoyment however, has been proven to be a critical process within leisure (Podilchak, 1991). This finding is therefore also congruent with the utilitarian perspective that assumes that individuals who receive pleasure from a role would devote more time to the role because they have a preference for engaging in enjoyable roles and activities. Enjoyment is therefore a form of intrinsic motivation that may lead to greater involvement in a particular role (Scanlan & Simons, 1992).

As suggested by this finding, students may therefore expect to have more time to pursue enjoyable and satisfying leisure pursuits and emotional fulfillment in relationships than in the past. In light of this, Haworth and Hart (2007) also argued that increased flexibility of work and the reduction of household responsibilities has increased the time individuals to pursue relationships and enjoyable activities.

### **Structured- Flexible**

The findings of this study also revealed that students distinguished between structured and flexible roles. In light of this finding, the worker role was perceived as highly organised and fixed and therefore structured, while the other five life roles were perceived as and accommodating of changes and variations and therefore more flexible. This finding is therefore congruent with the traditional understanding of work, which views work as a repetitive and fixed role, with strict working hours and places of work (Bond & Friedman, 1993). However, with the changes in working life, and increased emphasis on work family balance, research has indicated flexibility to be an increasingly important value among employees (Bond & Friedman, 1993).

Correspondingly, research also indicates that students anticipating to go into the workforce are also viewing flexibility as an important quality for balancing family and a successful career. In support of this, an Australian research study reported that increased flexibility, in the form of even time rosters and reduced working hours, are likely to appeal to Australian engineering students (Marsden, 2004). Another study by (Bond & Friedman, 1993) also found that young adult's expectations for their future involve flexible work hours for family, maintaining relationships and their health.

As suggested by this finding, flexibility seems to be an increasingly important characteristic in the construal of future life roles. As such, student's expectations for their future life roles may involve flexible work practices such as flexible work hours or working from home, to allow for time pursuing family and other interests.

### **Personal satisfaction- Obligation**

According to Rossi and Rossi (1990) although feelings of obligation remain strong in general society, most Individuals today have the personal choice to participate in roles and engage in activities that are personally meaningful to them. Consistent with literature, the findings of this study revealed that the majority of the participants distinguished between roles motivated by personal satisfaction and those motivated by personal or social obligation. As suggested by this finding, some life roles were perceived by the participant as a "must do" due to personal or social pressure, while other roles are perceived as personally worthwhile.

In this research study, *obligation* was primarily associated with the home-care role. This finding is therefore congruent with past research that highlights obligations among family members as important in influencing individual behaviour (Rossi & Rossi, 1990). In support of this, Chao and Tseng, (2002) also argued that although not compulsory, obligations reflect an individual's tendency to put the good of the family first through responsibilities such as spending time in family activities and performing household obligations. Therefore, although the home-care role was perceived as boring and redundant, it was perceived as one of the requirements, duties or responsibilities that one has to fulfill as a spouse, or mother or family member. Furthermore, Gans and Silverstein's (2006) suggest obligations to be based on altruistic feelings based on

kinship or moral grounds, on the societal level, or in terms of reciprocity and affection, on the individual level. Rossi and Rossi (1990) however argue that feelings of obligation are not unconditional. To echo this, it was also found in the study that a number of participants viewed this role as optional or not significant. As suggested by this finding, although the home-care role is perceived as boring, and students do not expect to express much value from it, students may expect to participate in this role as the fulfilment of an obligation. At the same time, students may expect to outsource this role in the future, as long as the work gets done. As suggested by this finding, students may expect to sacrifice personal needs and desires, to meet the family duties and responsibilities such as caring for children and caring for the home. This, however, finding may hold greater implications for women, who continue to be the primary care givers in the family, both in terms of child-rearing and household tasks.

On the other hand, the roles most significantly associated with *personal satisfaction*, were the spousal and the leisure role. As suggested by this finding, students perceived that time spent in these roles as providing them with the opportunity to meet personal needs and providing them with feelings of fulfilment and contentment. This finding therefore congruent with Morgan (1996) view which highlighted the absence of necessity and the pursuit of personal satisfaction as key characteristics of the leisure role. In agreement, Saxbe et al. (2011) also found considerable evidence that leisure was important to later-life adults to achieving personal satisfaction with life. As highlighted by this finding, for many individuals, leisure is more than just a way to fill up time, but an opportunity to have personal needs and expectations met. However, Kelly (1978) also pointed out that some routine leisure activity with the family, especially when dictated by the schedules of others, may be perceived more as obligation than personal satisfaction. Similarly, Reed (2009) noted that one of the reasons individuals pursue marriage or committed relationships is for intimacy and personal satisfaction. For Reed (2009) although marriage may not be as strong a social institution as it once was, it remains as the dominant and most valued family form in the United states, especially for families that include children. Congruent with the above, this finding revealed personal satisfaction as important in the construal of the spousal role. As suggested by this finding, students expect to express a lot of value though the spousal role. Together with the previous finding on

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the spousal role and affect, this finding suggests that students may expect to attain emotional fulfilment through this role, particular with regards to love and affect.

## **Chapter Six: Conclusion**

The purpose of this study was to qualitatively explore the way in which students construe their future life roles, and therefore understand the expectations they have of these future life roles. First, this present chapter provides a summary of the main findings of this study, and pulls together the main conclusions based on the findings. Second, this chapter also highlight the implications of the findings for contemporary practice. Third, this chapter discusses the limitations of the study, and concludes by making recommendations for future study in the field.

### **Summary of Discussion**

In the first key theme, the findings revealed that the majority of the participants construed their future life roles as characterised by self- interest or selflessness. Selfless roles were perceived as roles that will require the denial of one's own interests and needs for the sake of others, while self-interested roles were perceived as focusing on individual interests, needs and desires. The three specific roles associated with selflessness or altruism were the parental role, the community role and the worker role. This finding tied in well with past research which indicates altruism to be an important work and family value, as well as a significant motivation for volunteering in community work (Andrade & Fontaine, 2000). Self-interest, on the other hand was associated with the leisure role. This finding also corresponds well with current research that suggests leisure to be an increasingly important value among young adults who place more emphasis on happiness and well-being and individualistic values, than their predecessors has also contributed to the shift in values among employees (Twenge, 2004). In light of the above finding students are likely to expect model altruistic values and behaviours in certain roles, while tending to model more individualistic and selfish behaviours in other roles.

In the second key theme, the findings revealed that the majority of the participants construed their future life roles as either demanding or relaxing. Demanding roles were perceived by the participants as requiring intensive mental or physical effort, time, attention or patience, while relaxing roles were perceived as affording physical or mental rest or relief from effort or concentration. Consistent with

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past research, the roles most associated with high demands and pressure were the worker and parental role, and the role most associated with relaxation was the leisure role. As suggested by this finding, students are likely to expect more leisure time for psychological and physical recovery from the high demands of work and family roles. Furthermore, this finding also emphasises young adults desire to reconcile their various life interests through work- life balance (Treuren & Anderson, 2010).

In the third theme, the findings revealed that the majority of the participants construed their future life roles as characterised either by collaboration or independence. Collaborative roles were perceived as roles requiring joint effort between one or more persons, while independent roles were perceived as a comprising of individual effort and free from the influence of others. In this study, four roles were most commonly associated with collaboration, namely, the spousal role, home-care role, the parental role and the community role. Congruent with current research, this finding indicates a shift away from traditional family values towards more egalitarian family attitudes and values among young adults (Kaufman, 2005). As suggested by this finding, student's expectations of their future may therefore involve a later commitment to family and work roles. Moreover, to ensure that one is able to allocate the maximum time possible to leisure, students may expect to work less hours, hire domestic help or even decide to have less children. As previously mentioned, students may be less willing to sacrifice their leisure time to fulfil work or family responsibilities.

In the fourth theme, it was found that the majority of the participants construed their future life roles as either freeing or restricting. Freeing roles were associated with an absence of or release from ties or obligations, therefore allowing individuals to pursue their own desires and interests. Restricting roles, on the other hand, were perceived as comprising of increased responsibility, thus imposing limitations on the individual's activities or choices. In light of this finding, the role most associated with freedom was the leisure role, while other roles were considered generally more restrictive. As suggested by this finding, students' anticipate increased responsibility upon assuming work and family roles. As indicated by research, students may expect to commit to family and work much later in life. Furthermore, upon assuming adult life

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roles and responsibilities, students may expect to make far less sacrifices in terms of their leisure time, as this role is perceived as the single role which will provide individuals with opportunity to place family and work responsibilities on the side and pursue other activities that the individual finds as enjoyable and relaxing.

In the fifth theme, the findings showed that the majority of the participants construed their future life roles as either structured or flexible. Structured roles were perceived as highly organised and fixed, while flexible roles were perceived as more informal and accommodating of changes and variations. Congruent with the traditional understanding of work (Marsden, 2004), the role most associated with the *structure* was the worker role, while other roles were considered generally more flexible. As suggested by this finding, flexibility appears to be an important characteristic in the construal of future life roles. As such, student's expectations for their future life roles may involve flexible work practices to allow for time pursuing family and other interests.

As suggested by this finding, students expect to express a lot of value though the spousal role. Together with the previous finding on the spousal role and affect, this finding suggests that students may expect to attain emotional fulfilment through this role, particular with regards to love and affect.

In the sixth theme, findings revealed that the majority of the participants construed their future life roles as either boring or as a source of enjoyment. Boring roles were perceived as arousing no interest or attention, curiosity or excitement and causing mental weariness for the participants, while enjoyable roles were perceived as arousing feelings of pleasure and satisfaction, especially when doing something or experiencing something one likes. Consistent with literature, the role most associated with boredom was the homecare role, and the roles most associated with enjoyment were the spousal and leisure role. As suggested by this finding, students may expect to express little value through the homecare role, and are therefore likely to expect less participation in this role. On the other hand, students may expect to have more time to pursue enjoyable and satisfying leisure pursuits and emotional fulfillment in relationships than in the past. In relation to this, Haworth and Hart (2007) argued

that increased flexibility of work and the reduction of household responsibilities has increased the time individuals to pursue relationships and enjoyable activities.

In light of the seventh theme, it was found that the majority of the participants in the study construed their future life roles as motivated by either personal satisfaction or personal or social obligation. Roles that were perceived to allow for the fulfilment or gratification of one's own desires, needs or expectations were associated with personal satisfaction, while roles that were perceived as consisting of activities and responsibilities imposed by society or one's own conscience or morals, for example a duty, commitment or promise were associated with obligation. In this study, the role most associated with feelings of obligation was the home-care role, while personal satisfaction was predominantly associated with the spousal and the leisure role. This finding is congruent with past research which highlights obligations among family members as important in influencing individual behaviour (Rossi & Rossi, 1990). As suggested by this finding, students expect to express a lot of value through the spousal role, however, students may expect to sacrifice personal needs and desires, to meet the family duties and responsibilities such as caring for children and caring for the home. This finding however, may hold greater implications for women, who continue to be the primary care givers in the family, both in terms of child-rearing and household tasks.

In the eighth and final theme, the findings revealed that the majority of the participants construed their future life roles as affective- unaffectionate. The participants distinguished between roles that were perceived as emotionally involved and characterised by feelings such as love, and unemotional roles that were likely to arouse no particular feelings. The role most associated with affect was the spousal role. This finding largely correlates with the assertion by Doherty and Colangelo (1984) that affection constitutes one of the significant aspects interpersonal family interactions. Furthermore, despite the blurring of boundaries between work and family life, affection with loved ones remains one of the primary distinguishing factors between the work and family domain. As suggested by this finding, students may expect to have different levels of emotional involvement when it comes to the different life roles. Consequently, students may expect their need for love and affection to be met in the

family domain, while the work takes a more results focused approach.

### **Theoretical and practical implications**

This research study has a number of potential implications for contemporary practice. Research on the expectations of students may enhance understanding of the development of career and family plans among young adults, and therefore assist in promoting timely career interventions to minimise the harmful effects of work-family conflict and role strain on the realisation of family and career goals (Barnett et al., 2003; Conlon, 2002). Research on student expectations may also be useful in assisting young adults in planning for the interface between their multiple roles by assisting them clarify their personal beliefs and values, as well as prioritizing their time and energy when it comes to managing multiple roles (Weitzman & Fitzgerald, 1996). Furthermore, understanding future expectations may help experts in addressing work-family issues before young adults assume their anticipated roles, potentially facilitating young adults' formulation of realistic expectations and future plans that combine dual roles (Barnett et al., 2003; Cinamon & Rich, 2004). Ultimately, such research may assist experts in managing expectations and in developing timely interventions to help young adults effectively blend life roles, minimise work-family conflict and maximise work-life balance.

This research study may also have practical implications for the recruitment and management of the emerging workforce. In order to attract, motivate and retain high caliber entry-level employees, it would be of value for employers to have insight into their attitudes, values and expectations with regards to their future life roles (Batt & Valcour, 2003; Carsten, 2006). Such a research study can also assist organisations in formulating effective policies and practices with regards to work and family life, in order to help accommodate the different role commitments young individuals have (Doherty & Tyson, 2000).

Furthermore, research that provides insight into young adult's expectations could also assist the employers in satisfying the potential needs of young adults with regards to work and family lives, thus managing problems such as levels of

productivity of staff, commitment, level of job satisfaction, absenteeism, turnover rates as well as psychological well-being (Carsten, 2006). In addition, insight into the attitudes and expectations of young adults could ultimately assist students and organisations in managing and integrating their various life roles more successfully in the future, and therefore reap the benefits associated with occupying multiple roles, increasing life satisfaction and enhancing quality of life (Carsten, 2006).

### **Limitations of the Study**

Every research study carries some limitations; this research study was by no means an exception. First, although the repertory grid collects both qualitative and quantitative, a major limitation for this study was the fact that the data analysis was only conducted on the qualitative data thus making the findings more susceptible to bias (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). Qualitative data is highly subjective, as a result, the success of the reliability and validity of the findings are dependent on the extent of to which the participants opinions are reflected by the interviewer. Although, reliability checks were conducted to minimise bias and increase the validity of the findings of this study, it acknowledged by the researcher that the study could have been further strengthened if one had made use of the quantitative information provided by the repertory grid. This limitation was difficult to overcome mainly because of the time constraints the researcher was exposed to, and the fact that the researcher was predominantly interested in the personal understanding of the participants rather than the quantitative relationships between constructs. In light of this limitation, although the rating information is not taken into account in the qualitative analysis of the repertory grid, Hawley (2007) emphasises that qualitative analysis is often enough to develop a good understanding of the constructs that are important to the target audience

Second, one cannot argue the value of using Kelly's repertory grid method to understand how students construe their future life roles, however, in any study using a single research instrument can limit the validity and reliability of ones findings. As a result, the researcher also acknowledges that the use of a multiple qualitative and/ or quantitative methods such as semi-structured interviews, document analysis and survey

questionnaires, would have enabled the researcher to compare and contrast results, as well as control for bias, thus further increasing the reliability and validity of the study.

The relatively small sample size may also be seen as a limitation in this study. In qualitative studies, the researcher emphasises the depth and meaning around the topic understanding, as a result qualitative samples tend to be small (Neumann, 1997). Since this study was conducted within a qualitative paradigm, the research only made use of fifteen participants. The disadvantage of this however, is that small sample sizes are not generalizable to the larger population and may create problems in internal consistency (Neumann, 1997).

Another limitation of this study was that data was collected at one point in time. The result was that the present research could merely provide a snapshot of reality that occurred in a single time frame. The conclusions in the present study are thus limited to one period of time and are subject to further tests based on data collected at other times (Babbie & Mouton, 2001).

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Although this study contributes to the literature on the anticipated work-family interface, certain limitations should be addressed in future research.

One of the distinguishing features of the repertory grid technique is its ability to provide a combination of qualitative and quantitative data (Fallman & Waterworth, 2010). Since repertory grids also embody a rating system used to quantitatively relate each element in relation to the constructs, the grid technique can also provide quantitative for statistical analysis, complementing the qualitative nature of the method. Therefore, in order to increase the validity and reliability of the repertory grid method, as well as improve the rigor of the study, use of the quantitative rating information provided by the repertory grid is suggested for future research. Furthermore, this approach would also provide the researcher with complementary information, resulting in a more holistic understanding of the participant's life-worlds.

Second, although Kelly's repertory grid can be used as a standalone methodology, it is very useful as a preliminary study for further qualitative or quantitative investigation, or as a complement for validating or deepening results obtained with other methods (Beail, 2005). Therefore, in order to increase the validity and reliability of the study, as well as have a stronger research design, a two-stage methodology is also suggested for future research. The repertory grid could potentially be conducted in two phases. In stage one; the data could be collected both qualitatively and quantitatively, on a small sample. The findings from the stage one could therefore be used to create a standardised repertory grid which could be used for statistically analysing a larger sample. Thus, the researcher would employ a two stage methodology that allows him or her to confirm the findings on a larger sample, thus enabling the findings to be generalizable to a larger population. Alternatively, the repertory grid could potentially be used as a basis to create a questionnaire or interview schedule that is more topic and sample appropriate. However due to time constraints and a lack of resources this limitation may not be overcome.

Consequently, to build on this study, a researcher could use the qualitative findings revealed in this study as the basis for a standard repertory grid, a questionnaire or an interview schedule.

### **Concluding Remarks**

This research study thus provided a clearer understanding of South African university student's role expectations, and the attributes they construe as distinguishing within each of these roles. In spite of having no direct experience in these roles, the young adults formed preferences for their adult role balance. Although these expectations may change when young adults actually experience the roles that they are anticipating, they still serve as important motivators for current career choice decisions, as well as future role decisions and role behavior. Consequently, addressing work-family issues during emergent adulthood, when young people have not yet assumed adult roles may potentially facilitate young adult's formulation of realistic future plans that accommodate multiple roles and minimize the harmful effects of work-family conflict and roles strain on the realization of work and family goals.

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## STUDENT EXPECTATIONS OF FUTURE LIFE ROLES

### Appendix A

The repertory grid example.

These ratings represented the following:

1 = the element is closely linked to the construct

2 = the element is somewhat linked to the construct

3 = neutral

4 = the element is somewhat linked to the contrasting pole

5 = the element is closely linked to the contrasting pole

| <b>Construct</b> | <b>ELEMENTS</b> |                 |                  |               |               |                 | <b>Contrasting pole</b> |
|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
|                  | Worker<br>role  | Spousal<br>Role | Parental<br>Role | Home-<br>care | Comm<br>unity | Leisure<br>role |                         |
| E.g. Exciting    | 5               | 4               | 3                | 1             | 2             | 4               | E.g. Boring             |
| E.g. Fulfilling  | 4               | 5               | 3                | 2             | 1             | 2               | E.g. Survival           |
| E.g. Money       | 3               | 5               | 2                | 5             | 5             | 3               | E.g. Love               |
| E.g. Status      | 2               | 3               | 3                | 2             | 5             | 1               | E.g. Ordinary           |

Appendix B

Letter of informed consent.

University of Cape Town



School of Management Studies

**Informed Consent Form for Research Participants**

As part of the requirements for an MA in Organizational Psychology at UCT, I Sikho Mgweba (MGWSIK001) I am conducting a research study. The study is concerned with understanding the expectations of postgraduate students with regards to their future life roles.

This research has been approved by the Commerce Faculty Ethics in Research Committee.

Your participation in this research is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any point during the study.

Your participation in the study will involve taking part in a repertory grid interview, lasting approximately 45 minutes.

You will not be requested to supply any identifiable information, ensuring your anonymity.

Should you have any questions regarding the research please feel free to contact the researcher.

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

I agree to participate in the above study:

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS OF FUTURE LIFE ROLES

Appendix C

Repertory grid interview schedule.

**Demographic Information:**

Please indicate the following with an X

**Gender**

|               |             |
|---------------|-------------|
| <b>Female</b> | <b>Male</b> |
|---------------|-------------|

**Race**

|              |              |                |               |              |              |                             |
|--------------|--------------|----------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Black</b> | <b>White</b> | <b>Colored</b> | <b>Indian</b> | <b>Asian</b> | <b>Other</b> | <b>Choose not to answer</b> |
|--------------|--------------|----------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------------------|

**Age**

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

**Postgraduate Student**

|            |           |
|------------|-----------|
| <b>Yes</b> | <b>No</b> |
|------------|-----------|

**Faculty of Study**

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

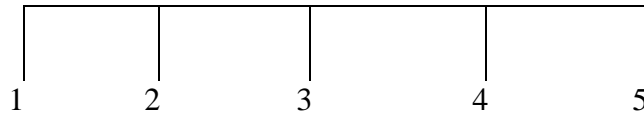
**Part-time work**

|            |           |
|------------|-----------|
| <b>Yes</b> | <b>No</b> |
|------------|-----------|

## STUDENT EXPECTATIONS OF FUTURE LIFE ROLES

### Instructions for Ratings on the Repertory Grid

Example:



**Construct**

**Contrasting Pole**

1. Very Fun

5. Very Boring

1 = Very Fun

(The element is very linked to the construct)

2 = Fun

(The element is linked to the construct)

3 = Somewhat Fun

(The element is more linked to the construct than the contrasting pole)

4 = Boring

(The element is linked to the contrasting pole)

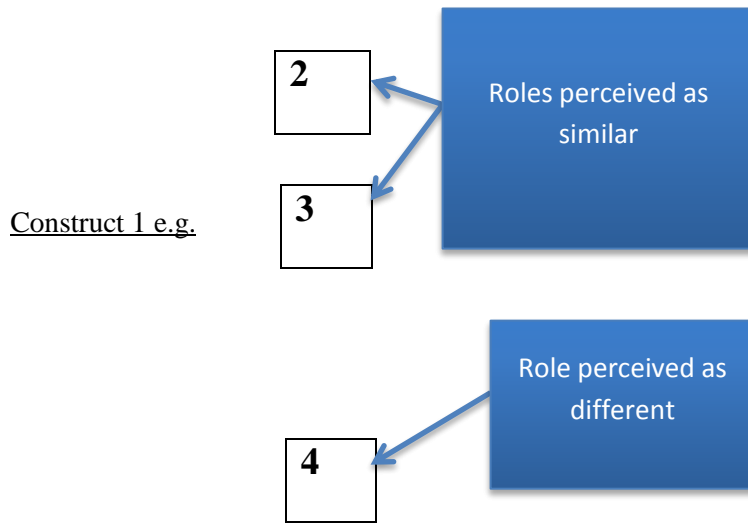
5 = Very Boring

(The element is very linked to the contrasting pole)

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS OF FUTURE LIFE ROLES

| Construct | ELEMENTS             |                       |                        |                     |                           |                      | Contrast |
|-----------|----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|----------|
|           | 1.<br>Worker<br>Role | 2.<br>Spousal<br>Role | 3.<br>Parental<br>Role | 4.<br>Home-<br>Care | 5.<br>Communi-<br>ty Role | 6<br>Leisure<br>Role |          |
| 1.        |                      |                       |                        |                     |                           |                      |          |
| 2.        |                      |                       |                        |                     |                           |                      |          |
| 3.        |                      |                       |                        |                     |                           |                      |          |
| 4.        |                      |                       |                        |                     |                           |                      |          |
| 5.        |                      |                       |                        |                     |                           |                      |          |
| 6.        |                      |                       |                        |                     |                           |                      |          |
| 7.        |                      |                       |                        |                     |                           |                      |          |
| 8         |                      |                       |                        |                     |                           |                      |          |
| 9.        |                      |                       |                        |                     |                           |                      |          |

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS OF FUTURE LIFE ROLES



Construct 2

NOTES

---

Construct 3

Appendix D

Researcher's instructions for the RepGrid technique.

**\*\*\*The participant MUST be UNMARRIED, and NOT HAVE CHILDREN\*\*\*\***

1. The cards are turned face down, **shuffled**, and then **three cards are drawn** at random.
2. The participant then decides: "Out of the three elements chosen, **which two SEEM** (*participant must not state the similarity just yet*) to have something more in **common** with each other?" These two elements are connected with a line.
3. The participant must then **express what it is that makes the third element different from the other two** (*This is the construct, write it on the left*).
4. Always on the right side of the grid, the participant will **describe what aspect these two elements share**. (If this is too difficult, people are allowed to write something they believe to be the opposite of the left/construct hand construct).
5. The participant will then be asked to state which pole for them is **positive** and which is **negative** (*This is to help with rating*)
6. Finally, the elements are rated to the constructs. Each **element is rated to the constructs** on a **scale of one to five**, with the left construct as "1" and the right construct as "5". (Do all the rating at the end of elicitation process)

**1. Worker Role**

**2. Spousal Role**

**3. Parental  
Role**

**4. Homecare  
Role**

**5. Community  
Role**

**6. Leisure Role**

# STUDENT EXPECTATIONS OF FUTURE LIFE ROLES

## Appendix E

Construct dyad List Total 131.

1. Accommodating----- Inflexible
2. Authority----- Partnership \*
3. Authority----- Subordination \*
4. Authority----- Submission
5. Boring----- Adventurous \*
6. Boring----- Energizing
7. Boring----- Enjoyment \*
8. Boring----- Fun \*
9. Boring-----Stimulating \*
10. Connection----- Detachment\*
11. Costly ----- Less costly \*
12. Creative----- Limiting \*
13. Daily attention-----Non-daily attention \*
14. Demanding----- Less demanding \*
15. Discipline ----- Less discipline \*
16. Duty----- Self-value giving \*
17. Duty----- Self- rewarding \*
18. Easy----- Hard \*
19. Effort-----Effortless \*
20. Effort----- Less effort \*
21. Emotive----- Non- emotive \*
22. Emotionally draining-----Emotionally Replenishing \*
23. Emotionally invested----- Not emotionally invested
24. Enjoyment----- Hard work \*
25. Enjoyable-----Routine
26. Exciting -----Confining \*

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS OF FUTURE LIFE ROLES

|                                   |                         |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 27. Expectations-----             | Less expectations *     |
| 28. Expectations-----             | Self-driven *           |
| 29. Expectations -----            | Self- directed *        |
| 30. Expected –time—-----          | Available time *        |
| 31. Flexible-----                 | Non-flexible *          |
| 32. Formal—-----                  | Informal *              |
| 33. For self—-----                | For others *            |
| 34. For self -----                | Helping others *        |
| 35. Fulfilling—-----              | Boring *                |
| 36. Fulfilling -----              | Duty *                  |
| 37. Fulfillment-----              | Expectations            |
| 38. Fulfilling-----               | Limiting *              |
| 39. Fulfilling-----               | Less fulfilling *       |
| 40. Fulfilling-----               | Less rewarding *        |
| 41. Fulfillment—-----             | Obligation *            |
| 42. Fulfillment-----              | Output                  |
| 43. Fulfillment -----             | Recognition *           |
| 44. Fun-----                      | Conceited *             |
| 45. Fun-----                      | Challenging *           |
| 46. Fun-----                      | Dull                    |
| 47. Fun-----                      | Limiting                |
| 48. Fun-----                      | Drag *                  |
| 49. Fun-----                      | Responsibility *        |
| 50. Fun-----                      | Redundant               |
| 51. Fun-----                      | Repetitive              |
| 52. Fun-----                      | Tiresome                |
| 53. Individual-----               | Partnership *           |
| 54. Individual-----               | Support *               |
| 55. Inspiring -----               | Uninspiring *           |
| 56. Interaction with others—----- | Interaction with self * |

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS OF FUTURE LIFE ROLES

|                               |                                 |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 57. Interactive               | Personal responsibility *       |
| 58. Individual responsibility | Teamwork *                      |
| 59. Image                     | Being yourself                  |
| 60. Impression                | Reality *                       |
| 61. Important                 | Less important                  |
| 62. Leadership                | Less authority *                |
| 63. Leadership                | Teamwork *                      |
| 64. Love                      | Loveless *                      |
| 65. Love                      | Money *                         |
| 66. Love                      | Need for Personal Achievement * |
| 67. Love                      | Serious *                       |
| 68. Materialistic             | People centered *               |
| 69. Monetary                  | Non- monetary *                 |
| 70. Myself                    | Role Modeling *                 |
| 71. Need                      | Want *                          |
| 72. Network of people         | -Partnership *                  |
| 73. Optional                  | Essential *                     |
| 74. Optional                  | Individual Responsibility *     |
| 75. Optional                  | Not optional*                   |
| 76. Passive                   | Active *                        |
| 77. Passive                   | Assertive                       |
| 78. Passive                   | Challenging                     |
| 79. Passive                   | Stimulating *                   |
| 80. Personal Enjoyment        | Enjoyment with others *         |
| 81. Personal Comfort          | Societal responsibility *       |
| 82. Personal Investment       | Societal investment *           |
| 83. Personal investment       | Societal Contribution *         |
| 84. Personal focus            | Contribution to Society *       |
| 85. Personal focus            | Shared focus *                  |
| 86. Personal focus            | Selflessness *                  |

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS OF FUTURE LIFE ROLES

|      |                   |       |                         |
|------|-------------------|-------|-------------------------|
| 87.  | Personal growth   | ----- | Obligation *            |
| 88.  | Personal service  | ----- | Social service *        |
| 89.  | Professional      | ----- | Informal                |
| 90.  | Relaxed           | ----- | Serious *               |
| 91.  | Relaxed           | ----- | Strict *                |
| 92.  | Relaxing          | ----- | Active *                |
| 93.  | Relaxing          | ----- | Anxiety provoking *     |
| 94.  | Relaxing          | ----- | Constant attention *    |
| 95.  | Relaxing          | ----- | Demanding *             |
| 96.  | Relaxing          | ----- | Energetic *             |
| 97.  | Relaxing          | ----- | Stressful *             |
| 98.  | Relaxing          | ----- | Tiring *                |
| 99.  | Relaxation        | ----- | Hard work *             |
| 100. | Relaxation        | ----- | Responsibility *        |
| 101. | Receiving         | ----- | Giving *                |
| 102. | Responsibility    | ----- | Adventurous *           |
| 103. | Responsibility    | ----- | Enjoyment *             |
| 104. | Responsibility    | ----- | Exciting *              |
| 105. | Responsibility    | ----- | Less responsibility *   |
| 106. | Responsibility    | ----- | Love *                  |
| 107. | Requires Finances | ----- | Requires less Finances* |
| 108. | Results focused   | ----- | Affection *             |
| 109. | Results focused   | ----- | People focused *        |
| 110. | Restrictive       | ----- | Spontaneous*            |
| 111. | Rigid             | ----- | Flexible                |
| 112. | Rules             | ----- | Freedom *               |
| 113. | Routine           | ----- | Exploratory *           |
| 114. | Selfish           | ----- | Serving others          |
| 115. | Self-serving      | ----- | Self-sacrificing        |
| 116. | Self-focused      | ----- | Caring for others *     |

## STUDENT EXPECTATIONS OF FUTURE LIFE ROLES

- |      |                       |       |                           |
|------|-----------------------|-------|---------------------------|
| 117. | Self-focused          | ----- | Social contribution *     |
| 118. | Shared interests      | ----- | Personal interests *      |
| 119. | Shared goals          | ----- | Personal goals *          |
| 120. | Shared power          | ----- | Individual power *        |
| 121. | Shared responsibility | ---   | Individual attention *    |
| 122. | Shared responsibility | ---   | Individual effort*        |
| 123. | Shared responsibility | ---   | Individual responsibility |
| 124. | Shared responsibility | ---   | Personal satisfaction *   |
| 125. | Short-term rewards    | ---   | Long-term rewards *       |
| 126. | Significant           | ----- | Less significant *        |
| 127. | Structured            | ----- | Fluid *                   |
| 128. | Spontaneous           | ----- | Planned *                 |
| 129. | Spontaneous           | ----- | Systematic *              |
| 130. | Time-consuming        | ----- | Time-rewarding *          |
| 131. | Time-consuming        | ----- | Less effort *             |
| 132. | Time-consuming        | ----- | Less time Consuming *     |
| 133. | Time-consuming        | ----- | Free time*                |
| 134. | Voluntary             | ----- | Compulsory *              |