

**An investigation into the
existence of white leadership
prototypicality in the
Department for Work and
Pensions: An ethnic minority
perspective.**

Doctor of Business Administration

Never Muskwe

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Dedications

This thesis is dedicated to

my wife, Pauline

our children, Adelaide Thandeka, Admiral Dali and
Adrian Thabiso 'AT'

my mother Shuvayi Matanha

my father Pharaoh Bishop Muskwe

and

This thesis is also dedicated to my late grandparents, Ngungwayi 'Stati' Tigere and Robert 'Mhuka' Muskwe, two people who would have been proud of my achievements as they have always believed in me.

Preface

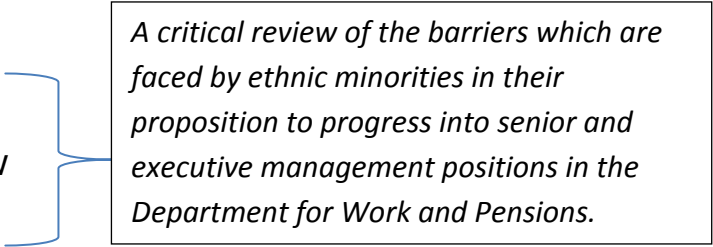
This volume brings together six documents that collectively comprise the Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) degree requirements completed by the author in April 2011. The first three documents are entitled the same *A critical review of the barriers faced by ethnic minorities in their proposition to progress into senior management positions*. These three documents constitute Volume One.

Volume Two is composed of documents 4, 5 and 6 as shown below. Documents 4 and 5 have different titles as there were further researches developed from the findings of the preceding documents. The documents are presented in sequence in which they were produced:

Document 1: Research Proposal

Document 2: Critical Literature Review

Document 3: Qualitative Research



A critical review of the barriers which are faced by ethnic minorities in their proposition to progress into senior and executive management positions in the Department for Work and Pensions.

Document 4: Quantitative Research

A comparative analysis on the existence of the glass ceiling in DWP and how social support impacts on the advancement of ethnic minorities and whites in SEO to SCS grades.

Document 5: Thesis

An investigation into the existence of white leadership prototypicality in the Department for Work and Pensions: An ethnic minority perspective.

Document 6: A Reflective Journal

An exceptionally difficult journey, but was worthwhile undertaking: A pyrrhic victory.

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A critical review of the barriers faced by ethnic minorities in their proposition to progress into senior management positions

Document 1: Research Proposal is presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Business Administration
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Chapter 1

1.1 Introduction

Few ethnic minorities currently hold senior management positions in the DWP. DWP as an institution funded by public money has a legal responsibility to provide leadership in the area of equality and diversity. However, even by its own admission, highlighted in DWP Report 512 where it is stated by Hooker, Jagger and Baldwin (2008) that it has failed to promote ethnic minorities into Senior Civil Servants (SCS) grades. This situation is particularly marked at the Chief Executive level is a cause of concern to those considering a future in the Public Service as it does not and has never had an ethnic minority Chief Executive Officer (CEO). While DWP actively promotes the business case for diversity, does it actually practice it in terms of its own workforce? Why is it that, it has disproportionately few ethnic minorities at the apex of the organisation in senior and executive management positions? This is despite the existence of equality legislation and the need for public sector organisations to consider equality and diversity issues as priorities, however it is not on the business agenda (Sanglin-Grant and Schneider, 2002), but on the backburner.

Despite a range of high-profile government diversity initiatives, in most organisations racial equality is a low priority. The boss is always white, less than 1% of them have a black or a minority ethnic minority chief executive officer (CEO) (Jackson and

Daniels, 2007b). The contrast between snowcapped summit and the mountain base could hardly be starker (Carvel and Shifrin, 2004). Examining statistics on who gets promoted into senior management and, particularly, who gets the top spots in any organisation shows that even employers with the best employment diversity records may not fare as well in fostering ethnic diversity in organisational upper atmosphere (Pitts, 2007; Thomas and Gabarro, 1999). Previous studies have highlighted that ethnic minority managers encounter more obstacles to career progression than their white counterparts (e.g. Jackson, 2008b; Hill, 2004; Steefle, 2006; Jackson and Daniels, 2007b, Jackson *et al*, 2007a; Jackson, 2008a; Corrigan, 2002; Hill, 2004; Bush, Glover and Sood, 2006; Giscoombe and Mattis, 2002; Bush and Moloi, 2006; Maume, 2004, Kandola, 2004; Bell and Nkomo, 2001).

The study seeks to address the void in understanding the inequality in the representation of ethnic minorities in top management by investigating how race affects their promotional prospects. In response to equality and diversity and changing demographics the organisation has made considerable efforts to attract ethnic minorities. Changes in the composition of the UK's working population and employment patterns have resulted in considerably greater diversity in the economically active workforce compared with only 20 years ago (Kersten, 2007;). Although over the years the representation of Black Minority Ethnic (BME) people has improved considerably, a similar pattern can still be found today, whereby BME staffs remain concentrated at the bottom of the organisational hierarchy, with apparently few prospects for promotion. (Somerville, Steele and Sodhi, 2002. Organisations have invested heavily on implementing equality and diversity strategies (e.g. Pitts, 2007, Foster and Harris, 2005; Jain, Sloane and Horwitz, 2003;

Kersten, 2000). But why is it ethnic minorities are still underrepresented at senior and executive management positions?

Data regarding the trends and changes in the scholarly literature focusing on the career development of ethnic minorities spanning several decades are not well documented (Flores *et al.*, 2006). Leadership studies focusing on ethnic minorities provide particularly rich contexts to illuminate the human condition as it pertains to leadership. Yet insights about the leadership experience of ethnic minorities from context-rich research remain marginal in the field. There is little research that focuses on the public sector and in particular on race as a trait of leadership and the promotion of ethnic minorities at senior and executive management positions. Surprisingly few studies involving ethnic minority status have been conducted (Tomaskovic-Devey and Stainback, 2007; Elliott and Smith, 2001; Cox and Nkomo, 1990), much less at middle and executive management levels. More attention has been given to ethnic minority group members' access to jobs than to their treatment as job incumbents (Bursell, 2007; Carlsson, and Rooth, 2007; Mackay *et al.*, 2006; Chow and Crawford, 2004). The slower progression of minority ethnic employees within organisations is well-established (Cabinet Office Strategy Unit, 2003; Miller and Travers, 2004; Ocloo, 2002; Sanglin-Grant and Schneider, 2000) as is their underrepresentation in senior positions (Ocloo, 2002; Sanglin-Grant *et al.*, 2000). Promotions, one aspect of the treatment of incumbents, can be awarded to certain groups but not to others, or awarded to certain groups at a faster rate than to others. No empirical research has examined the effect of race on decisions about promotion to top management positions. This gap in the research base stems from data limitations (Jackson, 2001), and in part, the gap is due to the nascent nature and presence of ethnic minorities in senior and executive positions, hence this research

aims to fill the gap in the literature by looking at the underrepresentation of ethnic minorities and determine how race as a leadership trait affects ethnic minorities' promotability.

The current research proposal provides a brief overview of the organisation under study, as well as the literature review. The rationale behind the proposed methodology will be explained and the methodology is mapped. The research plans for Documents 3, 4 and 5 are set out. These are not definitive and it is expected that some modifications may occur prior to submission of the actual documents. The expected ethical issues and outcomes are set out in the final section.

1.2 Area of study

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is the largest government department in the United Kingdom with a workforce of 100 000 employees. It was created on June 8, 2001, from the merger of the employment part of the Department for Education and Employment and the Department of Social Security. It is headed by the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, a Cabinet position. It is currently headed by the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, a Cabinet position. It is made up of five businesses which are Jobcentre Plus, The Pension Service, Disability and Carers Services, The Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission, Health and Safety Executive and the Rent Service.

A key feature of the organisation which is pertinent to this research is that the senior management and executive management positions are predominantly white people from similar corporate, social and educational backgrounds. This is based on the observation of the researcher who is an employee in the organisation for the past four years at a senior management grade. Such homogeneity does not reflect the

modern perspective of the changing demographics and the representativeness of the organisation's workforce. Being a public board it has a legal responsibility to provide leadership in the area of equality and diversity. Ethnic minorities make up 10% of the total workforce; however the distribution of the workforce is concentrated mainly in the lower level with only 2% of the senior managers being ethnic minorities. Most of the ethnic minorities are found in the lower grades of AO to EO and as the number starts receding as one moves from HEO to SEO and dwindles from Grade 7 to Grade 6 and starts to disappear into thin air in the Senior Civil Servant bracket with no trace of non-white SCS. The disproportionate numbers of ethnic minorities are at the low echelons of the organisation or plateau in middle management positions, where there is stagnation in terms of career progression, whilst the organisation has a broad base and narrow or slim line of ethnic minorities at the apex. Although ethnic minorities are relatively well represented, in fact in some cases overrepresented, in the public service, these figures are not equally distributed. Masked behind these overall statistics are serious imbalances, especially with respect to supervisory and managerial positions. Ethnic minority employment is concentrated in the lower levels positions, individual efforts apparently confront a glass ceiling that hinders advancement in to management and upper management.

For the sake of this study the researcher proposes to be analysing the representation of ethnic minority as from Senior Executive Officer (HEO) to Senior Civil Servant (SCS). As shown by the table below there is disproportion on the number of ethnic minorities at lower levels. There are only 22 ethnic minorities in DWP at Grade 6 and SCS out of 10091 ethnic minorities, this a drop in the ocean as it represents a meagre of 0.22% of ethnic minority population within the organisation.

They make 2.6% of the grade which has a total of 836 whites. This figure is not representative of the people in the lower level of the organisation.

Permanent staff shown by grade gender and ethnicity

Gender	Grade	Ethnic Minorities	Unclear / No Response	White	No of Staff Declaring	% Ethnic
Female	Band A / AA	474	481	3,558	4,032	11.8%
	Band B / AO	3,979	5,828	33,174	37,153	10.7%

	Band C / EO	2,255	3,102	22,469	24,724	9.1%
	Band D / HEO	218	550	3,633	3,851	5.7%
	Band E / SEO	51	195	1,100	1,151	4.4%
	Band F / G7	17	96	458	475	3.6%
	Band G / G6 & Above	12	62	233	287	4.9%
Female Total		7,006	10,314	64,625	71,631	9.8%
Male	Band A / AA	212	360	1,914	2,126	10.0%
	Band B / AO	1,651	2,853	12,051	13,702	12.0%
	Band C / EO	1,016	1,766	9,900	10,916	9.3%
	Band D / HEO	135	430	2,323	2,458	5.5%
	Band E / SEO	37	180	985	1,022	3.6%
	Band F / G7	24	137	579	603	4.0%
	Band G / G6 & Above	10	80	389	399	2.5%
Male Total		3,085	5,806	28,141	31,226	9.9%
Total		10,091	16,120	92,766	102,857	9.8%

Permanent & FTA staff (HC) by Business & Ethnicity

Business	Ethnic Minorities	Unclear / No Response	White	No of Staff Declaring	%

Child Support Agency	539	1,322	10,656	11,195	4.8%
Disability & Carers Service	622	626	5,461	6,083	10.2%
Shared Services	236	682	4,018	4,254	5.5%
Corporate Centre	364	1,204	4,040	4,404	8.3%
Jobcentre Plus	7,553	10,790	57,098	64,651	11.7%
The Pension Service	777	1,496	11,493	12,270	6.3%
DWP Total	10,091	16,120	92,766	102,857	9.8%

Permanent & FTA staff (HC) by Grade & Ethnicity

Grade	Ethnic Minorities	Unclear / No Response	White	No of Staff Declaring	% Ethnic
Band A / AA	686	841	5,472	6,158	11.1%

Band B / AO	5,630	8,681	45,225	50,855	11.1%
Band C / EO	3,271	4,868	32,369	35,640	9.2%
Band D / HEO	353	980	5,956	6,309	5.6%
Band E / SEO	88	375	2,085	2,173	4.0%
Band F / G7	41	233	1,037	1,078	3.8%
Band G / G6 & Above	22	142	622	644	3.4%
Total	10,091	16,120	92,766	102,857	9.8%

Permanent & FTA staff (HC) by Government Office Region & Ethnicity

Government Office Region	Ethnic Minorities	Unclear / No Response	White	No of Staff Declaring	%
East Midlands	652	801	4,593	5,245	12.4%
East of England	431	818	4,338	4,769	9.0%
London	4,335	2,340	4,515	8,850	49.0%
North East	256	1,224	11,101	11,357	2.3%
North West	1,112	3,066	20,750	21,862	5.1%
Scotland	222	1,280	11,175	11,397	1.9%
South East	497	1,193	6,005	6,502	7.6%
South West	209	1,089	6,685	6,894	3.0%
Wales	141	925	5,844	5,985	2.4%
West Midlands	1,506	1,522	7,514	9,020	16.7%
Yorkshire & the Humber	730	1,862	10,246	10,976	6.7%
Total	10,091	16,120	92,766	102,857	9.8%

Source: *DWP Workforce Management Project*

1.3 Research aims and objectives

The overarching purpose of this study was to examine the different types of barriers that inhibit ethnic minority managers to progress in to senior management positions in the context of DWP. More specifically, this study was undertaken to identify the

presence of barriers that might be unique to DWP and to examine evidence of barriers identified in extant literature on barriers to career progression. The study was guided by the following exploratory research questions:

- To establish the nature and extent of specific barriers that prevent ethnic minorities from progressing to senior management positions in the organisation whilst they are found in large numbers at the lower echelons of the organisation.
- To explore the structural, organisational and individual factors defining career opportunities for ethnic minorities. (Identify the factors, both organisational and individual, that inhibit the movement of ethnic minorities into senior management positions.)
- To identify factors, originating from both within and outside the organisation which lead to the exclusion of ethnic minorities into senior management positions.
- To construct a theory of ethnic minority progression into senior management, this might assist for further research of the ethnic minority managerial future.
- The present study seeks to address the limitations in prior studies and to fill in the gaps of knowledge
- To suggest initiative to addresses the factors emerging from the study which lead to lack of promotion of ethnic minorities.

1.4 Research Questions

1. Why are ethnic minorities found plateaued at middle management and occupying the lower echelons of the organisation whilst the apex is mainly occupied by the whites?

2. How is the white dominance and the continued existence of homogeneity at senior and executive management positions maintained in DWP?
3. What are the individual and organisational barriers to career advancement of ethnic minorities?
4. How does the promotion of ethnic minorities into senior and executive management positions differ from whites, and what mechanism produces the differences?
5. What part can diversity play in the inclusion of ethnic minorities into senior management positions?

Chapter 2

2.1 Literature Review

The participation of ethnic minorities in the upper echelons of management continues to be disproportional relative to that of their white counterparts. Although over the years the representation of Black Minority Ethnic (BME) people has improved considerably, a similar pattern can still be found today, whereby BME staffs remain concentrated at the bottom of the organisational hierarchy, with apparently few prospects for promotion (Jackson et al., 2007; Somerville et al., 2002). Less than 1% of chief executives are drawn from black or minority ethnic groups, depriving promotion to such individuals and the organisation of their experience. So how can the service tackle 'snow capping'? (Carvel et al., 2004). It seems to be a similar pattern across a wide range of employers in Britain where ethnic minority staff are restricted to posts at the lower levels of the organisation and are underrepresented at the upper echelons of the organisations, though the extent of this restriction is greater in some organisations than in others. It is particularly notable that there are hardly any ethnic minorities at the top of various organisations, only one ethnic minority chief executive out of the top 100 private firms, and two out of the 72 non-BME housing associations, as shown by in a national survey carried out in 2001 (Somerville et al, 2002).

While ethnic minorities have been recruited into organisations, especially in the public sector, their career advancement has, in many instances, stalled at the middle management level. Empirical research supports the claim that whites are overrepresented in managerial positions. Eagly and Carli (2007) characterised the leadership related challenges which ethnic minorities confront as a labyrinth or maze

consisting of many barriers that they must negotiate as ethnic minorities no longer face monolithic roads that obstruct all access management positions. Given the pervasiveness of this disturbing trend, several researchers have offered potential explanations. Reasons advanced to explain this phenomenon include institutional racism (Esmail et al., 2005), prevalent stereotypes (Sartore et al., 2006), discrimination (Kandola, 2004; Grodsky and Pager, 2001; Arrow, 1998; Maume, 1999), a lack of role models (Simard, 2009), and racial differences in opportunities and career experiences (Jackson et al., 2007b; Cheung et al., 2006; Hill, 2004).

Ethnic minorities are typically concentrated in dead end, low level, undervalued jobs (Greenhaus, Parasuraman, and Wormley, 1990), which block their movement into higher status positions (Maume, 1999; Sakura-Lemessy and West 1999). The glass ceiling is also said to be preventing talented black and minority ethnic managers from stepping up into top executive jobs (Jackson, 2008a; Maume, 2004). They have, in essence, bumped up against a "glass ceiling" (Guy, 1992; Naff, 1993). Conceptually the glass ceiling has come to include other gender and ethnic related barriers to career advancement. Additionally ethnic minorities have experienced 'glass walls', 'sticky floor' and 'trap doors' (Guy, 1994). Executive positions remain elusive (Catalyst, 2005). Although ethnic minorities are relatively well represented, in fact some cases overrepresented, in public service, these general figures are not equally distributed. Masked behind these overall statistics are serious imbalances, especially with respect to supervisory and managerial positions. Overall percentages in an organisation may reflect a demographically balanced organisation while middle and upper management figures are progressively more unbalanced (Guy, 1994; Lewis 1986, 1988, 1994; Newman 994).

The leadership of ethnic minority executives is needed to ensure the delivery of culture competent services for the expanding diverse population, as well to provide role models to ethnic minority aspiring to be in senior management positions in the organisation (Jackson, 2008). Ethnic minorities comprise a large segment of the available managerial talent cross the organisation, yet their representation at top level managerial positions in DWP, is rather obscure. The leadership prospect for ethnic minority managers is a critical issue in race equality and remains a researchable proposition. Therefore, the absence of ethnic minorities in the highest and most visible positions in corporate hierarchy cannot be ignored. The question here is: Why don't ethnic minorities make it to leadership positions? Ethnic minorities have made no progress in ascending to executive positions and are unlikely to do so.

The human capital model seeks to explain these results in terms of individual characteristics (Becker, 1993; Newman, 1993). Ethnic minorities are not found in managerial positions in proportion to their presence in the workforce due to their lack of the requisite knowledge, skills, and abilities or to personal choices they have voluntarily made. An individual's formal education and experience along with their choices as to what kind of jobs, locations, and working conditions they desire are viewed as the prime determinants of career advancement. The human capital model represents a clear case of internal attributions. However, empirical research does not fully support this solution, individual differences fail to account for all the differences between the advancement of ethnic minorities and whites into management (Baron and Bielby, 1985; Morrison and Von Glinow, 1990). Contrary to the human capital

model, the ruling elite (or socio-psychological) model posits that minorities' career advancement has faltered due to decisions made by those in control of society and its institutions (Blum, Fields, and Goodman, 1994; Newman, 1993).

Ethnic minorities are not seen as leadership material, as the expectations for senior and executive management positions are shaped by who people have historically been seen in these roles and by who they believe is best suited to handle these responsibilities (Eagly et al., 2002). Whites have historically held the primary leadership positions, this pervasiveness undermines ethnic minority executives in predominantly white corporations as it triggers the stereotype which actively hinders their career advancement as they are not categorised as leaders (Chung-Herrera et al., 2005; Ng et al., 2005). The concentration of ethnic minorities in lower level and marginal jobs reinforces negative stereotypes about their capabilities and aspirations which limits their access to career opportunities such as prestigious job assignments (Reskin et al, 1999; Fiske 1998; Tsui, Egan and O'Reilly, 1992). The historical trends shape people's perceptions about who can and cannot hold particular job roles and contribute to the continued underrepresentation of ethnic minorities in senior and executive management positions (Eagly et al., 2002).

An underlying assumption is that ethnic minority leaders are disadvantaged because for various reasons, they are not perceived as legitimate (Ospina et al., 2009). Hogg and Terry, (2000, p.130) suggest that "minorities may find it difficult to attain top leadership positions in organisations because they do not fit culturally prescribed organizational traits". Equally Kandola (2004) and as Ng and Burke (2005) conveys that ethnic minorities find it difficult to attain top positions because they do not fit and

are not seen as having the 'right stuff' hence they are not perceived as leadership material. In prescribed organisational traits of being white still sees the archetypal and most effective leader as white (Simpson, 2008;). White senior managers therefore fall into a trap of 'cloning' feeling inherently more sympathetic towards people who share their own cultural background and interests and therefore recruiting employees primarily from within their own ethnic group (Kanter, 1977). Social identity and organisational demography literature suggests that people prefer to interact with members of their own identity group rather than with members of other groups. Whites tend to predominate in higher positions, ethnic minorities tend to occupy more junior positions, thereby creating in-group favouritism for whites (Smith, 2005, Elliot et al., 2001, Baldi et al., 1997).

2.2 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is described as a set of broad ideas and principles taken from relevant fields of enquiry and used to structure a subsequent presentation (Reichel and Ramey, 1987). When clearly articulated, a conceptual framework has potential usefulness as a tool to scaffold research and, therefore, to assist a researcher to make meaning of subsequent findings. A conceptual framework is described as a set of broad ideas and principles taken from relevant fields of enquiry and used to structure subsequent research (Fisher, 2005). Miles and Huberman (1984, p. 33) define a conceptual framework as "the current version of the researcher's map of the territory being investigated". Implicit in their view is that conceptual frameworks may evolve as research evolves. Their notion accommodates purpose (boundaries) with flexibility (evolution) and coherence of the research (plan/analysis/conclusion) which all stem from conceptual frameworks.

However, Weaver-Hart (1988) argues that conceptual frameworks contain an inherent dilemma: the term itself is a contradiction because concepts are abstract whereas frameworks are concrete. She reconciles this dilemma by acknowledging that conceptual frameworks are “tools for researchers to use rather than totems for them to worship” (Weaver-Hart, 1988, p. 11). As a consequence, she views it as “A structure for organising and supporting ideas, a mechanism for systematically arranging abstractions, sometimes revolutionary or original, and usually rigid” (1988, p. 11). Thus, the conceptual framework can be viewed as providing a theoretical overview of intended research and order within that process. When clearly articulated, a conceptual framework has potential usefulness as a tool to scaffold research and, therefore, to assist a researcher to deduce the meaning of subsequent findings. Such a framework should be intended as a starting point for reflection about the research and its context. The conceptual framework is a research tool intended to assist a researcher to develop awareness and understanding of the situation under scrutiny and to communicate this information (Guba and Lincoln, 1994).

A researcher is guided by the conceptual framework in collecting data to identify concepts and ideas, thus the data collection interacts with the conceptual framework to move the research toward conclusion (Hair et al., 2007,p.153).

The conceptual framework provides a link between literature and the research goals and questions, as well as provide information on research designs and serve as a reference point thereby contributing to the trustworthiness of the study (Bryman, 2008. Fisher (2005) postulates that clear definitions of concepts and devising a conceptual framework assist the researcher greatly in their task, in that it clarifies the process ahead. The generalist nature of the principles and descriptors forming the

conceptual framework although not idiosyncratic to its context might have the potential to assist the writer, to gain further insights into other aspects of the perplexing failure of ethnic minorities climbing the corporate ladder and the various barriers which they face in their efforts to be corporate leaders

Nevertheless, there are some cautions to be aware of when utilising a conceptual framework. Firstly, the framework is a construction of knowledge bounded by the life-world experiences of the person developing it and should not be attributed a power that it does not have. Secondly, the nature of a conceptual framework means that it consciously or unconsciously informs thought and practice by increasing personal sensitivity to notice particular occurrences so this must be accounted for (Mason and Waywood, 1996). Thirdly, no researcher can expect that all data will be analysed using the framework without the risk of limiting the results from the investigation. By considering these cautions, I hoped I could remain open to new or unexpected occurrences in the data and the investigation more generally (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

Fisher (2005) postulates that clear definitions of concepts and devising a conceptual framework assist the researcher greatly in their task, in that it clarifies the process ahead. After agreeing on the usage of certain concepts, the next step in the process is to define them.

2.3 Ethnic minorities

For the study the researcher will be concentrating on the race strand of diversity. This study examines how ethnic minorities are denied promotion due to their ethnicity. An 'ethnic unit' is a population whose members believe that they share common descent and cultural heritage or tradition (Smith, 1986). Ethnicity

emphasises the social rather than biological factors as it is rooted in the self-definition of people themselves and is therefore situationally based (Fenton, 2010; Mason, 2003). Race entails distinguishing people on the basis of physical markers, such as skin pigmentation, hair texture and facial features and placing them into distinct categories (Pilkington, 2007). In order to qualify for designation as an ethnic minority, a category of people must exhibit a degree of difference that is regarded as significant (Fenton, 2010). As a result not every group having a distinctive culture and constituting a minority in the British population is included in this research, such as Cypriots, Italians, Polish and Irish people as these groups are rarely designated as 'ethnic minorities' (Mason, 2000). In this research it is the unstable combination of skin colour and culture that marks ethnic minorities from the majority of the UK population (Fenton, 2010). Mason (2003, p.12) maintains that, "Ethnic minorities are those whose skin is not white and the difference between ethnic minorities and the majority is marked ultimately by the whiteness". The researcher used this distinction to identify ethnic minorities for the research in addition to the Census ethnicity classification (Office of National Statistics, 2008). Ethnic minorities constituted Asians (Indian Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Other Asian background, All Asian groups), Black (Caribbean, African, Other Black background, All Black groups), Mixed Heritage (White and Black Caribbean, White and Black African, White and Asian, Other mixed background) and Chinese (Chinese, All Chinese or Other groups).

The researcher uses the term 'ethnic minority' problematically and recognises that while it suggests a singularity of black and ethnic minority experience, experiences will differ widely between and within ethnic groups. This is a research limitation to be addressed in future research, where salient ethnic groups would be studied. This

research explores the views and experiences of twenty ethnic minority managers in Senior Executive Officer (SEO) to SCS grades as they attempt to ascend into senior and executive management positions within DWP. The research seeks to understand how the participants' career aspirations have been affected by their race. The researcher acknowledges that other factors will have affected the participants' career progression, such as gender, disability and age, but for the purposes of this research, the focus is on race. Race is an extremely sensitive subject in society as talking, writing, discussing, and thinking about racial issues can be quite emotional and maintaining political correctness in research and writing about racial issues is of paramount importance, but facets of this problem may introduce commentary and concepts that some readers may struggle to conceive. It is recommended that readers of this research should try to maintain an open mind about the topic on ethnic minorities in management and why opportunities to advance and break into senior or executive management have been so limited.

2.4 Organisational barriers to the top

Ethnic minorities report barriers to job satisfaction and organisational advancement (Catalyst, 2006). The major barriers to upward career mobility are no longer at the recruitment and job entry stage but at the advancement stages (Jackson *et al.*, 2007; Giscoombe *et al.*, 2002). Research by (Jackson *et al.*, 2007; Catalyst, 2006; Hite, 2006; Esmail *et al.*, 2005; Kandola, 2004; Maume, 2004) has demonstrated that the primary barriers to the advancement of non-white leaders include:

- Lack of mentors
- Lack of "visible role models in organisational positions
- Exclusion from networks of communication

- Interpersonal dynamics and networking restrict promotion prospects for an ethnic minority employee,
- Stereotyping and preconceptions of roles and abilities
- Lack of significant line experience, visible or challenging job assignments that facilitate their career mobility

Organisational barriers include elements of tokenism, informal and hidden senior promotion processes, stereotyping of leadership, management and 'fit', corporate culture and power dynamics, old boys' network and social exclusion. (Singh, 2002). Previous research has consistently shown that ethnic minorities have lower career attainment than white males (Judge *et al.*, 1995). Two possible explanations are offered. First, it is possible that these individuals have experienced discrimination against them in the form of adverse promotion decisions. It is also possible that women and minorities are afforded fewer opportunities for promotion than white males (Grenhaus, Parasuraman and Wormley, 1990).

2.5 Glass ceiling

The concept of a glass ceiling is a widely accepted explanation for the failure of ethnic minorities to match whites in their access to managerial positions. Despite notable exceptions in politics and in the business world, ethnic minorities are still less likely to be found at the apex of public and private organisations compared to their white counterparts (Jackson *et al.*, 2007; Raha, 2007; Prato, 2006; Maume 2004; Foley, Kidder and Powell, 2002). The glass-ceiling concept connotes the idea that ethnic minorities are recruited into firms dominated by whites, but fail to progress as far as whites in climbing the corporate hierarchy. Although ethnic minorities are close

enough to the senior management positions in the organisations to be considered in the recruitment pool for these positions, they rarely reach them. This frustration in seeing the top jobs but being passed over for them is what many think of as a glass ceiling (Jackson *et al.*, 2007; Raha, 2007; Maume, 2004).

Therefore, the glass ceiling is typically acknowledged as a subtle, but transparent barrier that prevents the advancement of ethnic minorities to the upper echelons of power and responsibility in the workforce (Raha, 2007; Foley *et al.*, 2002; Lee, 2002; Padavic *et al.*, 2002). Additionally, the presence of a glass ceiling is often not explainable through possession of job-relevant qualifications of employees, or their lack (Jackson *et al.*, 2007). As such, organisational policies and practices which disproportionately and negatively impact ethnic minorities effectively create a “hidden” system of discrimination (Goodman, Fields and Blum 2003, Morrison *et al.*, 1990).

The paucity of ethnic minorities running large corporations is taken as evidence that these groups face discriminatory barriers preventing them from reaching privileged positions. Those who dispute these numbers contend that executives require 20 to 30 years of grooming before they are ready to assume top leadership positions in large organisations (Maume, 2004). Most studies confirming the existence of the glass ceiling have used cross-sectional data to show that women and minorities are underrepresented at the top of a job ladder. However, as Cotter *et al.* (2001) pointed out, proportional representation at the top of a job ladder depends on a number of factors, including the rate of exit from the job ladder. That is, ethnic minorities who are discouraged with their initial placement on the ladder and their limited promotion chances may leave the firm. This will result in lower proportions of minorities and

higher proportions of White men who survive to reach the top of the job ladder. Other analysts, although not necessarily testing for the effects of a glass ceiling, have used retrospective data to examine race and gender differences in promotions (Baldi *et al.*, 1997, Alessio and Andrzejewski, 2000). It cannot be disputed that it takes years for one to be able to reach the upper echelons of the organisation, but the question is why it should be ethnic minorities who are taking longer to get to the apex of the organisation whilst whites take less time. If you are found not to fit in the prototype, you will be discriminated and eventually you will leave the organisation, as the leaders of the organisation would only offer sponsorship to people who are similar to them as they intend to clone their successors.

2.6 Organisational blindness

Inequalities exist in the organisation and according the executive team it is not due to discrimination, even though ethnic minorities are being discriminated and organisation are denying the discrimination. Organisation blindness is a term used to show how organisations turn a blind eye to discrimination within the organisation. Organisational blindness represents a state where an issue cannot be identified or recognised because of the extant of the culture (Sheffield, Hussain and Coleshill, 1999). Human resource management theorists have described organisations that cannot perceive barriers to groups or discrimination against groups as unaware or culturally blind (Jackson *et al.*, 2007). The colour-blind perspective in principle is grounded in the ideals of meritocracy and equality—in essence, “treating all people the same” (Plaut, 2002). As such discrimination may not be overt or conscious, but instead might represent a far more insidious management problem, as the organisation is blind to the issue (Hill, 2004). When an organisation failures to adjust

policies and methods to meet the needs of an ethnic diverse workforce, people mistakenly believe that it is legitimate to be colour blind. A colour blind approach fails to take account of the nature and needs of people becomes discrimination, thus allowing racism to take place in the organisation. Of the same opinion Stevens, Plaut and Sanchez-Burks (2008, p.121) said, "A colour-blind ideology may appeal to non-minorities, this approach to diversity also may alienate minority employees and allow a culture of racism to develop". Organisational blindness represents a state where an issue cannot be identified or recognised because of the extant culture. Questions need to be asked about whether organisational blindness is confined to staffing policies or whether it is linked to equity.

2.7 Cultural competency

Cultural competency has been defined as an "on-going commitment or institutionalization of appropriate practice and policies for diverse populations" (Brach and Fraser 2000). While cultural competence is the goal, diversity management is the process leading to culturally competent organisations. Making changes to policies and practices in an organisation may be window dressing if the organisation is not culturally competent as the changes will fail to yield results, the organisation need to be culturally competent. Brach and Fraser (2000) defined cultural competence as a set of cultural behaviours and attitudes integrated into the practice methods of a system, agency, or its professionals, that enables them to work effectively in cross cultural situations, it is an on-going commitment or institutionalisation of appropriate practice and policies for diverse populations (Chin *et al.* (2007) also defined culture competency as the development of skills by individuals and systems to live and work with, educate and serve diverse individuals

and communities. It is the willingness and ability of a system to value the importance of culture in the delivery of services to all segments of the organisation (Chin, 2005).

It is the use of a systems perspective which values differences and is responsive to diversity at all levels of an organisation, that is policy, governance, administrative, workforce, provider, and consumer/client. Cultural competence is developmental, community focused, family oriented, and culturally relevant. In particular, it is the attention to the needs of underserved and racial/ethnic groups, and the integration of cultural attitudes, beliefs, and practices into promotion, training, and workplace environments (Chin *et al.*, 2007). It is the continuous promotion of skills, practices and interactions to ensure that services are culturally responsive and competent. Culturally competent activities include developing skills through training, using self-assessment tools, and implementing goals and objectives to ensure that governance, administrative policies and practices, cater for the diversity within the populations served (Chin, 2005). Cultural competency is achieved by translating and integrating knowledge about individuals and groups of people into specific practices and policies applied in appropriate cultural settings (Brach *et al.*, 2000).

2.8 Diversity management

Diversity management refers to the systematic and planned commitment by organisations to recruit, retain employees from diverse demographic backgrounds and promote a heterogeneous mix of employees in order to increase productivity, increase organisational efficiency, competitiveness and harmony in the workplace (Pitts, 2007; Thomas, 1990). An alternative approach is to see diversity management as the management of “uniqueness” rather than the management of difference and

to adopt an “everyone-is-different”/“equally unique” discourse (Foster and Harris, 2005; Kersten, 2000). Managing diversity arose because of the increasing demographic complexity of the labour market as the workforce becomes increasingly diverse, organisations are challenged with managing diversity, both from a human resource and an organizational perspective (Ross-Gordon and Brooks, 2004). Many governments have responded with equal employment opportunity legislation to remove barriers in employment and advancement of ethnic minorities (Jain, Sloane and Horwitz, 2003). The UK has seen a significant increase in diversity legal regulation over the past decade or so extending individuals’ rights to protection against discrimination on grounds of race, disability, religion, sexual orientation and age (Kersten, 2007). Managing for diversity is a management strategy that intends to make productive use of (ethnic and other) differences between individuals. It is based on the premise that at least if they are well managed diverse teams will produce better results and diverse companies will gain market advantage. In contrast to other employment equity policies, diversity management are primarily driven by the ‘business case’, that is by the argument that diversity and or its management will and profitability (Pitts, 2007; Fischer, 2007).

Diversity management is the recognition that all individuals have unique skills and backgrounds that need to be recognized, respected and valued. In terms of the organisation the harness of the workforce diversity can enable the creation of a more dynamic and flexible organisation. The basic concept of managing diversity accepts that the workforce consists of a diverse population of people. The diversity consists of visible and non-visible differences which will include factors such as sex, age, background, race, disability, personality and work style. It is founded on the premise

that harnessing these differences will create a productive environment in which everyone feels valued, where their talents are being fully utilised and in which organisational goals are met. (Fischer, 2007; DiTomaso, Post and Parks-Yancy, 2007; Charles, 2003; Scott, 2007; Kandola and Fullerton, 1998) Managing diversity focuses more on the culture and environment it aims to provide a supportive environment to all employees, where differences are valued and each individual can maximise their development and contribution. Managing diversity initiatives are more about attitude change and involve all employees and managers in an organisation. Managing diversity is not about 'them' and 'us', but about moving everyone to 'Us'. Diversity management is "a strategically driven process" whose emphasis is on building skills and creating policies that will address the changing demographics of the workforce (Pitts, 2007).

With diversity management as a business practice becoming more and more popular in Europe, the question of whether this policy actually delivers the business benefits its advocates promise, becomes increasingly relevant to anyone involved in the discussion and implementation of employment policies relating to ethnic and other minorities. An examination of the literature, however, shows that there is no unanimous answer regarding the business benefits of diversity and its management. While for many advocates of diversity management the business case seems to be rather self-evident, academic research on the effects of diversity provides mixed and inconclusive results and has led critics to see a 'mismatch between research results and diversity rhetoric (Kochan *et al.*, 2003). Diversity management requires a long term commitment and the payback is not often as tangible or predicted as the sales targets or health and safety initiatives. Yet, unless proponents of diversity

management can demonstrate compelling arguments, diversity management is unlikely to get attention it deserves. In other words a proper business case for diversity has to be built in.

2.9 Stereotype

Stereotypes - beliefs about differences between groups of people, such as ethnic minorities and whites influence employers' and fellow employees' expectations regarding the performance, capability and personality of an individual member of the group. Stereotypical thinking becomes self-reinforcing when individuals select information from their environment that confirms beliefs they already hold (Tomaskovic-Devey, 1994). Stereotyping is a process of categorisation that is effective and efficient in most instances, but is often inaccurate when used to group people according to attributes such as attitude or abilities (Quillian, 2006; Sartore and Cunningham, 2006; Reskin 2003). The use of stereotypes as the basis for assessment of individuals can result in advantage or disadvantage, not because of individual ability or lack of it but because of group membership. Race stereotypes are still pervasive and widely shared, according to (Carter, 2007; Dipboye and Collela, 2005). The concentration of ethnic minorities in lower level and marginal jobs reinforces negative stereotypes about their capabilities and aspirations limits their access to career opportunities, such as prestigious job assignments (Stockdale and Crosby, 2003; Eagly and Karau, 2002; Fiske 1998; Reskin 2003; Tsui and O'Reilly 1989).

More commonly, employers who have no conscious prejudice may be prone to conscious acts of discrimination during the recruitment process. This may involve for

instance recruiting employees who reflect the current ethnic breakdown of the workforce in the belief that such individuals are most likely to 'fit in' and ethnic minorities are not seen as having the 'right stuff', are not part of the 'golden circle', and they are not perceived as leadership material (Gray *et al.*, 2007; Kandola, 2004). Lyness and Thompson, (1997) and Raggins *et al.*, (1998) argue that members of ethnic minority groups find it difficult to attain top positions because they do not fit in prescribed organisational prototypes. As a result employers fall into a trap of 'cloning' feeling inherently more sympathetic towards people who share their own cultural background and interests and therefore recruiting employees primarily from within their own ethnic group. (Haslam, 2002; Lyness *et al.*, 1997; Raggins, *et al.*, 1998). This is based on the belief that communication and trust are easier to establish with those who share similar backgrounds, tastes, and philosophies and managerial composition is said to be self-reproducing due to homosocial reproduction (Elliott *et al.*, 2004; Kanter, 1977).

Elliott *et al.* (2004) provide further intellectual support to the idea that labour market opportunities depends not just on individual human capital, but also on group membership. In other words, they advocate a contextual approach to understanding social mobility in which the causal dynamics of authority attainment are embedded in group composition. The researcher views this as a traditional assumption, based on identity theory and truncated interpretations of homosocial reproduction, that elites only reproduce themselves that the white managers assist white people to climb the corporate ladder as they belong to the same race with them.

Of the same opinion social identity and organisational demography literature suggests that people prefer to interact with members of their own identity group rather than with members of other groups hence members of ethnic minorities find it difficult to attain top positions because they do not fit in prescribed organisational prototypes (Kersten, 2000). Specifically, those who fit are socially and politically supported by the organisation's members and systems, while those who do not are ostracised and undermined (Ng and Burke, 2005).

2.10 Social identity theory

Social identity theory states that people classify themselves and others in categories based on salient characteristics, such as gender, race, or ethnicity (Ho, 2007; Hogg and Cooper, 2007; Brunetto and Farr-Wharton, 2002; Haslam, 2002). People identify more with members who are similar to their category than with dissimilar out-group members. Such distinctions and attachments affect their group and self-attribution, including stereotypic attribution (Abrams and Hogg, 1999). The consequences of socially constructed identities include in-group favouritism, negative stereotyping and subordinating of out-groups, inter-group competition, and role conflict (Ho, 2007). The distinctive identity of employees in a work setting subsequently results in the exclusion of ethnic minorities from group membership and important decision-making and less access to support, which, in turn, jeopardises career advancement. The perception of unfair treatment eventually creates an overall negative work environment for all employees (Capozza and Brown, 2000).

Social identity and organisational demography literature suggests that people prefer to interact with members of their own identity group rather than with members of other groups. Whites tend to predominate in higher positions, whilst ethnic minorities

tend to occupy more junior positions (Kersten, 2000), thereby creating in-group favouritism for whites (Kersten, 2000). Differences between groups generate negative feelings in members of low-status groups about their collective identity (Ho, 2007; Hornsey *et al.*, 1999). For example, work relationships among ethnic minorities are likely to be negatively affected by status disparities. Group membership, therefore, is a powerful variable influencing attitudes toward the value of diversity. There is ample evidence of the unequal experience of ethnic minorities in the workplace, especially their limited access to, or exclusion from, informal interaction networks (Kandola, 2004; Ely 2001). These networks allocate a variety of resources that are critical for performance and career advancement as well as social support and friendship (Erickson, 2005; Ibarra, 1995).

2.11 Social Closure

Social closure is the process of subordination whereby one group monopolises advantages by closing off opportunities to another group of outsiders beneath it (Ho, 2007; Maume, 2004). Social closure refers to the process by which social collectivises seek to maximize rewards by restricting access to resources and opportunities to a limited circle of eligibles, who are part of the 'golden circle' (Ho, 2007; Tomaskovic-Devey, 2006). Tomaskovic-Devey (2007) expands on the previous theoretical arguments by suggesting that status groups create and preserve their identity and advantages by reserving certain opportunities and reserving access and competition for those resources to any member of the in-group. Social closure embodies the glass ceiling phenomena (Maume, 2004).

Organisations are inherently conservative entities in that they tend to simply reproduce and reinforce past behaviours rather than respond to the needs of their employees (Tomaskovic-Devey *et al.*, 2007). Social closure is as much about protecting opportunities for the majority as it is about denying opportunities to others. (Tomaskovic-Devey *et al.*, 2007) have noted that a shared ethnicity, nationality, race, and gender may form the basis of dominant group membership and in this sense social closure is similar to other forms of discriminatory practices. Similarly, social closure is also subsequently reinforced by the benefits and assets accrued by the members of that group through the exclusion of others (Tomaskovic-Devey *et al.*, 2007). Super ordinate group members have a vested interest in maintaining their authoritative positions they retain these positions by excluding candidates who differ from their racial identity (Smith, 2002). Some argue that this exclusion may be an unconscious act or a result of the demography of the organisation (Elliott *et al.*, 2001, Baldi *et al.*, 1997). Tomaskovic-Devey and Skaggs (2002) put it more bluntly in stating that social closure processes are about more powerful actors monopolising desirable jobs by excluding subordinate groups. Because these processes are typically unobservable, in reference to the social closure theory, it may not matter whether they are a mix of conscious or unconscious processes. Within the framework of social closure processes, the human capital model might be most relevant at the outset of a career before access to promotions or authority became objects of social closure. According to social closure theorists, even later in the career given equivalent human capital, ethnic minorities will less often attain promotions or positions of authority, because the dominant group monopolises these positions for other members of the dominant group (Tomaskovic-Devey *et al.*, 2007).

This practice of finding employees who are like existing employees at the top is homosocial reproduction (Kanter, 1977). Managers tend to carefully guard power and privilege for those who fit in, for those they see as ‘their kind,’ part of the golden circle (Ho, 2007; Arthur Jnr, Bell and Villado, 2006; Turner, 2003). The structure sets in motion forces leading to the replication of managers of the same kind with the managers (Edwards *et al.*, 2006). By so doing ethnic minorities are left at the bottom of the organisation as there is no one of their kind who can hold their hand and take them up the corporate ladder. Social identity and self-categorisation theories are not a far departure from social closure theory. Managers at the top are reserving positions for those employees who are socially similar to themselves, in other words they are reproducing themselves at the very top of the organisation. In this research the implicit aspect of the prototype is whiteness as a result the stereotypes of ethnic minorities just do not fit the stereotypes of successful leaders and this hinders their career advancement, because the leaders would select the people to nurture who fit the prototype and on this incident it will be white people who have high potential by virtue of possessing particular attributes often the same attributes possessed by the gate-keepers. (See Appendix DWP Directors)

Those at the top of organisations, sponsor those that they think are most like themselves. This implies that there exists some type of sponsorship model for advancement within the organisation for white, while blacks have to rely on advancement through a “contest” model (Turner, 2003). This sponsorship model also suggests that there is an informal system of promotion through homosocial mentoring for whites, conversely for ethnic minorities the contest model implies a

system in which one advances only through formal qualifications without the mentoring networks of the sponsorship model (Baldi *et al.*, 1997).

2.12 Organisational Culture

Organisational culture is defined as the collection of traditions, the realities, values, policies, symbols, beliefs, attitudes and rituals held in common by members of an organisation and which contribute to the creation of norms and expectations of behaviour and everything we do and think in an organisation (Mullins, 2007; Philip, Little and Goodine, 1997). This can also be reflected in the ideology, philosophy, character or basic credo of the organisation (Kouzes and Posner, 1995). The realities, values, symbols and rituals held in common by members of an organisation and which contribute to the creation of norms and expectations of behaviour (Phillips, Little and Goodine, 1997). Organisational culture defines conduct within an organisation, determines what is and is not valued and how authority is asserted (James and Saville-Smith, 1992). Organisations may claim that they provide equal opportunities for all employees yet make it virtually impossible for ethnic minorities to access training or high profile assignments or positions. In general, organisations develop cultures that systematically favour certain types of people and are systematically biased against others, and these are often expressed in terms of person specifications. Consciously or unconsciously, organisations build up an assumptive world (Young and Kramer, 1978), which defines for their members what is to count as good or effective management. Organisational Culture is how things are done around here; it is what is typical of the organisation, the habits, the prevailing attitudes, the grown up pattern and accepted behaviours (Drennan, 1992). (McKenna, 1997; Cornelius, 1998) argue that it is these values and behaviours that create the kind of organisational culture which many find so inhospitable. Not only

find the environment inhospitable but the patterns of interaction potentially ineffective (Marshall, 1995). An inhospitable culture is one of the most significant barriers to their advancement and a major factor in diminishing their satisfaction with work in large organisations (Philip *et al*, 1997).

2.13 Racism

Racism is a constant experience expressed by ethnic minorities (Carter, 2007) in their bid to climb the corporate ladder. Racism in general terms consists of conduct or word or practices, which disadvantage or advantage people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin (Macpherson, 1999). Dovidio and Gaetner, (1998) cited by Stockdale *et al.* (2003) said like a virus that has mutated racism has also evolved into different forms that not only are difficult to recognise but also to combat. This subtle process underlying discrimination can be identified and isolated under the controlled conditions of the laboratory. In organisational decision making, however in which controlled conditions of an experiment are rarely possible, this represents a substantial challenge to the equitable treatment of members of disadvantaged groups.

While blatant racism has not been eradicated, it has diminished in many segments of the society and replaced by a more subtle form, (Hite, 2006). Social psychologists identified three forms of subtle prejudice that resist diversity efforts, these are aversive racism, modern, and symbolic racism (Stockdale *et al.*, 2003). Aversive racism is characterised by whites who endorse egalitarian values, who regard themselves as non-prejudice, but who discriminate in subtle, rationalisable way. While consciously endorsing equity, aversive racists also unconsciously harbour negative belief systems based on racial difference, (Pager *et al.*, 2008, Dovidio,

2001). So while they espouse valuing equality, they will discriminate, although unintentionally in situations where their actions can be justified on a non-racial basis. This covert bias is hard to identify and therefore, difficult to combat, (Hite, 2006). However, it may play out as ambivalence about racial equity initiatives, through assertions of being 'colour blind' and not seeing racial differences or as well rationalised favouring of whites over blacks that allow individuals to maintain their egalitarian self-images, (Stockdale, et al, 2003, Dovidio, 2001). Similarly modern racism engage in subtle prejudice due to their ambivalence towards blacks brought about by conflict between negative beliefs and attitudes about blacks and the need not to be perceived as racists (Stockdale, et al, 2003) Symbolic racism is practised by whites who tend to resist changing the racial status quo in all areas of life as they believe that doing so would violate their values (Stockdale *et al.*, 2003)

In its subtle form it is as damaging as in its overt form. Racist prejudice does manifest itself occasionally, the damage done by racial prejudice is calculable (Lord Scarman cited in Stephen Lawrence Inquiry by Macpherson, 1999). Racialism and discrimination against black people, often hidden and sometimes unconscious, remain a major source of social tension. Lord Scarman said failure to adjust policies and methods to meet the needs of a multi-racial society can occur because people mistakenly believe that it is legitimate to be colour blind. A colour blind approach fails to take account of the nature and needs of people. Racism can be detected in how operational decisions are carried out and consequently implemented and indeed how existing policy is ignored resulting in racist outcomes. Violet Racism cited in Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, (1999) is rooted in widely shared attitudes, values and beliefs, discrimination can occur irrespective of the intent of the individuals who carry out the activities of the organisation.

2.14 Institutional racism

Institutional racism is the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin which can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantages minority ethnic people. (Macpherson, 1999). Institutional racism covertly or overtly resides in the policies, procedures, operations and culture of public or private institutions - reinforcing individual prejudices and being reinforced by them in turn. If racist consequences accrue to institutional laws, customs or practices, that institution is racist whether or not the individuals maintaining those practices have racial intentions. (Commission for Racial Equality, 1999). Carmichael and Hamilton cited in the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry said institutional racism originates in the operation of established and respected forces in the society. A sense of superior group prevails such as for example that whites are better than blacks and therefore blacks should be subordinated to whites. This is a racist attitude and it permeates society on both individual and institutional levels.

The recognition of institutional racism as a problem is critical to understanding not only the mechanisms by which ethnic minorities are underrepresented in senior management positions. King (1996) argues that the concept of institutional racism helps to clarify and distinguish between actions of individuals who discriminate and racial stratification resulting from structural impediments and processes. Institutional racism is less of an indictment of individuals working within the organisation, than it is of the systematic operations of an institution. However, there is a problem with

using institutional racism as a paradigm to understand why ethnic minorities are not achieving promotion to the highest positions in the organisation.

Institutional racism is less overt, far subtler and less identifiable when it comes to specific individuals. It is less quantifiable and difficult to assess its impact on individuals. Because it originates in the operations of stable and respected organisations in the society, it receives far less public condemnation than individual racism. (Esmail, 2004) describes it as the prejudice of good people. It is these subtle barriers to promotion which are hardest to tackle. For instance not a single housing organisation has publicly admitted to being institutionally racist. This is in spite of the fact that the most recent surveys have shown that only one in ten local authorities have workforces that come within 1 per cent of reflecting their local ethnic minority population (Chin, 2005).

2.15 Tokenism

Tokenism refers to a policy or practice of limited inclusion of members of a minority group, usually creating a false appearance of inclusive practices, intentional or not. Typical examples in real life and fiction include purposely including a member of a minority race (such as a black character in a mainly white cast, or vice versa) into a group. Classically, token characters have some reduced capacity compared to the other characters, and may have bland or inoffensive personalities so as to not be accused of stereotyping negative traits.

2.16 Old boys' network

Promotion and developmental opportunities are influenced by or awarded through personal, "good old boy" networks. While perception may not indeed be the same as reality, that condition is only temporary. If left unaddressed, these attributional factors

could indeed become objective descriptions. The consequences are dire not solely for ethnic minorities but for all who believe in the merit principle. The existence of a merit system should not be taken for granted; vigorous advocacy of the merit principle is required. Denial of developmental opportunities is plagued by external-ruling elite attributions. These concerns are heightened by gender and ethnic distinctions. Many employees and more so in the case of ethnic minority employees, perceive access to developmental opportunities as being strongly influenced by buddy systems which are augmented along gender and racial lines. Since developmental opportunities are held out as the solution to the promotional dilemma, the perception of biased barriers to the obtainment of developmental opportunities is a serious setback. Employees, especially ethnic minorities, perceive or attribute their promotional and developmental opportunities as being blocked by intransigent (if perhaps unintentional) ruling elites. Ethnic differences crop up in terms of viewing another candidate as more qualified a view less likely to be held by minority applicants. Minority respondents are even more likely to perceive pre-selection and in-group cronyism at play in determining promotions. While these factors may reflect the working of personal or professional networks, they also indicate a tendency for these networks to cut along ethnic lines (Ibarra, 1993).

Chapter 3

3.1 Research Design

A research design is a basic plan that guides the data collection and analysis phases of the research project (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2007, Fisher, 2005, Bryman, 2008). It provides the framework that identifies the type of information to be collected, its sources, and the collection procedure. The purpose of the research design is to provide the most valid, accurate answers possible to the research questions. This chapter aims to present the research design and methodology employed in the research. The methods employed in this study will either be qualitative or quantitatively-based, as data will be collected through interviews and an online questionnaire from ethnic minority managers within the organisation.

3.2 Sampling

The sample will make up the population to be studied (Morris, 2000) however the sample cannot be guaranteed to be representative (Fisher 2007). Although random selection is preferred as it minimises selection biases (Krueger and Casey, 2000), the pool of participants for this study was chosen purposefully, and hence purposeful sampling was used. The power of purposive sampling lies in selecting information rich-cases for in-depth analysis related to the central issues being studied (Sanders *et al.*, 2007). Purposive sampling can be used with both quantitative and qualitative studies (Bryman, 2008). The researcher was not allowed to select the participants, but to use volunteers who met the research criteria, such as being in SEO to SCS grades. The participants will self-selected themselves to take part in the research by responding to an invitation which will be placed on the DWP Equality and Diversity

intranet page inviting participants to take part in the research. Snowball sampling will also be used where participants are encouraged to recommend at least one other person who meet the required criteria for this study.

The Global Access List (GAL) is a comprehensive directory of email addresses for DWP employees, will be used to identify the email addresses of the participants. The DWP Directory will also be used to identify the grade of the participant as a result it was easy to identify the right participant who meet the research requirements of being in SEO to SCS grades, this will aid to eliminate errors as some people may have similar names and people in lower grades might respond to the invitation to take part in the research, thus using the directory would ensure that the participants' grade are verified and so that they met the sample criteria.

3.3 Research Methodology

To adopt a theoretical or empirical research or not is usually a dilemma for a researcher. The research is torn between what strategy to use positivism or intepretivism/phenomenology approach? There is no agreed methodology as what you intend to research determines how the research is carried out and also the researcher's interests in a particular research methodology or approach, determines how the research is carried out. Some researchers are qualitative and others are quantitative. Different modes of research allow us to understand different phenomena and for different reasons (Deetz, 1996). The methodology chosen depends on what one is trying to do rather than a commitment to a particular paradigm (Cavaye, 1996). Thus, the methodology employed must match the particular phenomenon of interest. Different phenomena may require the use of different methodologies. By focusing on the phenomenon under examination, rather

than the methodology, researchers can select appropriate methodologies for their enquiries (Falconer and Mackay, 1999). However this is not an ensure as the DBA requires that Document 3 and 4 are interpretive and positivistic respectively, such that the dilemma is on the thesis where to be a positivist or interpretivist.. With a considerable range of approaches to choose from, selecting and using a philosophical stance is not a simple matter for the business and management researcher. (Remenyi *et al.*, 1998)

Two research epistemologies will be considered for the research, positivism and intepretivism/ phenomenology.

3.4 Positivism

Positivism is based on the assumption that there are universal law that govern social events, and uncovering these laws enables researchers to describe, predict and control social phenomena (Wardlow, 1989). Phenomenology research, in contrast seeks to understand values, beliefs and meanings of social phenomena, there by obtaining *verstehen* (deep and sympathetic understanding) of human cultural activities and experiences (Smith and Heshusius, 1986). Critical science seeks to explain social inequalities through which individuals can take actions to change injustices (Comstock, 1982). The three approaches take distinctively different epistemological positions regarding theoretical foundations, assumptions and purposes while producing competing modes of inquiry.

Positivism asserts that knowledge and truth are questions of correspondence in that they relate on external referent reality (Smith, 1993). This correspondence theory of truth stipulates that the source of truth is in reality; therefore, a statement is proved to be true if it agrees with an independently existing reality and is false if it does not. For example, if two or more statements regarding the same external referent reality compete with one another, then researchers must make a decision to accept one and reject the other, or even to reject both in favour of another alternative (Smith, 1983). It further contends that empirical methods for the process of verification should be employed because these methods are objective and do not influence what is being investigated. In the process researchers should express themselves in value-neutral, scientific language to move beyond ordinary and subjective descriptions, thereby resulting in universal and accurate statements and laws about the world. In so, doing knowledge attained about the independent reality can be accepted by reasonable people (Smith, 1983).

3.5 Phenomenology

Phenomenology is located within the interpretive paradigm (Racher and Robinson, 2003; Guba *et al.*, 1994). It fits the nature of this research, because it helps to gain a rich understanding of the deep meaning of a phenomenon based on a description of human lived experience (Yanow, 2006; Van Manen, 1990). It was most appropriate for answering the research questions, gain understanding of the perceptions of participants who have a shared experience and to describe these subjective experiences (Creswell, 1998). Van Manen (1990, p.62) asserted that the goal of phenomenological research is to ask “the question of what is the nature of this

phenomenon as an essentially human experience”. However, lived experience itself is not the purpose of phenomenology, but it is the instrument to understanding reality in the social world of the participants. According to Van Manen (1990, p.62), the phenomenological approach aims to ‘borrow’ other people’s experiences and their reflections on their experiences in order to come to an understanding of the deeper meaning or significance of an aspect of human experience, in the context of the whole human experience. It involves the use of thick description and close analysis of lived experience to understand how meaning is created through embodied perception (Starks and Trinidad, 2007).

Phenomenology was characterised by Husserl (1931) cited by (Levesque- Lopman, 1988, p. 17) as the means “to describe the ultimate foundations of human experience by ‘seeing beyond’ everyday experiences in order to describe the ‘essences’ that underpin them”. The phenomenological approach does not seek to find causality or to reach generalisability about a reality that exists ‘out there’. Husserl (1931) supported the notion of subjective interpretation of reality rather than an objective reality. For a phenomenologist, “reality is not restricted to those things that can be empirically verified or logically inferred, rather, reality is based on a common-sense knowing or *verstehen* [understanding] of the social world” (Waugh and Waugh, 2006, p.493). The researcher engaged in a process of trying to see the world differently and attended more actively to the participant’s views (Dahlberg, Dahlberg, and Nystrom, 2008). The researcher was prepared to be surprised, awed and generally open to whatever was revealed by the participants during the story telling. Dahlberg, Dahlberg, and Nystrom, (2001, p. 97) describe this open stance, “as the mark of a true willingness to listen, see and understand. It involves respect

and certain humility toward the phenomenon, as well as sensitivity and flexibility.” The researcher allowed the phenomenon to present itself without imposing preconceived ideas on the experiences of the participants and this was maintained throughout the research process, not just at the start. As a result the stories told by the participants were not influenced by the researcher in any way or form.

Chapter 4

4.1 Research Plan

Research is not a linear process (Remenyi *et al.*, 1998). Even though there is a need to have a plan on how the research would be conducted as this will guide the researcher. The plan on how this research would be carried out is outlined below in Documents 2, 3, 4 and 5. A research plan provides a general framework which if followed, will lead the researcher in a logical way into the research process, (Remenyi *et al.*, 1998). Due to exogenous factors which might be beyond the researcher's control a timeline cannot be provided, but all things being equal, the degree would be completed in three years as expected.

4.2 Document 2: Critical literature review and initial development of conceptual framework

An extensive literature review is one of the most essential and preliminary steps within the research process (Fisher 2000, Remenyi *et al.*, 1998). The literature review is of considerable importance and needs to be thorough and exhaustive. The references would be taken primarily from leading academic journals and not from general textbooks (Remenyi *et al.*, 1998). The literature review will reveal the established and generally accepted facts of the situation and this need to be fully understood by the researcher (Remenyi *et al.*, 1998). In addition the review should enable the researcher to identify and understand the theories or models which have been used by previous researchers in the field (Leedy, 1989). In order to review literature adequately it is essential that the researcher examines the published work critically, not all that is published should be taken at face value for, as von Clausewitz (1832) observed, it is the maxim in all books that we should trust only certain information and that we be always suspicious. The candidate should not

simply regurgitate the ideas from the literature but it is expected to evaluate and comment on them critically but constructively (Remenyi *et al.*, 1998). The literature review should assist the researcher in identifying an unsolved problem in the field being that will become the focus of the research project (Leedy, 1989). A conceptual framework would be provided defining the concepts and the literature review will serve as point of reference for the following:

- Examine why ethnic minorities are found plateaued at middle management and occupy the lower echelons of the organisation whilst the apex is mainly occupied by the whites.
- Identify the barriers which inhibit ethnic minorities from climbing the corporate ladder into senior management positions.
- Provide an insight on the part can diversity play in the inclusion of ethnic minorities into senior management positions. (business case of ethnic diversity)
- Identify ways in which the situation be addressed and remove the impediments.
- Provide interventions and strategies for increasing ethnic minorities in to senior management positions are available to implement.

4.3 Document 3: Qualitative Research

Qualitative research entails taking “an interpretivist perspective where one is particularly interested in being able to... investigate the perspectives that subjects have and to interpret their view of the world” (Cassell *et al.*, 2006, p.295). Qualitative research would be employed for this research as it goes beyond the surface level, enabling the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of not only individual

perceptions but also contribute to the field in which relatively little research has been carried out . According to Bless and Higson-Smith (1995) qualitative research methodology refers to research which produces descriptive data, generally in people's own written or spoken words, produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Schwandt (2001) concurs that qualitative researchers do not rely on statistics to show the confidence they have in their representation of their fieldwork. Instead, they build confidence in their findings or contributions by attempting to saturate themselves with observations of the phenomenon in question, instead, it produces findings arrived from real-world settings where the phenomenon of interest unfold natural (Patton, 2002). Qualitative research asks open questions about phenomena as they occur in context rather than setting out to test predetermined hypotheses (Carter and Little, 2007).

Qualitative research is based on an interpretive paradigm and is exploratory in nature, thus enabling researchers to gain information about a social phenomena in its natural setting, in which little is known (Liamputtong and Ezzy, 2005; Denzin and Lincoln, 2003). As a result of its naturalistic approach this research sought to understand the experiences of ethnic minorities in DWP within the SEO to SCS grades in their proposition to climb the corporate ladder in a "real world setting where the researcher did not attempt to manipulate the phenomenon of interest" (Patton, 2002, p. 39). Denzin *et al.* (2003) suggest that qualitative research is most interested in processes and meanings that are not experimentally examined. Among many distinctive features, it is characterised by a concern with exploring phenomena from the perspective of those being studied, with the use of unstructured methods which

are sensitive to the social context of the study, the capture of data which are detailed, rich and complex, adopting a mainly inductive rather than deductive analytic process and developing explanations at the level of meaning or micro-social processes rather than context free laws, and answering the 'what is', 'how' and 'why' questions research questions stated above (Spencer *et al.*, 2003).

Qualitative research offers copious, detailed evidence from natural settings crafted into accounts intended to convince readers that they have reached a reasonable interpretation of participants' experiences. Whereas quantitative research depicts cause and effect relationships among variables by studying the association of corresponding numbers of cases for each variable. Qualitative researchers see causation in everyday, emergent processes of intersubjective human action and meaning construction (Bogdan and Biklen, 2003). Emphasis on the emic perspective in qualitative research originates from the basic ontological assumption that reality is constructed by each knower or observer subjectively (Sipe and Constable, 1996), therefore what we know about reality is only through representations (Denzin *et al.*, 2003). The research design was aimed at gathering rich qualitative data, an approach which does not rely on specific sample sizes.

4.4 Document 3 Data collection method- The semi-structured interview

In phenomenology, the semi-structured interview is regarded as the preferred data collection method, with an emphasis on providing open-ended questions that encourage the participants to express their own perspectives and tell their stories (Neuman, 2000). Like Bouty (2000), the purpose of the interviews would be to gather

anecdotes and accounts of past experiences in the participants' careers rather than general considerations, opinions and judgements as the interviewees would be encouraged to illustrate their answers with examples of practice.

This method is highly recommended for conducting interpretive research because it is based on the experiences, the thoughts, insights and feelings of the participants (Garza, 2007; Creswell, 1998; van Manen, 1990). Through qualitative interviewing the researcher would be able to understand ethnic minorities' experiences and reconstruct events in which he had not participated (Rubin and Rubin, 1995).

The interviews would be digitally recorded using a Dictaphone, with the permission of all the participants to ensure completeness of the interview and to get information for reliability checks. However, the use of the Dictaphone will not eliminate the need for taking notes as it assisted in formulating questions and probes and to record non-verbal communication (Garza, 2007; McMillan and Schumacher, 1993). The duration of each interview would be determined by the participants' willingness to elaborate on the questions, as envisaged the interviews are expected to last 45 minutes to one hour.

Once the interviews are completed and all the other data had been collected, precautions would be taken to protect the original data. Copies will be made of the original recordings and stored on a computer with a password protection, in case the Dictaphone is damaged during transcription, as the interviews will be transcribed verbatim.

4.5 Document 4: Quantitative Research

Quantitative research has its underpinnings in the philosophical paradigm for human inquiry known as positivism (Polit and Hungler, 1999). Research driven by the positivist tradition is a 'systematic and methodological process' (Kotzab, 2005) that places considerable value on 'rationality, objectivity, prediction and control' (Creswell, 1998). A distinguishing feature is the collection of numerical data (Jack and Clarke, 1998; Miles *et al.*, 1994) that, in turn, can be subjected to statistical analysis (Carter, 2000a). The functional or positivist paradigm that guides the quantitative mode of inquiry is based on the assumption that social reality has an objective ontological structure and that individuals are responding agents to this objective environment (Macmillan *et al.*, 1993). Quantitative research involves counting and measuring of events and performing the statistical analysis of a body of numerical data (Smith, 1988). The assumption behind the positivist paradigm is that there is an objective truth existing in the world that can be measured and explained.

Document 4 would test two hypotheses, hence quantitative research would be used and because of its link to the notion being objective truth or fact. Being deductive and particularistic, quantitative research is based upon formulating the research hypotheses and verifying them empirically on a specific set of data (Miles *et al.*, 1994). Hypotheses are value-free the researcher's own values, biases, and subjective preferences have no place in the quantitative approach. Researchers can view the communication process as concrete and tangible and can analyse it without contacting actual people involved in communication (Kotzab, 2005).

4.6 Document 4 Data collection method – Online Questionnaire

An online questionnaire would be structured to elicit information relating to the participants' views, concerning the existence of the glass ceiling as a barrier faced by ethnic minorities in their propositions to reach senior management positions within DWP and how career-related support affects their career advancement within the organisation. The online questionnaire would be used because it is cheap, as compared to interviews which would have been used in Document 3 where the researcher might have to travel to different places to interview the participants. The participants can complete it at their convenience and taking only ten minutes than spending a quarter of an hour of their precious time in an interview. As the research is considered to be sensitive, the online questionnaire was found to be appropriate as the participants are more likely to answer sensitive questions (Pealer *et al.* (2001) as compared to interviews where interviewer effect and privacy issues may affect reliability (Braunsberger, Wybenga and Gates, 2007). This is because during the completion of the online questionnaire the tangible presence of the researcher is removed so bodily presence become invisible and the online research becomes a great equaliser with the researcher having less control over the research process and potentially becoming a participant researcher (Llieva *et al.*, 2002).

The construction of the questionnaire would be based on themes gleaned from the literature reviewed in Document 2 and the themes which came out of the data analysis from the interviews carried out in Document 3 (Kaparou and Bush, 2007). An attempt would be made to relate the questions directly to the objectives of the study (Kaparou *et al.*, 2007).

The assistance of an expert in online questionnaire development in the form of the supervisors and work colleagues, would be sought at every stage of the construction of the questionnaire, and the help of the Nottingham Trent University informatics department to assist in writing the web pages for the survey would be highly appreciated. All pages included the Nottingham Trent University crest to show institutional affiliation, to give the project credibility and ensure the participants could verify the status. After the scales had been developed the supervisors would be consulted to review the instrument layout, item standardisation, clarity, relevance and level of difficulty of the language used. Using the professional feedback, the necessary changes would be made, and a suitable sample would be used to pilot the questionnaire before administering it.

4.7 Document 5: Thesis: Mixed methods: Qualitative - Quantitative Methods

The researcher advocates the espousing of quantitative and qualitative methods for the research to solicit the information needed to answer the research questions, without leaving any stone unturned. Therefore in order to accomplish the research aims the researcher proposes a research framework that combines various research methods, both qualitative and quantitative (Mingers, 2001), with the development and legitimacy of both quantitative and qualitative research, the combination of both types of research is expanding (Tashakkori and Teddle, 2003). The alternative of combining methods, the multi-method approach has emerged in different research areas as a way of improving research process and findings. Multiple methods are used in research (Morse, 2003). The main advantages of multi-method work are triangulation, seeking to validate data and results by combining a range of data

sources, methods or observers (Tashakkori and Teddle, 1998). Quantitative and qualitative methods should not be viewed as polar opposites (Van Maanen, 1993), since their combination introduces both testability and context into the research (Kaplan and Duchon, 1988). Collecting different kinds of data by different methods from different sources provides a wide range of coverage that may result in a fuller picture of the unit under study than would be achieved otherwise (Bonoma, 1985). It is a strategy for overcoming each method's weakness and limitations by deliberately combining different methods within the same investigations (Mingers, 2001)

Human beings are indeed are a complex system and when coupled with the complexities of business organisations the task of understanding how they interact is a daunting task (Fornaciari and Dean, 2001). An example of this can be seen in the on-going research into employee turnover. Only by utilizing both qualitative and quantitative research methods may researcher be able to uncover, test and verify further variables. However this will mean that the research community put aside the debate on the validity of either paradigm and accept that there are different ways to gain the truth. Different ways that include the use different sample sizes, but still insist on accurate and meaningful findings that must pass measures of validity. Perhaps it is, as Fornaciari *et al.*, 2001) call it, time for a 'leap of faith'.

Chapter 5

5.1 Research ethics

Being a member of the organisation under review, for the last four years gives one a fair understanding of what it is like to fail to attain promotion into senior management, whilst the organisation has a snow apex with a broad base of ethnic minorities. However, the researcher is also very aware of the dangers of subjectivity and every effort will be made to circumvent this. The researcher is not going to use subjective opinions so as to deviate the research to his desired outcomes as he would abide to the information gathered to make conclusions about his findings, the research is going to be carried out in utmost good faith by surrendering his ego and pursuing the interests of the participants rather than self-interest.

Bell (1993) points out that no researcher can demand access to an institution, an organisation or to materials. The researcher is not going to coerce people to take part in the research as he is going to respect the will of the people whom he would have chosen as part of the sample. Sekaran (2000, p.261) *“no-one should be forced to respond to the survey and if someone does not want to avail of the opportunity to participate the individual’s desire should be respected.”*

Thus, special permission to conduct this research was granted by the Director of Equality and Diversity after explaining to her about the research and she offered to have the invitation for participants to be placed on her directorate intranet page. The invitation will explain the purpose of the research and ensure that the participants know what is expected of them and what would happen to the information they would have given. This information is necessary before the participants can decide whether

to participate or not. The data collected is not going to be gazetted as it is going to be used by the organisation in question. The researcher is going to explain to the people to be involved the aims of the research and he is going to ensure that all the information gathered would be kept confidential and the respondents would remain anonymous, as the researcher would guard the privacies of the respondents.

The research would be reviewed for approval by the Research Ethics Committee at Nottingham Trent University. The review would involve outlining the research approach, methodology and sample selection.

According to Neuman (2000) a researcher has a moral obligation to uphold confidentiality of data, which includes keeping information confidential from others in the field and disguising member's names in the field notes. It is in this light that all participants would be assured that the data collected would be kept confidential and would not be shared with anyone apart from the research supervisors, without their authorisation. The researcher would use pseudonyms to prevent the research participants from being individually identifiable in any document or publication arising from this research. All possible care would be exercised to ensure that the participants and the business units that they work for would not be identified in the write up of the findings of the research.

5.2 Research limitations

As with all studies this research has some limitations. The amount of literature available on barriers faced by ethnic minorities in their bid to climb the corporate ladder is quite low in United Kingdom. With a substantial amount of literature available from overseas studies, especially from North America, not all this material is relevant to the United Kingdom context. Reconciling research material from

overseas with material from UK was a challenge as the issues and the social context for ethnic minorities in UK are different from other countries.

From the literature explored, the barriers faced by ethnic minorities into senior management positions are varied and what is left is to find out whether these are the same barriers which are facing ethnic minorities in DWP in their career advancement. Clearly, research is needed to empirically test the barriers faced by ethnic minorities regarding their advancement to executive positions.

The researcher uses the term 'ethnic minority' problematically and recognises that while it suggests a singularity of black and ethnic minority experience, experiences will differ widely between and within ethnic groups. This is a research limitation to be addressed in future research, where salient ethnic groups would be studied.

5.3 Research Outcomes

The proposed research will have associated benefits to the researcher and the organisation.

The researcher will acquire the following benefits:

- Become a fully independent and competent professional researcher.
- Gain a thorough understanding of a subject that has been of personal interest for a long period.
- Proficient in using research skills in positivist/phenomenological approaches.
- Apply the research experience gained in the work situation.
- Obtain the highest academic qualification.
- Acquire a licence to practice or teach.

The organisation will benefit by:

- Gaining an understanding of a topic and organisation issues affect some of its employees.
- Provide the organisation with a mirror reflection of its practices,
- facilitating future change programmes;
- Acquire pertinent information at no cost.

It is hoped to disseminate the findings via publication of articles in a number of academic and professional journals such as:

- Academy of Management Journal
- Journal of Applied Behavioural Science
- Work and occupations
- Journal of Applied Psychology
- Journal of Management.

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A critical review of the barriers faced by ethnic minorities in their proposition to progress into senior management positions.

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Introduction

This document examines the social aspect of race as an applicant characteristic that might directly or indirectly influence promotion decisions to the upper echelons of the organisation. The social group the research will focus on is the ethnic minorities. The ethnic minority is widely understood in Britain to denote a category of people whose skin is not white (Mason and Iganski, 2002). Ethnic minorities for this study will constitute Black British, Black Africa, Asian, Chinese and people of Mixed Heritage. Consequently some of the works cited will refer to ethnic minorities as people of colour or Black people. Ethnicity entails distinguishing people on the basis of cultural markers, such as language, religion and shared customs and identifying key social groups (Carter, 2007). What distinguishes ethnic groups from most others is the belief shared by its members in their common descent (Carter, 2007; Dovidio, 2002; Weber and Higginbotham, 1997).

The researcher is aware that ethnicity may not be based on colour, for example Irish, Germans, Norwegians, and Poles. The central issue is the difference because of the skin colour. In this research it is the unstable combination of skin colour and culture that marks ethnic minorities from the majority of the UK population (Fenton, 2010). Mason (2003, p.12) maintains that, " Ethnic minorities are those whose skin is not white and the difference between ethnic minorities and the majority is marked ultimately by the whiteness". The researcher used this distinction to identify ethnic minorities for the research in addition to the Census ethnicity classification (Office of National Statistics, 2008). Ethnic minorities constituted Asians (Indian Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Other Asian background, All Asian groups), Black (Caribbean, African,

Other Black background, All Black groups), Mixed Heritage (White and Black Caribbean, White and Black African, White and Asian, Other mixed background) and Chinese (Chinese, All Chinese or Other groups).

Although it cannot be disputed that ethnic minorities have made significant progress in advancing to mid-level managerial positions over the past three decades, their executive advancement has been far less impressive. Why is it that ethnic minorities have stalled at the middle management level as if bumped up against a "glass ceiling", glass walls', 'sticky floor', 'glass cages' and 'trap doors'? (Browne, 2006; Catalyst, 2006; Kandola, 2004; Blair-Loy 2001; Brief and Barsky, 2000). Executive positions remain elusive to the ethnic minorities as they have yet to establish themselves at senior levels in significant numbers (Jackson, 2007; Catalyst, 2006; Kandola, 2004).

Few ethnic minorities currently hold senior management positions in the Department for Works and Pensions (DWP). This situation is particularly marked at the Chief Executive level and the executive management team which is known as the Senior Civil Servant (SCS), and is a cause of concern to those considering a future in the Public Service and the researcher as he works for the organisation, as it paints a gloomy picture on the availability of role models of their race. Of the same opinion Charles (2003) said a major deterrent to ethnic minorities in entering the government workforce is the lack of visible role models in organisational positions. (See Appendix of DWP organisation charts) The number of ethnic minorities in senior management is disproportionate when compared to the number of those who are anchored at the lower echelons of the organisation. (Jackson and Daniels, 2007). The researcher would expect the top management to be reflective of the people it serves, not the prevailing which shows mostly white directors as shown on the appendices. The

ethnic minorities make up 11% of the organisation whilst there is only 2% in SCS.

Despite thirty years of executive development research, equal employment opportunity and affirmative action, the study of successes and failures of ethnic minority executives in organisations is still scarce. In a review of more than twenty-five years of literature on executive development by (Flores *et al.*, 2006), they found that out of approximately 12,000 studies and articles on the topic, there was virtually silent on the issue of race with less than 1% having considered its impact on the selection, development and advancement of executives within corporates . Similarly data regarding the trends and changes in the scholarly literature focusing on the career development of ethnic minorities spanning several decades is also not well documented. (Jackson *et al.*, 2007). Meanwhile very little of this research has focused on the effects of the glass ceiling on ethnic minorities in senior-level positions (Jackson *et al.*, 2007). Although there has been little empirical work on the ethnic minorities' progression, a significant amount of research exists focusing on women and the glass ceiling. This literature has yielded certain insights into the casual factors underpinning women and the glass ceiling, and some of the gathered information may also be applicable to ethnic minorities (Jackson *et al.*, 2007).

As documented in the literature, most of the previous research on the glass ceiling is focused on gender inequities (Furst and Revees, 2008; Raha, 2007; Alex-Assensoh, 2007; Davies-Netzley, 1998). While the glass ceiling issue has been mostly associated with barriers to upward mobility for women, Morrison and Von Glinow (1990) and Jackson (2008) argue that ethnic minorities may face the same

impediments. Therefore, very little of the knowledge about the glass ceiling comes from research focused on race/ethnicity (Jackson *et al.*, 2007). At the same time, the possibility of ethnic differences in leadership have received relatively little research attention, surprisingly few studies involving ethnic minority status and leadership style have been conducted much less at middle and executive levels (Jackson *et al.*, 2007).

The researcher has not attempted to review the research findings relating to specific groups of ethnic minorities in this document and acknowledges this limitation. This deficiency will be overcome by collecting information on barriers salient to individual ethnic minority groups in United Kingdom in future work. The review is primarily concerned with the barriers faced by ethnic minorities' career progression as a reflection of the available literature. It is hoped that such an approach will provide an appropriate basis for developing strategies to overcome the barriers. Given the importance of research in understanding the career development of ethnic minorities in work settings, an overview of the research conducted in this area is essential. The present study therefore seeks to address the limitations in prior studies and to fill in the gaps of knowledge. The document concludes with a discussion of the practical implications arising from the conceptual framework, with a particular emphasis on why ethnic minorities stagnate and fail to achieve senior management positions in DWP.

Chapter 2.1

2.1.1 Objectives for Document 2

This literature review focuses upon evidence of the barriers faced by ethnic minorities in their attempt to ascend on to the corporate ladders as they are found to plateau at middle management and fail to progress into top management. This document provides a critical review of the available literature on barriers to ethnic minorities' career progression. The researcher seeks to explore and address the void in understanding inequality in the representation of ethnic minorities in top management by investigating how race affect their promotional prospects. As well as exploring the barriers faced by ethnic minorities in detail, also seeks to highlight the reasons why ethnic minorities plateau and fail to climb the corporate ladder. The document provides a business case of ethnicity diversity and strategies for creating a level playing field for ethnic minorities to enter senior management. The prime purpose is to ascertain the extent of existing evidence and its implications for further research.

Drawing on the premise of popular theories and concepts, frequently applied to diversity research such as social theories, interaction frameworks, and heuristics.

Social theories refer to the identity theory, self-categorisation theory and social comparison theory. Interaction frameworks include the similarity attraction paradigm, person environment fit, and the tokenism and contact hypotheses. Heuristics accounts for the information processing that forms the bases of stereotyping, prejudice and bias (Ho, 2007). In combination, these theories and concepts reinforce and complement each other to provide a comprehensive understanding of an individual's behaviour within a diverse workforce and how these affect ethnic minorities in their pursuit for senior management positions.

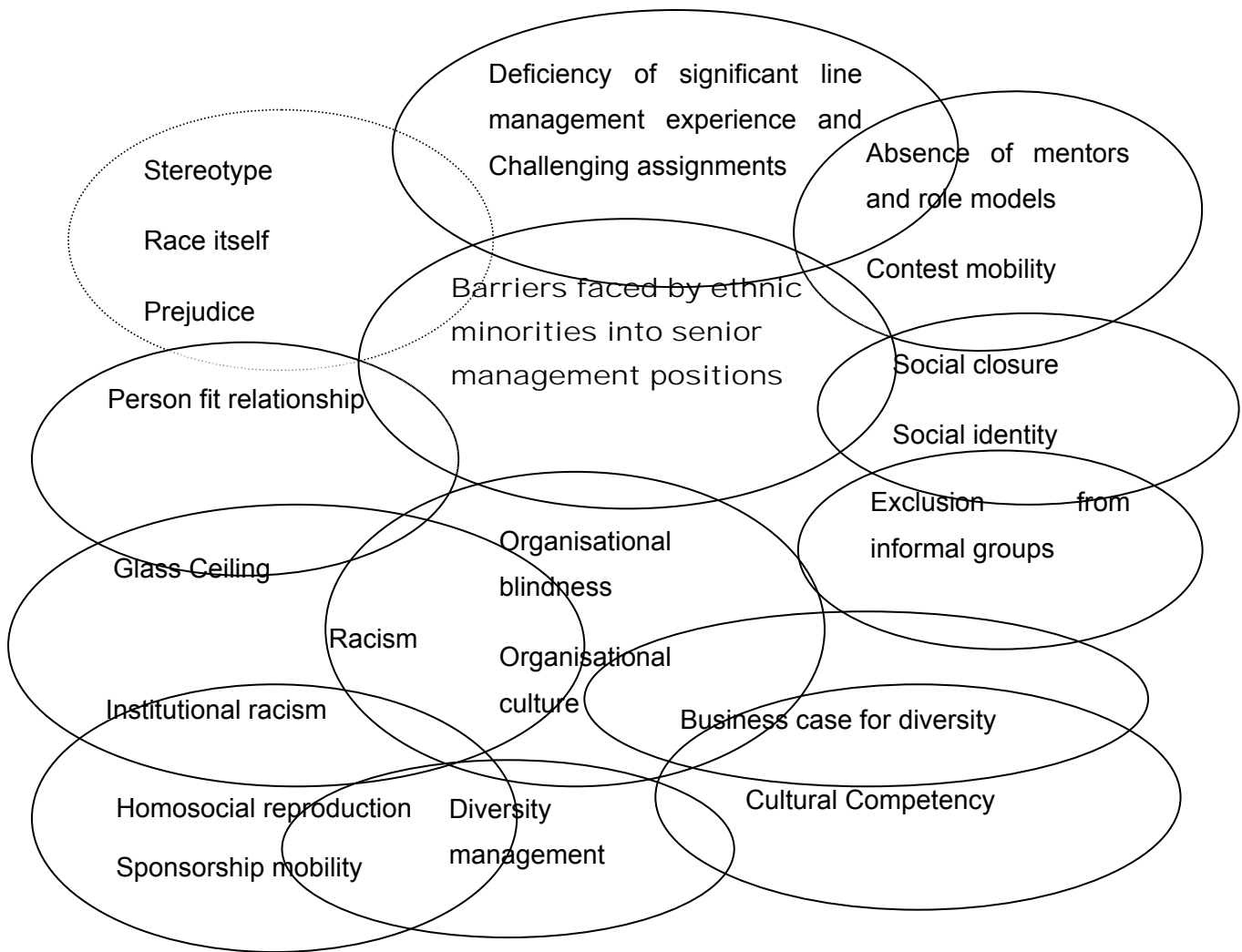
The literature review is envisaged to provide answers to the following research questions below:

1. Why ethnic minorities plateau at middle management and occupying the lower echelons of the organisation whilst the apex is mainly occupied by the whites?
2. What are the barriers to career advancement of ethnic minorities?
3. What part can policies and practice of equality and diversity play in the inclusion of ethnic minorities into senior management positions?

2.1.2 Identification of key literature

An extensive literature review is one of the most essential and preliminary steps within the research process (Fisher 2007; Remenyi *et al.*, 2000). The literature review is of considerable importance and needs to be thorough and exhaustive. The references would be taken primarily from leading academic journals and not from general textbooks (Remenyi *et al.*, 2000). The literature review will disclose the

established and generally accepted facts of the situation and this need to be fully understood by the researcher (Remenyi *et al*, 2000). In addition the review should enable the researcher to identify and understand the theories or models which have been used by previous researchers in the field (Fisher, 2005). In order to review literature adequately it is essential that the researcher examines the published work critically, not all that is published should be taken at face value for, as von Clausewitz (1832) observed, it is the maxim in all books that we should trust only certain information and that we be always suspicious. The researcher shall not simply regurgitate the ideas from the literature but evaluate and comment on them critically but constructively (Remenyi *et al.*, 2000). Literature review would assist the researcher in identifying an unsolved problem in the field that will become the focus of the research project (Fisher, 2007). The literature range to be reviewed is shown on the literature map below.



Literature map Figure: 2.1

The literature review will serve as point of reference for the following research objectives:

- To establish the nature and extent of specific barriers that prevent ethnic minorities from progressing to senior management positions in the

organisation whilst they are found in large numbers at the lower echelons of the organisation.

- To explore and identify the factors, both organisational and individual, that inhibits the movement of ethnic minorities into senior management positions.
- To identify factors, originating from both within and outside the organisation which lead to the exclusion of ethnic minorities in to senior management positions.
- To construct a theory of ethnic minority progression into senior management, this might assist for further research of the ethnic minority managerial future.
- Based on the findings of the study, to provide advice and guidance on how best to take forward recommendations to address the factors emerging from the study which might lead to lack of promotion of ethnic minorities.

Chapter 2.2

2.2.1 Underrepresentation of ethnic minorities in senior management positions in UK organisations.

In order to ascertain that ethnic minorities were not only failing to advance into the corporate leadership in DWP, the researcher had to investigate on the following organisations: broadcasting, police, education, National Health Service (NHS) and Sports, in particular football. This was done to find out what their position was in regard to having ethnic minorities in senior management position. The organisations chosen were not selected for a particular reason but it was due to the accessibility of information and they were the few which the researcher was interested in. More could have been researched but due to lack of time required to complete this document only a few had to be chosen for benchmarking purposes. The organisations researched have shown that barriers exist and are part of the exclusionary practices that successfully eliminate ethnic minorities from higher managerial positions. The following account acts a point of departure as it describes and analyses the representation of ethnic minorities in senior management in the industry.

2.2.2 Broadcasting

News director jobs still prove elusive for ethnic minorities in the broadcasting sector even though, more ethnic minorities are working as reporters and anchors in local television but a significant obstacle remains for ethnic minorities trying to become

news directors (Baracaia, 2008). The BBC is the most significant player in British broadcasting however its senior management is not reflective of society and its employees, as it is more "hideously white", it has 40 ethnic minority executives out of almost 1,000 senior BBC posts (Hundal, 2006). Channel 4, has 12% ethnic minorities, but has 5% at senior management and 33% as women. ITV reflects below the average, drawing 8% of its staff from ethnic minorities but has no ethnic minority as a management board member (Baracaia, 2008).

2.23 The police force

The police force as the custodian of the law has a high number of discrimination cases (Bland *et al.*, 2005). Ethnic minority police officers are not being considered for top jobs in the force. Out of more than 200 officers holding the rank of assistant chief constable or higher, only seven are from ethnic minorities, as promotions are often based on whether the applicant's face fits the set mould (Fresco, 2008). Concurring with this view, Erwin (2008), conveys that promotion to the highest ranks of the Metropolitan Police Service appears to operate by the earmarking of a 'golden circle' of preferred candidates. The findings of the police report by Bland *et al.* (2005) suggest that ethnic minority officers' progress through the promotion process was slower than that of their white colleagues. On average, ethnic minority officers took 12 months longer than their white colleagues to reach the rank of Sergeant. As for the promotion to Inspector, ethnic minority officers were found to be taking 23 months longer than their white colleagues to reach the same rank. According to Erwin (2008), an ethnic minority police officer has to work twice as hard as a white colleague in order to gain promotion.

2.2.4 Education

In parallel with the low representation for people of ethnic minorities in senior-level positions in private industry and the public sector, the number of people of ethnic minorities in senior-level positions in higher education remains low (Jackson, 2008a, Jackson, 2008b; Jackson et al, 2007). Research focused on ethnic minorities in these positions, coupled with demographic information on the higher education workforce, demonstrates the dismal representation for these groups in senior-level positions (Hill, 2004; Jackson, 2008a, 2008b; Lee, 2002). Other studies have focused on employment trends for ethnic minorities administrators in colleges and universities (Jackson, 2008a, 2008b, Bush, Glover, and Sood, 2006, Bush, and Moloi, 2006). For example, ethnic minorities are not equal in terms of their professional standing compared to Whites on the levels of power, decision-making, and authority in educational institutions (Alex-Assensoh, 2007, Bush et al, 2006). Researchers have further identified a “double-whammy” for ethnic minority women in higher education leadership positions. This term describes the reality that ethnic minority women often face two forms of institutionalized discrimination, sexism and racism (Singh and Vinniscombe, 2005) double whammy or double jeopardy (Hite, 2006, Giscombe et al, 2002, Ferdman, 1999). In this document the researcher will not dwell much on the double whammy faced by ethnic minority women, as race is the variable being used for the research, the double whammy effect will be investigated in future research.

2.2.5 National Health Service

The National Health Service is the world's third largest employer, the largest employer in Western Europe, employing 1.4 million people and the largest employer of ethnic minorities, 16% of the total workforce. Equality chairperson Trevor Philips quoted in the (Martin, 2004) talking about the NHS said, it was a mountain of an organisation. At the base among its 1.3 m employees, there is wide ethnic diversity. People from black and minority ethnic communities make up 35% of its doctors and dentists, 16.4% of the nurses 11.2% of non-medical staff. However at the top of each NHS organisation, the boss is almost always white. There are more than 600 NHS trust, health boards, local health boards and health services boards in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and less than 1% of them have a black or minority ethnic chief executive. The contrast between snow-capped summit and the mountain base could hardly be starker (.Esmail, Kaira and Abel, 2005). It has long been recognised that the NHS's huge workforce does not wholly reflect the diversity of the society it serves. In some sectors, up to 30% of lower level staff comes from black minority and ethnic backgrounds but this falls to 10% at middle management and less than 1% at CEO level.

2.2.6 Sports – Football

There is a high number of ethnic minorities in the world's most popular game, but the question is does the number of players correlate the number of football managers. The lack of ethnic minorities is not only peculiar in the private and public but it is also prevalent in the sporting arena especially in the big game of football where a quarter of the players in the four divisions are from ethnic minorities but with only 2 ethnic

minorities football managers out of the England's 92 league clubs, (Solhekol, 2008). Football is a very conservative industry and always has been; unfortunately the chairmen and chief executives of the clubs are notorious conservative and would not take a gamble, as all club owners are white and they are reluctant to employ a manager who does not look like them. The managers need prototypes would be similar to them as they perceive them to have the right attributes to manage the teams. It's a closed shop for black coaches as they are not getting the opportunities. The Times (2008) cited Brendon Batson FA Equality and Diversity Consultant saying, the numbers do not lie, it is shocking and football should be embarrassed. Black coaches are not getting the same opportunities as white coaches. There is a lack of trust when it comes to appointing black managers; there is a reluctance to put them in charge. In this day and age it seems that a black man has more chance of becoming the President of United States than he has of managing a Barclays Premier League Club (Solhekol, 2008). (See Appendix on Football Managers)

2.2.7 The current position of ethnic minorities' representation in DWP

DWP is the largest government department in the Government of the United Kingdom with a workforce of 100 000 employees. It was created on June 8, 2001, from the merger of the employment part of the Department for Education and Employment Skills and the Department of Social Security. It is currently headed by the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, a Cabinet position. It is made up of five businesses which are Jobcentre Plus, Pension, and Disability and Carers (Was

formed through the merger of The Pension Service and Disability and Carers Service) , One Agency used to be called Child Support Agency, Health and Safety Executive and The Rent Service.

A key feature of the organisation which is pertinent to this research is that the executive management positions are predominantly occupied white people from similar corporate, social and educational backgrounds. This is based on the observation of the researcher who is an employee in the organisation at a senior management grade. Such homogeneity does not reflect the modern perspective of the changing demographics and the representativeness of the organisation's workforce. Ethnic minorities make up 11.2% of the total workforce however the distribution of the workforce is concentrated mainly in the lower levels with 2% of the senior civil servants being ethnic minorities. Most of the ethnic minorities are found in the lower grades of Administrative Officer (AO) to Executive Officer (EO) and the numbers start receding as one moves from Higher Executive Officer (HEO) to Senior Executive Officer (SEO) and dwindles from Grade 7 to Grade 6 and starts to disappear into thin air in the Senior Civil Servant bracket with no trace of non-white Senior Civil Servants (SCS) (see Appendices of the DWP organisation charts)

Summary

The organisations researched have revealed that ethnic minorities face exclusionary barriers into management and struggle to make it into senior management positions, thus they have a snow apex like DWP. These organisations do not have role models from ethnic minorities and the ethnic minorities in the organisation such as the police are actually discouraging ethnic minorities to join the organisation as racism is rife.

Areas such as football management, do not trust ethnic minorities to manage their teams, such that they would rather have a white person like them regardless of the ethnic diverse of the football players they still would not entrust their clubs to an ethnic minority manager. The organisations researched have a white apex and make it difficult for ethnic minorities to reach the apex, as it is a case of homosocial reproduction, where whites recruit people to management positions who are similar to them. The low representation for ethnic minorities in senior-level positions in both the private industry and public sector consequently means that the number of ethnic minorities in senior-level positions generally remains low. Ethnic minorities were said to find it difficult to attain top positions because they do not fit in prescribed organisational prototypes. As a result employers fall into a trap of 'cloning' feeling inherently more sympathetic towards people who share their own cultural background and interests and therefore recruiting employees primarily from within their own ethnic group

The next chapter present the individual and attitudinal barriers which are faced by ethnic minority as they attempt to advance in to senior management positions. The barriers will be obtained from different sources of literature such as journals and text books.

Chapter 2.3

This chapter presents and examines the different categories of barriers which are faced by ethnic minorities in their effort to climb the corporate ladder. This section takes a look at a cross-section of the obstacles as discussed in the literature. Although it would be useful to distinguish the barriers according to different categories, such categorisation may fail to capture the encompassing nature of some of the barriers. Suffice to say that common practice is to explain them in their nature namely individual and attitudinal and organisational barriers. The problem of ethnic minorities' under-representation in senior management positions is not attributable to a single set of factors, but to a whole cycle of discrimination.

Ethnic minorities report barriers to job satisfaction and organisational advancement (Catalyst, 2006). The major barriers to upward career mobility are no longer at the recruitment and job entry stage but at the advancement stages (Jackson *et al.*, 2007; Giscombe *et al.*, 2002). Research by (Jackson *et al.*, 2007; Catalyst, 2006; Hite, 2006; Esmail *et al.*, 2005; Kandola, 2004; Maume, 2004) has demonstrated that the primary barriers to the advancement of non-white leaders include:

- Lack of mentors
- Lack of "visible role models in organisational positions
- Exclusion from networks of communication
- Interpersonal dynamics and networking restrict promotion prospects for an ethnic minority employee,
- Stereotyping and preconceptions of roles and abilities

- Lack of significant line experience, visible or challenging job assignments that facilitate their career mobility

2.3.1 Individual and attitudinal factors

2.3.9 Effects of race to career progression

Race indirectly affects promotion decisions through key job-relevant variables, to the disadvantage of ethnic minority applicants. Despite the growing proportion of ethnic minorities in the workplace (Raha, 2007) and the concurrent emphasis on valuing diversity in organisations (Jackson *et al.*, 2007), the proportion of ethnic minorities in top management positions in UK organisations remains less than 1 per cent (Kandola, 2004). Evidence suggests that ethnic minorities encounter a "glass ceiling" that keeps them from reaching the tops of managerial hierarchies (Raha, 2007; Maume, 2004; Morrison *et al.*, 1990). Promotion decisions for top management positions involve subjective appraisals as to whether a given candidate will fit in with incumbent top managers. Individuals who are dissimilar to the incumbents in a particular type of job to those making promotion decisions as ethnic minority candidates for senior management positions in a white-dominated organisation would be at a disadvantage compared to individuals who are similar to incumbents and decision makers (white candidates).

However, racial discrimination need not be intentional. Bush *et al.* (2006) suggested that unconscious biases resulting from fear of selecting an unacceptable candidate,

personal attraction to candidates similar to oneself, and holding a stereotype of the ideal candidate for a position may distort decision makers' judgments and lead job-irrelevant variables such as race to influence their selection decisions. Kanter (1977) concluded that the desire for social certainty leads decision makers to prefer to work with individuals like themselves, she called this homosocial reproduction. The "similar-to-me" effect is based on perceived similarity, prototype (Hogg, 2007; Haslam, 2001) as result it is the prototype that will be offered the job at the disadvantage of ethnic minorities, who whites cannot relate to due to differences in racial makeup.

Powell and Butterfield (1997) have stated that race has a direct effect on the applicant when seeking promotion, thus the decision to promote someone according to this research is based on whether you are white or an ethnic minority. Most of the literature on racism in society has examined anti-black sentiments among whites. Whereas whites are less likely to express openly racist sentiments now than in the past, most scholars agree that prejudice against blacks continues in more subtle forms. For example, Dovidio *et al.* (2005) proposed that whites' current attitudes toward blacks reflect aversive racism, defined as a state of ambivalence caused by a conflict between egalitarian values and unacknowledged negative affect toward blacks. Aversive racists' negative affect toward blacks stems from discomfort, uneasiness, and fear rather than from hostility or hate. Similarly, Pager and Shepherd (2006) proposed that symbolic racism, defined as a blend of negative affect toward blacks and traditional values such as individualism and self-reliance, has largely replaced old-fashioned racism, or open bigotry, among whites. But like old-fashioned racists, aversive and symbolic racists are inclined to discriminate on

the basis of race. Direct effects of race may also arise in the workplace from the way people process information when making personnel decisions (Motowidlo, Hooper, and Jackson 2006). Stockdale *et al.* (2003, p.46) cited an interview panel discussion about a Black candidate where it was said,

regardless of their qualifications, the good of the company is ultimately at stake. Look at the big picture. The company is predominately white and our clients are predominately white. Hiring a black candidate would actually be a disservice, both to our company and clients, but also to the black candidate. This inherent 'lack of fit' with our current workforce and clients would put undue hardship on all parties involved. For the sake of the organisation as a business, I would recommend hiring the white candidate

The black candidate could not get the job by virtue of being black did not 'fit' the organisation. Carless (2005) suggested that systematic biases occur in raters' evaluations, such that ethnic minorities are evaluated more on the basis of stereotypes characterising them as inferior performers than on the basis of their actual performance. Ideally promotion practices do not guarantee that ethnic minority employees will fare as well as white employees when promotion decisions are made for senior management positions. The outcomes of such decisions are influenced by job irrelevant factors.

2.3.3 Lack of mentors and role models

Elliot and Smith, (2004) define mentoring as a set of roles and role activities senior, experienced organisational members assume with junior members. These roles include career-enhancing functions such as sponsorship, coaching, facilitating exposure and visibility, and offering challenging work and protection in addition to psychosocial functions such as role modelling, counselling and friendship. Research reveals that mentor relationships often lead to career-related support (Gibson, 2004; Eby and Allen, 2002) and professional growth (Higgins and Kram, 2004; Eby *et al.*, 2000). Mentors are people either inside or outside an individual's organisation with whom there is a formal or informal working relationship. Mentors and protégés can talk openly about job and career advancement issues. Mentors help to build self-confidence and professional identity in their protégés (Blake-Beard, and Murrell, 2006; Raggins, Townsend and Mattis, 1998). They can provide access to developmental opportunities that allow people to demonstrate ability and become trusted. Moreover, because they have a vested interest in the successes of their protégés' projects, mentors keep open information channels and provide feedback on performance at crucial times. By ensuring success they confirm belief in their initial assessment. The visibility, success and trust that result from this process are then reflected in promotion rates.

Mentors play a significant role in providing access to high-profile development opportunities which in turn allow mentoring relationships, which are so important to career progression, to develop and flourish. Raggins *et al.* (1998) found that almost all (91%) successful ethnic minority Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) they interviewed said they had had mentors at some time, and almost as many (81%) said that mentors were critical or fairly important. These findings are in alignment

with other evidence that individuals who are mentored are more frequently promoted, have more career mobility, and advance faster. However, there are fewer opportunities for ethnic minorities to build mentoring relationships than there are for white people. In part this is because there are fewer senior ethnic minorities to act as mentors and in part because of the difficulties associated with black-white mentoring relationships. Research suggests that cross-race ties tend to be weaker in a variety of ways than same-race ties (Blake-Beard, Murrell, and Thomas, 2006; Ibarra, 1993). Ethnic minorities in this study claimed to be found in same race networks which are weak and which do not provide sponsorship as the mentors are not influential (Catanzarite, 2002). Although same -race networks tend to provide psychological support for both black and white managers, such networks are more influential in career support and the promotion chances of whites than ethnic minorities (Thomas, 1990; Ibarra, 1995). Ethnic-minority social networks may be ineffective in placing members in high-end jobs because there are fewer high-status contacts in the network (Browne *et al.*, 2001; Catanzarite, 2002; Kmec, 2003; McGuire, 2000). Holding high-ranking positions provides employees with credibility and status, which enhances their influence over network members, helping them to get what they want (Kanter, 1977). For instance, high-status employees have greater access to, and control over, corporate resources than do low-status employees (Burt, 2005). Consequently, high-status network members can facilitate employees' mobility, advocate for employees in controversial situations, and help employees bypass the corporate hierarchy (Marsden, 2005).

Marsden (2005) found that people tend to interact and establish relationships with others that resemble themselves on characteristics such as age, class, gender,

occupation, sexuality, politics, family status, where they live, or leisure pursuits. Kanter (1977) makes a similar point in her theory of homosocial reproduction in the workplace. According to this theory, sponsorship is crucial to career advancement within the workplace, and sponsorship tends to be homosocial that is, people tend to establish sponsorship ties with people who resemble them closely in terms of characteristics such as race, gender, and social background. Gray *et al.*, 2008). Lack of similarity to senior managers may prohibit the involvement of ethnic minorities in informal social networks with supervisors. Similarity to senior managers may result in greater personal attraction and identification on the part of senior managers for subordinates.

2.3.4 Exclusion from informal groups / networks

One of the most frequently reported problems faced by ethnic minorities in organisational settings is limited access to or exclusion from informal interaction networks (Kandola, 2004). The exclusion from the social networks results in information isolation or the lack of access to diverse information networks, as one of the main barriers that block the career advancement ethnic minorities (Gray *et al.*, 2008). Similarly, Gray and James (2007) found that being excluded from informal networks of knowledge in knowledge-intensive firms affect ethnic minorities' ability to advance in the workplace. Exclusion from informal social networks produces disadvantages for ethnic minorities such as less access to critical organisational information, barriers to establishing strategic alliances, and subsequent limitations on upward mobility (Ibarra, 1995).

Ethnic-minority social networks may be ineffective in placing members in high-end jobs because there are fewer high-status contacts in the network. McGuire (2000) argues that high-status employees usually occupy command and control positions within their networks that facilitate their access to resources. Ethnic minorities are less likely than whites to have the resources and positions that would put them into contact with high-status employees and, therefore, they miss out on critical information and sponsorship. McGuire shows that structural exclusion from high-ranking and resourceful positions, not a lack of networking knowledge or skills, prevent ethnic minorities from forming ties to powerful network members. She argues that high-status employees may not have to personally exclude ethnic minorities from their networks because their organisations are already doing it (McGuire, 2000). This isolation means that ethnic minorities are excluded from top networks and informal relationships that are necessary for further career advancement. This reflects the perception that whites can only interact with other whites in certain prominent business or professional roles, thus preventing other racial groups from access to all possible roles in the workplace (Petersen, Sporta and Seidel, 2005).

Effective social networks are also thought to affect job stability and better promotion prospects. Intra-organisational networks are thought to provide information that is fundamental to career success (Gray *et al.*, 2007; Davies-Netzley, 1998). Limited network access, therefore, produces multiple disadvantages, including restricted knowledge of what is going on in their organisations and difficulty in forming alliances, which, in turn, are associated with limited mobility and "glass ceiling" effects (Gray *et al.*, 2008; Morrison *et al.*, 1990).

The benefits of having informal networks are not the same for ethnic minorities (Kandola, 2004, Ibarra 1995). Ethnic minorities are less likely than white to have high-status network members and to have diverse networks (McGuire 2000; Ibarra 1995). Having a network composed of diverse and powerful members is critical for employees' acquisition of resources and power in work organisations (Higginbotham 2004; Kanter 1977). Ethnic minorities are also less likely than whites to be central in work-based networks, which limit their access to network members' resources (Ibarra 1995).

Holding high-ranking positions also provides employees with credibility and status, which enhances their influence over network members, helping them to get what they want (Kanter 1977). For instance, high-status employees have greater access to, and control over, corporate resources than do low-status employees (Burt, 2005). Consequently, high-status network members can facilitate employees' mobility, advocate for employees in controversial situations, and help employees bypass the corporate hierarchy (Marsden, 2005). Lack of membership in the networks is detrimental to ethnic minorities' career progression as they will not have access to information and resources which they may need in order to reach management level. Access to these network groups is beyond their reach as they are found at the lower echelons of the organisation which hinders their interaction with those in management positions.

2.3.5 Lack of significant line management experience and challenging assignments

Ethnic minority employees are more likely to experience close supervision, have less complex tasks, have less managerial authority, and have less supervisory responsibility than white employees. (Tomaskovic-Devey, 2007; Kandola, 2004; Baldi and McBrier, 1997). The inequalities in the workplace persist as role slotting takes place by placing ethnic minorities into positions that are not directly related to the business line, as a result they will lack job variables required for promotion due to lack of significant assignments, which will affect their competency in competency based interview (Tomaskovic-Devey, 2007; Maume, 2004; Cohen 2006).

Further, they are more likely to be tracked into jobs that don not facilitate their move upward career ladders. As a result ethnic minorities may be developed less as individuals than majority group members (Carless, 2005). Concurring Simon (2008), said ethnic minorities are affected by race for promotion decisions as they are found to be victims of role slotting that is the practice of manoeuvring into positions that are not directly related to business lines as result they will lack the job variables required for promotion due to lack of significant assignments. Deficits in individual development may in turn make ethnic minorities appear unsuited for advancement to the highest levels and lead them to languish at lower levels of organisations, making it appear that they have plateaued (Simon, 2008; Bush, 2006). Developmental deficits may also lead to their receiving lower evaluations that restrict their future opportunities for advancement (Jackson *et al.*, 2007; Greenhaus *et al.*, 1990).

Ethnic minorities are likely to be tokens in a work setting (Esmail *et al.*, 2005; Kandola, 2004) and thereby experience unfavourable treatment that hinders their development. Whilst once hired, white people receive more on-the-job training and visible job assignments that facilitate their career mobility (Esmail *et al.*, 2005; Kandola, 2004). White people are also more likely to be assigned mentors and receive more favourable job evaluations from their white superiors (Bush *et al.*, 2006, Esmail *et al.*, 2005). White people have better promotion prospects than ethnic minority groups (Bush *et al.*, 2006). In spite of the consistent association of on-the-job development and promotion, research indicates that ethnic minorities are offered fewer developmental experiences than white people (Weisenfeld and Robinson-Backmon, 2007; Tharenou, Latimer and Conroy, 1994)

Previous research concluded that ethnic minority employees generally hold jobs with less task complexity, less supervisory responsibility, and less managerial authority (Cohen and Huffman, 2007; Tomaskovic-Devey, 2007). Racial inequality studies have consistently found that whites receive more supervisory positions, higher authority and higher pay than ethnic minorities (Tomaskovic-Devey, 2007). Racial segregation limits ethnic minority workers' initial placement on job ladders to positions that ultimately offer relatively little opportunity for further advancement. Furthermore, ethnic minority workers tend to be channelled to "racialised" jobs (Maume, 2004, 1999) where they tend to be used as a liaison linking the company to the black community. Cohen *et al.*, (2007) contends that these jobs are functionally important but they are not jobs that bring in revenue, promote growth, or prepare an executive to become a CEO. The channelling of ethnic minorities into these jobs

leaves the more visible jobs for whites and they, in turn, have more opportunities to exercise higher order and reward relevant job functions (Jackson *et al.*, 2003).

2.3.6 Stereotype and pre conceptions of roles and abilities

Stereotyping is a process of categorisation that is effective and efficient in most instances, but is often inaccurate when used to group people according to attributes such as attitude or abilities (Quillian, 2006; Sartore and Cunningham, 2006; Reskin 2003). The use of stereotypes as the basis for assessment of individuals can result in advantage or disadvantage, not because of individual ability or lack of it but because of group membership. Race stereotypes are still pervasive and widely shared, according to (Carter, 2007; Dipboye and Collela, 2005). The concentration of ethnic minorities in lower level and marginal jobs reinforces negative stereotypes about their capabilities and aspirations limits their access to career opportunities, such as prestigious job assignments (Stockdale and Crosby, 2003; Eagly and Karau, 2002; Fiske 1998; Reskin 2003; Tsui and O'Reilly 1989).

More commonly, employers who have no conscious prejudice may be prone to conscious acts of discrimination during the recruitment process. This may involve for instance recruiting employees who reflect the current ethnic breakdown of the workforce in the belief that such individuals are most likely to 'fit in' and ethnic minorities are not seen as having the 'right stuff', are not part of the 'golden circle', and they are not perceived as leadership material (Gray *et al.*, 2007; Kandola ,

2004). Lyness and Thompson, (1997) and Raggins *et al.*, (1998) argue that members of ethnic minority groups find it difficult to attain top positions because they do not fit in prescribed organisational prototypes. As a result employers fall into a trap of 'cloning' feeling inherently more sympathetic towards people who share their own cultural background and interests and therefore recruiting employees primarily from within their own ethnic group. (Haslam, 2002; Lyness *et al.*, 1997; Raggins, *et al.*, 1998). This is based on the belief that communication and trust are easier to establish with those who share similar backgrounds, tastes, and philosophies and managerial composition is said to be self-reproducing due to homosocial reproduction (Elliott *et al.*, 2004; Kanter, 1977).

Elliott *et al.* (2004) provide further intellectual support to the idea that labour market opportunities depends not just on individual human capital, but also on group membership. In other words, they advocate a contextual approach to understanding social mobility in which the causal dynamics of authority attainment are embedded in group composition. The researcher views this as a traditional assumption, based on identity theory and truncated interpretations of homosocial reproduction, that elites only reproduce themselves that the white managers assist white people to climb the corporate ladder as they belong to the same race with them.

Of the same opinion social identity and organisational demography literature suggests that people prefer to interact with members of their own identity group rather than with members of other groups hence members of ethnic minorities find it difficult to attain top positions because they do not fit in prescribed organisational

prototypes (Kersten, 2000). Specifically, those who fit are socially and politically supported by the organisation's members and systems, while those who do not are ostracised and undermined (Ng and Burke, 2005).

2.3.7 Social identity theory

Social identity theory states that people classify themselves and others in categories based on salient characteristics, such as gender, race, or ethnicity (Ho, 2007; Hogg and Cooper, 2007; Brunetto and Farr-Wharton, 2002; Haslam, 2002). People identify more with members who are similar to their category than with dissimilar out-group members. Such distinctions and attachments affect their group and self-attribution, including stereotypic attribution (Abrams and Hogg, 1999). The consequences of socially constructed identities include in-group favouritism, negative stereotyping and subordinating of out-groups, inter-group competition, and role conflict (Ho, 2007). The distinctive identity of employees in a work setting subsequently results in the exclusion of ethnic minorities from group membership and important decision-making and less access to support, which, in turn, jeopardises career advancement. The perception of unfair treatment eventually creates an overall negative work environment for all employees (Capozza and Brown, 2000).

Social identity and organisational demography literature suggests that people prefer to interact with members of their own identity group rather than with members of other groups. Whites tend to predominate in higher positions, whilst ethnic minorities tend to occupy more junior positions (Kersten, 2000), thereby creating in-group favouritism for whites (Kersten, 2000). Differences between groups generate negative feelings in members of low-status groups about their collective identity (Ho,

2007; Hornsey *et al.*, 1999). For example, work relationships among ethnic minorities are likely to be negatively affected by status disparities. Group membership, therefore, is a powerful variable influencing attitudes toward the value of diversity. There is ample evidence of the unequal experience of ethnic minorities in the workplace, especially their limited access to, or exclusion from, informal interaction networks (Kandola, 2004; Ely 2001). These networks allocate a variety of resources that are critical for performance and career advancement as well as social support and friendship (Erickson, 2005; Ibarra, 1995).

2.3.8 Social Closure

Social closure is the process of subordination whereby one group monopolises advantages by closing off opportunities to another group of outsiders beneath it (Ho, 2007; Maume, 2004). Social closure refers to the process by which social collectivises seek to maximize rewards by restricting access to resources and opportunities to a limited circle of eligibles, who are part of the 'golden circle' (Ho, 2007; Tomaskovic-Devey, 2006). Tomaskovic-Devey (2007) expands on the previous theoretical arguments by suggesting that status groups create and preserve their identity and advantages by reserving certain opportunities and reserving access and competition for those resources to any member of the in-group. Social closure embodies the glass ceiling phenomena (Maume, 2004).

Organisations are inherently conservative entities in that they tend to simply reproduce and reinforce past behaviours rather than respond to the needs of their employees (Tomaskovic-Devey *et al.*, 2007). Social closure is as much about protecting opportunities for the majority as it is about denying opportunities to others.

(Tomaskovic-Devey *et al.*, 2007) have noted that a shared ethnicity, nationality, race, and gender may form the basis of dominant group membership and in this sense social closure is similar to other forms of discriminatory practices. Similarly, social closure is also subsequently reinforced by the benefits and assets accrued by the members of that group through the exclusion of others (Tomaskovic-Devey *et al.*, 2007). Super ordinate group members have a vested interest in maintaining their authoritative positions they retain these positions by excluding candidates who differ from their racial or gender identity (Smith, 2002). Some argue that this exclusion may be an unconscious act or a result of the demography of the organisation (Elliott *et al.*, 2001, Baldi *et al.*, 1997). Tomaskovic-Devey and Skaggs (2002) put it more bluntly in stating that social closure processes are about more powerful actors monopolising desirable jobs by excluding subordinate groups. Because these processes are typically unobservable, in reference to the social closure theory, it may not matter whether they are a mix of conscious or unconscious processes. Within the framework of social closure processes, the human capital model might be most relevant at the outset of a career before access to promotions or authority became objects of social closure. According to social closure theorists, even later in the career given equivalent human capital, ethnic minorities will less often attain promotions or positions of authority, because the dominant group monopolises these positions for other members of the dominant group (Tomaskovic-Devey *et al.*, 2007).

This practice of finding employees who are like existing employees at the top is homosocial reproduction (Kanter, 1977). Managers tend to carefully guard power and privilege for those who fit in, for those they see as 'their kind,' part of the golden

circle (Ho, 2007; Arthur Jnr, Bell and Villado, 2006; Turner, 2003). The structure sets in motion forces leading to the replication of managers of the same kind with the managers (Edwards *et al.*, 2006). By so doing ethnic minorities are left at the bottom of the organisation as there is no one of their kind who can hold their hand and take them up the corporate ladder. Social identity and self-categorisation theories are not a far departure from social closure theory. Managers at the top are reserving positions for those employees who are socially similar to themselves, in other words they are reproducing themselves at the very top of the organisation. In this research the implicit aspect of the prototype is whiteness as a result the stereotypes of ethnic minorities just do not fit the stereotypes of successful leaders and this hinders their career advancement, because the leaders would select the people to nurture who fit the prototype and on this incident it will be white people who have high potential by virtue of possessing particular attributes often the same attributes possessed by the gate-keepers. (See Appendix DWP Directors)

Those at the top of organisations, sponsor those that they think are most like themselves. This implies that there exists some type of sponsorship model for advancement within the organisation for white, while blacks have to rely on advancement through a “contest” model (Turner, 2003). This sponsorship model also suggests that there is an informal system of promotion through homosocial mentoring for whites, conversely for ethnic minorities the contest model implies a system in which one advances only through formal qualifications without the mentoring networks of the sponsorship model (Baldi *et al.*, 1997).

Summary

The findings from these studies have documented numerous barriers faced but ethnic minorities in their bid to become senior managers they range from lack of mentors, lack of visible role models in organisational positions, being excluded from networks of communication and interpersonal thus restricting promotional prospects for them. Due to their race they have been stereotyped, as not being part of the golden circle, not fitting in the group as a result managers have resorted to cloning prototypes to suit them who they slotted into managerial positions, whilst ethnic minorities are placed into insignificant racialised jobs which did not provide ethnic minorities significant line experience, visible or challenging job assignments that facilitate their career mobility. In essence ethnic minorities are ostracised as they do not meet the leadership prototype thus they are excluded from being recognised as potential managers for the organisation. This is typical of what happens in some areas of DWP where managers promote people because they are like them and ethnic minorities are not regarded as the management type as are left to do jobs which do not reflect their capabilities and will put them at a disadvantage when applying for promotion as the job will have less weight than what the white counterpart would have been doing.

The chapter examined the social identity theory and the social closure which illuminated how people are secluded and put at a disadvantage because they are viewed to be different from the in-group and they also do not meet the requirements of the leadership prototype as a result they will not be part of the golden circle. Through formalised human resource systems, those who fit are often afforded greater opportunity to succeed than are those who do not. Ethnic minorities would

not be afforded the opportunities to advance to the apex of the organisation, as they do not fit the leadership prototype they will have to advance through the contest model where they have proven their capabilities whilst whites would advance through the sponsorship model, by being nurtured and homosocial mentoring by the white managers.

The following chapter discusses how organisational barriers impede ethnic minorities in their career advancement into senior management positions.

Chapter 2.4

2.4.1 Organisational Barriers

The previous chapter made reference to the existing literature relating to the individual barriers that are faced by ethnic minorities in their proposition to senior management positions. Organisational barriers include elements of organisational blindness, racism, institutional racism, systemic and procedures that recruitment and selection procedures, performance assessment and promotion procedures, tokenism, informal and hidden senior promotion processes, stereotyping of leadership, management and 'fit', corporate climate and power dynamics, old boys' network and social exclusion. (Singh *et al.*, 2005). Previous empirical research has consistently shown that ethnic minorities have lower career attainment than whites (Furst *et al.*, 2008; Jackson, 2008a, 2008b; Jackson *et al.*, 2007; Hite, 2004; Kandola, 2004; Morrison *et al.*, 1990; Powell *et al.*, 1997; Judge *et al.*, 1995). Two possible explanations are offered. First, it is possible that these individuals have experienced discrimination against them in the form of adverse promotion decisions. Secondly they bumped up against a "glass ceiling", glass walls', 'sticky floor', 'glass cages' and 'trap doors' and affected by ethnic penalties (Furst *et al.*, 2008; Raha, 2007; Heath and Chung, 2006; Kandola, 20004; Blair-Loy 2001; Brief *et al.*, 2000). These barriers perpetuate the practices of the organisations, which seek to maintain a status quo, regardless of the demographic changes within the organisation. This narrative is important to the investigation as it establishes an emphasis on the discourse of the organisational barriers and exposes them and how their affect ethnic minorities in their effort to become corporate leaders.

2.4.2 Organisational blindness

Organisational blindness is a term used to show how organisations turn a blind eye to discrimination within the organisation. Organisational blindness represents a state where an issue cannot be identified or recognised because of the extant of the culture (Sheffield, Hussain and Coleshill, 1999). Human resource management theorists have described organisations that cannot perceive barriers to groups or discrimination against groups as unaware or culturally blind (Jackson *et al.*, 2007). The colour-blind perspective in principle is grounded in the ideals of meritocracy and equality—in essence, “treating all people the same” (Plaut, 2002). As such discrimination may not be overt or conscious, but instead might represent a far more insidious management problem, as the organisation is blind to the issue (Hill, 2004). Organisational blindness represents a state where an issue cannot be identified or recognised because of the extant culture. Questions need to be asked about whether organisational blindness is confined to staffing policies or whether it is linked to equity. When an organisation fails to adjust policies and methods to meet the needs of an ethnic diverse workforce, people mistakenly believe that it is legitimate to be colour blind. A colour blind approach fails to take account of the nature and needs of people becomes discrimination, thus allowing racism to take place in the organisation. Of the same opinion Stevens, Plaut and Sanchez-Burks (2008, p.121) said, “a colour-blind ideology may appeal to non-minorities, this approach to diversity also may alienate minority employees and allow a culture of racism to develop”

2.4.3 Racism

Racism is a constant experience expressed by ethnic minorities (Carter, 2007) in their bid to climb the corporate ladder. Racism in general terms consists of conduct or word or practices, which disadvantage or advantage people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin (Macpherson, 1999). Dovidio and Gaetner, (1998) cited by Stockdale *et al.* (2003) said like a virus that has mutated racism has also evolved into different forms that not only are difficult to recognise but also to combat. This subtle process underlying discrimination can be identified and isolated under the controlled conditions of the laboratory. In organisational decision making, however in which controlled conditions of an experiment are rarely possible, this represents a substantial challenge to the equitable treatment of members of disadvantaged groups.

While blatant racism has not been eradicated, it has diminished in many segments of the society and replaced by a more subtle form, (Hite, 2006). Social psychologists identified three forms of subtle prejudice that resist diversity efforts, these are aversive racism, modern, and symbolic racism (Stockdale *et al.*, 2003). Aversive racism is characterised by whites who endorse egalitarian values, who regard themselves as non-prejudice, but who discriminate in subtle, rationalisable way. While consciously endorsing equity, aversive racists also unconsciously harbour negative belief systems based on racial difference, (Pager *et al.*, 2008, Dovidio, 2001). So while they espouse valuing equality, they will discriminate, although unintentionally in situations where their actions can be justified on a non-racial basis. This covert bias is hard to identify and therefore, difficult to combat, (Hite, 2006). However, it may play out as ambivalence about racial equity initiatives, through assertions of being 'colour blind' and not seeing racial differences or as well

rationalised favouring of whites over blacks that allow individuals to maintain their egalitarian self-images, (Stockdale, et al, 2003, Dovidio, 2001). Similarly modern racism engage in subtle prejudice due to their ambivalence towards blacks brought about by conflict between negative beliefs and attitudes about blacks and the need not to be perceived as racists (Stockdale, et al, 2003) Symbolic racism is practised by whites who tend to resist changing the racial status quo in all areas of life as they believe that doing so would violate their values (Stockdale et al, 2003)

In its subtle form it is as damaging as in its overt form. Racist prejudice does manifest itself occasionally, the damage done by racial prejudice is calculable (Lord Scarman cited in Stephen Lawrence Inquiry by Macpherson, 1999). Racialism and discrimination against black people, often hidden and sometimes unconscious, remain a major source of social tension. Lord Scarman said failure to adjust policies and methods to meet the needs of a multi-racial society can occur because people mistakenly believe that it is legitimate to be colour- blind. A colour blind approach fails to take account of the nature and needs of people. Racism can be detected in how operational decisions are carried out and consequently implemented and indeed how existing policy is ignored resulting in racist outcomes. Violet Racism cited in Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, (1999) is rooted in widely shared attitudes, values and beliefs, discrimination can occur irrespective of the intent of the individuals who carry out the activities of the organisation.

2.4.4 Institutional racism

Institutional racism is the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin which can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantages minority ethnic people. (Macpherson, 1999). Institutional racism covertly or overtly resides in the policies, procedures, operations and culture of public or private institutions - reinforcing individual prejudices and being reinforced by them in turn. If racist consequences accrue to institutional laws, customs or practices, that institution is racist whether or not the individuals maintaining those practices have racial intentions. (Commission for Racial Equality, 1999). Carmichael and Hamilton cited in the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry said institutional racism originates in the operation of established and respected forces in the society. A sense of superior group prevails such as for example that whites are better than blacks and therefore blacks should be subordinated to whites. This is a racist attitude and it permeates society on both individual and institutional levels.

The recognition of institutional racism as a problem is critical to understanding not only the mechanisms by which ethnic minorities are underrepresented in senior management positions. King (1996) argues that the concept of institutional racism helps to clarify and distinguish between actions of individuals who discriminate and racial stratification resulting from structural impediments and processes. Institutional racism is less of an indictment of individuals working within the organisation, than it is of the systematic operations of an institution. However, there is a problem with

using institutional racism as a paradigm to understand why ethnic minorities are not achieving promotion to the highest positions in the organisation.

Institutional racism is less overt, far subtler and less identifiable when it comes to specific individuals. It is less quantifiable and difficult to assess its impact on individuals. Because it originates in the operations of stable and respected organisations in the society, it receives far less public condemnation than individual racism. (Esmail, 2004) describes it as the prejudice of good people. It is these subtle barriers to promotion which are hardest to tackle. For instance not a single housing organisation has publicly admitted to being institutionally racist. This is in spite of the fact that the most recent surveys have shown that only one in ten local authorities have workforces that come within 1 per cent of reflecting their local ethnic minority population (Chin, 2005).

2.4.5 Recruitment and Selection

Recruitment into the organisation is no longer a barrier to ethnic minorities, it is the upward selection into the upper echelons of the organisation, which has become difficult for ethnic minorities to access (Gray *et al.*, 2008). Recruitment and selection related decisions are made by individuals and organisations cumulatively affect the representation of ethnic minorities in particular areas of work and at different levels within organisations. Assumptions about ethnic minorities' role and abilities have led to them being over-represented in lower level occupations and being scarce at

higher management positions, thus constraining their work opportunities (Gray *et al.*, 2008, Jackson *et al.*, 2007). Segregation, can implicitly reserve senior management jobs for whites (Goodman, Fields, and Blum, 2003). Ethnic minorities are bypassed over for job offers or promotions in favour of whites because whites, who are in a position to hire, are predisposed to hiring individuals similar to themselves. More specifically, organisations hire or promote basing on the perceived “fit” of the candidate with existing top managers, most of whom are white (Morrison *et al.*, 1990; Powell, 1999). The phenomenon of homosocial reproduction also occurs among executive search firms that limit their search of Chief Executive Officers (CEO) candidates to a select few of primarily candidates who fit a traditional model of leadership (Khurana, 2002). The internal labour market is inefficient in securing the best appointments because the pool of candidates is artificially restricted and culturally defined by stereotypically traits (Fields *et al.*, 2003).

In addition to selection practices, the procedure and criteria used in promotions present obstacles to ethnic minorities’ advancement. It has been noted that even with their competence, diligence, talents and contributions, ethnic minorities are not recognised and not promoted (Jackson *et al.*, 2007). The promotion system for them seems to operate just below levels of senior management. Promotions are made on the basis of recommendations made by the line managers. The researcher has observed that in DWP most people are put on temporary promotion and when they go for the selection panel, they get the job. Of course this may not apply to everyone but frequently the managers are whites and would always bring up people who are similar to them and naturally they offer the jobs to the white people. In this case the chances of ethnic minorities progressing to the next level of management are

jeopardised by expectations of excellence as they are viewed as not having the right attributes to lead the organisation, whilst they have not been given significant work which would put them at par with their white colleagues during the promotional boards.

The selection of an institution is a barrier to ethnic minorities wishing to advance to senior management positions. For instance the pool from which the candidates are drawn from and their composition disadvantages ethnic minorities, as they are always white people. The scarcity of ethnic minorities at senior levels means that the interviewing committee consists of white people, thus putting ethnic minorities in the position of being negatively judged (Fine, 2003). Bush *et al.*, (2006) pointed out that the interviewers are traditionally drawn from the senior management which is composed of white people. These senior managers are often more concerned about ethnic minorities' ability to fit in with the existing organisation. As stated in the previous chapters, the managers are seeking to replicate prototypes which are white like them, as result ethnic minorities would not be offered the senior management jobs because they are not part of the in group which the managers are cloning due to their race which is not white.

2.4.6 Performance Appraisal

Performance appraisal is one of the elements of performance management systems implemented in recent years as organisations move away from a narrow concept of

training and skills development to a broader vision of personal development (White, 2005). The opportunities and demands made in the workplace itself are seen to provide the best opportunities for personal development. Access to these opportunities and the way staff are managed in their work are both seen as crucial to the development process. However, performance appraisal is also one of the most complex activities in HRM and there are numerous 'veto-points' that derail even the best designed systems (Fisher, Schoenfeld, and Shaw, 2006,). These include rater bias, inadequate documentation, absence of training, unclear performance standards, and heuristical and attributional errors, all of which reduce performance appraisal validity and reliability.

White, Bach and Kessler (2005) found that differences persisted systematically between white people and ethnic minorities through most elements of the performance management system. Of particular interest were the results concerning appraisals, the foundation of all performance management. Whereas overall, the race difference in access to appraisal was quite small, the difference became more marked the more intensive the type of appraisal. White and colleagues also concluded that the systematically lower exposure of ethnic minorities to the developmental systems of performance management meant that ethnic minorities tended to be in workplaces or work groups where there was less emphasis on individual performance and on rewarding performance.

As for ethnic minorities recruited at lower levels of organisations, the problem clearly relates to a lack of progression. Ethnic minorities, it appears, are not seen as having

the “right stuff” they are not perceived as leadership material (Kandola, 2004). Managers play a key role in this process as they appraise the performance of their employees and, more importantly, identify individual's potential for success in more senior roles. Therefore, any differences in the way managers interpret appraise and respond to the performance of their white and ethnic minority subordinates is likely to contribute to the existence of different career paths for different groups of people. In DWP the line manager has to make a line manager assessment of the candidate and this assessment can determine whether someone is interviewed or not, in most cases, if ethnic minorities are managed by whites, they tend to get negative line manager assessment and this is a hindrance for their career advancement. It was realised at the Pension and Disability Services Diversity Group (2008) that they were more ethnic minorities who were being rated lower by their white managers and a team was chosen to look into this discrepancy.

2.4.8 Glass ceiling

The concept of a glass ceiling is a widely accepted explanation for the failure of ethnic minorities to match whites in their access to managerial positions. Despite notable exceptions in politics and in the business world, ethnic minorities are still less likely to be found at the apex of public and private organisations compared to their white counterparts (Jackson *et al.*, 2007; Raha, 2007; Prato, 2006; Maume 2004; Foley, Kidder and Powell, 2002). The glass-ceiling concept connotes the idea that ethnic minorities are recruited into firms dominated by whites, but fail to progress as far as whites in climbing the corporate hierarchy. Although ethnic minorities are close enough to the senior management positions in the organisations to be considered in

the recruitment pool for these positions, they rarely reach them. This frustration in seeing the top jobs but being passed over for them is what many think of as a glass ceiling (Jackson *et al.*, 2007; Raha, 2007; Maume, 2004).

Therefore, the glass ceiling is typically acknowledged as a subtle, but transparent barrier that prevents the advancement of ethnic minorities to the upper echelons of power and responsibility in the workforce (Raha, 2007; Foley *et al.*, 2002; Lee, 2002; Padavic *et al.*, 2002). Additionally, the presence of a glass ceiling is often not explainable through possession of job-relevant qualifications of employees, or their lack (Jackson *et al.*, 2007). As such, organisational policies and practices which disproportionately and negatively impact ethnic minorities effectively create a “hidden” system of discrimination (Goodman, Fields and Blum 2003, Morrison *et al.*, 1990).

The paucity of ethnic minorities running large corporations is taken as evidence that these groups face discriminatory barriers preventing them from reaching privileged positions. Those who dispute these numbers contend that executives require 20 to 30 years of grooming before they are ready to assume top leadership positions in large organisations (Maume, 2004). Most studies confirming the existence of the glass ceiling have used cross-sectional data to show that women and minorities are underrepresented at the top of a job ladder. However, as Cotter *et al.* (2001) pointed out, proportional representation at the top of a job ladder depends on a number of factors, including the rate of exit from the job ladder. That is, ethnic minorities who are discouraged with their initial placement on the ladder and their limited promotion chances may leave the firm. This will result in lower proportions of minorities and

higher proportions of White men who survive to reach the top of the job ladder. Other analysts, although not necessarily testing for the effects of a glass ceiling, have used retrospective data to examine race and gender differences in promotions (Baldi *et al.*, 1997, Alessio and Andrzejewski, 2000). It cannot be disputed that it takes years for one to be able to reach the upper echelons of the organisation, but the question is why it should be ethnic minorities who are taking longer to get to the apex of the organisation whilst whites take less time. If you are found not to fit in the prototype, you will be discriminated and eventually you will leave the organisation, as the leaders of the organisation would only offer sponsorship to people who are similar to them as they intend to clone their successors.

Summary

This chapter has provided an insight into the individual and organisational barriers which are faced by ethnic minorities as they make effort to advance into senior management. It's not only the individuals within the organisation who erect obstacles to hinder the career advancement of ethnic minorities, the organisation are institutional racists as they tend to be blind and not recognise racism taking place within the organisation. Whilst blatant racism has not been eradicated, it has diminished in many segments of the society and replaced by a more subtle form. Even though racism has transformed, ethnic minorities are still being discriminated into promotions.

The findings from these studies not only document acrimonious experiences in the work place, but significant slower promotion rates, and artificial "ceilings" that limit employees' professional advancement within the organisation.

Chapter 2.5

2.5.1 Diversity management

Diversity management refers to the systematic and planned commitment by organisations to recruit, retain employees from diverse demographic backgrounds and promote a heterogeneous mix of employees in order to increase productivity, increase organisational efficiency, competitiveness and harmony in the workplace (Pitts, 2007; Thomas, 1990). An alternative approach is to see diversity management as the management of “uniqueness” rather than the management of difference and to adopt an “everyone-is-different”/“equally unique” discourse (Foster and Harris, 2005; Kersten, 2000). Managing diversity arose because of the increasing demographic complexity of the labour market as the workforce becomes increasingly diverse, organisations are challenged with managing diversity, both from a human resource and an organizational perspective (Ross-Gordon and Brooks, 2004). Many governments have responded with equal employment opportunity legislation to remove barriers in employment and advancement of ethnic minorities (Jain, Sloane and Horwitz, 2003). The UK has seen a significant increase in diversity legal regulation over the past decade or so extending individuals’ rights to protection against discrimination on grounds of race, disability, religion, sexual orientation and age (Kersten, 2007). Managing for diversity is a management strategy that intends to make productive use of (ethnic and other) differences between individuals. It is based on the premise that at least if they are well managed diverse teams will produce better results and diverse companies will gain market advantage. In contrast

to other employment equity policies, diversity management are primarily driven by the 'business case', that is by the argument that diversity and or its management will and profitability (Pitts, 2007; Fischer, 2007).

Diversity management is the recognition that all individuals have unique skills and backgrounds that need to be recognized, respected and valued. In terms of the organisation the harness of the workforce diversity can enable the creation of a more dynamic and flexible organisation. The basic concept of managing diversity accepts that the workforce consists of a diverse population of people. The diversity consists of visible and non-visible differences which will include factors such as sex, age, background, race, disability, personality and work style. It is founded on the premise that harnessing these differences will create a productive environment in which everyone feels valued, where their talents are being fully utilised and in which organisational goals are met. (Fischer, 2007; DiTomaso, Post and Parks-Yancy, 2007; Charles, 2003; Scott, 2007; Kandola and Fullerton, 1998) Managing diversity focuses more on the culture and environment it aims to provide a supportive environment to all employees, where differences are valued and each individual can maximise their development and contribution. Managing diversity initiatives are more about attitude change and involve all employees and managers in an organisation. Managing diversity is not about 'them' and 'us', but about moving everyone to 'Us'. Diversity management is "a strategically driven process" whose emphasis is on building skills and creating policies that will address the changing demographics of the workforce (Pitts, 2007).

With diversity management as a business practice becoming more and more popular in Europe, the question of whether this policy actually delivers the business benefits its advocates promise, becomes increasingly relevant to anyone involved in the discussion and implementation of employment policies relating to ethnic and other minorities. An examination of the literature, however, shows that there is no unanimous answer regarding the business benefits of diversity and its management. While for many advocates of diversity management the business case seems to be rather self-evident, academic research on the effects of diversity provides mixed and inconclusive results and has led critics to see a 'mismatch between research results and diversity rhetoric (Kochan *et al.*, 2003). Diversity management requires a long term commitment and the payback is not often as tangible or predicted as the sales targets or health and safety initiatives. Yet, unless proponents of diversity management can demonstrate compelling arguments, diversity management is unlikely to get attention it deserves. In other words a proper business case for diversity has to be built in.

2.5.2 Business case for ethnic diversity

Research on diversity effects is a logical next step from research on inclusion and integration. If underrepresented employees become more and more integrated into the organisation, what would be the impact of increased diversity? Very little research in public administration has sought to understand the impact of personnel diversity on organisational outcomes (Pitts, 2007). However, research in business management, psychology, and social psychology has considered the impact of different types of heterogeneity on performance outcomes (Willoughby and O'Reilly,

1998; Wise and Tschirhart, 2000). Leveraging this diversity has important implications for the promotion of positive organizational change through its facilitation of both individual and organizational performance (Brief, 2008; Earley and Mosakowski, 2000; Williams and O'Reilly, 1998).

The justification for promoting diversity and a multicultural work environment is based on the claim that such policies create better decision making processes, enhance creativity and innovation and increase business competitiveness (Dessler, 2005). The organisation can fully utilise its diverse human resource talents to sustain its competitive advantage (Shapiro, 2000) and conform to the requirements of equal opportunity employment. Diversity enhances corporate performance, through emergence of valuable and creative viewpoints in decision making situations. Corporate governance is enhanced by the presence of ethnic minorities on boards, because they also take their director roles very seriously, bring different voice based on other experiences and transformational style of leadership (Singh, 2002).

The business case is largely based on the premise that working proactively with cultural diversity not in reaction to it can yield superior business results such as increased efficiency and productivity. An extensive research project funded by the European Union attempted to assess the cost and benefits of adopting diversity approach (Esmail *et al.*, 2005). The research consisted of a survey of 200 companies in four EU countries, an extensive literature review as well as eight in depth case studies. The study concluded that the companies that implement the workforce diversity policies identify important benefits that strengthen long-term competitiveness and in short-term also produced improvements in performance.

According to (Kandola *et al.*, 1998) the benefits of a diversity approach are in three segments which are proven benefits, debatable and indirect. Proven benefits include employing the best candidate, an organisational climate which enables employees' potential to be realised, motivated and developed employees who are reluctant to leave. Debatable benefits of diversity are employees give their best, employees are more in tune with the customer base, enhance innovation, creativity and problem solving and indirect benefits are better public image, satisfying work environment, improved staff relations, increased job satisfaction and morale, thus less labour turnover, increased productivity and the organisation has a competitive advantage.

The details of the business case may vary from one deployment of the argument to another, but there are core claims which tend to be repeated. (Kirton and Greene, 2005) summarises that an organisation sensitive to diversity can better recruit in labour characterised by diversity, and operate more effectively across cultural and national borders or boundaries. They go on to say a diverse workforce, properly managed has the likelihood of being creative as employees maximize their potential.

The business case for the full inclusion of ethnic minority members is powerful and multi-faceted. Understanding that there are differences among employees and that these differences, if properly managed, are an asset to work being done more efficiently and effectively .The diverse customer base means that managing diversity can be embraced in organisations to provide customers with a quality service experience that at least meets their expectations (Kellough and Naff, 2004; Nykiel, 1997).

2.5.5 Cultural competency

Making changes to policies and practices in an organisation may be window dressing if the organisation is not culturally competent as the changes will fail to yield results, the organisation need to be culturally competent. Brach and Fraser (2000) defined cultural competence as a set of cultural behaviours and attitudes integrated into the practice methods of a system, agency, or its professionals, that enables them to work effectively in cross cultural situations, it is an on-going commitment or institutionalisation of appropriate practice and policies for diverse populations (Chin et al. (2007) also defined culture competency as the development of skills by individuals and systems to live and work with, educate and serve diverse individuals and communities. It is the willingness and ability of a system to value the importance of culture in the delivery of services to all segments of the organisation (Chin, 2005).

It is the use of a systems perspective which values differences and is responsive to diversity at all levels of an organisation, that is policy, governance, administrative, workforce, provider, and consumer/client. Cultural competence is developmental, community focused, family oriented, and culturally relevant. In particular, it is the attention to the needs of underserved and racial/ethnic groups, and the integration of cultural attitudes, beliefs, and practices into promotion, training, and workplace environments (Chin *et al.*, 2007). It is the continuous promotion of skills, practices and interactions to ensure that services are culturally responsive and competent. Culturally competent activities include developing skills through training, using self-assessment tools, and implementing goals and objectives to ensure that

governance, administrative policies and practices, cater for the diversity within the populations served (Chin, 2005). Cultural competency is achieved by translating and integrating knowledge about individuals and groups of people into specific practices and policies applied in appropriate cultural settings (Brach *et al.*, 2000).

Chapter 2.6

2.6.1 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is described as a set of broad ideas and principles taken from relevant fields of enquiry and used to structure subsequent research (Fisher, 2005). Miles and Huberman (1984, p. 33) define a conceptual framework as “the current version of the researcher’s map of the territory being investigated”. Implicit in their view is that conceptual frameworks may evolve as research evolves. Their notion accommodates purpose (boundaries) with flexibility (evolution) and coherence of the research (plan/analysis/conclusion) which all stem from conceptual frameworks. However, Weaver-Hart (1988) argues that conceptual frameworks contain an inherent dilemma: the term itself is a contradiction because concepts are abstract whereas frameworks are concrete. She reconciles this dilemma by acknowledging that conceptual frameworks are “tools for researchers to use rather than totems for them to worship” (Weaver-Hart, 1988, p. 11). As a consequence, she views it as “A structure for organising and supporting ideas, a mechanism for systematically arranging abstractions, sometimes revolutionary or original, and usually rigid” (1988, p. 11). Thus, the conceptual framework can be viewed as providing a theoretical overview of intended research and order within that process. When clearly articulated, a conceptual framework has potential usefulness as a tool to scaffold research and, therefore, to assist a researcher to deduce the meaning of subsequent findings. Such a framework should be intended as a starting point for reflection about the research and its context. The conceptual framework is a research tool intended to assist a researcher to develop awareness and

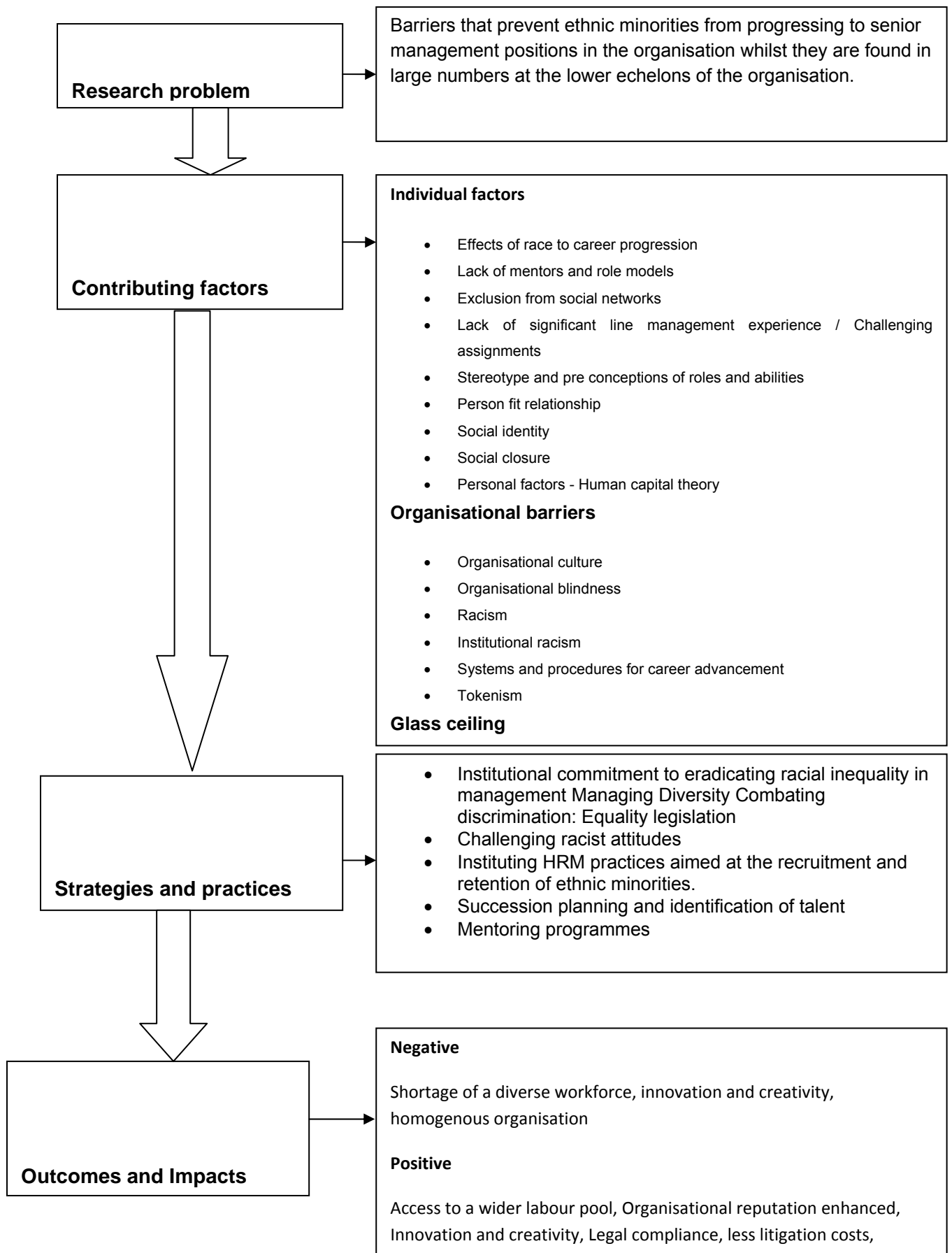
understanding of the situation under scrutiny and to communicate this information (Guba and Lincoln, 1994).

A researcher is guided by the conceptual framework in collecting data to identify concepts and ideas, thus the data collection interacts with the conceptual framework to move the research toward conclusion (Hair et al., 2007, p.153).

The conceptual framework provides a link between literature and the research goals and questions, as well as provide information on research designs and serve as a reference point thereby contributing to the trustworthiness of the study (Bryman, 2008). Fisher (2005) postulates that clear definitions of concepts and devising a conceptual framework assist the researcher greatly in their task, in that it clarifies the process ahead. The generalist nature of the principles and descriptors forming the conceptual framework although not idiosyncratic to its context might have the potential to assist the writer, to gain further insights into other aspects of the perplexing failure of ethnic minorities climbing the corporate ladder and the various barriers which they face in their efforts to be corporate leaders

To explain ethnic minorities' under representation in top management the conceptual framework below depicts how the underrepresentation is a major problem for the organisation as it classifies the individual and organisational barriers and the impacts of the barriers to the organisation and also strategies and practices which the organisation might adopt to increase ethnic minorities in senior management positions.

Conceptual framework on the barriers faced by ethnic minorities into senior management positions Figure 2.2



Chapter 2.7

2.7.1 Conclusion

Despite significant progress of ethnic minorities at work, racial segregation is still a defining feature of their employment. Research suggests several mechanisms through which this segregation restrains ethnic minorities' career outcomes. The literature has revealed and identified several barriers that limit ethnic minorities' progress to leadership positions. Powney, Wilson and Hall (2003) said that marginalisation and indirect racism create barriers, while Harris, Muijs and Crawford (2003) noted the subtle influence of informal networks from which ethnic minorities are excluded. Tallerico (2000) mentions invisible or 'behind the scenes' criteria for promotion while Davidson (1997) notes that ethnic minorities may experience isolation as 'token blacks' and face lack of acceptance by colleagues. There is widespread evidence of covert or indirect discrimination, coupled, with a racial 'glass ceiling' and negative stereotyping. Recruitment and selection strategies, and the composition of the 'selectors', also constitute a barrier to employment and promotion (Bush *et al.*, 2006).

The concentration of ethnic minorities in lower level and marginal jobs reinforces negative stereotypes about their capabilities and aspirations (Fiske 1998; Kanter 1977; Reskin 2003; Tsui and O'Reilly,1989) limits their access to career opportunities, such as prestigious job assignments and training restrains their ability

to develop strategic networks and mentoring relations (Petersen, Saporta and Seidel 2005, Blair-Loy 2001; Burt 1998; Ibarra 1995), and lowers their self-esteem and career aspirations (Reskin 2003). The term 'glass cages' hence symbolically depicts segregated jobs that, due to the mechanisms described above, hinder career opportunities of ethnic minorities.

Managerial composition is said to be self-reproducing due to homosocial reproduction (Elliott *et al.*, 2001; Kanter 1977), social closure (Tomaskovic-Devey, 1993) and social networks (Burt 1998; Reskin and McBrier 2000). Elliott *et al.* (2004) found that when they have the opportunity to do so, ethnic minorities also attain power through homosocial reproduction, but if there are no ethnic minorities at the apex of the organisation, the managerial positions become unattainable for ethnic minorities.

Workforce diversity is not a transient phenomenon; it is today's reality, and it is here to stay. Homogeneous societies have become heterogeneous, and this trend is irreversible. The problems of managing today's diverse workforce, however, do not stem from the heterogeneity of the workforce itself but from the unfortunate inability of corporate managers to fully comprehend its dynamics, divest themselves of their personal prejudicial attitudes, and creatively unleash the potential embedded in a multicultural workforce.

2.7.2 Research Limitations

As with all studies this research has some limitations. The amount of literature

available on barriers faced by ethnic minorities in their bid to climb the corporate ladder is quite low in United Kingdom. With a substantial amount of literature available from overseas studies, especially from North America, not all this material is relevant to the United Kingdom context. Reconciling research material from overseas with material from UK was a challenge as the issues and the social context for ethnic minorities in UK are different from other countries.

From the literature explored, the barriers faced by ethnic minorities into senior management positions are varied and what is left is to find out whether these are the same barriers which are facing ethnic minorities in DWP in their career advancement. Clearly, research is needed to empirically test the barriers faced by ethnic minorities regarding their advancement to executive positions.

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**A critical review of the barriers
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their proposition to progress
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positions.**

Document 3: Qualitative Research is presented in partial fulfilment of the requirement of the degree of Doctor of Business Administration.

Nottingham Business School
Nottingham Trent University

**Never Muskwe
May 2009**

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Chapter 3.1

3.1 Introduction

This study explores the views and experiences of eight ethnic minority managers in Senior Executive Officer (SEO) and Grade 7 positions as they attempt to ascend into senior management positions within DWP. Despite equal opportunities policies, few organisations have tackled effectively the representation of ethnic minorities in their workforce or investigated how organisational culture may contribute to ethnic minorities experiencing discrimination at work. Few ethnic minority executives are in leadership positions in organisations (Giscombe and Mattis, 2002; Bush and Moloj, 2006; Jackson, 2000; Corrigan, 2002; Hill, 2004; Jackson and O'Callaghan, 2007a; Steefle, 2006; Jackson and Daniels, 2007b; Maume, 2004; Kandola, 2004). The leadership of ethnic minority executives is needed to ensure the delivery of culture competent services for the expanding diverse population, as well to provide role models to ethnic minority aspiring to be in senior management positions in the organisation (Jackson, 2008b). Ethnic minorities comprise a large segment of the available managerial talent cross the organisation, yet their representation at top level managerial positions in DWP, is rather obscure. The leadership prospect for ethnic minority managers is a critical issue in race equality and remains a researchable proposition. Therefore, the absence of ethnic minorities in the highest and most visible positions in corporate hierarchy cannot be ignored. The question here is: Why don't ethnic minorities make it to leadership positions? Ethnic minorities have made no progress in ascending to executive positions and are unlikely to do so.

This study seeks to focus on the experiences of eight ethnic minority managers and their career aspirations over a period of time. The researcher acknowledges that other factors will have affected the participants, such as gender and age, but for the purposes of this study is to focus on race. The participants in the study all expressed a common wish, to progress to a senior management position within the organisation. Their individual voices are both distinct and diverse and the themes, which emerged from the transcripts, provide a lens through which these experiences can be viewed.

It should be made clear that since little is known about the barriers experienced of ethnic minority managers who work for the public sector, and aspiring to move to higher positions. This study hopes to understand the barriers which create the blockage, leaving ethnic minorities' plateaued at lower grades. The ethnic minority managers were given the opportunity to articulate their perspectives about the barriers which they encountered in their endeavour to get into senior management positions, drawing on semi-structured interviews with eight ethnic minority managers, four Senior Executive Officers (SEO) and three, Grade 7s. Semi-structured interviews provided an opportunity to analyse the experiences of ethnic minorities and to create significant discourse for the understanding of the barriers they face as they attempt to get promoted to senior management positions, nested in complex social, political and cultural contexts.

Due to the lack of available literature on the barriers faced by ethnic minorities in the public sector as they attempt to ascend into the apex of the organisation, this study

attempts to describe the barriers entirely through what the ethnic minorities have experienced in the organisation. Its aim is to build an understanding of the issue from the ground up, so to speak. Given that this study seeks an in-depth understanding of the experiences of ethnic minorities in the public sector, interpretivism is the most suitable theoretical perspective for the research. The interpretative epistemology has been applied through the research because this study not only depends on understanding, but it highly depends on lived experiences. It also provides an understanding of how race impacts the participants' accession to senior management positions in a natural setting (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, 2003; Glense, 1999). This approach engages both the 'how' and 'what' of social reality, (Finlay, 2008) thus it aligns with the requirements of the research which seeks to answer the research question on why ethnic minorities are found on the lower echelons of the organisation whilst the apex is made up of white people and how can these inequalities be solved in order to have a management team with a mirror representation of all the racial groups.

This study makes no assumptions about the generic management experiences of ethnic minorities and rests on the premise that individual experiential description of ethnic minorities, allows for a better understanding of lived experience. It specifically considers the barriers which are faced by ethnic minorities in the attempt to get promoted into senior management positions. DWP has been chosen as the context for this study because ethnic minorities' representation is higher than other organisations, yet ethnic minorities are still under represented at senior management levels and at executive level there are none existent, there is no ethnic minority in the executive team.

Chapter 3.2

3.2.1 Literature Review

The purpose of this chapter is to review previous research regarding racial inequality in management positions within organisations. The literature review links the research topic to the body of the literature in the field. The literature review covers readings about the status of ethnic minorities in organisations and examines the literature pertaining to leadership trait and how race acts as a barrier to the career advancement of ethnic minorities to senior management and executive positions. This review serves as a facilitator to connect the local context of this study with the general body of literature on these topics in the United Kingdom and elsewhere in the world.

3.2.2 Barriers to career progression of ethnic minorities

Research focusing on ethnic minorities in senior management positions, in Document 2 articulated the low representation of ethnic minorities in senior-level positions (e.g. Jackson *et al.*, 2007a; Jackson *et al.*, 2007b; Hill, 2004; Corrigan, 2002; Jackson, 2000; Corrigan, 2002). The major barriers to upward career mobility are no longer at the recruitment and job entry stage but at the advancement stages (Giscombe and Mattis, 2002; Bush *et al.*, 2006; Jackson *et al.*, 2007b). More ethnic minorities still work in lower status jobs than their white counterparts (Dipboye and Halverson, 2005). Previously identified variables that limited career development among ethnic minorities in general have included difficulty finding mentors (Blancero and DelCampo, 2005; Pearson and Bieschke, 2001) perceptions of workplace

discrimination (Foley and Kidder, 2002; Hsieh and Kleiner, 2001; Maume, 2004; Paul, 2006; Richie et al., 1997; Sanchez and Brock, 1996), perceptions of limited opportunities for upward mobility (Flores and O'Brien, 2002; Foley, Kidder, and Powell, 2002; Luzzo and McWhirter, 2001; McWhirter, 1997).

Perceptions of a limited opportunity structure have also been identified as a barrier to career progression among ethnic minorities. Foley *et al.* (2006) found that ethnic minorities perceived their advancement to be blocked because of a glass ceiling which related to decreased perceptions of promotional fairness, increased perceptions of ethnic discrimination, limited perceived career prospects, and intent to turnover. The glass ceiling is defined as a barrier so subtle that it is transparent, yet so strong that it prevents ethnic minorities from moving up in the management hierarchy (Morrison and Von Glinow, 1990). This unique form of racial discrimination is believed to prevent minorities from obtaining managerial positions and increases in severity at higher levels of attainment and later in the life cycle (Maume, 2004). Researchers acknowledged the glass ceiling as a barrier and impediment to the advancement for ethnic minorities in the workplace (Jackson *et al.*, 2007a). Despite notable exceptions in politics and in the business world, ethnic minorities are still less likely to be found at the apex of public and private organisations compared their white counterparts (Jackson *et al.*, 2007b; Maume, 2004; Kandola, 2004). The glass-ceiling concept connotes the idea that ethnic minorities are recruited into firms dominated by whites, but fail to progress as far as whites in climbing the corporate hierarchy (Jackson *et al.*, 2007a; Raha, 2007; Kandola, 2004; Maume, 2004). The paucity of ethnic minorities running large corporations is taken as evidence that

these groups face discriminatory barriers preventing them from reaching privileged positions.

Race indirectly affected promotion decisions to the disadvantage of applicants of ethnic minorities. Despite the growing proportion of ethnic minorities in the workplace (Raha, 2007) and the concurrent emphasis on valuing diversity in organisations (Jackson *et al.*, 2007a), the proportion of ethnic minorities in top management positions in organisations remains less than 1 per cent. Promotion decisions for top management positions involve subjective appraisals as to whether a given candidate will fit in with incumbent top managers. Individuals who are dissimilar to the incumbents in a particular type of job or to those making promotion decisions as ethnic minority candidates for a top management position in a white-dominated organisation would be at a disadvantage compared to individuals who are similar to incumbents and decision makers (white candidates).

Research (e.g. Jackson *et al.*, 2007b; Kandola, 2004; Maume, 2004; Charles, 2004; Catalyst, 2001) has demonstrated that the primary barriers to the advancement of non-white leaders include:

- Absence of mentors
- Scarcity of visible role models in organisational positions
- Exclusion from networks of communication
- Interpersonal dynamics and networking can each restrict promotion prospects for an ethnic minority employee,
- Stereotyping and preconceptions of roles and abilities

- Deficiency of significant line experience, visible or challenging job assignments that facilitate their career mobility

Organisational barriers include elements of tokenism, informal and hidden senior promotion processes, stereotyping of leadership, management and 'fit', corporate climate and power dynamics, old boys' network and social exclusion. (Singh, 2002). Powney, Wilson and Hall (2003) said that marginalisation and indirect racism create barriers, while Harris, Muijs and Crawford (2003) noted the subtle influence of informal networks from which ethnic minorities are excluded. Tallerico (2000) mentions invisible or 'behind the scenes' criteria for promotion while Davidson (1997) notes that ethnic minorities may experience isolation as 'token blacks' and face lack of acceptance by professional colleagues. There is widespread evidence of covert or indirect discrimination, coupled, with a racial 'glass ceiling' and negative stereotyping.

The concentration of ethnic minorities in lower level and marginal jobs reinforces negative stereotypes about their capabilities and aspirations (Fiske, 1998; Kanter, 1977; Reskin, 2003; Tsui and O'Reilly, 1989); limits their access to career opportunities, such as prestigious job assignments and training (Baron and Newman, 1990; Knoke and Ishio, 1998; Steinberg, Haignere and Chertos, 1990) restrains their ability to develop strategic networks and mentoring relations (Blair-Loy, 2001; Burt, 1998; Petersen, Saporta and Seidel, 1998; Ibarra, 1995, 1992) and lowers their self-esteem and career aspirations (Kanter, 1977; Reskin and Cassirer, 1996; Ridgeway and Smith-Lovin, 1999).

Gray *et al.* (2008) said, shortage of similarity to senior managers may prohibit the involvement of ethnic minorities in informal social networks with supervisors. The exclusion from the social networks results in 'information isolation' or the lack of access to diverse information networks, as one of the main barriers that block the career advancement ethnic minorities (Gray, *et al.*, 2008; Kandola, 2004). Exclusion from informal social networks produces such disadvantages for ethnic minorities as less access to critical organisational information, barriers to establishing strategic alliances, and subsequent limitations on upward mobility (Gray *et al.*, 2008; Ibarra, 1993).

Ethnic minority employees are more likely to experience close supervision, have less complex tasks, have less managerial authority, and have less supervisory responsibility than white employees (de Morsella, 2008; Tomaskovic-Devey, 2007; Tomaskovic-Devey, 2007; Cohen 2006; Kandola, 2004; Maume, 2004; Baldi and McBrier, 1997). Tomaskovic-Devey and Skaggs (2002) put it more bluntly in stating that social closure processes are about more powerful actors monopolising desirable jobs by excluding subordinate groups. Managers at the top are reserving positions for those employees who are socially similar to themselves, in other words they are reproducing themselves at the very top of the organisation. This practice of finding employees who are like existing employees at the top is homosocial reproduction (Kanter, 1977). Managers tend to carefully guard power and privilege for those who fit in, for those they see as 'their kind.' The structure sets in motion forces leading to the replication of managers as the same kind. By so doing ethnic minorities are left at the bottom of the as there is no one of their kind who can hold their hand and take them up the corporate ladder. Those at the top of organisation, sponsor those that

they think are most like themselves. This implies that there exists some type of “sponsorship” model for advancement within the organisation for whites, while ethnic minorities have to rely on advancement through a “contest” model (Baldi *et al.*, 1997; Turner, 1974; Wilson, 1997; Wilson *et al.*, 1999). Ethnic minorities have to work twice as much their white counterparts as they have to prove themselves due to lack of sponsorship which is available to their white counterparts (Collin, 1997). Researchers have also pointed out the double marginalisation, double jeopardy or double whamming which ethnic minority women face because of gender and minority status (Giscombe, 2002). Ethnic minority women were found to face a double bind of racism and sexism, as inhabitants to their progression into senior management positions.

Summary

This chapter has examined the salient barriers which are inhibiting ethnic minorities to ascend into higher positions within the organisations as identified in Document 2. It has also identified the limitations of the previous research and the subsequent identification of interpretivism as a research approach suitable for filling the gap in the literature. In the next chapter, the methodology employed in this study is presented. This includes an explanation of the research methodology, the research design and the methods employed for data collection and analysis.

Chapter 3.3

3.3.1 Research Methodology

This chapter discusses the methods employed in this study. The discussion will include the rationale for using an interpretive approach, qualitative research strategy, the interview structure and design, sampling technique, method of data collection and data analysis. As discussed in the previous chapter, the aim of the research is to investigate the barriers which are faced by ethnic minorities in their ascension to senior management positions within DWP in order to establish if race either facilitates or hinders career success. The selected research approach outlined in this chapter is consistent with the aims of this study in that it follows an interpretive and qualitative research approach which explicitly examines variation in conception.

The objective of this study is not to test a hypothesis, but to understand the ethnic minorities' own conceptions and the influence of race on career advancement in line with the barriers uncovered in Document 2. Crucial to determining the research approach, as identified in the previous chapter, is that it allows for the consideration of the range of experiences that would ultimately capture the essence of the different ways of experiencing the phenomenon under investigation.

3.3.2 Qualitative Research

There is no agreed methodology as what you intend to research determines how the research is carried out and also the researcher's interests in a particular research

methodology or approach, determines how the research is carried out. Different modes of research generally allows us to understand different phenomena and for different reasons (Deetz, 1996). The methodology chosen depends on what one is trying to do rather than a commitment to a particular paradigm (Cavaye, 1996). Thus, the methodology employed must match a particular phenomenon of interest. By focusing on the phenomenon under examination, rather than the methodology, researchers can select appropriate methodologies for their enquiries (Falconer and Mackay, 1999). Qualitative research entails taking “an interpretivist perspective where one is particularly interested in being able to... investigate the perspectives that subjects have and to interpret their view of the world” (Cassell *et al.*, 2006, p.295). A qualitative approach allows the research participants to speak for themselves, this is achieved as far as is possible, by the researcher allowing interviews to go in the direction participants choose to take them and writing themes from the source of data. It is acknowledged that the researcher is the author of the ensuing report, the researcher must take responsibility for the final interpretations of the lived experience of the participants as they emerge from it, with as many direct quotes as is practical and with minimal intervention from the researcher in determining directions. In this manner the participants’ lived experience is further understood. Such an orientation is consistent with the aims of this study. This research was conducted using a qualitative methodology consistent with anthropological ethnography (Wolcott, 1997).

Strauss and Corbin (1998) suggest that qualitative research includes any research that produces findings that are not arrived at by statistical procedures or other means of quantification. Uelthzoffer and Ascheberg (1999) argues that the aim of

qualitative research is primarily of a sociological and psychological orientation, as it attempts to gain insight into the individual's subjective interpretative patterns, experiences and positions. Similarly Denzin and Lincoln (2003) suggest that qualitative research is most interested in process and meanings that are not experimentally examined. Qualitative research is a situated activity and interpretivist practice that includes a wide variety of methods to understand social phenomena in its natural setting (Denzin *et al.*, 2000). These include, but are not limited to ethnographic field work, such as interviews, participant observation, cultural artefacts analysis, case studies, phenomenology, discourse analysis, hermeneutics and symbolic interactionism. Common to all these approaches in qualitative research is that the researcher is the main instrument in exploring the social phenomena in the lived experience of people and he focuses on the insider's point of view or emic perspective. Emphasis on the emic perspective in qualitative research originates from the basic ontological assumption about reality, that reality is constructed by each knower or observer subjectively (Sipe and Constable, 1996), therefore what we know about reality is only through representations (Denzin *et al.*, 2000)

3.3.3 Research Objectives

The overarching purpose of this study was to examine the different types of barriers that inhibit ethnic minority managers to progress in to senior management positions in the context of DWP. More specifically, this study was undertaken to identify the presence of barriers that might be unique to DWP and to examine evidence of barriers identified in extant literature on barriers to career progression. The study

was guided by the following exploratory research questions:

4. What causes ethnic minorities to plateau at middle management and occupy the lower echelons of the organisation whilst the apex is mainly occupied by the whites?
5. How does race affect the promotion of ethnic minorities into senior management positions?
6. How can ethnic minorities improve their chances of getting promoted into senior management positions?
7. What can DWP do to assist ethnic minority managers to move into senior management positions so that the top management is reflective of the people in the organisation?

This is examined in the context of determining how race impacts on these experiences consistent with the interpretivism approach, as this study is both descriptive and methodologically orientated. The aim of this study is interested in gaining a second order perspective as described by Marton (1986) as it is concerned not only with describing the experience, but also with accessing the research participant's own understandings of that experience. The research approach selected for this study responds to the gap in the research and the call for continued research into the ethnic minorities' representation and experiences at senior management levels.

3.3.4 The research paradigm

This section outlines the research paradigm adopted for the research in comparison with the other paradigms. A paradigm tells the researcher how to go about conducting research, based on assumptions and questions that need to be answered. Three distinctly different paradigms that guide research are Positivism, Interpretivism and Critical Science (Cantrell, 1993). Guba and Lincoln (1994) suggest four underlying paradigms for qualitative research: positivism, post-positivism, critical theory, and constructivism. Neuman (2000) following Sandelowski, (1995), suggest three categories, based on the underlying research epistemology: positivist, interpretive and critical or realism. However it needs to be said that, while these three research epistemologies are philosophically distinct, in the practice of social research these distinctions are not always so clear cut (Lee, 1999).

3.3.5 Interpretivism

The epistemology for this research is interpretivism. Interpretivism is an epistemological perspective that advocates the need for a researcher to understand the differences between humans in their role as social actors (Saunders et al, 2007, Fai Pang 2003). Interpretive approach engages both the 'how' and 'what' of social reality, it is centred on how people methodologically construct their experiences and their worlds and in the configurations of meaning and institutional life that inform and shape their reality-constituting activity (Gubrium and Holstein, 2000). This study is a naturalistic since it searches the meaning in the natural context (Lincoln *et al.*, 1985)

and interpretivist as it makes sense of these meanings through the interactions and perspectives between the research participants' and the researcher as the main instrument in the research (Charmaz, 1990, 2000; Erickson, 1986). Such a perspective therefore requires a researcher to adopt an empathetic stance, thereby challenging researchers to go into the world of their research subjects and understand the world from their point of view (Saunders *et al.*, 2007). Interpretivism allows the study of the social world using a different logic of research procedure, one that reflects the distinctiveness of humans against the natural order. One of the key concepts that have aided the popularity and acceptance of interpretivism is phenomenology, a philosophy that is concerned with the question of how people make sense of the world around them and the methods through which a researcher can set aside pre-conceptions in his understanding of that world (Bryman *et al.*, 2003, 2007).

Interpretivism uses as its base an experientialist paradigm in that knowledge is viewed as an experience of the relationship formed between an individual and some aspect of his or her world (Watkins, 2000). The relationship is internal, it is developed as individual awareness through the individual-world relationship and in this way is attributed meaning by the individual. By considering that the individual and world are internally related the experiential paradigm is interested in how individual world relations differ and change (Marton, 1996).

Addressing this claim interpretivism was presented to challenge the metaphysical assumptions of positivism, that there is a real social and culture world of being

objectively studied by scientific method (Levesque-Lopman, 1988). In fact interpretivism has its own rigorous research tools and is no less systematic than positivist- informed research (Yanow, 2006). Yanow (2006, p.9) illustrated this difference:

Interpretive philosophers argued that the analogy drawn by positivists between the natural and the physical world and the social world is a false analogy. The latter cannot be understood in the same way as the former because of an essential difference between them. Unlike rocks, animals and atoms, humans make, communicate, interpret, share and contest meaning. We act, we have intentions about our actions, we interpret others' actions, and we attempt to make sense of the world: We are meaning-making creatures. Our institutions, our policies, our language, our ceremonies are human creations, not objects independent of us. And so human or social science needs to be able to address what is meaningful to people in the social situation under study.

The aim of the interpretive logic is to ensure a clear understanding of the meaning conveyed in human actions (White, 1999, White *et al.*, 1994). Understanding the meanings beyond human actions is the main concern for interpretive theory. White (1999) agreed that the common concern for interpretivists is not to explain human behaviour but to understand it. White (1994) stressed that interpretation seeks to understand the meanings that the actors attach to their social situations, to their own actions and to take actions of others. Rubin and Rubin (1995) shared the same view that interpretive research focuses on how people understand their worlds and how they create and share meanings about their lives.

In this sense, interpretive theory differs from positivism that focuses on explanations, predictions and establishing causality. White (1999) noted that instead of seeking casual explanations of behaviour, interpretive research enhances our understanding of among other things, the beliefs, meanings, feelings and attitudes of actors in social situations. White (1994, p.59) illustrated the practical distinction of interpretive theory from positivism by giving this example:

A positivist might attempt to explain why a particular job enrichment program is failing to provide expected results by examining established hypotheses about motivation and job design. An interpretivist would rather enter the situation and ask the workers what they think about the program, what it means to them, what they are doing and why they are doing it. The goal is to discover the meaning of the program, how it fits with prior norms, values, rules and social practices, how the program may be in conflict with their prior definitions of social situation and what the emerging norms, values, rules and social practices might be.

Researchers advocating interpretive theory often question the positivistic belief of the mind-independent reality. Interpretivism posit there are certain essential features of the life world, such as a person's sense of selfhood, embodiment, sociality, spatiality, temporality, project, discourse and mood-as-atmosphere (Ashworth, 2003, 2006). These interlinked 'fractions' (Ashworth, 2003) act as a lens through which to view the data. The task of the researcher is to bring out these dimensions and show the structural whole that is socially shared while also experienced in individual and

particular ways. The overall aim of life world research said, Dahlberg, Dahlberg and Nystrom (2008) is to describe and elucidate the lived world in a way that expands our understanding of human being and human experience and allow the phenomenon to present itself to the researcher instead of the researcher imposing preconceived ideas on it. Interpretivists believe that reality is not detached from research but is shaped by the lived experiences and social values of the participants as well the researchers (Dahlberg, Drew and Nystrom, 2001, Finlay, 2008). However, since different people have different views about reality, there is not a single reality that could be reached. Rubin *et al.* (1995) asserted that in interpretive theory there is not one reality out there to be measured, objects and events are understood by different people differently, and those perceptions are the reality or realities that social science should focus on. This reality is understood through the interaction between researchers and the actors under study to reach a shared meaning, which is a critical component of interpretive theory.

Interpretive research, according to White (1999), enhances mutual understanding between the researcher and the actors and self-understanding among the actors themselves. Based on interpretive theory, researchers should not observe from outside, but be involved in the research and the world of the participants. Yanow (2006) stressed that understanding is not possible from a positions entirely outside the focus of analysis. Of course, this is a significant point in interpretive research because lack of interaction between the researcher and the participants will not meet the purpose of this interaction, which is the actual meanings that people attach to norms, rules and values that regulate their interactions (White, 1994). Thus, interpretive researchers should understand how people view their world and the

intended meanings they attach to their world through mutual participatory interaction with them.

Interpretive researchers bring understandings, norms and values with them into the research setting, but they are obligated to take steps to keep these as much as possible from biasing their work. White (1994) emphasised that the interpretive researcher should be careful not to impose a prior understanding of the norms, values and rules upon others, but rather understand their beliefs and actions from their point of view. Meanings are produced based on the interpretation of the participants' experience given through the researcher's sense making activity. To reach an effective interpretation, the researcher should bracket his own values set as well as set aside preconceptions and presuppositions, what he already knows about the social world, refrain intentionally from all judgements to relate directly or indirectly to the experience of the social world (Fay, 1975, Levesque-Lopman, 1988; White, 1994).

3.3.6 Ethnography

Ethnography is cultural study of diverse groups of people, organisations or institutions through prolonged engagement in the field to acquire knowledge that people use to interpret experience and generate social behaviour (Spradley, 1979). Ethnographic research comes from the discipline of social and cultural anthropology where an ethnographer is required to spend a significant amount of time in the field (Hair *et al.*, 2007, Bryman, 2003, 2007). According to LeCompte and Schensul

(1999a, p.2-3) ethnography assumes that:

We must first discover what people actually do and the reasons they give for doing it before we can assign their actions to their interpretations drawn from our own personal experience or from our professional or academic disciplines. The basic tools for ethnography use the researcher's eyes and ears as the primary modes for data collection. Much like naturalists, ethnographic researchers learn through systematic observation in the field by interviewing and carefully recording what they see and hear as well as how things are done while learning the meanings that attribute to what they make or do.

Ethnographers immerse themselves in the lives of the people they study (LeCompte *et al.*, 1999a, 1999b; Hair *et al.*, 2007, 1985) and seek to place the phenomena studied in their social and cultural context. Ethnographic researchers constantly search for meaning in the behaviours, artefacts, events and people's interpretations of the world to make the relationships between part and whole. They make cultural inferences based on what people say, the way people act and the artefacts people use (Spradley, 1979; Zaharlick and Green, 1991).

Ethnography is not driven by theory, rather it is informed by theories. The researcher's purpose, therefore, is not to validate a grand theory through ethnography but to provide culturally driven explanations and interpretations of phenomena by following hunches, notions and ideas (Willis and Trondman, 2000; Wolcott, 1995; Zaharlick, 1992). In other words it is not so much a question of applying scientific theory and findings to an outside given, but aim to circulate knowledge about different forms of life between different social settings (LeCompte and Schensul, 1999a, 1999b; Willis *et al.*, 2000).

Ethnography is more than a set of fieldwork and data collection techniques identified by the researchers' total or partial immersion in a social setting for a prolonged period. van Manen (1997) presents ethnography as a story telling institution and notes a trend emerging in various genres, which he calls the ethnography of ethnographies. In their historical discussion of qualitative research, Denzin *et al.* (2000) make a similar argument and identify the emergence of various issues in qualitative research what constitutes reality, the role of the researcher, and issues of interpretation and representation. They argue that qualitative researchers in the present moment confront the crisis of representation and of legitimation while wrestling with the issues of reflexivity, authority, and polyvocality at the same time (Denzin *et al.*, 2000). Regardless of the particular form that ethnographic presentation however, van Manen asserts that,

when it comes to constructing a particular ethnography... ethnography must make its points by the same means... through the hard work of presenting evidence, providing interpretations, elaborating analogies, invoking authorities, working through examples, marshalling the tropes and so on" (van Manen, 1997, p.22).

The resulting ethnographic description, then, becomes an interpretive explanation of the flow of social discourse (Gephart, 2004).

The advantages of engaging in ethnographic research to understand the barriers faced by ethnic minorities into management positions are threefold; improving theoretical understanding, influencing policymaking process and developing relationships between the researchers and the participants. According to Demerath

(2002), ethnography can broaden the theoretical understanding by providing insights in social agents' reasoning, their assumptions and the way they formulate and respond to problems. The very process of ethnographic research also creates reciprocal relationships between researchers and participants through which the practitioners can see themselves through new lenses and the researcher can negotiate the tensions.

One of the challenges of engaging in ethnographic research however is the prolonged engagement required in the field. According to Walford (2002) researchers need to modify traditional ethnographic methods and conduct compressed ethnographies to keep up with the changes. Contemporary ethnographies generally are focused on particular aspect of culture simply because it is no longer feasible for most researchers to spend years in a single site (LeCompte *et al.*, 1999a). The present research is ethnographical in the sense of the process, but not necessarily in the sense of the product. The researcher will not spend one or more years, around the clock, in DWP business units, as did the early anthropologists with the exotic tribes. Nor will the researcher, evaluate all ethnic minorities within DWP who make up the study population. This was compressed ethnography, carried out between September 2008 and April 2009. Rather than use the vague term micro-ethnography or embrace some newer synonym that may not quite fit the researcher's specific design. The researcher would use the adjective ethnographic to describe the approach used here. The researcher is deeply indebted to the anthropological roots of many aspects of the design, and thus this adjective seems more appropriate than other options.

3.3.7 Case Study

A case study is an in-depth, detailed investigation of a single instance or one setting, although more than one case at a time may be conducted (Tharenou, Donohue and Cooper, 2008). Yin (2003) describes a case study as an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context. Unlike the experimenter who manipulates variables to determine their significance, or the surveyor who asks standardised questions of large, representative samples of individuals. The case study researcher typically observes the characteristics of an individual unit – a child, a clique, a class, a school or a community (Cooper and Schindler, 2008; Cohen and Manion, 1994). Similarly Tharenou *et al.* (2008) said a case study can answer research questions unlike experiments or quasi-experiments, the variables cannot be controlled and manipulated. It allows retaining the holistic and meaning characteristics of events in real life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clear cut (Yin, 1994, 2003). Merriam (1998) describes a case study more of an end product and characterises a case study as being particularistic, descriptive and heuristic. Case studies according to Merriam (1998) are thick and contextual descriptions of a particular situation, event, program that illuminate a phenomenon or discover unique meanings as to the complex relationships among wide ranges of variables.

Since the investigation was driven by the 'how' questions the case study method suited this study. Yin (2003) argues that where the research requires an answer to a 'how' and a 'why' question and is focused on a contemporary phenomenon within a real life

context, the case study design becomes a suitable research strategy. Another point to be made is that the cases are built on the assumption that there is much to learn from a specific case than any other one (Stake, 2000). Qualitative research typically uses a case study design, meaning that analysis focuses on the one phenomenon, which the researcher selects to understand in depth, regardless of the number of sites, participants or documents for a study (McMillan and Schumacher, 1993). It is in this sense that the researcher refers to this study as a case study, focusing on the perception and experiences faced by ethnic minorities in their effort to ascend in to senior management positions as a phenomenon which the researcher needs to understand in depth.

Case studies are especially useful for adding to existing knowledge to increase our understanding in the field of study (Stake, 2001). Contrary to the common perceptions, case studies can be a powerful approach for theory building. First, the particularistic character of a case study leaves room for inductive analysis to allow the researcher to study a single phenomenon or process in depth and to draw a comprehensive picture of the case with rich analytical conclusions. Second, the flexibility and emerging nature of design in the case study allow the researcher to bricolage different methods in the research process. The researcher can go beyond thick description and adding to existing knowledge, and instead contribute to theory building by using the inherent features of the case study approach.

While this study's purpose is not to build theory in the barriers faced by ethnic minorities in their proposition to get promoted into senior management positions, this

research was a case study due to the specific contexts in which it took place and questions it asked. DWP was chosen as the case study and was rich with information on the barriers faced by ethnic minorities as observed by the researcher who is an employee of the organisation at a senior management grade and also to question the racial inequality in senior management as depicted by the equality data, which the researcher obtained from DWP Workforce Management Team.

The strength of the case study method rests on its ability to capture conceptual developments (Kotzab *et al.*, 2005), while not immediately proposing broad theories (Bryman *et al.*, 2003, 2007). Therefore, it is particularly appropriate if new fields of research are emerging (Yin, 2003; Hartley, 1994). The advantage of the case study approach is its ability to address 'Why?' and 'How?' questions in the research process (Yin, 2003; Meredith, 1998; Ellram, 1996). This study seeks to answer the 'Why?' and 'How?' questions as a result that makes the case study approach to be the appropriate method to use for the study. Applying a flexible, sometimes even opportunistic research strategy (Yin, 2003), is one of its major strengths, but also a major weakness of the case study research (Stuart *et al.*, 2002). Regardless of its weakness, according to Cooper *et al.* (2008), the flexibility of the case study approach and the emphasis on understanding the context of the subject being studied allow for the richness of understanding sometimes labelled thick description. Moreover, researchers have argued that certain kinds of information can be difficult or even impossible to tackle by other than qualitative approaches such as the case study (Sykes, 1990). Gummesson (1998, p.76) argues that an important advantage of case study research is the opportunity for a holistic view of the process:

The detailed observations entailed in the case study method enable us to study many different aspects, examine them in relation to each other, view the process within total environment and also use the researcher's capacity for verstehen

3.3.8 Area of study

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is the largest government department in the United Kingdom with a workforce of 100 000 employees. It was created on June 8, 2001, from the merger of the employment part of the Department for Education and Employment and the Department of Social Security. It is headed by the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, a Cabinet position. It is made up of five businesses which are Jobcentre Plus, Pension, and Disability and Carers Services (was formed through the merging of The Pension Service and Disability and Carers Service), The Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission, Health and Safety Executive and the Rent Service.

A key feature of the organisation which is pertinent to this research is that the senior management and executive management positions are predominantly white people from similar corporate, social and educational backgrounds. This is based on the observation of the researcher who is an employee in the organisation for the past five years at a middle management grade. This has been reiterated by the participants who described the executive as being white with no black spot. The researcher also analysed the equality data which he obtained from the DWP Workforce management, which was presented in Document 1, depicts the disparity in the number of ethnic minorities in senior management as compared to whites.

Such homogeneity does not reflect the modern perspective of the changing demographics and the representativeness of the organisation's workforce. Being a public board it has a legal responsibility to provide leadership in the area of equality and diversity. Ethnic minorities make up 12% of the total workforce; however the distribution of the workforce is concentrated mainly in the lower level with 2% of the senior managers being ethnic minorities and none in the executive team. Most of the ethnic minorities are found in the lower grades of Administrative Officer (AO) to Executive Officer (EO) and the number starts receding as one move from Higher Executive Officer (HEO) to Senior Executive Officer (SEO) and the numbers start to dwindle from Grade 7 to Grade 6 and disappears untraceably at Senior Civil Servant grade with no non-white Senior Civil Servant (SCS). The disproportionate numbers of ethnic minorities are at the low echelons of the organisation or plateau in middle management positions, where there is stagnation in terms of career progression, whilst the organisation has a broad base of ethnic minorities and a snowy peak at the apex made up of whites (Jackson *et al.*, 2007b).

Chapter 3.4

3.4.1 Research Design

A research design is a basic plan that guides the data collection and analysis phases of the research project (Saunders et al, 2007, Fisher, 2005, Bryman *et al.*, 2007). It provides the framework that identifies the type of information to be collected, its sources, and the collection procedure. The first phase of this study involved a detailed review of the literature, (Document 2) to identify the theoretical background and factors that either enhance or constrain career advancement of ethnic minorities. The methods employed in this study are qualitatively-based, and data was collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews with eight ethnic minority managers.

3.4.2 Population

As stated in Document 1, this study was intended to consist of ethnic minority managers who are in SEO, Grade 7, Grade 6 and SCS grade within DWP, however for this particular study, Document 3, it has not been possible to have Grade 6 and SCS taking part as they did not respond to the invitation to take part in the research, only 8 people responded (3 Grade 7s and 5 SEOs) to the advertisement placed on the intranet (See Appendix A). Even though participants could not be found in G6 and SCS, the sample still aids to the study as SEO is the grade before senior management grades thus it makes the research credible as the participants would provide their experiences on attempting to get into senior management grades. The Grade 6 and SCS did not respond to the invitation this might have been due to the sensitivity of the topic, thus they did not want to be associated with the study.

3.4.3 Sampling

This study is based on responses from eight ethnic minorities' experiences. The researcher interviewed eight ethnic minorities 5 SEOs and 3 Grade 7 due to non-response by the Grade 6 and SCS to take part in the research. While the number is small it reached data saturation as a result the researcher felt that there was no need to engage with more participants as the information being provided during the interviews was not yielding new data. For interpretive research the sample size was appropriate as Cantrell (1993) and Neuman (2000) points out that sample size for qualitative research is based upon the purpose of the study, not on specific rules. Similarly Strauss et al (1998) posit that qualitative research usually involves much smaller sizes than quantitative research. Patton (1990) suggests that the optimal sample size is determined by the nature of the research and that a formulaic approach can be misguided and continues to Patton (in Anderson 1998) point out that there are no rules for sample size.

Although random selection is preferred as it minimises selection biases (Krueger and Casey, 2000), the pool of participants for this study was not sufficiently large to permit random sampling. Therefore participants were chosen purposefully, hence purposeful sampling was used. This type of sampling is usually used when working with very small samples and a researcher wishes to select cases that are particularly informative (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998; Saunders *et al.*, 2007).

3.4.4 Data collection

The primary instrument of qualitative methods is the researcher (Cantrell, 1998) therefore the researcher conducted ethnographic interviews. The purpose of the interview, as stated by Cantrell (1998), was to gather descriptive data in the subjects' own words and access the unobservable, 'to walk in the head'. The interview was chosen to allow the researcher to gain access to the ethnic minorities' experience, beliefs and feelings. In in-depth interviewing, the interviewee can freely talk about events, behaviour and beliefs related to the research topic.

As explained before this study is interested in gaining a second order perspective and this in itself has determined the data collection methods employed. The semi-structured interview is used in stage one of the research to elicit the experiences of people in relation to the phenomenon being reviewed. This type of interview allows for the exploration of the issues as well as enabling the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon being investigated through the use of probing questions. A distinction is made between probing and leading questions, and it is crucial that the interviewer does not guide or direct the participant in any way (Marton and Booth 1997). Crotty (1998) suggests that when interviews are chosen as a research method, the nature of the interview, the techniques used and the setting must be predetermined. For this study, all interviews were conducted at the participant's workplace, where a private space was made available. The research methods employed in this study are presented in the next section.

3.4.5 The semi-structured interview

This study depended on conducting interviews as a tool for collecting data about the experiences of ethnic minorities in their effort to climb the corporate ladder into

senior management positions in the organisation. The nature of the study, presented the semi-structured interviews to be used, as the most favoured by the researcher as it allowed participants to express themselves at some length, telling their stories in their own words (Neuman, 2000; Saunders *et al.*, 2007; Cooper *et al.*, 2008). Semi-structured interviewing is a way of finding out what others feel and think about their world (Bush and Kaparou, 2007; Garza, 2007). Through qualitative interviewing you can understand experiences and reconstruct events in which you did not participate (Rubin *et al.*, 1995). Seidman (1998, p. 4) asserts that research interview:

Provides access to the context of people's behaviours and thereby provide a way for researchers to understand the meaning of the behaviour. Interviewing allows us to put behaviour in context and provides access to understanding the action.

This method is highly recommended for conducting interpretive research because it is based on the experiences of others (Cresswell, 1998). The semi structured interviews are well known to be an adequate means of capturing the thoughts, insights and feelings of participants and that is the aim of this study. van Manen (1990) stressed that interviews are a suitable method of collecting lived-experience data for interpretive research.

Pseudonyms were used for each participant for the purposes of anonymity and confidentiality. The portraiture of the participants will not be disclosed given the distribution of the ethnic minority participants in the organisation, in order to maintain the confidentiality of their identification. The limited number of ethnic minorities who hold the SEO to SCS grades in DWP makes it simple to recognise their identity if a portraiture is given. Eight interviews were conducted with 5 SEOs and 3 Grade7s.

The researcher interviewed the participants in their offices, each lasting 45 minutes to one hour and allowed participants a considerable degree of latitude (Bowden 1994, Walsh 1994, Bryman et al, 2008). The participants were provided with opportunities to reflect on their experiences as ethnic minorities aspiring to move up the corporate ladder into senior management positions. They were asked eleven questions concerning the following central themes: *promotional opportunities, feeling of being rejected for promotion, barriers encountered in their effort to get promotion into senior management, the racial composition of the organisation's executive team, why inequalities exist in the organisation on senior management positions, how they could improve their chances of getting promoted and what the organisation could do to assist them to get into senior management positions.*

Although certain questions were asked, the participants were given freedom to talk about the topic and gave their view in their own time, unlike structured interviews where the participant is limited to a range of responses previously developed by the researcher. Therefore the semi-structured interview served as an effective technique in allowing the participants to talk freely about their experiences and feelings without the researcher losing track. Although the participants were asked the same key questions, the researcher had the flexibility to ask supplementary questions arising from their response and probed for elaborations appropriate (Saunders *et al.*, 2007).

As Gephart (2004) puts it, interpretive researchers often prefer meaning to measurement-oriented methods in collecting data. Equally the researcher's interest was not in testing or measuring a hypothesis or theory, but in understanding the participants' beliefs, feelings and experience as ethnic minorities in their aspirations to be promoted into senior management grades.

The interviews were digitally recorded using a Dictaphone, with the permission of all the participants to ensure completeness of the interview and to get information for reliability checks. However the use of the Dictaphone did not eliminate the need for taking notes as it assisted in formulating questions and probes and to record nonverbal communication (McMillan *et al.*, 1993, Garza, 2007). Therefore notes were taken and the interviews were later transcribed verbatim.

As the researcher was conducting the research, he was conscious that he shared the same ethnicity with some of the participants and as such conducting research on racial and ethnic lines may raise ethical and epistemological concerns for the researcher (Cresswell, 1998). The researcher had to acknowledge his position as a black researcher in this process interviewing black people and ethnic minorities. Reflexivity and an acknowledgement of the researcher's position are fundamental to the validity of any argument made if the researcher wishes to conduct sensitive and valid research on ethnic lines (Fearfull and Kamenou, 2006). Even though some of the participants attempted to bond with the research on racial grounds, saying 'you know what it's like' and 'you know what I mean', the researcher remained objective to solicit the information and not to influence or agree with the responses, he had to see the world differently, freshly and attended actively to the participant's views (Finlay, 2008). To reach an effective interpretation, the researcher had to bracket his own values as much as possible and strived to approach the conversations with participants with an open mind. However, bracketing does not have the same meaning of objectivity as in positivist research (Levesque-Lopman, 1988). Finlay (2008) explained that bracketing changes the attitudes toward the world, allowing us

to see more clearly. The researcher set aside preconceptions and presuppositions, what was already known about the social world and refrained intentionally from all judgements to relate directly or indirectly to the experience of the social world. The researcher allowed the phenomenon to present itself instead of imposing preconceived ideas on it. This openness was maintained throughout the entire research process, not just at the start as the researcher withheld his own biases and prejudices about the research and the people involved in it and tried to control any outside influences about the outcomes of the research result.

3.4.6 Research instrument development

The interview was structured to elicit information relating to the interviewees' views

Concerning the barriers faced by ethnic minorities in their propositions to reach senior management positions within DWP and how race affects their career advancement within the organisation. The construction of the interview questions was based on themes derived from the literature review, in Document 2 (Bush *et al.*, 2007). An attempt was made to relate the questions directly to the objectives of the study (Bush *et al.*, 2007; McMillan *et al.*, 1993). The process was iterative in that the interview schedule provided a starting point to get descriptive data in the subject's own words so that the researcher can develop insights on how subjects interpret some piece of the world (Bogdan and Biklen, 1998). The questions were broadly designed to explore the barriers which are faced by ethnic minorities in their effort to get to senior management positions.

The questions were open ended and indirect, to elicit the most honest response and

to avoid any bias that may occur from the researcher directing the questions (Rubin *et al.*, 1995; Bush *et al.*, 2007; Kaparou, 2007). The indirect way of asking questions also helped to deal with concerns regarding the possibility of sensitive questions (Rubin *et al.*, 1995). Forming the questions is a critical part of any interview because they should be able to capture some of the richness and complexity of the subject matter (Rubin *et al.*, 1995). To ensure that the questions were compatible with the purpose of this study as well as the interpretivism method that it follows, the questions were reviewed and revised by the supervisors. This was done to check for potential problems and to ensure that they were free of any bias such as those that might be caused by leading questions, ambiguity and technique. A leading question causes a participant to be more aware of one response than another (McMillan *et al.*, 1993). The feedback obtained was then incorporated in the construction of the final questioning route. Two interviews were conducted with an SEO and a G7 as a pilot study. This was done in order to help the researcher to identify the design of the questions, sequencing of questions or procedures for recording responses (Saunders *et al.*, 2007; Burns and Grove, 1997).

The key quality in the data sought by interpretivists is concreteness (Wertz, 2005). Details of the person's lived situation rather than their abstract views or interpretations are wanted in an effort to access the person's lived experience which goes beyond what they have consciously thought about it. Interpretivists doing interviews, for example, will tend to ask participants to describe their experience concretely by posing such questions as: *'Could you describe the barriers you have encountered in a bid to get promoted?', 'Would you consider race as a variable to have affected your promotional prospects?', 'Could you describe the racial*

composition of DWP executive team and the Directors of the business units?, How many times have you applied for promotion in the last 5 years?, How have you felt by being rejected for promotion? This way of opening a dialogue is valued over and above asking more general abstract questions such as ‘what is your role?’ The researcher had to empathise with the participant’s situation and offer further prompts geared to exploring existential dimensions of that situation. For instance, researchers asking ‘*How have you felt by being rejected for promotion?*’ They might then seek to apply such notions as ‘felt space’ and ‘felt time’. For example, what is the participant’s experience in terms of felt- space? Do they feel angry, frustrated, disappointed? In terms of felt-time, does the participant seem to be experiencing this as useless, underperforming?

3.4.7 Evaluating the quality of interpretive research

The issue of quality in qualitative research has been receiving considerable attention in the literature (Dingwall *et al.*, 1998; Morse *et al.*, 1995). In this regard, quality is a contested concept, often bound up with a debate about the nature of the knowledge produced by qualitative research (Strauss *et al.*, 1990). Despite this epistemological debate, there is some agreement at least among many qualitative research experts that quality research demonstrates rigor, trustworthiness, and relevance (Bergman and Coxon, 2005; Lincoln *et al.*, 1985). The quality of any phenomenological study can be judged in its relative power to draw the reader into the researcher’s discoveries, thus, allowing the reader to see the worlds of others in new and deeper ways (Finlay *et al.*, 2009). Beyond the use of particular procedures to ensure quality, it is worth emphasising that the best phenomenology highlights the complexity, ambiguity and ambivalence of participants’ experiences. As Dahlberg *et al* (2008, p.94) warns, researchers need to be “careful not to make definite what is indefinite”.

This researcher offers four qualities to aid the reader evaluate the power and trustworthiness of this phenomenological account, which are generalisability, validity, reliability, communication validity check and pragmatic validity check.

3.4.7.1 Generalisability

Generalisability is regarded as the extent to which the research findings can be replicated (Kvale 1996). Akerlind (2002) suggests that as interpretive research investigates variation, the sample should be selected on the basis of heterogeneity rather than representativeness and as such interpretive findings may not be easily generalisable. Marton and Booth (1997) suggest, however, that variation within the sample is likely to reflect variation in the wider population and therefore the range of perspectives is likely to represent the range of perspectives across the population. Hence, they argue, the results of interpretive research should therefore be generalisable to similar populations. This study makes no attempt at seeking generalisability beyond the population being considered. The study solely relates to ethnic minorities in DWP within SEO to Grade 7 and its research findings are only considered as representative within this context. It is, however, noted that emergent themes may be generalisable beyond this context, but such considerations are beyond the scope of this study.

3.4.7.2 Reliability

Kvale (1996) suggests that research reliability generally refers to replicability of results and that this is ensured through the use of appropriate methodological procedures to obtain consistency and quality in data interpretations. Interpretivism, by its very nature, makes this replicability problematical, because data analysis involves an intersubjective approach where the researcher's interpretation of the

data is determined by her/his own background and unique interpretation. This therefore limits the reliability of the results (Booth 1992). Kvale (1996) however, argues that research reliability is enhanced through the use of several researchers to analyse the data.

3.4.7.3 Validity

Validity in qualitative studies refers to the degree to which the research findings are reflective of the phenomenon under investigation (Bryman et al, 2003). Since interpretivism research reflects the data as experienced by the researcher (Marton and Booth, 1997), it is argued that the research aims should be appropriately reflected in the research methods (Ashworth 2003). The researcher is therefore cautioned to ensure that the sample is appropriate, interview questions are non-leading and data analysis is undertaken following pre-established guidelines (Saunders et al, 2007). The validity of the interpretive research approach is identified in the researcher's ability to justify and defend the outcome space and result findings (Cresswell,1998). Justification can thus be illustrated in a transparent and open presentation of research method and findings. Kvale (1996) suggests that there are two types of validity measures that are appropriate for interpretive research - communicative and pragmatic validity checks.

3.4.7.4 Communicative validity checks

In developing and agreeing on the categories of description developed by each of the researchers in the team, it is argued that the researcher must convincingly argue his own interpretation and rationale, as a means of gaining agreement between the research team members (Sandberg 1996, 1997; Marton and Booth 1997; Kvale, 1996). This study, as already described, involves data analysis being validated by

the research team. In addition, other feedback mechanisms and checks were put in place; in particular the commentary sought from the research participants on the research findings. This is seen as a means of conducting a communicative validity check. This check directly addresses some of the criticism raised by Francis (1996) who suggests that little is done to validate the interpretation of the researcher. Clearly, in this study a group approach, involving the research team, addresses this issue of validating the findings.

3.4.7.5 Pragmatic validity checks

Kvale (1996) argue that research outcomes can also be evaluated in terms of their usefulness to the group under study. A further check is in the acceptance of the research findings by the intended audience (Uljens, 1996). Ackerlind (2002) argues that if the study is considered useful, and has findings that can be applied to the particular situation under investigation, then it meets the pragmatic validity check. The issue of pragmatic validity is addressed by directly seeking the research participants' commentary on the findings. Cope (2000) suggests the following guidelines for increasing validity:

- The researcher's own background and understanding of the phenomenon in question should be identified;
- The characteristics of the research participants should be noted so that the generalisability potential is more clearly understood.
- The interview question design should be justified.
- The steps taken to collect data should be transparent.
- The data analysis methods should be outlined.
- The processes for arriving at categories should be identified and

- The results should be presented in a manner that allows for scrutiny.

These guidelines were used in conducting this study thus can be used for transferability purposes.

3.4.8 Data Analysis

The technique for analysing interpretive interview scripts is well documented (Lucus and Ashworth, 2000), though no one particular algorithm for uncovering categories of the descriptions exist (Marton, 1998). The data analysis stage as a process of discovery, in that categories of meanings must emerge from the data and are not hypothesised in advance (Hasslegren and Beach, 1997). A major aim in the data collection process is to ensure that the outcome space is based on the interview data, accordingly, categories of description are not defined prior to the research but rather should emerge from the data (Stevenson 1997, Marton 1986). Bowden and Walsh (1994) take a different position in favouring an approach that draws on the literature first to create theoretical categories. This approach is taken to ground in the existing research. In this study, a review of the literature was undertaken in Document 2 prior to data collection and a conceptual framework was also developed in Document 2, literature was also used in framing the interview questions but categories of the description were not determined prior to the interviews. The interview transcripts are the source of the data collection and analysis.

There is no an agreed-upon number of steps in the procedure of explicating data in the interpretive approach. While a methodologist like Hycner (1985) presents a fifteen – step procedure, other methodologists present shorter procedures (e.g. Giorgi, Fisher and Murray, 1975; Groenewald, 2004). However, these different procedures seem to have the same path with more or less detail. In this study, the

researcher followed a modified model of the fifteen-step procedure suggested by Hycner (1985). Although Hycner (1985) did not make it clear that this procedure is based on the traditions of Husserl and Schultz's phenomenology in social sciences, his phenomenological approach is consistent with their perspectives of phenomenology. The procedure of dealing with the interpretation of the interview data in this study included:

- 1) Transcription: Transcription was created for the entire interview including the researcher's notations of communications. It should be made clear that all the transcripts in this study were prepared by the researcher in order to ensure the accuracy of the interviews and to maximise the confidentiality of the participants.
- 2) Bracketing and Reduction: the researcher approached the transcripts with open –mind to whatever meanings emerged from the participants. The researcher suspended any presuppositions of interpretations and was prepared to enter the world of the participants.
- 3) Reading Interviews for a Sense of the Whole: each interview was reviewed by the researcher many times in order to build a context to interview as a whole. This context helped to clarify the units of meaning and to help eliminate irrelevant units of meaning and to assure that the main themes are compatible with each other.
- 4) Delineating Units of meaning: the researcher went comprehensively through every word, sentence, paragraph and note in order to extract the participants meaning. The researcher observed the essence of each unit of meaning that was expressed by the participant. Through this process the researcher determined whether each unit of meaning was essential to the interview and

was part of the response to the researcher questions. This process according to Hycner (1985) would ensure that each unit of general meaning is evaluated against the entire context of the interview to determine the units of relevant meaning.

- 5) Clustering Units of Meaning: the researcher chose the units of meaning that could be clustered together to explore the emergence of the main themes. In order to concentrate on the main themes, irrelevant units of meanings were eliminated.
- 6) Determining Themes from Clusters of Meaning: the researcher examined all clusters in order to parse out the central themes. All the clusters were checked to ensure their compatibility with the context of each interview as a whole. During this part of the process, the researcher focused on van Manen's (1990) question of what does this sentence cluster reveal about the phenomenon or experience being described.
- 7) Participant's Check: the researcher wrote a summary that noted the main themes in each interview. The summary and the main themes were returned to the participant in order to check whether they agreed that the researcher's summary and the main themes were accurate and captured the essence of their experience.
- 8) Identifying General themes for all the Interviews: the researcher focused on the themes common to most or all the interviews. In other words, the main themes were generated based on the whole context of responses across all interviews.

The central tenet for interpretivism is that the research is guided by the data, ensuring that the analysis is not coloured by the researcher's own preconceptions.

3.4.9 Ethical Considerations

Bell (1993) points out that no researcher can demand access to an institution, an organisation or to materials. Thus, special permission to conduct this research was granted by the DWP Director of Equality and Diversity after explaining to her about the research and she offered to have the invitation for participants to be placed on the intranet on her directorate web page (Appendix A). The invitation explained the purpose of the research and ensured that the participants knew what was expected of them and what would happen to information they would have given. This information was necessary before the participants could decide whether to participate or not.

The research was reviewed and approved by the Research Ethics Committee at Nottingham Trent University. The review involved outlining the research approach, methodology and sample selection. Although this research was exempted by the Research Ethics Committee, a consent form (Appendix C) was presented to all the participants prior to the interviews with the recommendation to read it carefully and sign. The form included the purpose of the study, permission to use a recorder, an assurance of confidentiality, voluntary participation, and the right to withdraw as well as the right not to answer any specific questions. Informed consent implies that the subjects have a choice about whether or not to participate (McMillan *et al*, 1993, Cohen *et al*, 1994).

Prior to the interviews taking place a participant form (Appendix D) was sent electronically to the participant outlining the research objectives and informing them that their participation was voluntary and could withdraw anytime from the research.

The researcher and the participant signed the participant form before the interviews as consent to take part in the research.

According to Neuman (2000) a researcher has a moral obligation to uphold confidentiality of data, which includes keeping information confidential from others in the field and disguising member's names in the field notes. It is in this light that all participants were assured the data collected would be kept confidential and would not be shared with anyone apart from the research supervisors, without their authorisation. The researcher used pseudonyms to prevent the research participants from being individually identifiable in any document or publication arising from this study. All possible care was exercised to ensure that the participants and the business units that they worked for could not be identified by the way the researcher writes up the findings.

Although the researcher knew some of the participants personally, he was not much involved with them either socially or professionally, since they worked for different business units. This helped the researcher to retain focus and prevented him from making assumptions. Burns and Grove (1997) warn that if the researcher is collecting data while surrounded by familiar professionals with whom he or she interacts socially and professionally, it is sometimes difficult to completely focus on the study situation, which may lead to loss of data. The researcher had to adopt as a 'friendly stranger' role with the participants as the participants felt safe revealing their experiences to the research and shared information they would not share with close friends or family, because the researcher was a stranger.

Inconveniences to participants were also taken into consideration. For example, the issue of when and where the interviews were to be conducted was left in the hands of the participants, so as not to interfere with their work. As stated above, they all chose to be interviewed in their offices in the early hours of the day or later in the evening in their own time. The researcher tried to stick to the agreed duration of interviewing, which was forty-five minutes to one hour (Bell, 1993, p.97) warns that:

If an interview takes two or three times as long as the interviewer said it would , the participant, whose other work or social activities have been accordingly delayed, will be irritated in retrospect, however enjoyable the experience may have been at the time. This sort of practice breaks one of the ethics of professional social research.

3.4.9 Research Limitations

The main limitation and concern in this study was the interviewing approach, as an ethnic minority interviewing ethnic minorities, the participants assumed I shared the same experiences with them. This is depicted by the statement which they made such as 'you know what I mean' and 'you know what it is like', as a result they may not have given me sufficient information due to our similarity. The participants felt that the researcher knew what they had experienced and did not need to give the researcher a detailed account of their experiences, based on their assumptions that as an ethnic minority the researcher shared similar experiences with them. In fact, Rubin et al (1995, p. 11) made the argument that:

Interviewing people similar to yourself can pose difficulties, because the interviewees assume that you know what they know. Thus, they may not explain taken-for-granted meanings in the way they would to an outsider.

This is a disadvantage for interpretive research because its approach is based on the experiences of people, the interviewees will not strive to explain their different experiences to the researcher as they assume you share the same experiences due to the shared race as compared to different a researcher of a different race, as they will strive to share with him/her their lived experiences as they assume that they do not share similar experiences (Rubin *et al.*, 1995).

As the primary data collection instrument and as an ethnic minority researcher, the thinking and experience might have biased the data gathering and analysis. It is difficult to see how this bias can be avoided completely, but awareness of the problem plus constant self-control can help (Bell, 1993). For example, the researcher tried to avoid asking leading questions, as these might suggest the responses desired by the researcher and not the participants. (Bell, 1993) also points out that interviewers are human beings and not machines and their manner might have an effect on the participants. Additionally Bell (1993) sees interviewing as a highly subjective technique that always has the danger of bias.

The sample used was not a representative sample, due to low and non-response from the invitation to take part in the research. It ended up being a convenience sample which was made up of eight ethnic minorities 3 G7s and 5 SEOs, which had volunteered to take part in the research, whilst the research was intended to have 2 participants from SEO to SCS grades, making a total of 8, with two participants representing each grade. The non-response from the Grade 6 and SCS grades may have been due to the sensitiveness of the topic, hence they were reluctant to participate. The researcher was aware that topics related to race have been known to be sensitive, therefore it might be possible that the participants might not have been willing to divulge some of their information to the researcher. The use of the

Dictaphone might also have affected the way the participants answered the interview questions. Therefore the reason for recording the interviews was explained to the participants to avoid suspicion and their permission was sort prior to recording.

It may also be argued that because of the sample size it becomes difficult to infer the research to the organisation, although measures were taken to validate the research as stated in Chapter 3.4. Guba and Lincoln (1994) identify credibility as the interpretivists' parallel to validity. They further equate transferability with external validity. Credibility depends less on sample size than on the richness of the information gathered and on the analytical abilities of the researcher (Patton, 1990). Credibility refers to the extent to which the results approximate reality and are judged to be trustworthy and reasonable (McMillan *et al.*, 1993), whereas external validity refers to the ability to generalise findings across different settings (Patton, 1990).

In interpretive research the burden of transferability is on the reader to determine the degree of similarity between the study site and the receiving context (Mertens, 1998). Stake (2000) calls this process of transferability naturalistic generalisation. Patton (1990) also maintains that pragmatic validation of qualitative research means that the perspective presented is judged by its relevance to and use by those to whom it is presented. This means that the validation of findings is left in the hands of the reader or those who use the findings to judge or decide whether the findings can fit into another context. These readers are advised to play a different role than those reviewing quantitative researches, since the criteria for assessing validity in qualitative research differ. Thus Cantrell (1998) advises the consumers of research to wear appropriate goggles, interpretive goggles for interpretive studies and positivist ones for positivist studies. Cantrell further states that wearing positivist

goggles to assess the rigour of an interpretive study leads to in appropriate questions concerning, for example sample size, generalisability and objectivity.

Therefore to strengthen the credibility of this research, the researcher used the strategy of participant checking. Mertens (1998) stated that this is the most important criterion of establishing credibility. After transcribing the interviews, the researcher sent the transcripts via email to the participants to see if the notes reflected what they had told the researcher. Also at the end of each interview the researcher gave a summary to the participants to see if the data was accurate. As stated above the researcher bracketed of his own bias that may have distorted the findings to help enhance the credibility of this research. Only four of the participants wanted changes made and some of the information deleted and the others were content with the information the researcher had captured during the interviews.

Needless to say that in spite of the attempt to eliminate these limitations of interview-based research, it is hard to claim that the research method of this study is free of shortcomings. However, it should be made clear that this is a qualitative not a quantitative study and it should be seen within this context. Thus, no limitations associated with quantitative research methods should be seen in any part of this study. Rubin *et al.* (1995, p. 264) reminded qualitative researchers in a few words about the rigorousness of their research methods, which should be always observed:

The tone of your method discussion should be quietly authoritative. Make sure you do not sound apologetic for not having carried out a quantitative design. If you apologise for having only 10 interviewees or for an inability to generalize because your interviewees were not picked at random, you come

across as if you do not understand either the qualitative interview model or the quantitative one.

Summary

This chapter has described the nature and approach of interpretive research and its application to the study. It has suggested how the interpretive research investigates and describes qualitative variation in the ways in which people experience specific phenomena, it is seen as a highly appropriate approach for this study. The chapter also outline the ethnography and case study and how they were used in the research based on their relevance to solicit the much needed information on the experiences of ethnic minority managers. The chapter has presented the research design which was used in the research to gather the data from the participants and how the data collection instruments were designed.

In the next chapter, the findings are presented. This includes a data analysis from the interview transcripts. The interviews produced rich data, which is presented in the next chapter.

Chapter 3.5

3.5.1 Findings

In this chapter, the researcher presents the findings of this study, which are constructed using the researcher's interpretation of the experience of the eight ethnic minorities in their proposition to gain promotion into senior management positions within DWP. This chapter first presents the main themes, which have been gleaned from the participants, their follow up comments and the researcher's notes. The study separately parses out the themes in each interview based on the interpretation of the entire conversation. An overview of all the themes from all the interviews determines the main themes of thesis research. Therefore, the main themes in this study were derived from the conversations with the ethnic minorities based on the researcher's judgment of which perspectives touched most closely and faithfully the essence of the participants' experience. Each theme is stated in this chapter and further explanations are given to illustrate what that theme meant for ethnic minorities aspiring to be promoted to senior management positions.

Most of the themes have several dimensions that are discussed to clarify interpretations of each one. It should be made clear that a considerable portion of this study is intended to lay foundation for Documents 4 and 5. Each main theme recurred again and again throughout the interview material and dimensions of each theme were revealed in specific comments that found parallels across interviews.

This chapter is also based on the participants' responses to the interview questions. Main issues anticipated by the research questions such as the experiences of ethnic minorities in their effort to get promoted to senior management positions, the barriers

they faced, the ethnic composition of the DWP executive team, how they can improve their chances of getting promoted and what DWP should do to aid them in their bid to get promoted and create a mirror representation of the organisation's workforce. The whole discussion of the research sub questions provides the foundation to the interpretation of this research. The interpretation concentrates on answering the research main question regarding the barriers which inhibit ethnic minorities in their effort to get into senior management positions within the organisation.

3.5.2 Identifying Themes

The main themes considered by this study came from the participants, who were asked to describe their experiences in trying to get promoted to senior management positions, the barriers they faced, the ethnic composition of the DWP executive team, how they can improve their chances of getting promoted and what DWP should do to aid them in their bid to get promoted and create a mirror representation of the organisation's workforce. The participants' responses articulated some common concerns and issues, which are presented as the main themes.

Also, it should be made clear that some of these themes are highly interrelated. This point will be seen through some quotations that are used under a specific theme but may fit under another theme as well. Distributing the quotations among the themes in this context represents the researcher's judgment based on the interpretations of the themes and quotations. Quotes are verbatim recordings of participants' interviews.

It should be mentioned that this interrelationship among the main themes strengthens the clarity of the whole picture of the findings in this study, which helps to answer effectively its research questions. The following discussion presents more explanations about these main themes.

3.5.2.1 Theme 1: Race

The experiences of ethnic minorities have a variety of dimensions, including some contradictory ones. Race, in general, refers to cultural norms and expectations about appropriate behaviour for white and for ethnic minorities. Race is not socially constructed rather based strictly on biology. The first dimension emphasised by the participants is whites dominate the leading positions in the organisation. There is an agreement among the ethnic minorities that they do not have the same opportunity to hold high positions as their white counterparts. The discrimination against ethnic minorities within this is affirmed by most of the participants who mentioned, for example, the limited number of ethnic minorities who hold leading positions in the DWP. In the discussion of promotions to higher positions, one of the participants stressed that:

As a black woman [laughs] short black woman. As a black person in the civil service, you cannot deny that race is an underlying fact. It will always be there, you will be tested on that as an issue. I think racism will always be there whether covert, subtle, overt, this is a white organisation. (SEO 003)

I think racial discrimination has stopped me achieving my potential. If I am given an equal chance like my white counterparts I think I stand a good chance of getting the job. (G7 008)

I do work which is suppose to be done by the [Grade...], but why am I not a in that grade, it's simple, it's my race, if I had been different not a non-white, I would be up there. (G7 006)

Another participant concurs when he said,

Many unfair decisions give opportunities for whites... only because they are white. (SEO 002)

Another participant stated that

The leading positions... whether for deputies ... most of the time ... are dominated by whites. Promotion to the higher grades appears to operate by the earmarking of a 'golden circle' of preferred candidates. These are groomed for promotion by the white managers [and] receive preferential treatment. Between 2003 and 2008, I have applied more than half a dozen times to become a G7 was never successful, never got to interview stage and I am stuck in this career graveyard. I believe that I was excluded because my face did not fit because I am not white. It is unprecedented for a manager to have half a dozen failed applications for promotion, my skin is my enemy. (SEO 005)

Supporting the above view the participant concur that their ethnicity hinders them from progressing into senior management positions within the organisation when they said:

Yeah, (laughs) There is racism in the organisation , look at the executive team, they are mostly white, middle aged white men, its documented and recorded that half senior management teams are made up of white middle class, middle aged men not truly representative of the organisation. It does

not mean that blacks are not competent but this is racism. ...Let's go back to basic human nature, I am more comfortable with someone who looks and sounds like me. Coming from a position of power, decision making, who they employ following what I just said will end up having a room full of white middle age men, because they are comfortable having people who look like them.
(SEO 004)

If you look at the senior management structure it is mainly white. In terms of institutional racism just simply look at the senior management level. It's like a little group and they stick together. (SEO 007)

Most of the participants shared the same view about the executive team as they noted the inequalities that exist in the team of not having a single ethnic minority, but only made up of white people both male and female, with the latter being dominant. They have concluded that if it was not racism espoused with most fit, the organisation would be having ethnic minorities in the executive team and senior management positions, but due to racism ethnic minorities are ostracised and relegated to lower positions within the organisation, whilst the apex is white.

Another participant described the hard pressure and unfair conditions that ethnic minorities face in the process of promotion to high positions because of race.

There is a problem with holding leading positions... there is a war in terms of holding the leading positions. Any ethnic minority must be very distinguished and highly qualified in order to find his/her opportunity to hold a high position in DWP ... but for any white person... his or her strong relationships, communications, and connections are enough to assure him or her a leading position. Some whites do not accept the existence of an ethnic minority

beside them... one of the white managers did not prefer to have an ethnic minority, especially in our field. The effective performance of ethnic minorities is not taken into consideration, but every ethnic minority needs to affirm his or her effective work over and over. Society is white, and only the voice of a white is heard. (G7003)

Another participant contended the same view by referring to her personal experience when she was assigned her position as an [SEO]

Before getting this position, there were some whispers about the person who would take the position. There was a kind of fear of appointing a Muslim Asian woman as a manager... there were some doubts about the potential of an ethnic woman and her competencies. Even after being appointed, there were some people who were not satisfied by appointing an Asian woman in this position. The reason for that was either because they were willing to get this position or because they continued not to trust the potential of ethnic minority woman to occupy leading positions. (SEO 007)

It seems that whiteness in itself is considered the only licence necessary to enter the world of senior management positions in DWP as stated by one participant saying:

You will find that black people and people of colour who are in the policy area are EO to HEO or SEO. With that scenario it will take BME people a long-time to reach that level G7 or G6. The reason being that there is little concentration of black people or people of colour in the SCS grades. Most ethnic minorities are concentrated in middle management where efforts are not valued and where there is very little promotion. Going years back blacks did not want to work in the policy area as their work was rubbed out and made to be

demeaning against their white peers and they were never put forward for promotion and this is what is happening in DWP. The 3 DWP business units I tap into do not have black senior managers in policy, if they are any they are AO, AA, EO or support. (G7 008)

Another important dimension that was emphasised in terms of race in senior management positions is whether ethnic minorities should be seen and treated equally or differently comparable to their white counterparts. Ethnic minorities aspiring for senior management positions within DWP have contradictory perspectives in this regard. While a few of them think that equality between whites and ethnic minorities is the major factor that should be observed in order to have effective performance, most participants believe that ethnic minorities have their own intellectual, emotional, and social qualifications that should be positively taken into consideration to have more effective performance in the organisation. The study confirmed the additional expectations of ethnic minorities from their colleagues and managers.

Supporting the view the participants said:

You have to prove that you are competent before you can be accepted by your subordinates and your superiors. I had to go an extra mile and work twice than them [whites]. (SEO 005)

Why do I have to go an extra mile and prove myself, it's because of lack of trust, lack of acceptance, but you can do as good as they do. (G7 001)

Constant pressure to perform at 110%. (SEO 007)

You have to work hard to be recognised as an ethnic minority woman, of Asian Muslim origin. (SEO 004)

As a BME worker you feel, you have to justify your role and tasks unlike my white counterparts doing the same job in the same grade. (G7 006)

Ethnic minorities who seek to reach high positions must distinguish themselves as ethnic minorities, they do not have to take white people's characteristics as it is not acceptable for ethnic minorities to act as white in their jobs. Reaching high positions by any ethnic minority should be in a harmony with their nature and characteristics as an ethnic minority in this society.

Race is a commonly discussed issue among the ethnic minorities aspiring to be promoted to senior management positions within DWP. The participants have an agreement on each one of them as they confirm, in general, the existence of racial discrimination against them in the organisation. Few ethnic minorities think that pure equality between ethnic minorities and whites should be observed in order to have effective performance, while most of them believe that ethnic minorities have their own qualifications that should be positively considered.

3.5.2.2 Theme 2: Racism and Institutional Racism

Most of the participants demonstrated clearly that racism is a major issue in the organisation and it was there to stay and many of them may not be there to witness having an ethnic minority in the executive team. Evident to this is what some of the participants said, in view of racism in the organisation:

Mostly, the BMEs see subtle racism, racism of exclusion and feel the sting of overt racism. The team I was responsible for would defy me and circumvent me to the extent of seeking advice from my line manager and my line manager would not take advice from me but from my white subordinates. What is this? If not racism. (G7 006)

It is much better than it was before due to discrimination legislation. But is it yet totally mirroring the people in the organisation? No. Is there a long way to go? I think there is. We need to acknowledge we are not over the hump yet. It is going to take 20 years to see a black executive in this organisation. (G7 001)

It will take a long way before white discrimination and racism are addressed. Even if we go over the racial barrier, which I know will take 30 years to get over. This will take 30 years to resolve, you and me will not be there when this happens. (G7 008)

My requests were always questioned or ignored until I framed an email which I wrote and had my EO [white] to send it, it was well received and no questions asked, this shows that they would rather take orders from one of their kind, even if they are juniors, than taking orders from a black manager, that's a very very narrow way of thinking. (SEO 003)

Although, the decision for promotion in the organisation is granted mainly by white individuals, the participants in this study believe they were equally as good and at times more qualified than their white counterparts. Several individuals indicated that if they were white, their career development would not be impeded, they would have

had more career advancement, and they could have been promoted with lower qualifications. However from the stories of these participants, they believed they were promoted on the strength of their competency, skills and knowledge. The participants viewed themselves as oppressed or as victims, they did view racism as a challenge which they must overcome. They did not attain their positions by being tokens, they understood they had to be twice as good and work twice as hard and had to be prepared twice compare to their white counterparts, this was described by a G7 participant, when he said:

You have to prove that you are competent before you can be accepted by your subordinates and your superiors. I had to go an extra mile and work twice than them [whites]. (G7 001)

Similarly another participant contradictorily agreed that ethnic minorities had to prove themselves and work harder in order to be recognised with their white counterparts in the same grade when he said:

You have heard that we need to work twice as whites; I do not believe in it, we have to work twice as than our white counterparts.(SEO 007)

Discriminatory treatment was also linked to perceptions of limited opportunities. Several participants perceived that paths to advancement were blocked for them because of lack of managerial support, indifference by managers, or discriminatory treatment. Discriminatory treatment by management was often discussed. Interviewees felt that their managers did not want ethnic minorities to advance because they perceived them as fit only for menial labour and wanted to keep them in those positions. Some of the participants discussed limited or no in-house training

opportunities and internal job postings as a sign of management's indifference toward them. Two participants mentioned being discouraged from applying for promotion and level transfer. They felt that jobs were posted only to appear egalitarian, but that the opportunities were not truly available to everyone.

3.5.2.3 Theme 3: Organisational support for career development

Most of the participants have stated that they are qualified in their own right both academically and professional and some of them have brought skills from other organisations but all these are not recognised by the DWP. They would have hoped for the organisation to be reciprocal and recognise their skills and experience and assist them to climb the corporate ladder with less obstacles, but they feel the organisation is too blind to see, the nonexistence of ethnic minorities in the DWP Executive Team which is made up of whites only and that ethnic minorities in the organisation do not mirror the ethnic minorities in senior management.

First you need the ability to get to a higher level, to want to move on, but also your employer must make the facilities available, to give you the opportunity to move on. It's a two way thing, you are actually developing yourself with the assistance of the organisation. It has to be a win-win scenario, that your organisation develops you and that they see it as a way of developing others.
(SEO 005)

The organisation needs cultural change to attract ethnic minorities in senior management positions. There needs to be senior management complete commitment – not just a project for the Permanent Secretary [name give]. The permanent secretary needs to get his hands dirty if there is ever going to be

an improvement, it's no good for him telling his driver to drive to the meeting when he is at the backseat reading the newspaper. He needs to direct the driver how to get to meeting and watch as the driver drives, because this is what is happening, the Executive Team is instructed on the recruitment of ethnic minorities into senior management positions but they are not told how to do it, the success criteria as a result no-one takes it through. This will only change when there is a black person who understands what it is like to be beneath a white person. This will take 30 years. (SEO 007)

All participants believed that the organisation had well developed and detailed equal opportunity and career development policies, but to use the specific and meaning-representative words of one participant, that they were sitting in [sic] the shelves:

If an organisation has a policy, I don't think it's very important, because it depends on whether it's a policy that's sat there gathering dusty or whether it's real... Just because you've got it, doesn't mean you do it. Developing the equality and diversity policies is a tickbox exercise for CRE. (G7 008)

Perhaps even worse, the view was expressed that policies could actually work against ethnic minorities seeking recourse for having experienced discrimination since they could be viewed as 'trouble makers'.

In line with equality initiatives, recently the organisation launched REACH a programme to assist ethnic minorities and disabled people to acquire skills which would put them at par with their white counterparts when competing for promotion. The REACH programme replaces the Realising Potential which was also aimed at helping ethnic minorities to climb the corporate ladder, but from the participants'

views they are useless programmes as three participants have been on the realising potential and it did not yield anything for them in comparison to the Fast Stream which is run by the Cabinet Office and guarantees the fast streamers promotion at senior management level after completing it. The following are indicative of such perceptions:

I was on the Equal Chance and Realising potential program, but not even a single interview was I invited to, why? Because I am of a wrong colour. I had to get my promotion after eight years whilst my white counterparts had been long promoted. The programmes are there to tick a box not to help ethnic minorities. Ethnic minorities have to fight for themselves until the top has a mixture of black and white. (G7 001)

I think in theory, because all the policies are in place, one would think that it's [the organisational culture] beneficial to ethnic minorities, but I haven't seen any evidence of some ethnic minority being promoted or being offered opportunities... I think it's very much left to the individual.. (But) it's harder.. I don't think it's made easier. (SEO 005)

I work in this organisation, for goodness sake! Even if I do 101 courses, I will never get all the way to the top? Equal opportunities is not a given. (SEO 007)

Of course, not everyone can get all the way to the top, but questioning the relatively few ethnic minorities in senior management positions and none in executive positions needs a better assessment of the policies in place. Where organisational leaders do not agree with the perceptions and experiences of the ethnic minorities on their career situations, it is incumbent upon them to put in place initiatives that

work towards changing those perceptions. Without such commitment, people, will question the extent to which both their commitment to the organisation is reciprocated and the action involved in equipping oneself with professional knowledge and expertise is supported by the structure ostensibly facilitating equal opportunities for career development and advancement. In addition there is a legal obligation not to discriminate and therefore an implicit notion of equality of opportunity.

From the evidence of this research, it is suggested that the participants measured their success in terms of the extent to which they were able to penetrate the structures of what was referred by some of them as senior management positions. To them being SEO was not seen as part of senior management, but middle management, and the organisation defines senior management as from G7 to SCS. They believe that they were not being given equitable opportunities to progress to senior management positions

They don't want when they have climbed to the top of their hill, they don't want to look across at the other side of the hill and see a black person sitting there, do they? They have positions for black people at the table, she or he can serve tea, but sit next to me and discuss the same issues? Come again!
[In a cynical voice]. (SEO 003)

I think there is a lot of lip service. The organisation hasn't changed at all. I'm sure a lot of organisations would want to see black faces at the back office or as security guards like here [office name given] , did you not see them when you were coming, you will not find them in senior management meetings, and they don't belong there. (G7 006)

My former manager told me that when you apply for a G7 post they sit like soldiers at an army canteen and say guess what [folding legs and arms] so and so wants to join this team. No he or she does not fit and they laugh, the next thing you receive a regret without being offered an interview. (SEO 004)

While career progress was regarded as a problem in and of itself it was also inextricably linked to recruitment, with a shortage of senior role models seen as hampering attempts to attract minority ethnic groups into the organisation. The organisation plays a numbers game to satisfy the requirement of Race Equality Scheme (RES) under Race Relations Act Amendment (RRAA)(2000) , this was a view which was given by most of the participants, as they felt they were promoted or brought into the organisation so as to meet its quota of ethnic minorities and get the then CRE (Commission for Racial Equality) off their radar and once that was done they forgot about them hence they are found to stagnate at their current grades with little success to manoeuvre to higher positions within the organisation. They felt they were a token and hired as part of the positive action programme. Moreover, while the targets for lower grade employees might be exceeded, it was not 'just a numbers thing' as the following participant recognised:

My main concern about hitting the targets is it is relatively easy, in fact, to hit the targets if you are recruiting at AA [Administrative Assistant] level. . . . But an AA has no influence apart from the filing that they do. . . .No one has to listen to them. And it easy to say we have hit the targets, but only if the target is nobody who is actually not going to effect change on the culture of the organisation. You have not done anything but made the situation worse as the

underrepresentation at the top will still be visible. (G7 008)

Given their perceptions on the lack of organisational support present, it would appear that the participants considered themselves as working in, at best unsupportive and at worst hostile environment. They are faced with a paradox of valuing the validity that the organisational success could afford them while at the same time believing that, realistically the organisation has failed to provide support necessary for them to move to higher grades like their white counterparts. From this analysis, it can be suggested that moving to a higher grade is dependent, in part, upon access to organisational and social networks and it is this aspect that the research turns to.

3.5.2.4 Theme 4: Networking / old Boys Schools network

The participants have categorically emphasised that they are discriminated against due to their race and race is the biggest barrier which they have to go over, but still recognised that after going over the race hurdle they are still discriminated by the old boys network, which align themselves on educational backgrounds and also social background is a barrier which deters them from join the senior management positions as they are seen not as prototype managers, hence they do not fit and are denied the chance to be promoted , whilst white who look similar to the recruiting managers are promoted to the next grade.

Many of the participants acknowledged the role that networking plays in the organisation and the effect it has on career advancement opportunities. They argued, however, that they felt excluded from the informal networks, which could be beneficial to them:

I have realised it, it's about who you know! There are no ethnic minorities in

the ET [Executive Team] and I guess it's affecting my promotions. (SEO 002)

The problem is that the good old boys still treat this organisation like their clubhouse. And they still don't want to let us into their club. They went to Oxbridge and Cambridge, so they keep pulling each other up. (SEO 005)

You must also have gone to the same university, it's not about colour, it becomes about educational background, and did we come from the same part of the country. It becomes about national identity, are we of the same grade it becomes about peer connection, so there is the racial barrier, class barrier, educational barrier. Even if we go over the racial barrier, which I know will take 30 years to get to. If you get into a room full of white people who are wise and create other barriers among themselves, which have got nothing to do with you what chances do you have. Do you understand what I am saying, oh! , we always have the same school tie and I will look after you, forget about them. People forget, I have to keep on reminding them that it's not the racial barrier eh, It's about the old boys school network,(laughing and clapping)I don't want be part of any old boy school network (laughs). (G7 008)

They come from the same stables, eh mm, they will stick together, and you cannot come between them. (G7 001)

I'm beginning to see that it's about who you know... I don't know that many people at the top of the organisation. I guess it is affecting my opportunities because people that you know might know of opportunities. (G7 006)

Most of the participants expressed that, they are consistently denied promotions for which they are qualified as they are excluded socially from a tightly knit group, they end up being ignored for the special training and assignments that enhance careers.

The statements above are evident of what the participants experience due to the fact that they are not part of the in group, the decision making group hence, they will not get into senior management positions as they do not know anyone who can hold their hand to the top of the organisation.

The participants have limited opportunity to network with influential colleagues in their own group. One of the participants states it this way,

I am always aware that I am different. It seems there is a 'club' atmosphere but I'm not a member — nor have I been invited to join. (SEO 007)

One participant commented that white counterparts have more 'friends and colleagues' to call on at work and ethnic minority managers do not have the same amount of support or networking opportunities within the college. Her stories suggested that the informal meetings in the pub were useful to find out the latest gossip as much as finding out the latest vacancies in the college. She was not able and not comfortable about going to pubs after work as she said:

They go to the pub for social gathering after work, which I cannot do because I am a Muslim woman, thus I am excluded from the club and important information will skip me, I feel ostracised.(SEO 003)

Their marginalization was, in their view, connected to their lack of progression and was evidenced in the interviews by a build-up of frustration. White managers were seen by the participants in this study to be progressing faster. Informal networking, culturally biased groupings and informal mentoring were described as part of the institutional climate. All of which, in their view, favoured their white counterparts:

Just by the nature of their colour, their culture, people would take them on board, people would push opportunities their way, and also I guess there is an element in them that they feel it is their right. (SEO 005)

White managers have colleagues and friends and people they can call on, so there is a lot of networking, and there is a lot of support, and I don't think that BME managers have the same amount of network and support mechanism in the organisation. (G7 008)

White counterparts, same age, similar qualifications to me would not have the same problems I would encounter moving up the ladder. It's a race thing associated with who you know as compared to what you know. (G7 001)

They can move through the system quite easily. They have friends and colleagues who make it all right for them—I mean literally make it all right. (SEO 004)

In the organisation, networking has been a barrier for the participants, but ethnic minorities find an additional challenge in that they lack the sponsorship and informal access channels open to many whites. One female participant expressed the experience this way:

Access to opportunities is easier for whites because they share informal experiences with the power structure [live next door to each other; kids go to the same schools; husbands/brothers are head of something] As well as interests in activities like golfing. Networking is a game that not everyone

plays somebody has to ask you to play. But you have to recognise that there's a game being played in the first place. (SEO 007)

The over-riding view is that the powerful networks in the organisation, where people of influence are involved and where assignments and promotions are often informally decided and allocated, are typically white.

For ethnic minority women, this represents a double negative barrier, where they would be excluded from these networks on the bases of both their race and gender. Many of the participants acknowledged this experience and argued that they have to take action in learning how to play the game. They argued that they are often seen as lacking managerial skills and assertiveness, and this is a result of their exclusion from powerful networks. The virtuous cycle inherent in relationships between network members can be regarded as crucial for the development of a workable career strategy. Certainly, a point strongly made is that positive action strategies would not be necessary if there was equity in the organisation.

3.5.2.5 Theme 5: Absence of same race mentors and role models.

Six participants found that the shortage of mentors as a barrier to advancement. One of the participants said,

It's easier for management to mentor those who are like them, so you get the same people rising through the organisation and you don't see change. (SEO 003)

An ethnic minority woman said,

Accessibility to mentors is easier for whites because of comfort level. (SEO 001)

I took a white male as a mentor for selfish reasons — I know that the world is white, so he would help me. (SEO 007)

Two of the participants had mentors in senior management or in influential positions in different business units and the department than the areas they worked in. They felt the role of the mentor is not only to be a sounding board and offer advice, but also to serve periodically in the role of advocate for the ethnic minority. When there is doubt about their experience or expertise to handle an assignment or simply the necessity to get their names on the table for consideration of high-visibility assignments, the difference is whether someone involved in or influencing the decision making. One of the participants stated that,

Many ethnic minorities find their career advancement suffers due to a lack of role models of their own race/ethnicity in the organisation, as the top is white, with no stain of black. Such models may also serve as influential colleagues or mentors. (SEO 002)

One of them said,

I can't get to the top when there is no-one like me I relate to, as a result I feel it's a no go area and I will not attempt to get there, because all who have been here before me have not attempted to get to the top. You may say I may be the first but the welcome will make you want to leave, even though you have just arrived. (G7 006)

This shows that the participant felt it was an inhabitable environment which was not friendly to ethnic minorities. The scarcity of role models meant, it's an area which is not attainable by ethnic minorities, hence they will not try but be content with their current positions.

One of the participants did not mention absence of role models as a barrier, but felt it was a cultural issue embedded in ethnic minorities born here. He said,

When I was born here we always saw white people at the top of the organisation and never did we see a black person, as a result we do not attempt to get to the top of the organisation as there is no seat for a black person on the table. Whereas you [guys] from Africa when you were born you see black people being leaders as a result you aspire to be leaders as you believe you are equals with the white people. (SEO 004)

The participant is of the view that your race affects you from the moment you are born as you will not be able to seat at a table with people whom your parents have always served. You cannot move from a lower caste into a higher caste, but if you are born where blacks and whites were viewed as equals competing for positions of power you are bound to aspire to be a leader as there is no fear.

3.5.2.6 Theme 6: Deficiency of high-visibility tasks and support

Another form of discrimination highlighted by interviewees was inequitable access to development opportunities, such as 'acting up', which later assisted in securing promotion. The participants concurred that shortage of high visibility assignments is an obstacle to their ascension to senior management positions. Most of them mentioned that the promotional boards use competency based interviews, which require the applicant to depict behaviour on how to carry certain tasks and in most cases they cannot apply for the jobs as they lack the evidence required on the application thus they do not make it to the interview stage. They also insisted that they had the academic qualifications but still are not afforded the challenging assignments by their managers, but the tasks are awarded to their less competent white counterparts whom they have to advise, until they have proved their

capabilities then, they will be given challenging work. The participants said,

Oh yes, black people are always the most qualified aren't they; we just keep on studying all our lives just to try and make ourselves more marketable. And then the frustration comes in because we still don't get the jobs. (SEO 002)

Even if you do 101 course you will never be recognised, because of your race, it's your race which determines the work the can do not your qualifications in this organisation. (SEO 005)

If people don't perceive you as someone that can fulfil certain stretch targets or developmental opportunities, if they don't feel that you're competent to survive that test, then you won't be given that first opportunity. (G7 008)

The experience of the participants was very similar as they said, they were regularly moved from one assignment to another in the same job grade. These were labelled as 'developmental assignments', but resulted in lots of movement and very few promotions. Managers of these ethnic minorities seemed less likely to take a risk in promoting an ethnic minority than they preferring to promote white who are similar to them, than ethnic minorities who were alien to them. Ironically, the fact that there were so few ethnic minorities in senior management positions was an additional barrier. The thinking was that if an ethnic minority was promoted and was not successful, everyone would know because they would be in a spotlight.

3.5.2.7 Theme 7 : Glass ceiling or Concrete ceiling

The participants concur that a glass ceiling or a concrete ceiling hinders ethnic minorities to penetrate into senior management positions as it is not impermeable

and they stagnant at middle management positions. They alluded that whilst they struggle with the glass ceiling their white counterparts use the glass escalators to move to the apex of the organisation. One of the participants said,

And once they reach HEOs and SEOs, blacks seldom advance into senior management and some can't even get into first-line supervisor positions. There's not a glass ceiling, there's a barbed-wire roadblock. (G7 001)

You can't progress. You just do, do, do. It's like the motorway, you just keep on driving until you reach your destination and our destination as middle managers is the pension! You can never progress . . . I would say it is a kind of ceiling. (SEO 003)

On promotion boards ethnic minorities will be invited for interviews, but do not get the jobs, whilst the whites get promoted or are offered the jobs as the sitting tenants not because ethnic minorities are competent but because they do not fit. (G7 006)

The participant is implying that you can see and navigate your way into the next management grade, but there is a barbed wire roadblock, which inhibits ethnic minorities to ascend into senior management positions as it is not possible to climb over it even though you can see others beyond the barbed wire.

The glass ceiling is not simply a barrier for an individual, based on the person's inability to handle a higher-level job. Rather, the glass ceiling applies to ethnic minorities as a group who are kept from advancing higher because they are ethnic minorities. The majority of the participants indicated that they experienced a glass ceiling which hindered upward mobility. Within the organisation, the participants indicated that they did not receive the experiences needed to advance in the

organisation and were not given assignments that would make them good candidates for higher-level positions. There was a general recognition that ethnic minorities were channelled into jobs interfacing ethnic minorities, which are less strategic and light weight as a result they are disadvantaged to apply for promotion as the roles they have been slotted in do not provide adequate competencies for their career progression as a result they stagnant. This is evident by the following statements:

only the white managers are given challenging tasks whilst I do routine work which the my white colleagues who have refused regardless of being the same grade and when it comes promotion the sitting tenants get the job, I have observed this an only whites are put on TDA [Temporary Development Allowance] (SEO 003)

It seems that black people get into middle management and that's it. It seems that black people are kept in very safe positions, you know, there are certain jobs they will put us into equal opportunities, community engagement, HR and security. (SEO 007)

Discrimination on the basis of race is illegal, under the RRAA (2000) so other reasons must be given for the glass ceiling that results in ethnic minorities' absence at the top of the corporate ladder.

3.5.2.8 Theme 8: Rejection

Most of the participants described the rejection from the interview boards as frustrating, disturbing and regarding themselves useless. To some of the participants this rejection rendered them to seem incompetent as a result did not apply for any

promotion for fear of being rejected. Some of the participants felt angry with themselves. As one participant said:

In the past, I felt rejected, why am I not as good as anybody else, especially when the line manager had signed off the form and said I was good at the interview, but I didn't get the job. The feeling of rejection makes me feel like [not printable] and I am not as good as them. (SEO 002)

Most of the participants would be disappointed and hurt, but would seek for feedback from the interview panel, so that they can improve if offered another chance. Whilst one of the participants felt the panel are always white as a result he is failing to go through the selection boards and has stopped applying within the organisation, as they system has frustrated and let him down.

One of the participants alluded to the same comments as the other participants that he would be disappointed and feel useless if he knew that he had done well during the interview but did not get the job, however he feels he can be a barrier himself, when he said:

I think like anybody else I will be very disappointed. I have to look at why I failed to get the job Two things if my race was an element and find out what do I have to do for someone to be able to want to hire me on to their team at that grade. Remember that the interview is about getting the best candidate for the job. I need to be confident that I can do the job exceptionally well, ee h..., I would be disappointed, but I would look at the reasons why. I am just trying to be honest, because sometimes we can runoff with the race card, whilst when we look at the person shouting race, my worry is they do not have

the skills to do the job, we need to make sure that we have to have the skills before we start saying its race. We have to be careful about what we are imagining, there are hurdles, there are barriers, sometimes the barriers come from ourselves, I recognise that once I have cleared my barriers I can look at what barriers other people are putting up for me. (SEO 003)

The participant has distanced himself from the other participants who felt that they do not get promoted because of their race, as he argues that there is a need to skill oneself before using the race card, when you do not meet the competencies to do the job at a higher grade. He however acknowledges race as a barrier to ethnic minorities, but insists on having to acquire the skills and move up the corporate ladder, when you are confident of doing the work at a higher grade and deal with other barriers which may be erected at a later stage. To an extent the participant is an advocate of the human capital theory which states that people do not achieve career growth due to lack of skills, knowledge and experience to carry out the work, but when you have filled your skills and knowledge gap, then you can progress to the senior positions within an organisation.

Summary

This chapter has outlined the themes which have emerged from the interviews with the eight ethnic minority managers. The themes have outlined the barriers which ethnic minorities face in their effort to get promoted into senior management positions and it also showed the direct correlation of these themes with the literature uncovered in Document 2. The next chapter discusses the findings in relation to the literature.

Chapter 3.6

3.6.1 Discussion

The previous chapter presented the findings from the interviews and this chapter discusses the findings responding to the research aims and questions. It is evident from the present findings that there is racial inequality in DWP in the representation of ethnic minorities at senior management positions. Most of the participants described the DWP executive management team to be white with no trace of ethnic minorities regardless of a high representation of ethnic minorities at the lower echelons of the organisation. Ethnic minorities have been recruited into organisations, especially in the public sector, their careers in many instances have stalled at middle management level and lower positions of the organisation (Jackson *et al.*, 2007b). Ethnic minorities have in essence bumped up against a glass ceiling (Raha, 2007; Jackson *et al.*, 2007a; Maume, 1999, 2004; Naff, 1994; Guy, 1992). Additionally ethnic minorities have experienced glass walls, stick floors, barbed wire, ethnic penalty and trap doors (Cheung, 2006; Guy, 1994). The findings from the study not only document acrimonious experiences in the work place and slower promotion rates, and artificial ceilings that limit ethnic minorities' advancement within the organisation. The organisation has a snowy peak, which highlights the under representation of ethnic minorities at senior management positions.

The participants expressed that they are watched by their superiors, as they took a wait and see position with them while they made sure that their white peers are 'fast tracked' early in their careers, thus enabling them to reach executive levels fairly quickly. They attributed their success to luck and not skill and talent as with their white peers. To overcome these obstacles, the participants often found themselves performing above and beyond what is expected in order to get similar treatment with white colleagues even though are appraised lower and do not get promotion, whilst

their white counterparts are highly appraised and recommended for promotion. Many of the ethnic minorities that do overcome these barriers to senior management positions encounter a whole new set of barriers. Some of the participants were only able to get into senior management by changing organisations and coming back to DWP, as they were not appreciated within the organisation and deemed not fit for senior management positions. Concurring with the above views Kandola (2004, p.143-144) said:

With greater numbers of ethnic minorities recruited at lower levels of organisations, the problem clearly relates to a lack of progression. Ethnic minorities, it appears are not seen as the 'right stuff' – they are not perceived as leadership material. Managers play a key role in this process: they appraise the performance of their employees and, more importantly, identify individual's potential for success in more senior roles. Therefore, any differences in the way the managers interpret, appraise and respond to the performance of their ethnic minorities subordinates is likely to contribute to the existence of different career paths for different groups of people

It was noted that the organisation was not doing enough to assist ethnic minorities into senior management positions, even though the organisation provided ethnic minorities with developmental programmes such as Realising Potential and Reach. The participants unanimously said the programmes were useless in comparison with the Cabinet Office, Fast Stream which guarantees promotion to the candidates during or after the training. Two of the participants had been on the organisation's development programmes, but they had yielded nothing for them in terms of promotion, as they do not guarantee promotion whilst the later guarantees. The participants alluded that the organisation was racist as they felt it was not assisting ethnic minorities to penetrate

senior management positions, its structural and cultural dimensions were discriminatory, in terms of policies and practices, in an impersonal indirect manner. The data collected strongly suggests that the organisation is institutionally both sexist and racist and this combination of andro-and-ethno-centricity has a clear potentially detrimental implication for the ethnic minorities.

3.6.2 Race

The findings identified a strong and recurrent theme of institutionalised racism and a culture of hegemonic white supremacy. Race indirectly affected promotion decisions through key job-relevant variables, to the disadvantage of applicants of ethnic minorities. Despite the growing proportion of ethnic minorities in the workplace (Raha, 2007) and the concurrent emphasis on valuing diversity in organisations (Jackson *et al.*, 2007a), the proportion of ethnic minorities in top management positions in organisations remains less than 1 per cent. Evidence suggests that ethnic minorities encounter a glass ceiling that keeps them from reaching the tops of managerial hierarchies (Maume, 2004, Morrison *et al.*, 1990). Promotion decisions for top management positions involve subjective appraisals as to whether a given candidate will fit in with incumbent top managers. Individuals who are dissimilar to the incumbents in a particular type of job or to those making promotion decisions as ethnic minority candidates for a top management position in a white-dominated organisation would be at a disadvantage compared to individuals who are similar to incumbents and decision makers (white candidates). The participants experienced similar sources of discrimination arising from their race discrimination as compared to their white counterparts.

The ethnic minority women participants experienced the double bind of racism and sexism thus increasing their vulnerability. Half the price but twice as nice” and “two

for the price of one” are old adages that take on a new dimension as they are used to refer to the dual minority status of ethnic minority women. These phrases have been used to articulate the perceived advantage or “bonus standing” that race and gender afford to ethnic minority women in the workplace (Nkomo and Cox, 1989). The dual minority status of ethnic minority women is construed as a condition that provides a decided competitive advantage in hiring and professional advancement. However, ethnic minority women who experience this phenomenon of race and gender give divergent accounts of what it is like being “Black and female” and how their work experiences, work relationships, and advancement are affected (Blake, 1999; Ferdman, 1999; Yoder and Aniakudo, 1997). The convergence of race and gender may not be a double advantage (Bell and Nkomo, 2001; Nkomo *et al.*, 1989). Ethnic minority women contend that being “Black and female” has a negative impact on career advancement (Bell and Nkomo, 1994; Bova, 2000). Ethnic minority women occupying and aspiring to senior management and executive positions are forced to encounter dynamics in the work environment that hinder rather than enhance their career prospects and achievement (Feagin and Sikes, 1994; Ferdman, 1999; Nkomo *et al.*, 1989). The intersection of race and gender often results in workplace inequities that stem from racial and gender biases that permeate the everyday experiences of ethnic minority women as they perform and seek career advancement in organisations (Bell *et al.*, 2001; Golden, 2002).

3.6.3 Discrimination

The study shows that ethnic minorities experienced covert discrimination in the organisation. Whites were reluctant to accept the authority of an ethnic minority manager. Similarly, white managers did not treat ethnic minority managers as

equals. Such unequal treatment constitutes indirect discrimination in practice. The participants concur that race as a variable affects their promotion prospect and they cannot run away from it as it will always be there and it might take about four decades to eradicate the discrimination of ethnic minorities from promotion based on their race and the participants expressed that they will not be there to see this change take place.

Racial discrimination need not be intentional. Motowidlo (1986) suggested that unconscious biases resulting from fear of selecting an unacceptable candidate, personal attraction to candidates similar to oneself, and holding a stereotype of the ideal candidate for a position may distort decision makers' judgments and lead job-irrelevant variables such as race to influence their selection decisions. Kanter (1977) concluded that the desire for social certainty leads decision makers to prefer to work with individuals like themselves. The similar-to-me effect (Rand and Wexley, 1975) may be based on perceived similarity (Dalessio and Imada, 1984; Pulakos and Wexley, 1983), on actual similarity, or on both. Korand and Pfeffer (1983) argued that the demographic composition of organisations influences many behaviour based events, including managerial successions.

The definition of institutional racism used in the Macpherson Report perceived public institutions to be collectively failing minority ethnic individuals by not providing 'an appropriate and professional service . . . because of their colour, culture, or ethnic origin' (1999: para. 34). Institutional racism could be seen in 'processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping' (1999: para. 34). Certainly this research, has uncovered continuing instances of unwitting prejudice, unfairly appraising the job performance of ethnic minorities, ignorance and thoughtlessness,

and racist behaviour. These elements are really examples of direct or indirect racial discrimination legally defined in RRAA 2000.

3.6.4 Glass Ceiling

Researchers acknowledge the glass ceiling as a barrier and impediment to the advancement for women and ethnic minorities in the workplace (Jackson *et al.*, 2007b, Morrison *et al.*, 1990). The primary evidence for the existence of a glass ceiling comes from the absence of Blacks at the apex of large corporations, it is still the case that more than 9 of out of 10 chief executive officers are white men (Jackson *et al.*, 2007a). The paucity of ethnic minorities running large corporations is taken as evidence that these groups face discriminatory barriers preventing them from reaching privileged positions. Those who dispute these numbers contend that executives require 20 to 30 years of grooming before they are ready to assume top leadership positions in large firms (Maume, 2004, Cordtz, 1994). However, the present study on ethnic minority participants in DWP endorses the proposition in the literature that discrimination exists in the form of a 'glass ceiling'. The glass ceiling appears when there is no official or objective reason for rejecting one's application, except for race. The study has revealed the subjectivity and covert discrimination in the selection procedure, confirming the view that ethnic minorities face invisible barriers when seeking promotion.

The participants concur that there is a glass ceiling exists within the organisation and inhibits them from being promoted to senior management positions even though they are academically and professional qualified to do the jobs, they still miss out on being promoted due to their race. Rather than viewing the glass ceiling from a deficit-model, one which presumes that the low number of ethnic minorities in senior-level positions is due to a lack of job relevant qualifications among job applicants, social

closure affirms the ability of qualified individuals to transcend through the ranks to senior-level positions. Accordingly, social closure provides that it is a group of individuals actively invested in retaining positions of power and control for their own cohort that prevent ascension through the glass ceiling. Social closure emphasises that it is the exclusionary practices themselves which create segregation, both within organisations and individual jobs. It has been noted that these practices appear deliberate, and produce and perpetuate advantages for the whites (Tomaskovic-Devey, 2006). Alternatively, social closure occurs when opportunities are closed to outsiders and reserved only for members of our own group (Tomaskovic-Devey *et al.*, 2007).

Researchers such as Tomaskovic-Devey *et al.*, (2007) have noted that a shared ethnicity, nationality, race, and gender form the basis of dominant group membership and in this sense social closure is similar to other forms of discriminatory practices. Similarly, social closure is also subsequently reinforced by the benefits and assets accrued by the members of that group through the exclusion of others (Tomaskovic-Devey *et al.*, 2007). Scholars have illustrated that social closure suggests that status groups create and preserve their identity and advantages by reserving certain opportunities for members of the group (Tomaskovic-Devey, 1993). Since exclusion appears to be the preferred practice for retaining the homogeneity of the dominant group, the implication as it pertains to the glass ceiling is that whites being the dominate group would benefit most from exclusionary practices. As such, when measuring for glass ceiling effects, one can expect to see fewer effects in the culturally dominant group, and more effects for the excluded groups.

Tomaskovic-Devey and Skaggs (2002) put it more bluntly in stating that social closure processes are about more powerful actors monopolizing desirable jobs by

excluding subordinate groups. The interviews provides evidence of the existence of the old boys school network, the peerage and regionalism which is used by the managers to promote people who have attended similar schools with them, who are from the same region and in the same social strata. This practice of finding employees who are like existing employees at the top is homosocial reproduction (Kanter, 1977). Managers tend to carefully guard power and privilege for those who fit in, for those they see as 'their kind.' This has been reiterated in the interviews that they do not get promotion as they are not part of the golden circle and they do not fit as they are different from the managers. The structure sets in motion forces leading to the replication of managers as the same kind of social individual and the men who manage reproduce themselves in kind. By so doing ethnic minorities are left at the bottom of the as there is no one of their kind who can hold their hand and take them up the corporate ladder. Managers at the top are reserving positions for those employees who are socially similar to themselves, in other words they are reproducing themselves at the very top of the organisation. Those at the top of organisation, sponsor those that they think are most like themselves. This implies that there exists some type of "sponsorship" model for advancement within the organisation for Whites, while Blacks and women have to rely on advancement through a contest model (Baldi *et al.*, 1997, Turner, 1974; Wilson, 1997; Wilson *et al.*, 1999). As stated by the participants they have to work twice as much their white counterparts as they have to prove themselves due to lack of sponsorship which is available to their white counterparts.

3.6.5 Racial Stereotype

The concentration of ethnic minorities in lower level and marginal jobs reinforces negative stereotypes about their capabilities and aspirations limits their access to

career opportunities, such as prestigious job assignments (Stockdale and Crosby, 2003; Eagly and Karau, 2002, Fiske 1998, Reskin, 2003; Tsui and O'Reilly 1989). Ethnic minorities find it difficult to attain top management positions because they do not fit in prescribed organisational prototypes (Kandola, 2004, Maume, 2004; Raggins *et al.*,1998; Lyness *et al.*, 1997). As a result employers fall into a trap of 'cloning' feeling inherently more sympathetic towards people who share their own cultural background and interests and therefore recruiting employees primarily from within their own ethnic group. (Haslam, 2002; Raggins, *et al*, 1998). Kanter (1977) refers to this process as homosocial reproduction whereby the group in charge reproduces its ascriptive characteristics in those they select to join them (Smith, 2005, Elliot *et al.*, 2001; Brewer and Brown 1998; Baldi *et al.*, 1997; Bergmann 1986).

Interview evidence shows that powerful white people prefer to promote managerial candidates who are socially similar to them. This is based on the belief that communication and trust are easier to establish with those who share similar backgrounds, tastes, and philosophies and managerial composition is said to be self-reproducing due to homosocial reproduction (Elliott *et al.*, 2004; Kanter, 1977). Career advancement may be linked to an individual's promotability or their ability to fit into the culture. These practices of particularistic manipulation in promotion subvert ostensibly meritocratic procedures by relying on vague criteria (Gray *et al.*, 2008; Baldi *et al.*, 1997; Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995; Wilson, 1997). Because whites have historically been the primary decision makers in organisations, they benefit most from this in-group preference, leaving minorities underrepresented in positions of authority.

Elliot *et al.* (2001) provide further intellectual support to the idea that labour market opportunities depends not just on individual human capital, but also on group membership. Of the same opinion social identity and organisational demography literature suggests that people prefer to interact with members of their own identity group rather than with members of other groups hence members of ethnic minorities find it difficult to attain top positions because they do not fit in prescribed organisational prototypes (Kersten, 2000). Psychological and political influence processes also may be powerful, fit-based determinants of career success (Janis, 1972; Schneider, 1983, 1987). Specifically, those who fit are socially and politically supported by the organisation's members and systems, while those who do not are ostracised and undermined. Therefore, those who fit are more likely to receive the support necessary to perform well, thereby increasing the likelihood that their performance will lead to extrinsic indicators of success, such as pay increases and promotion. They also are likely to encounter more comfortable and supportive working environments than those who do not fit, and are therefore likely to possess higher levels of job and life satisfaction

3.6.6 Networking

The study highlights the sense of isolation experienced, the lack of professional acceptance and acknowledgement and the lack of belonging and the lack of trust are also marked as hindrance to their career advancement. Networking for the participants was more likely to be focused outside the institution. There was a recognition that ethnic minority staff would be more likely to network with other ethnic minority staff. Was this a question of trust or merely of familiarity? All of the participants felt under pressure being an ethnic minority manager, this was an aspect of being in a minority position and also how they felt their peers and

managers perceived them. The participants felt that extra requirements and scrutiny was placed on ethnic minority managers. The participants repeatedly stated that because of their race they had to be better and perform more than their white peers. They view overachievement as the only response to the unstated questions of whether or not they deserve all that came to them. For them it is not enough to be the best once. They had to prove themselves every time they started a new piece of work as the tax of prejudice is time (Thomas and Gabarro, 1999).

It is clear that the predominately white culture of organisations can hinder advancement opportunities for ethnic minorities, by stereotyping them and excluding them from the influential 'old boys networks' on the bases of their race and educational backgrounds as one of the participants mentioned that most of the senior managers are from Oxbridge. This situation has negative implications for their networking and career development opportunities. Such organisational shortcomings, when combined with excesses of stereotyping of ethnic minorities, which stems from an interaction of their status as ethnic minorities. Symbolic boundaries between ethnic groups are especially likely to have material effects on employment opportunity in workplaces where tacit knowledge, interpersonal interactions, and peer evaluations are critical to work performance. Kanter (1977) drew attention to the ways in which homophily can bear on the selection and promotion of managerial employees. She contended that senior managers tend to seek out candidates who hold cultural and linguistic traits similar to their own, which sets in motion a kind of cultural exclusivism that works against members of out-groups whose backgrounds are at odds with those of the dominant group. Kanter's argument was framed in terms of the selection of employees for elite positions, but it has broader applicability. Levels of trust and familiarity affect not only admission to

but also success within occupational realms, especially where social ties are vital to the accumulation of technical expertise (Blair-Loy, 2001).

One of the most frequently reported problems faced by ethnic minorities in organisational settings is limited access to or exclusion from informal interaction networks (Kandola, 2004). The exclusion from the social networks results in information isolation, or the lack of access to diverse information networks, as one of the main barriers that block the career advancement ethnic minorities (Gray *et al.*, 2008). Similarly, Gray *et al.* (2007) found that being excluded from informal networks of knowledge in knowledge-intensive firms affect ethnic minorities' ability to advance in the workplace. Exclusion from informal social networks produces such disadvantages for women and minorities as less access to critical organisational information, barriers to establishing strategic alliances, and subsequent limitations on upward mobility (Ibarra, 1993).

3.6.7. Mentoring

The participants found that having mentors to be useful to their career development and advancement. Mentors are people either inside or outside an individual's organisation with whom there is a formal or informal working relationship. Mentors and protégés can talk openly about job and career advancement issues. Mentors help to build self-confidence and professional identity in their protégés (Raggins *et al.*, 1998). They found the mentors to provide access to developmental opportunities that allow them to demonstrate ability and become trusted (Eagly and Calri, 2007). Moreover, because they have a vested interest in the successes of their protégées' projects, mentors kept open information channels and provided feedback on performance at crucial times. Their roles included career-enhancing functions such

as sponsorship, coaching, facilitating exposure and visibility, and offering challenging work and protection in addition to psychosocial functions such as role modelling, counselling and friendship. Research reveals that mentor relationships often lead to career-related support (Chao and Gardner, 1992) and professional growth (Fagenson, 1989; Kram, 1985).

Mentors play a significant role in providing access to high-profile development opportunities which in turn allow mentoring relationships, which are so important to career progression, to develop and flourish. Raggins *et al.* (1998) found that almost all (91%) successful ethnic minorities Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) they interviewed stated that they had had mentors at some time, and almost as many (81%) reported that mentors were critical or fairly important. These findings are in alignment with other evidence that individuals who are mentored are more frequently promoted, have more career mobility, and advance faster. However, there are fewer opportunities for ethnic minorities to build mentoring relationships than there are for white people. In part this is because there are fewer senior ethnic minorities to act as mentors and in part because of the difficulties associated with black-white mentoring relationships as in most cases the ethnic minorities were told to seek mentors of similar race to them, which was difficult due to the scarcity of ethnic minorities at the upper echelons of the organisation. The participants felt the shortage of ethnic minority in senior grades prohibited their involvement in informal social networks with the senior managers as a result plateaued in lower and middle management positions.

The benefits of having informal networks are not the same for ethnic minorities (Ibarra, 1997; Smith-Lovin and McPherson, 1993; Aldrich, 1989). Ethnic minorities are less likely than white to have high-status network members and to have diverse

networks (McGuire, 2000; Scott, 1996; Moore, 1992; Ibarra, 1992; Campbell, 1988; Brass, 1985). Having a network composed of diverse and powerful members is critical for employees' acquisition of resources and power in work organisations (Brass, 1985; Higginbotham and Weber, 1999; Jackall, 1988; Kanter, 1977; Lin, Ensel, and Vaughn, 1981). Ethnic minorities are also less likely than whites to be central in work-based networks, which limit their access to network members' resources (Ibarra, 1997). The dearth of membership in the networks is detrimental to ethnic minorities' career progression as they will not have access to information and resources which they may need in order to reach management level. Access to these network groups is beyond their reach as they are found at the lower echelons of the organisation which hinders their interaction with those in management positions.

Ethnic-minority social networks may be ineffective in placing members in high-end jobs because there are fewer high-status contacts in the network. McGuire (2000) argues that high-status employees usually occupy command and control positions within their networks that facilitate their access to resources. Ethnic minorities were less likely than whites to have the resources and positions that would put them into contact with high-status employees and, therefore, they miss out on critical information and sponsorship. McGuire shows that structural exclusion from high-ranking and resourceful positions, not a lack of networking knowledge or skills, prevent ethnic minorities from forming ties to powerful network members. She argues that high-status employees may not have to personally exclude ethnic minorities from their networks because their organisations are already doing it (McGuire, 2000). These networks allocate a variety of instrumental resources that are critical for job effectiveness and career advancement as well as expressive

benefits such as friendship and social support (Gray *et al.*, 2008). Limited network access, therefore, produces multiple disadvantages, including restricted knowledge of what is going on in their organisations and difficulty in forming alliances, which, in turn, are associated with limited mobility and "glass ceiling" effects (O'Leary and Ickovics, 1992; Morrison *et al.*, 1990; DiTomaso *et al.*, 1988; Brass, 1985).

Marsden (1987) found that people tend to interact and establish relationships with others that resemble themselves on characteristics such as age, class, gender, occupation, sexuality, politics, family status, where they live, or leisure pursuits. Kanter (1977) makes a similar point in her theory of "homosocial reproduction" in the workplace. According to this theory, sponsorship is crucial to career advancement within the workplace, and sponsorship tends to be "homosocial" – that is, people tend to establish sponsorship ties with people who resemble them closely in terms of characteristics such as race, gender, and social background. Gray *et al.*, 2008). Research suggests that cross-sex/cross-race ties tend to be weaker in a variety of ways than same-sex/same-race ties (Ibarra, 1993). Similarity to senior managers may result in greater personal attraction and identification on the part of senior managers for subordinates

A number of studies have found (Fisher, 2006, Davies-Netzley, 1998, Ibarra, 1995) that ethnic minorities who do make it to elite positions are often "outsiders on the inside", that is they are less integrated in informal discussion networks and outside the influential, central circle of high-level contacts. This isolation means that ethnic minorities are excluded from top networks and informal relationships that are necessary for further career advancement. This reflects the perception that whites

can only interact with other whites in certain prominent business or professional roles, thus preventing other racial groups from access to all possible roles in the workplace (Pierre, 1998).

3.6.8 Deficiency of significant line management experience and challenging assignments

Ethnic minority employees are more likely to experience close supervision, have less complex tasks, have less managerial authority, and have less supervisory responsibility than white employees and taken as tokens (Baldi *et al.*, 1997; Tomaskovic-Devey, 2007; Kandola, 2004; Esmail *et al.*, 2005; Kandola, 2004; Kanter, 1977). As a result ethnic minorities are be less developed as individuals than whites (Ilgen and Youtz, 1986) as they are pigeonholed into jobs which do not equip them for senior management positions. These deficits in ethnic minorities' development as stated in the interviews make ethnic minorities appear unsuitable for advancement to the highest levels and lead them to languish at lower levels of organisations and plateaued as the lower evaluations which they receive during performance appraisal restrict them for opportunities for advancement. Whilst once hired, whites receive more on-the-job training and visible job assignments that facilitate their career mobility (Esmail *et al.*, 2005, Kandola, 2004). Whites are also more likely to be assigned mentors and receive more favourable job evaluations from their white superiors (Chao, 1997). In spite of the consistent association of on-the-job development and promotion, research indicates that ethnic minorities are offered fewer developmental experiences than white people (Tharenou, 1997; Wernick, 1994;; Tharenou *et al.*, 1994)

Previous research have concluded that ethnic minority employees generally hold jobs with less task complexity, less supervisory responsibility, and less managerial authority (Kaufman, 1986; Mueller, Parcel, and Tanaka, 1989; Tomaskovic-Devey, 1993). Kanter (1977) argued that, in addition to women, ethnic minorities have low access to opportunity and power in organisations. This research has been consistent with previous studies as it has found that whites receive more supervisory positions, higher authority than ethnic minorities. Racial segregation limits ethnic minority workers' initial placement on job ladders to positions that ultimately offer relatively little opportunity for further advancement. Furthermore, ethnic minority workers tend to be channelled to racialised jobs (Maume, 1999, Collins, 1997) where they tend to be used as a liaison linking the company to the ethnic minority community. The channelling of ethnic minorities into these jobs leaves the more visible jobs for whites and they, in turn, have more opportunities to exercise higher order and reward relevant job functions (Wilson *et al.*, 1999).

Summary

Despite significant progress of ethnic minorities at work, racial segregation is still a defining feature of their employment. Research suggests several mechanisms through which this segregation restrains ethnic minorities' career advancement. The literature identified several barriers that limit ethnic minorities' progress to leadership positions such as marginalisation and indirect racism create barriers and it has been noted that the subtle influence of informal networks from which ethnic minorities are excluded. The participants and the literature have mentioned the invisible or 'behind the scenes' criteria for promotion where ethnic minorities experience isolation as 'token ethnic minorities' and face lack of acceptance by professional colleagues.

There is widespread evidence of covert or indirect discrimination, coupled, with a racial 'glass ceiling' and negative stereotyping. Recruitment and selection strategies, and the composition of the 'selectors', also constitute a barrier to employment and promotion.

Managerial composition was said to be self-reproducing due to homosocial reproduction, social closure and social networks as it was found that through co ethnic reproduction whites managers replicated themselves at the apex of the organisation whilst excluded ethnic minorities by virtue of not meeting the white leadership trait as they were atypical.

Chapter 3.7

3.7.1 Conclusion

This research confirms that ethnic minorities experience barriers in their effort to ascend to senior management positions in the organisation. These barriers are notable from the point of selection for senior management positions, coupled with lack of high visibility tasks, poor recommendations, racism, glass ceiling, not fitting the prototype manager as per the requirements of the white recruiting managers who sought for people who are similar to them, hence they will sponsor white managers by offering them developmental tasks, temporary promotion and eventually offer them the jobs as the sitting tenant. Thomas and Gabarro (1999) worked on a six-year research programme to study the processes of development and advancement that produce ethnic minority executives. They focused on those who had 'broken through the glass ceiling of race'. Their findings suggest that there are different career patterns for white and ethnic minority executives, which they describe in terms of 'two different tournaments', one for whites and one for minorities. In explaining the difference they argue that:

Racial prejudice, whites' need for comfort and avoidance of risk, and the apparent difficulty of identifying ethnic minorities as high potential each constitute major hurdles to the career mobility of minority managers. (1999: 73)

This study is seen as contributing to the on-going debate highlighting the experiences of discrimination faced by ethnic minority managers as they endeavour to move up the corporate ladder. In spite of the advances made by ethnic minority managers, they perceived that "all is not right" with their experiences in the organisations (Collins, 1997). This research provides compelling accounts of differential treatment, overall exclusion and isolation in the workplace, and career advancement not commensurate

with their knowledge, skills, and abilities. In some cases, the chilling effects of disparity in opportunities in instrumental relationships temper the positive experiences of ethnic minority managers (Bell *et al.*, 2001; Dickens and Dickens, 1991; Talley-Ross, 1995). The research offers substantial support for the feelings and perception of ethnic minority managers about their work environments.

Ethnic minorities have to work twice as compared to their white counterparts who are fast tracked into positions as they are sponsored by the senior white managers, whilst the ethnic minorities have to contest for the position through proving their capabilities even if they are professional and academically qualified to do the work. Upon appointment the ethnic minorities suggest that they are subjected to a much harsher scrutiny and are constantly aware of how they not only represent themselves, but are also seen to represent all ethnic minorities. The organisation's senior executive arena is regarded as a white domain, where white culture and behaviours predominate.

In conclusion this study has provided an in-depth account of the barriers experienced by ethnic minorities as their attempt to get promoted into senior management positions.

The research has established that race awareness and concerns with low ethnic minorities' representation appear to be given little priority at either the senior management or executive management level.

Instead, the relative scarcity of ethnic minorities in senior management positions and the dominant white culture are both explained away as 'the way things are in DWP.

Race does matter, if you are an ethnic minority.

3.7.2 Implications for DWP

Increasing ethnic minorities' representation in DWP workforce, is not an overt goal for DWP. At best there is an acknowledgement of the limited numbers of ethnic minorities at senior management and executive level, but on the whole this is rationalised away as a reflection of the organisation and its inability to attract ethnic minorities into senior positions within the organisation. DWP could do much to maximise opportunities for ethnic minorities across all its business units, as well as looking at traineeships and placement opportunities for ethnic minorities in the senior management positions. Until DWP acknowledges the bias against ethnic minorities at the most senior level, the opportunities for ethnic minorities would continue to be limited.

Workforce diversity is not a transient phenomenon; it is today's reality, and it is here to stay. Homogeneous societies have become heterogeneous, and this trend is irreversible. The problems of managing today's diverse workforce, however, do not stem from the heterogeneity of the workforce itself but from the unfortunate inability of corporate managers to fully comprehend its dynamics, divest themselves of their personal prejudicial attitudes, and creatively unleash the potential embedded in a multicultural workforce.

3.7.3 Limitations of the research

This study has specifically focused on DWP context, using an in-depth research approach with a small sample. The study has highlighted variation of conception as well as variation of experience and provides a detailed account of the experiences and views of a sample of eight ethnic minority participants. The research findings

have relevance to DWP but, as the findings are based on the specific experiences within this context, may not all be relevant to other government departments' contexts where provisions and requirements are different.

3.7.4 Future Research

The sense of DWP still being a boys' club, with a dominant white male culture, is identified at the executive level. This study identifies similar sentiments expressed by ethnic minorities in relation to the executive team and the senior management positions which consists of white people with similar social and educational background. It becomes difficult for ethnic minorities to make it into the senior positions and if they make it they are not accepted due to racial differences and are seen as a token and are not respected and trusted and other barriers are erected which do not have anything to do with race. The study was designed to explore the experiences of a group of ethnic minority managers. The researcher was left with the question, whether some of the issues raised were applicable to white managers who also feel undervalued within the organisation. This research is by no means complete as it will be carried forward in Document 4, quantitatively. A comparative analysis will be carried out in Document 4 with both white people and ethnic minorities in senior and executive management positions to find out why the organisation has a snowy apex, when it has 12% of the workforce being ethnic minorities and also to verify some of the inhibitions raised by ethnic minorities in this study. The research findings suggest that there is a need to understand further the barriers and successes that ethnic minority managers experience before the researcher can offer recommendations.

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A comparative analysis on the existence of the glass ceiling in DWP and how social support impacts on the advancement of ethnic minorities and whites in SEO to SCS grades.

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Chapter 4.1

4.1.1 Introduction

The dearth of ethnic minorities in senior and executive management positions across the globe has been the subject of much debate. Research in recent years questions why there are very few senior ethnic minority managers has been posed for over two decades (Avery, 2009; Ortiz and Roscigno, 2009; Rosette, Leonardelli and Philips, 2008; Kalev, 2009; Jackson, 2008a; Jackson and O'Callaghan, 2007a; Tomaskovic-Devey and Stainback, 2007; Cohen and Huffman, 2007; Avery, McKay, and Wilson, 2008; Goldman, Gutek, Stein, Lewis, 2006; Kandola, 2004). Previous studies have highlighted that ethnic minority managers encounter more obstacles to career progression than their white counterparts (Avery, 2009; Rosette *et al.*, 2008; Giscoombe and Mattis, 2002; Bush and Moloi, 2006; Jackson, 2008b; Hill, 2004; Steefle, 2006; Jackson and Daniels, 2007b, Jackson *et al.*, 2007a; Jackson, 2008a; Corrigan, 2002; Hill, 2004; Bush, Glover and Sood, 2006; Maume, 2004, Kandola, 2004; Bell and Nkomo, 2001). When it comes to those making it to top management grade, the gap between the overall population and those in work is even greater. Just 4.4%, or one in 15, ethnic minorities were in management positions at the end of 2007, up from 3.2% in 2000. In other words non-white workers have failed to secure the share of management posts that the size of the population would justify and it also means that white workers, who make up 90% of the population, currently hold 95.6% of management positions in the UK (Kerr, 2009). The depressing implication is that there may still be a colour bar to management jobs in the UK 34 years after the passing of the landmark Race Relations Act of 1976. Despite the presence of the Equality Act (2010) which has replaced all existing equality legislation such as the Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act and Sex Discrimination Act and other anti-discrimination legislation, there is still evidence that ethnic minorities continue to be discriminated against in the workplace (Kerr, 2010).

Ethnic minorities comprise a large segment of the available managerial talent cross the organisation, yet their representation at top level managerial positions in Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), is rather obscure, there is no ethnic minority in Chief Executive positions and the number of ethnic minorities in the Senior Civil Servant grade is so small that it is hard to get meaningful data. This in itself is an indication of the seriousness of the problem. Not only is that an issue but the senior management and executive management positions are occupied predominantly by white people from similar corporate, social and educational backgrounds (Muskwe, 2009). In the research which the researcher carried out in Document 3, the DWP executive team was described as being white with no black spot. The observed racial homogeneity in senior management does not reflect the modern perspective of the changing demographics and the representativeness of the organisation's overall workforce (Muskwe, 2009; Avery, 2009; Jackson *et al.*, 2007b). Being a public board DWP has a legal responsibility to provide leadership in the area of equality and diversity. Ethnic minorities make up 12% of the total workforce, however the distribution of the workforce is concentrated mainly in the lower level with only 2% of the senior managers being ethnic minorities and none of which are part of the executive team. Most of the ethnic minorities are found in the lower grades of Administrative Officer (AO) to Executive Officer (EO) and the numbers start to recede as one moves from Higher Executive Officer (HEO) to Senior Executive Officer (SEO) and rapidly dwindle from Grade 7 to Grade 6, with complete disappearance at Senior Civil Servant grade where they are scarce. Disproportionate numbers of ethnic minorities are found at the low echelons of the organisation or plateaued in middle management positions, where there is stagnation in terms of career progression, whilst the organisation has a broad base of ethnic minorities, it has snowy peak at the apex made up of whites (Gorman, 2009; Padavic and Reskin 2002; Creswell 2006; Jackson *et al.*, 2007a).

Examining statistics on who gets promoted into senior management and, particularly, who gets the top spots in any organisation shows that even employers with the best employment diversity records may not fare as well in fostering ethnic diversity in organisational upper atmosphere (Pitts, 2007; Thomas and Gabarro, 1999). It remains today almost always big news when a racial minority becomes Chief

Executive Officer (CEO) of a large corporation. It is much easier for a black person to be the President of United States of America, than for an ethnic minority to be a director in DWP (Muskwe, 2009). Ethnic minorities' persistent under representation in powerful organisational positions presents a puzzle (Avery, 2009; Cohen *et al.*, 2007). The higher the position, in both the private and public sectors, the less likely that an ethnic minority will fill it. Why? The answer is provided by Rosette *et al.*, (2008) when they found that 'being White' is a component for leadership prototype. This explains, in part, why ethnic minority managers are seen as atypical (Avery, 2009), hence they fail to climb the corporate ladder as they do not fit the white leadership prototype.

Evidence suggests that ethnic minorities encounter a 'glass ceiling' an invisible barrier that rudely obstruct them short of the top prize (Eagly and Carli, 2007) it keeps them from reaching the tops of managerial hierarchies (Morrison and Von Glinow, 1990). It is a barrier that appears invisible but is strong enough to hold ethnic minorities back from top-level jobs merely because they are not white rather than because they lack job-relevant skills, education, or experience (Gorman, 2009; Foley, Kidder and Powell, 2002; Woo 2000; Morrison *et al.*, 1990; Powell and Butterfield, 1994). Ethnic minorities perceive the presence of a glass ceiling within their social context, as a barrier put into place by those in the advantaged majority (Muskwe, 2009). Recent anecdotal evidence appearing in both academic treatises and media accounts suggests that ethnic minorities have to be 'more qualified and work twice as hard to get ahead' (Avery, 2009; Gorman, 2009; Cohen *et al.*, 2007; Bush *et al.*, 2006; Mackay *et al.*, 2006; Kandola, 2004) and are hampered by lack of access to social networks in a promotion system predicated on the notion, 'it's not what you know but who you know' (Avery, 2009; Buckley *et al.*, 2007, Blair-Loy, 2001). This seems to signal that ethnic minorities' movement into desirable occupations is based on overcoming unique and relatively burdensome obstacles.

Document 4 was carried out within the framework of a cross-sectional survey research design employing quantitative data collection methods. A structured online questionnaire consisting of closed-ended questions and pre-coded items was used

to gather the data from 121 DWP managers from SEO to SCS grade, even though only 40 (33.1%) responded. The data was analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17.0. Descriptive analysis of all the variables was done focusing on the distribution of the statements. Appropriate means, standard deviations frequencies and percentages were derived for the sample of ethnic minorities and white. Chi square was administered to determine whether there were significant differences between ethnic minorities and whites' perception of the existence of the glass ceiling in the organisation and how race hinders promotion to the higher grades of the organisation. The foremost findings indicated that ethnic minorities experience the glass ceiling hindering their ability to move the upper stratum of the organisation as compared to their white counterparts. The findings also illustrated that ethnic minorities lack career-related support to enhance their career advancement such that they are ostracised and circumvented from the social networks. Race was judged to have detrimental effects on the promotion of ethnic minorities as compared to whites as they do not fit by virtue of not being a white prototype, a result the managers replicated themselves by recruiting people who are similar to them and are part of the golden circle. For their advancement to the apex of the organisation ethnic minorities have to contest for the positions whilst whites waltz on glass escalators via the sponsorship from their strong ties and ethnic minorities are stifled by the glass ceiling and stagnating at the lower positions of the organisation.

4.1.2 Purpose of the study

The main premise of Document 4 is to test two hypotheses and examine if there is a distinction between the promotion of ethnic minority managers and whites managers to access the existence of the glass ceiling as a barrier to their proposition to ascend into senior and executive management positions. The researcher also seeks to examine how career related support affects the promotion prospect of both ethnic minorities and whites. Rather than viewing the glass ceiling from a deficit-model, one which presumes that the low number of ethnic minorities in senior-level positions is due to a lack of job relevant qualifications among job applicants, the researcher will

control the educational qualifications as they are not used for promotion in DWP, hence the need to assess how career related support impacts career advancement. Document 4 seeks to elaborate on the findings unearthed in Document 3 which outlined the glass ceiling as a major barrier for ethnic minorities' plateau in lower management positions. (Muskwe, 2009). In Document 3, it was stated that the ethnic minorities may jump over the race hurdle, but will still encounter a glass ceiling, as they fail to progress as far as whites in climbing the corporate hierarchy. In addition, ethnic minorities are close enough to the top positions in organisations to be considered in the recruitment pool for these positions, but they rarely reach them. This frustration in seeing the top jobs but being passed over for them is what many think of as a glass ceiling (Avery *et al.*, 2008; Jackson *et al.*, 2007a). Ethnic minorities are shut out as outsiders as positions are reserved for their own (Tomaskovic-Devey *et al.*, 2007).

There is a growing body of research literature on the glass ceiling. The bulk of the research, however, has focused on how the glass ceiling has affected white women (Weyer, 2007; Hsieh and Winslow, 2006; Adler, 2000;1993, Singh and Vinnicombe, 2004; Wirth, 2001; Linehan and Scullion, 2001; Wajcman, 1998; Morrison *et al.*, 1990, Cross and Linehan, 2006; Coughlan, 2002; Davidson and Burke, 2000; Still, 1997; Federal Glass Commission, 1995; Nieva and Gutek,1980, Kanter, 1977; Morrison, White and Van Velsor,1987; Blum, Fields, and Goodman, 1994; Powell, 1993; Powell and Butterfield, 1994; Tharenou, Latimer and Conroy, 1994; Lee, 2002; Blum, Fields, and Goodman 1994; Huffman 1999; Reskin and McBrier, 2000). While the glass ceiling issue has been most commonly associated with barriers to upward mobility for white women. Morrison *et al.* (1990) argue that ethnic minorities may face the same impediments. Yet surprisingly few studies involving ethnic minority status have been conducted (Stainback and Tomaskovic-Devey 2006; Elliott and Smith 2001; Shenhav and Haberfeld 1992;; Cox *et al.*, 1990; Bartol, Evans, and Stith, 1978), much less at middle and executive management levels. The slower progression of minority ethnic employees within organisations is well-established (Cabinet Office Strategy Unit, 2003; Miller and Travers, 2004; Ocloo, 2002; Sanglin-Grant and Schneider, 2000) as is their underrepresentation in senior positions (Ocloo, 2002; Sanglin-Grant *et al.*, 2000). It should be made clear that since little is

known about the barriers experienced by ethnic minority managers who work for the public sector, and aspiring to move to higher positions. However, given the lack of research on ethnic minorities in the public sector, this document provides new and important baseline findings to guide future research on the glass ceiling in the public sector. It is crucial that this research is conducted so that ethnic minorities, especially those aspiring to hold leadership positions in the public sector, can understand the challenges, strategies, and contexts for ethnic minorities in the public sector to crack the glass ceiling and move up the echelons of the organisation rather than plateau at lower grades.

4.1.3 Research Objectives

The overarching purpose of Document 4 is to examine whether the glass ceiling exists in DWP and if career-related support are inhibiting ethnic minority and whites managers in SEO and SCS grades to progress in to senior management and executive management positions in context of DWP. More specifically, this study was undertaken to identify the presence of the glass ceiling, unique to DWP and to examine evidence to the extent of the literature identified. The study was guided by the following exploratory research questions:

8. Is the existence of the glass ceiling in the organisation liable for the stagnation of ethnic minorities in lower levels and middle management positions, whilst the apex is white?
9. What influence does social career-related support have on the upward mobility of both ethnic minorities and whites?

This is examined in the context of determining how race impacts on these experiences. To this end, consistent with the positivism approach, this study is both descriptive and methodologically orientated. This study is interested in testing the hypothesis and contributing to knowledge on how the glass ceiling affects the career

aspirations of ethnic minorities to get to the upper echelons in a public organisation. The research approach selected for this study responds to the gap in the research and the call for continued research into the ethnic minorities' representation and experiences at senior management levels.

4.1.4 Area of study

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is the largest government department in the United Kingdom with a workforce of 100 000 employees around the country. It was created on June 8, 2001, from the merger of the employment part of the Department for Education and Employment and the Department of Social Security. It is headed by the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, a Cabinet position. It is made up of five businesses which are Jobcentre Plus, Pension, and Disability and Carers Services (was formed through the merging of The Pension Service and Disability and Carers Service), The Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission, Health and Safety Executive and the Rent Service.

A key feature of the organisation which is pertinent to this research is that the senior management and executive management positions are predominantly white people from similar corporate, social and educational backgrounds (Muskwe, 2009). Ethnic minorities make up 12% of the total workforce; however the distribution of the workforce is concentrated mainly in the lower level with 2% of the senior managers being ethnic minorities and none in the executive team. Most of the ethnic minorities are found in the lower grades of Administrative Officer (AO) to Executive Officer (EO) and the number starts receding as one move from Higher Executive Officer (HEO) to Senior Executive Officer (SEO) and dwindles from Grade 7 to Grade 6 and disappears at Senior Civil Servant grade with no non white Senior Civil Servant (SCS) as shown by figure 1. The disproportionate numbers of ethnic minorities clustered at the low echelons of the organisation or plateaued in middle management positions, where there is stagnation in career progression, whilst the organisation has a broad base of ethnic minorities and a snowy peak at the apex made up of whites. This apparent inequity is still prevalent even in the 21st century,

whilst public organisations have no choice but to pay more attention to diversity issues.

Staff composition

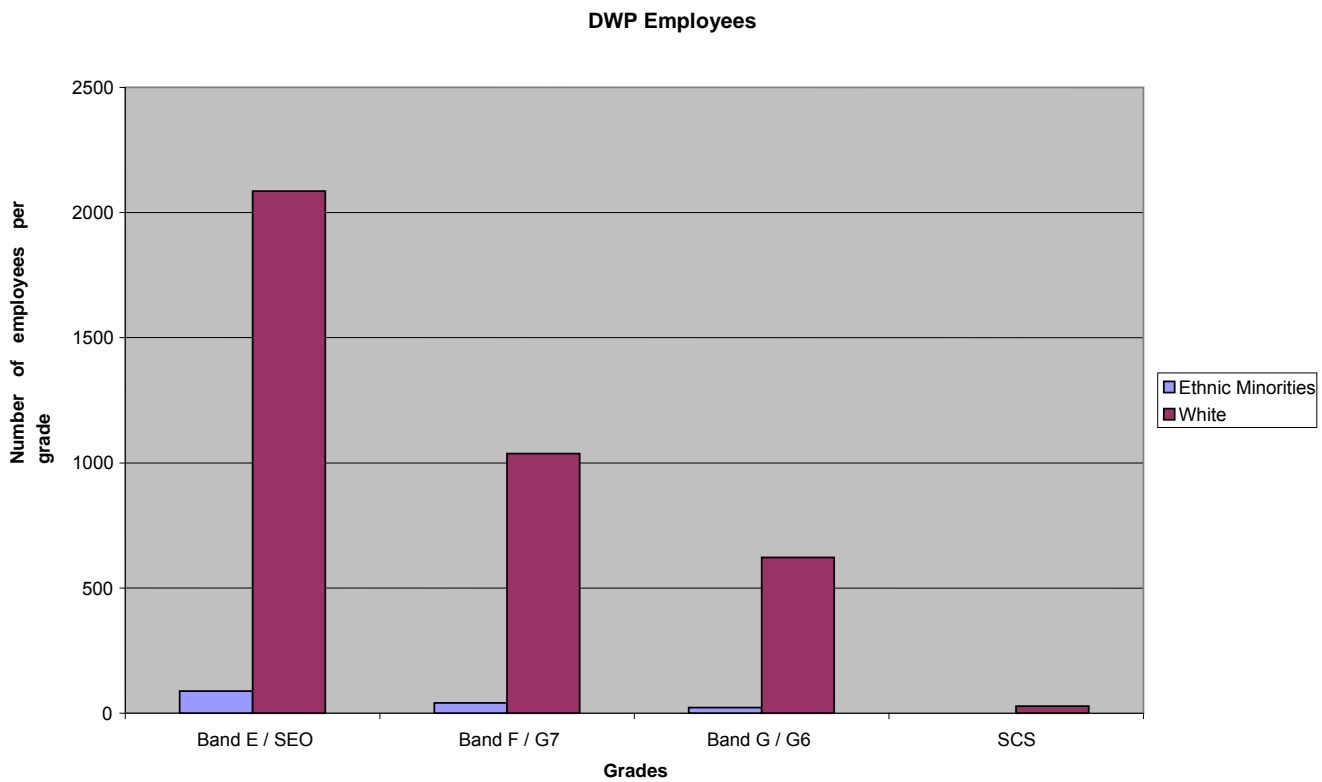


Figure 1: DWP employees shown by ethnicity and grades: Source: DWP Workforce Management Project

Chapter 4.2

4.2.1 Glass ceiling

The literature review of this study intends to apply the glass ceiling lens to view and unwrap the barriers faced by ethnic minorities into senior and executive management positions within DWP. The concept of a glass ceiling is a widely accepted explanation for the failure of ethnic minorities to match whites in their access to managerial positions (Garmon, 2007; Raha, 2007). Despite notable exceptions in politics and in the business world, ethnic minorities are still less likely to be found at the apex of public and private organisations compared their white counterparts (Avery, 2009; Kerr, 2009; Rosette *et al.*, 2008; Jackson *et al.*, 2007; Maume, 2004; Kandola, 2004). Research focusing on ethnic minorities in senior management positions, in Document 2 articulates the low representation of ethnic minorities in senior-level positions (Jackson, 2000; Corrigan, 2002; Hill, 2004; Jackson *et al.*, 2007b).

The major barriers to upward career mobility are no longer at the recruitment and job entry stage but at the advancement stages (Giscombe *et al.*, 2002; Bush *et al.*, 2006; Jackson *et al.*, 2007a). More ethnic minorities still work in lower status jobs than their white counterparts (Dipboye and Halverson, 2005). Previously identified variables that limited career development among ethnic minorities in general have included difficulty finding mentors (Blancero and DelCampo, 2005; Pearson and Bieschke, 2001), perceptions of workplace discrimination (Foley and Kidder, 2002; Maume, 2004; Paul, 2006), perceptions of limited opportunities for upward mobility (Foley, Kidder, and Powell, 2002). Perceptions of a limited opportunity structure have also been identified as a barrier to career progression among ethnic minorities. Jackson *et al.* (2007b) found that ethnic minorities perceived their advancement to be blocked because of a glass ceiling, which related to decreased perceptions of promotional fairness, increased perceptions of ethnic discrimination, limited perceived career prospects, and intent to turnover.

The glass ceilings are those artificial barriers based on attitudinal or organisational bias that prevent qualified individuals from advancing upward in their organisation (Powell *et al.* 1994). This unique form of racial discrimination is believed to prevent ethnic minorities from obtaining managerial positions and increases the severity at higher levels of (Maume, 2004). Researchers acknowledged the glass ceiling as a barrier and impediment to the advancement for ethnic minorities in the workplace (Jackson *et al.*, 2007a). The glass-ceiling insinuates the idea that ethnic minorities are recruited into firms dominated by whites, but fail to progress as far as whites in climbing the corporate hierarchy (Jackson *et al.*, 2007b; Raha, 2007; Kandola, 2004; Maume, 2004). The glass ceiling has become increasingly embedded in the discourse and praxis of society (Coleman, 1998). The core principles of a glass ceiling align with a contemporary movement to diversify senior-level positions in society by making advancements with regards to racial/ethnic participation. Specifically, the concept of a glass ceiling is generally viewed as a set of impediments barriers to career advancement for women and people of colour (Baxter *et al.*, 2000; Morrison *et al.*, 1990). These impediments span a constellation of variables that materialise into conscious and sub-conscious discriminatory practices (Lee 2002; Padavic *et al.*, 2002; Ridgeway, 2001).

The primary evidence for the existence of a glass ceiling comes from the absence of ethnic minorities at the apex of large corporations, it is still the case that more than 9 out of 10 chief executive officers are white (Avery, 2009; Roscigno, 2009; Rosette *et al.*, 2008; Jackson *et al.*, 2007b). The paucity of ethnic minorities running large corporations is taken as evidence that these groups face discriminatory barriers preventing them from reaching privileged positions. Those who dispute these numbers contend that executives require 20 to 30 years of grooming before they are ready to assume top leadership positions in large firms (Maume, 2004). Glass-ceiling proponents have responded to this assertion by investigating the ways in which organisations prevent ethnic minorities from entering the pipeline that would promote career parity. Analysts have examined the attainment effects of using social networks to find a job, differences in first job assignment, consequences of job

evaluations, and interactions with mentors and supervisors. Findings generally showed that whites have more extensive social networks, resulting in their securing better jobs than ethnic minorities (Avery, 2009). Once hired, white receive more on-the-job training and visible job assignments that facilitate their career mobility (Esmail *et al.*, 2005, Kandola, 2004). Whites are also more likely to be assigned mentors and receive more favourable job evaluations from their usually white superiors (Chin, 2005).

Most studies confirming the existence of the glass ceiling have used cross-sectional data to show that ethnic minorities are underrepresented at the top of a job ladder. However, as Cotter and colleagues (2001) pointed out, proportional representation at the top of a job ladder depends on a number of factors, including the rate of exit from the job ladder. That is, ethnic minorities who are discouraged with their initial placement on the ladder and their limited promotion chances may leave the firm. This will result in lower proportions of ethnic minorities and higher proportions of whites who survive to reach the top of the job ladder. Other analysts, although not necessarily testing for the effects of a glass ceiling, have used retrospective data to examine race differences in promotions (Baldi and McBrier, 1997). In addition to the possibility of recall error, these samples were limited to organisational survivors. If anything, these analyses may have underestimated the effects of the glass ceiling, because they do not examine the job transitions that narrows the promotion pool over time, processes that help create and sustain the glass ceiling (Alessio and Andrzejewski, 2000).

The glass ceiling is camouflaged by invisible or behind the scene elements such as racism, discrimination, tokenism, informal and hidden senior promotion processes, stereotyping of leadership, management and 'fit', token black (Davison, 1997), old boys' network and social exclusion (Muskwe, 2009). There is widespread evidence of covert or indirect discrimination, coupled, with a racial glass ceiling and negative stereotyping. The concentration of ethnic minorities in lower level and marginal jobs reinforces the existence of the glass ceiling through negative stereotypes about their capabilities and aspirations (Reskin, 2003; Fiske, 1998; Tsui and O'Reilly,

1989Kanter, 1977) limits their access to career opportunities, such as prestigious job assignments and training (Baron and Newman, 1990), restrains their ability to develop strategic networks and mentoring relations (Burt, 2005; Blair-Loy, 2001; Petersen, Saporta and Seidel, 1998; Ibarra, 1992, 1995) and lowers their self-esteem and career aspirations (Reskin 2003; Ridgeway and Smith-Lovin, 1999; Kanter, 1977) and this increases the intentions of ethnic minorities to leave the organisation (Foley, *et al.*, 2002).

Gray *et al.* (2008) argued that lack of similarity to senior managers may prohibit the involvement of ethnic minorities in informal social networks with supervisors. The exclusion from the social networks results in 'information isolation' or the lack of access to diverse information networks, as one of the main barriers that block the career advancement ethnic minorities (Gray *et al.*, 2008; Kandola, 2004). Exclusion from informal social networks produces such disadvantages for ethnic minorities as less access to critical organisational information, barriers to establishing strategic alliances, and subsequent limitations on upward mobility (Gray *et al.*, 2008, Ibarra, 1993). Ethnic minority employees are more likely to experience close supervision, have less complex tasks, have less managerial authority, and have less supervisory responsibility than white employees (; Tomaskovic-Devey, 2007; Tomaskovic-Devey, 2007; Cohen, 2006; Kandola, 2004; Maume, 2004; Baldi *et al.*, 1997).

Tomaskovic-Devey and Skaggs (2002) put it more bluntly in stating that social closure processes are about more powerful actors monopolizing desirable jobs by excluding subordinate groups. (Muskwe, 2009) studying ethnic minority managers found that the existence of the old boys school network, golden circle, white prototype, the peerage and regionalism was used by the managers to promote people who have attended similar schools (Oxbridge) with them, who are from the same region and in the same social strata. This practice of finding employees who are like existing employees at the top is homosocial reproduction (Smith, 2005; Kanter, 1977). Managers tend to carefully guard power and privilege for those who fit in, for those they see as 'their kind' (Kanter, 1977). Rand and Wexley (1975) are commonly credited with coining this phenomenon the 'similar-to-me effect'. The structure sets in motion forces leading to the replication of managers as the same kind and whites by virtue of protecting the power positions they reproduce

themselves at in senior and executive management positions thus maintaining a status quo of having a snowy apex. By so doing ethnic minorities are left at the bottom of the peck as there is no one of their kind who can hold their hands and take them up the corporate ladder (Muskwe, 2009). Managers at the top are reserving positions for those employees who are socially similar to themselves, in other words they are reproducing themselves at the very top of the organisation (Tomaskovic-Devey, 1993, 2007; Stainback, 2008). Those at the top of organisation, sponsor those that they think are most like themselves. This implies that there exists some form of sponsorship model for advancement within the organisation for white, while ethnic minorities have to rely on advancement through a contest model (Baldi *et al.*, 1997; Wilson, Kura-Lemessey and West, 1999), thus articulating the different promotion routes taken by whites and ethnic minorities, based on their race.

4.2.2 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework that guides the study is informed by two strains of research: the glass ceiling and the career support. The present work has a more straightforward aim, namely to document the existence of the glass ceiling in the organisation and how career-related supports impacts the advancement of ethnic minorities and whites. The researcher acknowledges that existing employment disparities stem from a variety of places. These include the historical, unequal treatment of ethnic minorities and as well as contemporary outcomes of employment and educational practices that are discriminatory at multiple levels, either in nature or intent. However, this study does not purport to uncover why employment disparities exist, rather the researcher seeks to identify to what extent, if any, they do and to what extent they differ by race. There are a number of theoretical frameworks which speaks of the existence of inequality. These include disparate impact theory (Jackson, 2008a; Shoben, 1977), social closure (Tomaskovic-Devey *et al.*, 2007) and underutilisation theory (Weinberg, 2008) among others. While incredibly robust and insightful these theories, the research conceptual model seeks to identify inequity in the workforce due to the existence of the glass ceiling and career social support mechanisms. Accordingly, the conceptual framework is informed by, in a

limited fashion, employment disparities identified as the glass ceiling. Access to longitudinal data that are required to formally test for a glass ceiling is limited, and possibly non-existent, in public sector research. Due to this limitation, glass ceiling is used only as a guiding concept for this study of ethnic minority disparities in the public sector workforce. While the researcher cannot say for certain that any identified disparities are evidence of a glass ceiling, they serve to highlight whether one might exist or not.

Due to the glass-ceiling ethnic minorities are recruited into organisations dominated by whites, but fail to progress as far as whites in climbing the corporate hierarchy. Although ethnic minorities are close enough to the top positions in the organisation to be considered in the recruitment pool for these positions, they rarely reach them. This frustration of seeing the top jobs but being passed over because of barriers which create a glass ceiling (Jackson *et al.*, 2007a; Raha, 2007; Maume, 2004). Figure 2 below shows how pull factors facilitate the advancement of white to the apex of the organisation whilst push factors such as racism, discrimination, being an ethnic minority, weak social networks ensure that they do not move beyond the middle management level as they do not fit, because the managers replicate themselves by sponsoring whites who are similar to them and fit the white prototype, thus they waltz to the apex of the organisation.

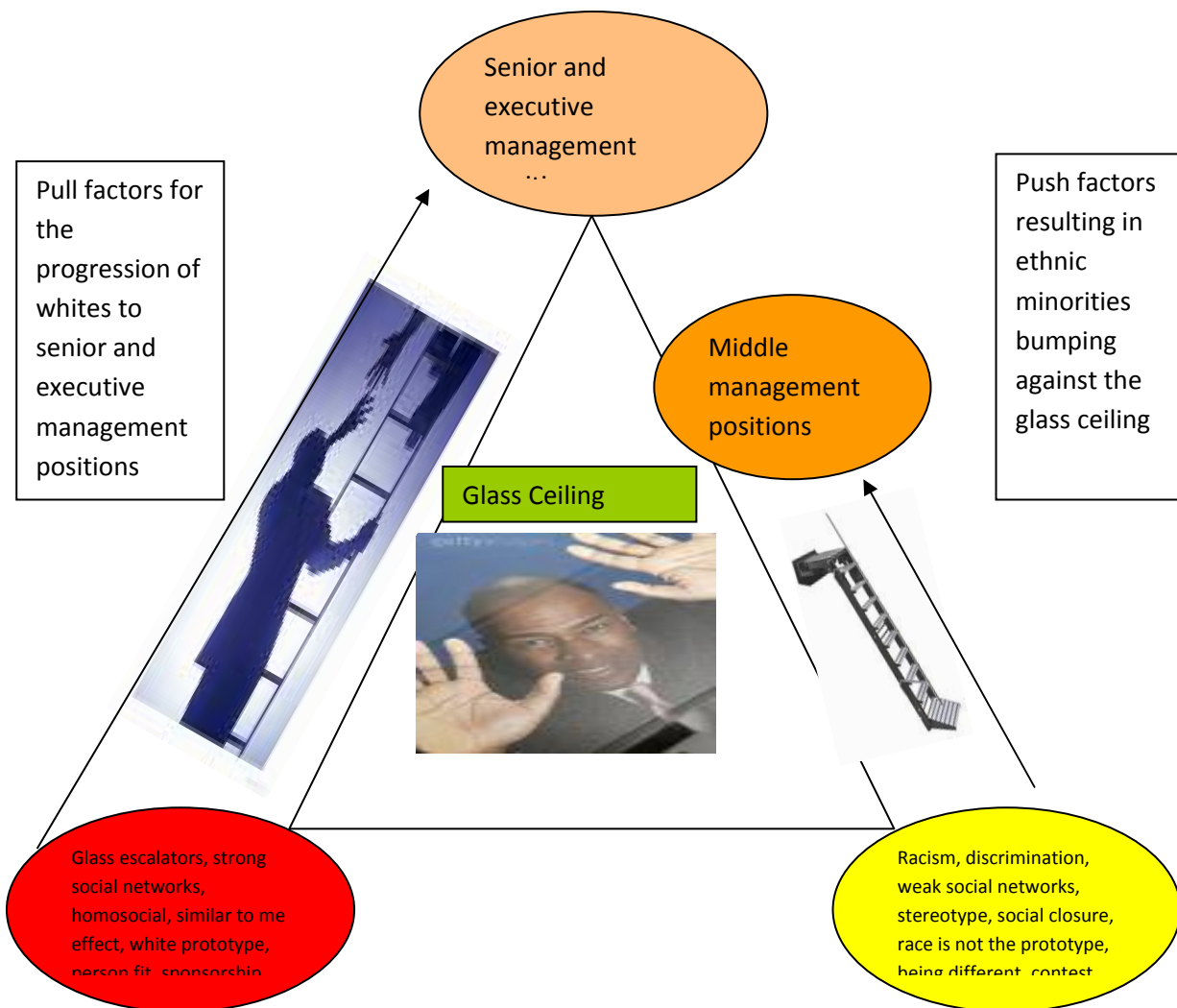


Figure 2: The glass ceiling mechanism.

While ethnic minorities are denied ascension into the senior and executive management jobs by the push factors shown by the figure 2 above. Whites find themselves ascending to the top management position via glass escalators, leaving ethnic minorities plateaued at the lower levels of management as they are ostracised from the social networks due to fewer network ties and less access to power than whites (Ibarra, 1993; 1995; Ragins and Sundstrom, 1989). Whites remain entrenched in the most powerful organisational positions (McGuire, 2000; Ibarra, 1992, 1995). Similarly, Forret and Dougherty (2004) found that some networking behaviours such as increasing internal visibility and engaging in professional

activities, helped White employees, but did not exhibit comparable effects for their ethnic minority counterparts. Thus, it appears ethnic minorities find it difficult to access informal social networks, thereby limiting their advancement prospects relative to their white peers as social arena is closed for them incurring a social closure (Tomaskovic-Devey *et al.*, 2007, Jackson *et al.*, 2007b; Combs, 2003). Given the differences in social networks, it naturally follows that ethnic minorities often perceive less support within their workplaces from their co-workers, supervisors, and organisations in general (Liao, Joshi and Chuang, 2004). As James (2000) demonstrated, ethnic differences in perceived support are mediated by social networks, such that ethnic minorities tend to have smaller social networks and, therefore, perceive less support than whites. Perceiving greater support from these various entities enhances the employee's perception of self worth and heightens their level of commitment to their work and the company in general (Ng and Sorenson, 2008). This, in turn, is likely to enhance decision-makers' perceptions of these individuals and influence who gets promoted.

Summary

This chapter has examined the glass ceiling as salient barrier, with a multiplier effect inhibiting ethnic minorities to ascend into higher positions within the organisations as identified in Documents 2 and 3. The chapter presented a conceptual model which illustrated how ethnic minorities are disadvantaged by the glass ceiling due to pull factors such as white as a leadership trait, similar to me effect, racism, homosocial reproduction and sponsorship which allowed whites to replicate themselves at the apex of the organisation. While ethnic minorities due to lack of fit are racialised, discriminated through social closure and have to obtain promotion through contest mobility, whilst whites waltz on the glass escalators to senior and executive management positions. The next chapter presents the research methodology which will be used to comprehend if the glass ceiling exists and how career related support affect career advancement for both whites and ethnic minorities in the organisation. This includes an explanation of the research approach, the research design and the methods employed for data collection and analysis.

Chapter 4.3

4.3.7 Research Methodology

This chapter confers the research methods employed in this study. The discussion hinges on the rationale for using positivism approach, quantitative research, online questionnaire and questionnaire design, sampling technique, method of data collection and data analysis. The purpose of the research is to provide the most valid, accurate answers possible to the research questions. In this chapter it is the aim of the researcher to present the research design and methodology employed in the study. The selected research approach outlined in this chapter is consistent with the aims of this study in that it follows a positivistic and quantitative research approach which explicitly examines variation in conception. As discussed, the aim of the research is to test hypothesis on the existence of the glass ceiling in DWP which hinders the ascension of ethnic minorities in middle management positions into senior or executive management positions within DWP in order to establish if race either facilitates or hinders career success.

4.3.8 The research paradigm

This section outlines the research paradigm adopted for the research in comparison with the other paradigms. A paradigm tells the researcher how to go about conducting research, based on assumptions and questions that need to be answered. Three distinctly different paradigms that guide research are positivism, interpretivism and critical science (Cantrell, 1993). Guba and Lincoln (1994) suggest four underlying paradigms for quantitative research: positivism, post-positivism, critical theory, and constructivism. Neuman (2000), following Sandelowski (1995) suggest three categories, based on the underlying research epistemology: positivist, interpretive and critical or realism. However it needs to be said that, while these three research epistemologies are philosophically distinct, in the practice of social research these distinctions are not always so clear cut (Lee, 1999).

4.3.9 Positivism

Positivism is based on the assumption that there are universal laws that govern social events, and uncovering these laws enables researchers to describe, predict and control social phenomena (Wardlow, 1989). Phenomenology research, in contrast seeks to understand values, beliefs and meanings of social phenomena, there by obtaining *verstehen* (deep and sympathetic understanding) of human cultural activities and experiences (Smith and Heshusius, 1986). Critical science seeks to explain social inequalities through which individuals can take actions to change injustices (Comstock, 1982). The three approaches take distinctively different epistemological positions regarding theoretical foundations, assumptions and purposes while producing competing modes of inquiry.

Researchers employing positivistic approach inherently recognise the following primary assumptions as intrinsic characteristics of the positivistic approach of inquiry. The physical world and social events are analogous in that researchers can study social phenomena as they do physical phenomena. (Wardlow, 1989: p3). An objective reality is assumed which can be systematically and rationally investigated through empirical investigation, and is driven by general causal laws that apply to social behaviour. This is sometimes called naïve realism (the ontological position) (Guba *et al.*, 1994). The researcher and the phenomena being investigated are assumed to be independent, and the researcher remains detached, neutral and objective. Any reduction in independence is a threat to the validity of the study, and should be reduced by following prescribed procedures. Hypotheses and subjected to empirical testing that is replicable. Hypotheses should be testable and provide the opportunity for confirmation and falsification. This is the essence of the scientific method (Wardlow, 1989).

Positivism predominates in science and assumes that science quantitatively measures independent facts about a single apprehensible reality (Healy and Perry, 2000). In other words, the data and its analysis are value-free and data do not change because they are being observed. That is, researchers view the world through a “one-way mirror” (Healy *et al.*, 2000). In its broadest sense, positivism is a rejection of metaphysics. It is a position that holds that the goal of knowledge is simply to describe the phenomena that we experience. The purpose of science is

simply to stick to what we can observe and measure. Knowledge of anything beyond that, a positivist would hold, is impossible (Trochim, 2000). As such, positivists separate themselves from the world they study, while researchers within other paradigms acknowledge that they have to participate in real-world life to some extent so as to better understand and express its emergent properties and features (Healy *et al.*, 2000). According to the positivist epistemology, science is seen as the way to get at truth, to understand the world well enough so that it might be predicted and controlled. The world and the universe are deterministic, they operate by laws of cause and effect that are discernable if we apply the unique approach of the scientific method. Thus, science is largely a mechanistic or mechanical affair in positivism. Deductive reasoning is used to postulate theories that can be tested. Based on the results of studies, we may learn that a theory does not fit the facts well and so the theory must be revised to better predict reality. The positivists believe in empiricism, the idea that observation and measurement are at the core of the scientific endeavour. The key approach of the scientific method is the experiment, the attempt to discern natural laws through direct manipulation and observation (Trochim, 2000).

4.3.4 Positivism Vs Phenomenology and Critical Science

Researchers advocating phenomenology often question the positivistic belief of the mind-independent reality. To phenomenologist researchers, organisational and social realities are constructed as a product of theorising itself shapes and affects reality; there is no mind-independent reality to correspond with hypotheses to serve as external referent point of their acceptability (Walker *et al.*, 1999). Phenomenology as a view that advocates the study of direct experience taken at face value and one which sees behaviour as determined by the phenomena of experience rather than by external, objective and physically described reality (Cohen and Manion 1987). Many would argue that phenomenology; sometimes called the non-positivistic approach is the appropriate strategy for research into people and their organisations. Of the same vein (Remenyi *et al.*, 1998: p 94 – 95), said,

But positivism has trouble in explaining why so many people hate their jobs, why customer service is so frequently poor, why some staff are achievement oriented and others are not, why some corporate cultures are highly centralised, while others need high degrees of autonomy. When it comes to answering these questions positivism provides few insights or even convincing and useful explanations. To cope with these problems of people and organisations it is necessary to go beyond positivism and use a phenomenology approach to research. It is increasingly accepted among business and management scholars that phenomenology is better suited to this type of research where the central issues concern people and their behaviour.

In this sense, phenomenology differs from positivism that focuses on explanations, predictions and establishing causality. White (1999) noted that instead of seeking casual explanations of behaviour, phenomenology research enhances our understanding of among other things, the beliefs, meanings, feelings and attitudes of actors in social situations. White (1994, p.59) illustrated the practical distinction of phenomenology from positivism by giving this example:

A positivist might attempt to explain why a particular job enrichment program is failing to provide expected results by examining established hypotheses about motivation and job design. A phenomenologist would rather enter the situation and ask the workers what they think about the program, what it means to them, what they are doing and why they are doing it. The goal is to discover the meaning of the program, how it fits with prior norms, values, rules and social practices, how the program may be in conflict with their prior definitions of social situation and what the emerging norms, values, rules and social practices might be.

Researchers advocating phenomenology often question the positivistic belief of the mind-independent reality. Phenomenology posit there are certain essential features of the life world, such as a person's sense of selfhood, embodiment, sociality, spatiality, temporality, project, discourse and mood-as-atmosphere (Ashworth, 2003, 2006). These interlinked 'fractions' (Ashworth, 2003) act as a lens through which to view the data. The task of the researcher is to bring out these dimensions and show the structural whole that is socially shared while also experienced in individual and particular ways.

Critical scientists go one step further in their philosophical opposition to the value-neutrality of positivism by arguing that researchers should take a stance and share

responsibility for social changes (Comstock, 1982). Critical scientist maintains that positivistic methods cannot capture the critical role in knowledge of values that are needed to improve human conditions (Comstock, 1982). They also point out that the positivistic tradition frequently neglects the realities of power, ideological beliefs and social inequities manifested in the society (Rettig, Tam and Yellowthunder, 1995). The major disadvantage of employing critical science in research is that the researcher's involvement, interaction and activities during the research process can be substantially political and thus may fail to facilitate scholarly writing (Fay, 1987). The critical science approach advocates a process of research that yields social change rather pure knowledge generation. Thus, while employing critical science can produce emancipatory knowledge, it might not be readily transformed into academic and publication due to lack of understanding and acceptance of the approach among the scholars and the time consuming nature of the research process (Rettig *et al.*, 1995). Critical scientists criticise positivistic researchers on the grounds that they lack or even dismiss the realities of value-laden policy making processes embedded in society. Yet, positivistic research has increasingly addressed the policy implications of research findings through evaluation research (Babbie, 1993).

After examining the merits and shortcomings of each, this has nevertheless led to the conclusion that organisational research would greatly benefit by adopting an emphasis of positivism as the principal research approach. Because of the fundamental premises that underlie positivism, specifically the requirements that the development and testing of hypotheses be conducted in a manner that is both quantifiable and able to be replicated, the subsequent findings would be less prone to error introduced by investigator subjectivity and hence more widely accepted. Empirical procedures used in the positivistic approach, moreover are best to assess and develop practical organisational interventions relative to outcomes produced by the phenomenologist and critical science paradigms. This not to say that the shortcomings of positivism as articulated by proponents of phenomenology and critical science taxonomies should be ignored, in fact, for the positivistic approach to be truly valuable, its potential disadvantages must be recognised and addressed.

One caveat to be noted is that while this research strongly advocates the adoption of positivism as the central research approach to investigate ethnic minorities' barriers into senior management positions in the organisation, it does not contend that the paradigms of phenomenology and critical science are ignored. Both provide the research with substantial value, the former through its attention to understanding the individual experiences and the latter by encouraging emancipation and self development.

4.3.5 Qualitative Research

Quantitative research has its underpinnings in the philosophical paradigm for human inquiry known as positivism (Polit and Hungler, 1999). Research driven by the positivist tradition is a 'systematic and methodological process' (Koch and Harrington, 1998) that places considerable value on 'rationality, objectivity, prediction and control' (Streubert and Carpenter, 1999). A distinguishing feature is the collection of numerical data (Jack and Clarke, 1998; Miles *et al.*, 1994) that, in turn, can be subjected to statistical analysis (Carter, 2000a). The functional or positivist paradigm that guides the quantitative mode of inquiry is based on the assumption that social reality has an objective ontological structure and that individuals are responding agents to this objective environment (Macmillan *et al.*, 1993). Quantitative research involves counting and measuring of events and performing the statistical analysis of a body of numerical data (Smith, 1988). The assumption behind the positivist paradigm is that there is an objective truth existing in the world that can be measured and explained. The main concerns of the quantitative paradigm are that measurement is reliable, valid, and generalisable in its clear prediction of cause and effect (Cassell and Symon, 2004).

Document 4 seeks to test two hypotheses, hence quantitative research was used and because of its link to the notion being objective truth or fact. Being deductive and particularistic, quantitative research is based upon formulating the research hypotheses and verifying them empirically on a specific set of data (Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias, 1992). Hypotheses are value-free; the researcher's own values, biases, and subjective preferences have no place in the quantitative approach. Researchers can view the communication process as concrete and

tangible and can analyse it without contacting actual people involved in communication (Ting-Toomey, 1984).

4.3.6 Hypotheses

The objective of this study is to test hypotheses and to understand ethnic minorities' and whites' own conceptions of the existence of the glass ceiling in the organisation and the influence of race on career advancement in line with the barriers uncovered in Documents 2 and 3. Race directly affected promotion decisions, to the disadvantage of ethnic minority. Despite the growing proportion of ethnic minorities in the workplace (Avery, 2009; Jackson *et al.*, 2007a; Kandola, 2004) and the concurrent emphasis on valuing diversity in organisations (Jackson *et al.*, 2007b), the proportion of ethnic minorities in top management positions in organisations remains less than 1 percent. Promotion decisions for top management positions involve subjective appraisals as to whether a given candidate will fit in with incumbent top managers (Smith, 2005; Baldi *et al.*, 1997). Individuals who are dissimilar to the incumbents in a particular type of job or to those making promotion decisions as ethnic minority candidates for a top management position in a white-dominated organisation would be at a disadvantage compared to individuals who are similar to incumbents and decision makers (white candidates) (Buckley *et al.*, 2007).

This hypothesis assumes that the glass ceiling exists within the organisation such that it hinders the success of ethnic minorities to become senior or executive managers within the organisation. Not only the existence of the glass ceiling affects ethnic minorities, but their race, being ethnic minorities has a direct effect on their promotion as they do not fit the white prototype of leadership. There is also a disadvantage created by lack of a strong social network, such that ethnic minorities are ostracised and circumvented by being outside the golden circle. To test these hypotheses, the researcher will compare whites against ethnic minorities' propensity to promotion within the organisation. Research has shown that ethnic minorities are at a disadvantaged position in professional occupations by virtue of their racial background. Ethnic minorities have to overcome a lot more obstacles than their

white counterparts to advance in their careers. When competing with their white counterparts for promotions, ethnic minorities are more likely to bumping their heads against the 'glass ceiling' (Naff, 1994), this will result in stagnation at the lower levels of the organisation and some of the ethnic minorities who would perceive treatment discrimination and leave the organisation.

H1: Ethnic minority managers will report the existence of the glass ceiling than white managers when seeking promotion.

H2: Ethnic minority managers will report receiving less career-related support than white managers.

Summary

This chapter has described the research paradigm, positivism and the quantitative research method. Quantitative research was used because of its link to the notion of being objectively truth or fact. It was used to test the two hypotheses, it is seen as a highly appropriate approach for this study. The next chapter provides the research design which was used in the research to gather the data from the participants and how the data collection instruments were designed.

Chapter 4.4

4.4.1 Research Design

A research design is a basic plan that guides the data collection and analysis phases of the research project (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2007, Fisher, 2005, Bryman and Bell, 2007). It provides the framework that identifies the type of information to be collected, its sources, and the collection procedure. The purpose of the research design is to provide the most valid, accurate answers possible to the research questions. This chapter aims to present the research design and methodology employed in Document 4. The methods employed in this study are quantitatively-based, as data was collected through an online questionnaire from ethnic minority and white managers within the organisation.

4.4.2 Sampling

The sample will make up the population to be studied (Morris, 2000) however the sample cannot be guaranteed to be representative (Fisher 2007). Although random selection is preferred as it minimises selection biases (Krueger and Casey, 2000), the pool of participants for this study was chosen purposefully, and hence purposeful sampling was used. The power of purposive sampling lies in selecting information rich-cases for in-depth analysis related to the central issues being studied (Sanders *et al.*, 2007). Purposive sampling can be used with both quantitative and qualitative studies (Bryman *et al.*, 2007). The researcher was not allowed to select the participants, but to use volunteers who met the research criteria, such as being in SEO to SCS grades. 99 of the participants self selected themselves to take part in the research after responding to an invitation (See Appendix) which was placed on the DWP Equality and Diversity intranet page inviting participants to take part in the research. Snowball sampling was also used where participants recommended at least one other person who met the required criteria for this study. Unfortunately, snowball sampling did not yield the expected results. Despite including the statement, 'Please contact me if you know of others who qualify for this study' on the invitation, the response rate was minuscule. Only twenty-two participants were

recommended and qualified to participate in the study. Overall the sample was made up of 121 people they were 60 ethnic minorities and 61 whites.

The Global Access List (GAL) is a comprehensive directory of email addresses for DWP employees, it was used to identify the email addresses of the participants. The DWP Directory was also used to identify the grade of the participant as a result it was easy to identify the right participant who meet the research requirements of being in SEO to SCS grades, this helped to eliminate errors as some people had similar names and people in lower grades had responded to the invitation to take part in the research thus using the directory ensured that the researcher verified the participants' grade and made sure that the participant met the sample criteria.

4.4.5 Data collection

The process of data collection began in November 2009 and was completed in the second week of December. Data was collected by means of an online questionnaire which was administered to 121 managers in SEO to SCS grades. The respondents were emailed an introductory and consent letter (Appendix 1) explaining the purpose of the research, they were informed that data will be numerically coded in order to preserve anonymity. The completion of the online questionnaire was taken as evidence of their willingness to participate and their consent to have the information used for the purposes of the study. A web link to the Nottingham Trent Auto form page was provided on Appendix 1 and this took the participants to the questionnaire.

Forty participants completed the questionnaire, this was a response rate of 33.1%. The response rate was higher than expected in online questionnaires as Witmer *et al.* (1999) suggested response rates of 10% or lower to be common. Additionally, it has been suggested that drop out from online questionnaires is much more likely than onsite questionnaires. This may be because individual questions regarding the completion of the online questionnaires are usually not possible, which can increase

drop out rates. Online questionnaires can be easily ignored and deleted at the touch of a button so getting a reasonable response rate can be challenging. Online users are intolerant of unsolicited communications and invitations to participate in research are increasingly considered 'spamming' (Harris, 1997), resulting in online surveys often having lower response rates than onsite surveys. The researcher attributes the response rate to a clash with the DWP employee survey which was administered a few days after inviting people to take part in the research. Also the sensitivity of the research might have made people reluctant to respond to the question irregardless of giving them assurance that they will not be identified as their responses will be codified. A reminder was sent out to all the participants to encourage them to complete the questionnaire and the importance for doing so was explained. Due to the fact that the researcher was not collecting identifiers, he had to apologise in case some of the recipients of the reminder had completed the questionnaire.

4.4.6 Research instrument development : Online questionnaire

An online questionnaire was structured to elicit information relating to the participants' views, concerning the existence of the glass ceiling as a barrier faced by ethnic minorities in their propositions to reach senior management positions within DWP and how career-related support affects their career advancement within the organisation. The online questionnaire was used as it was found to be cheap, as compared to interviews which were used in Document 3 where the researcher had to go to London, Nottingham, Sheffield, Manchester, Leeds, Birmingham and Bradford to interview the participants. In Document 3 the SCS participants did not take part as they did not have the time for the interview whereas with the online questionnaire, the participants can complete it at their convenience and taking only ten minutes than spending a quarter of an hour of their precious time in an interview. As the research is considered to be sensitive, the online questionnaire was found to be appropriate, the participants are more likely to answer sensitive questions (Pealer *et al.* (2001) as compared to interviews where interviewer effect and privacy issues may affect reliability (Braunsberger, Wybenga and Gates, 2007). This is because during the completion of the online questionnaire the tangible presence of the researcher is removed so bodily presence become invisible and the online research

becomes a great equaliser with the researcher having less control over the research process and potentially becoming a participant researcher (Llieva *et al.*, 2002).

The construction of the questionnaire was based on themes gleaned from the glass ceiling and social network literature reviewed in Document 2 and the themes which came out of the data analysis from the interviews carried out in Document 3 (Kaparou and Bush, 2007). An attempt was made to relate the questions directly to the objectives of the study (Kaparou *et al.*, 2007). Two demographic questions were also asked (See Appendix 2).

The assistance of an expert in online questionnaire development in the form of the supervisors and work colleagues, was sought at every stage of the construction of the questionnaire, and the help of the Nottingham Trent University informatics department particularly Mr Andy Sutton who assisted in writing the web pages for the survey is highly appreciated. The questionnaire survey was created using the html compiler on the NTU Auto form and followed a similar format to traditional self-completion postal questionnaires, the main difference being that the survey form was set up online. In order to administer the questionnaire a series of web pages were developed. All pages included the Nottingham Trent University crest to show institutional affiliation, to give the project credibility and ensure the participants could verify the status. After the scales had been developed the supervisors were consulted to review the instrument layout, item standardisation, clarity, relevance and level of difficulty of the language used. Using the professional feedback, the necessary changes were made, and then a suitable sample was found to pilot. The final questionnaire had 39 items.

The questionnaire had 5 sections outlined below.

4.4.4.1 Demographics

This was designed to obtain the participants' demographic information, on ethnicity, there were two variables to distinguish the ethnicities white and ethnic minority, it

should be noted that ethnic minority denotes people who were non white. In this research it is the unstable combination of skin colour and culture that marks ethnic minorities from the majority of the UK population Mason (2003, p.12) maintains that, "Ethnic minorities are those whose skin is not white and the difference between ethnic minorities and the majority is marked ultimately by the whiteness". The researcher used this distinction to identify ethnic minorities for the research in addition to the Census ethnicity classification (Office of National Statistics, 2008). Ethnic minorities constituted Asians (Indian Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Other Asian background, All Asian groups), Black (Caribbean, African, Other Black background, All Black groups), Mixed Heritage (White and Black Caribbean, White and Black African, White and Asian, Other mixed background) and Chinese (Chinese, All Chinese or Other groups). The gender of the participant was requested and this section also sought to obtain information about the participants' business unit and their grade. (See Appendix 2)

4.4.4.2 Doing your job

This section sought to explore information on how the participants viewed their working environment and their respective jobs, it had 5 items: such as *Prejudice exists where I work*, *At my present job, some people get better treatment because of their race*, and *My line Manager is positive and encourages me to progress in my career*. This was designed to find out about the views of the participants about their perceptions of the areas they work in general.

4.4.4.3 Reaching top management

This section collected information on the career aspirations and the experiences of the participants as they sought to get promotion to the next grade. These questions were derived from examining statistics shown in *figure 1* there are no ethnic minorities at the apex of the organisation whilst there is a broadbase, which is made

up of ethnic minorities that stagnate at the lower level of the organisation, hence the need to find out what is causing the disparity. The questions were gleaned from literature by (e.g. Rosette *et al.*, 2008; Jackson, 2008b; Jackson *et al.*, 2007b; Esmail., 2005; Kandola, 2004; Thomas and Gabarro, 1999) who found that ethnic minorities were not getting the top jobs, in both the private and public sectors and asked why? The why question has also been asked by Avery (2009) in *Why the Playing Field Remains Uneven?: Impediments to Promotions in Organisations*. This section had 9 items such as *I'd like to see myself as part of the future leadership in the DWP, Seeing (people similar to me) ethnic minorities working at senior and executive levels would encourage me to develop my career, and Race is a contributing factor to black-white differences in the workplace, with more favourable treatment towards whites*. In the Document 3, the DWP executive team was described as being all white with no black spot, this necessitated the statement *DWP senior and executive teams are made up of whites only* so as to ascertain if this could be verified by whites. The observed racial homogeneity in senior management does not reflect the modern perspective of the changing demographics and the representativeness of the organisation's overall workforce (Gorman, 2009; Muskwe, 2009; Avery, 2009; Jackson *et al.*, 2007a; Creswell 2006; Padavic and Reskin, 2002). The disproportionate numbers of ethnic minorities found at the low echelons of the organisation or plateauing in middle management positions has necessitated the development of these questions.

4.4.4.4 Experience of the glass ceiling effect

This section gathered information on the existence of the glass ceiling in the organisation as perceived by the participants. Ethnic minorities comprise a large segment of the available managerial talent cross the organisation, yet their representation at top level managerial positions in Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), is rather obscure. There is no ethnic minority in Chief Executive positions and the number of ethnic minorities in Senior Civil Servant grade are so small that it is hard to get meaningful data. This in itself is an indication of the seriousness of the problem. Not only is that an issue but the senior management and executive

management positions are occupied predominantly by white people from similar corporate, social and educational backgrounds (Muskwe, 2009). This observation convinced the researcher to seek clarification of the situation through the following statements: *The makeup of the senior and executive management teams means they are looking for the same type of people, There is no place for anyone who does not fit the white leadership prototype, A glass ceiling exists in the organisation and hinders my promotion and Because of my race I am locked in glass cage and I cannot get to the next grade, even though I can see an empty seat.*

The researcher needed to understand how the participants viewed the organisation in regard to the existence of the glass ceiling as a barrier to promotion to higher grades. These statements were designed to find out if the glass ceiling exists within the organisation and was hindering career progression of the participants. The statements were derived from issues raised by (Mackay *et al.*, 2006; Steele, 2006; Powel, 1988; Jackson, 2008a; Muskwe, 2009; Gorman, 2009; Padavic and Reskin 2002; Creswell 2006; Jackson *et al.*, 2007b) on why ethnic minorities fail to progress into executive management positions. Due to lack of heterogeneous at the top of the organisation, the researcher sought to understand and assess if being white was the leadership prototype for senior or executive positions as found by Rosette *et al.*, 2008 in their White Standard paper, where it was stated that white was a component for leadership prototype, hence these statements were developed, *White is a prototype for senior and executive management positions, ethnic minorities do not meet the leadership prototype.*

4.4.4.5 Social network

This section sought information on the social network how it enhances or hinders the prospects of promotion of the managers within the organisation. (Muskwe, 2009) studying ethnic minority managers found that the existence of the old boys school network, golden circle, white prototype, the peerage and regionalism was used by the managers to promote people who had attended similar schools (Oxbridge) with them, who are from the same region and in the same social strata. Ethnic minorities were found to be excluded from the social networks that would enhance their career advancement due to their race. This urged the researcher to seek further clarification

on how deep rooted the issue was hence these statements were developed: *There are positive ethnic minority role models in senior and executive positions whom I can relate to, Managers see two colours black and white and they stick with their own kind, You need someone to hold your hand as you walk on the glass escalators to the senior and executive management positions, At work I feel socially isolated because of my race, and I sometimes contemplate leaving to join another organisation.* Empirically ethnic minorities are hampered by lack of access to networks in a promotion system predicated on the notion 'it's not what you know but who you know' (Avery, 2009, Buckley *et al.*, 2007; Blair-Loy, 2001; Burt, 2001; Wilson *et al.*, 1999). This evident by their responses to these statements were the overwhelmingly agreed that *You have to know the right people in order to get promoted into senior or executive management positions, Old boys network assist people to get into senior and executive management positions,. You need someone to hold your hand as you walk on the glass escalators to the senior and executive management positions and My social networks assist in my career advancement.* These statements were also encouraged by literature from Gray *et al.* (2008) who concurred with the researcher that that lack of similarity to senior managers may prohibit the involvement of ethnic minorities in informal social networks with supervisors.

The exclusion from the social networks results in 'information isolation' or the lack of access to diverse information networks, as one of the main barriers that block the career advancement ethnic minorities (Gray *et al.*, 2008; Kandola, 2004). Exclusion from informal social networks produces such disadvantages for ethnic minorities as less access to critical organisational information, barriers to establishing strategic alliances, and subsequent limitations on upward mobility (Gray *et al.*, 2008, , Tomaskovic-Devey *et al.*, 2007; Tomaskovic-Devey, 2007; Cohen, 2006; Maume, 2004; Baldi *et al.*, 1997; Ibarra, 1993, 1995, Kanter, 1977). *Managers tend to carefully guard power and privilege for those who fit in, for those they see as 'their kind.'* Managers at the top are reserving positions for those employees who are socially similar to themselves, in other words they are reproducing themselves at the very top of the organisation. Those at the top of organisation, sponsor those that they think are most like themselves. This implies that there exists some type of

sponsorship model for advancement within the organisation for white, while ethnic minorities have to rely on advancement through a contest model (Baldi *et al.*, 1997; Wilson *et al.*, 1999).

4.4.5 Rating scale

Likert scales were used in the questionnaires to measure the participants' attitudes, opinions, or perceptions. The researcher employed a 5-point scale strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree. The participants choose from a range of possible responses to a specific question or statement, such as "strongly agree," "agree," "neutral," "disagree," "strongly disagree." The categories of the response were coded numerically, in which case the numerical values must be defined, such as 1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, neutral =3, disagree = 4 strongly disagree =5

4.4.6 Online Questionnaire Development

The researchers kept the questionnaire short as a long and time-consuming questionnaire is likely to result in fewer people wanting to participate thus less people would complete it. To overcome these problems the invitation to participate in the questionnaire, and the welcome message, provided realistic details about how long the questionnaire will take respondents to complete. The researcher stated that it would take 10 minutes to complete the questionnaire. As a general rule, Best and Krueger, (2004) recommended that online questionnaires should take respondents no more than 10 minutes to complete. Providing respondents with an indication of how far through the questionnaire they are at regular intervals can be useful for participant retention (Best *et al.*, 2004).The researcher used a progress indicator, which showed the respondent's progress.

The online questionnaire was consistent in appearance when viewed using different computer hardware and software packages. This was important to avoid possible variations in the appearance owing to differences between the respondents' computer hardware or software and the researchers'. To achieve this, the questionnaire was assessed on how it works at a range of screen settings. It is common practice to design for the most common screen size (800 x 600) as a minimum, but it is important to check that the questionnaire does not display badly at

larger or smaller sizes. As good practice the questionnaire was tested on as many different web browsers as possible prior to launch. This was done by downloading archived versions of major browsers. The researcher also asked friends and colleagues who use different browsers or have different connection speeds to view the questionnaire and feed back before deploying it. Prior to distributing the online questionnaire all aspects of design were piloted, using different types of potential respondents and with different types of computer. Navigation, spelling, typographical errors, appearance and readability were all checked. Usability testing can also be conducted for web-based questionnaires which involve checking that the website performs the function for which it was designed, with the minimum amount of user frustration, time and effort (Pearrow 2000). Nielsen (2000) suggests that testing five users will reveal 85% of a website's usability problems. Colour was used to enhance the questionnaire style and ease navigation. But technical variance in computers can result in colour variation in the received questionnaire and can increase download times. In order to minimise variation in the colour scheme, the researcher according to adopted the 216 colour web-safe palette that eliminates the 40 variable colours on an 8-bit system (Best *et al.*, 2004).

Text appearance is based on font, size and decoration. The choice can affect transmission times, screen configurations and perceived length of questionnaire. The researcher used the Arial font style for high levels of legibility and readability (Bernard and Mills, 2002). The researcher used font size 12 and 14-point which are the most popular according to (Bernard *et al.*, 2002). Font decorations such as italics, bold were not used as it can reduce reading speed and accuracy. Underlining was not used as it can cause confusion with hypertext links. The questions formatted and laid out for easy distinguishing and choices given were equally spaced and positioned consistently to avoid measurement error.

A welcome message was placed at the start of the questionnaire to inform the respondents that they had come to correct place. This was brief, outlined the purpose of the questionnaire, made respondents feel that their contribution was important, and emphasised how easy it was for them to participate in the research. The welcome message was simple in order to avoid complex information such as lists of instructions about how to complete the questionnaire. Further links were

provided for more detailed information about issues such as data protection and confidentiality.

Successful instructions at the final stage of a questionnaire can improve response rates, and reduce the incidence of multiple submission or submission of invalid data (Best *et al.*, 2004). Before submission, the researcher informed the user that the submit button should be pressed only once. After submission, the respondent was informed that the questionnaire had been submitted successfully and the researcher expresses his gratitude and this message appeared: *Thank for taking part in this research.*

4.4.7 Reliability and validity

Replicability is a common measure of reliability of research results (Cooper *et al.*, 2008). According to McMillan and Schumacher (1993), reliability refers to the consistency of measurement, which is, the extent to which the results are similar over different forms of the same instrument or occasions of data collection. A highly reliable instrument (Cates, 1995) can be depended upon to produce the same or nearly same score when administered twice to the same subject. To ensure consistency of reliability in the current investigation, the researcher administered the online questionnaire to participants similar in characteristics that was from SEO to SCS grades within DWP. Also to enhance reliability the online questionnaire was administered during the same time period to all participants.

Validity is the degree to which systematic explanations of phenomena match the realities of the world (McMillan *et al.*, 1993). A measurement is valid if it measures or represents what it claims to measure or represent. In the case of this investigation, the online questionnaire was used to assess the lived experiences of the participants as employees of DWP in SEO to SCS grades. Thus the questionnaire had items related to the glass ceiling and the career-related support as these were the phenomena of interest.

4.4.9 Ethical Considerations

Bell (1993) points out that no researcher can demand access to an institution, an organisation or to materials. Thus, special permission to conduct this research was granted by the Director of Equality and Diversity after explaining to her about the research and she offered to have the invitation for participants to be placed on her directorate intranet page (Appendix 3). The invitation explained the purpose of the research and ensured that the participants knew what was expected of them and what would happen to the information they would have given. This information was necessary before the participants could decide whether to participate or not.

The research was reviewed and approved by the Research Ethics Committee at Nottingham Trent University. The review involved outlining the research approach, methodology and sample selection. Although this research was exempted by the Research Ethics Committee, an invitation letter (Appendix1) to participate in the survey informed the participants that by taking part they would have given their consent Informed and they had a choice whether or not to participate (McMillan *et al*, 1993; Cohen *et al.*, 1994).

Due to the sensitivity of the research, the anonymity of the participants was maintained as the researcher did not collect any identifiers as a result the participants could not be identified. According to Neuman (2000) a researcher has a moral obligation to uphold confidentiality of data, which includes keeping information confidential from others in the field and disguising participants' names. It is in this light that all participants were assured the data collected would be kept confidential and would not be shared with anyone apart from the research supervisors, without their authorisation. The researcher coded the responses obtained to prevent the research participants from being individually identifiable in any document or publication arising from this project. All possible care was exercised to ensure that the participants and the business units that they worked for can not be identified by the way the researcher writes up the findings.

4.4.10 Research Limitations

Although the present results are significant both theoretically and empirically, there are some methodological limitations. Several limitations of this study should be noted. Notably, the cross-sectional design of the study precludes causal inferences. For example, the direction of the relationships between glass ceiling and career related support is difficult to determine. Although the researcher argues that receiving career-related support is an outcome of having a network that comprises racially similar and strong-tie relationships. Longitudinal and qualitative designs may speak better to the predicted relationships. The extent to which the findings of this study are generalisable to organisations in the public sector or other industries and with different hierarchical structures is unknown. This is an especially important concern because the sample for this study constitutes only management level employees (SEO to SCS grades) working in DWP business units.

The researcher cannot be sure whether similar patterns of results would be found in organisations that differ in their demographic and structural composition. Results obtained from studying one department in this organisation should not be generalized to other departments in the same organisation or to other types of organisations without additional research. Further, analyses were restricted to a limited response of 40 people as compared to the 121 participants whom the questionnaire had been sent to, this can be attributed to the sensitivity of the research and also ethnic minority managers are found in meagre numbers, not much could be done to increase them as the researcher had contacted the suitable people. The researcher has not attempted to review the research findings relating to specific groups of ethnic minorities in this document and acknowledges this limitation. This deficiency will be overcome by collecting information on barriers salient to individual ethnic minority groups in United Kingdom in future work.

4.4.10 Data Analysis

According to Punch (2003), a descriptive analysis of all the main variables is done focussing on the distribution of statements. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 17.0 was used to analyse the data captured from the questionnaires. Each questionnaire item was regarded as representing the perception of the respondent on the issues and thus a separate variable. Analysis undertaken on the responses to these variables included the following:

- One way frequencies: Frequency or one-way tables represent the simplest method for analysing nominal data. They are often used as one of the exploratory procedures to review how different categories of values are distributed in the sample. In Document 4 the perception of the existence of the glass ceiling was summarised in a frequency table and the frequency tables show the number of whites and ethnic minorities who participated. As an initial exploratory analysis step, univariate one way frequency tables, categorised according to the specific options of each question, such as strongly agree to strongly disagree were calculated for each variable. This was undertaken to validate data and correct or remove any spurious response analysis. For instance if a response of '6' was to be encountered for the 5 point Likert rating scale questionnaire items in section 2-5, this would need to be investigated as the value of '6' falls outside the range of the valid response, which vary between '1' and '5' for the five point Likert rating scale questionnaire. The one-way frequency tables on the variables were further calculated as means of describing the sample population of the grades between ethnic minorities and ethnic minorities. This was done in two stages, first the entire sample population, and then frequencies were split into ethnic minorities and whites.
- Relationship: cross-tabulations of the sub-sets of items within sections 2-5 of the questionnaire with variables of race and the variables. Cross tabulation is a combination of two or more frequency tables arranged such that each cell in the resulting table represents a unique combination of specific values of cross tabulated variables. Thus, cross tabulation allows the researcher to examine frequencies of observations that belong to specific categories on more than one variable. By examining these frequencies, the researcher can identify relations between cross tabulated variables. Only nominal variables or variables with a relatively small number of different meaningful values should

be cross tabulated. The simplest form of cross tabulation is the 2 by 2 table where two variables are "crossed," and each variable has only two distinct values this was used to analyse the view of race and grades.

- The Pearson Chi-square is the most common test for significance of the relationship between categorical variables. This measure was calculated from the tables of frequencies to determine if there was any significance between the variables.

Summary

This chapter has discussed the research paradigm and approach and provided the rationale for using positivism and quantitative inquiry. The research presented how the data collection tool, online questionnaire was developed and pilot tested. The ethical considerations taken were discussed and how the data obtained was to be analysed using the SPSS. The following chapter presents the results.

Chapter 4.6

4.5.1 Results

This chapter elucidates the findings from the data which was obtained from the survey, through the use of descriptive statistics to make comparison of the information presented by the respondents. Data was collected from whites and ethnic minorities in SEO to SCS grades the response was 33.1%

The managers participating the survey were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with a number of statements relating to the existence of the glass ceiling in the organisation and how social support influences career advancement. They assigned a rating to each statement using 5-point Likert scale (1: strongly agree, 2: agree, 3: neutral, 4: disagree 5: strongly disagree). For the purpose of analysis, these ratings were collapsed into three response categories as follows, this was done to validate the results, as some of the variables had an expected count of less than 5, thus rendering the findings invalid:

- 1 – agree/strongly agree;
- 2 – neither agree nor disagree;
- 3 – disagree/strongly disagree.

4.5.2 Presentation of the findings

The results presented in this research will be based on simple bivariate cross-tabulations of survey variables. Key relationships between the relevant variables are presented in the charts of tables in the study. The base for each chart/table is given underneath the relevant chart/table, and non-responses are not included in the base. Similarly, the percentages reported in the tables exclude non-responses and therefore they are valid percentages. Pearson's Chi-square has been used to test significance on cross-tabulations, and significance is measured at a cut-off of 95 per

cent significance in a two-sided test. However, if the minimum expected frequency is less than one, or the number of cells with an expected frequency of less than five applies to more than 20 per cent of the cells, the sample size is too small for the test to be reliable, and the result is not reported as significant, regardless of the Chi-square statistic, hence the ratings were collapsed into three response as stated above in order to conduct detailed analysis on the two groups.

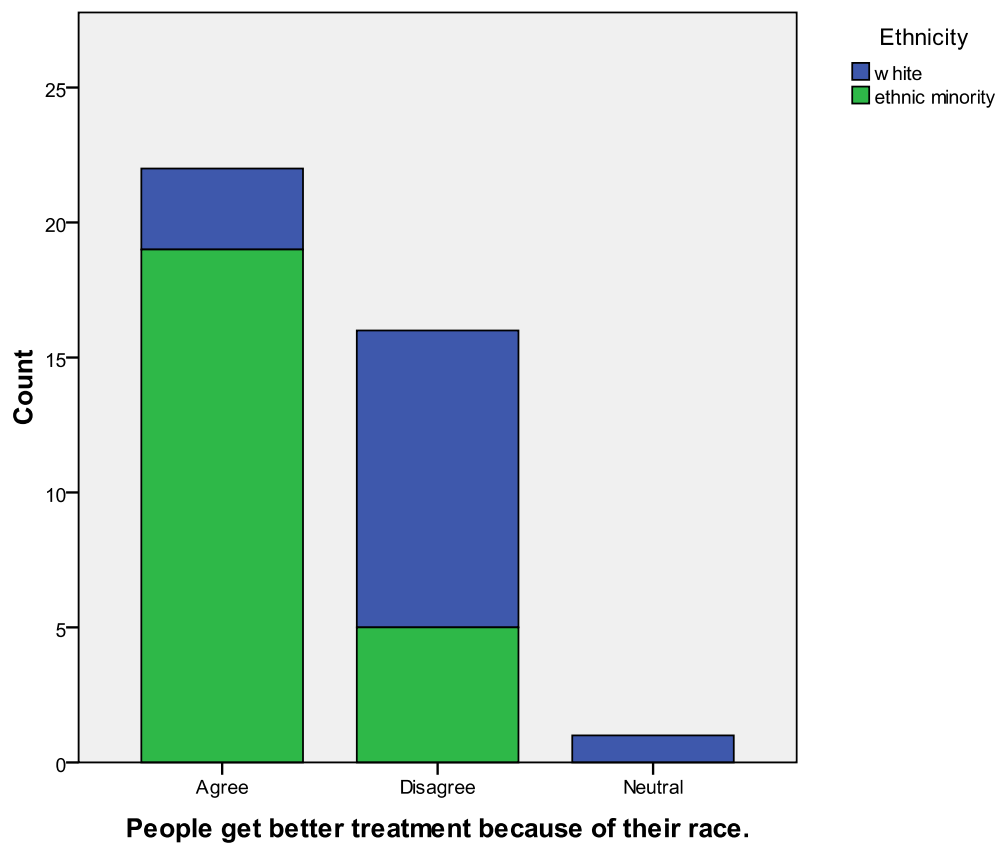


Figure 3

As shown by the Figure 3 above in terms of how people are treated in the organisation in relation to their race 19 out of 24 (79.2%) of ethnic minority managers reported that they are not treated the same as their white colleagues due to their race. On the contrary white managers, were more likely to mention that they there is equal treatment within the organisation, this is shown by the negative correlation of the responses given for the question as 11 out of 15 (73.3%) of whites disagree.

Ethnicity * Better Treatment Cross tabulation

			Better Treatment			Total
			Agree	Disagree	Neutral	
Ethnicity	White	Count	3	11	1	15
		Expected Count	8.5	6.2	.4	15.0
		% within Ethnicity	20.0%	73.3%	6.7%	100.0%
	ethnic minority	Count	19	5	0	24
		Expected Count	13.5	9.8	.6	24.0
		% within Ethnicity	79.2%	20.8%	.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	22	16	1	39
		Expected Count	22.0	16.0	1.0	39.0
		% within Ethnicity	56.4%	41.0%	2.6%	100.0%

Table 1

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	"Asymp. Sig". (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	13.530 ^a	2	.001
Likelihood Ratio	14.569	2	.001
N of Valid Cases	39		

a. 2 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .38.

Table 2

As shown by the profound chi square evidence of association there is absolute no association, since $p\text{-value} = .001 < .05$, because of the high significance level of 0.01 or 99.9% indicates there is certainly a true difference on how people are treated in the population from which the sample was drawn. It can be concluded that there is a relationship between race and the treatment people get within the organisation as ethnic minorities have shown even though whites have different opinions.

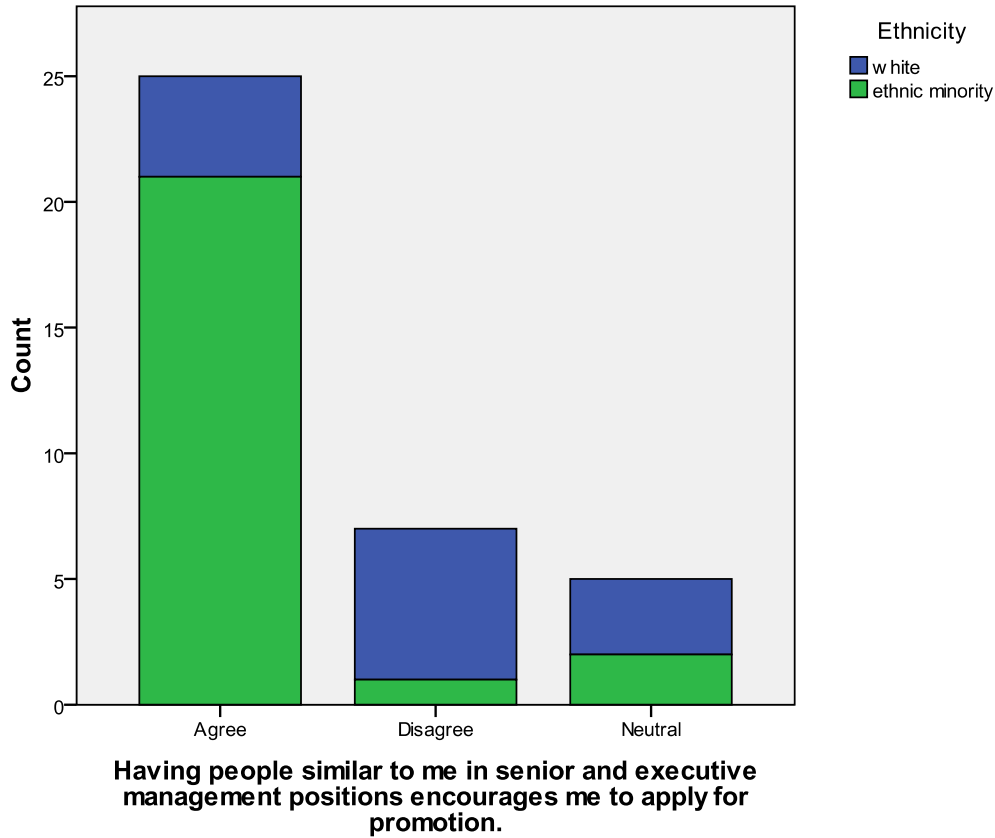


Figure 4

87.5% ethnic minority managers (21 out of 24) agreed than 26.7% White managers, (2 out of 15) that having people similar to you in senior or executive management positions encourages them to seek promotion to the next grade. 40% of white disagreed with this notion, whilst only 4.2% ethnic minorities disagreed also. This show an over representation of ethnic minorities with over half of the sample 21 out of 39 agreeing that similarity plays an important part when it comes to career advancement as compared to less than a fifth of the population disagreeing 6 out 39 whites.

Ethnicity * Similar to me Cross tabulation

			Similar to me			Total	
				Agree	Disagree		Neutral
Ethnicity	White	Count	2	4	6	3	15
		Expected Count	.8	9.6	2.7	1.9	15.0
		% within Ethnicity	13.3%	26.7%	40.0%	20.0%	100.0%
	ethnic minority	Count	0	21	1	2	24
		Expected Count	1.2	15.4	4.3	3.1	24.0
		% within Ethnicity	.0%	87.5%	4.2%	8.3%	100.0%
Total		Count	2	25	7	5	39
		Expected Count	2.0	25.0	7.0	5.0	39.0
		% within Ethnicity	5.1%	64.1%	17.9%	12.8%	100.0%

Table 3

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	"Asymp. Sig". (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	16.113 ^a	3	.001
Likelihood Ratio	17.514	3	.001
N of Valid Cases	39		

a. 6 cells (75.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .77.

Table 4

The fact that the Pearson chi-square value under “Asymp. Sig” is 0.001 and less than .05 indicates that the variables are independent of each other, stating that ethnicity plays a pivotal role in the association of people within the organisation. This is statistically significant and hence the researcher can conclude that there is a relation between the two variables as ethnic minorities strongly feel that having people similar to them in senior and executive management positions acts as a stimuli for them to aspire ascending on to the corporate ladder to the higher echelons of the organisations, whilst whites do not agree that the racial similarities urges them to apply for promotion.

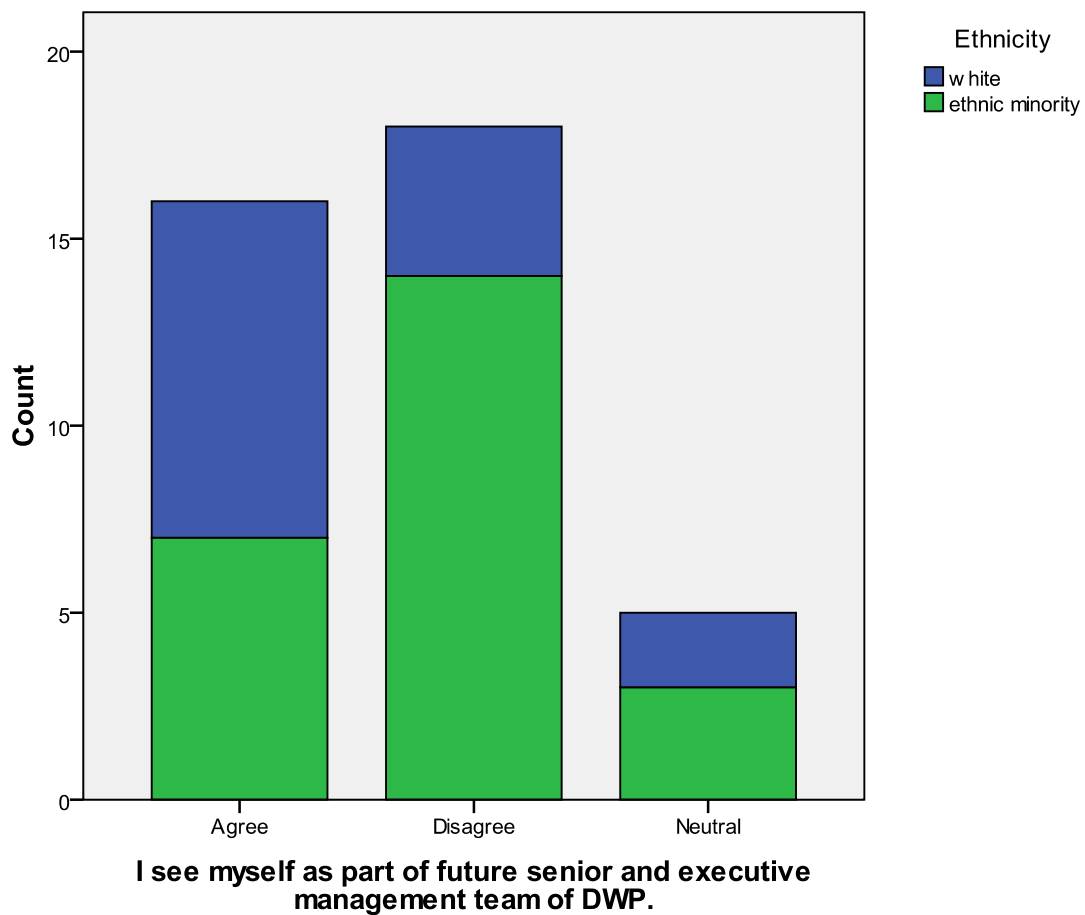


Figure 5

Managers from white backgrounds were more likely than ethnic minority managers to indicate that they would like to be a future leader in the organisation. As shown by

the bar graph, on *Figure 5*, 80% (2 out of 15) whites agree that they see themselves as part of the senior and executive management team of DWP in the near future whilst 14 out 24 (58.3%) of ethnic minorities disagree that they will be part of the future leadership of the organisation, whilst only 41.7% (10 out 24) see themselves as part of the future leadership team of the organisation as compared to 20% whites who do not see themselves as part of the future leadership of the organisation.

Ethnicity * Future leadership Cross tabulation

			Future leadership		Total
			Agree	Disagree	
Ethnicity	White	Count	12	3	15
		Expected Count	8.5	6.5	15.0
		% within Ethnicity	80.0%	20.0%	100.0%
ethnic minority		Count	10	14	24
		Expected Count	13.5	10.5	24.0
		% within Ethnicity	41.7%	58.3%	100.0%
Total		Count	22	17	39
		Expected Count	22.0	17.0	39.0
		% within Ethnicity	56.4%	43.6%	100.0%

Table 5

If the figures in the table are observed then it can be seen that 80% of whites can see themselves as future leaders but only 41.7% of people from ethnic minorities can do so. Although this result is interesting a chi square test shows that it is statistically significant at the 0.5 level.

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	"Asymp. Sig". (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.516 ^a	2	.019
Likelihood Ratio	5.809	2	.044
N of Valid Cases	39		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 6.54.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Table 6

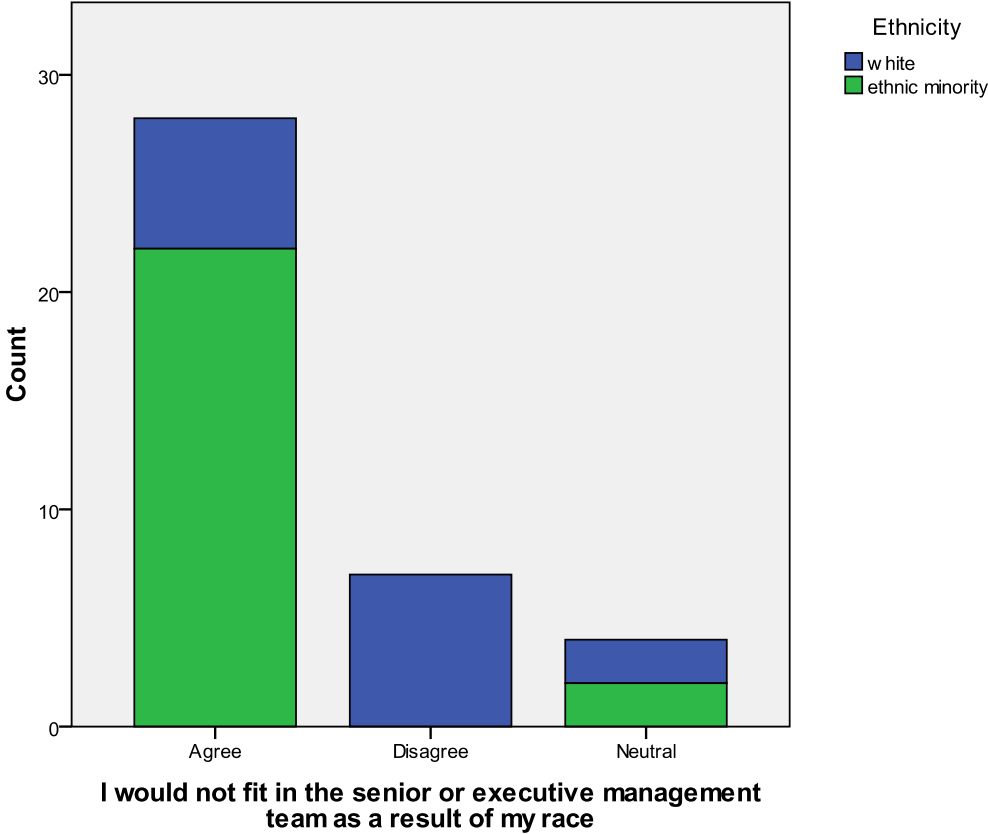


Figure 6

91.7% ethnic minority managers (22 out of 24) agreed that they would not fit into the senior or executive management team as a result of their race. Only 40% White managers, (6 out of 15), agreed with the notion, whilst 46.7% whites disagreed with this conception, as compared to only 12.5% ethnic minorities who also disagreed. Over half of the population 26 out 39 agree that they would not apply for promotion due to the fear of not being able to fit in the senior or executive management team. However statistically since $p\text{-value} (0.001) < .05$, the researcher accepts that there is no relationship, thus it is clear that ethnic minorities feel that race determines their eligibility for the senior or executive management of the organisation as this is likely to have 99.9 % of an error occurring.

Ethnicity * Fit into senior or executive management Cross tabulation

			Fitintoseniorexc			Total
			Agree	Disagree	Neutral	
Ethnicity	White	Count	6	7	2	15
		Expected Count	10.8	2.7	1.5	15.0
		% within Ethnicity	40.0%	46.7%	13.3%	100.0%
ethnic minority		Count	22	0	2	24
		Expected Count	17.2	4.3	2.5	24.0
		% within Ethnicity	91.7%	.0%	8.3%	100.0%
Total		Count	28	7	4	39
		Expected Count	28.0	7.0	4.0	39.0
		% within Ethnicity	71.8%	17.9%	10.3%	100.0%

Table 7

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	"Asymp. Sig". (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	14.857 ^a	2	.001
Likelihood Ratio	17.328	2	.000
N of Valid Cases	39		

a. 4 cells (66.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.54.

Table 8

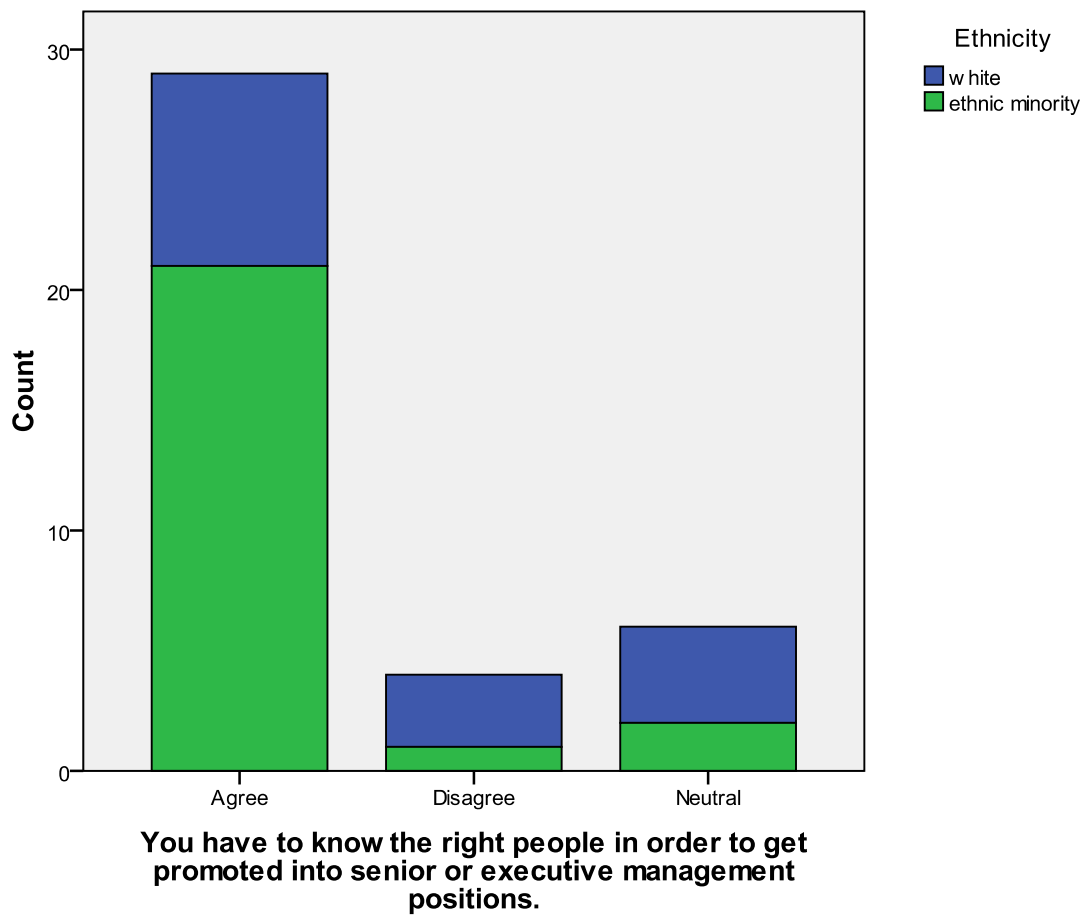


Figure 7

The above graph shows an interesting variation in response categories between ethnic minority managers and white managers. While ethnic minority managers were more likely than white managers to report that it's who you know that matters in order to get promoted into senior or executive management positions. 21 out 24 (87.5%) of ethnic minorities agreed that you have to know the right people to facilitate your ascension into the higher echelons of the organisation and 8 of 15 (53.3%) whites also agree, this shows an overrepresentation of ethnic minorities to the overall population as they constitute over half of the respondents to have agreed with the question. There is some correspondence as both ethnic groups have a total of 29 out 39 people agreeing that it pays to know the right people for your career advancement, thus 75% of the responses agreeing showing an association of the two ethnic groups. The p-value for Pearson's Chi-Square is 0.057. The researcher is fairly confident that there really is no relationship between these two variables with a 94.3% chance of being true meaning there is 5.7% chance of being false.

Ethnicity * Right people Cross tabulation

			Right people			Total
			Agree	Disagree	Neutral	
Ethnicity	White	Count	8	3	4	15
		Expected Count	11.2	1.5	2.3	15.0
		% within Ethnicity	53.3%	20.0%	26.7%	100.0%
ethnic minority		Count	21	1	2	24
		Expected Count	17.8	2.5	3.7	24.0
		% within Ethnicity	87.5%	4.2%	8.3%	100.0%
Total		Count	29	4	6	39
		Expected Count	29.0	4.0	6.0	39.0

Ethnicity * Right people Cross tabulation

			Right people			Total
			Agree	Disagree	Neutral	
Ethnicity	White	Count	8	3	4	15
		Expected Count	11.2	1.5	2.3	15.0
		% within Ethnicity	53.3%	20.0%	26.7%	100.0%
	ethnic minority	Count	21	1	2	24
		Expected Count	17.8	2.5	3.7	24.0
		% within Ethnicity	87.5%	4.2%	8.3%	100.0%
Total		Count	29	4	6	39
		Expected Count	29.0	4.0	6.0	39.0
		% within Ethnicity	74.4%	10.3%	15.4%	100.0%

Table 9

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	"Asymp. Sig". (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.722 ^a	2	.057
Likelihood Ratio	5.671	2	.059
N of Valid Cases	39		

a. 4 cells (66.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.54.

Table 10

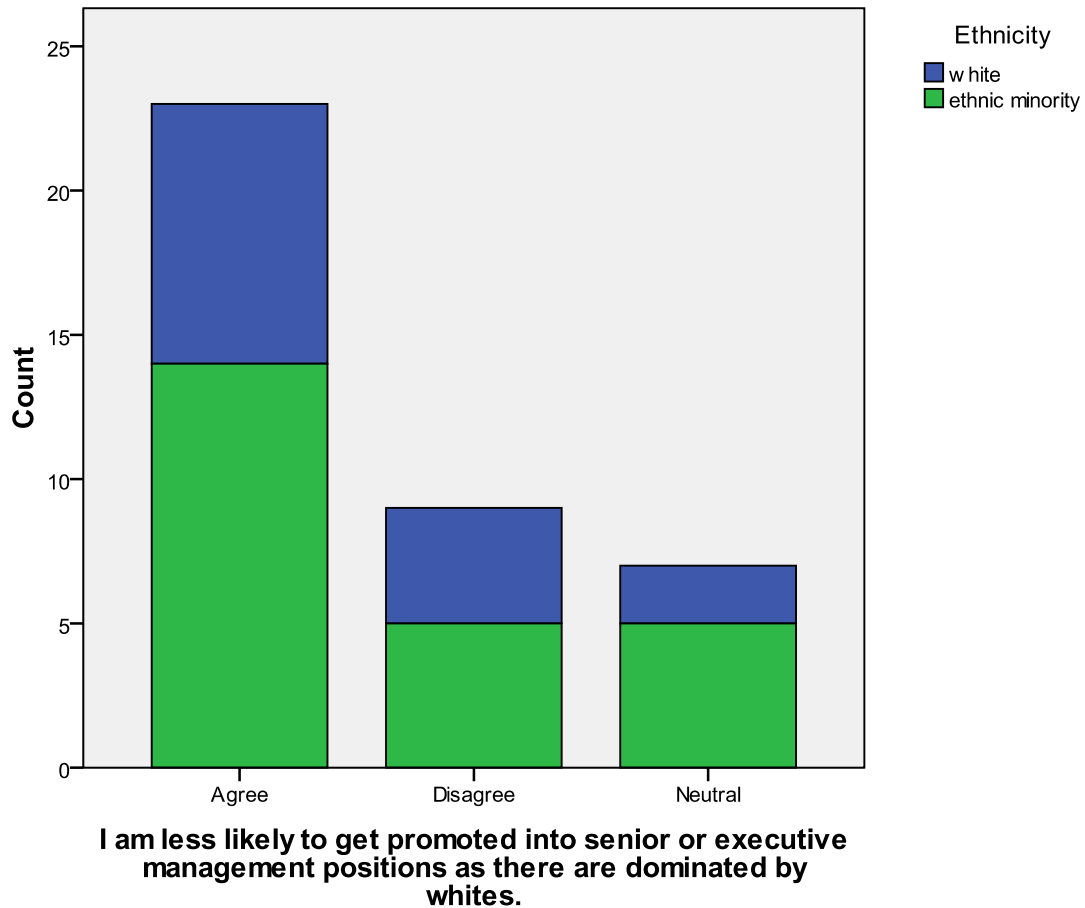


Figure 8

The above graph shows interesting similarity in response categories between whites and ethnic minority managers, both groups agree that the domination of whites in senior or executive management positions might hinder their promotion prospects. The both groups have a 60% split on agreeing to the view as shown by the graph above 9 out of 15 whites and 14 ethnic minorities have agreed, whilst 4 whites and 5 ethnic minorities disagree. However statistically since $p\text{-value} > .05$, the researcher accepts that there is no relationship, since there are 19.3% chances of being true and 80.7% being false, but looking at the observed and expected values, it can be noted that the number of whites who have agreed is almost $9 = 9$ expected, whilst for ethnic minorities it is equal $14 = 14$ expected, due to no differences between the two groups, observed and expected, this shows a great difference of opinion between the ethnic minorities and the white managers.

Ethnicity * Dominated by white people Cross tabulation

			Dominated by white people			Total
			Agree	Disagree	Neutral	
Ethnicity	White	Count	9	4	2	15
		Expected Count	8.8	3.5	2.7	15.0
		% within Ethnicity	60.0%	26.7%	13.3%	100.0%
	ethnic minority	Count	14	5	5	24
		Expected Count	14.2	5.5	4.3	24.0
		% within Ethnicity	58.3%	20.8%	20.8%	100.0%
Total		Count	23	9	7	39
		Expected Count	23.0	9.0	7.0	39.0
		% within Ethnicity	59.0%	23.1%	17.9%	100.0%

Table 11

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	"Asymp. Sig". (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.430 ^a	2	.807
Likelihood Ratio	.440	2	.803
N of Valid Cases	39		

3 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.69.

Table 12

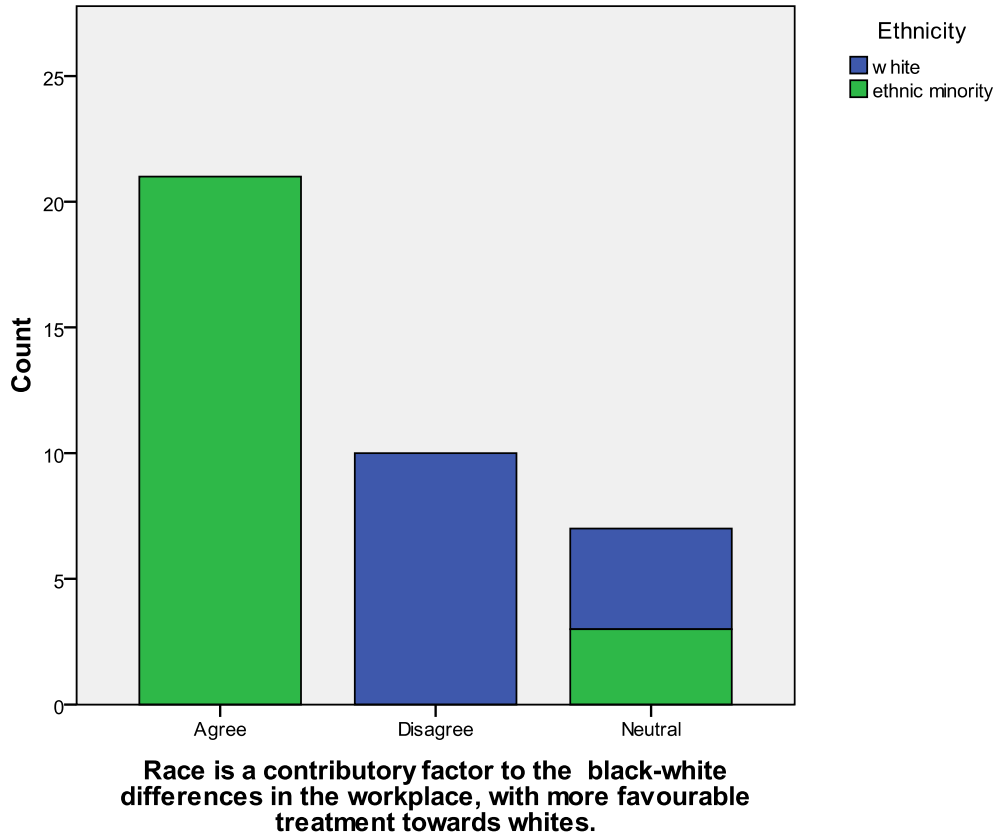


Figure 9

This graph shows attention-grabbing variations in the responses as it shows that whites do not agree with the opinion that race is a contributory factor to black and white difference in the workplace with more favourable treatment towards whites. Ethnic minority managers were found to agree as 21 out of 24 (87.5%) concurred with the view, whilst 10 out of 15 (66.7%) whites disagreed with the notion that race plays a part in the differences between the two ethnic groups. Interestingly there is a great difference between the observed count and the expected count (0 versus 8.1) for whites to agree to this notion as more ethnic minorities observed count and expected count (21 versus 12.9), there is a greater difference which shows that the two groups all things being equal will not agree even this seems to point towards a racial bias in the way people are treated in the organisation with more favourable treatment towards whites.

Ethnicity * Race Black and White difference Cross tabulation

			Race Black and White difference			Total	
				Agree	Disagree		Neutral
Ethnicity	White	Count	1	0	10	4	15
		Expected Count	.4	8.1	3.8	2.7	15.0
		% within Ethnicity	6.7%	.0%	66.7%	26.7%	100.0%
	ethnic minority	Count	0	21	0	3	24
		Expected Count	.6	12.9	6.2	4.3	24.0
		% within Ethnicity	.0%	87.5%	.0%	12.5%	100.0%
Total		Count	1	21	10	7	39
		Expected Count	1.0	21.0	10.0	7.0	39.0
		% within Ethnicity	2.6%	53.8%	25.6%	17.9%	100.0%

Table 13

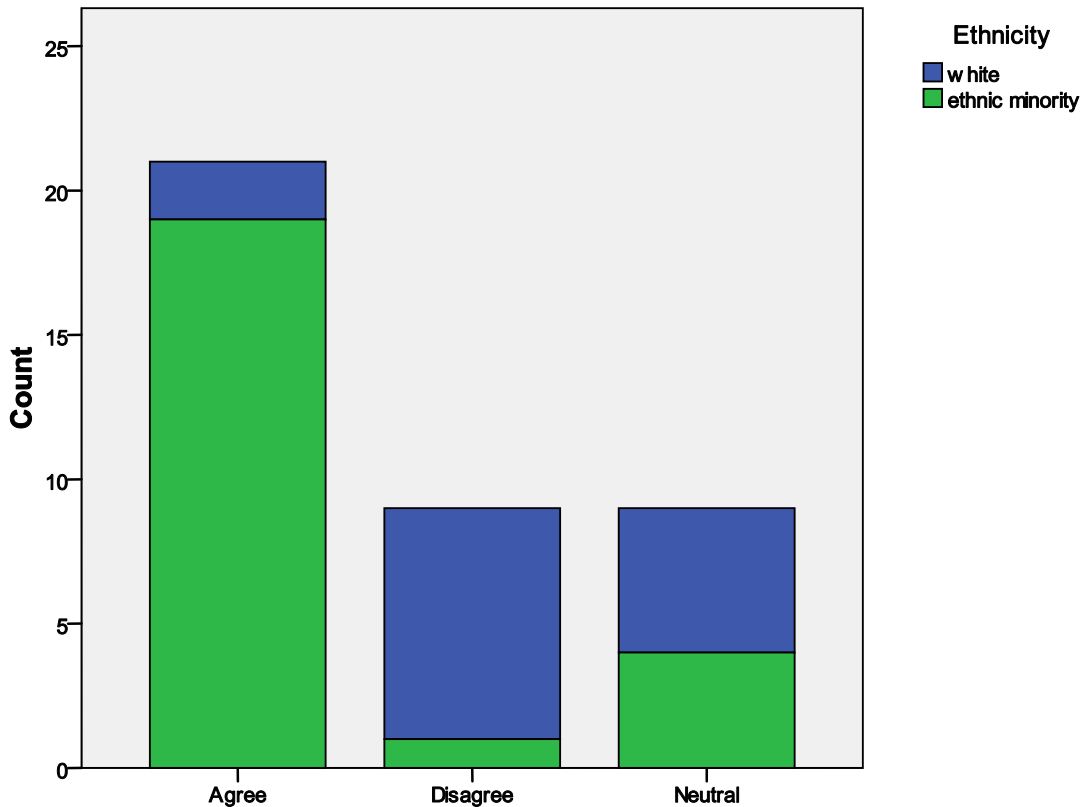
The fact that the Pearson chi-square value under “Asymp. Sig” is 0.000 and less than .05 indicates that there is a relation between the two variables stating that race plays a pivotal role in shaping the differences which exist in the organisation favouring the whites as per the perception of ethnic minorities. This means that ethnic minorities strongly report that race contributes to favouritism of whites at their expense, whilst whites do not strongly disagree with this belief. Since p is zero the error is zero as well, so the researcher is certain that the conclusion is correct.

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	"Asymp. Sig". (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	31.757 ^a	3	.000
Likelihood Ratio	42.409	3	.000
N of Valid Cases	39		

5 cells (62.5%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .38.

Table 14



The makeup of the senior and executive management teams, shows that there is no place for someone different who does not meet fit the prototype.

Figure 10

The above inverted graph shows 79.2% ethnic minority managers (19 out of 24) agreed that the make up of the senior or executive management team shows that there is no place for someone different, who does not fit the prototype, this is in comparison with 13.3% White managers, (2 out of 15) who have the same opinion, whilst 53.3% (8 out of 15) of white managers disagreed with this view, only 4.2% ethnic minorities disagreed also. This illustrates an over representation of ethnic minorities with over half of the sample 19 out of 39 ethnic minorities agreeing that you have to meet the required prototype in order to fit in the senior and executive teams within the organisation, as compared to a fifth (8 out 39) of the population disagreeing.

Ethnicity * Senior or executive management Cross tabulation

			Senior or executive management			Total
			Agree	Disagree	Neutral	
Ethnicity	White	Count	2	8	5	15
		Expected Count	8.1	3.5	3.5	15.0
		% within Ethnicity	13.3%	53.3%	33.3%	100.0%
ethnic minority		Count	19	1	4	24
		Expected Count	12.9	5.5	5.5	24.0
		% within Ethnicity	79.2%	4.2%	16.7%	100.0%
Total		Count	21	9	9	39
		Expected Count	21.0	9.0	9.0	39.0
		% within Ethnicity	53.8%	23.1%	23.1%	100.0%

Table 15

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	"Asymp. Sig". (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	18.210 ^a	2	.000
Likelihood Ratio	20.117	2	.000
N of Valid Cases	39		

a. 2 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.46.

Table 16

Since $p\text{-value} = .000 < .05$, this shows that there is a relationship, this is statistically significant as it indicates that the variables are independent of each other, stating that ethnicity plays a pivotal role in the association of people within the organisation. This means that ethnic minorities strong feel that as long as the organisation has a white apex, they will always be viewed as outsiders and will not fit due to not meeting the required prototype.

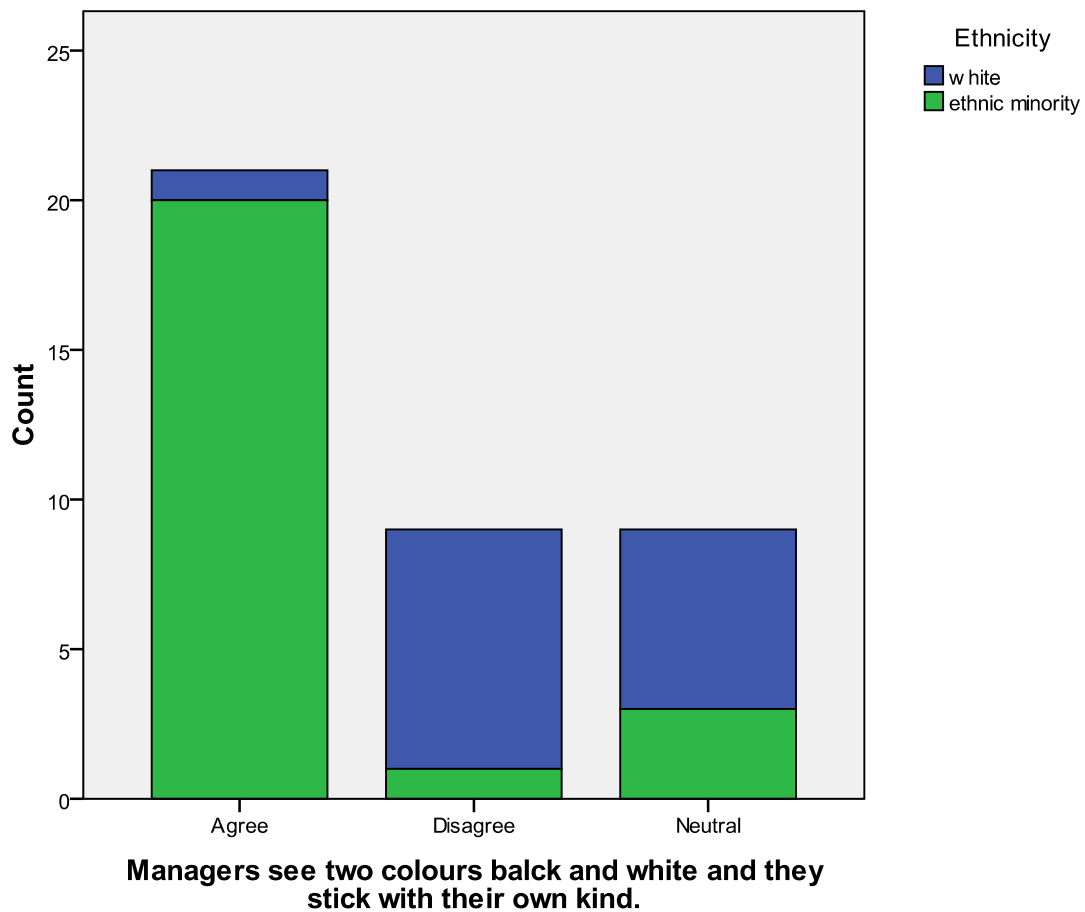


Figure 11

A fascinating graph which epitomises a disproportion of responses between the two ethnic groups, 83.3% (20 out of 24) ethnic minorities agreed that the managers are comfortable with people who are similar to them and ethnic minorities are outsiders. Whilst 53.3% (8 out of 15) whites disagree with the view, and only 1 (6.7%) ethnic minority disagreed with the notion, with 40% neutral. Amusingly there is a great difference between the observed count and the expected count (1 versus 8.1) for whites to agree to this notion as more ethnic minorities observed count and expected count (20 versus 12.9), there is a greater difference which shows that the two groups all things being equal will not agree even this seems to point towards a racial bias as 20 out 24 ethnic minorities believe managers would replicate themselves by recruit people similar to them.

Ethnicity * Not comfortable with outsiders Cross tabulation

			Not comfortable with outsiders			Total
			Agree	Disagree	Neutral	
Ethnicity	White	Count	1	8	6	15
		Expected Count	8.1	3.5	3.5	15.0
		% within Ethnicity	6.7%	53.3%	40.0%	100.0%
	ethnic minority	Count	20	1	3	24
		Expected Count	12.9	5.5	5.5	24.0
		% within Ethnicity	83.3%	4.2%	12.5%	100.0%
Total		Count	21	9	9	39
		Expected Count	21.0	9.0	9.0	39.0
		% within Ethnicity	53.8%	23.1%	23.1%	100.0%

Table 17

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	"Asymp. Sig". (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	22.771 ^a	2	.000
Likelihood Ratio	26.193	2	.000
N of Valid Cases	39		

a. 2 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.46.

Table 18

The fact that the Pearson chi-square value under “Asymp. Sig” is 0.000 and less than .05 indicates that the variables are independent of each other. Since p is zero so it can be concluded that ethnicity plays a pivotal role when managers are making promotion decisions as they tend to stick with people who are similar to them within the organisation.

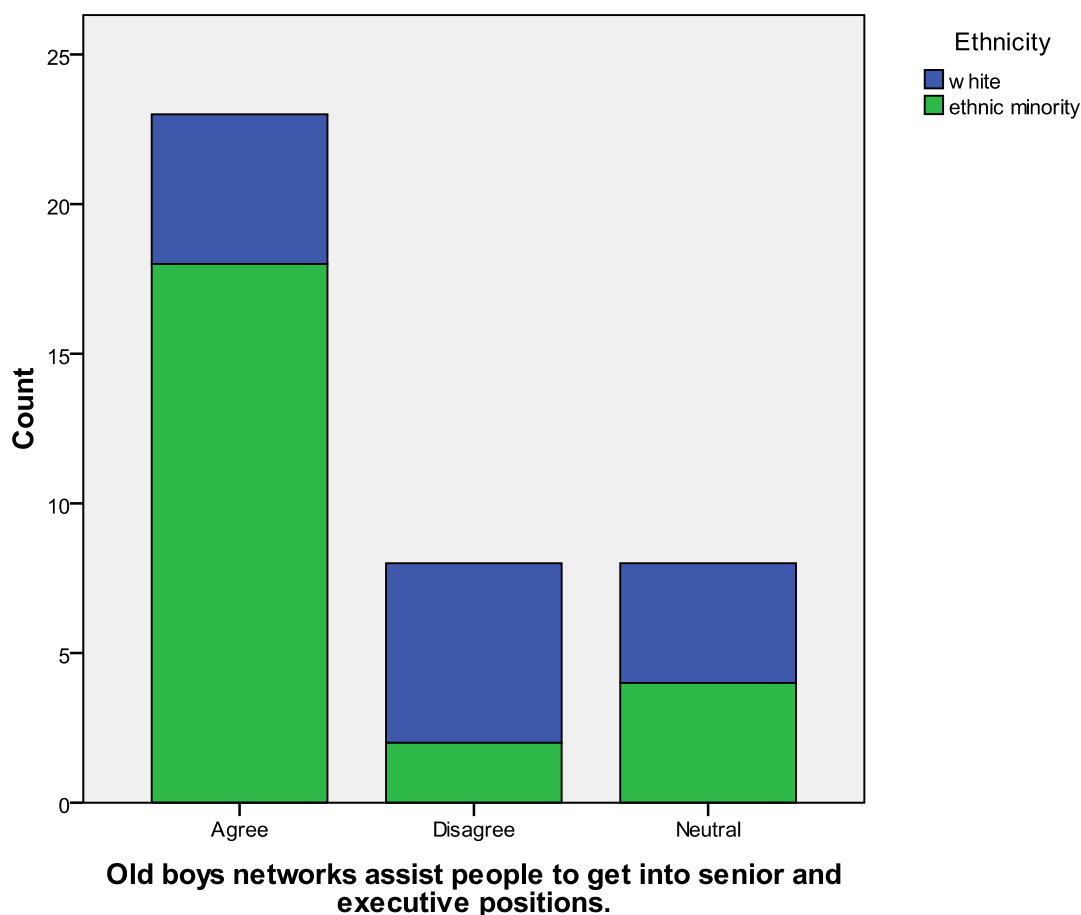


Figure 12

75% of ethnic minorities and 33.3% of whites agree that the old boys’ network influences the appointment of people into senior and executive management positions. While 40% whites and only 8.3% ethnic minorities disagree with this view.

Ethnicity * Old Boys Net Cross tabulation

			Old boys network			Total
			Agree	Disagree	Neutral	
Ethnicity	White	Count	5	6	4	15
		Expected Count	8.8	3.1	3.1	15.0
		% within Ethnicity	33.3%	40.0%	26.7%	100.0%
ethnic minority		Count	18	2	4	24
		Expected Count	14.2	4.9	4.9	24.0
		% within Ethnicity	75.0%	8.3%	16.7%	100.0%
Total		Count	23	8	8	39
		Expected Count	23.0	8.0	8.0	39.0
		% within Ethnicity	59.0%	20.5%	20.5%	100.0%

Table 19

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	"Asymp. Sig". (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	7.680 ^a	2	.021
Likelihood Ratio	7.797	2	.020
N of Valid Cases	39		

a. 4 cells (66.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.08.

Table 20

The fact that the Pearson chi-square value under “Asymp. Sig” is 0.021 and less than .05. Thus, p is small and hence it can be concluded that there is a relation between the two variables ethnicity and old boys’ network. In other words, the promotion of people within an organisation is dependent on the race and affiliation to a social group. There is a 97.9% chance of being true and 2.1% of being false.

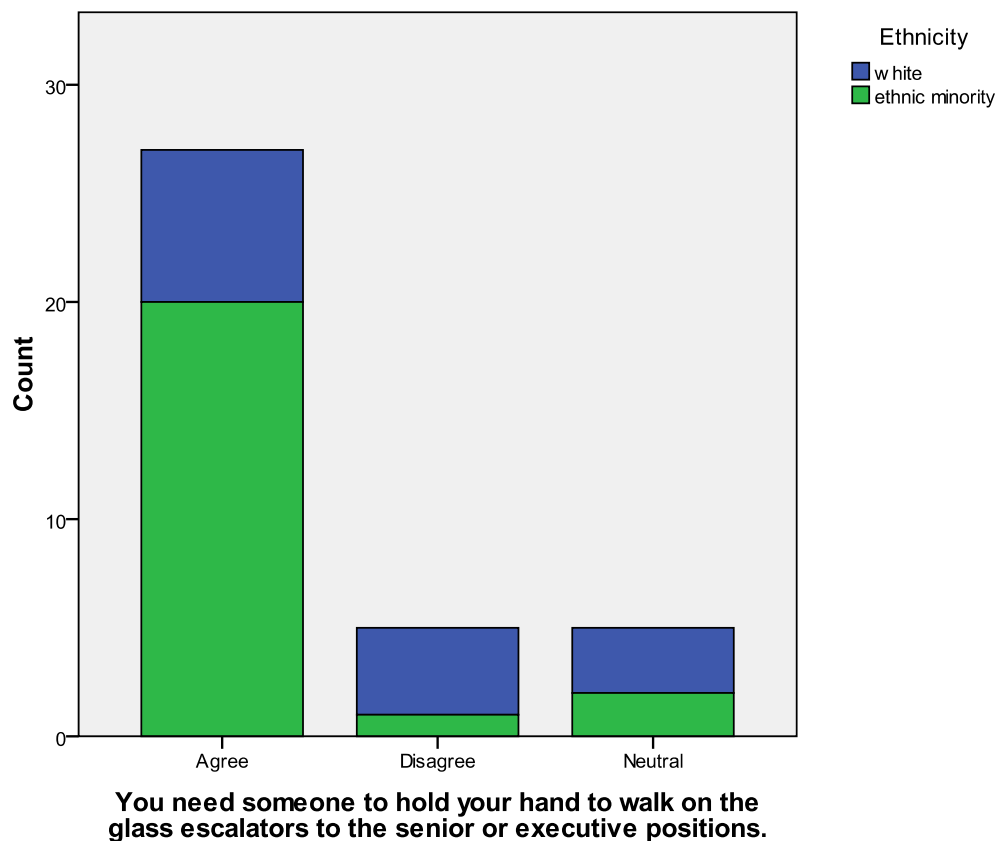


Figure 13

83.3% ethnic minority managers (20 out of 24) agreed that you need someone to hold your hand to walk on the glass escalator to the senior or executive management positions, this is in comparison with 46.7% white managers, (7 out of 15) who share the same opinion. 26.7% (4 out of 15) of white managers disagreed with this view, whereas only 4.2% (1 out of 24) ethnic minorities also disagreed. This illustrates an over representation of ethnic minorities with over half of the sample 27 out of 39 of

the participants agreeing that you need someone to assist you to climb the corporate ladder.

Ethnicity * Hold your hand cross tabulation

			Hold your hand			Total	
			Agree	Disagree	Neutral		
Ethnicity	White	Count	1	7	4	3	15
		Expected Count	.8	10.4	1.9	1.9	15.0
		% within Ethnicity	6.7%	46.7%	26.7%	20.0%	100.0%
	ethnic minority	Count	1	20	1	2	24
		Expected Count	1.2	16.6	3.1	3.1	24.0
		% within Ethnicity	4.2%	83.3%	4.2%	8.3%	100.0%
Total		Count	2	27	5	5	39
		Expected Count	2.0	27.0	5.0	5.0	39.0
		% within Ethnicity	5.1%	69.2%	12.8%	12.8%	100.0%

Table 21

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	"Asymp. Sig". (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.530 ^a	3	.088
Likelihood Ratio	6.560	3	.087
N of Valid Cases	39		

a. 6 cells (75.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .77.

Table 22

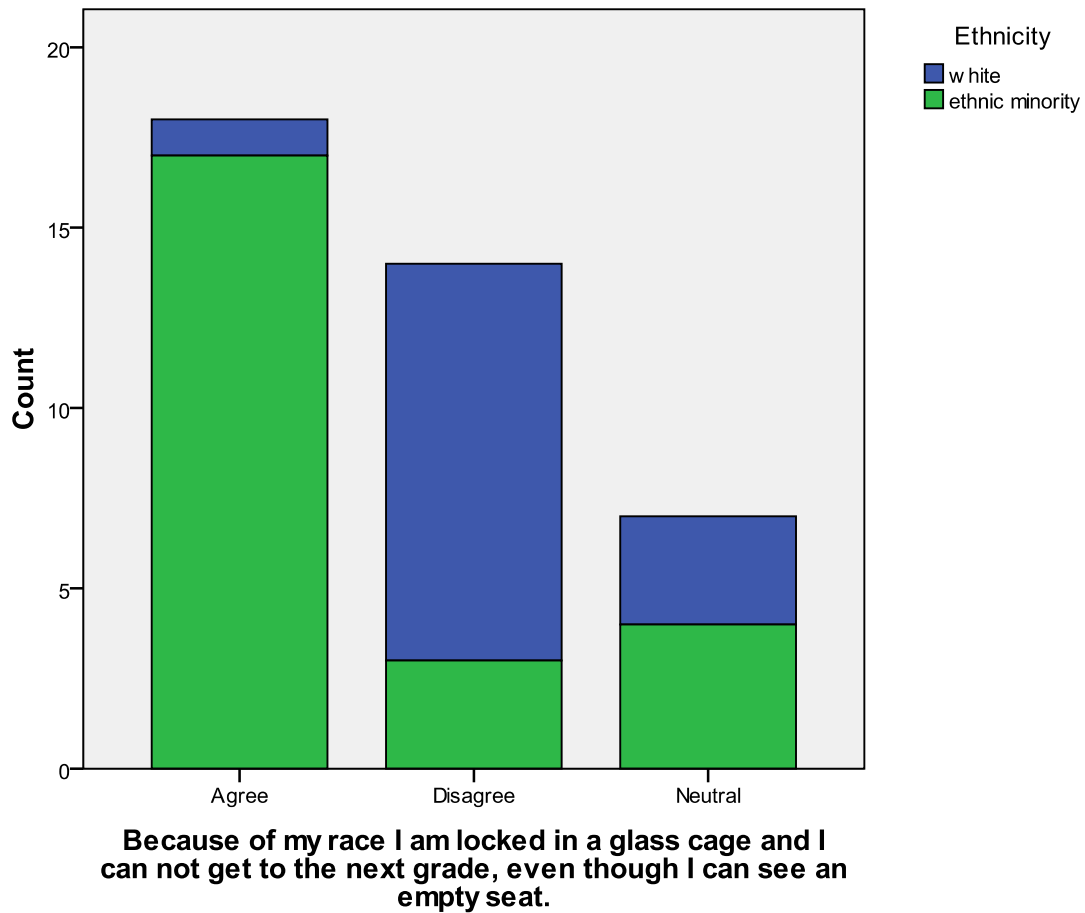


Figure 14

A captivating reversed graph which shows a disproportion of responses between the two ethnic groups. 70.8% (17 out of 24) Ethnic minorities reported that because of their race, they are locked in a glass cage, which inhibits them from ascending into the next grade. Whilst 73.3% (11 out of 15) whites disagree with the view, and only 1 (6.7%) agreed with the notion, with 20% neutral. Only three ethnic minorities disagreed. The expected count would have been 7 whites and 11 ethnic minorities agreeing with this view. This is in total contrast with 17 out 24 ethnic minorities who believe they are locked in a glass cage because of their and only 1 out 15 agree with the view. Comparing the values, it can be observed that the whites agreeing are (1 versus 6.9) less than ethnic minorities agreeing (17 versus 11.1) while more than

expected whites disagreeing (11 versus 5.4). On the other hand, less ethnic minorities disagreeing than expected (3 versus 8.6). That seems to point towards a racial bias for promotion as ethnic minorities found themselves locked in a glass cage unable to attain promotion.

Ethnicity * Locked in glass cage Cross tabulation

			Locked in a glass cage			Total
			Agree	Disagree	Neutral	
Ethnicity	White	Count	1	11	3	15
		Expected Count	6.9	5.4	2.7	15.0
		% within Ethnicity	6.7%	73.3%	20.0%	100.0%
ethnic minority		Count	17	3	4	24
		Expected Count	11.1	8.6	4.3	24.0
		% within Ethnicity	70.8%	12.5%	16.7%	100.0%
Total		Count	18	14	7	39
		Expected Count	18.0	14.0	7.0	39.0
		% within Ethnicity	46.2%	35.9%	17.9%	100.0%

Table 23

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	"Asymp. Sig". (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	17.808 ^a	2	.000
Likelihood Ratio	20.137	2	.000
N of Valid Cases	39		

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	"Asymp. Sig". (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	17.808 ^a	2	.000
Likelihood Ratio	20.137	2	.000
N of Valid Cases	39		

a. 2 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.69.

Table 24

Since $p\text{-value} < .05$, the researcher accepts the hypothesis that ethnic minorities are locked in a glass cage due to their race thus hindering their prospects for promotion. Because $p\text{-value} = .000$, this means that the probability is low of making a type I error the researcher rejects the H_0 . Thus, it can be concluded that there is a relation between the two variables. The two groups are independent of each other and their views are based on their ethnicity as a result ethnic minorities have reported being locked in glass ceiling by virtue of their race.

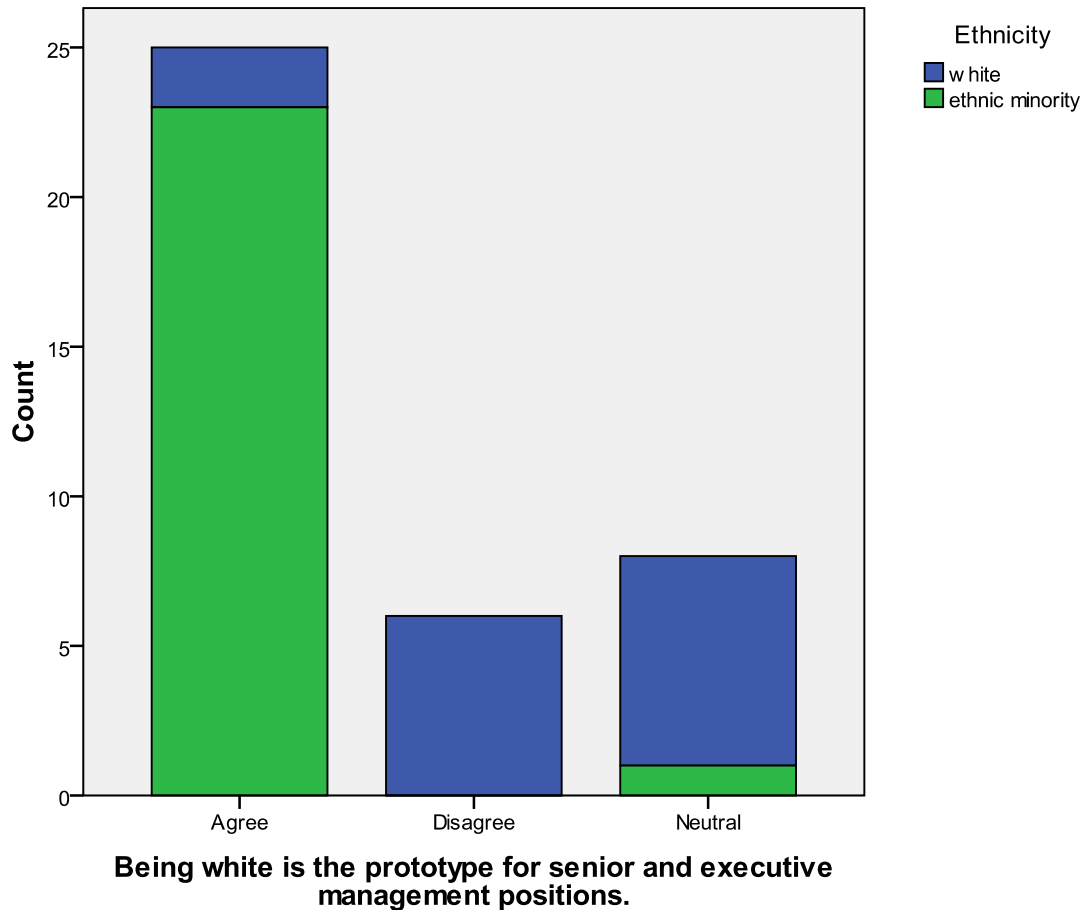


Figure 15

23 out of 24 (95.8%) ethnic minorities as shown above reported that being white is the prototype for senior and executive management positions with only 2 out of 15 (13.3%) whites also agreeing with this view, whilst 40% of them disagree and 46.7% are neutral. The analysis by ethnicity at being white as the prototype for leadership shows a considerable variation in the views of the two groups. Over half of the sample agree that being white is the leadership prototype for senior and executive management positions within the organisation even though there is an over representation of ethnic minorities.

Ethnicity * White prototype Cross tabulation

			White prototype			Total
			Agree	Disagree	Neutral	
Ethnicity	White	Count	2	6	7	15
		Expected Count	9.6	2.3	3.1	15.0
		% within Ethnicity	13.3%	40.0%	46.7%	100.0%
ethnic minority		Count	23	0	1	24
		Expected Count	15.4	3.7	4.9	24.0
		% within Ethnicity	95.8%	.0%	4.2%	100.0%
Total		Count	25	6	8	39
		Expected Count	25.0	6.0	8.0	39.0
		% within Ethnicity	64.1%	15.4%	20.5%	100.0%

Table 25

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	"Asymp. Sig". (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	27.529 ^a	2	.000
Likelihood Ratio	32.003	2	.000
N of Valid Cases	39		

a. 4 cells (66.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.31.

Table 26

The p-value=.000, this means that there is virtually no chance of making a type I error thus the researcher rejects the H1. It is clear that ethnic minorities believe that being white is a prototype for senior or executive management positions within the organisation. Since p is zero the researcher concludes that the conclusion is correct.

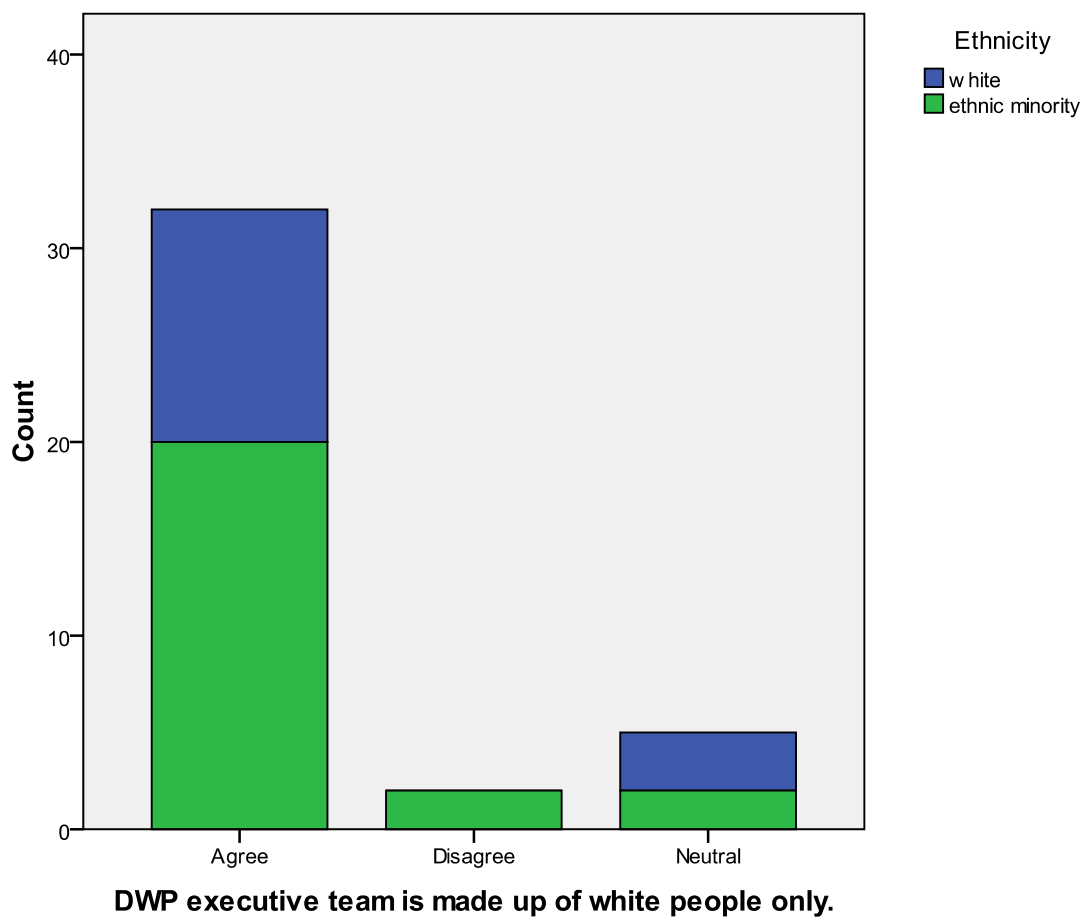


Figure 16

White managers and ethnic minority managers unanimously agreed that DWP executive team is made up of white people and most of the business units have white directors, this is shown by the above graph with 80% (12 out of 15) whites and 83.3% (20 out of 24) ethnic minorities reporting to this effect. No white respondents

disagreed with the statement, only 2 ethnic minorities disagreed with the statement. Both groups have agreed on the make up of the executive team and business unit directors that they are mainly white even the expected count is similar to the observed there are 12 and 20 responses respectively. Since p-value >.05, the researcher accepts that there is no relationship between the two variables.

Ethnicity * DWP executive composition Cross tabulation

			DWP executive composition			Total
			Agree	Disagree	Neutral	
Ethnicity	White	Count	12	0	3	15
		Expected Count	12.3	.8	1.9	15.0
		% within Ethnicity	80.0%	.0%	20.0%	100.0%
	ethnic minority	Count	20	2	2	24
		Expected Count	19.7	1.2	3.1	24.0
		% within Ethnicity	83.3%	8.3%	8.3%	100.0%
Total		Count	32	2	5	39
		Expected Count	32.0	2.0	5.0	39.0
		% within Ethnicity	82.1%	5.1%	12.8%	100.0%

Table 27

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	"Asymp. Sig". (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.243 ^a	2	.326
Likelihood Ratio	2.900	2	.235
N of Valid Cases	39		

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	"Asymp. Sig". (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.243 ^a	2	.326
Likelihood Ratio	2.900	2	.235
N of Valid Cases	39		

a. 4 cells (66.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .77.

Table 28

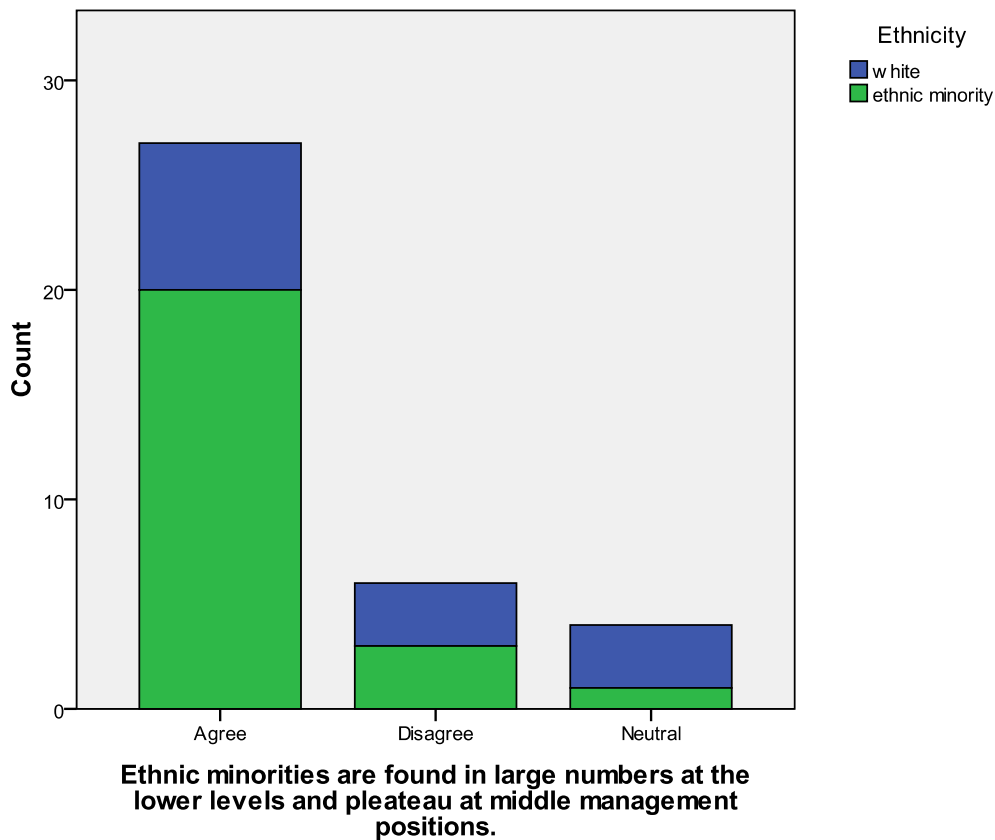


Figure 17

With regard to ethnic minorities being found on the lower levels of the organisation and plateauing at middle management, 21 out 24 (87.5%) ethnic minorities are

shown above reporting to have agreed with the statement, whilst 26.7% (7 out of 15) whites disagreeing and 53.3% agree that ethnic minorities are found at the base of the organisation in large numbers. The analysis by ethnicity on the position of ethnic minorities within the organisation shows a considerable distinction in the views of the two groups. Over half of the sample agrees that ethnic minorities are found to plateau at lower and middle management levels of the organisation.

Ethnicity * Plateau in middle management Cross tabulation

			Plateau in middle management			Total
			Agree	Disagree	Neutral	
Ethnicity	White	Count	8	4	3	15
		Expected Count	11.2	2.3	1.5	15.0
		% within Ethnicity	53.3%	26.7%	20.0%	100.0%
	ethnic minority	Count	21	2	1	24
		Expected Count	17.8	3.7	2.5	24.0
		% within Ethnicity	87.5%	8.3%	4.2%	100.0%
Total		Count	29	6	4	39
		Expected Count	29.0	6.0	4.0	39.0
		% within Ethnicity	74.4%	15.4%	10.3%	100.0%

Table 29

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	"Asymp. Sig". (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.722 ^a	2	.057
Likelihood Ratio	5.671	2	.059
N of Valid Cases	39		

a. 4 cells (66.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.54.

Table 30

The fact that the Pearson chi-square value under "Asymp. Sig" is 0.055 and greater than .05 indicates that there is no association. The two groups are independent of each other and their views are based on their ethnicity as a result ethnic minority have reported that they are found stagnant at the lower and middle level of management in large numbers.

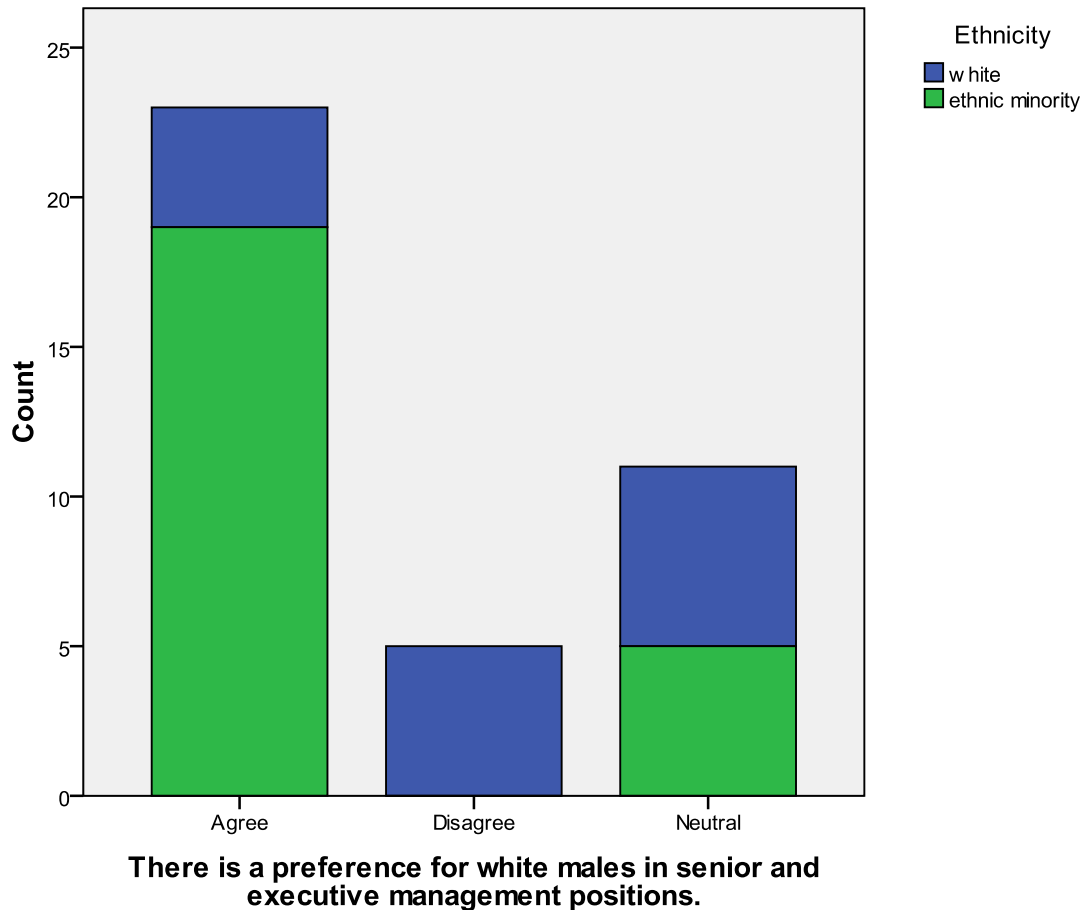


Figure 18

79.2% ethnic minority managers (19 out of 24) agreed that there is a preference for white males for senior and executive management positions this is in comparison with 26.7% White managers, (4 out of 15) who have the same opinion, whilst 33.3% (5 out of 15) of white managers disagreed with this view, whilst there are no ethnic minorities who disagreed with the view, interestingly 40% of the white managers are neutral. This illustrates an over representation of ethnic minorities with over half of the sample 19 out of 39 ethnic minorities agreeing that there is a preference for white males for senior and executive management positions with less than an eighth (5 out of 39) of the overall population from white background disagreeing.

Ethnicity * White preference Cross tabulation

			White preference			Total
			Agree	Disagree	Neutral	
Ethnicity	White	Count	4	5	6	15
		Expected Count	8.8	1.9	4.2	15.0
		% within Ethnicity	26.7%	33.3%	40.0%	100.0%
	ethnic minority	Count	19	0	5	24
		Expected Count	14.2	3.1	6.8	24.0
		% within Ethnicity	79.2%	.0%	20.8%	100.0%
Total		Count	23	5	11	39
		Expected Count	23.0	5.0	11.0	39.0
		% within Ethnicity	59.0%	12.8%	28.2%	100.0%

Table 31

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	"Asymp. Sig". (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	13.516 ^a	2	.001
Likelihood Ratio	15.558	2	.000
N of Valid Cases	39		

a. 3 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.92.

Table 32

Since $p\text{-value}=.001<.05$, the researcher rejects the H_0 and conclude that there is a relationship between being white a male and acquiring a leadership position within the organisation. Specifically, it appears that ethnic minorities were more expressed that there is a preference for white males for senior or executive management positions, whilst a third of white managers disagreed with the view and 40% were neutral.

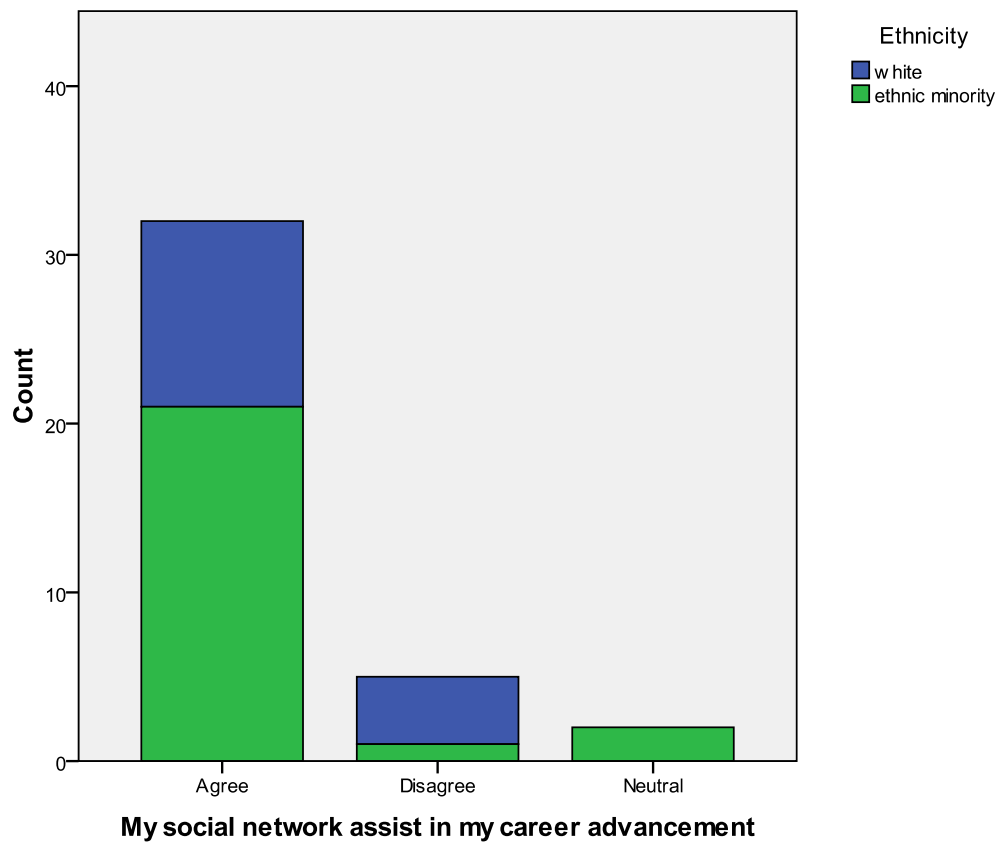


Figure 19

The two groups agreed that social networks assist them in their career advancement with 87.5% ethnic minorities and 73.3% whites.

Ethnicity * Social network Cross tabulation

			Socialnet			Total
			Agree	Disagree	Neutral	
Ethnicity	White	Count	11	4	0	15
		Expected Count	12.3	1.9	.8	15.0
		% within Ethnicity	73.3%	26.7%	.0%	100.0%
	ethnic minority	Count	21	1	2	24
		Expected Count	19.7	3.1	1.2	24.0
		% within Ethnicity	87.5%	4.2%	8.3%	100.0%
Total		Count	32	5	2	39
		Expected Count	32.0	5.0	2.0	39.0
		% within Ethnicity	82.1%	12.8%	5.1%	100.0%

Table 33

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	"Asymp. Sig". (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.121 ^a	2	.077
Likelihood Ratio	5.782	2	.056
N of Valid Cases	39		

a. 4 cells (66.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .77.

Table 34

The fact that the Pearson chi-square value under “Asymp. Sig” is 0.077 and less than .05 indicates that two variables are independent. Since $p < 0.5$, the H0 can be rejected, as both groups have expressed that having a network would assist in career advancement.

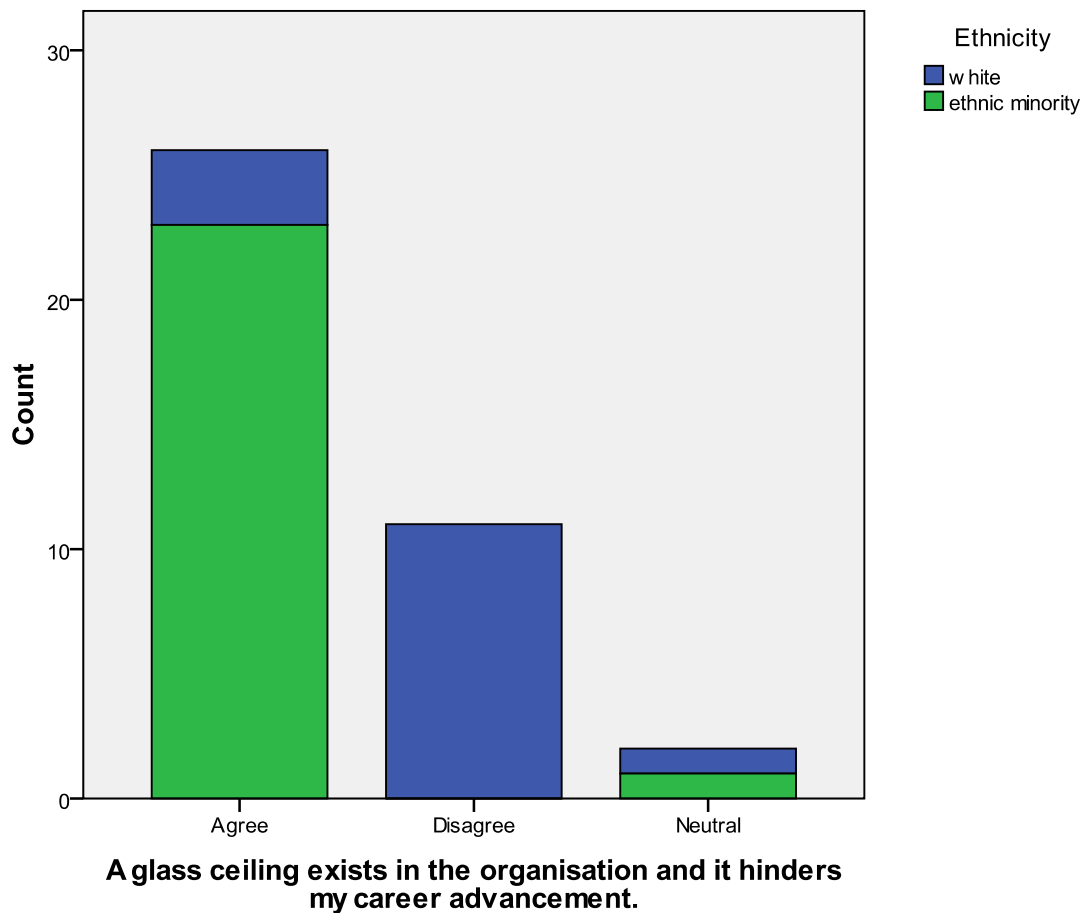


Figure 20

Managers from ethnic minority backgrounds were more likely than white managers to indicate that a glass ceiling exists within the organisation and it hinders their career advancement. This is evident in the above the graph depicting the responses showing that 23 out of 24 (95.8%) ethnic minorities overwhelmingly agreed with the view , whilst only 3 out of 15 (20%) whites also agreed with this notion. Meanwhile 11 out of 15 (73.3%) whites disagreed, showing a negative correlation between the views of the two groups. Ethnic minorities are overrepresented as 23 out of 24 which is over half

of the sampled population have agreed that a glass ceiling exists and hinders their career progression. That seems to point towards the existence of the glass ceiling as a barrier hindering the career progression of ethnic minorities as compared to whites.

Ethnicity * Glass ceiling Cross tabulation

			Glass ceiling			Total
			Agree	Disagree	Neutral	
Ethnicity	White	Count	3	11	1	15
		Expected Count	10.0	4.2	.8	15.0
		% within Ethnicity	20.0%	73.3%	6.7%	100.0%
ethnic minority		Count	23	0	1	24
		Expected Count	16.0	6.8	1.2	24.0
		% within Ethnicity	95.8%	.0%	4.2%	100.0%
Total		Count	26	11	2	39
		Expected Count	26.0	11.0	2.0	39.0
		% within Ethnicity	66.7%	28.2%	5.1%	100.0%

Table 35

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	"Asymp. Sig". (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	25.675 ^a	2	.000
Likelihood Ratio	30.601	2	.000
N of Valid Cases	39		

a. 3 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .77.

Table 36

Since $p\text{-value}=.000<.05$, this means that the probability is low of making a type I error the researcher rejects the H_0 . Thus, it can be concluded that there is a relation between the two variables. The two groups are independent of each other and their views are based on their ethnicity as a result ethnic minority have reported the existence of the glass ceiling in the organisation.

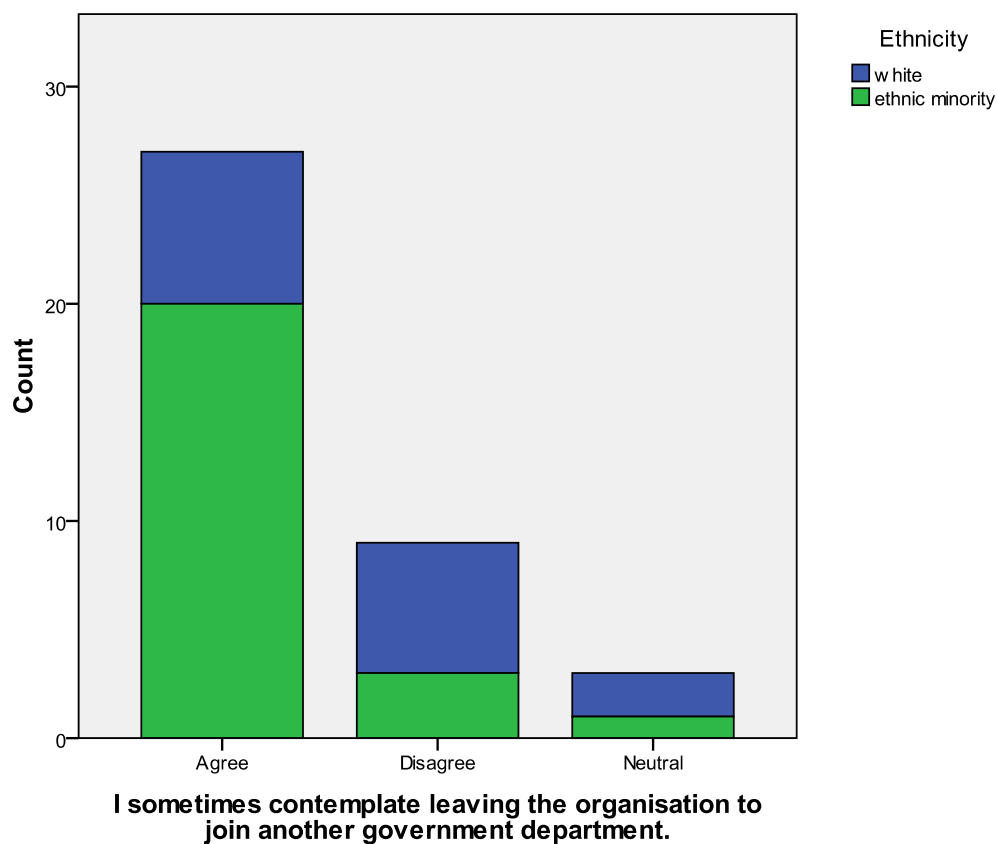


Figure 21

The above graph shows 79.2% ethnic minority managers (19 out of 24) agreed that they contemplate leaving the department to join another organisation and also 53.3% whites concur with ethnic minorities about leaving the department. Whilst 20% (3 out of 15) of white managers disagreed with this view, and only 8.3% ethnic minorities disagreed. This illustrates an overrepresentation of 27 out 39 people contemplating

of leaving the organisation as compare to an eighth (5 out of 39) are likely to remain in the organisation.

Ethnicity * Contemplate leaving Cross tabulation

			Contemplate leaving			Total
			Agree	Disagree	Neutral	
Ethnicity	White	Count	7	6	2	15
		Expected Count	10.4	3.5	1.2	15.0
		% within Ethnicity	46.7%	40.0%	13.3%	100.0%
	ethnic minority	Count	20	3	1	24
		Expected Count	16.6	5.5	1.8	24.0
		% within Ethnicity	83.3%	12.5%	4.2%	100.0%
Total		Count	27	9	3	39
		Expected Count	27.0	9.0	3.0	39.0
		% within Ethnicity	69.2%	23.1%	7.7%	100.0%

Table 37

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	"Asymp. Sig". (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.826 ^a	2	.054
Likelihood Ratio	5.790	2	.055
N of Valid Cases	39		

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	"Asymp. Sig". (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.826 ^a	2	.054
Likelihood Ratio	5.790	2	.055
N of Valid Cases	39		

a. 3 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.15.

Table 38

The p-value for Pearson's Chi-Square is 0.283. The researcher is fairly confident that there really is no relationship between these two variables with a 28.3% chance of being wrong.

Summary

The chapter presented the results of the survey, which showed a great variance of the response from the two groups. Interesting the ethnic minorities have reported that they are locked in glass cages which hinder their upward progression to the apex of the organisation to be part of the senior or executive management because a glass ceiling exists in the organisation. Contrary to this white did not agree with the ethnic minorities about the existence of the glass ceiling even though both groups reported that the senior and executive teams of DWP were made up of whites only, could not agree that being white was a leadership trait as depicted by the underrepresentation of ethnic minorities at executive level.

The table below shows how the hypotheses were assessed using the statements under each hypothesis:

<i>H1: Ethnic minority managers will report the existence of the glass ceiling than white managers when seeking promotion.</i>	<i>H2: Ethnic minority managers will report receiving less career-related support than will white managers.</i>
I'd like to see myself as part of the future leadership in the DWP	People get better treatment because of their race
I would not fit in the senior or executive management team as a result of my race	Having people similar to me in senior and executive management positions encourages me to advance in my career
I am less likely to get promoted into senior or executive management positions as there are dominated by whites	I am less likely to get promoted into senior or executive management positions as there are dominated by whites
Race is a contributing factor to black-white differences in the workplace, with more favourable treatment towards whites	You have to know the right people in order to get promoted into senior or executive management positions
The makeup of the senior and executive management teams, shows that there is no place for someone different who does not fit the prototype	Old boys network assist people to get into senior and executive management positions
Managers see two colours black and white and they stick with their own kind	You need someone to hold your hand as you walk on the glass escalators to the senior and executive management positions
A glass ceiling exists in the organisation and it hinders my career advancement	There is a preference for white males in senior and executive management positions.
Because of my race I am locked in glass cage and I can not get to the next grade, even though I can see an empty seat.	I sometimes contemplate leaving to join another organisation.
Being White is the prototype for senior and executive management position	
DWP executive team is made up of white people only	
Ethnic minorities are found in large numbers at the lower levels and middle management positions.	

Table 39

The next chapter discusses the results aligning them with pertinent literature. It also provides practical implications and concludes the research.

Chapter 4.7

4.7.1 Discussion and Conclusion

The overall purpose of this study was to examine whether the glass ceiling existed in the organisation and how it has been experienced or perceived by ethnic minority and white managers in SEO to SCS grades. The study also sought to understand how career-related support aids the promotion of ethnic minorities and whites. The explanation suggested that ethnic minorities experience glass ceiling at work, as would be evidenced by a direct effect of race on reported promotion rates and the receipt of career-related support. The data show support for the explanation as shown when race and the career-related variables were entered simultaneously into the regression equations, ethnic minorities were found to hit against the glass ceiling hindering their promotion prospects and they had weak career related support while whites had strong career support which assisted them in moving up the corporate ladder.

There is a growing body of research literature on the glass ceiling. The bulk of the research, however, has focused on how the glass ceiling has affected white women (Weyer, 2007; Hsieh *et al.*, 2006; Cross *et al.*, 2006; Singh *et al.*, 2004; Coughlan, 2002; Davidson *et al.*, 2000; Wirth, 2001; Linehan *et al.*, 2001; Reskin *et al.*, 2000; Adler, 2000;1993; Morrison *et al.*, 1990). While the glass ceiling issue has been most commonly associated with barriers to upward mobility for white women. Morrison *et al.* (1990) argue that ethnic minorities may face the same impediments. Yet surprisingly few studies involving ethnic minority status have been conducted (Stainback and Tomaskovic-Devey 2006; Elliott and Smith 2001; Shenhav *et al.*, 1992; Cox *et al.*, 1990; Bartol, Evans, and Stith, 1978), much less at middle and executive management levels. The slower progression of minority ethnic employees within organisations is well-established (Cabinet Office Strategy Unit, 2003; Miller and Travers, 2004; Ocloo, 2002; Sanglin-Grant and Schneider, 2000) as is their underrepresentation in senior positions (Ocloo, 2002; Sanglin-Grant *et al.*, 2000). It should be made clear that since little is known about the barriers experienced by ethnic minority managers who work for the public sector, and aspiring to move to

higher positions. However, given the lack of research on ethnic minorities in the public sector, this document provides new and important baseline findings to guide future research on the glass ceiling in the public sector.

Statistics confirm that the glass ceiling persists for scores of ethnic minority managers and having less help from the social support as they do not have strong ties to provide career related support which is influential to their career advancement. This was contrary to the views of the white managers who disagreed with ethnic minorities that the glass ceiling exists whilst they agreed with ethnic minorities that the organisation's executive is made up of whites only and most business unit directors are only white. If there is no glass ceiling or lack of support from the social networks, why would an organisation with hundred thousand employees not have an ethnic minority Chief Executive or business director? The responses from the survey is evident of this as ethnic minorities provided the following response rate to these statements, *'Because of my race I am locked in glass cage and I can not get to the next grade, even though I can see an empty seat' (70.8%)*. *'A glass ceiling exists in the organisation and it hinders my career advancement (95.8%)*.' Evidence suggests that ethnic minorities encounter a glass ceiling that keeps them from reaching the tops of managerial hierarchies (Morrison *et al.*, 1990). Researchers acknowledged the glass ceiling as a barrier and impediment to the advancement for ethnic minorities in the workplace (Jackson *et al.*, 2007a). This is supported by Gorman *et al.* (2009), Kalev (2009), Maume (2004, 1999), Smith *et al.* (2004), Fiske (1998), Reskin (2003), Tsui *et al.* (1989) when they concurred that, the concentration of ethnic minorities in lower level and marginal jobs reinforces the existence of the glass ceiling. Of the same vein (Avery (2009), Roscigno (2009) Rosette *et al.*, (2008), Jackson *et al.* (2007b) when they said, the primary evidence for the existence of a glass ceiling comes from the absence of ethnic minorities at the apex of large corporations, it is still the case that more than 9 out of 10 chief executive officers are white. Evidence also suggests that ethnic minorities encounter a glass ceiling that keeps them from reaching the tops of managerial hierarchies (Jackson *et al.*, 2007b, Raha, 2007, Kandola, 2004, Maume, 2004, Morrison *et al.*, 1990). This has been depicted by the survey were 95.8 ethnic minorities stated that a glass ceiling exists in the organisation and it hinders their

career advancement (95.8%). Due to the difference in the way ethnic minorities and whites attain promotion, it can be stated that ethnic minorities overwhelmingly stated that they face the glass ceiling and are locked in the glass cage as a result they are found to plateau at lower level and middle management positions of the organisation at the same time the apex is snowy white as it is made up of whites with no black spot. This is also evident by the exclusion of ethnic minorities from the senior and executive management positions as shown by the survey where both groups agreed that these positions are occupied by whites only.

Race as a variable affects the career progression of ethnic minorities into the apex of the organisation. This is evident by the responses from ethnic minority who agreed that *People get better treatment because of their race (70.8%)*. This finding is consistent with the findings of Baldi *et al.* (1997), who concluded that the determinants for promotion were different for blacks than for whites. Previous empirical research has consistently shown that women and minorities have lower career attainment than white males (Jackson *et al.*, 2007a, Mackay *et al.*, 2006; Smith, 2005; Esmail *et al.*, 2005; Kandola, 2004; Elliot *et al.*, 2001; Baldi *et al.*, 2001; Morison *et al.*, 1990; Kanter, 1997). Despite the growing proportion of ethnic minorities in the workplace and the concurrent emphasis on valuing diversity in organisations (Kerr, 2009; Avery, 2009; Jackson *et al.*, 2007b; Tomaskovic-Devey *et al.*, 2007), the proportion of ethnic minorities in top management positions in organisations remains less than 1 percent.

Evidence suggests that ethnic minorities that they do not meet the white prototype of leadership as stated by Rosette *et al.* (2008), when they found that 'being white' is a component of business leaders. This could explain, in part, why ethnic minority managers are seen as atypical (Avery, 2009). It is because they do not fit as white is the leadership prototype for one to succeed as a senior manager in the organisation. This is further enhanced by the similar to me effect which results in homosocial reproduction as a result ethnic minorities suffer from social closure and their ascension into the upper echelons of the organisation is dependent on contest mobility whilst whites waltz on the glass escalators through sponsorship mobility.

Promotion decisions for top management positions involve subjective appraisals as to whether a given candidate will fit in with incumbent top managers. Thus, it appears that decision-makers commonly tend to exhibit bias in favour of candidates who remind them of themselves, which works to the disadvantage of traditionally underrepresented groups because many higher level decision makers are White . This is also evident by the exclusion of ethnic minorities from the senior and executive management positions as shown by the survey where both groups agreed that these positions are occupied by whites only 83.3% ethnic minorities and 80% whites agreed that the DWP's executive team was predominately white.

The present research takes into account espousing of similar to me effect, social closure to be equal leadership prototype as a mechanism used to exclude ethnic minorities from promotions and career support. In the analysis of promotions not only did the researcher found that ethnic minorities are less likely than whites to receive promotions, but also that whites that are in jobs with a higher percentage of ethnic minorities are less likely to receive promotions than other whites. This practice of finding employees who are like existing employees at the top is homosocial reproduction (Avery, 2009; Smith, 2005; Kanter, 1977). Managers tend to carefully guard power and privilege for those who fit in, for those they see as 'their kind.' The structure sets in motion forces leading to the replication of managers as the same kind of social individual and the men who manage reproduce themselves in kind. By so doing ethnic minorities are left at the bottom of the peck as there is no one of their kind who can hold their hands and take them up the corporate ladder (Muskwe, 2009).

Managers at the top are reserving positions for those employees who are socially similar to themselves, in other words they are reproducing themselves at the very top of the organisation. This was elucidated by their response these statements *I would not fit in the senior or executive management team as a result of my race (91.7%) I am less likely to get promoted into senior or executive management positions as there are dominated by whites (60%) The makeup of the senior and executive management teams, shows that there is no place for someone different who does*

not meet the prototype (79.2%) Managers see two colours black and white and they stick with their own kind (83.3%). Being White is the prototype for senior and executive management position (95.8%) DWP executive team is made up of white people only (100%). (90% Whites agreed) There is a preference for white males in senior and executive management positions (79.2%) Having people similar to me in senior and executive management positions encourages me to advance in my career (79.2%). Those at the top of organisation, sponsor those that they think are most like themselves. This implies that there exists some type of sponsorship model for advancement within the organisation for white males, while ethnic minorities have to rely on advancement through a contest model (Baldi *et al.*, 1997; Wilson *et al.*, 1999). After examining the interaction effect of race and percent of ethnic minorities in the job, ethnic minorities were less likely to be promoted when they are in jobs dominated by whites as managers tend to replicate themselves.

These findings are also consistent with Tomaskovic-Devey and Skaggs (2002) stating that social closure processes are about more powerful actors monopolising desirable jobs by excluding subordinate groups. (Muskwe, 2009) studying ethnic minority managers found that the existence of the old boys school network, golden circle, white prototype, the peerage and regionalism was used by the managers to promote people who have attended similar schools (Oxbridge) with them, who are from the same region and in the same social strata. This resonates the view that '*Managers see two colours black and white and they will stick with their own kind*' (83.3%). Ethnic minorities lack strong social ties who can provide them with vital information about the organisation as results whites would move up the corporate ladder through sponsorship, use glass escalators (Maume 2004, 1999; McGuire 2000) whilst ethnic minority have to contest to move up the corporate ladder. Buckley *et al.* (2007) found evidence of same-race bias in evaluations during a police promotion process.

Empirically ethnic minorities are hampered by lack of access to net works in a promotion system predicated on the notion 'it's not what you know but whop you know' (Avery, 2009, Buckley *et al.*, 2007, Blair-Loy, 2001; Burt, 2000; Wilson *et al.*,

1999). This evident by their responses to these statements were the overwhelmingly agreed that *You have to know the right people in order to get promoted into senior or executive management positions (87.5%). Old boys network assist people to get into senior and executive management positions (75%). You need someone to hold your hand as you walk on the glass escalators to the senior and executive management positions (83.3 %). My social networks assist in my career advancement*, the two groups agreed that social networks assist them in their career advancement with 87.5% ethnic minorities and 73.3% whites. However Gray *et al.* (2008) argued that lack of similarity to senior managers may prohibit the involvement of ethnic minorities in informal social networks with supervisors. The exclusion from the social networks results in 'information isolation' or the lack of access to diverse information networks, as one of the main barriers that block the career advancement ethnic minorities (Gray *et al.*, 2008; Kandola, 2004). Exclusion from informal social networks produces such disadvantages for ethnic minorities as less access to critical organisational information, barriers to establishing strategic alliances, and subsequent limitations on upward mobility (Gray *et al.*, 2008, Ibarra, 1993). Ethnic minority employees are more likely to experience close supervision, have less complex tasks, have less managerial authority, and have less supervisory responsibility than white employees (Tomaskovic-Devey, 2007; Maume, 2004; Cohen *et al.*, 2007; Baldi *et al.*, 1997).

The findings from this study are consistent with those of a number of other researchers. Ethnic minority managers were affected by their race in career advancement (Avery, 2009, Cohen *et al.*, 2007, Bush *et al.*, 2007; Mackay *et al.*, 2006; Maume, 2004; Kandola, 2004; Baxter *et al.*, 2000; Woo, 2000; Cox *et al.*, 1990; Greenhaus *et al.*, 1990; Thomas 1990). Steefle (2006) discovered that ethnic minority nurses were failing to get the directorship of the hospitals they were working. Foley *et al.*, (2002) reported that black lawyers could not be partners in the law firms. While various others also concluded that ethnic minorities face the glass ceiling in their attempt to climb the corporate ladder (e.g. Gorman, 2008; Jackson *et al.*, 2007b; Raha, 2007 Bartol *et al.*, 2003; Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995;; Naff, 1994; Guy, 1994; Morrison *et al.*, 1990).

It is widely acclaimed from the survey that ethnic minorities are found in large numbers at lower levels of the organisation and plateau at middle management positions (83.3%). Research in recent years have questioned why there are very few senior ethnic minority managers has been posed for over two decades (e.g. Avery, 2009; Kalev, 2009; Kerr, 2009; Ortiz *et al.*, 2009; Rosette *et al.*, 2008; Avery *et al.*, 2008; Jackson *et al.*, 2007b, Tomaskovic-Devey *et al.*, 2007; Cohen *et al.*, 2007; Mackay, *et al.* 2006; Goldman *et al.*, 2006; Kandola, 2004). Previous studies have highlighted that ethnic minority managers encounter more obstacles to career progression than their white counterparts (Avery, 2009; Jackson, 2008a; Rosette *et al.*, 2008; Jackson *et al.*, 2007a; Jackson *et al.*, 2007b; Bush *et al.*, 2006; ; Steefle, 2006; Corrigan, 2002; Hill, 2004; Bush, Glover and Sood, 2006; Maume, 2004, Kandola, 2004; Hill, 2004; Giscombe *et al.*, 2002; Bell *et al.*, 2001) and this increases the intentions of ethnic minorities to leave the organisation (Foley, *et al.*, 2002).

Despite significant progress of ethnic minorities at work, racial segregation is still a defining feature of their promotion to the apex of the organisation where they are scarce. The research has shown how the glass ceiling with a constellation of hidden variables such as similar to effect coupled with homosocial reproduction and it's by product, white leadership prototype hampers the advancement of ethnic minorities to senior and executive positions in the organisation. The research has brought to light how social network influence both groups in their career advancement. Ethnic minorities have shown that they do not benefit from social networks as compared to their white counterparts, because of lack of influential people in the organisation who can hold their hands whilst they waltz on the glass escalators on their way to the top. Ethnic minorities are bypassed as they have to contest for their advancement, due to lack of sponsorship from powerful social networks, frustration of seeing promotion pass them results some of them contemplating leaving the organisation.

In conclusion, this study provides evidence of the existence of a glass ceiling among ethnic minorities and how career-related support based on 'who you know not what you' hinders career advancement due to their race which is not considered to fit the white leadership prototype as a result they are found at the lower levels of the organisation and if they gain upward mobility they are found to plateau at middle

management positions, whilst the apex of the organisation is snowy. If ever the organisation is to reflect the multicultural society in which we live, it will mean shattering the glass ceiling and having an ethnic minority man or woman as CEO in DWP business units. And to achieve this DWP society needs to recognise that it has a problem with race. To borrow from President Barack Obama's rhetoric, it is time for a change, not just on moral grounds but on commercial grounds. If no action is taken now then the problem will not just remain, it will get worse and become a more obvious lesion on society. That is hardly the face that the DWP wants to present to the rest of the society and prospective employees.

4.7.3 Implications for Practice

The research findings show that ethnic minorities face the glass ceiling and the organisation is dominated by white people at the top of the organisation. This is evident that there is no mirror reflection of the people working in the organisation and those managing the organisation. It is imperative that a review of the equality and diversity policies be carried out as a means to create a top management which is inclusive and reflect the people it serves. Ethnic minorities are increasing in numbers within the organisation the same should be true at the top or else there will be an exodus to organisation that embrace the difference and celebrate it by having a diverse senior or executive management team. By having a diverse senior or executive management team will act as an enticement for people who want to join the organisation as they will make it an employer of choice with as they will associate themselves with the people at the top.

By studying the glass ceiling variables, the present study makes contributions to the literature as it examines the existence of the glass ceiling with in a public sector and how social support affects the promotions from the point of view of those who may actually be aspiring to advance in their career. It should be made clear that since little is known about the barriers experienced by ethnic minority managers who work for the public sector, and aspiring to move to higher positions. However, given the

lack of research on ethnic minorities in the public sector, this document provides new and important baseline findings to guide future research on the glass ceiling in the public sector. It was crucial that this research was conducted so that ethnic minorities, especially those aspiring to hold leadership positions in the public sector, can understand the challenges and contexts for ethnic minorities in the public sector to crack the glass ceiling and move up the echelons of the organisation rather than plateau at lower grades. Previous researchers have focused primarily on how the glass ceiling has affected white women whilst ethnic minorities continue to be underrepresented in senior and executive management positions. This research offers an impetus for future research to understand the barriers and how to overcome them so that the organisation can achieve racial equality at senior and executive management.

4.7.3 Limitations to the research

The researcher has already addressed the limitations of this study in the previous chapter 4.4.6. However, there are limitations common to the larger research that is more appropriate to address here. The researcher has not attempted to review the research findings relating to specific groups of ethnic minorities in this document and acknowledges this limitation. This deficiency will be overcome by collecting information on barriers salient to individual ethnic minority groups in United Kingdom in future work. In addition to the sampling method, it is also important to note some limitations to the methods provided for empirically testing the hypotheses. While DWP served as a tremendous research setting with many positives, the organisation employs an exceptionally low number of ethnic minorities in senior and executive positions, making the sample too small to provide significant results, statistically.

4.7.5 Future research

The findings of this research suggest a wealth of future research questions, many of which have already been addressed in the previous chapters. The researcher would

like to expand upon some of the issues raised in the ensuing Document 5 (Thesis). This should be extended and replicated using qualitative approach. This research found that ethnic minorities face the glass ceiling due to their race and found in the larger numbers at the bottom of the organisation whilst the apex is white. Rosette *et al.* (2008) concluded that being white was the leadership prototype required for someone to be a successful leader. The researcher seeks to pursue this view in Document 5, with a view to find an answer on why ethnic minorities stagnant at middle management. Focusing on how race impacts on the career advancement of ethnic minorities would provide insight into the why and how questions. The researcher is convinced that more research of this kind is vital if racial inequality in management is to be understood and be resolved.

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An investigation into the existence of white leadership prototypicality in the Department for Work and Pensions: An ethnic minority perspective.

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Abstract

This document sets out to examine the experiences of twenty ethnic minority managers in SEO to SCS grades in the Department for Work and Pensions in order to enhance the understanding of why there is a relative scarcity of senior and executive ethnic minority managers in the largest government department in the United Kingdom. In particular, the research examines how homosocial reproduction and the effect of social closure can limit the promotion opportunities for ethnic minorities in this organisation.

This study did not seek to test a hypothesis but instead attempted to understand ethnic minorities' own experiences in their propositions to senior management positions and how race as a variable is perceived to impede their career advancement. An interpretive paradigm and qualitative methodology were used which enabled the participants to describe their experiences in detail as a natural inquiry. In-depth semi-structured interviews are conducted with twenty ethnic minorities in SEO to SCS grades. The interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim, and using a thematic analysis, eight themes were identified from the data analysis. The findings revealed that ethnic minorities when seeking promotion are faced with a set of insurmountable obstacles. These barriers are created by their race, which is atypical to the white leadership prototype. The findings show that there are different paths to promotion for ethnic minority and white employees. Ethnic minorities are excluded through social closure and white managers are reproduced at the top, through homosocial reproduction, as they fit with the white leadership prototype. Ethnic minorities due to their nonprototypicality, have to work hard to gain promotion through contest mobility whilst whites are promoted through sponsorship through homosocial mentoring.

The research concludes with a discussion of the research limitations, and future research possibilities including a call for more research into the effects of race on ethnic minorities' propensity to be promoted. Recommendations are made in relation to how DWP can ensure that the senior and executive teams are reflective of their workforce and also to individual ethnic minorities in terms of how they can improve their promotion prospects.

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Chapter 1

“I want the civil service to be a beacon for change and a model of best practice for all organisations, a truly representative workforce, at the most senior levels, it is important that the civil service reflects the community it serves” (Sir Gus O’Donnell, Cabinet Secretary, 2008)

1.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the research study. The first section provides the background to race inequality in management and provides the context in the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). It also presents a picture of the representation of ethnic minorities in senior and executive management across the United Kingdom organisations. This section also outlines the aims of the research, briefly explains how the research was carried out, and the limitations of previous theoretical frameworks. The chapter profiles the academic and organisational contributions of the research as it addresses inadequacies of previous research. The last section contours a skeletal picture of the document structure.

1.2 Racial inequality in management

There still remains a disproportionate representation of ethnic minorities within the upper echelons of organisational hierarchies (e.g. Avery, 2010; Kerr, 2010, 2009; Kalev, 2009; Karla, Abel and Esmail, 2009). Ethnic minorities’ persistent underrepresentation in powerful organisational positions presents a puzzle (Avery, 2010; Cohen and Huffman, 2007) as they appear to be continually trapped and plateau at middle and junior management roles within organisations (Kalev, 2009; Collins, 1997a). “It is sobering that in 2010 ethnic minorities are still underrepresented in several fields and in some cases grossly absent at the highest levels” (Pinkett, Robinson and Patterson, 2010, p. XV),.

Ethnic minorities are scarce in top leadership positions as higher positions of authority constitute a coveted social closure as whites have a vested interest in using their power to exclude, or at least severely limit, ethnic minority members from gaining access to senior management positions (Roscigno, Garcia and Bobbitt-

Zeher, 2007). As a result whites are reluctant to relinquish the power, and they protect it through 'co-ethnic reproduction' the process by which key organisational decision makers, seek to promote members of their own ethnic group into management positions, (Avery, 2010; Wood *et al.*, 2009; Elliott and Smith, 2004, 2001; Smith *et al.*, 2002; Kanter, 1977). Many organisations have failed to achieve racial balance within their executive teams as some have revolving doors for talented ethnic minorities, recruiting the best and brightest only to see them, leave frustrated and even angered by the barriers they encounter (Thomas, 2001). Other organisations are able to retain high-potential professionals of ethnic minorities, only to have them mired in middle management (Avery, 2010; Pinkett *et al.*, 2010; Kalev, 2009; Kalra *et al.*, 2009) and are "less likely to be found in the higher paid professions and confined to lower-level positions" (Woodhams, Lupton and Xian, 2009, p.2084). Researchers have noted that some of the organisations have ethnic minorities in their executive ranks, but only in racialised positions, such as those dealing with community relations or ethnic markets (Pinkett *et al.*, 2010; Kalev, 2009; Thomas, 2001; Colin 1997a).

The dearth of ethnic minorities in senior and executive management positions across the globe has certainly garnered attention in recent years as researchers and scholars around the globe have raised questions pertaining to this emerging caste system, due to this conceived incapableness, as ethnic minorities are not considered managerial material and are analogous to individuals in lower strata of caste-like societies. "Ethnic discrimination is a highly discussed topic in modern societies, both politically and across several academic disciplines" (Midtbøen, 2010, p.1). Despite the attention towards racial inequality in management, the discrimination field is still characterised by a significant ambiguity that can be illustrated by two related questions troubling both academics and politicians: Could this underrepresentation represent the lack of qualifications of ethnic minorities? Or could it represent discriminatory barriers whereby whites have preferential access to leadership roles compared with equally qualified ethnic minorities? These questions have long been researched, often by economists and sociologists and have been raised in research in the United States of America (e.g. Avery, 2010; Pinkett *et al.*, 2010; Eagly and Chin, 2010; Ortiz and Roscigno, 2009; Kalev, 2009; Jackson and O'Callaghan, 2007a; Tomaskovic-Devey and Stainback, 2007; Cohen *et al.*, 2007) in the UK (e.g.

Kerr, 2010; 2009; Wadsworth and Hobson, 2010; Wood *et al.*, 2009; Kalra *et al.*, 2009; Smith, 2009; Solhekol, 2008; Healy and Oikelome, 2006; Mackay *et al.*, 2006; Esmail *et al.*, 2005; Kandola, 2004), in Canada (e.g. Giscombe and Jenner, 2009; Pendukar and Pendukar, 2006) in Spain (e.g. Moscovici and Perez, 2007), in Australia, (e.g. Peucker, 2010; Nielsen, 2007), in New Zealand (e.g. Harcourt *et al.*, 2008; Pio, 2008), in Israel, (e.g. Maman, 1997), in Netherlands (e.g. Anthonissen and Knoppers, 2008), in Sweden (e.g. Magnus, 2010; Bursell, 2007; Carlsson, and Rooth, 2007), in Norway (e.g. Midtbøen, 2010), Germany (e.g. Kaas and Manger, 2010), in Greece (e.g. Drydakis and Vlassis, 2008) and in South Africa (e.g. Bush and Moloji, 2006).

1.3 Research context

DWP is the largest government department in the United Kingdom with a workforce of about 100 000 employees. It was created on June 8, 2001, from the merger of the employment part of the Department for Education and Employment and the Department of Social Security. It is headed by the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, a cabinet position. It is made up of five business units which are Jobcentre Plus, Pension, Disability and Carers Services (was formed through the merging of The Pension Service and Disability and Carers Service), The Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission, Health and Safety Executive and the Rent Service.

DWP as an institution funded by public money, it has a legal responsibility to provide leadership in the area of equality and diversity. However, even by its own admission, highlighted in DWP Report 512 where it is stated by Hooker, *et al.* (2008) that DWP has failed to promote ethnic minorities into Senior Civil Servants (SCS) grades. “This is surprising in a sector which has a number of statutory duties placed on its employers to positively promote equality of opportunity and show how they are eliminating gender, race and disability discrimination in their organisations” (Harris and Foster, 2010, p.424). While DWP actively promotes the business case for diversity, does it actually practice it in terms of its own workforce? Why is it that, it has disproportionately few ethnic minorities at the apex of the organisation in senior and executive management positions? This is despite the existence of equality legislation and the need for public sector organisations to consider equality and diversity issues as priorities, however it is not on the business agenda (Sanglin-

Grant and Schneider, 2002), but on the backburner. Despite a range of high-profile government diversity initiatives, in most organisations racial equality is a low priority (Kerr, 2009).

Ethnic minorities comprise of a large segment of the available managerial talent cross the organisation, yet their representation at top level managerial positions in DWP is rather obscure, such that until December 2009 there was no ethnic minority Chief Executive Officer, and in January 2010 the first ethnic minority CEO was appointed for Jobcentre Plus. The number of ethnic minorities in Senior Civil Servant grade is so small that it is hard to get meaningful data (See Table 1). This in itself is an indication of the seriousness of the problem. In the previous research, in Documents 3 and 4, the DWP executive team was described as being 'white with no black spot' (Muskwe, 2008, 2009). The observed racial homogeneity in senior and executive management does not reflect the modern perspective of the changing demographics and the representativeness of the organisation's overall workforce (Pinkett *et al.*, 2010; Avery, 2010; Jackson *et al.*, 2007b; Stafsudd, 2006).

Being a public board, DWP has a legal responsibility to provide leadership in the equality and diversity arena (Karla *et al.*, 2009), yet there is a disproportionate number of ethnic minorities at the upper echelons and lower echelons of the organisation as most of them are plateauing in middle management positions (Avery, 2010; Kalev, 2009), where there is stagnation in terms of career progression. In contrast, senior management positions are made up of whites, despite ethnic minorities constituting 11.2% of the total workforce, only 2.2% of them are in senior and executive management positions (Benton, 2009). The racial inequality at the apex of the organisation is reflected by the fact that numbers of ethnic minorities shrink from the lower grades of Administrative Officer (AO) in thousands (5630) to single digits in Senior Civil Servant (SCS) grades, which has only 5 ethnic minorities against 285 whites, this shows a broad based pyramid structure of the organisation in terms of the representation of ethnic minorities. There are more ethnic minorities at the bottom of the organisation, as the numbers start to recede as one moves through the grades to the upper echelons of the organisation, as shown by Table 1 below.

Ethnic minorities in DWP

Grade	Number of Ethnic minority staff	%
SCS	6	2.1 %
G/G6	20	3.3%
F/G7	61	4.1%
E/SEO	108	4.2%
D/HEO	489	6.4%
C/EO	3,271	9%
B/AO	5,630	12.3%

Table 1: *Representation of ethnic minorities in DWP*

Source: *DWP Employee Policy and Workforce Planning (Benton, 2009)*

1.4 Representation of ethnic minorities in management positions in United Kingdom organisations.

In order to put this research into context, it is important to understand how ethnic minorities are represented in other organisations in the UK as boardrooms across the public sectors remain stubbornly white (O'Hara, 2009). And it remains today almost breaking news when an ethnic minority becomes a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of a large corporation (Wearden, 2009). Evidently the percentage of ethnic minorities in top corporate leadership positions in the UK corporations is still lower than their representation in the overall population, 5.6% of ethnic minorities are in management positions (Kerr, 2009), out of a possible 15% (Siva, 2009). Interestingly according to Kerr (2010) ethnic diversity has become a top priority in UK corporations, such that when you talk to major employers, they will all claim to take race diversity seriously, but for most who talk about this, how many of their senior management, not just those who sit on the board or at an equivalent level, are from an ethnic minority background? Kerr (2010) further said, British management is still largely composed of whites, despite the presence of numerous social and governmental forces in place to diversify organisational workforces.

The organisations benchmarked were the UK parliament, local government, police force, broadcasting sector, education sector, the National Health Service, and the world of sports with specific emphasis on the world famous sport, football. Like DWP, these organisations are reported to have senior management positions predominately occupied by whites with a handful or an absence of ethnic minorities. The organisations were selected because of the availability of information reported in the literature. More organisations could have been researched but due to time limitations, only a few had to be chosen for benchmarking purposes. The organisations researched have shown that barriers exist and are part of the exclusionary practices that successfully eliminate ethnic minorities from higher managerial positions within the organisations.

1.4.1 UK Parliament

Not only in the boardrooms are ethnic minorities scarce but also in the government. Even in the world of politics, the disparity tells a similar story as only three people from an ethnic minority background have ever served as cabinet ministers in the previous Labour government. The current coalition government of the Conservative and Liberal Democrats are equally sparse as the coalition cabinet does not have any ethnic minority cabinet member. There is clearly an underrepresentation in UK parliament as evidenced by these statistics, out of 646 members only 27 are ethnic minorities accounting for 4.17% of MPs (Paton, 2010). It can be argued that there has been an increase in the number of ethnic minority MPs from 14 in 2009 to 27 in 2010, however, there is a democratic deficit of the missing faces on the green benches, and these represent the missing ethnic minorities' voices in this chamber (Hirsch, 2010). Ethnic minorities make up about 15% of the population but less than 5% of MPs in the House of Commons. It is fair to assume that there is still a long way to go before race is no longer an issue in UK politics.

1.4.2 Local government

The top tier of local government is 'hideously white' and ethnic minorities have missed out on top jobs in town halls across the UK as the highest paid council posts are overwhelmingly white (Wadsworth *et al.*, 2010). Only a handful of ethnic

minorities feature in key positions where they have a real chance to influence policy despite the local authorities having a large ethnic minority population and workforce. Table 2 below, shows how many local authorities employ predominately whites as top managers. The late ethnic minority parliamentarian Bernie Grant called it the 'Guinness effect' where white staff invariably rose to the top (Wadsworth *et al.*, 2010). Of London's 33 local authorities, including the Greater London Authority, only one town hall, Lambeth, has an ethnic minority chief executive officer, yet the capital has a population of 31% black and minority ethnics but only 25% of its workforce (Wadsworth *et al.*, 2010).

Cities	Ethnic minority population	Ethnic minority staff	Management board	Ethnic minorities in Management board
Greater London Authority	31%	25%	6%	0
Birmingham	30%	28%	10%	1
Greater Manchester	19%	17%	9%	0
Nottingham	19%	13%	5%	0
Leeds	11%	10%	10%	0
Bradford	29%	21%	8%	0
Liverpool	8%	7%	5%	0
Leicester	36%	27%	9%	0
Wolverhampton	27%	15%	8%	0
Bristol	10%	6%	8%	0
Sheffield	16%	8.6%	6%	0

Table 2: Representation of ethnic minorities in local authority management boards. Source: *The Latest. Com, (2010)*

1.4.3 Broadcasting

Television and radio is dominated by white faces (Martin, 2008). News director jobs still prove elusive for ethnic minorities in the broadcasting sector even though, more ethnic minorities are working as reporters and anchors in local television but a significant obstacle remains for ethnic minorities trying to become news directors (Baracaia, 2009). Thirty years after (Lenny Henry a black comedian) came into the business, there is not one black person, not one Asian person good enough to be a [channel] controller (Martin, 2008). The BBC is the most significant player in British broadcasting however its senior management is not reflective of society and its employees, as it is more "hideously white", it has 40 ethnic minority executives out of almost 1,000 senior BBC posts (Hundal, 2006). The BBC should take affirmative action to increase the number of people from ethnic minorities in senior roles (Martin, 2008). Channel 4, has 12% ethnic minorities, but has 5% at senior management and 33% as women. ITV reflects below the average, drawing 8% of its staff from ethnic minorities but has no ethnic minority as a management board member (Baracaia, 2009).

1.4.4 The police force

The police force as the custodian of the law has a high number of discrimination cases (Bland *et al.*, 2005). Ethnic minority police officers are not being considered for top jobs in the force (Sutton *et al.*, 2006). Out of more than 200 officers holding the rank of assistant chief constable or higher, only seven are from ethnic minorities, as promotions are often based on whether the applicant's face fits the set mould (Fresco, 2008). Concurring with this view, Milmo (2008), conveys that promotion to the highest ranks of the Metropolitan Police Service appears to operate by the earmarking of a 'golden circle' of preferred candidates. The findings of the police report by Bland *et al.* (2005) suggest that ethnic minority officers' progress through the promotion process was slower than that of their white colleagues. On average, ethnic minority officers took 12 months longer than their white colleagues to reach the rank of Sergeant. As for the promotion to Inspector, ethnic minority officers were found to be taking 23 months longer than their white colleagues to reach the same rank. According to Erwin (2008), an ethnic minority police officer has to work twice as hard as a white colleague in order to gain promotion.

1.4.5 Education

In parallel, with the low representation of ethnic minorities in senior-level positions in private industry and the public sector, the number of ethnic minorities in senior-level positions in higher education remains low (Jackson *et al.*, 2007a; Bush *et al.*, 2006; Jackson, 2004). Research focused on ethnic minorities in these positions, coupled with demographic information on the higher education workforce also demonstrates the low representation for these groups in senior-level positions (McNamara *et al.*, 2009; Jackson *et al.*, 2008a and b; Mackay *et al.*, 2006; Hill, 2004). Ethnic minorities are not equal in terms of their professional standing compared to whites on the levels of power, decision-making and authority in educational institutions (Mackay *et al.*, 2006). Ethnic minority teachers in senior management feel that they need to constantly prove themselves and work harder than their white counterparts, as they perceive racism both overt and covert as a major problem in the school environment affecting promotion opportunities (McNamara *et al.*, 2009).

1.4.6 National Health Service

The National Health Service is the world's third largest employer, the largest employer in Western Europe, employing 1.4 million people and the largest employer of ethnic minorities, 16% of the total workforce (Serrant-Green, 2010, Kalra *et al.*, 2009; Siva, 2009). 30% of nurses and doctors in the NHS are black and minority ethnic people, however, fewer than 10% of senior managers and only 1% of chief executives are of a minority ethnic origin (Serrant-Green, 2010; Siva, 2009). This shows a stark contrast between the snow-capped summit and the mountain base (Esmail, *et al.*, 2005; Carvel, 2003) where the apex is predominately white and ethnic minorities are found at the bottom of the organisation.

1.4.7 Football

There is a high number of ethnic minority players in the world's most populous game, but the question is, 'Does the number of ethnic minority players relate to the number of ethnic minority football managers?' The answer is a big NO. The lack of ethnic minorities is not only peculiar in the private and public sectors, but it is also prevalent in football where a quarter of the players in the four divisions are from ethnic minorities but with only one ethnic minority football manager out of the England's 92

league clubs (Solhekol, 2008). Football is a very conservative industry and always has been, unfortunately the chairpersons and chief executives of the clubs are notoriously conservative and would not take a gamble, it's 'who you know not what you know', that determines who the chairperson hires (Smith, 2009; Solhekol, 2008). Most of the club owners are white, and are reluctant to employ a manager who does not look like them, it's a closed shop for ethnic minority coaches as they are not getting the opportunities. Solhekol (2008) cited Brendon Batson FA Equality and Diversity Consultant saying, the numbers do not lie, it is shocking and football should be embarrassed. Solhekol continued to say, ethnic minority coaches are not getting the same opportunities as white coaches. There is a lack of trust when it comes to appointing black managers, there is a reluctance to put them in charge. It took until 1993 for English football to appoint its first black manager, the late Keith Alexandra, and until 2008, to appoint the first black premiership manager (Smith, 2009).

1.5 Theoretical background

Leadership studies focusing on ethnic minorities provide particularly rich contexts to illuminate the human condition as it pertains to leadership. Yet insights about the leadership experience of ethnic minorities from context-rich research remain marginal in the field. There is little research that focuses on the public sector and in particular on race as a trait of leadership (Sy *et al.*, 2010; Rosette *et al.*, 2008; Simpson, 2008) and the promotion of ethnic minorities at senior and executive management positions. Surprisingly few studies involving ethnic minority status have been conducted (Tomaskovic-Devey *et al.*, 2007; Elliott and Smith, 2001; Cox and Nkomo, 1990), much less at middle and executive management levels. More attention has been given to ethnic minorities' access to jobs than to their treatment as job incumbents (Magnus, 2010; Hooker *et al.*, 2009; Wood *et al.*, 2008; Bursell, 2007; Carlsson, and Rooth, 2007; Mackay *et al.*, 2006; Chow and Crawford, 2004). The slower progression of minority ethnic employees within organisations is well-established (Cabinet Office Strategy Unit, 2003; Miller and Travers, 2004; Ocloo, 2002; Sanglin-Grant and Schneider, 2000) as is their underrepresentation in senior positions (Ocloo, 2002; Sanglin-Grant *et al.*, 2000). Promotions, one aspect of the treatment of incumbents, can be awarded to certain groups but not to others, or awarded to certain groups at a faster rate than to others. No empirical research has examined the effect of race on decisions about promotion to top management

positions. This gap in the research base stems from data limitations (Jackson, 2001), and in part, the gap is due to the nascent nature and presence of ethnic minorities in senior and executive positions, hence this research aims to fill the gap in the literature by looking at the underrepresentation of ethnic minorities and determine how race as a leadership trait affects ethnic minorities' promotability into senior and executive management positions.

This research provides further intellectual support to the idea that promotion opportunities depend, not just on individual human capital, but on social and racial homophily embedded in the group composition. The researcher provides a correction to the traditional assumption, based on truncated interpretations of social closure and homosocial reproduction, that elites only reproduce themselves by excluding those whose backgrounds are at odds with the dominate group, considered 'alien and different' (Vallas, 2003; Smith *et al.*, 2002). The homosociability is a strategy for whites to sustain their position of dominance and serves the interests of hegemonic groups to reproduce the power structure (Izraeli and Talmud, 1998). By building on Kanter's (1977) theory of homosocial reproduction and Weber's (1968) theory of social closure, the researcher proposes that ethnic minorities may not have the same path to promotion as whites, simply by the virtue of not meeting the leadership trait of being white as put by Rosette *et al.* (2008), that the centrality of acquiring leadership is by being white and supported by Sy *et al.*, (2010, p.4), when they said, "the Caucasian race is considered more prototypic of leaders".

Drawing on the integration of the social closure theory and the theory of homosocial reproduction, this research investigates, and explains how the under representation of ethnic minorities in senior positions in DWP is by virtue of not being white (Avery, 2010). The researcher examines the racial inequality through the two theories by linking how the racial composition of the senior and executive management teams influence the promotion of whites against ethnic minorities as determined by their racial composition. The present research builds upon previous research by Baldi and McBrier (1997), who advanced the argument that the determinants for promotion differ for whites and ethnic minorities. Baldi *et al.* (1997) proposed that there may be a sponsorship model of promotion for whites, while ethnic minorities may be promoted by more formal criteria than whites, however they did not address social

closure or homosocial reproduction processes that could account for their results. As a result this research develops a conceptual framework showing how ethnic minorities are disadvantaged by social and relational mechanism which perpetuates their exclusion from promotion due to lack of homosocial sponsors whilst whites are cloned by similar managers.

1.6 Research aims

The aim of this research is not to test a hypothesis, but seeks to elucidate upon the mostly concealed and sensitive phenomenon of racial inequality in senior and executive management positions in DWP. It explores why in spite of the rhetoric, there is persistence on the dearth of ethnic minorities in senior and executive management positions in the organisation. Although unequal treatment is politically condemned, legally banned under Equality Act 2010 and across the EU under equality legislation, morally rejected by most citizens and economically illogical (Peucker, 2009). Previous research has focused on human capital explanations for the race gap in promotions, but has been less explicit exploring the how the social and relational mechanisms that contribute to race differences in promotion (Pitts, 2007, 2005; Wise and Tschirhart, 2000). A central assumption of much of this research is that a single system of workplace attainment operates for both ethnic minorities and whites, so that if ethnic minorities have the same amount of education and job experience and were located across same bureaucratised structures, the gap in attainment in the work place would disappear (Baldi *et al.*, 1997). Baldi *et al.* continued to say, “these approaches suggest that the process by which ethnic minorities and whites advance in the workplace place is race blind. This research using an integrative approach through the lens of social closure and homosocial reproduction theories argues that process of promotion for ethnic minorities and whites is determined by social and racial homophily as white is considered the centrality of leadership (Sy *et al.*, 2010; Rosette *et al.*, 2008).

Recent anecdotal evidence appearing in both academic treatises and media accounts suggests that being white was an attribute of people’s leadership trait, and provides a potential explanation for racial bias at top leadership positions within organisation (Avery, 2010; Pinkett *et al.*, 2010; Sy *et al.*, 2010; Rosette *et al.*, 2008; Simpson, 2008). As previously acknowledged, there is lack of literature on the

disproportionate representation of ethnic minorities at the higher echelons in the public sector organisations. In light of this, the research aims are:

- To explore race, specifically if 'being white,' is an attribute of a leadership trait, placing ethnic minorities at a disadvantage when seeking promotion in DWP.
- To examine the pervasive role of race as a contextual variable and how it affects the promotion of ethnic minorities in DWP through exclusion and 'co-ethnic reproduction' of inequality by applying social closure and homosocial reproduction theories.
- To examine how sponsorship and contest mobility influence the upward mobility of ethnic minorities in DWP to senior or executive management positions.
- To develop and use a conceptual model to examine the underlying processes that affects ethnic minorities' promotion into senior and executive management positions in DWP.
- To provide recommendations to DWP on how to achieve racial equality in senior and executive management positions.
- To provide ethnic minorities with strategies in their quest to gain promotion into senior and executive management positions within DWP.

1.7 Research Questions

Specifically, the central research question investigated in this research is:

Is being white a leadership trait for senior and executive management positions in DWP?

The research focus is on ethnic minorities' in SEO to SCS grades and their reflections on the barriers they have faced during their career advancement as a result of their race. The research is guided by the following supplementary questions:

- 1 How is the white dominance and the continued existence of homogeneity at senior and executive management positions maintained in DWP?

- 2 How does race influence the promotion decisions on who to select for senior and executive management positions in DWP?
- 3 How does the promotion of ethnic minorities into senior and executive management positions differ from whites, and what mechanism produces the differences?

1.8 Research participants

This study examines how ethnic minorities are denied promotion due to their lack of white leadership traits. An 'ethnic unit' is a population whose members believe that they share common descent and cultural heritage or tradition (Smith, 1986). Ethnicity emphasises the social rather than biological factors as it is rooted in the self-definition of people themselves and is therefore situationally based (Fenton, 2010; Mason, 2003). In order to qualify for designation as an ethnic minority, a category of people must exhibit a degree of difference that is regarded as significant (Fenton, 2010). As a result not every group having a distinctive culture and constituting a minority in the British population is included in this research, such as Cypriots, Italians, Polish and Irish people as these groups are rarely designated as 'ethnic minorities' (Mason, 2000). In this research it is the unstable combination of skin colour and culture that marks ethnic minorities from the majority of the UK population (Fenton, 2010). Mason (2003, p.12) maintains that, "Ethnic minorities are those whose skin is not white and the difference between ethnic minorities and the majority is marked ultimately by the whiteness". The researcher used this distinction to identify ethnic minorities for the research in addition to the Census ethnicity classification (Office of National Statistics, 2011). Ethnic minorities constituted Asians (Indian Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Other Asian background, All Asian groups), Black (Caribbean, African, Other Black background, All Black groups), Mixed Heritage (White and Black Caribbean, White and Black African, White and Asian, Other mixed background) and Chinese (Chinese, All Chinese or Other groups).

The researcher uses the term 'ethnic minority' problematically and recognises that while it suggests a singularity of black and ethnic minority experience, experiences will differ widely between and within ethnic groups. This is a research limitation to be addressed in future research, where salient ethnic groups would be studied.

This research explores the views and experiences of twenty ethnic minority managers in Senior Executive Officer (SEO) to SCS grades as they attempt to ascend into senior and executive management positions within DWP. The research seeks to understand how the participants' career aspirations have been affected by their race. The researcher acknowledges that other factors will have affected the participants' career progression, such as gender, disability and age, but for the purposes of this research, the focus is on race. Race is an extremely sensitive subject in society as talking, writing, discussing, and thinking about racial issues can be quite emotional and maintaining political correctness in research and writing about racial issues is of paramount importance, but facets of this problem may introduce commentary and concepts that some readers may struggle to conceive. It is recommended that readers of this research should try to maintain an open mind about the topic on ethnic minorities in management and why opportunities to advance and break into senior or executive management have been so limited.

1.9 Research Methodology

The researcher collected original data, rather than explore the research questions using an existing data set, because the data may have been collected for other purposes than those of the present study. Interpretivism was the chosen research paradigm and the research did not only depend on understanding the life world, but was highly dependent on lived experiences (Dahlberg, Dahlberg, and Nystrom, 2008). To answer the 'how' and 'what' of social reality (Finlay and Evans, 2009), phenomenology was used as a research approach, as it aligns with the requirements of gaining a deeper understanding of how race impacts the career advancement of ethnic minorities and determine if being white is a trait of senior and executive managers within the organisation. The research was a qualitative inquiry, and it utilised semi-structured interviews as data collection tools. The ethnic minority managers were given the opportunity to articulate their perspectives about the barriers which they encountered in their endeavour to get into senior and executive management positions. Their individual voices are both distinct and diverse, hence, the themes which emerged from the transcripts during the thematic data analysis and this provided the lenses through which these experiences can be viewed.

1.10 The anticipated contributions of the study

The researcher augments a critical contribution to the scholarship of racial inequality in senior and executive management positions in organisational studies. Firstly, the purpose of this research is to investigate if being white is a leadership trait, as an explanation for the racial inequality at the apex of the organisation. In particular this will illuminate the disadvantages which ethnic minority managers endure by virtue of their race, which has a detrimental effect on their ascension into senior and executive management positions. The research seeks to make contributions to leadership traits by making a case for race as a determinant of leadership because the potential role of race as a contextual input in leadership perception has been largely ignored. Thus, in addition to providing evidence for the direct linkage between race and leadership perceptions, the current study investigates the interactive effects of race and leadership perceptions. Specifically, the researcher argues that race elicits managerial fit perceptions, which affect leadership perceptions through the activation of the racial leadership trait. The current study fills the gap in the leadership literature and contributes to knowledge of the phenomenon by proposing that race specifically being white may be a prototypical attribute of leadership.

Secondly, an integrative approach employing social closure and homosocial reproduction theories are utilised as epistemological lenses to further crystallise on and provide a detailed explanation on the underrepresentation of ethnic minorities in senior and executive management positions, stimulated by being atypical to the leadership trait. Previous research has used singular explanations such as human capital theory, social identity theory and leadership categorisation theory, and has only supplied partial explanation on racial inequality in management. These theories accounted the lack of representation to the deficiency of ethnic minorities, but did not analyse how whites possess more social, economic, and political power than ethnic minorities, and how this power allows them to continue to dominate positions of authority within the workplace. Therefore this research uses an integrative approach to explain how white homogeneity is maintained through racial and social homophily. Homophily is the tendency for people to associate with others similar to them in terms of attributes (e.g. race, gender) and values. Understanding racial homophily is

important because ethnic minorities are often marginalised in social and occupational settings and this can be detrimental to career advancement.

Thirdly, given the lack of research on ethnic minorities in senior and executive management positions in the public sector, this research provides new and important baseline findings to guide future research on how race affects the upward mobility of ethnic minorities in the public sector. It is crucial that research in this area be conducted so that ethnic minorities, especially those aspiring to hold leadership positions in the public sector, can understand the challenges, strategies and contexts in the public sector. In gaining such an understanding, public sector management and leadership literature is further developed and a better understanding of the impact of race on the career of senior and executive managers is enabled.

Fourthly, this research also makes a contribution to the field of public sector management by studying the influence that race has on deciding who gets the top positions in the sector between whites and ethnic minorities. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, this is a naturalistic study and is unique in terms of the focus of its topic within the context of the public sector. It is the first comprehensive study that concentrates specifically on ethnic minorities in a government department and allows them to express their perceptions about how they are denied access to the higher echelons of the organisation by virtue of not being white as they do not meet the white leadership trait required for them to be part of the senior or executive management. By examining the role of race in a public sector organisation, this research adds considerable insight into the mechanisms inside the workplace that leads to the ethnic reproduction of racial inequality in management.

Finally, the research is expected to produce recommendations to DWP executive management team and HR managers, Equality and Diversity managers and policy teams regarding the promotion of ethnic minorities to senior leadership positions and how the organisation can ensure racial equality in the promotion to senior and executive management positions. While much has been done over the past decades, with the organisation having adopted equality legislation, developed policies and programmes promoting equality between ethnic minorities and whites, prohibiting discrimination or guaranteeing equal rights, much work still remains as depicted by the underrepresentation of ethnic minorities at the apex of the

organisation. The insights gained from this in-depth qualitative study should assist in the development of strategies and policies for the organisation and ethnic minorities to gain promotion to top management positions, and racial equality in the selection of candidates for promotion by evening the playing field.

1.11 Document structure

Chapter 1 is the introduction and presents the background to the research and the positions of ethnic minorities in both the private and public sector, the world of UK politics and DWP, in order to put the research in its local context. The chapter presents the research aims, the theoretical background of the research, research methods employed, research participants and the contributions of the research to both the industry and the academic world.

Chapter 2 is the literature review, which links the topic of this research to the body of the literature in the field. The research assesses the representation of ethnic minorities in senior and executive management, across the UK in order to understand the magnitude of racial inequality in management positions. The literature review covers readings about the status of ethnic minorities in organisations and examines the literature pertaining to leadership trait and how race acts as a barrier to the career advancement of ethnic minorities to senior management and executive positions. This review serves as a facilitator to connect the local context of this study with the general body of literature on these topics in the UK and elsewhere in the world. Additionally, this chapter focuses on key studies guiding this research as it describes the integrative theoretical perspective of homosocial reproduction and social closure theories, used to provide a comprehensive knowledge of the challenges ethnic minorities face by virtue of their race in their bid to climb the corporate ladder. The conceptual model is presented to explain the different promotion paths which are followed by ethnic minorities and whites due to the sponsorship and contest mobility, espoused by homosocial reproduction and social closure theories.

Chapter 3 focuses on the logic of inquiry and the methods used in this study. This chapter provides the rationale of the research methodology chosen as it outlines interpretivism, phenomenology and qualitative research. A detailed presentation is given in regard to choosing the participants, sampling methods, data collection

methods, semi structure interview, design of interviews questions, and the basis and process of data analysis. This chapter presents ethical principles guiding this research and limitations of the research methodology.

Chapter 4 highlights the participants' unique experiences and challenges faced by ethnic minority managers as they describe, in their own words, their promotion experiences in DWP. It presents the emerging eight main themes from the interviews, and how these themes serve to answer the research questions and achieve the research aims.

Chapter 5 discusses the findings based on the interpretation of the data presented by the participants during the interviews. The findings are correlated with the literature review.

Chapter 6 concludes the study. This chapter discusses limitations of the present study provides practical implications to improve racial equality in senior and executive management in DWP and offers strategies to ethnic minorities on how to improve their chances of succeeding into senior and executive management positions. The chapter present suggestions for future research that could be undertaken to confirm and extend the findings.

Summary

This chapter has presented the background of the study by outlining the research problem, the research aims and the significance of the research. DWP was described as the case study, in the context for conducting the research, as no prior research has specifically examined the barriers faced by ethnic minorities with race being a determinant for their progression into senior and executive management positions within this organisation.

The research framework employed is a qualitative approach and specifically uses the phenomenological research approach, under the interpretive research paradigm, because of its capacity to examine career advancement from the perspective of the research participants themselves. The present research takes an important step toward putting the literature on racial inequality in management in the labour market on a firmer methodological ground using an integrative approach, by applying social closure and homosocial reproduction which are entwined to explain the disparity

between whites and ethnic minorities in senior and executive management positions and argues that racial and social homophily determines the promotability of ethnic minorities. The grounds for this research are specifically its contribution to knowledge in the public sector that has had minimal investigation, and its provision of a greater understanding of ethnic minorities' barriers to senior and executive management positions by being non-prototypical to the white leadership trait. The next chapter is dedicated to a review of the literature, the theoretical framework and the conceptual framework, as the researcher unveils the barriers faced by ethnic minorities as stated by other writers.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to review previous research regarding racial inequality in management positions within organisations. The review establishes why there is a need for an alternative integrative theoretical framework that explains factors affecting ethnic minorities' upward mobility. It outlines a new conceptual model that articulates the different paths to promotion which are followed by whites and ethnic minorities based on race. However the review does not intend to 'cover the field' (Maxwell, 1998) in terms of concepts, rather it focuses on empirical and theoretical studies that helped the researcher to formulate the assumptions on which the model was based on. The research investigates if being white is a leadership trait which is socially constructed in different contexts and negotiated in multiple ways which hinders the promotion of ethnic minorities into senior and executive management position within the organisation. The literature outlines a range of hurdles ethnic minorities have to go over in order to gain promotion and that a lack of ambition is unlikely to be the reason. British workers of BAME origin show high levels of ambition, motivation and entrepreneurial appetite and to a much greater degree than their white counterparts (Kerr, 2011).

2.2 Underrepresentation of ethnic minorities in management positions.

Empirical research supports the claim that whites are overrepresented in managerial positions as stated in Chapter 1. Eagly and Carli (2007) characterised the leadership related challenges which ethnic minorities confront as a labyrinth or maze consisting of many barriers that they must negotiate as ethnic minorities no longer face monolithic roads that obstruct all access management positions. Given the pervasiveness of this disturbing trend, several researchers have offered potential explanations. Reasons advanced to explain this phenomenon include institutional racism (Karla *et al.*, 2009, Esmail *et al.*, 2005), prevalent stereotypes (Sartore *et al.*, 2006), discrimination (Kandola, 2004; Grodsky and Pager, 2001; Arrow, 1998;

Maume, 1999), a lack of role models (Simard, 2009), and racial differences in opportunities and career experiences (Avery, 2010; Pinkett *et al.*, 2010; Rosette *et al.*, 2008; Jackson *et al.*, 2007b; Cheung *et al.*, 2006; Hill, 2004). Ethnic minorities are typically concentrated in dead end, low level, undervalued jobs (Kalev, 2009; Greenhaus, Parasuraman, and Wormley, 1990), which block their movement into higher status positions (Maume, 1999; Sakura-Lemessy and West 1999). The glass ceiling is also said to be preventing talented black and minority ethnic managers from stepping up into top executive jobs (Jackson, 2008a; Maume, 2004).

As stated by Rosette *et al.* (2008) white is the leadership trait and whites in power tend to prefer others like themselves (Wood *et al.*, 2009; Hooker *et al.*, 2008; Elliot *et al.*, 2001; Kanter, 1977). Because whites have historically been the primary decision makers in organisations, they benefit mostly from in-group preference leaving ethnic minorities underrepresented in positions of authority (Pinkett *et al.*, 2010). This is further enhanced by the 'similar to me effect' espoused in social closure theory (Avery, 2010; Tomaskovic-Devey, 1993; Smith, 2005; Elliot *et al.*, 2001) thus hampering the ascension of ethnic minorities to the upper echelons of the organisation, as they are dependent on contest mobility, whilst whites would in most cases progress through sponsorship mobility (Tomaskovic-Devey, 2007; Baldi *et al.*, 1997). Impediments exist as explained in the following sections. These impediments produce a concrete ceiling which is difficult for ethnic minorities to penetrate and see through a glimpse of the corner office (Hesselgrave, 2009).

2.2.1 Non-inclusive practices.

Organisations tend to re-create social inequality through organisational practices that are non-inclusive (Avery, 2010, Pinkett *et al.*, 2010). The apex of most organisation is predominately made up of white senior executives (e.g. Avery, 2010; Kerr, 2010; Jackson, 2008b) and the organisations are found not to be inclusive to ethnic minorities who are found in large numbers at the base of the organisation (Kalev, 2009). There is a large body of literature which explores the ways in which workplaces are organised around and support whites' work styles and life cycles, even those that appear to be meritocratic (Acker, 2009; Smith, 2001; Ely and Meyerson, 2001; Reskin and McBrier, 2000), have biased selection, promotion and evaluation practices (Pfeffer, 1983). Organisations engage in 'homosocial

reproductions' and tend to evaluate prototypical targets more favourably (Elliott *et al.*, 2004; Eagly and Karau, 2002; Kanter, 1977). Discrimination is often subtly built in organisations for example, leadership and power are often construed in terms of one's ability to direct other's behaviour, a trait that people usually associate with whites (Rosette *et al.*, 2008), as opposed to construing leadership in terms of one's ability to achieve consensus or to listen, a trait that is most often associated with ethnic minorities (Mundar *et al.*, 2003). As a result ethnic minorities are offered fewer developmental experiences than white people (Weisenfeld and Robinson-Backmon, 2007; Tharenou, Latimer and Conroy, 1994). Previous studies have consistently found that whites receive more supervisory positions, higher authority and higher pay than ethnic minorities (Tomaskovic-Devey, 2007). Racial segregation limits ethnic minority workers' initial placement on job ladders to positions that ultimately offer relatively little opportunity for further advancement (Kalev, 2009).

2.2.2 Racial discrimination

Examining statistics on who gets promoted into senior management and, particularly, who gets the top spots in any organisation shows that even employers with the best employment diversity records may not fare as well in fostering diversity in organisational upper atmosphere (Pitts, 2007; Thomas and Gabarro, 1999). It remains today almost always big news when a racial minority becomes Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of a large corporation. It is much easier for a black person to be the President of United States of America, than for an ethnic minority to be a director in DWP (Muskwe, 2009). Ethnic minorities' persistent under representation in powerful organisational positions presents a puzzle (Avery, 2009; Cohen *et al.* 2007). Racial discrimination was reported to be stopping Britain's ethnic minorities from entering the top management positions, despite them having a stronger work ethic and greater drive than whites and the presence of anti-discrimination legislation, such as the Equality Act 2010 (Kerr, 2010; Esmail *et al.*, 2005; Kandola, 2004). The depressing implication is that there may still be a colour bar to management jobs in the UK 35 years after the passing of the landmark Race Relations Act of 1976, amended in 2000, now replaced by the Equality Act 2010.

The Equality Act 2010 came into force in October 2010 providing a modern, single legal framework with clear, streamlined law to more effectively tackle disadvantage

and discrimination (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2011). The Equality Act 2010 has replaced all existing equality legislation such as the Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act and Sex Discrimination Act. (Department for Education, 2011). The act covers nine protected characteristics such as age, sexual orientation, disability, gender, civil partnership, gender reassignment, sex, religion or belief including race which is of essence to this research. Under the Equality Act 2010, an employer is not allowed to discriminate directly or indirectly by treating a job applicant or employee less favourably than others because of race.

DWP as a public board as per the act has a duty to eliminate race discrimination, promote equality of opportunities for all racial groups and foster good relations between people of different racial groups, when employing, training and promoting its employees. However, despite the presence of the Equality Act and other anti-discrimination legislation, there is still evidence that ethnic minorities continue to be discriminated against in the workplace (Kerr, 2010). Employers have the autonomy to determine who is hired and who is not, and they have a wide range of legitimate arguments to justify their decisions (Jackson, 2009). Hence it is clear that an understanding of how and why employers discriminate is of unquestionable relevance for the legal and political means to prevent such discrimination (Peucker, 2009). Knight *et al.* (2003, p.87) argue that it is “white supremacy is perhaps the most difficult obstacle for ethnic minority managers to overcome” and this results in ethnic minorities stagnating at the lower echelons of the organisation, whilst white homogeneity is maintained at the upper echelons of the organisation.

In 1965, the UN Assembly adopted the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), which offers in Article 1 a rather broad but widely accepted definition of racial discrimination, which reflects the UN’s human rights perspective:

“In this Convention, the term ‘racial discrimination’ shall mean any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.” Schwelb (1966, p.1001)

More than four decades later, the general understanding of ethnic discrimination has not changed and much remains to be done to eliminate racial discrimination altogether (Peucker, 2009). While the scourge of officially sanctioned segregation has been eliminated, de facto segregation and persistent racial discrimination continue to exist. The forms of discriminatory practices have changed and adapted over time, but racial and ethnic discrimination continues to restrict and limit equal opportunity in the promotion of ethnic minorities (Wrench, 2007). Conventional explanations blame the underrepresentation of ethnic minorities in organisations on racial discrimination as it remains commonplace in large part because it continues to proceed in covert, subtle, and unintentional forms even when its more blatant expressions are restrained (Hooker *et al.*, 2008; Dovidio and Gaertner, 2004). People can unknowingly racially discriminate by means of “mindless” processes that operate beyond their conscious attentional focus, while thinking that they are merely choosing the best person for the job or otherwise acting in an unbiased manner (Eagly *et al.*, 2010) impeding the career advancement of ethnic minorities (Avery, 2010, Combs and Griffith, 2007; Esmail *et al.*, 2005; Kandola, 2004).

2.2.3 Lack of access to influential social networks.

The affinity that individuals tend to have for people with similar status distinctions such as race can be referred to as in-group bias (Fiske, 1998; Ridgeway, 1997). Ethnic minorities are trapped in segregated social networks, which isolate them from information and influence that can help them advance in their careers, this process serves as an alternative mechanism through which discrimination may operate (McDonald, Lin and Ao, 2009). Kanter (1977) provides one of the earliest examples of in-group bias in the workplace. She found that women’s exclusion from mentoring and network relations with men led to homosocial reproduction, which refers to the social process whereby male managers reproduce themselves with other males at the top of the organisational hierarchy. Although Kanter developed her argument as an attempt to explain sex difference in attainment at work, management literature have used applied it to race differences in promotion (Baldi *et al.*, 1997; Greenhaus *et al.*, 1990, Nkomo *et al.*, 1990) This resonates quite clearly with Weber’s (1968) classic conception of social closure, where status groups attempt to maintain or expand their access to valuable resources by limiting access to others outside of the group through either exclusion or usurpation (Parkin 1979; Burt, 1992; Tomaskovic-

Devey, 1993). The white networks are places where whites construct and negotiate their status with other whites. White managers however, do not see these networks as white (Anthonissen *et al.*, 2008). They tend to see themselves as colour-blind and as non-raced individuals while they see ethnic minority managers as being part of a racial and ethnic group (King, 2000).

The exclusion from the social networks results in information isolation or the lack of access to diverse information networks as one of the main barriers that block the career advancement of ethnic minorities (Hooker *et al.*, 2008). These networks allocate a variety of instrumental resources that are critical for job effectiveness and career advancement (Gray *et al.*, 2008; Ibarra, 1993). Exclusion from informal social networks produces multiple disadvantages for ethnic minorities such as less access to critical organisational information, barriers to establishing strategic alliances with mentors or sponsors who can assist them to climb the corporate ladder, and subsequently endure limitations on upward mobility (Smith, 2005; Thomas, 2001; Ibarra, 1995; Morrison and Von Glinow, 1990). Social closure suggests that groups are unlikely to provide information or influence in the job search process for out-group members, especially more valuable jobs even if ethnic minority groups use a white contact, social closure predicts that these jobs will be less desirable (Stainback, 2008). Access to leadership development and networking capabilities consists of the racial composition of those superiors to whom the subordinates will report. "Whites, by virtue of being dominant, nearly always rise to power under 'similar others,' whereas ethnic minorities generally take two tracks, they advance under white, or they advance under similar others" (Elliot *et al.*, 2004, p.370).

2.2.4 Leadership categorisation

Just as prejudice and discrimination limit the opportunities ethnic minorities have so too do leadership traits, based on categorisation of leaders and non-leaders. According to leadership categorisation theory (Lord and Maher, 1991), people develop mind sets over time of who can lead and what leaders should be. These characteristics develop into leadership categories such that people develop ideas of a standard example or typical leader. People then contrast a given leader with the leadership trait they have developed in their minds, a process known as the recognition-based process (Rosette *et al.*, 2008; Lord *et al.*, 1991). Those persons

who possess characteristics that are consistent with the stereotypes are likely to be viewed as more effective than are their counterparts. These leadership traits influence the way leaders are evaluated, and they can be highly detrimental in atypical cases, where mismatches occur between traits and reality. Whites are reported to be business leaders, because historically they have always been at the helm of the organisation such that they are regarded as the successful business leaders as compared to ethnic minorities. The central characteristic of leadership is 'being white' as white leaders are perceived to be more prototypical business leaders than are leaders who are ethnic minorities (Sy *et al.*, 2010; Simpson, 2008; Rosette *et al.*, 2008).

Ethnic minorities are not seen as leadership material, as the expectations for senior and executive management positions are shaped by who people have historically been seen in these roles and who they believe is best suited to handle these responsibilities (Ospina *et al.*, 2009; Rosette *et al.*, 2008; Eagly *et al.*, 2002). Whites have historically held the primary leadership positions, this pervasiveness undermines ethnic minority executives in predominantly white corporations as it triggers the stereotype which actively hinders their career advancement as they are not categorised as leaders (Ospina *et al.*, 2009; Chung-Herrera *et al.*, 2005; Ng *et al.*, 2005). The concentration of ethnic minorities in lower level and marginal jobs reinforces negative stereotypes about their capabilities and aspirations which limits their access to career opportunities such as prestigious job assignments (Pinkett *et al.*, 2010; Eagly *et al.*, 2010; Reskin *et al.*, 1999; Fiske 1998; Tsui, Egan and O'Reilly, 1992). The historical trends shape people's perceptions about who can and cannot hold particular job roles and contribute to the continued underrepresentation of ethnic minorities in senior and executive management positions (Eagly *et al.*, 2002).

An underlying assumption is that ethnic minority leaders are disadvantaged because for various reasons, they are not perceived as legitimate (Ospina *et al.*, 2009). Hogg and Terry, (2000, p.130) suggest that "ethnic minorities may find it difficult to attain top leadership positions in organisations because they do not fit culturally prescribed organizational traits". Equally Kandola (2004) and as Ng and Burke (2005) conveys that ethnic minorities find it difficult to attain top positions because they do not fit and are not seen as having the 'right stuff' hence they are not perceived as leadership material. In a prescribed organisational trait of being white still sees the archetypal

and most effective leader as white (Sy *et al.*, 2010; Simpson, 2008; Rosette *et al.*, 2008). White senior managers therefore fall into a trap of 'cloning' feeling inherently more sympathetic towards people who share their own cultural background and interests and therefore recruiting employees primarily from within their own ethnic group (Kanter, 1977). Social identity and organisational demography literature suggests that people prefer to interact with members of their own identity group rather than with members of other groups. Whites tend to predominate in higher positions, ethnic minorities tend to occupy more junior positions, thereby creating in-group favouritism for whites (Kalev, 2009).

2.2.5 Absence and scarcity of role models and mentors.

The scarcity of role models reinforces stereotypes in the organisation as a white organisation. Ethnic minorities see few role models in the higher echelons of the organisation, getting a message that they do not belong to these positions as an ethnic minority (Simard, 2009). This also reinforces the views of whites that they do not consider ethnic minorities as part of the 'in group' and management material (Ospina *et al.*, 2009; Ng *et al.*, 2005; Kandola, 2004). In the private sector, a study of FTSE 100 companies showed that ethnic minorities did not see positive role models at the senior management grades (Brown, 2010; Simard, 2009; Sanglin-Grant *et al.*, 2002) and lacked mentors (Thomas, 2001). Mentors play a significant role in providing access to high-profile development opportunities which in turn allow mentoring relationships that are so important to career progression (Pinkett *et al.*, 2010; Thomas, 2001).

Ethnic minorities need mentors who will act as sponsors for them, to assist in gaining promotion. Without the mentors and social networks they will be starved of the much needed information and guidance for their career advancement (Smith, 2005; Collins, 1997b). Yet the scarcity of role models leads to fewer mentoring opportunities for ethnic minorities, as mentors tend to seek protégés who resemble them in background, race, and gender (Simard, 2009). On the other hand, using a cross race contact, while a rare event, strongly discourages this process (Stainback, 2008). Raggins, Townsend, and Mattis (1998) found that almost all (91%) of successful ethnic minority Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) they interviewed said they had had mentors at some time and almost as many (81%) said that mentors

were critical or fairly important. These findings are in alignment with other evidence that individuals who are mentored are more frequently promoted, have more career mobility and advance faster as the mentor fuels sponsorship to the promotion (Smith, 2005). However, there are fewer opportunities for ethnic minorities to build mentoring relationships than there are for white people, this is because they are fewer senior and executive ethnic minority managers to act as mentors and in part because of the difficulties associated with black-white mentoring relationships (Kalra *et al.*, 2009).

Ethnic minorities are constrained from seeking friendships with whites by exclusionary pressures resulting from whites' efforts to preserve their own higher status (Mollica, Gray and Treviño, 2003). As people tend to be more comfortable interacting with similar others because "interpersonal similarity increases ease of communication, improves predictability of behaviour, and fosters relationships of trust and reciprocity" (Ibarra, 1993, p. 61). Same-race relationships provide more psychosocial support than cross-race relationships (Thomas and Gabarro, 1999) and for ethnic minorities in white dominated settings, informal sources of support are fundamental in maintaining one's racial identity (Cox 1993, Ibarra, 1993). Nevertheless, compared to whites, ethnic minorities reported receiving less psychosocial support in organisations (James, 2000).

2.2.6 Sponsorship versus contest mobility tournaments

Sponsorship mobility implies an informal system of promotion through homosocial mentoring, whereas contest mobility implies a system in which one advances through formal qualifications, hard work and formalised bureaucratic procedures because of exclusion from homosocial mentoring networks (Baldi *et al.*, 1997; Rosebaum, 1984). Under sponsored mobility elite recruits are chosen by the established elites or their agents, and elite status is given on the basis of some criterion of supposed merit and cannot be taken by any amount of effort or strategy (Rosenbaum, 1984). Kanter (1977) argued that sponsorship is a crucial mechanism for career advancement and it is homosocial that is people tend to establish sponsorship ties with people like themselves. As a result upward mobility is like entry into a private club where each candidate must be "sponsored" by one or more of the members (Turner, 1960). This implies that there exists some type of "sponsorship" model for advancement within the organisation for whites, while ethnic minorities

have to rely on advancement through a “contest” model regardless of similar experience and qualifications they find promotion attainment difficult (Smith, 2005; Elliot *et al*, 2001; Wilson, Sakura-Lemessy and West, 1999; Wilson, 1997; Turner, 1974). To gain promotion under contest mobility ethnic minorities “ethnic minorities have to rely more on education and experience, relative to whites, to ‘break into’ higher levels of power often having to ‘out-credential’ white counterpart (Elliot *et al*, 2004, p.368-369). As whites are promoted through sponsor mobility the effects of formal human capital are negligible because of the importance of personal ties (Baldi *et al.*, 1997).

2.2.7 Glass ceiling

Despite notable exceptions in politics and in the business world, ethnic minorities are still less likely to be found at the apex of public and private organisations compared to their white counterparts (e.g. Avery, 2010; Pinkett *et al.*, 2010; Hesselgrave, 2009; Eagly *et al.*, 2007; Maume, 2004; Giscombe *et al.*, 2002). The major barriers to upward career mobility of ethnic minorities are no longer at the recruitment and job entry stage but at the advancement stages (Bush *et al.*, 2006; Jackson *et al*, 2007a). The glass ceiling is preventing talented ethnic minority managers from stepping up into top executive jobs and is still rigidly in place despite a range of high-profile government diversity initiatives over the last few years (O’Hara, 2009).

The glass ceilings are those artificial barriers based on attitudinal or organisational bias that prevent qualified ethnic minorities from advancing upward in their organisation (Powell *et al.*, 1994). This unique form of racial discrimination is believed to prevent ethnic minorities from obtaining managerial positions and increases in severity at higher levels of management (Maume, 2004). The glass-ceiling insinuates the idea that ethnic minorities are recruited into firms dominated by whites, but fail to progress as far as whites in climbing the corporate hierarchy (Jackson *et al.*, 2007b; Kandola, 2004; Maume, 2004). The glass ceiling is camouflaged by invisible or behind the scene elements such as racism, discrimination, tokenism, informal and hidden senior promotion processes, stereotyping of leadership, management and ‘fit’, tokenism old boys’ network and social exclusion (Simard, 2009; Muskwe, 2009). The concentration of ethnic minorities in lower level and marginal jobs reinforces the existence of the glass

ceiling through negative stereotypes about their capabilities and aspirations (Reskin, 2003; Fiske, 1998; Tsui and O'Reilly, 1989; Kanter, 1977); limits their access to career opportunities, such as prestigious job assignments and training (Baron and Newman, 1990), restrains their ability to develop strategic networks and mentoring relations (e.g. Blair-Loy, 2001; Burt, 2005,1998; Ibarra, 1992; Ibarra, 1995; Petersen, Saporta and Seidel, 1998), and lowers their self-esteem and career aspirations (Reskin, 2003; Ridgeway and Smith-Lovin, 1999). This increases the intentions of ethnic minorities to leave organisations (Foley *et al.*, 2002), because they are close enough to the senior management positions in the organisation to be considered in the recruitment pool for these positions, but they rarely reach them. This frustration in seeing the top jobs but being passed over for them is what many view as the 'glass ceiling' (Jackson *et al.*, 2007a; Maume, 2004).

2.2.8 Role slotting

Ethnic minorities are affected by race for promotion decisions through minimising encroachment into privileged positions as they are found to be victims of role slotting, a source of social closure (Pinkett *et al.*, 2010; Tomaskovic-Devey *et al.*, 2007; Roscigno *et al.*, 2007). Role slotting is a practice of manoeuvring ethnic minorities into positions that are not directly related to the business line, as they are deployed out of the mainstream positions and into racialised jobs such as community relation roles and social welfare (Pinkett *et al.*, 2010; Kalev, 2009; Simon, 2008; Collins, 1997b). The problem with these assignments was summarised by one of Jones's (1986) informants:

Too often Black managers are channelled into The Relations as I call them—the community relations, the public relations, the personnel relations. These may be important functions, but they are not the gut functions that make the business grow or bring in revenues. And they are not the jobs that prepare an executive to be a CEO. (p. 89)

Deficits in individual development may in turn make ethnic minorities appear unsuitable for advancement and lead them to languish in lower roles in the organisations thus they have plateaued due to being disqualified for promotion (Simon, 2008; Bush *et al.*, 2006; Collins, 1997b). "Meeting the challenges inherent in tough assignments and becoming recognised for having overcome these challenges

are prerequisites to the advancement to upper-level management” Eagly *et al.*, 2007, p.148). As ethnic minorities are starved of the developmental job experiences, they incur a developmental deficit which not only affects their promotional prospects, but also leads to them receiving lower evaluations that restrict their future opportunities for advancement (Muskwe, 2009; Jackson *et al.*, 2007a; Greenhaus *et al.*, 1990).

Researchers have examined how ethnic minorities are channelled into certain jobs (Reskin and McBrier 2000; Kmec, 2005) and how these jobs become devalued (Kalev, 2009; Tomaskovic-Devey, 1993). Consequently, racialised jobs marginalise ethnic minorities’ skills and the probability of moving into, competing for, and, or performing in corporate areas that lead to decision-making positions is greatly diminished (Tomaskovic-Devey *et al.*, 2007; Maume, 2004). Most equality officers came from leftist community/political activist backgrounds and were often feminist women and/or black and minority ethnic (BME) people, who brought with them personal experiences of discrimination and harassment. They were generally viewed as progressive, politicised people who identified with particular disadvantaged social groups and had a clear social justice agenda. It was their personal experiences (rather than professional training or qualifications) that gave them the credibility, the authority and, arguably, the expertise to lead EO policy (Jewson and Mason, 1986; Cockburn, 1991). Cockburn (1991: 235) argued that equality officers were “a relatively new kind of employee, inserted to be an interface between a particular constituency of interests and the management system” Kandola *et al.* (1991) also argued that even if an equality officer did his/her job well, that it was unlikely to lead to further career opportunities in the organisation. The concentration of ethnic minorities in lower-level and marginalised jobs limits their visibility and strategic networks (Kalev 2009; Blair-Loy, 2001), and it reinforces negative stereotypes about their capabilities and aspirations (Ridgeway and Smith-Lovin, 1999). Segregated jobs are a result of an exclusionary practice which reserves prestigious jobs for whites and act as an informal barrier to advancement through social closure and homosocial reproduction.

2.2.9 Race as a determinant trait for leadership

Race is still and will be for some time, a major factor in the decision-making process for top management positions in the organisations (Ospina *et al.*, 2009; Soni, 2000;

Shropshire, 1996). Racial hierarchies exist with white people at the top and darker races at the opposite end (Pinkett *et al.*, 2010; Avery, 2010; Giscombe *et al.*, 2009; Bush *et al.*, 2006; Jackson *et al.*, 2007; Steefle, 2006; Hill, 2004; Maume, 2004; Kandola, 2004; Fenton, 2003). In many cases, the problem is exacerbated because senior management does not have a great number of ethnic minorities, they remain disproportionately underrepresented (Avery, 2010; Kalra *et al.*, 2009; Jackson *et al.*, 2007). The ability to lead and manage the organisation is a skill generally attributed to whites (Rosette *et al.*, 2008), this stereotype has prevented many ethnic minorities from obtaining decision-making positions in the organisation administration for years (Jackson *et al.*, 2009). The belief that ethnic minorities possess inferior leadership skills and thinking capacities means some managers and executives are reluctant to hire ethnic minorities for top positions (Avery, 2010; Solhekol, 2008). Leadership is not indigenous to one group of people, but to individuals, however, whites are more than five times more likely to hold managerial positions than comparable ethnic minorities (Mundra, Moellmeier, and Lopez-Agueres, 2003). Muskwe (2008) in his research about DWP found that in business units where a significant proportion of the employees were ethnic minorities, whites occupied more senior management positions than ethnic minorities.

Ethnic minorities are constantly at a disadvantage in the organisation's hierarchy as they are viewed as workers and not leaders. Rosette *et al.* (2008) theorised that a central characteristic of leadership is 'being white' and accordingly evaluators will perceive that white leaders are more prototypical business leaders than leaders who are ethnic minorities. Stockdale *et al.* (2004, p.46) cited an interview panel discussion about a black candidate where it was said,

Regardless of his qualifications, the good of the company is ultimately at stake. Look at the big picture. The company is predominantly white and our clients are predominantly white. Hiring a black candidate would actually be a disservice, both to our company and clients, but also to the black candidate. This inherent 'lack of fit' with our current workforce and clients would put undue hardship on all parties involved. For the sake of the organisation as a business, I would recommend hiring the white candidate.

The black candidate could not get the job by virtue of being black and did not fit the organisation's aims (Ng and Sorensen, 2008). "To choose an applicant that is culturally similar to oneself is not a choice that is made because it is believed to maximise profit. It is made because it is believed to have positive implications for the social atmosphere at the work place" Bursell, 2007, p.8). Bursell continues to say, cultural or social differences between people from different cultures, even very small and subtle differences, may make an employer prefer applicants from his/her own culture for social reasons, the employer simply feels more comfortable having people on her/his staff that abide by the same social codes as herself/himself, even though these social codes are irrelevant for work performance. According to Akerlof (1997) ethnic minorities are affected by the social distance when it comes to making hiring decisions as this distinguishes between social decisions and conventional economic decision-making. The former has social consequences and the latter has not. Carless (2005) suggested that systematic biases occur in raters' evaluations so that ethnic minorities are evaluated more on the basis of their race not on their competency to perform. Anothnissen *et al.* (2008) found that ethnic minority managers were rated significantly lower than were white managers. Similarly, Igbaria and Wormley (1992) found that ethnic minority managers and professionals within a large information system company received lower performance ratings and less career support than did their white counterparts.

White people have better promotion prospects than ethnic minority groups (Bush *et al.*, 2006). It is an indisputable fact that whites occupy the uppermost positions on the racial dimension of social stratification which lends credence to the notion that being white brings with it an unexplained power and social privilege (West, 1999). "Whiteness is one of the most salient characteristics in conferring power, reflecting a long history where skin colour determines inequities in 'the distribution power'" (Simpson, 2008, p. 141). The white privilege is an institutional rather than personal set of benefits granted to those who by race resemble the people who hold the power positions in our organisations (Renzetti, 2007). White privilege is so pervasive and embedded in social life, that it has an everyday, taken-for-granted character that, ironically, renders itself invisible to people who are white. Whiteness is used in this analysis to signify this 'condition' and to reveal that race discrimination in the workplace is founded in the 'cumulative privilege' that has been 'quietly loaded up on

whites' at the disadvantage of ethnic minorities (Nielsen, 2007). Managerial whiteness is masked when its existence and the accompanying privileges of whiteness are made invisible by means of a discourse of colour blindness and the denial that inequality exists. Those who are seen as 'other' are expected to engage in dominant white discursive managerial practices (Anthonissen *et al.*, 2008). This practice ignores the social constructions of whiteness as part of ethnicity and race and its conflation with power/privileges in organisations (King, Leonard and Kusz, 2007; Doane and Bonilla Silva, 2003; Grimes, 2002). Existing differences tend to be attributed to personal differences while ethnic minority group issues are often ignored (King *et al.*, 2007). Obstacles that ethnic minority managers may encounter are individualised so that whiteness is the invisible standard (Anthonissen *et al.*, 2008).

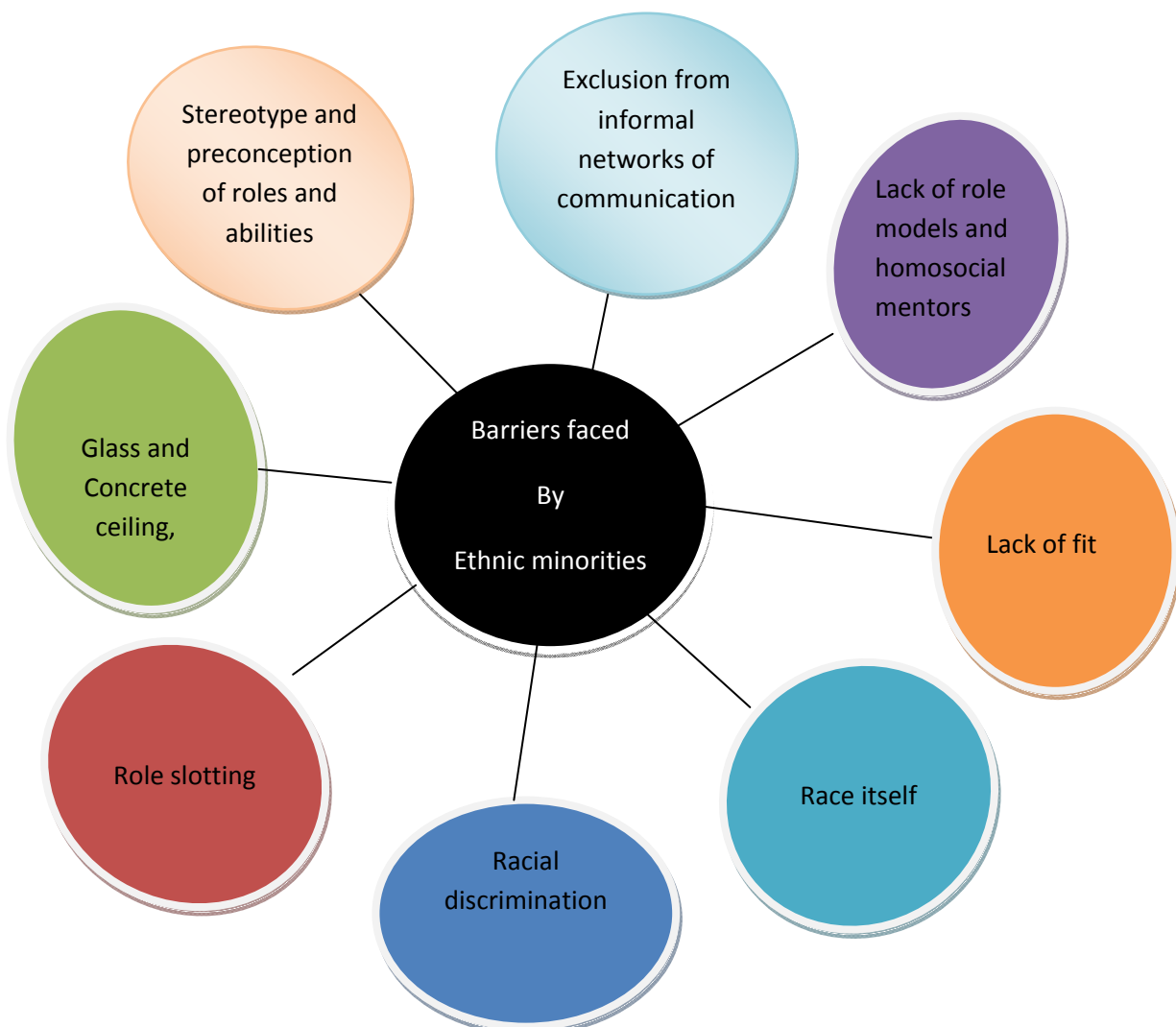


Figure 1: The multiple disadvantages faced by ethnic minorities

In summary, Figure 1 shows the multiple disadvantages ethnic minorities have to endure in their bid to gain promotion into the higher echelons of the organisation according to the literature. While a review of this literature is essential for revealing patterns of racial inequality at work, it fails to explore in detail how the social interactions between the decision makers and the prospective employees influence racial inequality and how it is reproduced in the organisations.

Past research has provided a foundation and point to the significance of race. However, further research is needed in order to discern the mechanisms behind ethnic minorities' mobility. An integrative approach will build on previous theories and expand the discussion to provide an examination of the underlying processes through which race might be a factor in movement through the selection and hiring process. The next section of the review, explores the integration social closure theory, homosocial reproduction theory, contest mobility and sponsorship together as a way of addressing this gap in the literature. An integrative approach acknowledges the need for more than one explanation for such a complex issue. Human capital theorists have explained racial inequality in management between whites and ethnic minorities as a result of human capital deficiency on ethnic minorities (Fietze, Holst, and Tobsch, 2010; Arrow, 1998; Heckmen, 1998; Becker, 1975, 1993) thus affecting their upward mobility, without noting how social homophily espoused with race fuels the racial inequality in management. To advance up the status hierarchy one obtains help from well-placed contacts "who are better able to exert influence on positions whose actions may benefit ego's interest" (Lin, 1999, p.470). Workers who have successful friend benefit because of information and influence that their friends can provide. This will be demonstrated by the conceptual model (below) developed from the integration of homosocial reproduction and social closure to explain how ethnic minorities are disadvantaged through social and racial homophily.

2.3 Theoretical framework

This research aims to assist in filling the gap in the literature by examining the representation of ethnic minorities at the apex of the organisation and how race impacts on their career advancement, as white is deemed the leadership trait (Sy *et al.*, 2010; Rosette *et al.*, 2008). The researcher uses the lens of an integrative approach of Webber's (1968) theory of social closure and Kanter's (1977) homosocial reproduction theory to illuminate the underrepresentation of ethnic minorities in senior and executive management positions in DWP, because of being atypical to the white leadership trait. The argument will be made that homogeneity at top management is created through social interaction processes validated by homosocial reproduction and social closure, as people prefer and, promote those who are prototypical to them, and excluding those less prototypical to them, while they self-reproduce themselves through homosocial reproduction. While several theories have attempted to explain racial inequities in the promotion of ethnic minorities, they have primarily used single theories which have not provided sufficient explanations to the issues.

Previous research on racial inequality in management has focused on single theories such as human capital theory (Heckmen, 1998; Becker, 1975; 1993), leadership categorisation theory (Lord *et al.*, 1991; Rosette *et al.*, 2008) and the social identity theory (Chow *et al.*, 2004), the particularistic mobility thesis (Wilson, 1997) as explanations for the race gap in promotions but have been less explicit exploring the actual mechanisms that contribute to racial differences in promotion (Pitts, 2007, 2005; Wise and Tschirhart, 2000). While these studies have contributed to the general understanding of the underrepresentation of ethnic minorities, they are, by and large, limited by their focus on a single level of analysis. The singular concentration is largely incomplete because it fails to recognise that organisations are multilevel entities that both shape and are shaped by myriad factors (Cunningham, 2010; Cunningham, 2008; Benschop, 2006; Prasad, Pringle, and Konrad, 2006).

To advance the understanding of the complexity of factors facing ethnic minorities, it is necessary that research efforts focus on developing an integrated theoretical framework to examine the issues. An integrative approach is best characterised by attempts to look beyond and across the confines of single-schools of thought, which have supplied only partial explanations for the racial gap in promotion attainment, but

has not thoroughly explored the social and racial differences impacting promotion. Previous research has been less explicit in exploring the actual internal labour market mechanisms that contribute to race differences in promotion. An integrative model was developed to provide a more concrete basis for examining and understanding racial inequality in the public sector management. This framework is based on social closure theory, homosocial reproduction theory, contest mobility and sponsorship mobility.

2.3.1 Social Closure Theory

The concept of social closure comes out of the Weberian tradition of sociology and refers to the action of social groups that maximise their own advantage by restricting access to rewards to their members, thus closing access to outsiders who are regarded as inferior and ineligible (Kidder, 2004; Murphy, 1988; Parkin, 1979). Social closure is the process of subordination whereby one group monopolises advantages by closing off opportunities to another group of outsiders reserving access and competition for those resources to any member of the in-group who are part of the 'golden circle', it embodies the glass ceiling phenomena (Tomaskovic-Devey *et al.*, 2007; Ho, 2007; Maume, 2004). Social closure has a mechanism to hoard opportunities or economic advantages with the consequence of generating and reproducing inequality, especially by ethnicity (Elliot *et al.*, 2001). Such processes might occur at the unevenness of different categories of people across jobs and occupations, and most likely reflects social closure processes that enable those with power to hoard positions of authority and favourable work assignments for people like them (DiTomaso, Post and Parks-Yancy, 2007). The hoarding of opportunities appears to occur more frequently at higher organisational levels (Smith, 2002). Organisations are inherently conservative entities in that they tend to simply reproduce and reinforce past behaviours rather than respond to the needs of their employees (Smith, 2005; Collins, 1999).

The dominant group's strategy for securing or protecting benefits is by closing off opportunities to the out-group, is referred to as exclusionary closure (Parkin, 1979). Exclusionary closure is the foci of this research, it contrasts with usurpation, which involves the strategic exercise of power by subordinate groups in order to gain advantages from the dominant group (Parkin, 1979). Since exclusion appears to be

the preferred practice for retaining the homogeneity of the dominant group, one implication is that whites benefit most from exclusionary practices. In essence this will be viewed as if whites are more competent than ethnic minorities whilst they hinge on their white sovereignty (Simpson, 2008) for their dominance in senior and executive management positions, and conclusively white will be regarded a leadership trait (Rosette *et al.*, 2008).

Social closure emphasises that it is the exclusionary practices themselves which create segregation, both within organisations and individual jobs. It has been noted that these practices appear deliberate, produce and perpetuate advantages for the dominant groups (Tomaskovic-Devey *et al.*, 2007) thus duplicate people who are prototypical as a result social closure occurs when opportunities are closed to outsiders and reserved only for members of our own group (Tomaskovic-Devey *et al.*, 2007). Social closure is as much about protecting opportunities for the majority as it is about denying opportunities to others. Tomaskovic-Devey (1993) expands on the previous theoretical arguments by suggesting that status groups create and preserve their identity and advantages by reserving certain opportunities for members of the group. Ospina (1996) views social closure as a product of the existence of social inequality while simultaneously promoting further inequality. Following the theoretical logic, the out-group will be excluded from the resources monopolised by the in-group and these resources are monopolised for the preservation of the in-group and the status that accompanies membership of that group. Social closure processes are the means by which superordinate groups preserve their advantage by tying access to jobs or other scarce goods to group characteristics, such as race, (Tomaskovic - Devey, 2006, 1993; Smith, 2005).

It is through social closure which enables the walking of whites on the 'glass escalators' (Maume, 1999) through sponsorship whilst ethnic minorities have to acquire upward mobility through the contest model as they bump against the glass ceiling (Elliot *et al.*, 2004). Human capital theory is mortified by the social closure theory, because even with equivalent or higher human capital, ethnic minorities find it difficult to gain promotions or positions of authority because the dominant group monopolises these positions for other members of the dominant group whom they sponsor, notwithstanding the human capital credentials (Tomaskovic-Devey *et al.*, 2007). According to Kalra *et al.* (2009) leaders who are prototypical are evaluated

more favourably than leaders who are less prototypical, such that whites are more favourable to be senior or executive managers due to their likeness to the top management as compared to ethnic minorities (Wood *et al.*, 2009; Hooker *et al.*, 2008).

2.3.2 Homosocial Reproduction Theory

According to Ospina (1996), social similarity acts as a mechanism of exclusion or inclusion in circles of power and privilege. This manifests itself not only in organisations, but also in society at large, as people tend to exclude those in the out-group and include those within the in-group. A long history of workplace studies on this phenomenon holds that people are more comfortable working with members of their own group. One of the earliest scholarly examples of in-group bias was Rosabeth Moss Kanter's (1977) study, *Men and Women of the Corporation*. According to Kanter (1977), there are many screening mechanisms that are used to find people who look like and will be socially accepted by the people at the top of the organisations. The jobs at the top are the 'best' jobs within the organisation and as social closure theory would have us believe, these are the jobs that the dominate group monopolises. The managers close to the top not only hold the most authority but also reap the most rewards. Managers in the top positions must deal with uncertainty of managerial tasks, rely heavily on communication flows and cope with the difficulty of evaluating managerial roles (Kanter 1977; Ospina, 1996). Given these circumstances there must be a great deal of trust among the members of the firm that occupy the top positions.

Kanter (1977) found that managers who hold authority at the top most often look to candidates that mostly resemble themselves when filling the top positions because of issues of trust and uncertainty. This practice of finding employees who are like existing employees at the top is homosocial reproduction (Kanter, 1977). Homosocial reproduction theory is not a far departure from social closure as managers tend to carefully guard power and privilege for those who fit in, for those they see as 'their kind' (Tomaskovic-Devey, 1993; Kanter, 1977). The structure sets in motion forces leading to the replication of managers and 'weeds out' those that are atypical of the leadership trait. The theory of homosocial reproduction posits that members of a dominant group tend to recruit, nurture and promote persons like themselves,

especially when they are selecting individuals for prestigious, confidential, and trusted positions (Outley *et al.*, 2007). This practice of finding employees who are white like the senior managers ensures that managers carefully guard power and privilege for those who fit in (Ng *et al.*, 2005), for those they see as 'their kind' and part of the 'golden circle' (Milmo, 2008; Tomaskovic-Devey *et al.*, 2007; Stafsudd, 2006). The structure sets in motion forces leading to the self-reproducing due to homosocial reproduction of managers similar to them, thus maintaining white homogeneity and dominance at the apex of the organisation (Elliott *et al.*, 2004; Kanter, 1977). By so doing, ethnic minorities are left at the bottom of the organisation as there is no one of their kind who can hold their hands and assist them to climb the corporate ladder to the upper echelons of the organisation. They stagnate at lower and middle management positions.

In their study of ethnic minority authority attainment Elliott *et al.* (2001) explained why ethnic minorities are unlikely to occupy positions of authority in the workplaces. They contended that those in power tend to prefer others like themselves, especially when trust is at stake. Historically, much has not changed in society today with the primary decision makers in organisations being whites, and benefit most from in-group preference (Eagly *et al.*, 2002; Elliott *et al.*, 2001), whilst ethnic minorities are left underrepresented in positions of authority in most organisations. Drawing on Wilbert Moore's description of a bureaucratic kinship system, Kanter (1977) explained the rationale for such associations:

Keeping management positions in the hands of people of one's kind provides reinforcement for the belief that people like oneself deserves to have such authority. So management positions become easily closed to people who are "different." (p. 62-63)

Those at the top of organisations, sponsor those that resemble them. This implies the existence of sponsorship model for advancement within the organisation for whites, while ethnic minorities have to rely on advancement through a contest model (Wilson *et al.*, 1999; Wilson, 1997; Turner, 1974). This sponsorship model also suggests that there is an informal system of promotion through homosocial mentoring for whites. Conversely for ethnic minorities the contest model indicates a

system in which one advances only through formal qualifications without the mentoring networks accorded to the sponsorship model (Baldi *et al.*, 1997).

2.5.3 Conceptual Model

The conceptual model, building upon previous research, is offered to provide a more comprehensive, integrative explanation of the promotion process for ethnic minorities and whites (Figure 2). The present study addresses the limitations discussed in previous research on racial inequality in management as the integrative approach it utilises the concepts of social closure, homosocial reproduction, sponsorship mobility and contest mobility to extend the research previously done on racial inequality. Numerous studies investigating career advancement of ethnic minorities focused on the influence of human capital deficiency as the reason for their low representation in management (Fietze *et al.*, 2010; Heckman, 1998). This research goes a step further and supplements this picture by considering race specifically being white as a leadership trait, and social cognitive factors to be facilitating the implicit bias against ethnic minorities, thus affecting their career progression.

The application of the integrative approach anticipates that the determinants of promotion will be significantly different for ethnic minorities and whites. In particular, ethnic minorities, relative to whites, should reach higher positions on the basis of a more deterministic and formal route, and whites are fast tracked through the sponsorship model, which is enhanced by the cloning of whites by white sponsors at the apex of the organisation who promote people similar to them. Ethnic minorities have to be promoted through the contest model as the path to promotion is marred with a lack of sponsorship. By not meeting the white leadership trait, they are excluded and only get promoted after working two or three times harder than their white counterparts and proving their capabilities (Pinkett *et al.*, 2010). The model depicts how the two theories entwined create barriers for ethnic minorities' career progression into the upper echelons of the organisation. Through inclusion of whites and exclusion of ethnic minorities from the social networks where homosocial mentors sponsor whites for promotion by virtue of the similar to me effect where like attracts like and by virtue of being atypical ethnic minorities do not have homosocial mentors, therefore they have to use contest mobility to attain promotion.

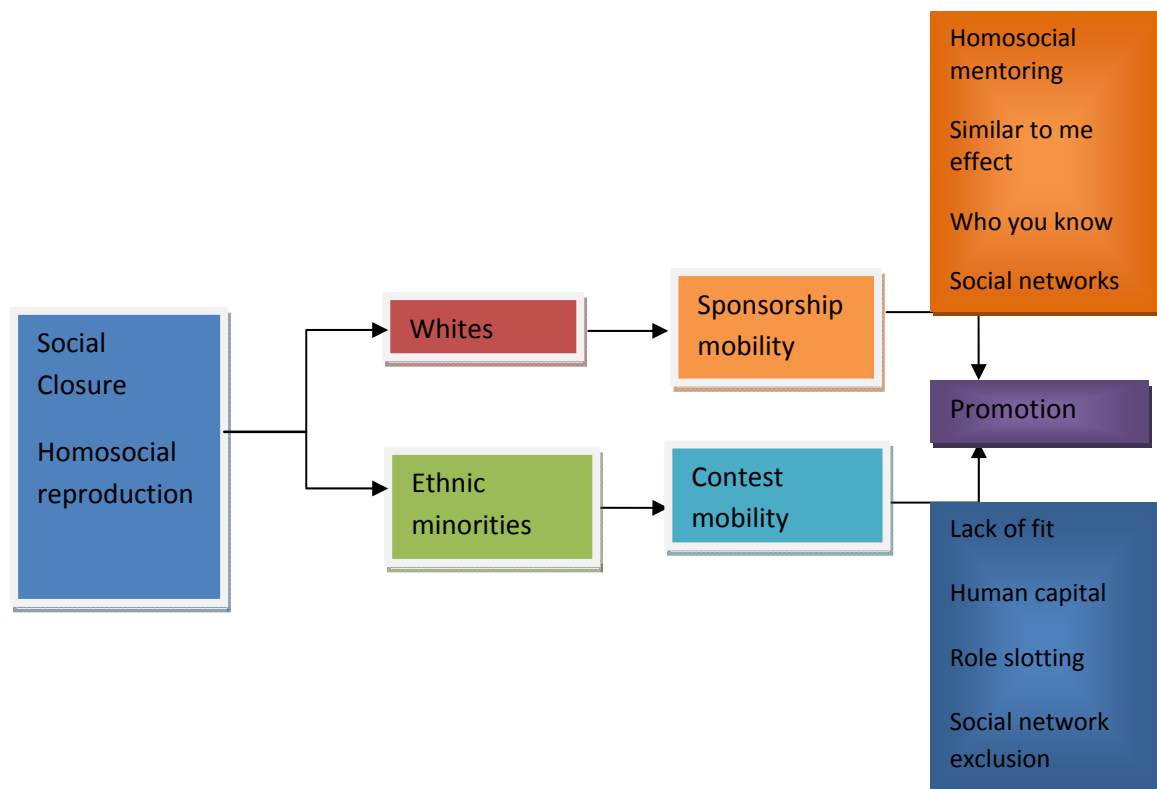


Figure 2: Conceptual model for the promotion process for ethnic minorities and whites

Summary

This chapter has examined the salient barriers which are inhibiting ethnic minorities' ascension into higher positions within the organisations and has also given a snapshot of how the issue is prevalent in UK industries and organisations including other government departments. The literature has identified a variety of factors that contribute to the relatively small number of ethnic minorities who reach the top of the corporate ladder. These factors include race as a trait of the leadership trait and ethnic minorities' ascension to senior management positions is potentially blocked due to lack of fit whilst whites are sponsored through the 'similar to me effect' and ethnic minorities are excluded due to being atypical to the white leadership trait because of their race. The review has also identified the shortcomings of previous research and has identified how this study responds to the gap in the literature. This includes an explanation of the theoretical framework which shows how social closure processes identify direct discriminatory practices used by the in-group to exclude the out-group from valued positions, while homosocial reproduction processes highlight indirect discriminatory practices used by the in-group to reduce uncertainty and enhance trust but lead to the preservation of valued positions. These theories are

based on the fact that managers sponsor those employees who are racially similar to them, as they clone themselves, whilst excluding those who are 'alien and different'. From the literature review it has been noted that ethnic minorities are promoted through contest mobility model where they have to use their human capital credentials.

The next chapter presents the research methodology which will be used to understand if being white is a leadership trait, based on the practical experiences of ethnic minorities in SEO to SCS grades who were interviewed in the view of answering the research questions and achieving the research aims stated in Chapter1. This includes an explanation of the research approach, the research design and the methods employed for data collection and data analysis.

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter confabulates the research design employed in this research. The discussion will include the rationale for using an interpretive approach, phenomenology as the research approach and qualitative research. Ethical considerations, sampling technique, methods of data collection and data analysis are examined. The chapter concludes by examining the limitations of the research methodology. As discussed in chapter one, the aim of the research is to investigate the experiences of career advancement of ethnic minorities in DWP within SEO to SCS grades, in order to establish if race as a trait of leadership, in any way either facilitates or hinders their career advancement. The selected research approach outlined is consistent with the aims of this research and to answer the research questions.

3.2 Interpretivism

The epistemology adopted in this research is interpretivism, as the research was designed to understand how race affects ethnic minority managers in their proposition to get promoted into senior and executive management positions. Interpretivism is an epistemological perspective that advocates the need for a researcher to understand the differences between humans in their role as social actors (Saunders, 2007; Fai Pang 2003). An interpretive approach engages both the 'how' and 'what' of social reality, it is centred on how people methodologically construct their experiences and their worlds and in the configurations of meaning and institutional life that inform and shape their reality-constituting activity (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2007; Fai Pang 2003; Gubrium and Holstein, 2000). This research is naturalistic as it searches the meaning in the natural context (Lincoln and Guba, 1985), as it makes sense of these meanings through the interactions and perspectives between the research participants and the researcher as the main instrument in studying ethnic minorities in DWP (Charmaz, 1990, 2000; Erickson,

1986). Interpretivism uses as its base an experientialist paradigm in that knowledge is viewed as an experience of the relationship formed between an individual and some aspect of his or her world (Yanow, 2006). By considering that the individual and world are internally related the experiential paradigm research is interested in how individual world relations differ and change (Bryman and Bell, 2003, 2007; Marton and Booth, 1997).

The aim of the interpretive logic is to ensure a clear understanding of the meaning conveyed in human actions (White, 1999, White *et al.*, 1994). Understanding the meanings beyond human actions is the main concern for interpretive theory, this is pertinent to this research as the researcher is trying to understand how race has impacted on the career advancement of ethnic minorities in DWP. White (1999) agreed that the common concern for interpretivists is not to explain human behaviour but to understand it. White (1994) stressed that interpretivism seeks to understand the meanings that the actors attach to their social situations, and their own actions. Rubin *et al.* (1995) are in accord with the view that interpretive research focuses on how people understand their worlds and how they create and share meanings about their lives. In this sense, interpretive theory differs from positivism as it focuses on explanations, predictions and establishing causality. White (1999) noted that instead of seeking casual explanations of behaviour, interpretive research enhances the understanding of the beliefs, meanings, feelings and attitudes of actors in social situations. White (1994, p.59) illustrated the practical distinction of interpretive theory from positivism by giving this example:

A positivist might attempt to explain why a particular job enrichment program is failing to provide expected results by examining established hypotheses about motivation and job design. An interpretivist would rather enter the situation and ask the workers what they think about the program, what it means to them, what they are doing and why they are doing it. The goal is to discover the meaning of the program, how it fits with prior norms, values, rules and social practices, how the program may be in conflict with their prior definitions of social situation and what the emerging norms, values, rules and social practices might be.

Researchers advocating interpretive theory often question the positivistic belief of the mind-independent reality. Interpretivists believe that reality is not detached from research, but is shaped by the lived experiences and social values of the participants as well as the researchers (Finlay, 2009; Dahlberg, Drew and Nystrom, 2001).

However, since different people have different views about reality, there is not a single reality that could be reached. Rubin *et al.* (1995) asserted that in interpretive theory there is not one reality out there to be measured, objects and events are understood by different people differently and these perceptions are the reality or realities that social science should focus on. This reality is understood through the interaction between researchers and the actors under study to reach a shared meaning, which is a critical component of interpretive theory.

Interpretive research, according to White (1999) enhances mutual understanding between the researcher, the actors and self-understanding among the actors themselves. Researchers should not observe from outside, but be involved in the research and the world of the participants. An emic approach was adopted as the researcher is 'an insider', researching an organisation which he has worked for seven years at senior management position and also shares the same ethnicity with the participants. Yanow (2006) stressed that understanding is not possible from a position entirely outside the focus of analysis. Of course, this is a significant point in interpretive research because lack of interaction between the researcher and the participants may hinder data collection and how the actual meanings that people attach to norms, rules and values are understood (White, 1994). Thus, interpretive researchers should understand how people view their world and the intended meanings they attach to their world through mutual participatory interaction with them.

Interpretive researchers bring understandings, norms and values with them into the research setting, but they are obligated to take steps to keep these as much as possible from biasing their work. White (1994) emphasised that the interpretive researcher should be careful not to impose a prior understanding of the norms, values and rules upon others, but rather understand their beliefs and actions from their point of view. Meanings are produced based on the interpretation of the participants' experience given through the researcher's sense making activity. To reach an effective interpretation, the researcher had to bracket his values as well as set aside preconceptions and presuppositions, on what he already knew about the organisation, as an employee, he had to refrain intentionally from all judgements related directly or indirectly to the experience of the social world (Levesque-Lopman, 1988; White, 1994; Fay, 1975), thus objectively enabling the flow of description of

the phenomena under study, as told by the participants in their stories. As recommended by Moustakas (1994), the researcher should separate his personal knowledge and experiences as an ethnic minority working for DWP in senior management and enter the world of the participants with an open mind, free of preconceptions, to allow the participants to tell the stories and write about their experiences and embrace them as new information.

3.3 Phenomenology

The research adopts a phenomenological approach for the purposes of establishing the qualitatively different ways people approach and perceive their experiences. Phenomenology is located within the interpretive paradigm (Racher and Robinson, 2003; Clark, 1998; Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Monti and Tingen, 1999). It qualifies the nature of this research, because it assists to gain a rich understanding of the deep meaning of a phenomenon based on a description of human lived experience (Yanow, 2006; Krider and Ross, 1997; Van Manen, 1990). It was most appropriate for answering the research questions, gaining an understanding of the perceptions of participants who have a shared experience and to describe their subjective experiences (Berg, 2001, 2004; Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 2002). Van Manen (1990) asserted that the goal of phenomenological research is to ask “the question of what is the nature of this phenomenon as an essentially human experience”. However, lived experience itself is not the purpose of phenomenology, but it is the instrument to understanding reality in the social world of the participants. According to Van Manen (1990, p.62), the phenomenological approach aims to ‘borrow’ other people’s experiences and their reflections on their experiences in order to come to an understanding of the deeper meaning or significance of an aspect of human experience, in the context of the whole human experience. It involves the use of thick description and close analysis of lived experience to understand how meaning is created through embodied perception (Starks and Trinidad, 2007; Sokolowski, 2000; Stewart and Mickunas, 1974).

Phenomenology contributes to a deeper understanding of lived experiences by exposing taken for granted assumptions about ways of knowing. Sokolowski (2000) wrote about this as follows:

Phenomenological statements, like philosophical statements, state the obvious and the necessary. They tell us what we already know. They are not new information, but even if not new, they can still be important and illuminating, because we often are very confused about just such trivialities and necessities. (p. 57)

In phenomenology, reality is comprehended through embodied experience, through close examination of individual experiences, as a phenomenological analyst, the researcher seeks to capture the meaning and common features, or essences, of the experience of ethnic minorities in their bid to gain promotion into senior and executive management positions in DWP (Finlay *et al.*, 2009; Starks *et al.*, 2007). The truth of the event, as an abstract entity, is subjective and knowable only through embodied perception, as meaning is created through the experience of moving through space and across time (Dahlberg *et al.*, 2001). Rather than being fixed in stone, the different phenomenological approaches are dynamic and undergoing constant development as the field of qualitative research as a whole evolves. The advantage of phenomenology according to Garza (2007, p. 338), is “the flexibility of phenomenological research and the adaptability of its methods to ever widening arcs of inquiry is one of its greatest strengths” Phenomenology was characterised by Husserl (1931) cited by (Levesque- Lopman, 1988, p. 17) as the means “to describe the ultimate foundations of human experience by ‘seeing beyond’ everyday experiences in order to describe the ‘essences’ that underpin them”. The phenomenological approach does not seek to find causality or to reach generalisability about a reality that exists ‘out there’. Husserl (1931) supported the notion of subjective interpretation of reality rather than an objective reality. For a phenomenologist, “reality is not restricted to those things that can be empirically verified or logically inferred, rather, reality is based on a common-sense knowing or *verstehen* [understanding] of the social world” (Waugh and Waugh, 2006, p.493).

The researcher engaged in a process of trying to see the world differently and attended more actively to the participant’s views (Finlay, 2009). The researcher was prepared to be surprised, awed and generally open to whatever was revealed by the participants during the story telling. Dahlberg *et al* (2001, p. 97) describe this open stance, “as the mark of a true willingness to listen, see and understand. It involves respect and certain humility toward the phenomenon, as well as sensitivity and flexibility.” The researcher engaged in a process of trying to see the world differently

and attended more actively to the participant's views and engaged in a state of *epoche*, Greek word meaning to stay away from or abstain. This helped the researcher to prepare to derive new knowledge where the researchers predilections, prejudices, predispositions were set aside allowing a fresh look at things. It helped to dampen the influence of the past knowledge. The use of this method encouraged a temporary setting aside of all such accounts and entering the field making a fresh start with the intention of discovering new ideas. The researcher was prepared to be surprised, awed and generally open to whatever was revealed by the participants during the story telling. *Epoche* gave the researcher the vantage point of holding in abeyance, previous experiences on phenomena and challenges to create new ideas, new feelings, new awareness and understanding about an old problem. It encouraged receptiveness to situations just as they appear without imposing any prejudgements on what he saw or heard or imagined or felt. It helped to suspend everything that interferes with fresh vision about a phenomenon. Even the researchers biases are set aside as well as prejudgments to enable him see the issue with new and receptive eyes. This open stance, "as the mark of a true willingness to listen, see and understand. It involves respect and certain humility toward the phenomenon, as well as sensitivity and flexibility." The researcher allowed the phenomenon to present itself without imposing preconceived ideas on the experiences of the participants and this was maintained throughout the research process, not just at the start. Although in reality this is not completely possible, the use of open-ended interviews helped to achieve this during the study. As a result the stories told by the participants were not influenced by the researcher in any way or form.

3.4 Qualitative Research

Qualitative research entails taking "an interpretivist perspective where one is particularly interested in being able to... investigate the perspectives that subjects have and to interpret their view of the world" (Cassell *et al.*, 2006, p.295). Qualitative research was employed for this research as it goes beyond the surface level, enabling the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of not only individual perceptions but also contribute to the field in which relatively little research has been carried out (Agyemang and DeLorme, 2010). Qualitative is exploratory in nature, thus enabling researchers to gain information about a social phenomena in its

natural setting, in which little is known (Liamputtong and Ezzy, 2005; Denzin and Lincoln, 2003; Golafshani, 2003). As a result of its naturalistic approach this research sought to understand the experiences of ethnic minorities in DWP within the SEO to SCS grades in their proposition to climb the corporate ladder in a "real world setting where the researcher did not attempt to manipulate the phenomenon of interest" (Patton, 2002, p. 39). Accordingly qualitative research methodology refers to research which produces descriptive data, generally in people's own written or spoken words, produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification (Bless and Higson-Smith (1995; Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Schwandt (2001) concurs that qualitative researchers do not rely on statistics to show the confidence they have in their representation of their fieldwork. In preference of they build confidence in their findings or contributions by attempting to saturate themselves with observations of the phenomenon in question, as preferred, it produces findings arrived from real-world settings where the phenomenon of interest unfold natural (Patton, 2002). Qualitative research asks open questions about a phenomena as it occurs in context rather than setting out to test predetermined hypotheses (Carter and Little, 2007; Wray, Markovic, and Manderson, 2007; Ortiz, 2001).

Denzin *et al.* (2003) suggest that qualitative research is most interested in processes and meanings that are not experimentally examined. Among many distinctive features, it is characterised by a concern with exploring phenomena from the perspective of those being studied, with the use of unstructured methods which are sensitive to the social context of the study, the capture of data which are detailed, rich and complex, adopting a mainly inductive rather than deductive analytic process and developing explanations at the level of meaning or micro-social processes rather than context free laws, and answering the 'what is', 'how' and 'why' questions research questions stated above (Spencer *et al.*, 2003).

Qualitative research offers copious, detailed evidence from natural settings crafted into accounts intended to convince readers that they have reached a reasonable interpretation of participants' experiences. Whereas quantitative research depicts cause and effect relationships among variables by studying the association of corresponding numbers of cases for each variable. Qualitative researchers see causation in everyday, emergent processes of intersubjective human action and

meaning construction (Brower, Abolafia and Carr, 2000). Emphasis on the emic perspective in qualitative research originates from the basic ontological assumption that reality is constructed by each knower or observer subjectively (Sipe and Constable, 1996), therefore what we know about reality is only through representations (Denzin *et al.*, 2000). The research design was aimed at gathering rich qualitative data, an approach which does not rely on specific sample sizes.

3.5 Sampling

It was too expensive and impractical to include the total population of 195 ethnic minorities in SEO to SCS grade in the research, therefore an inferable sample was drawn from the population (Thompson, 1999). The researcher purposefully selected twenty ethnic minorities in SEO to SCS grades, however a detailed breakdown of these people cannot be provided as this would mean that they might be identified and pseudonyms were used for each participant for purposes of anonymity and confidentiality. It was important that the participants had direct experience of the phenomenon as ethnic minorities who had attempted to get promoted to the higher grades, but had not been successful, therefore the researcher needed to understand their experiences. This was consistent with the views of Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 27) who said, “qualitative samples tend to be purposive rather than random”. Although random selection is preferred as it minimises selection biases (Tuckett, 2004; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003; Ezzy 2002), the purpose of sampling was not to establish a random or representative sample drawn from a population but rather to identify specific groups of people who either possess characteristics or live in circumstances relevant to the social phenomenon being studied.

Qualitative researchers recognise that some informants are 'richer' than others and that these people are more likely to provide insight and understanding for the researcher (Marshall, 1996). Choosing someone at random to answer a qualitative question would be analogous to randomly asking a passer-by how to repair a broken down car, rather than asking a garage mechanic—the former might have a good stab, but asking the latter is likely to be more productive (Speziale and Carpenter, 2007). Therefore qualitative researchers use non-probability sampling techniques (Thompson, 1999) and selecting a sample is based entirely on the researcher's knowledge of the population and the objectives of the research (Ezzy, 2002).

Similarly, Leedy and Ormrod (2001) concur, when they said, purposive sampling is whereby people are chosen for a particular purpose, implying the use of judgment on the part of the researcher. Maxwell (1998) further defines purposive sampling as sampling in which, “particular settings, persons, or events are deliberately selected for the important information they can provide that cannot be gotten as well from other choices” (p. 87). This design was effective as the researcher had a strong knowledge of the population. The researcher’s organisational experience within the organisation was beneficial, and the researcher was able to use personal judgment in drawing the sample. This type of sampling is usually used when working with very small samples and a researcher wishes to select cases that are particularly informative (Tashakkori *et al.*, 1998, Saunders *et al.*, 2007).

The researcher was not able to use data from the Human Resource directorate for sampling purposes as the Equality and Diversity Director felt some people might view it as a breach of privacy, therefore volunteers were invited to take part in the research. Out of a possible of 195 ethnic minorities in SEO to SCS grades who were alerted to the invitation through email, 88 expressed an initial interest to take part in the research, in response to an invitation (Appendix 3) which was placed on the DWP Equality and Diversity intranet page. Although participants were also asked to recommend at least one other person who met the required criteria for the research, this did not yield the expected results, only 27 people were recommended by some of the participants and only eighteen people who were recommended met the sampling criteria, of being an ethnic minority in SEO to SCS grades. Unfortunately 31 were turn down to take part in the research as 21 who had responded and 9 recommended were Higher Executive Officers (HEO) which was a grade below, SEO grade, the cut off point for the research sample.

In total the researcher had 106 people who had expressed an initial interest to take part in the research and met the sample requirements. An email was sent to the participants attached with a participant form (Appendix 4) explaining the research aims and objectives, how the data would be collected. Only 47 people responded and provided details of their availability. The researcher had intended to interview all the people who had expressed an interest. However, it was not possible as 9 of these people withdrew before being interviewed, citing time constraints. With the remaining 38, the sample size was driven by the desire to learn in detail and in depth

about the promotional experiences of the participants. In order to ensure that the five business units were represented and also that there was equal representation of the grades, stratified sampling was also used. Despite these efforts the sample had more SEOs than any other grade, however all the business units and grades were represented in the sample. The sample was made up of 20 participants because as the study was progressing during the interviews it became apparent that no new information of significance was being obtained' for on-going thematic development and theorising as new categories, themes or explanations had stopped emerging from the data due to data saturation (Speziale *et al.*, 2007; Lincoln *et al.*, 2002; Marshall, 1996). The researcher recognised the repetition of data and determined that the addition of new participants confirmed the research findings rather than add new information, and wrote to thank and inform the 18 prospective participants that they would not be involved in the research, as the data collected had been saturated.

The sample size in this study reflects phenomenological studies and is consistent with other qualitative studies. Neuman (2000) pointed out that the sample size for qualitative research is based upon the purpose of the study, not on specific rules. Strauss and Corbin (1998) posit that qualitative research usually involves much smaller sample sizes than in quantitative research. Whilst there are no closely defined rules for sample size (Baum 2002; Patton, 1990), sampling in qualitative research usually relies on small numbers with the aim of studying in depth and detail (Miles *et al.*, 1994; Patton, 1990). Qualitative research typically uses small, information-rich samples selected purposefully to allow the researchers to focus in depth on issues important to the study (Mertens, 1998). In phenomenological research, a sample of between 15 and 20 is considered to be sufficiently large, without becoming unwieldy, to reveal most of the possible viewpoints and allow a defensible interpretation (Trigwell, 2000). Some phenomenological studies cite smaller sample sizes ranging from 10 to 15 (Starks *et al.*, 2007; Bowden 1994). Patton (1990) suggests that the optimal sample size is determined by the nature of the research and that a formulaic approach can be misguided therefore, there are no rules for sample size. The sampling method was therefore in line with these expectations.

3.6 Data collection - The semi-structured interview

In phenomenology, the semi-structured interview is regarded as the preferred data collection method, with an emphasis on providing open-ended questions that encourage the participants to express their own perspectives and tell their stories (Bowden 1994; Neuman, 2000). The purpose of the interviews was to gather anecdotes and accounts of past experiences in the participants' careers rather than general considerations, opinions and judgements (Bouty, 2000) as the "interviewees were encouraged to illustrate their answers with examples of practice" (Woodhams *et al.*, 2009, p. 206).

The interview questions (Appendix 1) were used as a guide to elicit the information, as the research depended on conducting interviews as a tool for collecting data about the experiences of ethnic minorities in their effort to climb the corporate ladder into senior and executive management positions in the organisation. This method is highly recommended for conducting interpretive research because it is based on the experiences, the thoughts, insights and feelings of the participants (Kaparou and Bush, 2007; Garza, 2007; Creswell, 1998; van Manen, 1990). Through qualitative interviewing the researcher was able to understand ethnic minorities' experiences and reconstruct events in which he had not participated (Rubin *et al.*, 1995). Seidman (1998, p. 4) asserts that the research interview:

Provides access to the context of people's behaviours and thereby provide a way for researchers to understand the meaning of the behaviour. Interviewing allows us to put behaviour in context and provides access to understanding the action.

The researcher captured participants' perspectives with the assumption that study participants' perspectives are meaningful for the research (Patton, 1990). The flexibility of the semi-structured interviews helped the researcher to ask probing questions as needed (Fontana and Frey, 2000).

Twenty interviews were conducted, from November, 2009 through to April, 2010 and all took place at the participants' workplaces, 14 interviews were conducted after working hours and 6 were carried out early in the morning. The interviews were digitally recorded using a Dictaphone, with the permission of all the participants to ensure completeness of the interview and to get information for reliability checks. However, the use of the Dictaphone did not eliminate the need for taking notes as it assisted in formulating questions and probes and to record non-verbal

communication (Garza, 2007; McMillan and Schumacher, 1993). The duration of each interview was determined by the participants' willingness to elaborate on the questions, as envisaged the interviews lasted 45 minutes to one hour and allowed the participants a considerable degree of latitude (Bowden 1994; Walsh 1994; Bryman *et al.*, 2008). The researcher maintained the agreed duration of the interviews, as (Bell, 1993, p.97) warns that:

If an interview takes two or three times as long as the interviewer said it would, the respondent, whose other work or social activities have been accordingly delayed, will be irritated in retrospect, however enjoyable the experience may have been at the time. This sort of practice breaks one of the ethics of professional social research.

The researcher had an 'insider' status as an employee of the organisation (Sands, Bourjolly and Roer-Strier, 2007). As an insider the researcher easily gained access to participants and created an environment in which people felt comfortable and were willing to talk freely. Outsider researchers are regarded as 'social intruders', who are 'uninvited' and 'unwelcome' (Shah, 2004). On the other hand, outsiders are able to achieve acceptance as persons who can be taught if the participants need to relay information (Rubin *et al.*, 1995).

By being black, the researcher was conscious that he shared the same ethnicity with some of the participants and as such conducting research on racial grounds raised ethical and epistemological concerns for the researcher (Daley, 2001; Creswell, 1998). Burns and Grove (1997) warned that if a researcher is collecting data, while surrounded by familiar professionals with whom he or she interacts socially and professionally, it is sometimes difficult to completely focus on the study situation, which may lead to loss of data. In fact, Rubin *et al.* (1995, p. 11) made the argument that:

Interviewing people similar to yourself can pose difficulties, because the interviewees assume that you know what they know. Thus, they may not explain taken for granted meanings in the way they would to an outsider.

Interviews by outsiders have the advantage of bringing to the surface taken for granted meanings, which tend to be assumed and thus glossed over when the interviewer and interviewees are from the same culture (Rubin *et al.*, 1995). The researcher had to acknowledge his position as a black researcher in this process interviewing black people and other ethnic minorities. An area contested by other

writers, Daley (2001) for instance, suggests that black interviewers would be better able to communicate to black participants. Osler (1997) argues that black interviewers may have greater credibility in the eyes of black participants but there are other associated issues, such as, the degree of comfort in the interview and the assumed shared understandings between the interviewer and interviewee may pose some difficulties when presenting the results to a wider audience. Some things may be expressed in a more explicit way because the participants are speaking to a black researcher. Others are implicit because of the shared meanings which have been assumed (Mackay *et al.*, 2006). Even though some of the participants attempted to bond with the researcher on racial grounds, saying 'you know what it's like' and 'you know what I mean', sometimes assuming that the researcher shared the same experience and at other times appealing for confirmation to what they said was understood, the researcher remained objective, without influencing the participants' responses.

Once the interviews were completed and all the other data had been collected, several precautions were taken to protect the original data. Copies were made of the original recordings and stored on a computer with a password protection, in case the Dictaphone was damaged during transcription, as the interviews were transcribed verbatim.

3.7 Interview Questions

The interview was structured to elicit information relating to the participants' views concerning how race affects their intentions to reach senior and executive management positions within DWP. The construction of the interview questions was based on themes derived from the literature review (Bush *et al.*, 2006a). The questions also related directly to the objectives of the research (Bush *et al.*, 2006b; McMillan *et al.*, 1993). The questions were open ended and indirect, to elicit the most honest response and to avoid any bias that might occur from the researcher directing the questions (Bush *et al.*, 2006a; Rubin *et al.*, 1995). The indirect way of asking questions also helped to deal with concerns regarding the possibility of sensitive

questions (Rubin *et al.*, 1995). Forming the questions is a critical part of any interview because they should be able to capture some of the richness and complexity of the subject matter (Rubin *et al.*, 1995). To ensure that the questions were compatible with the objectives of this study as well as the interpretivism approach that it follows, the questions were reviewed and revised by prospective participants and the supervisors.

Three interviews were conducted with some of the prospective participants as a pilot study in order to assist the researcher to identify the design of the questions, sequencing of the questions and procedures for recording responses (Saunders *et al.*, 2007; Burns and Grove, 1997). The pilot was carried out to check for potential problems and to ensure that the interview questions were free from bias that might be caused by leading and ambiguous questions. The pilot resulted in the five questions being reworded as some of them were not clear and also the participants suggest the use of pictures showing the DWP organogram (Appendix 6) to describe the executive team.

The questions were gleaned from literature on racial inequality in management by (e.g. Avery, 2010; Pinkett *et al.*, 2010; Kalev, 2009; Karla *et al.*, 2009; Rosette *et al.*, 2008; Mackay *et al.*, 2006; Kandola, 2004, Thomas *et al.*, 1999). As the literature review illustrates the problems ethnic minorities experience when seeking promotion. Based on this review the following questions were developed to explore how race affects the promotion of ethnic minorities in senior and executive management in DWP. The first set of questions explores the participants' views on promotion more generally.

- *How many times in the last five years have you applied for promotion and what has been the outcome?*
- *If you did not get the promotion, do you consider your race to have hampered your opportunity to get promoted to the next grade?*
What makes you think that?
- *Do you think if you had been white, you would have made it into senior or executive management at faster rate than the amount of time you have taken to reach your current grade?*
- *How do you compare your promotion chances against your white counterparts?*

- *Have you ever felt at any time in the past that your white colleagues got promotion faster than you because of your race or ethnicity?*

The literature suggests that homogeneity, that is, similarity, in demographic characteristics comes about through basic social processes such as homosocial reproduction and social closure. In other words people prefer others like them and, therefore, recruit those who are prototypical to themselves and exclude those who are less prototypical (Rosette *et al.*, 2008; Elliott *et al.*, 2004; Kanter 1977; Tomaskovic-Devey, 1993). Due to lack of heterogeneity at the top of DWP, the researcher sought to understand, if being white was the leadership trait for senior or executive positions as stated that being white was a centrality of leadership trait (Avery, 2010; Pinkett *et al.*, 2010; Sy *et al.*, 2010; Simpson, 2008; Rosette *et al.*, 2008), hence these questions were developed:

- *From these pictures shown, can you please describe the ethnic composition of the senior and executive management teams?*
- *What do you think is the cause of such homogeneity in the executive team?*
- *Do you think there is in-group favouritism in the promotion process to senior and executive management positions?*
- *Do you think the senior and executive management positions are preserved for whites as compared to ethnic minorities*

Both in the literature and in previous DBA documents, it is suggested that ethnic minorities are found to be excluded from social networks that would enhance their career advancement. This encouraged the researcher to seek further clarification on how deep rooted in DWP this issue, was hence these questions were developed:

- *Are you a member of a social group and how useful is the network to your career advancement?*
- *What is the ethnic composition of your social network?*
- *Do you think if you were in a social network with whites that would assist your career advancement?*
- *How has the organisation and your colleagues hindered your career advancement?*
- *As an ethnic minority what do you see as the greatest challenge when seeking promotion within the organisation?*
- *What advice would you give to other ethnic minorities who desire to reach leadership positions within the organisation?*

3.8 Data Analysis

Once the interviews were completed and all other data had been collected, the data had to be analysed. According to Geertz (1973), data analysis is the researcher's own construction of the participants' constructions, therefore, these interpretations are partial accounts of socially constructed realities. There is no agreed number of steps in the procedure of explicating data in the interpretive approach. While a methodologist like Hycner (1985) presents a fifteen step procedure, other methodologists present shorter procedures such as Giorgi, Fisher and Murray (1975) and Groenewald (2004). However, these different procedures seem to have the same path with more or less detail. In this study, the researcher followed a modified model of the fifteen-step procedure suggested by Hycner (1985). Although Hycner (1985) did not make it clear that this procedure is based on the traditions of Husserl and Schultz phenomenological in social sciences, his phenomenological approach is consistent with their perspectives of phenomenology.

The researcher completed the data collection phase of the research in August 2010. The fieldwork generated a vast amount of data that included field notes. The researcher recorded the interviews and observations in the field using a Dictaphone to preserve the spoken words (Dickson-Swift *et al.*, 2007). Once the interviews were completed the researcher transcribed the interview data himself in order to ensure the accuracy of the interviews and to maximise the confidentiality of the participants. The researcher approached the transcripts with an open mind, embracing every meaning emerging from the participants, by suspending any pre-supposition of interpretations and entered the world of the participants when reading the interview transcripts. To make sense of the interviews, each interview was reviewed by the researcher many times in order to build a context to the interview as a whole. This context assisted to clarify the units of meaning, eliminate irrelevant units of meaning and to assure that the main themes were compatible with each other. The researcher went comprehensively through every word, sentence, paragraph and note in order to extract the participants meaning.

The researcher observed the essence of each unit of meaning that was expressed by the participant, by choosing the units of meaning that could be clustered together

to explore the emergence of the main themes. The researcher examined all clusters in order to identify the central themes. All the clusters were checked to ensure their compatibility with the context of each interview as a whole. This was consistent with Morse and Field (1995) when they stated that, thematic analysis involves the search for and identification of common threads that extend throughout an entire interviewer set of interviews.

The researcher made notes in the margins and categorised the areas of the interview guide, placing the topics of discussion under one or more categories. Accordingly Bogden and Biklen (1998) wrote,

You search through your data for regularities and patterns as well as for topics your data cover, and then you write down words and phrases to represent these topics and patterns. These words and phrases are coding categories. They are a means of sorting the descriptive data you have collected so that the material bearing on a given topic can be physically separated from other data (p. 171).

Once the researcher developed the initial codes, he listened to the tapes while following the transcripts in order to understand and recapture what was being discussed in the interviews. The researcher paid close attention to the comments as well as the manner in which they were stated he read through the information again, looking for emerging patterns and themes. The interviews were printed on coloured paper corresponding with the participants colour-coded sheets utilised for note taking. This process of coding interview material was deemed critical in this study as it is considered to be the heart and soul of the analysis process (Ryan and Bernard, 2000; Miles and Huberman, 1994). Although NVivo 9.1, a computer software to assist the analysis was considered as an organisational tool which would have allowed the researcher to index segments of the text to particular themes, carry out complex search and retrieval operations quickly, and link research notes to coding (Cassell *et al.*, 2005). Even though the researcher was trained to use it adopting a human-based coding system was found to be more useful in order to prevent the possibility of the richness, detail and meaning in the interview texts, being minimised. However software is only an aid to the organization of the material and is not in itself an interpretive device (King 2004). Nevertheless, computerisation does allow the researcher to work efficiently with large amounts of text and complex coding schemes facilitating depth and sophistication of analysis.

The researcher focused on the themes common to most if not all the interviews. In other words, the main themes were generated based on the whole context of responses across all interviews. The quotations were then cut out and placed under the appropriate theme and were used in the research. The 15 emerging themes were race, institutional racism, discrimination, in-group favouritism, lack of mentors and role models, not fitting, exclusion of social network, stereotyping of the abilities, glass ceiling, similar to me effect, lack of recognition of their experience and qualifications, lack of organisational support, overcoming the barriers, homosocial reproduction, social closure and social capita.

3.9 The Role of the Researcher

The researcher was the main instrument in studying ethnic minorities in DWP, as the research was primarily interview-based and therefore the researcher was the main “instrument” of data collection (Ortlipp, 2008). The researcher had to separate his personal knowledge and experiences as an ethnic minority working for DWP in senior management, and entered the world of the participants with an open mind, free of preconceptions, and allowed the participants to tell the stories about their experiences and embrace them as new information. Acknowledging this inequality and working against one’s privileged status is one of the ethical responsibilities of the researcher (Broadbridge, 2010; Eide and Kahn, 2008). The researcher was aware of the fact that he holds a privileged status even after the fieldwork is complete. The researcher is the author of the text produced, which can represent study participants in a variety ways. Hence, through continuous reflection of the researcher’s own status, he acknowledged the research as a process of moral reasoning and recognised his responsibility as being ethical before, during, and after the study. The researcher took the ethical responsibility to accurately tell the story of study participants without silencing the voices of people involved and connected the voices and the stories of the participants (Broadbridge, 2010) and presented the findings without privileging any one context or participant over another.

3.10 Ethical considerations

Qualitative research poses ethical issues and challenges unique to the study of human beings (Eide *et al.*, 2008), especially when discussing a sensitive topic such as race. In developing the interpersonal relationship that is critical to qualitative

research, the researcher and the participant engaged in a dialogic process that evoked stories and memories that are remembered and reconstituted in ways that otherwise would not occur (Eide *et al.*, 2008).

Bell (1993) points out that no researcher can demand access to an organisation or to materials. Thus, special permission to conduct this research was granted by the DWP Director of Equality and Diversity to carry out the research. After explaining to her about the research, she offered to have the invitation for participants placed on the intranet on her directorate web page and this gave the research credibility and authenticity, which helped to generate an initial high response of participants seeking to take part in the research (Appendix 3).

The research was reviewed and approved by the Research Ethics Committee at Nottingham Trent University and approved. A consent form (Appendix 5) was presented to all the participants prior to the interviews with the recommendation to read it carefully and sign. The consent form provided a description of the study, permission to use a recorder, voluntary participation, the right to withdraw as well as the right not to answer any specific questions. It also had information what would be done with the study and how confidentiality would be maintained. According to Neuman (2000) a researcher has a moral obligation to uphold confidentiality of data, which includes keeping information confidential from others in the field and disguising member's names in the field notes. It is in this light that all participants were assured the data collected would be kept confidential and would not be shared with anyone apart from the research supervisors, without their authorisation. The researcher used pseudonyms to prevent the research participants from being individually identifiable in any document or publication arising from this research. All possible care was exercised to ensure that the participants and the business units that they worked for would not be identified in the write up of the findings of the research. The researcher had the responsibility to protect the participants by maintaining anonymity. To ensure that their identity was protected, the researcher used numbers instead of names on the interview tapes. Participants were also assigned pseudonyms to protect their identity and in some instances, quotations were edited for clarity. Also, the identities of individuals they referenced, locations, and events were altered.

Informed consent implies that the participants had a choice about whether or not to participate (Bailey, 1989; McMillan *et al.*, 1993). Prior to the interviews taking place, a participant form (Appendix 4) was sent electronically to the participant outlining the research objectives and informing them that their participation was voluntary and they could withdraw at any time from the research.

Although the researcher knew some of the participants personally, he was not involved with them either socially or professionally, since he worked for a different business unit. This assisted the researcher to retain focus and prevented him from making assumptions. Burns and Grove (1997) warns that if the researcher is collecting data while surrounded by familiar professionals with whom he or she interacts socially and professionally, it is sometimes difficult to completely focus on the study situation, which may lead to loss of data. The researcher had to adopt what (Mertens, 1998) refers to as a 'friendly stranger' role with the participants. Mertens adopted this role with participants who were unfamiliar with her prior to her study and she found that they felt safe revealing things that they would not share with close friends or family because she was a stranger.

3.11 Quality of the research method

The issue of quality in qualitative research has been receiving considerable attention in the literature (Dingwall *et al.*, 1998; Morse *et al.*, 1995). In this regard, quality is a contested concept, often bound up with a debate about the nature of the knowledge produced by qualitative research (Strauss *et al.*, 1990). Despite this epistemological debate, there is some agreement at least among many qualitative research experts that quality research demonstrates rigor, trustworthiness, and relevance (Bergman and Coxon, 2005; Lincoln *et al.*, 1985). The quality of any phenomenological study can be judged in its relative power to draw the reader into the researcher's discoveries, thus, allowing the reader to see the worlds of others in new and deeper ways (Finlay *et al.*, 2009). Beyond the use of particular procedures to ensure quality, it is worth emphasising that the best phenomenology highlights the complexity, ambiguity and ambivalence of participants' experiences. As Dahlberg *et al* (2008, p.94) warns, researchers need to be "careful not to make definite what is indefinite".

This researcher offers four qualities to aid the reader evaluate the power and trustworthiness of this phenomenological account, which are generalisability, transferability, validity and reliability member checking.

3.11.1 Generalisability

Generalisability is regarded as the extent to which the research findings can be replicated (Kvale 1996). Ackerlind (2002) suggests that as interpretive research investigates variation, the sample should be selected on the basis of heterogeneity rather than representativeness and as such interpretive findings may not be easily generalisable. Marton *et al.* (1997) suggest, however, that variation within the sample is likely to reflect variation in the wider population and therefore the range of perspectives is likely to represent the range of perspectives across the population. Hence, they argue, the results of interpretive research should therefore be generalisable to similar populations. This study makes no attempt at seeking generalisability beyond the population being considered. The study solely relates to ethnic minorities in DWP within SEO to SCS grade and its research findings are only considered as representative within this context. It is, however, noted that emergent themes may be generalisable beyond this context.

3.11.2 Transferability

The transferability of research results from one setting to another depends on the fit between those common features and characteristics of the settings (Lincoln *et al.*, 1985). That is, the applicability of research results in other settings depends on the degree of similarity between the research setting in which the phenomenon studied occurs and the settings in which the results are expected to be transferable. In interpretive research the burden of transferability is on the reader to determine the degree of similarity between the study site and the receiving context (Mertens 1998). Bassey (1999) proposes that, if practitioners believe their situations to be similar to that described in the study, they may relate the findings to their own positions. Patton (1997) also maintains that pragmatic validation of qualitative research means that the perspective presented is judged by its relevance to and use by those to whom it is presented. This means that the validation of these findings is left in the hands of the reader or those who use the findings to judge or decide whether the findings can fit into another context.

To allow transferability of this research, the researcher has provided sufficient detail of the context of the fieldwork for the reader to be able to decide whether the prevailing environment is similar to another situation with which he or she is familiar and whether the findings can justifiably be applied to the other setting. Lincoln *et al.* (1985, p.124), however, suggest that rather than “indicate the range of contexts to which there might be some transferability...[researchers are expected] to provide sufficient information about the context in which an inquiry is carried out so that anyone else interested in transferability has a base of information appropriate to the judgement”.

Transferability depends on the researcher delineating the characteristics of the research setting as well as on the reader determining if that setting is similar to the one where he/she wants to apply those results. To allow transferability, this researcher has provided sufficient detail of the context of the fieldwork on the following areas for the reader to be able to decide whether the prevailing study environment is similar to his/her familiar situation and whether the findings can justifiably be applied:

- a) Description of the organisation taking part in the study and where it is based
- b) Restrictions in the type of people who contributed data for instance ethnic minorities in SEO to SCCS grades
- c) The number of participants involved in the fieldwork and how they were identified
- d) The data collection methods that were employed
- e) The number and length of the data collection sessions
- f) The time period over which the data was collected.
- g) Supported the analysis of the data with extensive quotes from the participants

Lincoln *et al.* (1985) and Firestone (1993) are among those who present a similar argument, and suggest that it is the responsibility of the investigator to ensure that sufficient contextual information about the fieldwork sites is provided to enable the reader to make such a transfer. They maintain that, since the researcher knows only the “sending context”, he or she cannot make transferability inferences. After perusing the description within the research context in which the work was undertaken, readers must determine how far they can be confident in transferring to

other situations the findings and conclusions presented. This study provides a baseline understanding with which the findings of the subsequent work should be compared.

3.11.3 Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability are two factors which any qualitative researcher should be concerned about while designing a study, analysing results and judging the quality of the study (Golafshani, 2003; Patton, 2002). This corresponds to the question that "How can an enquirer persuade his or her audience that the research findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to?" (Lincoln *et al.*, 1985, p.290). To answer this question, Healy and Perry (2000, p.266) assert that the quality of a study in each paradigm should be judged by its own paradigm's terms. Seale (1999), while establishing good quality studies through validity and reliability in qualitative research, states that the trustworthiness of a research report lies at the heart of issues conventionally discussed as validity and reliability. When judging qualitative work, Strauss *et al.*, (1990, p.250) suggest that the "usual canons of 'good science' require re-definition in order to fit the realities of qualitative research".

Kvale (1996) suggests that research reliability generally refers to replicability of findings and that this is ensured through the use of appropriate methodological procedures to obtain consistency and quality in data interpretations. Interpretivism, by its very nature, makes this replicability problematic because data analysis involves an inter-subjective approach where the researcher's interpretation of the data is determined by her or his own background and unique interpretation. This therefore negates the reliability of the findings (Booth 1992).

3.11.4 Member Checking

A major purpose of this qualitative study was to represent the perspectives and realities of the 20 participants. In order to accomplish this the researcher took several steps to increase the validity of the reconstruction of their stories. Kvale (1996) argue that research outcomes can also be evaluated in terms of their usefulness to the group under study. Member checking is "the process of having these individuals review statements made in the researcher's report for accuracy and completeness" (Gall *et al.*, 1996, p. 575). Member checking was used to avoid

misrepresentation of the data as well as give the ethnic minorities the opportunity to review the interpretations. Therefore to strengthen the credibility of the research, the researcher used the strategy of member checking. Mertens (1998) stated that this is the most important criterion in establishing credibility. After transcribing the interviews, the transcripts were sent electronically or as hard copies to the research participants, who were invited to check the accuracy of the accounts and comment on them, either in writing or by phoning the interviewer.

The researcher's member checking was beneficial because it revealed several factual errors that were easily corrected (Gall *et al.*, 1996). The opportunity to read the profiles and stories also allowed the people to recall the conversations and suggest information that could be added or removed due to new perceptions of their situations. This approach contributed heavily to the richness of the data collected in the study and enhanced the trustworthiness and credibility of the study as 16 of the participants made corrections and suggestions to the original document.

The responses were submitted by email, postal mail, telephone and in person. Only three of the participants actually went over the entire document, word by word, on the phone providing suggestions for approximately one hour. Two of the participants, preferred to meet face-to-face. The researcher had to meet them and go over the document and discuss the changes and requested for some of the information to be deleted. While this approach privileged the voices and interpretations of the participants, the researcher felt this process enhanced the credibility of the study.

3.12 Limitations of the research methodology

The research is limited to 20 qualitative interviews and so cannot be generalised to the wider population, rather, it is intended to instigate debate and highlight how race as a leadership trait affects the promotion of ethnic minorities in DWP as participants seek advancement into senior and executive management positions. As an insider and a black researcher the participants assumed the researcher shared their experiences, as depicted by some of the statements which they made such as, 'You know what I mean' or 'you know what it is like.' Unfortunately, this resulted in the interviewees not expanding on some of their experiences as they thought the researcher might have had similar encounters. The participants assumed that the researcher knew what they had experienced by virtue of being an ethnic minority,

hence, did not feel compelled to give detailed accounts of their experiences, based on their assumptions that as an ethnic minority, the researcher had also been through what they had been through, however this was mitigated through probing and asking further questions. In fact, Rubin *et al.*, (1995, p. 11) made the argument that,

Interviewing people similar to yourself can pose difficulties, because the interviewees assume that you know what they know. Thus, they may not explain taken-for-granted meanings in the way they would to an outsider.

This is a disadvantage for interpretive research because its approach is based on the experiences of people. The interviewees will not strive to explain their different historical experiences to the researcher as they assume that the researcher shares similar experiences due to shared race (Avery *et al.*, 2005). As compared to a researcher of a different race, the participants would strive to share their lived experiences with an assumption that the researcher did not endure similar experiences (Rubin *et al.*, 1995).

The sample used was not a representative sample, due to the low and non-response of people in some of the grades. It was intended to have equal participants from each grade, but in the end the SEO grade had more people than other grades. The non-response from some of the grades may have been due to the sensitiveness of the research subject, hence they were reluctant to participate. The researcher was aware that topics related to race have been known to be sensitive, therefore it might be possible that the participants might not have been willing to divulge some of their experiences to the researcher. The use of the Dictaphone might also have affected the way the participants answered. Therefore the reason for recording the interviews was explained to the participants to avoid suspicion and their permission was sought prior to recording.

Summary

This chapter has described the nature and approach of interpretivism and phenomenological research and its application to this research. It suggests that as phenomenological research investigates and describes qualitative variation in the ways in which people experience specific phenomena, it was seen as a highly

appropriate approach for this study. A case has been put forward for research methods to support the exploratory nature of phenomenological enquiry by employing interviews which are open and non-directive, and which promote exploration. The research used a sample of 20 ethnic minority managers in SEO to SCS grades. The sample was sufficient for qualitative research and the data collected was analysed using thematic analysis. Validity, reliability, generalisability and member checking issues were also explored. The ethical process undertaken during the research was discussed and the limitations to the research methods. A number of thematic areas emerged from the interview transcripts, these themes are discussed in more detail in the next chapter, providing a thick description of the experiences of ethnic minorities in their proposition to become senior or executive management positions within the organisation and how this is affected by their race.

Chapter 4

Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the data collected from the research participants. The findings are constructed using the researcher's interpretation of the experiences of the twenty ethnic minority managers in SEO to SCS grades. Most qualitative research involves the narrative presentation of data (McMillan *et al.*, 1993). Neuman (1997) states that the central purpose of analysis in qualitative studies is to sift, sort and organise the masses of information in a way that addresses the original research problem. This chapter aims to achieve this as the participants' stories, experiences, thoughts, knowledge, and the context within which they acted, are represented in research texts as original quotes and are provided to give the extensive description of the context (Johnson, 1997; Fox, 1992). This provides an opportunity for readers to judge the soundness of the researcher's analysis (Wertz, 2005; McMillian *et al.*, 1993), as "words are powerful conveyors of meaning, more powerful than statistics" (Neuman 2000, p.419). Using the actual statements or direct quotations from the data makes this research more meaningful and significant to the reader, since it reveals insights into the actual social setting as well as the participants' experiences.

The researcher's task was to arrange the participant's views according to themes in a logical manner and making their meaning clear to the reader (McMillan *et al.*, 1993)

4.2 Identifying Themes

The main themes to emerge from the analysis were informed by the literature review, and from what the participants said. The participants' responses articulated some common concerns and issues which are presented as the main themes.

The eight main themes that represent the participants' experiences and perceptions are:

1. White as leadership trait
2. Homosocial reproduction
3. Treatment discriminatory and racist attitudes
4. A playing field with two sets of rules
5. Social capital
6. Stereotypical beliefs
7. Social closure
8. Overcoming barriers

Most of these themes have several dimensions which are discussed in this chapter. Each main theme recurred in repeating sequences throughout the interview material and dimensions of each theme were revealed in specific comments that are found parallel across the interviews.

It should also be made clear that some of these themes are highly interrelated. This point will be seen through some quotations that are used under a specific theme but may fit under another theme. This inter-relationship among the main themes strengthens the clarity of the whole picture of the findings of this research whilst showing the complexity of people's experiences.

Distributing the quotations among the themes in this context represents the researcher's judgement based on the interpretations of the themes and quotations. Quotes are verbatim recordings of participants' interviews.

4.2.1 Theme 1: White as a leadership trait

The existence of the 'white standard' for leadership was acknowledged by most of the participants who mentioned that the organisation had a white apex, as whites predominately hold the top management positions as depicted by the photographs (Appendix 6), which had been presented to them to describe the racial composition of the senior and executive team of DWP and it's a business units. This was claimed by the participants to be firmly rooted in their race, of being white, as a result whites were found to be holding the senior and executive management positions, whilst

ethnic minorities plateaued in the middle and at the bottom of the organisation. There was a consensus among the participants that they did not enjoy similar opportunities as their white counterparts, as whites were promoted, whilst they were denied promotions, notwithstanding being better qualified. The participants narrated that in most cases they would have trained the white colleagues to learn the job, but later get promoted over them and in some cases they would have been on temporary promotion at that grade, but were by-passed for promotion. The participants concurred in their views that it was the skin colour which determined their ability to be promoted as the white managers were promoting people similar to them.

The participants emphasised their career advancement had stalled by virtue of not being white, and not being similar to the recruiting managers, this is articulated by the following comments:

Yes, I attribute my current position to my race, it has impacted negatively on me, I can't do anything about it that's how God created me. If I had been white I could be at the top, but, I ain't white, am I? If you have a choice between two candidates with the same experience, you are more likely to promote someone who looks like you, talks like you, and you assume shares the same value system. Since most of the managers recruiting are white, this means there is a preference for white candidates. I don't really see this as a matter of prejudice against the ethnic minority candidate just a natural preference for the familiar over the foreign. (Participant NM009)

Race is definitely an issue because the statistics just don't add up, look at the top and down, you will see the difference of white at the top and ethnic minorities at the bottom, especially here (name of business unit) It's like Guinness you know what I mean. (Participant NM003)

There was also ample evidence to show that whiteness in itself was considered the passport necessary to enter the world of senior and executive management positions in DWP as perceived by the participants, as they believed that if they had been white they would have been in top management, but because they are not white, their career progression has stalled, as stated:

Yeah man, when you look up at the top of the organisational hierarchy, you see that whites hold these top positions, so how can I say that my skin colour is not my enemy, I tell you man, if I had been white, I would be up there too [pointing up], not here but I am down here [pointing to the ground]. Look at these pictures even you can see that there are white faces with no trace of black faces, except [name given] who came yesterday, but is not going to last long, being the only BME among white people [Laughs]. This is a joke man.

It's all true. I am one of a very few BME who have been fortunate to be promoted to this grade, I have been in a civil servant since the late [year]. I can tell you that during my years, the door opened a little and BMEs were recruited into the civil service at my grade, but it was closed for them to move up, that's why you see many of us, in [name of business unit] sitting behind the desk with headsets on their heads answering and making call backs. It's because of their skin colour that they are 'call centre bound' and they are not going anyway, but being a team leader, I know this, because I've been there and you have been there, you know what I mean. (Participant NM009)

Of the same mind another participant pointed out:

I have been in my current grade since [year given] and remain the only ethnic minority on the SLT [Senior Leadership Team]. I watch helplessly the dearth of recruiting ethnic minorities into senior management positions, it's not that they are not competent, but their faces do not fit, it's a white [man]'s world. (Participant NM 012)

This participant concurs that ethnicity hinders progressing into senior management positions within the organisation as ethnic minorities are not recognised, this is supported by the comment,

I have been acting for over a year doing work which is suppose to be done by the Grade [-], but why am I not a in that grade? It's simple, it's my race, if I had been different not a BME, it would have been a different story, I would be up there [pointing up]. I tell you even after acting up if this job is advertised I will not get it, someone white will get it, as I cannot sit on the same table with

whites running the organisation, it's a 'white organisation'. (Participant NM019)

Another participant said senior managers are often white and bias is a barrier for ethnic minorities in obtaining promotion and career advancement. Describing how the participant was perceived by the line manager when seeking promotion, the participant said:

Let me tell what happened after my last interview, I didn't get feedback about why I wasn't considered for the position. I was given the feedback that 'I was not the 'right person' for the job rather than hearing, 'that I had not performed well during the interview and this is what you need to do to become competent for the next grade,' I was told the job was not for me. A white guy who used to be in my team got the job, I know the person, he is not competent, but got the job, Why?! Because he is white, period [Held up his hands]. (Participant NM013)

In contrast, not all of the participants agreed that race was a contributory factor to their failure to ascend into the upper echelons of the organisation as some of the participants believed that people should be promoted on merit not on racial background. The participants expressed that ethnic minorities who were claiming that their race had been a hindrance to their career advancement were more racist than the people who were excluding them from these positions. This is evident by the following statements:

I am a firm believer in promoting people based on their accomplishment and abilities. Their ethnic background should not give them a promotional leg up over other people in the organisation. (Participant NM001)

If you think you should be given a promotion because of your ethnic background or the colour of your skin, you are more racist than the people you are trying to marginalise for something that happened 200 years ago. (Participant NM008)

Another participant disagreed that race was a barrier to ethnic minorities', but stated that it was the people whom you knew that would assist you to climb the corporate ladder regardless of your race. The participant perceived ethnic minorities to be

hiding behind their fingers by blaming their lack of success to their race. This is evident by the comment:

I think ethnic minorities tend to use their race card rather than some other fault for their lack of success. If someone has a connection, that person has the upper hand no matter what race, nationality, or religion. Of course, more white people will gain top management positions, because that is how the British culture is as of right now, you know what I'm talking about? I've seen some BME employees getting promoted when they shouldn't have been obviously not as frequently as whites, but the majority of the people in the UK are white. (Participant NM0011)

In summary, race was a commonly discussed issue among the ethnic minorities aspiring to be promoted to senior management positions within DWP. More participants (17 out of 20) expressed, that race had created an enclave and they were excluded from promotion to the upper echelons of the organisation, by virtue of not being white, despite being more qualified than their white counterparts. It was believed that whites were fast tracked into promotion, as the managers at the top promoted those similar to them.

4.2.2 Theme 2: Homosocial Reproduction

Homosocial reproduction allows those in the dominant group to preserve their position of power and influence because it excludes those who do not look or act like them. Since whites are the primary decision makers in organisations, they are said to be 'self-reproducing themselves,' so as to promote a status quo by protecting opportunities for the dominant group but also act to preserve the status distinctions between in-group and out-group, thus whites remain at the apex of the organisation. Homosocial reproduction was reported to exist in DWP based on comments made during the interviews, as the participants concurred that it was not uncommon for a white manager to give the benefit of the doubt and promote a minimally qualified white candidate. The perception was that these people could be trusted and understood what the job entailed due to a history of past success leading to more proficient ethnic minorities being overlooked. Even, if an ethnic minority candidate

has the same minimum qualifications and background, the participants expressed that white recruiting managers are not likely to select them because they do not meet the racial profile as the recruiting managers are replicating themselves at the top of the organisation, hence, a white candidate will be promoted in spite of not being qualified but by virtue of being white and similar to the recruiting managers. This is apparent by what the participant said:

If you're white and the applicant is white, you are going to want to recruit someone of your own blood, because he's white. It is not uncommon for a white manager to give the benefit of the doubt by promoting a minimally qualified white candidate because he trusts the candidate better than an ethnic minority as they somehow know each other. However, if an ethnic minority candidate has the same minimum qualifications and background, the white managers aren't as likely to select them because these candidates don't have exactly the profile they were looking for, even though the white candidate may not either. (Participant NM 002)

Concurring, similarly another participant said:

Leadership and race cannot be separated I see more white people. But I guess it's more when you get up to the top it becomes more homogenous, snowy summit. (Participant NM 017)

Both social closure and homosocial reproduction appear to play a role and sometimes a more important role than credentials play as far as who is invited to apply for a promotion and whose applications arrive in the hands of decision makers. The participants' experiences are excellent cases in point. They were not promoted, nor were any ethnic minorities who had applied for promotion in the organisation. Rather, there was a history of ethnic minorities being passed over for promotion in favour of less qualified white employees. The participant's accounts of being denied promotion is included in the following example:

I have applied for promotion and have been rejected several times even though when I thought I had bagged the job. Interesting I have been invited on recruitment boards where ethnic minorities are among the candidates being interviewed, but regardless of doing well ethnic minorities were not offered the

jobs in most cases. White candidates whom I would not have offered the job are offered the jobs even if their interviews were rubbish. I now do not do the boards as I have been a token. (Participant NM 006)

The old cliché about upward mobility of ‘it’s not what you, but who you know that matters’ was reported throughout the interviews as obstacles to ethnic minorities’ promotion and it was claimed that good connections assist in career advancement. The participant’s perception was that as long as there are less ethnic minorities in senior and executive management positions, ethnic minorities will continue to be marginalised whilst whites assist other whites to gain promotion. The participant commented:

We must be realists, we do not live in a world where people are simply rewarded and promoted based on the work they do. If that was simply the case, there would be more BME CEOs and senior managers, but we live in a world where it’s who you know not what you know and the colour of your skin determines your career progression, that’s why I have been on this grade for the past [] years, watching a white [ethnic background given] move from an EO [Executive Officer] to a Grade 7 within 4 years. Why? Because [gender given] is white [shouts] and [gender given] friends in [Business Unit name] at the top have pulled [gender given] up. BMEs will always struggle to penetrate senior-management positions, there is none of their kind to pull them up, and they have to struggle to make it. (Participant NM0011)

When asked what impact that tendency would have on ethnic minorities in the organisation, the participant said;

Oh, it would have a tremendous effect, because it may not enable ethnic minorities to move up in to senior management grades, eventually they will leave the organisation to join other organisations who appreciate them and view them as equals with a capability to lead. BMEs will shun DWP, but it does not seem to matter a lot as no one questions why ethnic minorities are so few at the top, its only people like you voicing [laughs]. (Participant NM0011)

One of the participants recounted an experience of a recent promotion opportunity, where the participant assumed he would have been promoted after being on a temporary promotion at a higher grade, however, was unsuccessful. When the participant received the interview feedback, it stated the participant did not meet the requirements, even though they had executed the role at the grade for two years and had received good performance reviews from the line manager. The new incumbent was white, someone with no experience in the technical area but was 'known to the senior team'. The participant genuinely believed that race was an obstacle for career progression as whites who are similar to the senior managers were getting promoted, which showed the existence of homosocial reproduction as the managers were self-reproducing themselves by recruiting other whites, and excluding ethnic minorities. The participant explained:

As an ethnic minority manager having been a civil servant since [year given], my experiences, both personal and observed support that my race has affected my career progression to a very high degree. If you look at this organisation most ethnic minorities are employed in greater numbers at the lower levels of the organisation and their disproportionate representation does not result in a greater representation in senior management. This is not new to me in particular as it corresponds to my experience, I was on TDA [Temporary Development Allowance] (acting at a higher grade on a temporary basis) for over two years, but when the job was advertised, I did not get it, in spite of having been a box 1 whilst acting, the job was offered to someone I use to manage and now I report to [name give]. I found that my fellow managers would consistently overvalue the white candidates, and undervalue the contributions of ethnic minorities. (Participant NM007)

The participant believed that promotion decisions for top management positions involve subjective appraisals as the suitability of the candidate was determined by the 'fit' of the incumbent with the senior management team. This criterion is seen to go beyond professional abilities, into the 'cloudy waters' of compatibility. The participants suggested that ethnic minorities must be very distinguished and highly qualified in order to find an opportunity to hold a high position in the organisation, but for a white person, the strong relationships, communications, and connections were enough to assure a leading position, the participant recalls:

There was a white a guy who got promoted around the time that I got promoted but, had accomplished substantially less than I had, but got promoted ahead of me, because he was white and was friends to the recruiting manager. I always felt like I had to work harder than the other people because I had to fight for my greatness, whilst some have greatness thrust upon them. (Participant NM014)

Another good illustration of a disparity in treatment due to homosocial reproduction was highlighted through subjective selection criteria which had been challenged by ethnic minorities in the past. This subjective selection criteria has been seen as the preference for the promotion of whites, whilst ethnic minorities are denied promotion as noted by one participant:

Whites don't think we can perform at the senior management positions, so they don't let us. It's still very much a white [man]'s world, in any situation white will always triumph, think of it how many whites have taken their line managers to a performance appraisal grievance, very few, if any and how many ethnic minorities have sought arbitration in their performance appraisal. And many of them have won the performance grievances and were accorded the right box marking, but should it get to this? Yes whites favour other whites. (Participant NM 010)

The centrality of managerial discretion in the discrimination process does not simply revolve around targeted applications of promotion. It is also influential and arguably pivotal in the evaluation process as to who to promote into higher status positions. Here, the issue is not so much targeted use of formalised process, but rather significant subjective flexibility in managerial decision making, that often works to the disadvantage of ethnic minorities. Consider the following example where a participant has failed to get promotion whilst whites are promoted. The participants' remarks highlight how homosocial reproduction has a disparaging impact. The participant expressed that, when promoting for senior management the organisation has a tendency to promote whites over ethnic minorities for the role as ethnic minorities are viewed negatively:

*I have been around for too long, how long have you been in the organisation?
I have seen a lot with these eyes mostly its whites who are promoted over us,*

they are simply pulling each other up. In my SLT I am the only ethnic minority and when I attend meetings across the department, I am usually the only one BME or they could be another from [name of organisation given], it's really a lonely environment for me and the few of us. Nothing much has been changed, few SEOs were recruited externally, but they are not going anyway, they will hit a glass wall as I have done, unless they can play the game of which I doubt. (Participant NM003)

The discretionary power, in these cases, resulted in the promotion of whites at the expense of ethnic minorities. The statements are poignant that discrimination is by default or design creates and preserves advantage is clearly demonstrated by the participant's thoughts. The participant's words pinpoint what victims of homosocial reproduction deal with as they endeavour to get promoted, the cloning determines who get promoted as prescribed by the white leadership trait. It also suggests that ethnic minorities face isolation as a member of the out-group.

As stated by the previous participants, another participant has expressed similar sentiments:

There are a small number of us who are relatively near the top, so close but so far away, this shows how difficult it is to advance in this organisation. I often feel isolated, it's a glass cliff frequently being the only ethnic minority at their level. For example, only one BME has achieved the role of CEO for [name given], as shown on these photographs, they are all white men and women and one [ethnic minority] in the executive team. It does not baffle me that most of the executive teams and all senior managers are white. It is not representative, but it shows that they are the chosen race to lead the organisation and they replicate themselves at the top whilst BMEs languish at the bottom of the organisation. (Participant NM009)

Similar examples were found where by virtue of being an ethnic minority the participants felt that they were channelled into jobs considered for ethnic minorities where they engaged with the ethnic minority communities. These jobs did not develop their capabilities to get promotion into senior or executive management positions, as a result they are doomed to fail due to role slotting. This is evident by what the participant said:

It has made me very cynical about working for this organisation and about what you can realistically hope to achieve. As an ethnic minority you can get to a certain level and that's it. Is that not so? You know what I am talking about. The power structures in most business units are white dominated and where do you find BMEs? In the community. Who do you know who has made it to the executive team, who has been [job stated]? It's the wrong direction, you need to be in strategy and policy to get to the top, not from looking after your own kind. You do not have the competencies to apply for these jobs and you become a sitting duck, whilst whites pass you on the race to top management positions. (Participant NM005)

The participants have provided acrimonious accounts of how homosocial reproduction has negatively impacted on their career progression. White were reported to be cloning themselves at the top, whilst denying ethnic minorities promotion regardless of their qualifications and competency as race was perceived to determine who got promoted.

4.2.3 Theme 3: Discriminatory and racist attitudes

The participants provided wide-ranging examples of racial discrimination that served to reveal the complexity of social relations in DWP. Most of the participants expressed clearly that racism is a major hindrance to their career advancement and will always be. This is evident by the following statements as reported by the participants:

I think it's simply racism, when you have a top management that is primarily white. Ethnic minorities are bumping against the wall because they do not meet the model, of being white as they tend to select someone white, given that the other person has similar skills and experience, but his or her face does not fit. (Participant NM003)

I believe that I have been discriminated against because of my race. I have been here for [] years and I have trained people, some of these white people who have been promoted and are two or more grades above me. I look back and try to think what is it that I have done something wrong, and what have the white people who have been promoted excelled in, which I cannot do,

some of them, I have taught them the job. I realise that it does not take a genius to realise that they were white and I am not white, its discrimination, the managers are racists. It will take a long way before white discrimination and racism are addressed. (Participant NM008)

Both my names are English, and they do not reflect, that I am a [ethnic group], so when I get to interview, the first impression, the white panel would have is to be surprised, drop their faces and plaster a plastic smile, from there it will be all over as the interview will fall apart almost before it has begun, as there is a sudden loss of interest, as I am not what they were expecting a white person. (Participant NM12)

The participants cited examples of having experienced direct and indirect discriminatory promotion practices. The dominance of whites in the organisation was cited as meaning that preference would be given to people similar to themselves. Also, whites had access to a wider network of informal contacts and therefore to promotion opportunities that ethnic minorities could not even find out about. Thus, gaining promotion into senior and executive management positions represented a major barrier for them as expressed by the participant who also questions the existence of the concept of meritocracy:

I have sat to interview boards to create representation and I have seen the wrong person getting the job because he has a network, and is white, rather than the right person getting the job because he or she has the right skills and talents to for the job. I've seen this happen here many times with my own eyes and people say there is no discrimination, they probably live in another world. What has happened to the notion that the best candidate gets the job? (Participant NM016)

One participant expressed that racism was a stumbling block in career advancement, to such an extent that promotion is unattainable in the organisation as a result will not bother to apply for it. This is depicted by the statement:

Yes, racism is out there, and it will be there to undermine our career progression. You cannot deny that, because it has pulled me down several

times such that I do not bother applying for promotion anymore, [pause] there is no place for a BME at the top. (Participant NM012)

The statement by the participant, offers a compelling account of explicitly existence racism in the form of homosocial reproduction, as denoted by the statement:

Yeah, (laughs). There is racism in the organisation. Look at the executive team, they are mostly white, middle aged white men, it's documented and recorded that most of the senior management teams are made up of white middle class, middle aged not truly representative of the organisation. It does not mean that BMEs are not competent but this is racism. Let's go back to basic human nature; I am more comfortable with someone who looks and sounds like me. Coming from a position of power, decision making, who they employ following what I just said will end up having a room full of white middle age men, because they are comfortable having people who look like them. Is that not so, you know it's true. (Participant NM001)

The participants' accounts reflect on how they have been racially discriminated and denied promotion by the white managers, because of being ethnic minorities. Ethnic minorities reported to be competent, but still had been denied promotion as whites, through the similar to me effect replicated themselves at the top.

4.2.4 Theme 4: A playing field with two sets of rules

The participants expressed that their educational attainment were an important determinant of promotion, as some of them suggested that being academically qualified would open doors to promotion for them. However they have realised that being atypical to the white leadership trait meant they had to advance through contest mobility where selection rests on the accumulation of human capital. The participants expressed that they lacked homosocial sponsorship, as a result they were denied promotion. Whereas, whites were promoted through a system of sponsorship mobility, as white mentors assisted them to gain promotion into senior management positions, as it's an elite club for whites only. This is apparent as stated by the participant:

White counterparts of the, same age and similar qualifications to me would not have the same problems I would encounter moving up the ladder. They

know someone at the top who are ready to pull them up when a vacancy arise, I do not have a BME I can look up to even if I look from right, centre and left, I still see myself surrounded by whites, so I have to make it my own way without assistance from anyone. It's a race thing. (Participant NM018)

Similarly another participant explained why the organisation was homogenous at the top, with whites predominately in senior and executive management positions, the participant stated that:

In our directorate, if you're a white educated person you're going to be promoted more easily as the people at the top are white and they will only bring whites up only. If you're an ethnic minority, you know what I mean, you have to prove your worthiness, before you can be considered for promotion, but by then the white colleagues would have moved two or more grades above you. (Participant NM005)

Another participant described the hard compression and imbalanced conditions that ethnic minorities faced in the process of promotion to high positions because of their race irrespective of being educated to a higher level. Education did not guarantee promotion in the organisation. Instead ethnic minorities had to prove themselves and work hard to be noticed, as expressed by the participant:

Out of my entire management team, including my two managers, I am the only one with a degree and [name of qualification]. Everyone else has either a degree or nothing, surprisingly two people in my team, neither of whom have a degree are being groomed for promotion. One is a white man, the other a white woman. Why am I not being groomed also? It's simply, I am of the wrong race, and if I had been white I could be in the same boat on the verge of promotion. I was brought up to believe that if you are educated your qualifications would open doors for you, but it's different here, I have to work hard regardless of my qualifications, whilst whites are fast tracked into higher grades by their mentors. (Participant NM019)

Although, the decision for promotion in the organisation is granted mainly by white individuals, the participants in this research believed they were equally as good and at times more qualified than their white counterparts. Several individuals indicated

that if they had been white, their career development would have rocketed into SCS even with lower qualifications. However, the participants believed they were promoted on the strength of their determination, competency, skills and knowledge. Among the participants there was a widespread supposition that, in order to progress, being 'average' was not an option, hence they had to work two or three times harder however, this achievement came at a cost as described by the participants:

You have to prove that you are competent before you can be accepted by your subordinates and your superiors. I had to go an extra mile and work twice harder than them [whites]. Whites do not have to prove anything to be promoted but they have to be known by someone higher up. I know no one and I will remain here forever. (Participant NM007)

As a BME I have to prove myself, to be a brilliant performer as compared to my white colleagues. I joined the department as a qualified [name of profession] and I have trained people who have been promoted before me, whilst I am a qualified [name of profession]. Even if my performance is top notch, why am I still here [] years. The society dictates as people surround themselves with people like themselves, so how do I get up, tell me. (Participant NM020)

The participants feel that they are not being recognised for their qualifications and performance as the managers are recruiting and promoting people like themselves and leaving ethnic minorities as they are dissimilar. Regardless of being specialists in their profession and being competent, ethnic minorities have expressed that they are still bypassed for promotion, whilst people whom they have taught the job are promoted because they are white.

4.2.5 Theme 5: Social capital

'It's who you know and not what you know' is a statement that rings true in DWP according to the participants. As previously stated they believed that their competency and professional skills would assist them to gain promotion, but had not been able to gain promotion as they were excluded from the networks which sponsor whites. It was believed that access to these networks was restricted. The networks

were found to consist mostly of whites and were extremely resistant to promoting ethnic minorities to senior or executive management positions in the organisation. One participant said that the recruiting managers laugh when they see applications from of ethnic minorities, seeking promotion to the 'elite club'. The participant reflected on the racial politics of promotion:

Once my line manager told me that when the recruiting managers get the application forms they tell their colleagues, [laughing] Ah, guess what [name supplied] has applied for promotion and wants to join us and they laugh, then the next thing a regret is sent through. Why because I am not white and I cannot enter their prestigious club at the top, it like living in the 70s. (Participant NM013)

The participants stated that they are not supported to develop and progress in their professions to the same degree as their white colleagues. Privileges and even ordinary opportunities tend to go to what is perceived as 'white cliques' or networks, and ethnic minorities are side-lined and their achievements go unrecognised. When it comes to promotion opportunities, this lack of a development track record is interpreted as lack of ambition. The net effect in many cases is to depress the expectation to progress and thereby it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. Ethnic minorities claimed that they have been eroded after being down whenever they sought promotion several times and have given up applying for promotion because they 'know' they will not get it, as the participants said:

In most cases when the job is advertised on RM (Resource Management System), it would have been reserved for someone, several times I have been told the outcome of an interview well before the selection process has commenced, that so and so would get the job. In many cases the outcomes are true, I wish I could bet on it on Betfair and make money [laughs]. It all boils down to your face does it fit and who do you know? Because the interesting thing is that the people who get the jobs are whites who are friends with the manager. (Participant NM006)

I have realised it, it's about who you know! There is an ethnic minority CEO for [business unit]. Thank God, but he is not going to bring the change, as it will be him against the white [man]'s world he is going to struggle to bring

about change because he will face resistance from the different camps. The good old boys treat this organisation like their clubhouse. And they still don't want to let us into their club. They went to public schools and Oxbridge look at the Tories they went to Eton and Oxford most of them, so they keep pulling each other up and he is from [town given] and I am from [name of place] we will never mix and I will always be an outsider. I had to work hard to get where I am and I do not think I will be moving anywhere soon, as I am not the chosen one, I am not going to apply for promotion as I have been knocked back several times. (Participant NM020)

The participants felt that informal networking was a vital route to senior and executive management level, as the key benefits associated with it included increased visibility, support and upward mobility and greater respect and recognition within the organisation. Most of the participants expressed that lack of access to these networks resulted in a lack of access to contacts, opportunities and political information. Social capital was seen by the participants as a critical element of success in their attempt to gain promotion into senior and executive management, however they have been found excluded from the social networks, thus failing to secure promotion. The participants have expressed that to become a member of this elite club of senior and executive managers, it is not simply a question of whether you are able to do the job other things come into play, such as social background, how you spend your leisure time, whether other members of that club would like to spend social time with you. All too often, ethnic minorities fail these tests. This, in turn, increased their feelings of exclusion, isolation and frustration, as illustrated by these quotations:

Being part of the right group helps. Things happen quicker for you. Forging links is very important for promotion. I was told to take up golf to further my career. Career development should be down to people's merits and not how much golf you play. My handicap is I don't play golf. There are people who got promotions because they fit into the club, not based on merit. (Participant NM014)

People are equally qualified, but certain people always make it. I don't think it's racist, it's who you know. (Participant NM017)

The analysis shows that social networking is a manifestation of the social closure and homosocial reproduction processes, as it ensures that key jobs are given to individuals who resemble those in charge, often whites, and the participants expressed that their exclusion to the networks hindered their promotion prospects even more. This is evident by what the participants said,

If you look at the senior management structure it is mainly white, only whites are being promoted, as they help each other. It's like a little group and they stick together so where can I fit. (Participant NM010)

If you know someone, they say there is two degrees of separation, the people you know will carry you. Whites know more people at the top and the people at the top are more comfortable working with people like them, because of this they will promote a white person like them at the expense of a BME, whom they do not know, neither trust. (Participant NM002)

One of the participants offers evidence of struggling on the adversity of being excluded. At the time of the interviews, the participant was relatively new to the business unit though, but had been a civil servant for a number of years and was very optimistic about gaining promotion, but has since retreated and feels alienated as noted from the following statement:

I came here hoping to get promoted, but I've lost hope that I'm ever going to get promoted. The team has a group which seems to know much about what is happening in the organisation than I do. They are so used to working together and doing things together socially, that I'm not even on their radar as I am seen as an outside. In meetings people talk of having a meeting with the Permanent Secretary, how is this happening, I have never had such an opportunity. (Participant NM016)

The participants expressed that they have found it difficult to navigate to the upper echelons of the organisation as they are slotted into roles which do not lead the senior or executive management positions, but are dead end jobs. This is evident by the comments made by the participant:

If I had a mentor I would probably be somewhere holding a high office, but without assistance from someone above you end being stuck in useless jobs,

such as outreach and community engagement because you are an ethnic minority and you have to deal with your people as you understand them, but this does not lead to promotion. (Participant NM007)

Due to lack of mentors who advise ethnic minorities, they are found channelled into jobs which deal with community engagement working with and managing ethnic minorities. Whilst whites with a network of mentors are sponsored into lucrative positions, which allow them to gain knowledge and skills needed for senior or executive positions, such that it becomes easier for the mentors to sponsor them for promotion.

4.2.6 Theme 6: Stereotypical beliefs

The most insidious interpretation presented by the participants is an implicit assumption that ethnic minorities cannot manage. The participants felt they had been knocked down and denied promotion even on an acting capacity. The participants reported they were over shadowed to an extent of being given instructions by a white person at a lower grade. It was felt that this was because the white person was more trusted and more capable than an ethnic minority at a higher grade. The following quote explains one participant's experience:

Let me tell you what happened a couple of years ago. Four years back, my [Grade given] went on leave and she did not TDA me, as she said she was only going away for two weeks, but the HR policies state that I should have been TDA'd as I will be doing her work by virtue of being her deputy, this is interesting (pinching himself), this skin is deadly. An [grade given] was given email access by the [Grade given], whilst I was there, this person was not even a PA [Personal Assistant], but a member of my team reporting to one of my [grade given], somebody who is [] grades below me was now giving me work to do from my line manager's email box, why because she was white. I am not a racist but it is difficult for people like you and me to make it in this organisation because of the colour of our skin. We are found not to be the right stuff. My race will never help me to get to the top and if I manage, I will be side-lined as I do not come from the same areas as the SCS, it's basically who you know, but your skin colour should be the required one, white (laughs). (Participant NM002)

The experience of the 'ethnic penalty' was repeated as another participant concurs that race was detrimental to promotion in the organisation, as reflected:

My personal experience in this organisation is that I do not fit the bill because of the colour of my skin. How often have I asked myself, why are less talented and experienced white managers with track records of mediocre performance promoted to higher positions, while ethnic minorities are left behind waiting in the wings for similar opportunities? The answer has to be the standards by which both groups are judged and or evaluated. We hear talk about levelling the playing field, but that field will never be levelled as long as the performance of ethnic minorities is evaluated with the built in racial biases we face every day in both our personal and business lives. No matter how hard we may work to overcome these obstacles, it is a hard reality. In order to succeed whether in business, sports or entertainment ethnic minorities must always outperform their white counterparts. (Participant NM018)

With regard to promotion, the participants believed that less qualified or less senior employees were given the job not for being competent but for having the same race as the manager, yet they are denied promotion as they are atypical. It is likely that the manager's discretion and an invoking of on the spot subjective criteria are playing a role. Indeed, the case material suggests that whites often hold stereotypical views of ethnic minorities' hard or soft work skills. As a case in point, one participant was denied promotion over a white colleague because they 'didn't interview well, or did not fit the business area.' One of the participant recounts confronting the line managers about being denied promotion.

More whites were promoted than BMEs and when I enquired why this was happening, I was told they didn't seem like a good fit or, they didn't interview well. The leading positions whether for deputising or directorship are dominated by whites. Promotion to the higher grades appears to operate by the earmarking of the 'chosen ones' of preferred candidates. These are groomed for promotion by the white managers [and] receive preferential treatment. Between 2003 and 2008, I have applied for more than half a dozen times to become a [Grade given] and was never successful, never got to interview stage and I am stuck in this career graveyard. I believe that I was

excluded because my race did not fit and that my face did not fit because I am not white. It is unprecedented for a manager to have half a dozen failed applications for promotion, my skin is my enemy, and you know what I mean. (Participant NM020)

In the discussion of promotions to higher positions, one of the participants stressed that many unfair decisions gave opportunities for whites. The participants' experiences are excellent illustrations, of stereotypical beliefs as a by-product of social closure, where ethnic minorities were excluded whilst whites hoard senior and executive management positions which they reserved for fellows whites.

4.2.7 Theme 7: Social closure

The analysis shows that the challenge is no longer at entry point for ethnic minorities in DWP, there is a cause for concern that ethnic minorities face treatment discrimination due to social closure reported to be hindering their upward mobility as they claimed to stagnate in lower and middle management positions and also are siphoned off into jobs which provide little career advancement. The participants said:

On promotion boards ethnic minorities will be invited for interviews, but do not get the jobs, whilst the whites get promoted not because ethnic minorities are incompetent but because they do not fit and the positions are earmarked for whites well before they are advertised. (Participant NM008)

And once they reach HEOs and SEOs, BMES seldom advance into senior management and some can't even become team leaders within the sections they work in, the positions are closed, it's out of bound for BMEs. (Participant NM005)

The participants are implying that ethnic minorities can navigate their way to the next management grade, but are excluded from attaining promotion, as whites hoard and monopolise the senior management positions by promoting whites who are similar to them, thus making it impossible to climb the corporate ladder as they are outside the 'golden circle'.

A number of the participants discussed their own personal promotional aspirations during the interviews and their responses generated a number of interesting new

insights. Social closure appeared to impact female ethnic minorities even more than male ethnic minorities. They endured a dual burden of being an ethnic minority and a woman as explained in the following quotation:

As a woman, I totally agree that my race has created a roadblock affecting my career progression. I have been a civil servant for over [] years and I am proud to say I have done outstanding work, but I keep seeing people getting promoted, and they are all white. I'm so tired of working and making the white [man] look good, so good that they get the promotions and they don't take me with them. They leave me far behind. Being a BME and also a woman gives you not only deny me access, but I always bump against a brick wall. (Participant NM013)

Social closure is not simply a barrier for an individual, based on the person's inability to handle a higher-level job, but, it applies to ethnic minorities as a group who are kept from advancing into senior management positions. Ethnic minorities are excluded from the prestigious positions as the whites in power offer these positions to whites, thus maintaining a status quo of having whites only at the apex of the organisation.

The majority of the participants indicated that they experienced a social closure which hindered upward mobility, as they did not receive the experience needed to advance in the organisation and were not given assignments that would prepare them for higher-level positions. There was a consensus and recognition from the participants that ethnic minorities were channelled into jobs interfacing ethnic minorities, which are less strategic and light weight. As a result they are disadvantaged to apply for promotion as the roles they would have been slotted in do not provide adequate skills and competencies needed to succeed at senior or executive management level, thus their career progression stalls at lower and middle management positions. This is manifest in the following statement:

Only the white managers are given challenging tasks whilst I do routine work which my white colleagues would have refused regardless of being the same grade and when it comes to promotion the sitting tenants get the job, I have observed this, and only whites are put on TDA, I use to worry about it, but

*now I do not as whites are reserving seats at the top for other whites.
(Participant NM010)*

Another participant commented that the exclusionary practices would always be there hindering ethnic minorities from attaining senior or executive management positions, by virtue of being an ethnic minority as the apex of the organisation is for white people. The participant commented:

There is undoubtedly a system of exclusion that still exists in the organisation. I probably will never be considered a senior or executive manager, but I'm OK with this. I am still playing the corporate game, and it's obvious the higher you go in the hierarchy the whiter it gets. Unfortunately, I don't see this changing anytime soon. (Participant NM001)

Another participant acknowledged the problems with exclusionary practices and the impact this might have on promotion, such that he feels it's better to leave the organisation, since the playing field is uneven even though it the grass might not be green in the other organisation as it is envisaged that the situation is similar, as stated:

As a BME, I sense this exclusion as well, the only way you will make it is by your own effort, work hard I know you understand what I am saying, you will circumvent the exclusion and get into the big seat, as an SCS. I will have to try to make it work in this uneven playing field, if I do not manage to get promotion, I will leave for another department even though it will not make much of a difference, as the story is the same, whites at the top and BME underneath. (Participant NM003)

An interesting aspect raised in this research relates to the idea of what was termed a 'self-imposed social closure'. One of the participants discussed a situation which occurred recently where the position to the next grade became available and was advertised, but did not apply for it, commented,

I choose not to apply for promotion because the increased workload and responsibilities associated with the move up is not compatible with my own personal desire for a better quality of life outside work. If I had applied and got the job, it would have meant a lot of travelling to meetings and spending

nights away from home and my family, not forgetting long hours and having to bring work home, I cannot afford such a life. (Participant NM019)

The ethnic minority manager was happy at the current grade in the organisation, with the remuneration, the location, and being close to home. When asked if the participant could perform the job, the participant commented 'of course, even with my 'eyes closed', but did not want the promotion because of the excess baggage it would bring, disrupting the work life balance.

4.2.8 Theme 8: Overcoming the barriers

The research provides significant evidence of a range of problems experienced by the participants. However, it is clear that the participants have been able to overcome some of the barriers, at least to a certain extent, as the participants have managed to earn promotion to middle or senior management positions in DWP. The participants mentioned a range of strategies, including self-confidence, qualifications, resilience, perseverance, and drawing on the support of family and friends to succeed as they said:

I have to master my duties and engage in continuous learning to optimise my value to myself and the organisation, as I am a specialist, I have to be qualified to carry out certain duties, and my qualifications have helped me to a certain extent, but not my expectations and the so called ethnic minority development programmes such as REACH and Realising Potential, I never got anything out of them. (Participant NM015)

I have always strived for excellence, such that I still do credible work to the best of my knowledge, even though I have not been reward at times, my family has also encourage me not to give up, when the going gets tough. (Participant NM006)

I perform my duties to the best of my abilities and always deliver the results. I seek opportunities that are challenging for my growth, and I have taken advantage of developmental support offered internally and externally in order to succeed, but it has always been an uphill task. (Participant NM018)

Even though some of the participants had stated that they had failed to gain promotion as their academic credentials had not assisted them to earn promotion, these participants had benefited from working hard and their qualifications had yielded dividends.

The participants notwithstanding their lack of role models, and being excluded from the social networks had benefited from mentors, who were white for career support. Whilst they did not share the same ethnicity, they found that white managers were more receptive to applications from someone they knew. The 'who you know' factor was seen to be important in the organisation. This is evident by what the participants said:

After I did not get promotion I asked the recruiting manager if he could mentor me, initially he asked me if I could not find an ethnic minority mentor. He eventually agreed, and I learnt how to get to the next grade with his assistance. I drew inspiration from (name given), he was supportive and encouraged me to seek promotion. (Participant NM004)

I had to establish relationships with mentors and self-advocacy assisted me to be what I am. My mentor used his network to get me promotion after years of being denied, it's who you know that matters in this place. (Participant NM005)

In summary, the participants acknowledged that they had overcome barriers to be in their current grades, but had been denied further promotion due to their race.

Summary

This chapter presented eight themes which emerged from the interviews with the twenty ethnic minority managers in SEO to SCS grades. The themes show the barriers which ethnic minorities face in their effort to get promoted into senior management positions by virtue of their race. The ethnic minorities suggested that they were underrepresented in management positions due to their race and not being prototypical to the white leadership trait. The existence of social closure and homosocial reproduction was highlighted in the accounts of the ethnic minorities who claimed that the exclusionary practice borne out of the similar to me effect, necessitated the co ethnic reproduction of white managers in senior and executive

management. The participants expressed that their human capital credentials and experience did not assist them to get to the door, as promotion was based on homosocial sponsorship on the basis of 'who you know' and, not 'what you know'. Ethnic minorities had to prove their capabilities, through contest mobility before gaining promotion. Despite the barriers to promotion ethnic minorities had found some ways to overcome the barriers such as seeking help from mentors who provided them with career advice and assisted them to move to their current grades. The next chapter presents the discussion of the findings from the interviews.

Chapter 5

Discussion

5.1 Introduction

The research aim was explore race, specifically if 'being white,' was an attribute of a leadership trait, placing ethnic minorities at a disadvantage when seeking promotion in DWP. This was investigated using an integrative approach of homosocial reproduction and social closure theories to address the exploration of the study's research questions. These research questions were designed to examine how race as a leadership trait determines the promotion and the path to promotion of ethnic minorities in DWP, and also examined the existence of self-cloning at the apex of the organisation. Data was collected through semi structured interviews with twenty ethnic minorities in SEO to SCS grades. Thematic data analysis strategy was employed to explore the research objectives and questions, and provided thick description of the participants' experiences. The perceptions of the participants revealed that social closure and homosocial reproduction were the strongest predictor of selection in DWP promotion process, whites at top monopolised the positions and excluded ethnic minorities, whilst replicating themselves, by sponsoring whites similar to them for promotion. Additionally, it was reported that ethnic minorities were more likely to have experience at the non-central positions than power positions, as they were slotted into non-strategic roles and they had to use contest mobility to gain promotion, however at a slower rate than their white counterparts. Thus, lending support to the social closure and homosocial reproduction theories, which asserts that ethnic minorities will be found at lower level authority positions and will accordingly experience longer and more formal paths to authority, due to their race and being atypical to the white leadership trait.

The major findings of this research are as follows:

5.2 Senior executives select similar successors

Many participants spoke of the impact of social closure and homosocial reproduction, suggesting that organisational leaders tend to promote white people

like themselves, because it is an expedient way to ensure that those selected are compatible with existing norms and expectations and this resulted in the exclusion of ethnic minorities, culminating in their absence in senior and executive management positions. The participants expressed that when candidates are being considered for senior and trusted positions, those in charge tend to look for others who are prototypical, which invariably means someone who is white as most of the recruiting managers in DWP are white (Stafsudd, 2006; Smith, 2004). Rosette *et al.* (2008) found that whites are consistently viewed as more prototypical leaders than racial minorities in US business settings. This was true even when the raters were ethnic minorities themselves. The main implication, according to these researchers, is that white leaders may be advantaged over ethnic minority leaders, when career advancement opportunities are considered.

Whiteness was perceived to provide managers with a crucial tacit resource in the quest for sameness, and provide incentives for whites to 'clone' themselves in their own image, guarding access to power and privilege to those who fit in, to those of their own kind (Savage and Witz, 1992). This is a privilege of whiteness, the 'invisible package of unearned assets' gives whites an advantage (Hite, 2004; McIntosh, 1990). McIntosh indicates that white privilege is challenging because it requires accepting that race, not just hard work, contributes to achievements. The participants reported that they had to work harder than their white colleagues, because of their ethnicity, whilst whites enjoyed the benefits of sponsorship by their homosocial mentoring. Ethnic minorities were excluded from social networks, and in most cases did not have mentors to act as sponsor for their promotion, hence they have to work hard to prove that they are capable of working at the higher echelons of the organisation. As James (2000) demonstrated, racio-ethnic differences in perceived support are mediated by social networks, such that ethnic minorities tend to have smaller social networks and, therefore, receive less support than whites.

Elliot *et al.* (2001) provide further intellectual support to the idea that labour market opportunities depend not just on individual human capital, but also on group membership (Pinkett *et al.*, 2010). Of the same opinion social identity and organisational demography literature suggests that people prefer to interact with members of their own identity group, and more likely to favour leaders from their own race rather than from other races, hence ethnic minorities find it difficult to attain top

positions because they do not fit in prescribed organisational traits (Avery, 2010; Rosette *et al.*, 2008). The participants expressed that whites, by virtue of fitting the white leadership trait (Rosette *et al.*, 2008), are socially and politically supported by the organisation's members and systems to gain promotion, whilst ethnic minorities are ostracised and undermined because of being atypical to the leadership trait and are denied promotion (Avery, 2010).

5.3 Lack of fit

The perceptions of the participants provided evidence, that due to lack of 'fit' their promotion prospects were limited. Lyness *et al.* (1997) and Raggins *et al.* (1998) argue that members of ethnic minority groups find it difficult to attain top positions because they do not fit in prescribed organisational leadership traits, in other words they are not white. Concurring Rosette *et al.* (2008) stated that being white was the centrality of the leadership trait and Avery (2010) acknowledged that ethnic minorities are different, consequently they are underrepresented in management. The participants signalled a propensity for sameness, preservation of the status quo and underlying racism, as they claimed that the white managers looked for their 'mirror images' when promoting. They also felt that there were relatively few ethnic minorities on the recruitment boards with authority, hence there was bias in the selection process creating a major barrier in their ability to be promoted. This also reinforces the views of whites that they do not consider ethnic minorities as part of the 'in group' and management material (Ospina *et al.*, 2009; Ng *et al.*, 2005; Kandola, 2004).

As a result top white managers fall into a trap of 'cloning', feeling inherently more sympathetic towards people who share their whiteness and therefore promoting employees primarily from within their ethnic group (Neilson, 2007; Stafsduss, 2006). Interview evidence shows that powerful managers tend to carefully guard power and privilege for those who fit in, for those they see as 'their kind', as they are reproducing themselves at the very top of the organisation (Simrad, 2009; Kanter, 1977). This has been reiterated in the interviews that the participants do not get promotion as they are not part of the 'golden circle' and do not fit the white leadership trait, as they are ethnically different from the recruiting managers, this resulted in ethnic minorities plateauing at the middle and bottom of the organisation,

as there was no one of their kind who can 'hold their hands' and pull them up the corporate ladder. Most of the participants voiced that they would definitely be at the upper echelons of the organisation if there had been more ethnic minority senior or executive managers, as they believed that through co-ethnicity reproduction and exclusionary practices, they would also be at the apex of the organisation.

Buckley *et al.* (2007) found evidence of same-race bias in evaluations during a police promotion process. All-black panels favoured black candidates over white ones whereas all white panels exhibited the opposite pattern. The participants expressed that the decision-makers exhibit bias in favour of white candidates who remind them of themselves, which was to the disadvantage of ethnic minorities because many higher level decision makers are white, hence they reproduce themselves through both exclusionary and inclusionary processes (Avery, 2010; Smith, 2002). Decision-makers therefore tend to promote whites who are demographically similar to themselves. This shows that social closure and homosocial occurs when an ethnic group has to protect the privileged positions and reserve them for people similar to them whilst excluding those who are unrelated to them. The research findings suggest that decision makers should be sensitive to biases stemming from leadership traits. This stands in stark contrast to some beliefs that race no longer affects work evaluations because the process is guided by meritocracy (Pinkett *et al.*, 2010; Castilla, 2008; Rosette and Thompson, 2005) and colour-blindness (Reitman, 2006; Wildman, 1996).

5.4 The uneven playing field

According to the participants the omnipresence of promoting someone white placed many ethnic minorities in a no-win situation, as the playing field was claimed to be uneven. This is consistent with Elliot *et al.* (2004), where they found that whites due to the 'similar- to- me' effect are promoted to senior management positions through the sponsorship mobility. Decision-makers commonly tend to exhibit bias in favour of candidates who remind them of themselves, which works to the disadvantage of ethnic minorities because many higher level decision makers are whites (Avery, 2010). Turner (1960) viewed sponsorship as the mechanism by which certain people in an organisation are chosen and endorsed for upward movement. Under a sponsored mobility norm system, some individuals will receive special attention,

career development mentoring and career-related coaching from their senior managers who would have 'selected' them for sponsorship (Wayne, Linden and Graff, 1999). These individuals are provided the necessary resources to prepare them for future upward mobility, and not everyone is allowed into the competition for positions, only those with sponsorship are considered. Ethnic minorities were less likely than others to have access to resources because potential sponsors or mentors, most of whom are likely to be white, tend to choose protégés who are similar to themselves.

Ethnic minorities have to use the contest model in order to gain promotion, this shows that the whites and ethnic minorities do not follow the same paths to promotion as their race determines the course to be taken to top management. This supports the research theoretical model (*Figure 2*) and the findings of, Thomas *et al.* (1999) who studied processes of development and advancement that produce ethnic minority executives. Their findings suggest that there are different career patterns for white and minority executives, which they describe in terms of 'two different tournaments', one for whites and one for ethnic minorities. In the tournament for whites, contenders are sorted early on, and only those deemed most promising proceed to future competitions. Ethnic minorities were found to gain promotion through contest mobility, whilst whites were said to be sponsored by their homosocial mentors. Homosocial mentors help their protégé's gain exposure to powerful organisational networks through assignments that involve working with other managers and powerful executives and intervene for their protégée's by endorsing them for promotions (Hu, Thomas, and Lance, 2008; Collins, 1997a).

The participants stated that they had to work two or three times harder than their white counterparts as they had to prove themselves due to lack of sponsorship. This is based on the philosophies of management self-reproducing through exclusion mechanisms like homosocial reproduction and social closure (Elliott *et al.*, 2004; Kanter 1977). These findings are similar to Allison (1999), who found an organisation can erect visible and invisible barriers that limit opportunities for ethnic minorities. By pigeon holing ethnic minorities into certain positions, upper management reconstructs its homogeneous senior positions as a reflection of themselves. Specifically, ethnic minorities were reported to reach positions of authority based on a more deterministic and formal route, whilst whites use the informal route through

sponsorship (Elliot *et al.*, 2004, Smith, 2005). Ethnic minorities stated that they were evaluated for promotion on the basis of more traditional individualistic characteristics, including educational attainment, work experience, and competency (Elliot *et al.*, 2001; Baldi *et al.*, 1997; Mueller, Parcel, and Tanaka, 1989). Wilson (1997) noted that ethnic minorities' dependence on the accumulation of human capital credentials such as relevant job experience limits opportunities for authority attainment because of discriminatory obstacles encountered in their acquisition.

Whilst this research has shown that sponsorship and contest mobility exist when seeking promotion to the higher echelons of the organisation Rosenbaum (1984) found that ability and human capital variables and contest mobility were important predictors of promotion rates for individuals in their career stages. They suggested, but did not test the hypothesis, that sponsorship becomes more important as one seeks promotion to the upper echelons of the organisation. As stated earlier these are some of the inadequacies of single theories, as this research through the use of the integrative approach it has shown how two routes are followed by whites and ethnic minorities as they seek promotion and this has been demonstrated by the conceptual model, Figure 2.

5.5 Similar to me effect

There is an inherent tendency to perceive those who remind us of ourselves in a favourable light. Whites, by virtue of being dominant, always rise to power under a 'similar to me effect,' (Avery, 2010) or 'more like us or me' (Stainback, 2008; Tang, 1997, 2000) whereas ethnic minorities generally take two tracks, as they advance under whites, or they advance under similar others, whereby they have to manage ethnic minorities (Kauffman, 2002). According to Avery (2010), when making promotional decisions, individuals within organisations tend to choose people reminiscent of incumbent power brokers. This means that the demographic makeup at upper levels is highly resistant to change because dominant group members tend to be replaced with other dominant group members (Elliott *et al.*, 2004). The scarcity of ethnic minorities at the higher echelons of the organisation who would act as sponsors was suggested to mean that ethnic minorities had to rely more on determination, working hard, human capital credentials, skills and experience, relative to whites, to 'break into' higher levels of power, often having to 'out-

credential' white counterparts (Kauffman, 2002). Under an equal footing ethnic minorities would use their human capital to progress to the upper grades of the organisation as stated by the participants, but this is in contrast to what is actually happening at DWP.

Whites were perceived by the participants to be fast tracked into senior management positions, without taking into consideration the human capital credentials and experience of the ethnic minorities. Whites were therefore perceived to be promoted over more qualified and experienced ethnic minorities by virtue of their race, thus rendering human capital useless to enhance their promotion opportunities. Pinkett *et al.* (2010) found that the human capital is no longer assisting ethnic minorities to get promotion. As it is no longer considered by the organisations, as a result ethnic minorities have to change their strategies in order to get promotion as whites will continue to clone themselves by offering managerial positions to whites. This supports that the existence of homosocial reproduction and social closure fertilises the white leadership trait to prosper, as management composition is self – reproducing (Roscigno, 2007; Elliot *et al.*, 2004; Tomaskovic-Devey, 1993).

5.6 Subjective selection criteria

Ethnic minorities reported routinely experiencing more discrimination and less supportive work environments than their white counterparts. This research dovetails with the work conducted by Hill (2004) who found that managers have shown a tendency to use extremely subjective criteria in evaluating potential candidates. Esmail *et al.* (2005), found that compared to white managers, ethnic minority managers felt less accepted in their organisations, perceived themselves as having less discretion in their jobs, received lower ratings from their job performance and were not suitable for promotion, and were more likely to reach a career plateau. Woodhams and Lupton (2009, p.203), stated that, “the same practices serve to perpetuate discrimination, utilise stereotypes and continue the segregation.” The participants in this study stated that it was no longer the best candidate getting the job as the selection of the right person for a position in senior or executive management was subjective. This subjectivity was based on the concept of social closure and homosocial reproduction as the white candidates would be viewed more favourable, whilst ethnic minorities would be excluded from the promotion through

the practices which ostracises them, whilst offering the hoarded senior and executive management positions to whites.

Although subjectivity in promotion usually places ethnic minorities at a disadvantage, it does point to the fact that ethnic minorities have to further distinguish themselves from whites to be considered for top positions in management (Collins, 1997b). This means that potentially ethnic minorities' credentials have to be much higher than their white colleagues, and their accomplishments far greater. As noted by Solhekol (2008) many institutions seem unwilling to promote an ethnic minority director unless that person has excelled. The participants felt that the subjective promotion criterion was a disguised ploy to eliminate ethnic minorities from serious consideration for management positions (Kalev, 2009). The participants perceived this as a continuation of the racist attitude that permeates management positions. Ethnic minority managers face setbacks because of their race as directors are chosen from a fairly small pool of white candidates (Erhardt, Werbel, and Shrader, 2003).

5.7 Exclusionary practices

The present research on ethnic minorities in DWP endorses the proposition in the literature that discrimination may take the form of a social closure. The participants reveal the subjectivity and covert discrimination in the selection procedure, confirming the existence of the invisible barriers, which excludes ethnic minorities when seeking promotion. Most of the participants concurred that they are excluded from being promoted to senior management positions even though they are academically and professional qualified to do the jobs, they still missed out on being promoted on account of their race. Yet research suggests that Britain's minority ethnic communities are often better educated than their white counterparts (Kalra *et al.*, 2009).

Rather than viewing social closure from the human capital deficit model which presumes that the low number of ethnic minorities in senior-level positions is due to a lack of job relevant qualifications among job applicants. The findings of this research show that this is not the case. Unseen and unbreakable barriers keep them from rising to the upper rungs of the corporate ladder, despite of their qualifications and achievements (Pinkett *et al.*, 2010; Eagly *et al.*, 2007; Cotter *et al.*, 2001). This contradicts with a study by Daley (1997) which indicated that ethnic minorities are

much more dependent upon formal, objective factors such as education, prior experience and performance ratings for their career success than white colleagues.

The current findings suggest the existence of exclusionary practices on the part of white decision makers towards ethnic minorities seeking promotion to senior or executive management positions. According to (Elliot *et al.*, 2004) the presence of social closure precludes individuals not embodying the typical characteristics of those employed within senior or executive management positions from receiving the same organisational rewards, outcomes and experiences as individuals who embody whiteness and are recipients the reserved high status and high power positions within the organisation (Kaufman, 2002; Maume, 1999). It has been noted that these practices appear deliberate, and produce and perpetuate advantages for the whites, and opportunities are closed to ethnic minorities (Tomaskovic-Devey *et al.*, 2007). This has been claimed in the participants' stories as they stated that they were continually bypassed for promotion whilst, whites of similar or less qualifications, were promoted. The research findings indicate that even when ethnic minorities were reported to be more competent than their white counterparts, they still were perceived to be less prototypic leaders than were whites. Overall, the findings corroborate past research findings (Chung-Herrera *et al.*, 2005; Rosette *et al.*, 2008) and suggest that ethnic minorities are less prototypical leaders than are whites, regardless of perceptions of qualifications and competence.

The participants felt that ethnic minorities were kept away from jobs which could help them to develop into senior or executive management positions and instead were channelled into jobs which lead to dead-end and occupational niches that were in decline or that did not lead to advancement (Kalev, 2009; Greanhaus *et al.*, 1990). As a result they stagnate due to replicated bias within the workforce, and "those not fitting the desired mould are excluded, resulting in a preconscious form of discrimination" (Newman, 1994, p.407). Consequently, powerful and prestigious jobs with career growth opportunities and managerial jobs, in particular are more likely to be filled by whites (Collin, 1997). Researchers acknowledged this form of social closure as a barrier and impediment to the advancement for ethnic minorities in the workplace (e.g. Tomaskovic-Devey *et al.*, 2007; 1993; Smith, 2005; Elliot *et al.*, 2004, 2001; Baldi *et al.*, 1997).

It was noted however that social closure did not affect all the ethnic minorities as some of them endured self-imposed social closure by weighing up the benefits of gaining promotion against their work life balance. As a result not every participant who was interviewed was disadvantaged by social closure as it was personal choice to seek promotion or not.

5.9 It's who you know, not what you know

The participants testified that they were hampered by lack of access to social networks in a promotion system predicated by the notion of 'it's not what you know but who you know' that determines career progression (Huffman and Torres, 2002; Blair, 2001; Landry, 1987). The participants expressed that they failed to progress into senior or executive positions, because of homosocial reproduction and social closure. Workplace race segregation separates whites into positions of greater workplace power and authority than ethnic minorities (Smith 2002). As a result, whites have greater access to influential co-workers and are better able to mobilise decision-making networks at work than ethnic minorities. Connections to influential co-workers serve one especially well post-hire because ties to those in power can help a worker avoid bureaucratic red tape, connect a worker to high-level people within the company, and help a worker gain recognition and promotion (McGuire 2000). As Burt (2000, p.347) argues, "people who do better are somehow better connected" and better connected people enjoy higher returns (Feeney and Bozeman, 2008; Mouw, 2003).) The more contacts that people establish at higher organizational levels, the more promotions they gain from career sponsorship (Seibert, Kraimer and Liden, 2001). Beattie (2011, p.6) cited the Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg saying, "the top job market was rigged in favour of the privileged because of the system based on who you know and preferential treatment of acquaintances at the golf or tennis clubs." This was reiterated by the participants that their handicap to promotion had been not being able to play golf and tennis. Scholars note that there is no better place in the world to conduct business than on a golf course (Arthur, Del Campo and van Buren III, 2011; Seward, 2009). A 2006 survey conducted for Golf Digest magazine found that 71 per cent of Fortune 1000 chief executive officers reported doing business with someone they met on the golf course. Golf has been referred to as the "martini lunch of the modern workforce, the buoyant venue where business gets done" (Sens, 2009, p. 1). As a result the

participants considered their handicap to playing golf as a barrier to their career advancement.

Whites have greater access than ethnic minorities to networks that fuel mentorship ties with superordinate whites who then sponsor people like them through homosocial reproduction for promotion (Smith, 2005). Previous research has found that the more contacts an individual has established at higher organisational levels, the more promotions he or she gains from career sponsorship (Mott *et al.*, 2007; Seibert *et al.*, 2001). Accumulating social capital is essential to managerial advancement as human capital (Tymon and Stumpf, 2003; Eagly *et al.*, 2007) and arguably more so in advancing to senior management positions (Metz and Tharenou, 2001; Singh and Vinnicombe, 2002). At higher management levels, decision makers rely on sponsors to provide them with information on promotion candidates (Burt, 1998). This illustrates how subjective measures may overtake the importance of objective ones when deciding on senior positions. Managers with more social capital get higher returns on their human capital because they are positioned to identify and develop more rewarding opportunities (Burt, 2005).

The participants acknowledged the existence of exclusionary practices whereby whites by virtue of being prototypical were reported to be assisted to get to the earmarked positions which are specifically reserved by the gatekeepers. Ethnic minorities, by virtue of not being in a network, were excluded from essential information which might assist in their career advancement. Access to information can be an impediment for ethnic minorities' attempts to gain entry into "good jobs" information about jobs passes through racialised social networks (Green, Tigges, and Diaz 1999). Strong ties bind people who are in similar work situations where information tends to be common to the members (Coleman, 2010). In this way, the flow of job information is hypothesized to serve as a mechanism in the reproduction of existing racial inequality (McDonald, Lin and Ao, 2009). Whites in the network were afforded the opportunities to move up the corporate ladder, as "networks help workers gain skills, acquire legitimacy, and climb promotional ladders" (Kauffman, 2002, p. 368), as one participant said if you are connected there are only 'two degrees' of separation. An excellent illustration was a story told by one of the participants to this effect when it took, only a telephone call by a senior white manager, to another white manager who in turn offered the participant a secondment

opportunity bypassing the recruitment and selection procedures, which the participant would not have obtained with the help of the white 'connection'. This example elucidates how exclusion from the social networks results in information isolation, as one of the main barriers that blocks the career advancement for ethnic minorities (Gray *et al.*, 2008; Kandola, 2004; Ibarra, 1993). Networks, as Granovetter (1985, p.491) emphasised, "penetrate irregularly and in different degrees." Of the same vein, Brown (2010) found that ethnic minorities lack the personal connections and access to informal networks that are often necessary to navigate an organisation's culture and advance their careers.

Duderstadt (2002) believes that the absence of ethnic minorities in leadership positions is because whites who have the power are not about to share it with anybody else. The participants are of the view that whites use their social networks to put their proverbial 'foot in the door,' which creates a barrier for ethnic minority candidates applying for the same position. Since white's social networks tend to be homologous, or mirror the individual's broad characteristics, race further creates and maintains an increasingly restrictive network for ethnic minorities (Feeney *et al.*, 2008).

The participants stated that there was no formal mentoring programme in the organisation. Ethnic minorities felt that they struggled to get access to same race mentors due to their scarcity and in most cases they were told by white senior managers to seek ethnic minority mentors who scarce in the organisation. "Social networks are segregated by race and gender, access to these social capital resources tends to be greater for white men than for minorities", (McDonald and Day, 2011, p.1). As a result few ethnic minorities had mentors in DWP and most did not have mentors, due to failure in finding a same race mentor. Similarly Bygren, (2010, p.6) said, "networks are segregated by ethnicity, it is relatively safe to say that recruitment through informal contacts tend to sort ethnic minorities into lower jobs." Ethnic minorities in this study claimed to be found in same race networks which are weak and which do not provide sponsorship as the mentors are not influential (Catanzarite, 2002). Although same -race networks tend to provide psychological support for both ethnic minorities and white managers, such networks are more influential in career support and the promotion chances of whites than ethnic minorities (Thomas, 1990; Ibarra, 1995). Ethnic-minority social networks may be

ineffective in placing members in high-end jobs because there are fewer high-status contacts in the network (Browne *et al.*, 2001; Catanzarite, 2002; Kmec, 2003; McGuire, 2000). Holding high-ranking positions provides employees with credibility and status, which enhances their influence over network members, helping them to get what they want (Kanter, 1977). For instance, high-status employees have greater access to, and control over, corporate resources than do low-status employees (Burt, 2005). Consequently, high-status network members can facilitate employees' mobility, advocate for employees in controversial situations, and help employees bypass the corporate hierarchy (Marsden, 2005). In DWP ethnic minorities were found in weak tie networks which lacked sponsorship into the higher echelons of the organisation, thus ethnic minorities believed they had to work harder than their white counterparts in order to gain promotion.

To reinforce the importance of networks in DWP, one of the participants stated that 'once a job hits the RM (Resource Management), (is an electronic system used by DWP to advertise internal vacancies) your application is too late'. The job already has a name attached." This was prompted by the promotion of whites and in most cases the participants expressed situations where preferred candidates were known to the recruiting managers before the interviews and were offered the jobs.

Summary

It is evident from the present findings that there is racial inequality in DWP at senior management positions as all the participants have described the DWP executive management team to be predominately white, with a high representation of ethnic minorities at the lower and middle echelons of the organisation. The participants were of the perception that once they had been recruited into organisation, their careers in many instances have stalled at lower and middle management positions of the organisation. They have in essence bumped up against impermeable and invisible barriers owing to their race, as they are excluded and bypassed, when less experienced and qualified whites are promoted. White is regarded as a leadership trait required to succeed in senior and executive management positions.

Using the integrative approach of social closure and homosocial reproduction theories it has come to light as shown by Figure 2 that ethnic minorities are denied promotion and have to follow a different path to promotion because of their race, as

they are atypical of the white leadership trait. Ethnic minorities have expressed that they endure an excess of disadvantages because of their race as they have to follow different routes in order to gain promotion. At the same time, whites are protected from competing with ethnic minorities for promotion through social closure and homosocial reproduction where their mentors act as sponsors and by virtue of like attracting like, white leaders promote people like them, thus fast tracking them into promotion.

Ethnic minorities were perceived to have a lack of 'fit', hence they were excluded from senior or executive management positions. In order to gain promotion ethnic minorities engaged in contest mobility where they have to prove themselves, and have to be more qualified and work two or three times harder as white counterparts to get ahead (Pinkett *et al.*, 2010; Mackay *et al.*, 2006; Benjamin, 1991; MacLachlan, 1996). It is only through the contest model, that ethnic minorities gain promotion as they lack role models and mentors of similar race. However their human capital was not always considered, instead it was 'who you know' and the importance of their networks which helped promotion. The research has shown that the low representation of ethnic minorities is due to the guarding of the homogeneity at the apex of DWP, which activates social closure and homosocial reproduction therefore, selecting people who are similar to themselves and excluding ethnic minorities by virtue of being dissimilar (Huffman *et al.*, 2002). The race of the senior and executive managers substantially influenced the race of those hired into senior and executive management positions. After all, 98% of the executive are whites, and thus, pro-similarity bias is likely to be even more prevalent. There is considerable support for this latter point. For instance, a participant in the study noted, 'whites manager promote whites because the vast majority of senior and executive managers are white'.

The next chapter presents the conclusion, limitations of the research and presents practical implications for the organisation and strategies for ethnic minorities to scale the corporate ladder into the executive suite. Future research which might be carried out as a result of this study is outlined.

Chapter 6

6.1 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter is to bring the research to a close by reviewing its contributions and common themes. This chapter highlights the limitations of the research and focuses on the implications for DWP and recommendations for ethnic minorities. The chapter also identifies considerations for future research.

The research applied an integrative approach to understand if being white was a leadership trait which had resulted in ethnic minorities in DWP being underrepresented in senior and executive management positions. The utilisation of homosocial reproduction and social closure provided sufficient evidence to support the conceptual model in *Figure 2* below, as it implicitly showed that ethnic minorities and whites are sorted into different career tracks when seeking promotion by virtue of their race. It can be concluded that as per the perceptions of the participants, that race is a leadership trait, specifically being white.

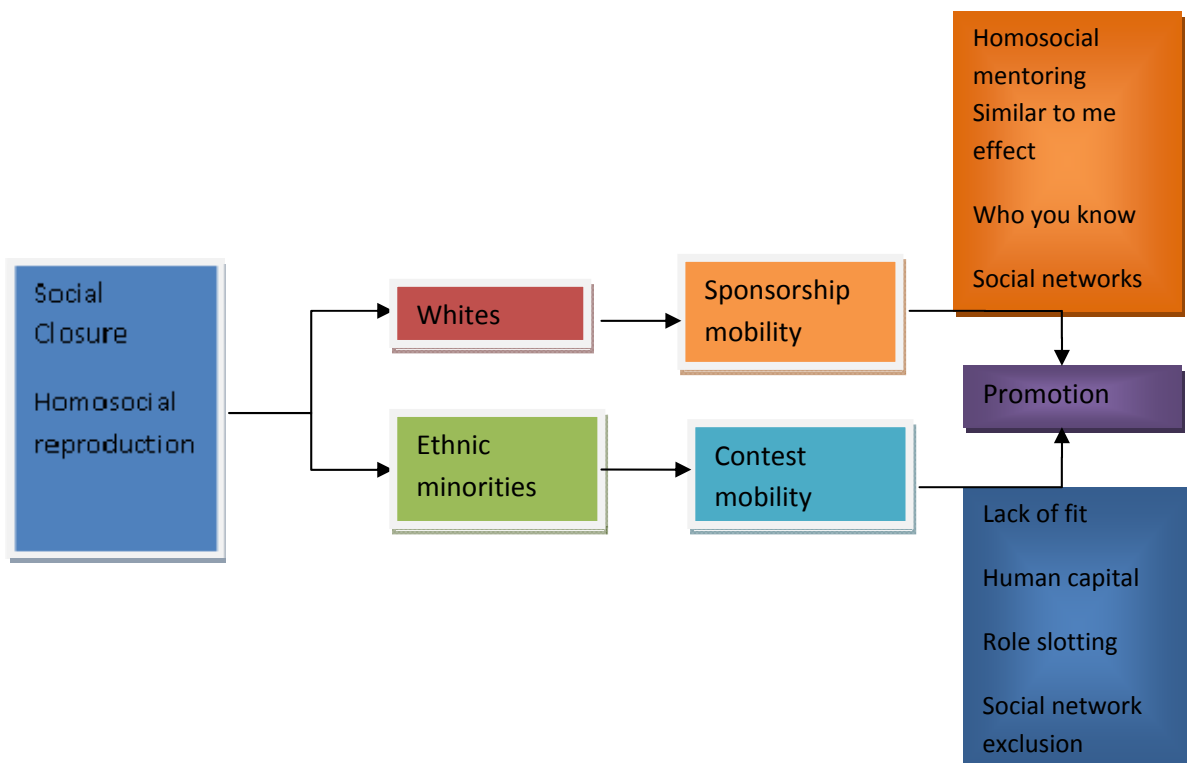


Figure 2: Conceptual model for the promotion process for ethnic minorities and whites.

The low representation of ethnic minorities at the higher echelons of the organisation as explained by the model shows that social and racial homophily is of essence in order to gain promotion. The top managers who are mentors to whites sponsor them, whilst ethnic minorities do not have mentors of a similar race due to their scarcity. Instead they have used contest mobility to attain promotion in the organisation as they are excluded from social networks which are rich with vital information on career advancement. Ethnic minorities are also stereotyped negatively such that they are not viewed as leadership material, hence they have to work hard to prove their competency before they can be promoted, through contest mobility (Pinkett *et al.*, 2010). One of the primary determinants of being chosen as a protégé is the perceived similarity to the mentor (Hu *et al.*, 2008). This works to the distinct disadvantage of ethnic minorities because they are disproportionately fewer prospective mentors at their disposal than for their white counterparts. Moreover, even when they are able to establish developmental relationships with demographically dissimilar mentors, the quantity and quality of mentoring received often pales in comparison to that in demographically similar relationships (Ortiz-Walters and Gilson, 2005).

Human capital credentials and 'what you are know' (experience and skills) as tools to gain promotion are not as effective as 'who you know' and the 'similar to me effect' in career development. Whites are fast tracked through the sponsorship model, which is enhanced by the cloning of the white, by white sponsors at the apex of the organisation who promote people similar to them. Ethnic minorities have to be promoted through the contest model as the path to promotion is marred with a lack of sponsorship and by not meeting the white leadership trait. As a result they are excluded and get promoted after hard work, determination and proving themselves. The model depicts how the two theories entwined create a multiplicity of penalties for ethnic minorities when trying to progress in DWP.

The participants' stories confirm that vertical racial segregation appears quite tenacious in character, despite the increase in the number of ethnic minorities joining the organisation and but are still stagnating at the lower levels of the organisation (Aver, 2010, Pinkett *et al.*, 2010; Kalra *et al.*, 2009). The organisation lacks a mirror reflection as it is not representative of the people in the organisation at senior and executive management positions, as it provides a stark contrast from the base to the

snowy summit (Karla, 2009; Carvel, 2003). Ethnic minorities do not fit the organisation's white trait of leadership (Rosette *et al.*, 2008) as a result of the similar to me effect, they are excluded from the 'golden circle' through social closure (Tomaskovic-Devey *et al.*, 2007; Roscigno *et al.*, 2007), whilst whites advance through homosocial reproduction and social closure where the elite whites replicate themselves at the top as they promote others like them, thus facing an enduring 'ethnic penalty' (Healy *et al.*, 2006).

This research pushes the literature forward on understanding how ethnic minorities are not in senior and executive management positions due to social closure and homosocial reproduction and explains how race as a leadership trait affects their promotability. The research has shown that ethnic minorities perceived that the acquisition of human capital leads to career success (Pinkett *et al.*, 2010; Tang, 1997). Baruch (2004, p. 91) maintains that "human capital is perhaps the single most important factor in determining whether a person will obtain a managerial position". Pinkett *et al.* (2010) supports the view as they said human capital was the gospel truth a deeply rooted belief for the success for ethnic minorities. Many individuals assume that sheer hard work and the accumulation of human capital (based on an assumption of neutral principles of merit) is critical for their career progression (Author, 2008). Human capital is necessary for success (Pinkett *et al.*, 2010; Tharenou, 1997; Metz *et al.*, 2001), but Burt (1998) and Woolcock (1998) suggest that it is useless without the social capital.

The accumulated human capital has failed to assist ethnic minorities, as they have reported that they have failed to gain promotion despite having the required skills and experience for the jobs. They have stated that 'it's not what you know but who you know' that determines promotion success and meritocracy does not exist. The participants expressed it as challenge, as society tells us that we will be rewarded for being the best, but sometimes when we are the best, another set of rules based on nepotism, cronyism or some arbitrary criteria seems to apply. Qualifications are no longer the route to success and because of social closure and homosocial reproduction, ethnic minorities have failed to progress beyond middle management grades. Pinkett *et al.*, (2010, p.XVI) confirmed that ethnic minorities have a harder time than whites, including those with degrees from respected universities, when they said, "their degrees will mean little". Audit studies and experiments in which

pairs of ethnic minorities and white workers who have equivalent qualifications apply for the same jobs, found that ethnic minorities are less likely to receive job offers than their white counterparts (Kaas *et al.*, 2010; Hooker *et al.*, 2008; Carlsson *et al.*, 2007; Bertrand and Mullainathan, 2004). Audit studies found that employers are less likely to offer jobs to ethnic minorities (Darity and Mason, 1998), thus the audit studies indicate that ethnic minorities face disadvantages due to their race (Kim, 2008).

In some cases ethnic minorities have left the organisation in search of promotion in other government departments. Not only does this potentially lead to a high turnover of ethnic minorities in DWP, it will also fail to attract ethnic minorities into the organisation, (Simard, 2009) because when a person chooses which organisation to work for, he or she will, for example, consider both the demographic make-up of the organisation as a whole as well as that of the top management team (Stafsudd, 2006). Being a public organisation, funded by public money, it has to be a leader in the field of equality and diversity, by ensuring that it reflects both the society and its workforce at senior and executive management level (Kalra *et al.*, 2009).

This research provides compelling accounts of differential treatment, overall exclusion and isolation in the workplace, and career advancement not commensurate with their knowledge, skills, and abilities (Collins, 1997a). Ethnic minorities felt that they are restricted from gaining access to high levels of power in the workplace because they are segregated into jobs, which deviates them from the executive suite, in most cases they perform jobs which deal with community relations or managing other ethnic minorities (Pinkett *et al.*, 2010; Kalev, 2009; Simon, 2008; Thomas, 2001). As a result it becomes difficult for them to compete for senior or executive management positions because they cannot showcase their performance as they have not been offered challenging opportunities which prepare them for top management positions.

6.2 Significance of the research

The present research has added to our understanding of racial inequality in management as it has documented that there are clear racial differences in the promotion of ethnic minorities and whites, as claimed by the participants. The fact that the research has reported that differences exist between ethnic minorities and

white candidates with similar credentials when seeking promotion raises several questions regarding the limitations of previous single approaches to research on race and promotion to the upper echelons of the organisation.

In this regard, the research advances our understanding of the upward mobility issues of ethnic minorities by redefining the way previous research has conceptualised racial inequality in management. This highlights how social and racial homophily contribute to the differences in upward mobility for whites and those who share the same race and involvement in networks is likely to lead to greater promotion opportunities.

In this research, an integrated theoretical model was used to assess racial inequality in management within DWP. This made use of social closure and homosocial reproduction. The findings of this research demonstrate the usefulness of utilising an integrated conceptual framework to assess the differences in the upward mobility process among the ethnic minorities and whites in the organisation. While much of this research's findings are consistent with both theoretical and empirical literature on racial inequality in the workplace, the overall findings of this study challenge the explanatory power of any single theory. The research findings suggest that using an integrative approach is more useful in understanding the underlying mechanisms involved in the selection and promotion process.

This study adds to the research on discrimination by illustrating how theories of discrimination, specifically social closure and homosocial reproduction, can be applied to the study of access to different authority levels within an organisation and the consequent influence on mobility in the workplace.

6.3 Limitations of the Study

The research focus was on gaining a deeper understanding of how race as a leadership trait, specifically being white was a trait of leadership in DWP. The research was carried out in one government department and the private sector was not included, and only 20 ethnic minority employees in DWP in the SEO to SCS grades were studied. Although the generalisability of the findings to other sectors may be limited the findings are expected to be relevant to other government departments, both nationally and internationally. The study does not claim to

homogenise the experiences of ethnic minorities, but it does seek to identify trends that are experienced, even though the antecedents to those experiences may differ. Even though the sample size of (n = 20) participants seemed small this is mitigated by the qualitative approach, which is concerned more with gaining an understanding of the issues, rather than identifying how many ethnic minorities experience them. The study still offers useful insights into the experiences ethnic minorities' career advancement, as it achieved theme saturation during the collection of data.

This research does not speak for all ethnic minority managers or white employees in the public sector, however, it is representative of challenges that ethnic minorities have encountered in their proposition to climb the corporate ladder by virtue of not being white. The research was not designed to be a comparative analysis between whites and ethnic minorities but instead the researcher wanted to understand through the experiences of ethnic minorities, how race as a leadership trait had affected their promotion to reach the apex of the organisation.

As an insider and an ethnic minority researcher, the participants may not have provided sufficient information as they assumed that the researcher would have experienced similar experiences, by virtue of sharing the same ethnicity. The sensitiveness of the racial issues, especially examining racial inequality in management meant that some of the participants were reluctant to take part even though they had expressed an initial interest in the research, withdrawing their involvement before the data collection.

In spite of the attempt to eliminate these limitations of the interview-based research, it is hard to claim that the research method of this study is free of shortcomings. However, it should be made clear that this is a qualitative not a quantitative study and it should be seen within this context. Thus, no limitations associated with quantitative research methods should be seen in any part of this study. In interpretive research the burden of transferability is on the reader to determine the degree of similarity between the study site and the receiving context (Mertens, 1998). Patton (2002) also maintains that pragmatic validation of qualitative research means that the perspective presented is judged by its relevance to and use by those to whom it is presented. This means that the validation of findings is left in the hands of the reader or those who use the findings to judge or decide whether the findings

can fit into another context. These readers are advised to play a different role than those reviewing quantitative researches, since the criteria for assessing validity in qualitative research differ. Thus Cantrell (1998) advises the consumers of research to wear appropriate goggles, interpretive goggles for interpretive studies and positivist ones for positivist studies. Cantrell further states that wearing positivist goggles to assess the rigour of an interpretive study leads to inappropriate questions concerning, for example sample size, generalisability and objectivity.

6.4 Practical implications for DWP

Despite these methodological limitations, the study has important implications for practice as the findings have indicated that equally qualified ethnic minorities increasingly disadvantaged with regard to promotions due to their race. The findings from this research are intended to assist DWP eliminate potential blind spots where the existence of racial inequality in senior and executive management positions is not recognised, with respect to promoting ethnic minorities to the upper echelons of the organisation.

The researcher calls for a rethink in DWP, not merely to flag up how problematic the current situation is, but to start a process for improving it. The Permanent Secretary and the Executive Team need to walk into their boardrooms, take a look around, and ask themselves: 'Does this represent in any way, shape or form what I see around, when I am walking in the offices and the streets every day?' Then they need to remedy the prevailing racial inequality in management. DWP has a responsibility as the largest government department with a large ethnic minority workforce to act as a role model by providing racial equality in management. The underrepresentation of ethnic minorities at the top would suggest that discriminatory practices that are occurring in DWP need to be tackled.

The researcher hopes the research findings will create a better understanding of the disparity that persists between whites and ethnic minorities in senior and executive management positions. The research creates an awareness of the bias, in-group favouritism and recognises that as stated by the participants white managers make biased decisions based upon race, as a result ethnic minorities congregate at the lower levels of the organisation whilst the top is swarmed by white people. To ignore it and say this does not happen is a problem.

At best there is an acknowledgement of the limited numbers of ethnic minorities at senior management and executive level, but on the whole this is rationalised away as a reflection of the organisation and its inability to attract ethnic minorities into senior positions within the organisation. Until DWP acknowledges the bias that currently exists against ethnic minorities at the most senior level, the opportunities for ethnic minorities will remain limited. The initial step is to become aware of the bias, to recognise that leaders make biased decisions based upon race.

The organisations should provide a range of career paths, uncorrelated by race, that lead to the executive suite as depicted in Figure 2 that ethnic minorities and whites follow different process to promotion by virtue of their race, white are sponsored through homosocial mentors. Due to lack of sponsorship ethnic minorities are reported to have been excluded by homosocial reproduction and social closure processes as claim to have been side-lined into dead-end jobs, which do not provide development skills required to succeed at senior and executive management positions. The organisation needs to recognise that leadership should not be racialised as both whites and ethnic minorities are capable leaders with the correct cultivation. DWP should ensure that people are promoted on merit, not on racial grounds, as Figure 2 has shown and reported by the participants that white privilege puts them at a disadvantage, as whites have mentors, who sponsor them through the similar to me effect. By virtue of not being white ethnic minorities are not seen to fit the management mould such that they are ostracised and excluded from the social network which are rich with information on career advancement. Being white as a leadership trait should be neutralised, so that race will be not be issue when it comes to deciding who to promote, but it's the best candidate who should be offered the job.

Organisational leaders must recognise that the responsibility for achieving a diverse workforce rests with board members, executive team and senior managers as the strategic drivers of the organisation. Positive policies and practices should be enacted to change the attitudes and behaviours of majority and minority decision makers, board members, team leaders, subordinates, and co-workers if meaningful changes that support diversity are to be made and sustained. The research recommends positive action measures to be used to counteract the effects of past discrimination so that ethnic minorities have equal opportunities to achieve their

potential. This is in line with The Equality Act, (2010) section 104 and 105, which states 'positive action' measures can be used by organisations where those with a "protected characteristic" (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation), have experienced some sort of disadvantage because of that characteristic, have particular needs linked to that characteristic or are disproportionately underrepresented in a particular activity. The use of positive measures would ensure that ethnic minorities are given an opportunity to be promoted not as a token, but based on their competencies.

Managing a diverse workforce is not a transient phenomenon, it is today's reality, and it is here to stay, however from the stories told by the participants, it seems like it is not a high priority for managers at DWP, it is not even in the backburner, but in the cupboard without a label. DWP need to recognise that, homogeneous societies have become heterogeneous, and this trend is irreversible, as ethnic minorities constitute 15% of the UK population (Siva, 2009) and some cities like London has 36% ethnic minorities, Leicester has 36%, Birmingham has 30% and Bradford has 29% (Wadsworth *et al.*, 2010). DWP has offices in these cities, but some of them have less than 4 % ethnic minorities in their senior management teams (Bentford, 2009; Muskwe, 2009). The problems of managing today's diverse workforce, however, do not stem from the heterogeneity of the workforce itself but from the unfortunate inability of corporate managers to fully comprehend its dynamics, divest themselves of their personal prejudicial attitudes, and creatively unleash the potential embedded in a multicultural workforce. Top management must be committed to recognising and being cognisant of how the process of discrimination and favour works in order to achieve a diverse workforce. The business case for diversity supports the contention that unless the Permanent Secretary shows strong public support for diversity as being critical to the strategic business goals of the organisation, and without the Permanent Secretary holding senior executives accountable for using diversity in every line of business, a diversity program will not be successful.

The researcher advocates for the department to meet the targets set for ethnic minorities in senior and executive management or risk losing their performance bonus, this was a strategy used in 2005 by Sir Gus O'Donnell, Cabinet Secretary. The strategy resulted in ethnic minorities being promoted to senior and executive

management positions, even though the increase was insignificant, as the disparity continues and the representation lacks a mirror reflection. The number of ethnic minorities in senior management roles in the civil service rose from 2.3% in 2005 to 4.6% (Stanley, 2010), the figure doubled in 5 years, but it is still not reflective as ethnic minorities make up 12% of civil servants. The lack of accountability on the Chief Executive Officers and the Permanent Secretary makes it difficult for the promotion of ethnic minorities as diversity is seen as 'another' piece of work by many which is not prioritised. There is a need to have racial diversity as part of their performance targets in order to enforce a shift in the numbers of ethnic minorities promoted into senior and executive management positions.

It is imperative that a review of the equality and diversity policies on the recruitment and selection be carried out as a means of creating top management which is inclusive and reflective of the workforce and the people DWP serves. From the research findings it has come to light that ethnic minorities are promoted through contest mobility, at the same time whites are promoted through sponsorship mobility. Ethnic minorities are increasing in numbers within the organisation and the same should be true at the top or else there will be an exodus to organisations that embrace the difference and celebrate it. If this is not addressed DWP will alienate itself from ethnic minority talent and it will be worse off, as it will lose its competitive advantage by losing valuable human resources. Prolonged engagement in this pattern could ultimately compel these ethnic minorities to stop seeking these senior and executive management positions in the organisation. Having a diverse senior or executive management team will act as an enticement for people who want to join the organisation as they will make it an 'employer of choice' as they can associate themselves with the people at the top and this becomes an invitation to join DWP. A lack of ethnic minorities across all job roles would send a message that they are a 'white organisation' and ethnic minorities would therefore be hesitant to join. The unequal treatment on the grounds of ethnic origin or race does not only harm those who face discrimination themselves, it also endangers social cohesion and is unanimously considered ineffective and a waste of resources in a meritocratic and competitive economic system.

As noted from the research, ethnic minorities would benefit from mentoring schemes, which provides sponsorship for whites, thus enhancing ascension to the apex of the

organisation. From a practical standpoint, the research findings suggest that organisations need to pay closer attention to their promotional practices if they hope to provide a non-discriminatory environment where both whites and ethnic minorities have equal chances of gaining promotions and rising in the management ranks. The organisation need to consider is how their ethnic minority managers are being mentored relative to white employees, and the dynamics that occur when lower level managers interact with top managers. The findings suggest that there is no mentoring programme in place. Since there is no formal mentoring scheme in the organisation, when seeking for mentors ethnic minorities have been told to seek same race mentors, who are few and oversubscribed. The participants have expressed that they are starved of information and advice on how to climb the corporate ladder, due to their weak networks which do not constitute people from the executive team. DWP should develop a mentoring scheme aimed at preparing ethnic minority employees for leadership roles. Ethnic minorities should be paired with mentors from the senior or executive management positions, all of who could be working at director-general level to assist them in gaining promotion to the higher grades within the organisation.

By having a mentoring programme the organisation will ensure that all employees are treated with equality and are provided with sufficient information, for career advancement. Both whites and ethnic minorities will be in the same social networks and have prototypical mentors, such the problems demonstrated by the Figure 2 of white having mentors who sponsor them for promotion, whilst ethnic minorities without mentors have to work hard to earn promotion, will continue as different routes to promotion will still be in existence.

DWP senior and executive managers should engage in reverse mentoring, where they are mentored by ethnic minorities in the middle management positions so that they get to understand the issues faced by ethnic minorities in their proposition to senior and executive management positions. This will give them insight into where the organisation is failing ethnic minorities and how it can assist them to be on an equal footing with the white counterparts. Mentoring would reduce the impact of social closure and homosocial reproduction as the people in the organisation would be viewed as equals, thus reducing exclusionary practices.

The research findings call into question the efficacy of current recruitment and selection practices for senior or executive management positions within the organisation since most final decisions are made by whites in senior and executive management positions. There is a danger that they will promote whites and the apex of the organisation will always be 'snowy', unrepresentative of the people in the organisation. As individuals within these positions are predominately white, they might be inclined to select someone like themselves and someone who fits the image for whom the position is reserved. These biases must be acknowledged if they are to be corrected. Human Resource Department provide a " multi-stranded enforcement approach" (Woodhams *et al.*, 2007, p.575), as Human Resource Business Partners are performing strategic functions to the directorates, and this has resulted in the devolution of some of the HR functions. Line managers are responsible for recruiting, thus leaving more potential for discrimination as the managers may be inclined to promote those similar to them. This function should be centralised in order to ensure consistency in the recruitment and selection, and people would be promoted on merit, than on race or similar to me effect, this would ensure that the policies are equality proofed.

The organisation needs to identify ethnic minorities who are capable of being senior leaders and develop them, through talent management programmes which can be carried out without breaching the equality and diversity policies and practices. Figure 2 has shown that ethnic minorities are left to their own devices to use contest mobility to gain promotion, this needs to be harnessed by the organisation so that they are provided the correct guidance for them to reach the upper echelons of the organisation. The process should be transparent and still permissible under the Equality Act (2010), section 104 and 105 which uses positive measures to correct the under representation of ethnic minorities in senior and executive management positions. The identified future leaders should be fast tracked into established leadership development programs, as the current programmes, REACH and Realising Potential, being offered to ethnic minorities' are reported to facilitate the promotion of ethnic minorities. The researcher advocates for organisational sponsorship where DWP provide special assistance to talented ethnic minority employees in Executive Officers to SEO grades on developmental programme. The sponsored would be provided with an opportunity to learn about the business on six

monthly job rotations to perform various functions of the business from corporate functions such as finance, human resource, policy, strategy to operations management. This will enhance their skill sets with a great understanding of the business, as most of them claimed to have been slotted into roles which are deviant of business such that they would not be able to complete for promotion due to lack of understanding the business but deal with their own communities. After the placements jobs to be ring-fenced where the success participants of the programme are allowed to apply for promotion and be guaranteed promotion after completing the programme. It would be beneficial for ethnic minorities to be on a programme which guarantees promotion to the next grade after completion, as the current programmes are seen more as a 'tick box' exercise to satisfy the requirements of the single equality initiative. The REACH programme was reported to add no value, by the participants as it was viewed to be like any other development course.

6.5 Recommendations for individual ethnic minorities

6.5.1 Standing Out from the Crowd

Ethnic minorities must be vigilant about ensuring that stereotypes about their lack of competence, initiative, social skills, and integrity do not cloud others' perceptions of their strengths and capabilities. The participants have expressed that there are times when they are required to suppress their ethnic identity as it is a liability and have to play the white 'man' in order to succeed. Ethnic minorities should not act white, but amplify their ethnic identity as it represents a personal and strategic competitive advantage that no one can replicate. By standing out from the crowd, ethnic minorities can be appreciated and respected for what they bring to the table. As ethnic minorities gain visibility in DWP, it is critical that they always keep sight of their own career aspirations especially at critical occasions. By having clear outlined career paths ethnic minorities will not be channelled into jobs which side track them from achieving promotion. Whilst ethnic minorities seek to stand out from the crowd, they should perform at their best, deliver results, and seek opportunities that challenge self-actualisation. It is recognised that positive opportunities may not always be accompanied by promotion, but nevertheless builds a reputable portfolio to be used in future promotion boards.

6.5.2 Build social capital to increase visibility

Ethnic minorities need to expend as much energy in developing good relationships with individuals both within and outside their organisation who can have a positive influence on their careers. It is not always easy, particularly for those who are not extrovert, as for some participants the human capital has done little to open doors to senior management positions, but it has been 'who you know', which has prevailed over 'what you know' in the bid to get promotion. Through the stories told by the ethnic minorities, it has been learnt that one tactic that has aided whites immeasurably is having mentors who support and sponsor them when they are not in the room. If ethnic minorities have a mentor this will ensure that someone will stand up and make sure that others pay attention to their strengths and contributions, so that the burden of promoting themselves does not always fall on their shoulders.

The importance of mentors, sponsors, allies, and friends cannot be underestimated, this means that ethnic minorities should have supporters inside of the organisation at the top table, as well as a team of support ready on the outside. To penetrate the top positions in the organisation, ethnic minorities should target mentors at a grade or two above them, and even have multiple mentors. The mentor should not always be of the same race, but someone who is in a position of authority, organisationally higher, whom they can learn from. The mentor should have strong networks and act as corporate sponsor who can coach, counsel, give the right advice and act as a spokesperson. The research findings point to the critical role the leaders play in the career success of their subordinates, through sponsorship by the mentors. Rather than focusing solely on individual characteristics such as education, experience, and motivation as determinants of career success, the role of mentors should be recognised and individuals should be proactive in developing strong relationships with immediate superiors.

6.6 Future research

The findings suggest that a fruitful avenue of this study could be developed through future research. First, quantitative research methods could be used to explore on a wider scale the findings of this research and help to overcome the sensitivity of the topic being studied. Participants may feel more comfortable participating in quantitative research where their identity is not known unlike in the interviewing

process. Secondly the researcher has not attempted to review the research findings relating to specific ethnic minority groups. To address this deficiency research should be carried out to understand the barriers salient to individual ethnic minority groups in United Kingdom, as the barriers faced by Blacks might be different from Asians or people of mixed heritage and this research might have ignored their unique experiences.

Thirdly to understand if being white was a trait for leadership as reported by ethnic minorities in this research, a comparative analysis should be carried out with white participants to understand their experiences. Furthermore utilising qualitative inquiry, interviews involving white senior and executive managers should be conducted to understand their thoughts pertaining to racial inequality in management. It would also be useful to extend the research into a larger project involving other government departments or even the entire civil service, so that the deep of the problem can be comprehended and solutions developed at large scale.

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Appendix1: Interview Questions

1. *When did you join the Department for Work Pensions?*
2. *What grade are you?*
3. *How many times in the last five years have you applied for promotion and what was the outcome?*
4. *Do you consider your race to have hampered your opportunity to get promoted into the next grade?*

What makes you think that?

5. *Do you think if you had been white, you would have made it into senior or executive management at faster rate than the amount of time you have taken to reach your current grade?*
6. *How do you compare your promotion chances against your white counterparts?*
7. *Have you ever felt at any time in the past that your white colleagues are getting promoted faster than you because of your race or ethnicity?*
8. *From these pictures shown, can you please describe the ethnic composition of the senior and executive management teams?*
 - a. *What do you think is the cause of such homogeneity in the executive team?*
 - b. *Do you think the senior and executive management positions are reserved for whites as compared to ethnic minorities?*
9. *Are you a member of a social group and how useful is the network to your career advancement?*
 - a. *What is the ethnic composition of your social network?*
10. *Do you think if you were in a social network with whites that would help your career advancement?*
11. *How has the organisation and your colleagues affected your career advancement?*
12. *As an ethnic minority what do you see as the greatest challenge when seeking promotion within the organisation?*

13. *What advice would you give to other ethnic minorities who desire to reach leadership positions within the organisation?*

Appendix 2: Interview Transcript

Interview ID: NM009

14. When did you join the Department for Work Pensions?

19--

15. What grade are you?

G-

16. How many times in the last five years have you applied for promotion and what has been the outcome?

I can't give you an exact number because it's a big number, I have the details on RM, but I am not going to show you. On average I have made over five or more applications per year. The outcome has been I have remained here, I have not been success, I believe one day the door shall open and I will be let in. It's a matter of time, time will tell.

17. Do you consider your race to have hampered your opportunity to get promoted into the next grade?

Yes

What makes you think that?

Yes I attribute my current position to my race, it has impacted negatively on me, I can't do anything about it that's how God created me. If I had been white I could be at the top, but, I ain't white, am I? It's not exactly racism, but if you have a choice between two candidates with the same experience, you are more likely to hire someone who looks like you, talks like you, and you assume shares the same value system. Since most of the managers recruiting are white, this means there is a preference for white candidates. I don't really see this as a matter of prejudice against the ethnic minority candidate just a natural preference for the familiar over the foreign. In fact, I'd argue its human nature.

18. Do you think if you had been white, you would have made it into senior or executive management at faster rate than the amount of time you have taken to reach your current grade?

If I was white, I bet you, I will be up in the clouds, heading one of the business units, like I said I ain't white, that's why I am here in my current position, I'm not going anyway as I will be retiring soon [number of years given], it might

sound like I have eternity here but in those years left before my retirement, I will still be in the position or grade unless the cutbacks get me first. White is supremacy, it opens door, you our people say education opens doors, that's not the case here, it's who you know and the colour of your skin. If you have the required skin colour, white not this [pulling skin on the back of hand] and yours [pointing at me] you will not make it to the top. At time I thank God that I have made it this far as most of you, BMEs are processing benefits, making call backs and visitations, whilst we manage, but still I feel I could have done, but I do not fit the bill. I have been to interviews where I have come out feeling that I got the job, only to get a regret and lame feedback, the truth of the matter is, my skin colour, is not suitable for the roles above my grade, there is rationing taking place, only a certain number of BMEs can get, if one retires or leaves, that's when a BME moves up, it a numbers games, when question by the equality board or to make cosmetic window dressing on their equality schemes, but deep down they can do without BMEs, if no one was monitoring them.

19. Have you ever felt at any time in the past that your white colleagues are getting promoted faster than you because of your race or ethnicity?

In terms of performance, I have always done better than my white colleagues, but there is been evaluative bias of the performance appraisal, as white tend to appraise other whites better than BMEs, as a result you would find that there are more performance appraisal grievances which are carried for BMEs and in most cases they triumph as the managers would not have followed the correct process and at times they will argue that the work they have done is BAU [Business As Usual], because if they consider that evidence the BMEs would be getting box 1 instead of 3 and 4 which they have getting thank God there is no longer this boxes, even though subjective decisions are being made against BMEs, I can see you think I am not answering your question, I need you to understand where I am coming from. As far as your question is concerned about how I compare against my whites colleagues on promotion. I don't think you really what the answer as you know it, I am at a big disadvantage because of my race, such that whites I know have been promoted 3 or 4 times some 5 times whilst I have been promoted once or twice, that's how bad it is.

Why such a discrepancy, is it because you do not apply for promotion?

Believe it not, to get this job, I had been to eight interviews and several regrets, when I was about to give up that's when I got this job. You cannot ask why there has been the discrepancy, since you are doing the interview, I will tell you, and it's simple because I am not white, had I been I could be miles away from my current grade.

20. From these pictures, can you please describe the ethnic composition of the senior and executive management teams?

There are all white man and woman and one Asian. It does not baffle me that most of the executive teams and all senior managers are white. It is not representative, but it shows that they are the chosen race to lead the organisation and they replicate themselves at the top whilst ethnic minorities languish at the bottom of the organisation.

What do you think is the cause of such homogeneity in the executive team?

The people at the top promote those who are similar to them and they shout out those who are not similar to them. They will never bring a BME to these top positions unless the equality board is pressing them for diversity at the top, they will bring a token, I hope the CEO of [name of organisation given] is not a token, because if he is place holder, the top will always be white and there will never be any change. I know loads of BMEs who have been in the civil service, but left to start their own organisation, consultancy, because they felt that their skills and capabilities were being stifled not because they were not competent but because they were not white. Frustration of seeing similar people to the executives being promoted frustrated, made them. My own view is like attracts like is one of the spiritual laws of the universe. We attract individuals into our lives that mirror who we are. Those you feel drawn to reflect your inner self back at you, and you act as a mirror for them. Simply put, when you look at others, you will likely see what exists in you, therefore whites only at the top will only promote whites and leave BMEs at the base of the organisation as they do not share the same ethnicity.

Do you think there is in-group favouritism?

I have said before, it's the skin colour, they prefer people like them, if we had [ethnicity mentioned] people up I would be up with them, its simple favouritism they believe it's easier to deal with someone like them like dealing with you and me.

Do you think the senior and executive management positions are preserved for whites as compared to ethnic minorities?

Like you have stated the seats are marked white only, no BME to sit there. I will try to get promotion but, it's not easy, because I am not white. It's a white[man]' place and they help each other to get up.

21. Are you a member of a social group and how useful is the network to your career advancement?

I am a member of a 5 aside team, which is made up of people from this office, we play every Wednesday evenings. The network is not helpful to my career, but it provides social gratification. I am the senior person in the group, such that much of the people look up to me, for advice on their career, but I can only advice and signpost to pertinent areas, but I cannot pull any strings for them if that's what you meant. It's tough for BMEs because they look up to someone like me to hold their hands and lead them to upper grades in the organisation, but I can't, because they are some groups who are strong such that they can pull strings for their members, ours is a weak group.

What makes these groups strong and yours weak?

It's a race thing, whites are at the top, such that they group members get information on what happening in the organisation and on career advancement well before it reaches the rest of the organisation and also when they [whites] apply they will have been mentored and coached by people who are at the top, such that they are better equipped than our group, where the person the people look up to is also aspiring to get to the top, but is failing, it becomes difficulty to advice when you, yourself is struggling to move up. The group's strength is determined by the people in it. I had an opportunity to be mentored by [Grade given], when he had been an Appeal manager to my performance grievance meeting, he offered to matter me after he realised that I had been discriminated by my line manager, I told him that I wanted to leave the team, it was in the morning and in the afternoon, he asked to send my CV to [name given], who interviewed the following day and I was offered a second opportunity for 2 years soon after the interview. That's how powerful networks help. I cannot do the same for these guys and neither can another BME do that for me as I do not know anyone above me, to assist. Most of these whites went to the same school, come from the same neighbour and probably play golf together. It took [name give] a phone call to get me a job, after being stressed by my former line manager. It's who you know regardless of how qualified, but the people you know will always pull you up the corporate ladder.

22. Do you think if you were in a social network with whites that would help your career advancement?

I always kind of describe it as a 'good old boy network,' where someone knows somebody and there is more of an opportunity for a white person to receive a promotion than either an ethnic minority. I think that people are more comfortable when they are looking for someone to either work with or work for, they are going to be more likely to pick someone that they feel comfortable with. And I think sometimes that the good old boy network feels more comfortable with a white person than an ethnic minority.

23. As an ethnic minority what do you see as the greatest challenge when seeking promotion within the organisation?

As an ethnic minority, my greatest challenge is overcoming racism, Yeah, (laughs) *There is racism in the organisation, look at the executive team, they are mostly white, middle aged white men, its documented and recorded that half senior management teams are made up of white middle class, middle aged men not truly representative of the organisation. It does not mean that blacks are not competent but this is racism. Let's go back to basic human nature; I am more comfortable with someone who looks and sounds like me. Coming from a position of power, decision making, who they employ following what I just said will end up having a room full of white middle age men, because they are comfortable having people who look like them. Is that not so, you know it's true.*

24. What advice would you give to other ethnic minorities who desire to reach leadership positions within the organisation?

You have to work twice or thrice harder, in order to be at par with the whites. I have been on the organisational programmes designed to assist BMEs to move onto senior management, and there have not yielded anything for me, but I had to persevere and be determined, that's what I can only say to other ethnic minorities, you have to work harder than the white colleagues, be ambitious, persevere and be determined to get to the top, if you are not on a dead end as they are victims of role slotting, this is a practice of slotting ethnic minorities into positions that are not directly related to business lines, where senior managers are cultivated as result they remain at the bottom of the organisation, while whites peers are fast tracked early in their careers, thus enabling them to reach executive levels fairly quickly. I tell you it's very difficult to give advice on how BMEs can reach senior leadership positions, because many of the ethnic minorities who have overcome the barriers to success have encountered a whole new set of problems, some only manage to get promotion to senior management after leaving the organisation. I know a lot of BMEs who have been promoted through this way as organisation believe increasing their diversity at the top with people from outside, instead of developing from within. I am not advocating for people to leave the organisation, as people who join the organisation have found themselves faced with a hostile environment. At times promotion can be attributed to luck and not on skill and talent as with the whites.

- **Which programmes were these and what were the outcomes?**

I was on the Realising Potential, years ago and it did not yield any results for me, I had whites who were in my same team moving up, whilst I remained on

the same grade. I also took part in the REACH programme, but I have not moved an inch. I have always expected that these programmes would help me to move up, but they did not so I just had to work extra hard and I was rewarded for my hard work, its always difficult, that you have to prove yourself that you are competent whilst some (whites) do not have to prove themselves, it's a piece of cake, as they mates help them out.

- **You seem to be saying that the programmes have not assisted your career advancement?**

Don't get me wrong the programs were good, I did benefit 1 or 2 things which I learnt, but considering that I hold a masters degree nothing was new. It was more of a tick box situation for my line managers sending me to these programmes for ethnic minorities, however when it comes to line management assessment for promotion, the same people who have recommended you to go on development programmes, still view as someone who is not ready for promotion, but would recommend a white guy, whom I have coached to do the work. It's not about sending me to ethnic minority development programmes, but it's about changing the mindsets of the line managers and promotion board, that I have to be treatment the same with the white colleagues, rather than being discriminated because of my race and having to work hard and prove myself. Some people are born great and others have to fight for their greatness, I am one of those people who have to fight of his greatness, I have achieved what I have through hard and I will keep on working hard and that's what every BME out there should do.

Appendix 3: Invitation to the research participants

Ethnic minority volunteers wanted in the Band E/SEO to Senior Civil Service grades to help with research

My name is Never Muskwe. I am a doctoral student at Nottingham Trent University. As part of my studies I am inviting you to take part in an interview for my research study entitled: *An investigation into the existence of white leadership prototypicality in the Department for Work and Pensions: An ethnic minority perspective.*

I would be very pleased if you agreed to participate, however before you decide to grant me an interview, it is important that you understand the reason why this research is being carried out, and what your participation will involve.

Please take time to read the following information carefully. Please feel welcome to ask if anything is unclear or if you would like more information. My contact details are provided at the end.

Purpose of the study

For the study I will be concentrating on issues associated with a person's race and how this might directly or indirectly influence their ability to progress to the senior levels of the DWP.

The study will focus particularly on the barriers faced by ethnic minorities wanting to reach senior management positions and how diversity and equality policies might help or hinder their progress.

Research participation

Your participation is entirely voluntary. If you do decide to take part, you will be given a consent form and will be required to sign two copies of this, one for you to keep and the other will be kept by me.

If you decide to take part and subsequently change your mind, you will be free to withdraw at any time up to the stage when the data is analysed and written up. If you do decide to withdraw before the data is analysed and written up you will not be asked the reasons for this decision.

If you agree to take part, you will be interviewed face-to-face for about an hour by me. The interview will be arranged at a time convenient to yourself. You will be asked if you agree to the interview being audio-recorded. If you do not agree to this the researcher will take written notes ~~during the interview unless you agree you may still ask for the tape recorder to be turned off at any point during the interview.~~

X-Ref:

AP:

Rec'd: 10 February 2009

Circulation - Normal

Confidentiality

At no point will your identity, or indeed the identity of the business unit you work for be revealed to anyone. Taped interview data will be numerically coded in order to protect anonymity. Your name will not be recorded on any of the research notes that are made and kept as part of the research.

All notes, tape-recordings and any other materials will be kept in a secure storage. The research will be written up as an academic thesis. It will be stored in the archives at Nottingham Trent University and copy will be issued to DWP.

Further information

You can contact me on 0116 235 4164 (home), 07985 755308 (mobile) or [e-mail Never Muskwe](mailto:Never Muskwe) to sign up for the interview and if you have any questions. I will make every effort to get in touch with anyone who corresponds to me regarding this study, within a week of receiving the correspondence.

I am hoping to have completed the first phase of the interviews by July, and final phase by 30 October 2010.

Appendix 4 :Participant information

An investigation to understand why ethnic minorities in the Department for Work and Pensions are found at the middle and lower management, whilst the white dominate the senior and executive management positions: *An investigation into the existence of white leadership prototypicality in the Department for Work and Pensions: An ethnic minority perspective.*

Principal Researcher: Never Muskwe

never.muskwe@thepensionservice.gsi.gov.uk

Invitation

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Participation in the project is entirely voluntary. Before you decide to grant me an interview, it is important that you understand the reason why this research is being carried out, and what your participation will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Please feel welcome to ask if anything is unclear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Thank you for reading this.

What is the purpose of the study?

The researcher proposes that race, specifically “being white,” may be a prototypical attribute of leadership best explained by homosocial production and social closure theories. This research aims to establish how ethnic minorities’ race affects their career advancement and examine the influence of homosocial reproduction and the effect of social closure by linking the racial composition of the senior and executive management with the prospect of an ethnic minority receiving promotion.

The aims of the project are to understand and explore the following questions:

10. Is being white a leadership prototype for senior and executive management positions within the organisation?
11. How race is affected by the sponsorship and contest mobility in the promotion of ethnic minorities into senior or executive management positions?

12. Are whites replicating themselves at the top of the organisation, whilst excluding ethnic minorities from senior or executive management positions?

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. Your participation is entirely voluntary. If you do decide to take part, you will be given a copy of this information sheet to keep. You will also be asked to sign two copies of a consent form, one of these will be for you to keep and the other will be kept by the principal researcher. If you decide to take part and subsequently change your mind, you will be free to withdraw at any time up to the stage when the data is analysed and written up. If you do decide to withdraw before the data is analysed and written up you will not be asked the reasons for this decision.

What will be my involvement if I take part?

You will take part in a research interview which normally last an hour. The interview will be arranged at a time convenient to yourself. The interview will cover the barriers faced by ethnic minorities in their bid to be part of the senior management team within the Department for Work and Pensions. You will be asked if you agree to the interview being audio-recorded. If you do not agree to this the researcher will take written notes during the interview. If you do agree you may still ask for the tape recorder to be turned off at any point during the interview. Details of where support, advice or counselling may be found will be made available to you after the interview in case any of the issues raised during the interview prove to cause distress.

Will my part in this study be kept confidential?

Yes. At no point will your identity, or indeed the identity of the business unit you work for; be revealed to anyone other than the academic supervisors and examiners of the project. Taped interviews will be transcribed and fully anonymised. Your name will not be recorded on any of the research notes that are made and kept as part of the research. All notes, tape-recordings and any other materials will be kept in a secure storage.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The research will be written up as an academic dissertation. It will be stored in the archives at Nottingham Trent University.

Who is organising and funding the research?

The research is being undertaken as part of a programme of academic study at the Nottingham Trent University leading to the award of Doctor of Business Administration.

Who has reviewed this study?

This study has been reviewed by the Research Ethics Committee of Nottingham Trent University.

Who can I contact for further information?

Please feel welcome to contact the principal researcher for further information.

Appendix 5: Participant CONSENT FORM

An investigation to understand why ethnic minorities in the Department for Work and Pensions are found at the middle and lower management, whilst the white dominate the senior and executive management positions: ***An investigation into the existence of white leadership prototypicality in the Department for Work and Pensions: An ethnic minority perspective.***

Principal Researcher: Never Muskwe

never.muskwe@thepensionservice.gsi.gov.uk

Please read and confirm your consent to being interviewed for this project by initialling the appropriate box (es) and signing and dating this form.

initial box	Please
1. I confirm that the purpose of the project has been explained to me, that I have been given a participant information sheet, and that I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the research.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I give permission for the interview to be tape-recorded by the principal researcher, on the understanding that the tape will de destroyed at the end of the project.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. In completing this form I certify that I am 18 years of age or older.	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I agree to take part in this study.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Name of participant

Date

Signature

Name of researcher

Date

Signature

Document 6: Reflective Journal

An exceptionally difficult journey,
but was worthwhile undertaking:
A pyrrhic victory.

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An exceptionally difficult journey

There is never a night so long that it does not end with dawn, little did I know that I will be writing Document 6, so soon, I cannot believe that three years have elapsed since I embarked on the doctorate the highest academic qualification (Phillips and Pugh, 2005) of Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) degree with the Nottingham Business School and now I am writing the final piece of the puzzle. The DBA journey began with Document 1 as the Research proposal, Document 2 Literature review of the barriers faced by ethnic minorities in their proposition to senior and executive management positions, Document 3, qualitative research which investigated the paucity of ethnic minorities at the upper echelons of the organisation, Document 4 quantitative research, which was a comparative analysis on the views of ethnic minorities and whites on the existence of the glass ceiling and how social support affects the promotion chances of the people in the organisation and Document 5, which was qualitative research, that investigated if being white was a trait for the leadership prototype.

In the following paragraphs I report my reflections on the DBA experience, organising the discussion around seven main areas: I am also conscious that it may make the research experience appear less 'messy' than it actually was. So I will try to avoid the textbook approach supposedly linear, rational and goal-oriented (Bryman, 1988), by following my logic-in-use (Kaplan, 1964), rather than the reconstructed logic of the textbook process (Silverman, 1985). I thought if I looked back through old best practice reflective journals, I would be able to copy paragraphs out of these journals and apply them to mine. After reading the best practices journals, I realised that there is no way I can completely rely on past work to write my journal, this is unique to me. Too much has happened and too much is still happening, to take snapshots. There is more going on and a few old paragraphs cannot cover it all. Instead I will let my memory guide me and let the present speak as well. This reflective process can prompt learners to gain new insights and understanding about themselves and their environment (Benner, 2001, Smith and Irby, 1997). It can also help students develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills as well as a stronger service ethic (Maudsley and Strivens, 2000; Dunn and Chaput de Saintonge, 1997).

The quest for the DBA degree equates to completing a London marathon race that requires extensive training, undeterred endurance, and utter commitment to the educational process. The journey to a doctoral degree is long and requires the patience, willpower and internal fortitude of a marathon runner. Like my colleagues, I have struggled against a host of obstacles from competing family and job commitments. This degree represents the pinnacle of achievement for those in the field of business. Doors will open, opportunities will present themselves, and lives will change both professionally and personally. Embarking on a three year period of study whilst continuing with a full time job was a major commitment for me and my family, not only was it financially straining, but time also became scarce as I became reclusive, as I was engrossed in reading and writing the various documents, thank God it did not put a strain on my marriage. From the outset there is the goal of obtaining a new qualification, change of title from Master (Mr) to Doctor (Dr) and the anticipation of being able to access new sources of something that I might loosely define as knowledge, wisdom and expertise, as well as a licence to teach (Makdisi, 1989). The DBA journey was a challenge by virtue of having to write this document and document 5, this is a pyrrhic victory even though I have not had my viva voce, it had a lot of meandering, uphill tracks and very little steepness, such that I spent most of my time struggling to climb and acquire new knowledge as some of the people I had started with fell on the sideways, when the going got tough and could not continue with the race, as the load pulled them down and eventually withdrew from the programme leaving 11 out of the original 21, I will discuss the cohort 9, as part of living and surviving with strangers. Although at the beginning of this worthwhile journey, I could not envision the rewards, which would greet me at its conclusion, I knew that I needed to strap on my running shoes to carry me safely to the finish.

Quest for knowledge

It has always been inscribed and preached as a true gospel from an early age that acquisition of knowledge was powerful and education opens all the doors, as a result I wanted to emancipate myself from the claws of poverty through education, thus as a boy herding Ngungwai, my departed grandmother's goats, I would read anything from old newspapers that were being blown by the wind thrown away from cars and buses. My biggest influence was a Shona novel, which was part of my brother's

literature set, which I read 26 years ago and hence I vividly remember the title, *Pafunge*, but, I am not going to recapitulate and regurgitate the story as I need more pages than required for this document, thus I will hit the nail on the head and state how the book influenced my academic aspirations. In this book there was a learned guy who was asking a girl out on a date, but like the Pharisee he was telling this girl that he had just enrolled to study an MPhil at the local university, so he stood a better chance to date the gorgeous village girl, compared to the local uneducated suitors. I asked my brother what an MPhil was, he told me to look it up in the dictionary, from the definition, I set myself to achieve an MPhil, not necessarily to get the gorgeous girl in the village, but to get a better job and earn more money. When I went for my secondary education, I came across an academic, who told me that a doctorate was much higher than an MPhil, from that point I changed my mind, my new target was to obtain a doctorate before I am 40 of which I am on track, as I am writing this document I am a couple of weeks away from celebrating my 40th birthday.

When I completed my Masters in Business Administration (MBA) in 2002, I enrolled for a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) at Staffordshire University in 2003, and I was registered, by Research Degree Committee. At the midst of writing my research proposal, Dr Charlotte Rayner, who was my Principal supervisor was promoted to be a Professorship of HRM of at Portsmouth University, not only did it rain, but it also poured on my PhD field, as within weeks of her leaving, Richard who was the second supervisor, also left after obtaining his Professorship at Keele University and I was left with no supervisor. As I was researching on managing diversity in the police, I was assigned to a celebrity Professor Ellis Cashmore who had done research in the police force and has an inclination for managing diversity, and he took me under his wings whilst he was writing David Beckham's autobiography. I would meet him and discuss about my research then he started spending more time in Spain with David Beckham, at my expense, the writing of Beckham's autobiography became a priority, as I lagged behind in my studies. I reminisce the times we would make arrangements to meet, and I would drive 50 miles to the university, only to be told that he had left that morning for Spain. He would leave me the books he had written to read and ask me to attend seminars, we seldom got the time to meet face to face and discuss my research. I felt like a sheep without a

shepherd, even though I was doing doctoral studies, I still needed some form of guidance, as I was for the first time embarking on this unfamiliar journey. With little assistance available from the professor, I found it not profitable to continue, and as a result I withdrew from the course, I had lost the will to study.

After four years of being in the academic wilderness, I realised that I was approaching my 40th birthday without getting the barrette and changing my title from Mr to Dr. An opportunity presented itself, when I transferred to work in Nottingham, I then enrolled to study for an DBA at NBS, my research focus was on racial inequality at top management within the organisation I work for, as I had realised that there was a scarcity of ethnic minorities at the senior and executive management position, leading to the organisation having a snowy apex, due to a high number of whites occupying the apex. I sought permission from the Director of Equality and Diversity to gain access to study the organisation, as Bell (1993) states that no researcher can force access into an organisation or materials. Attending my first lectures I was told that I had to pay a third of the fees, of which I did not have the money, I had to negotiate to pay on monthly basis, which was against the university's tuition policy the credit manager did not agree initially, but she eventually agreed after the intervention of Professor Colin Fisher.

Living and surviving with strangers

The genesis of a cohort begins when the cohort team comes together. That was exactly what happened when the ninth DBA cohort, met for the first time in October of 2007. Present at this meeting were a fireman, pharmaceutical consultant, lecturers, managing directors, banker, auditor, senior managers and businessmen. Each would soon lose his or her well-earned titles for a membership in this cohort. It soon became clear that these 21 strangers considered themselves equals and that they brought unique and individual gifts and talents to the group. Ortlipp (2008) stated that learning is a direct product of synergetic events, which take place between people and events or what occurs in their environment. Equally, they regarded learning as a by-product of knowledge. Maudsley (2000) shares the concept that people are born to learn and to be continually engaged in learning. Through interaction, coursework, group assignments, and high expectations, learning for a cohort is an on-going process. However, the learning expectations

established by the university and completed by candidates do not exist in a vacuum, the influence of the teaching factor also plays a prominent role in a cohort's development. When joining a cohort, individuals retain a small portion of their own identity while the majority of their thoughts and actions are moulded into the making of a cohesive group. Cohorts give candidates the opportunity to create a standard of continuous support, which in turn supports the interdependence among members of the group (Boden, Kenway, and Epstein, 2005). The bond between the individuals and each faculty member becomes apparent during this process (Haworth and Conrad, 1997). Boden *et al.* (2005) best describe the transformation that takes place with the individuals as the cohort model begins to evolve. Cohesive groups exude a mutual respect for one another as well as recognition of individual differences and an appreciation of individual strengths. An emotional safety net results from this exchange, allowing individuals to reveal themselves to one another.

Roles were established that very night and remained in place for the duration of the learning process. From within this group arose a cheerleader, a pragmatic thinker, an interpreter, a word monger, a comic, a lady, and an Earth mother. The establishment of these individual roles, decided early, had staying power within our cohort for the next 3 years. That first meeting not only did it introduce the group members to each other, but it also produced Cohort 9's mission statement: to meet or exceed the expectations of any cohort that had come before us and to leave a reputation for future cohorts to aspire to. With the inception of this goal, Cohort 9 members began the journey, together, to acquire the doctorate degree. The cohort was divided into 3 learning sets, which failed to take off due to the distance between the members as we had students from Zimbabwe, America, Denmark, Dubai, China, Scotland and Ireland and those from England lived in different cities, Nottingham, Coalville, London, Leicester and Ipswich. Despite this setback, over the past 3 years, Cohort 9 has exemplified the cohort model of learning. As each course developed, challenging assignments and presentations proved Cohort 9 was determined to achieve its goal. In accordance with Boden *et al.* (2005) who agreed that in order for an individual to develop, the group must equally develop through collaboration and group dynamics. Cohort 9 proved this principle to be the case by bringing enthusiasm, excitement, and collegiality to each class and adventure.

Slowly the cohort began to be transformed, disintegrate into debris, as some of the members dropped out and was joined by new members, such that by the 3rd year only 9 had been left from the original 21. Beyond the learning experiences, the core subjects, and the class instruction, our cohort became a family. For over 3 years, we celebrated births including the birth of my son Adrian Thabiso Muskwe, marriages, anniversaries and hospital stays. With each personal goal achieved, we were equally met with the possibility of emotional risks. When we agreed to forego some of our individuality for the betterment of the group, we took on the responsibility to care for each other through various life events. Haworth *et al.* (1997) have contended that as a cohort group develops so do the skills of communication and teamwork. As the group grows to its possible potential, so too, grows each individual within the group (Norris and Barnett, 1994). Part of the responsibility for ensuring this transference takes place rests with the instructors. Glense *et al.*, 1992) contends that the learning environment fosters both teachers' and students' willingness to freely exchange ideas, feelings, questions, and dispute with comfort, listen carefully to others, and apply, analyse, and evaluate with freedom.

As I began to reflect on the journey that I had taken to achieve the doctorate, I also wondered if others in cohort 9 felt the same way. In order to compare my personal thoughts with those of my fellow travellers, I asked a few who had become close friends, whom I had shared my DBA journey with. When asked about their reasons for entering the doctoral program, the most common response reflected on how the degree had also been a lifelong ambition. One candidate said, "I had a lifelong desire to complete my doctorate, the access, timing, and type of program attracted me." While some believed that the completion of the degree was a means to open doors for them professionally, others began the journey to develop a deeper understanding and appreciation for the field of business. The reasons for seeking the degree ranged from personal to professional but, whatever the intent, the road travelled together was much easier to bear. As my eyes move to the top shelf in my office, the picture of my Cohort 9 family smiles down on me as its members keep constant vigil. I am drawn to a quote by the Nobel Laureate, William Golding, "My yesterday's walk with me, they keep step, they are gray faces that peer over my shoulders." The impact of my cohort experience began one night, sitting at a table with 21 strangers, who were about to take the journey of a lifetime. Even now, almost 3 years later, the

picture of these hearty travellers brings back memories, feelings, and experiences that I hope shadow me for years to come.

Who am I?

I want to reflect briefly on my learning style. I am interested to establish whether my approach to learning has changed as a result of studying for the DBA. I am making a conscious distinction here between the philosophical backdrops or content of my DBA studies, which I have already acknowledged is different to my previous work, and focussing instead on the philosophical approach to learning. The early discussions on methodological perspectives opened my mind to different ways of thinking. Initially I found terminology and concepts difficult and would test my understanding through discussion with 'trusted' colleagues with whom I knew I could safely make mistakes. Interestingly one of the days after our lecture on different epistemologies, I found the lecture difficult not because of being dull, but because it was after lunch introducing new concepts on a hot October day. When my wife picked me and Tom Ushe a colleague from the train station, that evening she asked how the lectures were and we simultaneously said we had found the new concepts difficult to comprehend, thus when I realised that someone was in the same boat with me.

I had to do a lot of reading to understand the concepts and when it came to writing Document 3, I became more confident in claiming an interpretive perspective, particularly given that this piece of research was qualitative in nature and I could see this method as fitting well with my interpretive approach. However, my thinking was again tested at the second stage approached as this was to be quantitative research in Document 4, and I would surely align with a positivist approach. Quantitative methods was the least beneficial course, as what I learnt did not assist me in writing my document 4, this course had not equipped us with the pertinent knowledge resources required to carry out survey and to write the results. I did find working on document 4 difficult because I was not comfortable doing the research, I will stick with qualitative research as an interpretivist carrying out phenomenology research. Even though I consider myself to be a qualitative researcher, writing document 4 has equipped with moderate understanding of quantitative research, such that I can perform quantitative research comfortably even though it will be out of my comfort

zone. As I would want to be a lecturer, I feel I can supervise undergraduate, postgraduate and research students undertaking research, using either qualitative or quantitative research methods. I believe that the DBA has also helped me develop as a dissertation supervisor. Not only has my ability to discuss research methodologies and methods improved, but also I have increased awareness of the student/supervisor relationship and the potential discomfort that perceived power differences can bring. I will also be very willing to listen to colleagues who have more recently started the DBA journey and may wish to allay their concerns. In both of these circumstances, I feel that having a first hand experience will add to my credibility.

Writing documents 3 and 5 was primarily interview-based and therefore I was the main “instrument” of data collection (Ortlipp, 2008). Much of my reading about the role of the researcher was thus in relation to the role of the researcher as interviewer. I started out reading traditional qualitative methodology texts that presented the research process as linear and unproblematic, as long as the researcher followed the rules and paid attention to reliability, validity, and objectivity (Glensne and Peshkin, 1992; Patton, 1990). In relation to interviewing, this requires the interviewer to be non-reactive in order to increase the reliability of the interviewee’s responses, that is, that the same answers would be given if the questions were asked at another time, in another place, even by another interviewer (Glensne *et al.*, 1992). Given my personal and professional investment in the project I felt uneasy with this approach and wrote about it in my research journal. I am an ethnic minority (black), and all my participants were ethnic minorities in Document 3 and 5 except in Document 4 where I used comparative analysis between whites and ethnic minorities. If I were to take the view of the traditional methodology texts on interviewing, in the light of the above points, I should be particularly concerned about my role in the research process as the main instrument of data collection. My concerns relate to what Denzin (1994, p. 501) refers to as “the interpretive crisis” in qualitative research. The debate about the problem of bias in qualitative research remains unresolved. There is a lack of agreement on the amount and type of researcher influence that is acceptable, and whether and how it needs to be “controlled” and accounted for. In interview-based qualitative research this is a particularly pertinent issue, and again, there are a variety of different views on how

interviews should be conducted and the role of the researcher as interviewer. Scheurich (1997) proposes that research interviewing can be reconceptualised in keeping with a postmodern approach by making the “baggage” we bring to the research visible.

Ploughing against the contours

Doing sensitive research is a courageous activity which can only be done when you are prepared to defend what you are writing like an attorney defending a habitual criminal. I had to be a risk taker willing to lose all for the sake of the doctorate. Document 4 was a comparative analysis on the existence of the glass ceiling in the organisation, it engaged both whites and ethnic minorities. Document 4 is close to my heart as I nearly lost my job, I had participants referred to me by volunteers who had responded to my advert to take part in the research. When I sent out the invitation to the participants, I had the HR Director ringing me, to find out who had authorised the research, he asked my line manager to get the distribution list for the research. Fortunately I had kept all the correspondence I had with the Director of Equality and Diversity, who had authorised the research, which I forwarded to line manager, but he insisted that I send him the distribution list of the participants, which I kindly refused as it would have been a breach of confidentiality to the participants, who had volunteered to take part in the research and I had promised in my invitation letter that participants would remain anonymous. Also taking into consideration that I had Document 5 to write and would need participants, I did not give in even though I felt I could be disciplined for insubordination.

I was summoned to a disciplinary meeting. I discussed the issue with a friend and he told me to give them the distribution list rather than risk losing my job. I told him as a researcher I had a duty to protect the identity of my participants as I was bound by the research ethics. I had to engage a Trade Union representative to attend the disciplinary hearing with me. Sitting before a panel of managers can be nerve-racking, especially when they had the fate of my aspirations of acquiring a doctorate in their hands, and also my source of income, since I was self-sponsoring myself, as they were to make a decision on the continuity of my studies, if my access was to be withdrawn, I would not have a case to study. At the meeting I was informed that I had engaged in a research without the authority of the permanent

secretary as a result I had to stop, but I informed them and showed the evidence of written permission, which I had, to show that I had approval to carry out the research in the organisation. I also showed them the advert which had appeared on the DWP Equality and Diversity intranet page inviting people take part in the research, they insisted that I give them the distribution list, but I maintained my credibility to my participants, by not handing over the distribution list, as doing so would have breached the confidentiality bound by the psychological contract which I had with the participants. I could see that I had ruffled some feathers and the panel was simply doing what they had been instructed to do. After a week the Human Resources Business Partner wrote to inform me that after careful consideration, I had been found without a case to answer and was wished me well in my research. I had expected this to happen when I had placed my advert seeking participants for interviews in Document 3, but it only kicked off in Document 4, as the questionnaire had sensitive questions about the racial inequality at senior and executive management positions, some people do not want the status quo to be questioned, hence I had got myself into trouble, even though it seemed as if I was risking my job I had to stand for what I believed, as I had followed the correct ethical procedures to gaining access to carry out research in the organisation. I stood up for what I believed in and continued my research without compromising it by divulging the identity of the participants as this was going to affect me in the future research for Document 5. I have developed a stronger ethical and moral dimension to my way of thinking, this was not only transmitted during this occasion, but over the last three years, when I carried out research for other documents. On a more serious note, it remains to be seen whether my newly found ethical perspectives will lead into conflict in my work environment.

Life taken over by DBA

As I approach the end of my DBA incarceration there is a predictable interest in what might follow to fill the large gap that will be left. I have made reference to tennis coaching of my twins, Dali and Thandeka, and I will also be looking after our newly born baby Adrian Thabiso. I will be able to spend more time on the tennis courts and I will be able to watch them as they compete, so that I can work on areas of strength and weakness. During the DBA programme, I use to read whilst they were playing, at times I would only go out to watch them when my laptop battery had run down, I

felt every minute was precious such that I could not afford to watch them play as I had work on my documents on every spare moment I had, as I had to juggle the studies with fulltime employment, which was difficult due the demands of my job. The DBA had impacted on my life, as it is difficulty for a coach not to watch his players compete. The intensity of the three years course does require time to be made to undertake the study, and other hobbies have to be abandoned, and thus during this time I also had to stop football coaching, which I had been doing passionately for seven years.

.... *But it was a worthwhile journey to undertake*

I have found the journey to be interesting and challenging as I found it hard to juggle work life and being a student again, after having being in the academic wilderness for about 4 years. However I have meet good people both students and lecturers, who have supported me along the way, some of them will be friends forever. In all my studies I had never done a reflection piece so writing this was challenging, but it helped me to navigate through the journey to the end, and at times I laugh as I reminisce what the journey has be like. I am not only changing my title, but I am also emerging with a new identity as a competent professional, able to argue my viewpoint with anyone regardless of status, confident in my own knowledge but also aware of my boundaries (Phillips *et al.*, 2005) as I will be an authority when I have passed my viva. As the highest degree that can be awarded, it proclaims that the recipient is worthy of being listened to as an equal by the appropriate university faculty” (Phillip *et al.*, 2005, p.20-21). The experience was both beneficial to me and my family, now we wait for the crowning on the graduation day.

In my rich Shona language, I say “zvaida kushinga”, meaning I had to be strong in order to complete the DBA journey, a truly pyrrhic victory.

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