

Older women workers – will they be ready for the future workplace?

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**A Thesis submitted to Auckland University of Technology in partial
fulfilment of the requirements for the degree**

of

Master of Business (MBus)

2012

Faculty of Business and Law

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Attestation of Authorship

“I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgement), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.”

Signed: _____

Nonie Kirker

April 2012

Acknowledgements

I would firstly like to thank my supervisor, Dr Irene Ryan for her expert advice in guiding me through the process. I greatly appreciated her assistance.

Thank you also to all those friends who have supported and encouraged me over the time I have been doing my thesis, in particular the colleagues who have helped me along the way.

I also wish to thank the eleven women who gave their time and shared their stories with me during the interview process. Without their contribution this thesis would not have been possible.

Thank you also to Brett for all his support and my family for being understanding and patient.

Finally, I sincerely want to thank my friend and colleague Stephanie Coulthard for being there for me throughout the whole journey. I thank her for listening to me talk constantly about 'my thesis' and her encouragement and reassurance. I thank her also for her help with proofreading at the end.

It is now over!

Abstract

New Zealand, like other developed countries, has an ageing population and an ageing workforce (OECD, 2006a). This study looks at one age cohort of women, 50 years and over, who in the last few decades have become more visible in New Zealand workplaces (McPherson, 2009). Eleven women, between 50 and 65 years of age, employed in administrative roles at Auckland University of Technology [AUT University] were the sample group. The study aimed to gain an understanding of how stereotypes affect the self-efficacy of older women working in administration roles and whether negative stereotypes had an influence on their decision-making to undertake training and development opportunities. A qualitative case study explored participants' views on four main areas; training and development opportunities within the organisation; stereotypical attitudes; perception of their own identity within the workplace and finally, their future development expectations. The study built on previous New Zealand studies around stereotypical attitudes associated with the older worker (e.g., McGregor & Gray, 2002; Wilson & Kan, 2006). Underpinning this study was the assumption there is a link between negative stereotypical attitudes and the older workers' self-efficacy towards undertaking training and development opportunities suggested in previous studies (e.g., Maurer, 2001).

Findings from this study showed whilst the women had a positive self-identity and did not outwardly associate with the negative stereotypes of the older worker, stereotypical attitudes did affect older administrative women to some extent. In particular, the study identified a link between stereotypical attitudes and the participants' self-efficacy towards seeking future employment. The research concluded that overall there was no definite link between negative stereotypical attitudes and participants' self-efficacy to undertake training and development. However, the study did help identify areas where Auckland University of Technology [AUT University] could introduce new initiatives to develop their older female administrative workers so they can reach their full potential.

Chapter 1: Introduction

This thesis is a study on how negative stereotypical attitudes affect the self-efficacy of older women in administration roles in regard to training and development. The introductory chapter provides an overview of the researcher's motive for undertaking the study and background on why this study is important. Following on, the purpose and aim of the study is highlighted. In the final section the structure of the thesis chapters are outlined.

1.1 Motive for the study

Age should not define who we are. Through my study and personal experience I have become aware of the issues that surround the older worker and their training and development. This generation of older workers is often described as 'baby boomers' and generally refers to those born in the years between 1945 -1965 (Ministry of Social Development, 2009). When this group first entered the workforce it was common for women to take responsibility for the household and form their careers around these demands and childcare. Women in the 'baby boomer' cohort have experienced change not seen by their mothers or daughters. In many cases, what this group wanted to do or be twenty years ago may not be the same as when they have reached fifty. Some have taken responsibility for their own career development, whereas others have chosen to follow the path of previous generations of women. This thesis explores some of the reasons why this is. Integral to this exploration is whether stereotypical attitudes about older workers and in particular older women, have had an effect on their desire to engage in future career development opportunities.

My Story

What triggered my interest in this topic? In both my personal and professional life I have always been passionate about continuous development and lifelong learning. When my youngest child was three I immersed myself back into the education system to gain qualifications so I could re-enter the workforce. I was a 28 year old housewife with three young children and made the decision to enrol at the local high school where they had introduced a new initiative for older learners. I attended classes alongside the school's sixth form students. The experience was interesting to say the least, especially times when the class was kept back for detention because of some skylarking teenagers. Even though at times this situation was difficult, I managed to gain the qualifications I needed to get a job. Since then, I have worked in secretarial or administrative type roles throughout my working life and have continued my formal learning until this day.

Over this time I have been fortunate that I have worked at a learning institution which has given me the opportunity to continue my study. I have often been asked why I am doing it. My female peers, in particular, seem curious as to the reasons I would bother to study alongside my family commitments and paid employment. Many times I felt others thought I was too old. In spite of this it was important for my own self-identity and self-worth to continue my study to be the best I could.

At the beginning of the journey I have just described I had no knowledge of the social identity theory, stereotypes or the implications of being different within a social group. On reflection however, this was the first time I had some sense of how it felt to be identified as an 'older' learner with assumptions made about me because of my age.

My story is the impetus for this study. I wanted to gain an understanding of how stereotypical attitudes may affect other older women's belief in themselves to develop for the future. As a person who has held numerous administrative roles within a changing university environment, it is this group that caught my interest. Thus, the purpose of the study was to explore training and development from the perspective of older women working in administrative roles.

1.2 Why the study is important?

The population in the western world is ageing. In all OECD countries the birth rate is declining and life expectancy is rising (OECD, 2006a). Statistics predict as the 'baby boomers' leave the workforce, there will not be enough younger workers to take their place (Armstrong-Stassen & Templer, 2005; OECD, 2006a). This demographic shift is expected to have huge economic, financial and social implications on societies in the future. In addition, with compulsory retirement in many OECD countries having been abolished, older workers may also choose to remain in the workforce longer (Loretto, Vickerstaff & Duncan, 2006).

Previous studies have found older workers are not engaged in training and development to the same extent as their younger colleagues (Maurer, 2001; McGregor, 2001; Pillay, Kelly & Tones, 2006). Stereotypical attitudes, such as older workers are not adaptable and are slower to learn than their younger colleagues, are two of the main reasons given for this lack of participation (McGregor & Gray, 2002; Boyd and Dixon, 2008; Maurer, Barbeite, Weiss & Lippstreu, 2008). Research argues these stereotypical attitudes can become a self-fulfilling prophecy as older workers start to believe them to be true (Maurer, 2001; McGregor, 2001; Maurer et al, 2008; Buyens, Van Dijk, Dewilde & De Vos, 2009; Gaillard & Desmette, 2010).

How these stereotypical attitudes affect older women's self-efficacy towards undertaking training and development is particularly important. In the last few decades of the twentieth century there has been a substantial increase in the visibility of women in the workplace (O'Neil, Hopkins & Bilmoria, 2008). In New Zealand between 1991 and 2006, the greatest increase in the workforce was women aged 50 plus (McPherson, 2009). As a result, the workplace is confronted with both stereotypical bias against older workers and the need to respond to societal shifts in employment (Stein, Rocco & Goldenetz, 2000).

The actual 'age range' of an 'older worker' is not consistent across the literature. Kooij, de Lange, Jansen, Dijkers (2006) note the literature uses a variation within an age range from 40 onwards. To clarify - the OECD (2009) defines the 'older worker' by chronological age - 50 years and over. New Zealand research also

identifies an 'older worker' as 50 onwards (McGregor & Gray, 2002; McPherson, 2008a). Thus, the term 'older worker' is not specific or consistent throughout the literature but overall, refers to the large cohort of workers in the later stage of their working life.

There has been some research on older workers as a homogenous group in organisations, however there appears to be a gap in studies on how stereotypical attitudes affect older women's self-efficacy towards training and development. As the literature suggests, older women who work in traditionally female roles are more likely to be working in less visible areas such as administration as they age (Davy & Handy, 2007; Moore, 2009). Therefore it will be particularly important that older women are given the same opportunities for training and development and not discriminated because of stereotypical attitudes associated with their sex and age.

Universities are one of the organisations highlighted in the OECD (2006a) report as having a significantly ageing work force. McPherson (2009), in a report for Equal Employment Opportunity Trust New Zealand [EEO Trust], also noted that the education sector was one of the sectors that had a higher than average profile of older workers. Therefore, considering these factors and the increase of older women in the workforce it is an important topic to study. The focus of this study is older women working in administrative roles in a university.

1.3 Purpose of the research

The purpose of the study was to explore stereotypical attitudes and the affect they have on older women workers' self-efficacy towards undertaking training and development. To meet this purpose the following research question was formulated:

How do stereotypes affect older women administration workers' self-efficacy in regard to training and development?

The aims of the research are twofold.

Firstly, the study aims to explore how stereotypes affect the self-efficacy of older women working in administration roles at AUT University and gain an understanding of whether this has an influence on their decision to undertake opportunities for training and development. As AUT University has a commitment to developing their staff, all female staff should have opportunities for undertaking training and development. This study builds on previous New Zealand studies around stereotypical attitudes associated with the older worker (e.g., McGregor & Gray, 2002; Wilson & Kan, 2006; McPherson, 2008b). Underpinning this study is the assumption there is a link between negative stereotypical attitudes and an older workers' self-efficacy towards undertaking training and development opportunities, suggested in previous studies (e.g., Maurer, 2001).

Secondly, the study aims to improve practices and contribute to the body of knowledge on training and development of older women administration workers for a specific site: AUT University. Organisations need to introduce new initiatives to develop the ageing workforce and ensure they are productive in the future. The findings from this study could help identify areas where AUT University could introduce new initiatives to develop their older female administrative workers to empower them to reach their full potential.

1.4 The context of the study

AUT University, located in Auckland is New Zealand's newest university, transitioning from polytechnic to a university in 2000 (Shaw, 2002). In a similar manner to other New Zealand universities, it too has an ageing profile. AUT University consists of five faculties and offers a broad range of programmes from sub-degree to doctorates. AUT University is situated across three main campuses in the Auckland region; North Shore; Wellesley Street and Manukau. Figures from AUT University Annual report 2011 show AUT University had in total approximately 1896 full time equivalent staff; 1070 academic staff and 993 academic staff (AUT University Annual Report, 2011). Data extracted from Auckland University of Technology University payglobal system (2011) in November 2011 reported the approximate numbers of female staff at the

university was 640, of which 462 were females over 50 years old and 270 were female allied (administrative) staff.

Policies and training and development strategies

AUT University has an Equal Employment Opportunity policy which applies to all staff. The AUT University website states they are a good employer and committed to the development of their staff (AUT University Strategic Plan, 2007-2011, p.12). AUT University also has an inclusive staff development policy that promotes the notion of continuous development (AUT University Strategic Plan 2007-2011). More specific information on the Staff Development Policy is found in Chapter Three.

1.5 Methodology

The epistemology for this exploratory study is an interpretative paradigm which revolves around the belief that social knowledge or truth is subjective and based on an individual's own world view (Bryman & Bell, 2003). It follows a case study framework drawing on a single organisation. The study focuses on eleven older women who work in administrative roles in a large educational organisation. The sample is a purposeful selection of women in the 50-65 year age bracket working in administrative roles. Bryman and Bell (2003) suggest a case study is appropriate to use when wanting to gain an understanding of behaviour in a particular social context (p.64). The study aimed to explore the participants' views on four main areas; training and development opportunities within the organisation; stereotypical attitudes; perception of their own identity within the workplace; and finally their future development expectations. These four key areas were identified in the literature as relevant to the purpose of the study, thus formed the basis of the semi-structured interview questions. The interviews were audio-taped and transcribed by the researcher. The data was analysed using thematic coding. The researcher followed the thematic analysis guidelines suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006).

A qualitative research method was considered to be a relevant method for an exploratory study. Qualitative enquiry is used to capture a holistic, complex

picture of people's views in their own environment (Cresswell, 1998). The researcher used semi-structured interviews to gather information from the participants' viewpoint which brings to the fore what they see as important and significant (Bryman & Bell, 2003, p.42).

1.6 Structure

The thesis is organised into five chapters. Chapter One, introduces the study, thereby laying the foundation for the purpose of the thesis. Chapter Two, will review the literature pertaining to ageing populations and highlight the issues for organisations in relation to training and development of older workers with a focus on older women. The research question involves self-identity; stereotypes; self-efficacy; women and training and development, therefore it is necessary to explore a range of literature and theories. The literature selected draws on different disciplines ranging from management, career development, social science and psychology plus several secondary sources, such as statistics from Government Departments. Through these sources the purpose of the literature review is to achieve an understanding of the issues contributing to the importance of the research question.

Chapter Three, the methodology chapter, discusses in more depth the research design chosen for the exploratory study. Firstly, the ontological and epistemological considerations are discussed. Following on, the methods the study used are outlined and the justifications for choosing these methods are further explained. The final part of the methodology chapter highlights the ethical considerations, limitations and potential benefits of undertaking the study.

Chapter Four, presents the findings from the data with excerpts selected to explain their importance and relevance. Initially the chapter outlines the four main themes identified from the data: self-identity; influence of stereotypical attitudes; women and careers and training and career development for the future. Two sub-questions evolved out of the data and their significance to the main research question is explained.

The final chapter of the thesis discusses the findings from Chapter Four. The discussion is structured around the two sub-questions and training and development. The discussion draws on the literature reviewed in Chapter Two to highlight significant points and identify similarities and differences from previous studies. The final section of this chapter summarises the findings and outlines the conclusions in relation to the main research question. Limitations of the study are then noted and the chapter finishes by highlighting the benefits this study may have for the future.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction to literature review

The object of the literature review is to provide an overview of previous studies relevant to the research question on training and development of older workers. Given the broad scope of the research question the literature review will outline a selection of literature in the following areas: the implications of the demographic shift in the workplace; the importance of training and development for older workers; discrimination and stereotypical attitudes associated with the older worker; older workers' careers with a particular focus on women and the barriers they face. Finally, the literature review will discuss how these issues relate to older workers' development and their self-efficacy to undertake further training and development opportunities.

2.2 Demographic shift

The population in developed countries worldwide is ageing (OECD, 2006a). People are living longer and the birth rate is dropping in all OECD countries (OECD, 2006a). The impact of this impending demographic phenomenon is predicated to have enormous social and economic implications on society (OECD, 2006b). By 2015, projections suggest that the number retiring is expected to exceed the number entering the workforce (OECD, 2006b). In addition, the assumption younger unemployed people will replace older workers is questioned, meaning predicted patterns of work and retirement need to change (OECD, 2006a).

Many of the older population are capable and willing to continue to work if given opportunities for flexible working arrangements and opportunities to change jobs (OECD, 2006b). Financial reasons are a key factor in keeping people in the workplace longer (EEO Trust, 2006). With the prospect of longevity people may need to work for more years than previous generations, to meet their lifestyle expectations. As the cohort of older workers increases it will be even more

important for organisations to promote life-long learning and ensure their older workers' skills are updated (OECD, 2006b).

Nevertheless, whilst organisations are aware of the issues around the ageing population, the literature shows they are not proactive in retaining and up-skilling their older workers (McGregor & Gray, 2002; Loretto & White, 2006b; Armstrong-Stassen & Schlosser, 2007; Dychtwald & Baxter, 2008; Armstrong-Stassen, 2008; Van Veldhoven & Dorenbosch, 2008). Instead, any organisational strategies already in place are geared more towards older employees exiting the organisation (Callanan & Greenhaus, 2008; Desmette & Gaillard, 2008). Strebler (2009) suggests rather than concentrate on retirement strategies, organisations need to maintain a more balanced workforce and focus on helping their older employees consider their options. Greller (2006) also points out it is important to update older workers' skills, because even though they have accrued human capital through their experience, overtime this capital could decrease and not be as valuable as 'up to date' experience.

The New Zealand Context

Since 1992, there has not been a compulsory retirement age in New Zealand. People can now legally continue to work as long as they are able. By 2020, one in four people in the New Zealand labour force will be over 55 years (Boyd & Dixon, 2008) and by 2016, the medium age of those in the workforce is expected to be 42 years (Ministry of Social Development, 2009). Already, recruitment of suitable young people has become more competitive between companies (Department of Labour, 2007). By December 2011 there were 1,047,300 people 55 years and over in the workforce, an increase of 4.8% in five years (Department of Labour, n. a.).

Statistics show in the last few decades there has also been a significant growth in women in the New Zealand labour market (McPherson, 2009). The greatest growth has been women aged 50 years and over (McPherson, 2009). In March 2011, females were 50.99% of the total New Zealand population and 46.9% of the workforce (Goldman Sachs & Partners New Zealand, 2011). Furthermore, the trend indicates women are moving into occupations traditionally seen as male

dominated. Whilst secretarial or personal assistance roles are still female dominated, the age profile of the women in these roles has increased considerably (EEO Trust, 2006). Given impending skill shortages employers need to focus on employing those who have, in the past, been marginalised, most notably women and older workers (EEO Trust, 2011). Women also have a low representation in leadership roles. This was made abundantly clear in a recent census report initiated “to provide an objective picture of the progress women have made” (Human Rights Commission, 2010, p.3).

To help address some of the concerns, such as those noted above, the Ministry of Social Development introduced a Positive Ageing Strategy in 2001. The main objective of this initiative was to support people to lead productive lives as they age (Ministry of Social Development, n. a). One aim of this initiative is to eliminate covert age discrimination and ensure entitlement for training is the same for all workers, including older workers (Ministry of Social Development, n. a).

The older worker has received very little research attention in New Zealand (Gray & McGregor, 2003). What research has been done concurs with overseas studies on the implications of an ageing workforce. Whilst there is an awareness of an emerging employment gap, research suggests organisations are not implementing policies and practices to encourage older workers to take up training and development opportunities (Alpass & Mortimer, 2007; McPherson, 2008a). The EEO Trust report (2006) maintains that New Zealand organisations need to age-proof by identifying what they want to achieve and introduce economic strategies such as retaining older workers knowledge and skills, so they gain a competitive advantage.

In 2008, the New Zealand Institute of Management [NZIM] (2008) surveyed senior managers in organisations to explore attitudes and find out what actions and adjustments had already been made to address the ageing workforce. This report concluded that overall there were many areas where employers had responded positively. However, there were still questions around education and training opportunities for older workers. The key concerns related to the cost of training and the length of the pay-back period which it was assumed would be shorter (NZIM, 2008). In 2008 the EEO Trust produced a guide with practical suggestions

organisations could implement to retain older workers. The guide emphasises the business case and urges organisations to focus on performance not age by ensuring their older employees have the necessary skills and motivation (McPherson, 2009). Davey and Cornwall (2003) reiterating the business case argue “....maximizing the potential of older worker is a macro-economic priority” (p.15). In a similar frame, McGregor and Gray (2002) emphasise that the lack of training and professional development of older workers could have “serious implications for employers, trade unions and the workplace in general” (p.174). Thus concerns around ‘ageing populations’ have problematised ‘older workers’, but, what defines an ‘older worker’?

2.3 Who is an older worker?

The term ‘older worker’ is very subjective and the difficulty in determining ‘who is an older worker’ is highlighted in much of the literature. Riach (2007) for example, questions the category ‘older worker’ and the assumption that it has a homogenised meaning. A study conducted by the EEO Trust (2008) found “some employers use terms such as mature, ageing or life-experienced to soften age implications.” (p.3). The literature discusses several ways in which age can be categorised and prior studies use different measures. This is significant because as Peeters and Van Emmeriki (2008) suggest conceptualisations of age and how age is measured has implications that impact on the results of age related studies. Peeters & Van Emmeriki (2008) also point out that individuals differ immensely. They maintain people become more unique as they age and this particularly applies to older workers.

An example of how difficult it is to establish criteria for this group was shown in Claes and Heyman’s (2008) study which examined work motivation and older workers. The first stage of Claes and Heyman’s (2008) study was to ascertain the actual age group that would be included. However, the participants of the three focus groups involved were unable to agree on an age threshold to examine. Claes and Heyman (2008) finally concluded that age is only one of the characteristics that workers bring to a job. Claes and Heyman (2008) highlight older workers

have different needs and concerns depending on their personality traits, work attitudes, motivation, life events and career stages.

Research tells us that any chronological age groupings are random and problematic. Such groupings however, are a key feature of modern bureaucratised societies. Claes and Heyman (2008) point out using chronological age as a benchmark can lead to stigmatisation and negative stereotyping. Besides this, Peeters and Van Emmerik (2008) consider chronological age as perhaps a too narrow view of workplace ageing. They propose cognitive age, such as a person's own perception of themselves in relation to their health, energy levels or appearance should also be considered. For example, a person's exterior appearance; the variation rate of decline of eyesight, hearing or reaction times, all of which can differ from individual to individual as people age (Peeters & Van Emmeriki, 2008). McGregor and Gray (2002) also note, there is a difference between physical work and cognitive work hence the type of work a person is involved in needs to be considered. Physical deterioration through age can become challenging when working in a physical job but this may not be so important working in an office environment.

Another aspect to consider is how 'older workers' perceive themselves. According to the Tajfel's Social Identity Theory, people identify with a social group and self select to become part of a group by classifying people "as either like me or different to me" (Elmes and Connelley, 1977, p.157). When a worker identifies as an 'older worker' they see themselves as having membership to this 'in-group' (Chiu, Chan, Snape & Redman, 2001). Accordingly, the status attached to the group can define what they believe and importantly, how they are perceived by others (Desmette & Gaillard, 2008). Ageing is fluid, an unavoidable progressive condition and as Moore (2009) suggests individuals may need a period of adjustment before they accept being defined as 'older'. Moore (2009) argues that individuals may be reluctant to define themselves as 'older' as unlike gender and race, age is not a fixed category.

Several articles reviewed (e.g., Sterns & Doverspike, 1989; Kooij, et al, 2006) also mention 'organisational age' as another way to measure age. 'Organisational age' is

described by Sterns and Doverspike (1989) as based on the length of service a person has been in an organisation; the stage of their career; consideration of skill obsolescence; and age norms within an organisation. Kooij et al (2006) found the effects of 'organisational age' are twofold; firstly, when a person has been in a workplace for a long time this can result in their skills being outdated. As a consequence their career plateaus as they can be overlooked for promotion or any further development (Kooij et al, 2006). On the other hand, the person can also be seen as having an increased work commitment. However, when 'organisational age' is associated with skill obsolescence this could be detrimental to a person's career if there is a lack of opportunity for them to progress (Kooij et al, 2006).

One debate in the literature suggests that instead of categorising workers into age groups (e.g. older workers/younger workers) employers should manage their employees as individuals according to their abilities and potential (McPherson, 2008a; Peeters & Van Emmeriki, 2008). For example, Patrickson and Ranzijn (2004) argues, age *per se*, should be a part of workforce management strategies rather than specifically targeting what is assumed to be a homogenous group defined by chronological age. In a similar vein, Macky, Gardner and Forsyth (2008) suggest that organisations need to be aware of "changing personality profiles across generations, and changes in their attitudes to work and careers" (p.860). However, Macky et al (2008) note many of the empirical findings suggest there may be more variation among generational groups than between them.

Whilst who is an older worker and how that is defined may vary across the literature, most agree that stereotypical attitudes about older workers are still prevalent within the workplace. Stereotypes attributed to the older worker include both positive and negative traits. For example, on the positive side it is assumed older workers are reliable, loyal and stable; on the negative side they are considered less adaptable, less flexible and slower to learn than their younger colleagues (McGregor & Gray, 2002; Perry & Parlamis, 2006; Alpass & Mortimor, 2007).

2.4 Older workers stereotypes

Desmette and Gaillard (2008), maintain the moment a worker is classified as an 'older worker' they are stigmatised by negative social group categorisation. The literature suggests stereotypical attitudes, such as older workers are less adaptable and are slower to learn than their younger colleagues, has an influence on both employers and the older workers themselves (McGregor & Gray, 2002; Boyd and Dixon, 2008; Maurer et al, 2008;). Cameron and Trope (2004) found that even when there is opportunity for others to find out more about an individual which would dispel the stereotypes, people are more inclined to look for traits that confirm the stereotypes are apt. In other words, rather than have an open mind, people seek out bias information (Cameron & Trope, 2004). Furthermore, Tajfel (1974) notes it is immaterial as to whether or not the assumption has come about through personal experience, hearsay, literature, or any other form of communication, a person can be given a label regardless of whether or not they possess the characteristics attached to the stereotype.

Riach (2007) maintains neither positive nor negative stereotypes should be used to describe older workers. Riach (2007) argues even when stereotypes are complimentary they are limiting as they infer all older workers are the same. Furthermore, Buyens et al (2009) maintain that whilst stereotypical attitudes have become a popular image of the characteristics of older workers they are incongruent with empirical evidence. To illustrate, although employers' perception is that older workers' performance deteriorates as they age (Buyens et al, 2009) there is some suggestion that social and mental skills often increase (Loretto & White, 2006a).

Whilst, stereotypes are not fixed mental states (McGregor & Gray, 2002), research shows these attitudes have a significant influence on older workers' behaviour (Maurer et al, 2008). Claes and Heyman (2008) highlight how the label 'older worker' can result in the older worker taking on the stereotypical behaviour associated with this group. Much of the literature agrees with the idea that older workers assume stereotypical traits when they are exposed to them and refers to this as a self-fulfilling prophecy (McGregor, 2001; Maurer et al, 2008; Buyens et al,

2009; Gaillard & Desmette, 2010). It would follow therefore that when an older worker is subjected to negative stereotyping this could devalue their self-image (Desmette & Gaillard, 2008).

A further aspect worth noting, is some studies show not all older workers behave in the same way when exposed to negative stereotypes (August & Quintero, 2001; Chui et al, 2001). To illustrate, Chui et al (2001) undertook a comparative survey to examine the relationship between age stereotypes and discriminatory practices in the United Kingdom and Hong Kong. One of the findings from this study showed that older supervisors in both countries had a more negative attitude towards older workers than other older workers surveyed. August and Quintero (2001) also found that older supervisors were more likely to hold negative stereotypical attitudes about older workers than younger supervisors. Chui et al (2001) propose this could be because of the negative attitudes (stereotypes) associated with 'older workers'. For this reason, 'older supervisors' opted out of belonging to this group and instead, chose to see themselves as valued members of the organisation. This is in line with the social identity theory mentioned previously, which proposes that when a group is devalued, people suffer from a negative social identity and "adopt a range of cognitive and behavioural strategies" to improve their self-image (Desmette & Gaillard, 2008, p.170).

This may explain why older workers rate themselves more positively than their colleagues. The literature agrees that older workers have a more positive view of themselves than their employers or younger colleagues (Chui et al, 2001; McGregor & Gray, 2002). For example, Buyens et al (2009) found that older workers have a more positive perception of their ability than their employers and believe their cognitive skills neither decrease nor increase. McGregor and Gray (2002) found that older workers viewed themselves in a more positive way except in areas of flexibility and adaptability. Chui et al (2001) results show the respondent's age was a determinant in how positive they gauged the adaptability of an older worker. In other words, the nearer towards the older age group the respondents were, the more positive they rated older workers.

2.5 Older workers and discrimination

Research highlights that stereotypical attitudes about older people and especially older workers can lead to discrimination (Chui et al, 2001; McGregor 2001). Because an older worker is assumed to have the stereotypical characteristics of an older person they are discriminated against solely because of their age. This form of discrimination has coined the term 'ageism'.

In spite of many countries introducing age-friendly policies, research shows ageism against older workers is still widespread in many organisations (McGregor & Gray, 2002; Alpass & Mortimer, 2007). However, Choo (1999) believes the 'baby boomer' generation is more aware of their rights and expects to be treated equally. As Choo (1999) points out, ageing is unavoidable so all workers have a vested interest to ensure policies and practices are upheld. New Zealand studies have shown that employers still have stereotypical attitudes towards their older workers (e.g., McGregor & Gray, 2002; Alpass & Mortimer, 2007). For example, older workers were often targeted for reduced hours and redundancies (Alpass & Mortimer, 2007). There is also perceived discrimination around promotions and salary increases for older workers (EEO Trust, 2006). However, Loretto (2010) suggests "hidden ageism, especially where older employees may internalize ageism, assumptions and attitudes, is less easy to detect and tackle" (p.287).

Moreover, despite many organisations introducing Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) policies that include age, Loretto (2010) argues, discrimination persists for older workers. Both overseas and New Zealand studies agree recruitment is an area where discrimination against older workers is evident (McGregor & Gray, 2002; Loretto & White, 2006a; Wilson & Kan, 2006). Whilst older workers believed they made a positive contribution in the workplace there was little optimism for getting another job if there was a need to change (Loretto & White, 2006a). This reticence is supported by studies that show employers see the employment of older workers as a last resort (e.g., Billett, Dymock, Johnson and Martin, 2011). Billett et al (2011) go on to say there is much more to be done to change employers' attitudes about the older worker.

In a New Zealand study on the attitudes of recruitment specialists Wilson and Kan (2006) found younger applicants were more likely to be shortlisted than older applicants. Furthermore, younger applicants were seen as more suitable even when all the applicants had more than the required qualifications and experience for the job (Wilson & Kan, 2006). McPherson (2008a) found some recruitment specialists suggested it was the confidence levels and age perceptions of older candidates themselves that limited their employment prospects. This could explain why the length of time a person stays with the organisation increases with age (Boyd & Dixon, 2007). A more recent survey by McPherson (2008b) proposes there is a greater awareness and appreciation of older workers by employers and recruitment agencies than previously. Recruitment specialists maintained they did recruit on merit not age but did caution the need for older candidates in particular, to keep their skills current (McPherson, 2008a).

In an environment where stereotypical attitudes of older workers exist, training and development opportunities can be limited. Negative attitudes can mean supervisors overlook older employees for training or development whereas younger colleagues are encouraged to take up opportunities offered (August & Quintero, 2001). These discriminatory practices can have an effect on an older worker's self-esteem (Hassell & Perrewe, 1995). Even so, Hassell and Perrewe (1995) argue that discrimination may not be intentional and suggest the reason employers do not invest in older employees is because they perceive they will get a better outcome by choosing those younger. Conversely, a report by the OECD (2008) argues 'on the job' training for older workers is more advantageous for employers. Older employees have a lower turnover rate and unlike their younger colleagues, are less likely to leave and take their newly acquired skills to a competitor.

In addition to obvious discrimination, covert discrimination by co-workers can also have a negative effect on the older worker. For example, August and Quintero (2001) point out older workers can be excluded from social conversations in the workplace because of the negative stereotypes associated with them. These social networks are an important element in keeping the older worker engaged in the workplace, however when these networks convey sentiments of ageism they can

also be limiting to the careers of the older worker (Greller & Richtermeyer, 2006). In other words, when the older worker is left out, it can leave them feeling isolated, anxious and lacking in confidence in new environments (Shultz & Adams, 2007; Strebler, 2009).

Chui et al (2001) found that to some extent, there was a more positive response to older workers when contact was more frequent, and they suggest familiarity can possibly decrease discrimination and negative stereotypes. Chui et al (2001) also propose that by organisations recruiting large numbers of older workers will help to counteract discrimination. Similarly, Hassell and Perrewe (1995) suggest stereotypes about older workers could change if, as the predications show, the number of older workers increases. Consequently, as the proportion of older workers increases in the workforce, this in turn, could lead to a more accurate assessment of their worth and challenge the stereotypical assumptions that have surrounded this group to-date (Hassell & Perrewe, 1995).

Overall, whilst there are some suggestions that the increase of older workers in the workforce may help to dispel stereotypical attitudes there is still evidence of discrimination against older workers. Some positive strategies, such as including age in Equal Employment Opportunities policies, have been introduced in many organisations but there is still much to be done to counteract ageism in the workplace. Both men and women experience age discrimination, however, in a review of local and international empirical literature on mature jobseekers, McGregor and Gray (2001) note how the 'older worker' is embodied as male. Research suggests that being identified as an older woman is more problematic than being an older man (e.g., Ainsworth, 2002; Moore, 2009). It is an exploration of the literature on older female workers that this chapter now turns.

2.6 Women's journey through the workplace

As stated previously, there has been a dramatic increase in women's participation in the workforce over the last fifty years. O'Neil et al (2008) describe this as a 'surge' as it contrasts markedly with the past where expectations of domesticity defined a women's career. It was expected a woman would stay home and look

after children and any paid work they did was considered a supplementary income to the 'male breadwinner' (Ginn & Arber, 1995). In the last few decades this view has changed. Women are less willing or unable for financial reasons to not be in paid employment or may re-enter the workforce in mid-life once their parenting role is over (Choo, 1999).

Despite the increased visibility of women in paid work Levinson and Levinson (1996, cited in Pringle & McCulloch Dixon, 2003) highlight the internal struggle some women have balancing home and career. Women have more career interruptions due to family commitments than do their male counterparts (O'Neil et al, 2008) as they are more likely to put their career on hold to care for the children. These interruptions also influence their income level. A woman returning to work after child rearing can be perceived as lacking up-to-date skills (Shadbolt, Brunetto, & Nelson, 2009), resulting in her re-entering the workplace at a lower level. On the other hand, this is not the case for their male colleagues. According to Eagly and Carli (2007) marriage and parenthood is considered in a positive light for men and a contributor towards higher wages and promotion.

In a competitive employment market, it has been suggested, however, that women returning to the workforce are advantaged (Austen & Giles, 2003) and there will be more opportunities for older women. This is because they are able to get part-time work in areas such as the service sector, as employers perceive them as flexible, versatile, and adaptable compared to older men (Arrowsmith & McGoldrick, 1997; Ainsworth, 2002). This view supports Kanter's (2003) argument that jobs held by women are often the roles with 'shorter chains of opportunity' and 'fewer advancement prospects'. She suggests this is often why at times, women are noted for being less motivated and committed (p.34). In a similar frame, Ainsworth (2002) suggests older women may have a low expectation of work.

Certainly the literature agrees women are under-represented in higher levels within organisations and continue to be the subject of scrutiny and stereotyping (O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005; Human Rights Commission, 2010). A lot of management literature refers to the 'glass ceiling'. The glass ceiling is defined as "perceived barriers to women progressing into senior management positions" (Pringle,

Chaudhry, Olsson, Walker, 2004, p.2). For example, Powell (2000, p.240) states “women have taken significant steps to increase their human capital through education” and whilst the gap between men and women in management roles has lessened over the years it has not changed at the top level management roles.

Pringle et al (2004) note that more recent research indicates there is an air of optimism. McDavitt (2008) found, in a New Zealand study, senior women leaders felt they had the strength required to deal with the challenges of top management, albeit in a masculine environment. The Human Rights Commission Report (2010) on women’s participation in the workforce also shows, in some sectors of the economy there has been an increase in women in top senior positions in recent years. Perhaps, rather than attitudes changing, the reason the gap is lessening is, as Kanter (2003) suggests, women in top management roles have to work harder to overcome the barriers they face.

This view is supported by Eagly and Carli (2007) who question the value of the ‘glass ceiling’ metaphor. They believe there are obstacles throughout a woman’s working life and suggest a more poignant metaphor is a labyrinth (Eagly & Carli, 2007). In a labyrinth “the passage is not simple or direct but requires persistence, awareness of one’s progress, and a careful analysis of the puzzles that lie ahead” (Eagly & Carli, 2007, p.64).

Imagery of a woman’s career as a labyrinth is concerning given women are more likely to stay in the workforce longer than their male counterparts (Loretto, 2010). The reasons women remain longer differ from men. Research suggests women consider both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, (Ginn and Arber, 1995; August & Quintero, 2001) thus stay not only for financial reasons but social reasons as well (Loretto and White, 2006a). Family commitments also play a part in a woman’s decision to stay in the workforce. Whilst organisations have addressed some of the issues around family commitments for younger women, there is still little attention paid to older women and looming issues such as eldercare (Still & Timms, 1998). Ginn and Arber (1995) point out as women may be required to care for parents or grandchildren, their careers continue to be affected by family commitments more than mid-life men. O’Neil et al (2008) suggest, organisations need to implement

policies which support women and enable them to actively contribute throughout their career life cycle.

Thus, as Still and Timms (1998) note, even though there has been a social change in gender equality in recent decades there are still significant issues for women in organisations as they age. Still and Timms (1998) found older women managers were increasingly frustrated by the male culture in organisations. In the situation where older women managers received a promotion, they experienced resentment from male colleagues by, for example, exclusion from male networks (Still & Timms, 1998). Similarly, Goldberg, Finkelstein, Perry and Konrad (2004) maintain, women and men as they age, may be treated differently at work. One example cited is that men's salaries often increase with age but this is not so for their older female colleagues.

Studies show older women also felt pressure competing with younger generations (Still & Timms, 1998). Perkins, maintain ageism is inextricably linked to sexism because a woman's social identity is linked to youthful looks and her role as child bearer (1992, as cited in Still and Timms, 1998). Similarly, Duncan and Loretto (2004) refer to this as a 'double jeopardy' and propose women became more invisible as they age as their sexuality is related to the value of their youth.

Recruitment is another challenge for older women. Studies show older women perceived they were discriminated against because of both their age and gender (Wilson & Kan, 2006; Moore, 2009). However, Moore (2009) states it was inconclusive as to whether discrimination would be the same for older men. In an early study, Ginn and Arber (1995) suggest age-related discrimination was a reason for fewer older women being in the workforce and found a lack of qualifications reduced the chances of employment for women in their fifties. Whilst the demographic has changed in recent years, the lack of qualifications may explain why older women tend to be found in low paid service sector jobs. Moore (2009) also suggested women with education and higher qualifications were "insulated from the effects of age discrimination" (p.659). Therefore, because discrimination depended on the occupation the older women was working in

(Moore, 2009), it followed that older women working in 'perceived' lower occupations are less valued.

Chiu et al (2001) also notes there are age-related jobs and suggests older workers are viewed more favourable by younger colleagues when they are employed in what they deem 'older people's jobs.' That older women are more likely to be employed in administrative or secretarial roles and younger women in personal services, such as sales and customer service, aligns with the sex/age related roles noted by Moore (2009). Clerical work, also referred to as administration, was reported as the largest single occupation category for woman (Ministry of Women's Affairs, n. a.). Furthermore, Davy and Handy (2007) propose older women working in administrative type roles, for example reception or secretarial, are more likely to be discriminated against and therefore have more difficulty finding work.

Hierarchical layers within an organisation can have an influence on how an older woman is perceived. As the literature suggests older women who work in traditionally female roles are more likely to be working in less visible areas such as administration as they age (Davy & Handy, 2007; Moore, 2009). In settings, such as the university environment, there is also a hierarchy where general/allied staff (including administrative) are assumed to be of lower status (Eveline & Booth, 2004). Eveline and Booth (2004) refer to "a strong but tacit cultural curtain dividing general and academic staff" (p.246). It was notable the New Zealand Human Rights Commission Census Report (2010), aimed at highlighting the status of women in the workplace, covered only women in academic positions in universities and excluded those in allied (administrative) roles. Eveline and Booth's (2004) study in an Australian university, argue university policies, including those on career development, reinforces the secondary status of general/allied staff. Stein et al (2000) undertook a study in an American university and also found there was discrimination against women working in administration roles. Further, they found there was a perception the academic staff were rewarded as they aged whereas the contrary applied to administrative staff who were devalued as they got older (Stein, et al, 2000).

On the other hand, older age can be considered to be the stage in a woman's careers where she is at an advantage. Wolf (2009) suggests that some older women are experiencing a late mid-life revision and perceiving this time as an opportunity to grow.

“The opportunity to retrain, make a career transition, and explore new modes of being is part of the phenomenon of the current longevity revolution – more people living longer and in good health, more older person's working, and many embarking on new careers.” (p.59)

At the same time Wolf (2009) also suggests that whilst some older women feel now is their time, their financial commitments can create a tension between wanting to learn and being employed in a full time role.

The findings from a study undertaken by Armstrong-Stassen and Cameron (2005) show that older women's career satisfaction increased when they perceived they were supported by the organisation and they were more inclined to undertake further development. This study also highlighted the differences in what managerial women and professional women felt was important in relation to their career development. Professional women had increased career satisfaction when there was a commitment to retrain them, whereas it was important to managerial women that their organisation valued their effort and cared about their well being (Armstrong-Stassen & Cameron, 2005). On the other hand, Armstrong-Stassen and Cameron (2005) question whether women already have barriers in the workforce to overcome so may make them more open to development opportunities.

In summary, even though there has been a large increase in women in the work force over recent years, there are still many barriers to be overcome. Traditionally women took responsibility for family and this has an effect on how their careers progressed. Women have more career breaks than their male counterparts due to being the child bearers. The literature agrees there is still evidence of the 'glass ceiling' preventing women from reaching top level management positions. Furthermore, findings show evidence of stereotyping and discrimination against older women in the workplace (e.g., Wilson Kan, 2006). Other viewpoints argue women suffer a double disadvantage as they age because they are female and older

(e.g., Duncan and Loretto, 2004). Evidence of disadvantage is seen in the study by Ainsworth (2002). She highlights that while older women are seen as more flexible than older men and willing to train for casual, part-time and low skilled jobs, the need for flexible hours has led women to have a low expectation of work.

2.7 Retaining older workers in the workplace

As highlighted in the previous sections, research suggests stereotypes and discrimination have an influence on whether or not older workers stay in the workforce (Desmette & Gaillard, 2008; Buyens et al, 2009). Reiterating the business case argument discussed previously, Davey and Davis (2006) suggest retaining experienced older workers makes sense in many ways. While on one hand organisations should be mindful of preserving the corporate memory, retaining older workers saves on recruitment costs, improves morale and public image and can ensure a profile match to an organisation's ageing customer base (Davey & Davis, 2006).

Desmette and Gaillard (2008) found the less the older worker identified with being an 'older worker' the more intention they had toward developing their career for the future. Armstrong-Stassen and Schlosser (2007) maintain there is very little research on the issues around developing workers over fifty. Past research has focused more on what is wrong with the older worker rather than how to manage their careers (Peeters & Van Emmerik, 2008). Van Veldhoven & Dorenbosch (2008) argue without any career advancement a worker's career stagnates and this makes them even less eligible for future development opportunities.

Job involvement plays a crucial part in older workers choosing to stay in the workforce (Buyens et al, 2009). Whilst, organisations need to be mindful not all older workers will want to take advantage of development opportunities (Armstrong-Stassen & Schlosser, 2007), Armstrong-Stassen (2008) point out, managers still need to be aware of the importance of fostering the development of older workers who already have a high self-esteem.

Further, as Kooij et al (2006) highlight there are no motivational theories that focus on specific age-related factors. Conversely, Greller (2006) claims that age

does not play much of a part in career development and suggests people who have a greater motivation to develop their careers will devote more time regardless of their age. Maurer, Weiss & Barbette (2003) suggest whilst age is one of the variables, to understand an employee's involvement in development there are multiple elements to consider:

- Being involved in activities previously
- Believing in the need for development
- Believing in their ability to develop
- Receiving intrinsic benefits from participating
- Perceiving they possess the learning qualities
- Social support inside and outside of work
- Job involvement and career insight

(Maurer, Weiss & Barbette, 2003, p.722)

Career models for older workers

Most of the literature reviewed agreed that traditional career models were not suited to the older worker cohort. Choo (1999) maintains that the 'baby boomer' generation has a different attitude towards work than previous generations and were not prepared to follow traditional employment patterns. Super's influential Career Development Theory in 1991, proposed as a person matures they face challenges and careers transitions as they proceed to a maintenance stage in late career (Robson, Hansson, Abalos, & Booth, 2006). In contrast, Savickas (1997) argues that instead of viewing career development in such a segmented way career development should focus on adaptability through the life stages and continue into old age.

Yeatts, Folts and Knapp (2000) suggest the depreciation model is the philosophy around older workers career development in some organisations. Older workers are viewed the same way as goods and assets and they depreciate as they age and therefore have a limited useful life. This model implies a person peaks early, reaches a plateau and then declines. Yeatts et al (2000) suggest a more useful approach is the "conservation model" (p. 577) which entails organisations to manage, train and educate all employees regardless of their age by viewing them as renewable assets. Yeatts et al (2000) propose that workers desire and ability to adapt to the changing work environment is dependent on individual factors, of

which some are unique to the older worker. For example, research shows older workers learn best at their own pace and with their own peers (Dennis, 1988, Gist & Rosa 1988, as cited in Yeatts et al 2000).

Career models for older woman

Duncan and White (2004) maintain that it is important to look at older workers not only in the context of age but also by gender. Kanter (2003) argues that women's careers progress differently to men's. This view is supported by Armstrong-Stassen and Cameron (2005) who state because women face many barriers during their careers, traditional models and theories of career development may not apply to women. While there are many similarities in the issues older men and women have to confront there are also some marked differences. Mostly, these are because women have always experienced some inequalities in the workplace. Duncan and Loretto (2004) argue women are never the right age. Similarly, McMahon, Bimrose and Watson (2010) maintain older women's career development needs specific attention as they are already disadvantaged. Moore (2009) describes this as "a legacy of disadvantage accumulated over a life course" (p.669). Disadvantage meant older women often had a "sense of 'what might have been' given different circumstances" (Still & Timms, 1998, p. 147).

Bailyn (2004) proposes rethinking the work-centric notion of career by positioning a career as a shifting journey. Further, this journey need not be limited to the confines of paid work but should encapsulate simultaneous social roles within family and community (Pringle & McCulloch-Dixon, 2003; Bailyn, 2004).

O'Neil and Bilimoria (2005) note a woman's career may develop in directions and advance differently to men, even when they are employed in the same organisation. Duncan and Loretto (2004) propose that organisational life is male-biased and based on career development that values continuous employment and therefore penalises women who have career breaks to raise their children. As Pringle and McCulloch Dixon (2003) note "women's careers are characterised by diverse experiences in many social roles that are interdependent and fluid" and together with work and other life experiences contributes to the "development of

their personal identity and sense of self' (p. 299). Given these factors Pringle and McCulloch Dixon (2003) discuss the need for a broader career model for women consisting of four facets, however, these four facets are not necessarily linked to age. Some aspects, such as paid work, study, family responsibilities and travel can occur at any time in one's life (Pringle & McCulloch Dixon, 2003).

O'Neil and Bilimoria (2005) maintain there are distinct patterns on how women's careers develop, dependent on contexts such as social, organisational and relational. They propose a three phase, age-linked model for women's careers consisting of three stages: the idealistic achievement phase, pragmatic endurance phase and reinvention contribution phase. The idealistic achievement phase is when young women new in the workforce feel they are in charge of their careers and take strategic steps towards the direction they want to progress. The pragmatic endurance phase is when women have been in the workforce awhile and have learnt to manage both their personal and professional life and just do what it takes to get the job done. Then lastly, the reinvention contribution stage is where older women want to live a meaningful life and reclaim their careers. O'Neil and Bilimoria (2005) describe this as a stage when older women see success as being about recognition and respect with a sense of purpose. O'Neil and Bilimoria (2005) also refer to Margaret Meads who talks about a stage in older women's careers as "postmenopausal zest" which disputes the traditional concept that as people get older they move into the stage of stability and decline (p.170).

August and Quintero (2001) suggest opportunity during life is important in how a women's career develops. By the time a worker is at retirement age some have been limited by 'opportunity structures' throughout their lives whereas others have more options. They argue that older women's career choices either increase or decrease depending on whether opportunities have amassed overtime. August and Quintero (2001) propose using an 'opportunity framework' such as training and development, job design and recruitment agencies specifically for older workers, to widen opportunities and expand the choices for older women.

In summary, the literature identifies why organisations need to consider retaining the older worker. Several studies point out older workers careers do not follow the

traditional career path and suggest there is a need for career models specifically for older workers (e.g., Yeatts et al, 2000). Yeatts et al (2000) suggests organisations manage, train and educate all employees regardless of their age by viewing them as renewable assets. Duncan and Loretto (2004) highlight the many social roles women are involved in and the effect these have on their careers. Career development is particularly important for older women who may see 'now' as their time as they have not had opportunities in the past to pursue a career in paid employment.

2.8 Older workers: Issues around training and development

Older workers are a heterogeneous group (Maurer et al, 2003) with varying attitudes towards how and when they want to learn. Armstrong-Stassen and Schlosser (2007) suggest the best way to keep older workers' skills current is through providing informal development opportunities. Strebler (2009) proposes that some older workers have a fear of learning new concepts whilst others are over confident and think they know everything without undertaking further training.

Thus opinions vary on who is more likely to undertake training and development opportunities. Pillay et al (2006) claim older women are more likely to engage in training opportunities than older men. Pillay et al (2006) also found that older workers who are in office jobs had a more positive attitude towards further training compared to those older workers in manual jobs. Pillay et al (2006) suggest this is because of continuously changing technology which requires office workers to continuously up-skill as new technology is introduced. According to Foragre and Schils (2009) older workers with less education are more likely to participate in training opportunities than those who are better qualified. Foragre and Schils (2009) attribute this to older workers compensating for their lack of formal education.

While the importance of training and development is acknowledged, many of the articles reviewed agreed that older workers are not involved in these opportunities as often as their younger colleagues (Maurer, 2001; McGregor, 2001;

Pillay et al, 2006). Employers perceive the reason for this is because the older workers are unwilling to participate (McGregor, 2001). However, McGregor and Gray (2002) suggest these perceptions could be misplaced as older workers saw themselves as more ambitious. Similarly, Chui et al (2001) argue older workers themselves have a more favourable attitude towards their ability for training and development than their younger colleagues (Chiu et al, 2001). Bertolino, Truxillo and Fraccaroli (2009) found that there was no difference in the older workers intention to participate in training compared to their younger counterparts, however there was a difference in how it related to perceived career development. In other words, the reason older workers did not undertake training was because they perceived it would not be beneficial towards their future career development. However, as McGregor and Gray (2002) highlight older workers maintained they did not receive the same opportunities as their younger colleagues. This applied particularly to computer training (McGregor, 2001). In part this could be true, as some of the literature maintained that because employers did not feel they would get sufficient return on investment from training and developing older workers they were more inclined to give opportunities to their younger employees (Boyd and Dixon, 2008). Although some studies show that age is positively related to productivity (e.g., Van Veldhoven & Dorenbosch, 2008), overall there is no real conclusive evidence as to whether job performance is related to age. The inconsistency of results can partly be attributed to differences in the type of methodology adopted (Chui, 2001). "What is clear is that older workers are not necessarily any less effective than their younger counterparts" (Chui, 2001, p.634). Furthermore, Maurer, Barbeite, Weiss & Lippsteu, (2008) maintain, in any one group there will be older workers whose performance is better than their younger colleagues.

Strebler (2009) notes older workers' attitude towards further learning, training and development is complex and suggests there is a paradox between the myths and reality. Because older workers lack the confidence it is partly true they did not get involved in training. On the other hand, when older workers felt supported they could be more willing (Strebler, 2009). Similarly, Sterns and Doverspike

(1986) suggests older workers often undertake training with a fear of failure, because of prevalent stereotypes.

Self-fulfilling prophecy

Throughout much of the literature, stereotypical attitudes were cited as being a major contributor for older workers' lack of motivation to undertake training and development opportunities (McGregor & Gray, 2001; Maurer et al, 2008). Furthermore, older workers are considered to be less adaptable, less flexible and slower to learn than their younger colleagues (McGregor & Gray, 2002; Perry & Parlamis, 2006; Alpass & Mortimor, 2007). It is suggested fear of confirming these beliefs makes it more difficult to perform up to one's potential (Robson et al, 2006; Buyens et al, 2007).

Maurer (2001) proposes that when older workers are exposed to negative stereotypes they internalise these beliefs and this, in turn, has an influence on their behaviour and their inclination to undertake training and development. Results from Maurer et al's (2008) study indicate beliefs about older workers ability rather than their motivation are a more significant factor in the negative stereotyping around older workers' development. This lack of motivation, in turn, reinforces the notion that older workers are hard to train (Choo, 1999). As the literature shows these stereotypes create a self-fulfilling prophecy (e.g., McGregor & Gray, 2002) as older workers become de-motivated.

Self-efficacy and training and development

Maurer (2001) also believes there is a link between negative stereotypical attitudes and an older worker's self-efficacy. When an older worker has a lack of self-efficacy they will not feel they are capable to undertake new training and therefore, will not choose to take up the opportunities (Maurer, 2001; McGregor, 2001). For example, Reed, Doty and May (2005) found in their study that a decline in an older worker's computer skills was specifically related to their belief they would not be able to learn successfully. Conversely, a person will be more likely to participate in an activity if they believe they will succeed (Maurer, 2001). Thus, it would follow that self-efficacy for learning and development has a definite relationship with attitude and voluntary undertaking in training and development

(Maurer, 2001). Furthermore, Maurer (2001) also suggests there is a relationship between an employee's age and their self-efficacy for development of skills and participation to undertake further training. If, for example, an older worker perceives continuous learning as challenging they will have less inclination than their younger colleagues to undertake the new challenge (Maurer & Weiss, 2010).

According to Maurer et al (2008) the context outside the work environment can also have an effect on the older workers' self-efficacy towards training and development. Maurer et al (2008) suggest that the non work environment may have a negative or positive influence depending on the perceived support. When family, friends and others outside work are supportive and encouraging towards the older worker and their development, the older worker may feel more confident and believe the learning to be worthwhile.

What organisations can do?

Brooke and Taylor (2005) suggest organisations should adopt 'age aware' practices based on an awareness of inter-relationships between workers of all ages rather than focus on 'age free' practices. Rocco, Stein and Lee (2003) points out that an age-diverse workplace means more than just keeping older workers in a job. It is a workplace where there are opportunities for training and advancement based on performance not age. This would create an environment where training and development is supported through policies therefore, older workers are more likely to be motivated to take up the opportunities. In particular, it is important for organisations to develop older women for management roles to ensure a pipeline of women who can move forward into senior management positions (Wallace & Marchant, 2009).

Warr (1994, cited in Hedge, 2006) notes that when older workers have not been involved in training for a long time they may need help "relearning how to learn" (p.535). Shultz and Adams (2007) propose older learners have difficulty 'unlearning' and so it is important to provide feedback to correct mistakes and reinforce positive learning skills. In essence it seems, as patterns of learning attitudes differ depending on gender, education level and job type 'one size does not fit all' when it comes to designing training programmes (Pillay et al, 2006).

Gibson and Barron (2003) propose that the impact of role models within an organisation also has a very significant influence on how the older workers develop and suggest that even in late career, older workers are aspiring to learn new skills. Evidence from their study suggests older workers “cognitively ‘piece together’ a role model” through observation (Gibson and Barron, 2003, p206). They further noted, that older workers identified role models who were younger and at higher hierarchical levels than the older workers themselves (Gibson and Barron, 2003).

Nevertheless, older workers who intend to stay in the workplace are more likely to participate in training than those who are expecting to retire (Fouagre & Schils, 2009). Moreover, workers must also share the responsibility to adapt and gain the skills and knowledge that is needed (Yeatts et al, 2000). Billett et al (2011) maintains that older workers will need to take care of themselves and “become agentic learners and workplace participants” and over time it is more likely that “older workers will affirm their beliefs about being competent, up to the job, able to adapt and worthy of opportunities for development and advancement” (p.1259).

In general, older workers may also need more support and encouragement towards their development than other colleagues (Davey & Cornwall, 2003). McGregor and Gray (2001) maintain older workers “receive little direction as to where to direct their future training efforts” (p.55) therefore they may require some guidance from managers.

When an organisation invests in the training and development of their older workers, the older workers believe the organisation has an interest in their well-being, feel more valued and more likely to undertake these opportunities (Armstrong-Stassen & Ursel, 2009). Studies suggest older workers more readily accept opportunities for training and development when they are fully consulted and involved in the learning process (e.g., Walker & Taylor, 1999; Strebler, 2009). Therefore, Walker and Taylor (1999) propose that training courses be developed in conjunction with older workers within the organisation and considers this as being part of ‘best practice’ initiatives.

Armstrong-Stassen and Ursel (2009) also found that when an organisation tailor the training to suit older workers learning, the older workers perceives the organisation as being more supportive. Buyens et al (2009) believe older workers would be more receptive to undertaking training opportunities if the training was tailored towards their needs. In other words, the course could be developed to the style of learning best suited to older learners. Furthermore, Choo (1999) maintains that organisations need to consider older workers' fears and anxieties when designing the training programmes. Armstrong-Stassen (2008) argue that regardless of the reasons for their low participation "employers will need not only to ensure that mature workers have access to training and development opportunities, but also encourage their participation in these activities, to create a continuous learning climate, and adapt training and development programs to the learning style of the mature worker" (p.348). Without training and development older workers skills will become outdated and obsolete resulting in them becoming de-motivated workers who underperformance and are less productive (McGregor & Gray, 2002). Thus as noted previously, the situation becomes a vicious circle reinforcing myths and stereotypes about older workers.

Finally, in spite of the recent economic recession and downturn, research continues to emphasise the importance of organisations implementing training and development strategies to ensure an effective labour force is maintained for the future (OECD, 2009). It would therefore, seem important for organisations to encourage their older employees to undertake training and development so they can remain productive in a rapidly changing work environment. Perhaps this would suggest that without being given opportunities to develop and move forward older workers would remain static and eventually this would result in their skills becoming obsolete. Thus again, another self-fulfilling prophecy could occur.

2.9 Literature review: Key points

The literature highlights the ageing workforce and the implications their impending retirement is predicated to have on the economy in the future. Building on the 'business case' argument studies emphasise that to avoid labour shortages it

will be important for organisations to train and develop their older workers so they remain productive. Whilst organisations are aware of these issues, research shows many are not necessarily implementing strategies to keep their older workers engaged and career management of the 'older worker' cohort is limited. McGregor (2001) also notes that whilst recruitment specialists are aware of the impending gap of skilled workers in the workforce, they have not altered their practices to attract and include older workers. Considering these factors, organisations will need to focus on keeping older workers in the workforce and provide more opportunities for them to develop in light of changing technologies and workplace environments.

The literature signals the complexity of categorising who is an older worker. Chronological age is used to define the 'older worker' for this study, but there are other ways of grouping individuals such as functional age, social age or organisational age (Kooij et al, 2006; Claes & Heyman, 2008; Peeters & Van Emmeriki, 2008). Chronological age has however, become embedded through centralised social policymaking. Thus New Zealand studies concur with much of the overseas research which shows negative stereotypical attitudes about the older worker are in the workplace and ageism is prevalent. To reduce these negative effects of age-related identities, such as older worker/younger worker, Desmette and Gaillard (2008) as one example, suggest management strategies are needed to create a common organisational identity rather than one based on age.

Statistics also show there is an increase in women's participation in the workforce in recent years. While gender inequality in the workplace has been highlighted for decades, the literature revealed inequalities are still prevalent in organisations and women's career development is one important area organisations need to address. Age is noted as a real impediment to entry or re-entry into the labour market (Wilson & Kan, 2006; Moore, 2009). Older women face discrimination based on both their age and gender (Duncan and Loretto, 2004). Organisations need to implement policies to support the career development of all women to enable them make a significant contribution throughout their working life (O'Neil et al, 2008).

Studies agree that older workers do not undertake training and development opportunities as often as their younger colleagues (e.g., McGregor & Gray, 2002). However, research shows that there are varying views on the reason why some older workers are more interested in undertaking training and development than others. Again, discrimination resulting from stereotypical attitudes about an older worker's ability to learn and adapt can have an influence on their motivation to undertake training and development in the workplace. Much of the literature attributes the reason for older worker low participation in training and development as a self-fulfilling prophecy. Older workers believe the stereotypical attitudes referring to their lack of adaptability and being slow to learn and therefore do not participate in the opportunities for development (McGregor, 2001; Maurer et al, 2008; Buyens et al, 2009; Gaillard & Desmette, 2010). Furthermore, there is evidence to suggest that these negative stereotypical attitudes are related to an older worker's self-efficacy (Maurer, 2001). The questions the literature raises are: does categorising a worker as an 'older worker' firstly lead to stigmatisation solely by the 'label' itself? Secondly, does this stereotypical 'label' have a negative effect on the older worker's self-efficacy?

Finally, it is predicated as the demographic shift will lead to a lack of skilled workers in the future, it seems necessary for organisations to ensure that the older workers have the opportunity to make choices to continue to be involved in fulfilling and meaningful work if they so desire. A limited number of studies in New Zealand have explored stereotypical attitudes towards older workers and their lack of motivation for training and development (McGregor, 2001; McGregor & Gray, 2002). These studies however, include older workers in general and do not focus on issues that are specific to male or female employees. The literature that does specifically look at older women showed there are significant contextual factors influencing women's training and development opportunities and career progression. The purpose of this study was to explore how stereotypes affect older women workers' self-efficacy to undertake training and development.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

Chapter Three will outline the research plan and discuss the rationale around why the researcher decided this path was the best option. This chapter builds on the brief explanation of the methodology in Chapter One.

As the literature review has highlighted, the impact of an ageing population on the workforce and the importance of training and development opportunities for the older worker have been identified as issues for organisations. The literature showed older workers do not participate in training and development as much as their younger colleagues (Maurer, 2001; McGregor, 2001) however there is no clear answer to what factors contribute to this phenomenon.

Thus the purpose of this study was to explore:

How do stereotypes affect older administrative women workers' self-efficacy in regard to training and development.

A case study framework was used to explore the phenomenon in a single organisation. In this study the researcher undertook a qualitative approach and through semi-structured interviews sought to explore and understand the meaning eleven participants attached to the experiences in their lives. The data was coded and analysed using a thematic analysis.

The first section of this chapter will discuss the theoretical perspective underpinning this study. Crotty (1998) describes the theoretical perspective as the philosophical stance that informs which methodology or plan of action forms the bases of the study. This study is underpinned by a constructivist-interpretivist theoretical perspective. Merriam (2009) advocates using this perspective when the purpose of the study is to describe, understand or interpret. The following section will outline the methods and the justification for using this process. The next section identifies the ethical considerations and limitations of the study and finally discusses the implications for organisations and future study.

3.2 Ontological considerations

The ontological and epistemological perspectives have an influence on a researcher's choice of which methodology and methods they choose to study the phenomenon.

Firstly, there are two polarised views on how knowledge is discovered, one objective and one subjective. Bryman and Bell (2003) describe an objective view or 'objectivism' as "an ontological position that asserts that social phenomena and their meanings have an existence that is independent of social actors" (p.22). For example an objectivist comes from the view point that the organisation and culture have their own reality which is separate from human interaction or influence.

The constructivist on the other hand looks at the world in a subjective way and believes 'meaning' is constructed not discovered and "different people may construct meaning in different ways, even in relation to the same phenomenon" (Crotty, 1998, p.9). In this study, the researcher was interested in hearing the participants' stories from their point of view and how they viewed the situation. Their points of view could be the same or different from others depending on their perception of the situation or the experiences they had encountered.

Bryman & Bell (2003) describe constructivism as the belief that the social knowledge or truth is subjective and based on an individual's own world view. In other words, meaning is dependent on an individual's own reality and how they see the world. Qualitative research is about understanding the meaning people have constructed in their world or how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have (Merriam, 2009, p.13). Taking this into consideration and the researcher's aim to understand the meaning from the participants' viewpoint, a constructivist approach using qualitative methods was considered to be the best stance to take for this study.

3.3 Epistemological considerations

Positivism is an epistemological position which takes an objective view of how knowledge is discovered (Crotty, 1998). As such, a positivist "advocates using

natural science methods to study social reality and beyond” (Bryman & Bell, 2003, p.16). The positivist believes social phenomenon exists as a concrete identity (Bryman & Bell, 2003) and is most often associated with the use of quantitative methods. A positivist approach is to use hypotheses to test a theory and in most cases uses large data sets for analysis (Silverman, 1993) to determine cause and effect (Merriam, 2009).

In contrast, an interpretivist mode of research has a subjective theoretical perspective and believes that each individual has a complex and multidimensional version of their own truth (Bryham & Bell, 2003). The aim of an interpretivist “is to understand this complex and constructed reality from the point of view of those who live it” (Schram, 2006, p.44). The interpretivist focuses on the individual’s action, beliefs and her/his explanations and the interpretation is in the skills of the researcher. In this study the researcher sought to focus on gaining an understanding of the meaning of the participants experience and interpret the findings through the participants’ viewpoint. Thereby taking a subjective approach to the stories they told through their own worldwide view. The interpretivist paradigm is usually equated with qualitative methods of research (Grant & Giddings, 2002).

3.4 Methodology and methods

This study sought to investigate the participants’ understanding. It is positioned as an exploratory qualitative enquiry using a case study framework and thematic analysis. The location is a large New Zealand university. The participants were a purposeful sample of older women employed in administrative roles.

In the following paragraphs the case study design and location are outlined.

Case study framework

A case study provides the framework for the overall research design (Fitzgerald & Dopson, 2009). The case study design can be used for a variety of purposes; a change initiative; theory building; explanatory, exploratory or descriptive research (Blaikie, 2000). Bryman and Bell (2003) suggest using a case study to “understand behaviour and the meaning of the behaviour in it’s specific social context” (Bryman

& Bell, 2003. P.64). The researcher considered a case study an appropriate framework to use for this study because it “can offer a powerful and useful approach to research in organizations” (Fitzgerald & Dopson, 2009, p.466). In this study a qualitative approach was taken, however there is no standard approach for using a case study framework and either a qualitative or quantitative method can be applied.

Location

Fitzgerald and Dopson (2009) highlight the ‘case’ in a case study is the unit of analysis which in this study is a large New Zealand university. AUT University is New Zealand’s newest university (AUT Annual Report, 2011). AUT University has a long history which began as a Technical College in the early 1900’s. In 1963 it became a polytechnic known as Auckland Technical Institute (ATI). Over time it grew into the largest technical institute in New Zealand and the name changed to Auckland Institute of Technology (AIT). In 2000 it became a university, known as AUT University (Shaw, 2002). Teaching, learning and research is the University’s core business and it consists of 5 faculties and offers a broad range of programmes from sub-degree to doctoral levels. AUT University has five strategic themes and it is these themes that provide a ‘frame’ for the case’.

Policies and training and development strategies

AUT University has an EEO policy which has a commitment to equal employment opportunities for all staff and it is stated on their website that they are a good employer and are committed to the development of their staff (AUT Strategic Plan, 2009-2011). The AUT’s Strategic Plan (2009-2011, p.12) states

“We will continue to value our staff and nurture their development, fostering a culture that promotes cohesiveness and develops a community of staff that supports and advances the University. Our culture, supported by appropriate contractual arrangements, will provide opportunities for academic and allied staff to pursue well-rounded careers. AUT University will be a good employer and have staff that are in demand by others. We will be committed to equal opportunity employment”

Theme 4 objective 13 is “*To promote the development of well-rounded careers for all staff*” (p.13).

This commitment is supported by AUT University’s Staff Development Policy which grants leave and an allocation of money towards further training and development courses. The Staff Development Policy requires all staff, both academic and allied, to have what is termed a yearly Individual Development Plan.

In the literature review, lack of opportunity was cited as one of the reasons why older workers do not undertake training and development as often as their younger colleagues (McGregor & Gray, 2002). Therefore, in this ‘case’ it was assumed by the researcher that the policy was being implemented so all participants should have opportunities to undertake further training and development.

A further consideration in the choice on where to undertake the case study was the position of the researcher. The researcher is an ‘insider’, an employee at AUT University and as outlined in the introductory section, the researcher is in the same age bracket as the participants. She therefore has an excellent understanding of AUT University’s Staff Development Policies and, a desire to see if these could be improved to better cater to the needs of older female administrative employees. The researcher’s ‘insider status’ assisted in the recruitment of participants so bypassed concerns associated with sourcing participants. This process alongside the data collection method is discussed in more depth in the next section.

3. 5 Data collection method

Qualitative Enquiry

The qualitative method of research is within the interpretivist paradigm (Silverman, 1993). Considering the researchers theoretical perspective for this study, a qualitative enquiry using semi-structured interviews was considered to be an appropriate method to use. Also, Cassell (2009) maintains, qualitative research has a long association with organisational research and is widely used.

The purpose of the case study was to explore the participants’ view to get a better understanding as to how stereotypical attitudes might have affected their belief in

themselves to undertake further training and development. Bryman and Bell (2003) highlight that “the qualitative enquiry process captures the information from the participants’ own viewpoint so sheds light on what they see as important and significant” (p 425). Similarly, Silverman (1993) describes qualitative research as a method to collect data through words and images with an aim to gather an authentic understanding of the situation. As a further advocate, Cresswell (1998) suggests choosing a qualitative approach when wanting to study people within their own environment, and emphasises the holistic complex picture that a qualitative enquiry creates.

As previously discussed the researcher’s underlying epistemological assumptions are a key factor influencing the type of qualitative enquiry that is used (Cresswell, 1998). A positive enquiry more structured with the intention of minimising any social or other outside considerations. On the other hand, semi-structured interviews are more flexible and seek to understand meanings within the social context. Meyer and Newman (2007) consider the qualitative interview as one of the most important data collection tools in qualitative studies.

The researcher used semi-structured interviews to collect the data. Semi-structured interviews follow an interview guide and ask open ended questions, such as how or why. This form of questioning enables the interviewer to probe and seek further clarification to gain a better understanding (Bryman & Bell, 2003). Bryman and Bell (2003) maintain semi-structured questions allow the interviewee to interpret the issues and events from their own point of view and are also more likely to result in rich detailed description.

The interview process

An advertisement (appendix i) was placed on the AUT University intranet, May 2011, asking for expressions of interest from female allied staff between the ages 50 - 65 years old. The advertisement (appendix i) stated that participation was voluntary and confidential. Interview time and location was in consultation with the participants to ensure the environment was safe and time was mutually convenient. The initial response for those interested was to contact the researcher through email. An email reply was sent with a ‘Participants Information Sheet’

(appendix ii) and 'Consent Form' (appendix iii). The women who volunteered to be part of the study then signed the consent form (appendix iii) and returned it to the researcher through the internal mail system.

Approximately two weeks after the advertisement (appendix i) was put on the AUT University Intranet the desired number of participants were confirmed and the interviews were organised. A finite number of participants were sought due to the time constraints of the researcher. After the eleven participants were confirmed the researcher considered this was a representative sample from across the university, work areas and hierarchal levels. The interviews were completed in June 2011. All participants were given the option of being interviewed in a meeting room away from their workplace. The venue was organised by either the researcher or participants.

The interviews were all held within the university. Six were held at the North Shore campus and the other five at the Wellesley Street campus. Many of the participants were unconcerned about their colleagues knowing they were being interviewed, with approximately half of the venues organised by the participants. One participant organised the interview in a shared office space. While no one was working in there at the time this was not a very satisfactory situation as there was an interruption when a colleague came into the room. The interview resumed after the colleague left. Both the participant and the researcher were not as relaxed after this interruption. This could have been because of the anticipation of being disturbed again.

The interviews

At the beginning of each interview session, the researcher reiterated the information on the Participants' Information Sheet (appendix ii) - participation was voluntary; they did not need to answer a question if they chose not to and they had the ability to terminate the interview if they wished. During the interview, the participants were asked a set of questions (appendix iv) pertaining to the following topics; training and development opportunities within the organisation; self-identity; advantages and disadvantages of being an older worker and their future career aspirations. The participants were encouraged to discuss their views and

experiences. The questions were semi-structured, meaning extra probing questions were asked to explore the participants' answers more thoroughly.

A point to note, while the interview questions did not address either stereotypical attitudes or gender issues most of the participants spoke about these. The participants' comments indicated both stereotypical attitudes about age and issues concerning women were important and relevant to the topics they were asked to discuss. This was an advantage to the researcher because both topics are directly related to the main research question. The data from these findings lead to the decision to form the following sub-questions:

How do stereotypical attitudes to ageing and older workers affect older administrative women's confidence?

What influence does being female have on the career development of older women who work in administration roles?

As previously noted, the researcher was a colleague of the participants. The researcher had considered the issue of being an 'insider' prior to the study. There are differing views on whether being an 'insider' when undertaking a qualitative enquiry is beneficial or detrimental to the outcome. Studies show there is some debate on whether an 'insider' can give an objective view. Mercer (2007) states "each position has advantages and disadvantages" (p.5). For example, Simmel (1950, cited in Mercer, 2007) argues only an 'outsider' has an appropriate degree of detachment. Conversely, Mercer (2007) argues an 'outsider' has not had the same life experience so cannot fully comprehend the situation and therefore, does not have the same empathy as an 'insider.'

In this study being an 'insider' was considered to be an advantage during the interviews. Whilst not all the participants were known to the researcher, the perception of the researcher was that the participants were more relaxed because the researcher was an 'insider' and had an understanding of the culture of the university. The participants did not need to explain the AUT University Staff Development Policy and the expectation that all staff have an Individual Development Plan which is future orientated.

Initially, the researcher considered whether because the women who came forward would have an interest in training and development and possibly be more

proactive than others. However, during the interview process it became apparent there were differing reasons for their participation. This variation gave strength to the research conclusion as whilst there were only eleven participants, the in-depth interviews gave a reflective cross-section of employees.

To illustrate this cross-section, one of the participants admitted that she had never been interested in studying and two indicated they could not be bothered doing any further development. Another participant, was contemplating undertaking some further formal study and the interview inspired her to further pursue this goal. One participant mentioned enjoying the chance to talk about herself and ponder on her future. The researcher sensed this may have been true for many of the participants. The reason could have been because they are older females and there is less interest shown in their career and future development. As one participant noted, she had never had the space to reflect on the areas discussed and felt it was a positive experience and thought provoking. She had not given a lot of thought to where she was in her career or how the path she travelled had lead her to the role she was currently working in.

The eleven interviews were approximately 30 – 40 minutes long, were audio-taped and later transcribed by the researcher for analysis. During the transcribing process it was necessary to replay the audio-tape numerous times to ensure all of the words in the interview were heard correctly and accurate connotations put on the meanings. While this was time consuming it was helpful as the data became familiar and the meanings became clear. Silverman (1991) suggests transcribing by the researcher is an important element in qualitative research as it allows the researcher to listen to the interviewees repeatedly thereby gaining a better understanding of what is being said. Braun and Clarke (2006) propose the process of transcription is seen by some researchers as the key phase where meaning is created and forms the early part of the analysis. During the transcribing process in this study any identifying factors from the transcriptions were removed before printing with participants labelled numerically from participant 1 through to participant 11.

Participant sample

The sample of participants was a purposeful selection of eleven female employees in the 50 – 65 year old age bracket working in administrative roles at the university. This age bracket was selected because it is the age range considered to be an 'older worker'. It is also the age bracket identified in the literature as less likely to participate in training and development (McGregor, 2001). As noted earlier, previous studies in New Zealand have looked at 'older workers' as a homogenous group (McGregor & Gray, 2002; Wilson & Kan, 2006) so this study chose to focus specifically on women. The literature shows women already have multiple barriers in the workplace (Still & Timms, 1998; Armstrong-Stassen & Cameron, 2005) and ageing is a concurrent barrier they face (Duncan & Loretto, 2004). From the start of the study there was never any intention to generalise to other work places beyond a university environment.

Eleven women returned the consent form (appendix iii) and all eleven were interviewed. Three of the women worked part time and the other eight worked full time. Several of the participants heard about the research through others.

On reflection, the researcher considered the participants could have been more confident than some of their peers. This is one of the limitations of a voluntary process and there is no scope in this study to measure whether this bias was the reality. One participant in particular, was proud of her attitude towards training and development and what she had accomplished. Several of the participants mentioned other older women colleagues who were apathetic towards the training and development opportunities and had no interest in improving themselves or looking for another job.

3.6 Data analysis

The data was analysed using a thematic analysis with guidelines from Braun and Clarke (2006). The strength of thematic analysis is flexibility and the ability to provide a rich detailed account of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Braun and Clarke (2006) note that one of the criticisms of qualitative research is "the perception that anything goes" (p.95) however they argue the clear guidelines they

provide result in a more deliberate and rigorous analysis. Furthermore Braun and Clarke (2006) address the pitfalls and outline the advantages and disadvantages of using thematic analysis.

Phases of thematic analysis: Braun & Clarke (2006, p.87)

1. Familiarizing yourself with your data
2. Generating initial codes
3. Searching for themes
4. Reviewing themes
5. Defining and naming themes
6. Producing the report

To *familiarise yourself with the data* Braun & Clarke (2006) state the importance of immersing yourself in the data by repeated reading and searching for patterns and meaning. They describe this phase as “providing the bedrock for the rest of the analysis” (p.87). The interviews were read numerous times and this helped to understand the meaning of the data. Braun and Clarke (2006) point out that analysis is not a linear process but one where the researcher goes back and forth between the phases.

The second phase is to *generate the codes*. This process took time but Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest it ensures that nothing is missed and the researcher has a thorough understanding of the data. Initially the data was numbered and colour coded and then categorised into numerous categories. Through the coding process the patterns began to become clear. As Braun and Clarke (2006) point out, data is not coded in a “epistemological vacuum” (p.84). In other words, the researcher’s epistemological perspective drives the thematic analysis. The researcher’s epistemological perspective was to understand the data from the point of view of the participants and interpret the meaning, therefore it was important to take time over this process and ensure the coding was accurate.

The next stage in Braun and Clarke’s (2006) outline is *searching for themes*. This stage involves sorting all the codes into potential themes. Once all the data was manually coded it was clear there were four main themes. In thematic analysis the themes do not emerge they are identified and the decision is driven by the researcher’s own theoretical perspective (Braun & Clarke, 2006). At this stage the

data was linked into the identified themes. Initially, some of the data was coded for more than one theme. However, after further investigation the main themes were identified. Braun and Clarke (2006) also caution against using the list of semi-structured interview questions as the themes.

Following on from this, the next stage is *reviewing themes*. At this stage Braun and Clarke (2006) point out some of the themes may not be themes as there is not enough data to support them. On the other hand some themes maybe too large and need to be broken down. Two of the themes identified in this study, 'self-identity' and 'influence of stereotypical attitudes' were closely linked and could have been merged into the one theme of 'self-identity'. However, as both themes were significant to understanding the research question, the decision was made to explore each separately.

Next *defining and naming themes* – Braun and Clarke (2006) highlight it is important not to expect a theme to cover too much and the researcher must ensure the name of theme captures the essence of what the theme is about. The themes identified were a reflection on the factors that were significant to the participants. The four themes identified from the data were very relevant to the research question. The data was finally categorised into four main themes; self-identity; women and careers; influence of stereotypical attitudes and finally, training and career development for the future. These four themes were relevant to the two sub-questions and the main research question. Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest "the 'keyness' of a theme is not necessarily dependant on quantifiable measures" (p.82). In other words, the significance to the research question is important when defining a theme.

Braun and Clarke (2006, p.94) suggest when analysing the themes to ask the following questions: What does this theme mean? What are the assumptions underpinning it? What are the implications of the theme? What conditions are likely to have given to rise to it? Why do people talk about this thing in this particular way? What is the overall story the different themes reveal about the topic? Following this process, the researcher compared all the data and determined the main concepts. These four main concepts were further explored.

Finally the last stage is *producing the report*. Braun and Clarke (2006) point out that there are different stages that one can engage with the literature depending on the researcher's perspective. Some researchers argue that by reading beforehand can narrow how one views the data. Conversely, other researchers propose that the literature enhances your analysis by "sensitizing you to more subtle features of the data" (Tuckett, 2005 cited in Braun & Clarke, 2006, p86). In this study Chapter Two, the literature review, highlighted issues that formed the question this study sought to answer.

3.7 Ethical considerations

The purpose of this study was to explore the participants' perspective on how stereotypical attitudes about older workers have affected their belief in themselves and their willingness to undertake ongoing training and development. The researcher was aware that some of the discussion could have been of a sensitive nature and participants may have felt vulnerable. The researcher had agreed to adhere to the ethical principles set out by AUT Ethics Committee (AUTEK) throughout the process. Confidentiality and personal information was respected and all practical steps were taken to ensure interviewees were in a safe environment. Being an 'insider' was a consideration when deciding to undertake the study at the AUT University and the researcher acknowledges the research shows there are varying views on whether being known to those being researched has a positive or negative influence on the study. In this study there appeared to be no issues about being an 'insider', on the contrary, the researcher considered it was an advantage.

On the first contact the participants were all given a Participants Information Sheet (appendix ii) outlining the purpose of the study, identifying any potential risks and the assurance of confidentiality and respect for privacy at all times. Participants signed the Consent form (appendix iii) agreeing to voluntary participation with the understanding they could withdraw at any time.

The venue for the interviews was discussed with the participants and most took place in a meeting room either at the Wellesley Street or North Shore campus depending on the participants' choice. The participants were advised the

interview would be audio-taped before the interview began. The audio-tapes were transcribed by the researcher and participants' names and identifying comments were omitted from the transcriptions.

The participants' principle role was to share their experiences with the researcher. During the interviews the researcher was sensitive to any contentious issues that arose from the interview process. All participants were forthcoming and did not appear to have any concerns about sharing their views.

3.8 Limitations and potential benefits

The findings are limited to the context of a tertiary education environment, in this case, AUT University. The purpose of the case study was not to generalise to other 'like' organisations or workplaces. The study aimed to add further understanding to the body of research investigating stereotypical attitudes and self-efficacy and how these have an effect on older female workers' motivation to undertake training and development opportunities.

Given the limitations of the study, the potential benefits of this exploratory research are:

- to identify patterns pertaining to training and development of older women workers that can be investigated in another setting
- to improve understanding about the specific issues in relation to stereotypical attitudes and self-efficacy that can effect older women workers motivation to undertake training and development opportunities at AUT University
- to add to the body of knowledge on the link between stereotypical attitudes and the self-efficacy of older workers in regard to undertaking training and development opportunities

Overall, the researcher hopes the findings from this study will provide the impetus to encourage older women employed in administrative roles in what Eveline and Booth (2004) aptly describe as the "ivory basement" to undertake

opportunities to fulfil their future potential and to be appreciated as an “indispensable part of everyday university activity” (p.24).

3.9 Summary of the methodology

To summarise, the aim of the study was to explore how stereotypical attitudes affect the self-efficacy of older female administrative staff to undertake training and development opportunities. The study was conducted within a constructivist-interpretative paradigm. The methodology the researcher used was a qualitative enquiry in a case study framework seen as appropriate for an exploratory study. Semi-structured interviews in a safe environment gave participants an opportunity to talk of their personal experiences of training and development and discuss issues not discussed previously. Using a purposeful sample meant participants’ responses could be examined more thoroughly. This was an advantage as a researcher was able to gain a good understanding of what participants said. The data was analysed using thematic analysis based on the guidelines suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006). The researcher identified the four main themes: self-identity; women and careers; influence of stereotypical attitudes, and training and career development for the future. It is these four themes that frame the findings discussed in Chapter Four.

For reasons of confidentiality in the following discussion no persons or departments are named and specific details which may identify them have been avoided.

Chapter 4: Findings

4.1 Introduction of findings

In this chapter, the data selected from the eleven semi-structured interviews are presented within four main themes. The researcher focused on the meaning and understanding of how the participants viewed their situation. The interview questions (appendix iv) were chosen to ascertain: firstly, how the participants perceived their own identity within the workplace and their perception of how their work colleagues saw them; and secondly, if the participants perceived 'ageing' as being a factor for their participation or lack of participation in ongoing training and development. The following sections will outline the findings from the data collected. The findings are structured under each of the four main themes identified from the analysis of the data.

1. Self-identity;
2. Influence of stereotypical attitudes;
3. Women and Careers;
4. Training and Career development for the future.

4.2 Theme 1: Self-identity

Self-identity or how the women viewed themselves is an important factor towards ascertaining if stereotypical attitudes about 'older workers' have an effect on the participants.

Overall most of the women appeared to have a positive self-identity and considered they made a significant contribution to their work team or the organisation. However, whether their positivity was as deep rooted as it first appeared to be was questionable, because over the course of the interviews some of their comments were incongruent with their previous statements.

Initially, when asked about how they would describe themselves in the workplace the participants did not appear to identify with the categorisation 'older worker' and their chronological age was not mentioned. When defining their identity in their work role participants were optimistic about their contribution to the workplace and the support they gave to colleagues. At the beginning of the interviews the comments indicated the women had a good self-image and highlighted the importance of their work identity. The following excerpt is an example of one participant's view on the importance of work identity.

Participant 4: I think identity at work is very important particularly if you feel you are good at what you do, that you've put a lot of effort and energy into it and it's all the networks you make. It's all the contacts you make that helps to kind of secure that identity. I suppose my work identity is important to me.

Overall, all participants spoke positively about how they viewed themselves in the workplace. Their comments highlighted the perception they made a positive contribution and were valued.

Participant 7: I feel valued and very inclusive as a member of the team. Definitely a member of the team - which is really nice.

Participant 8: As an administrator you feel like you're there to help others and to do all their bits and pieces that need doing and I've begun to feel quite important in that role in that they can't operate too well without your help...to tell them you've got to do things this way.... point them in the right direction those sort of rules and things and just to be there for people.

Participant 2: I like to think I'm bubbly and I bring some life to the office and that people enjoy working with me and that I contribute in terms that I glue everything together.

Their good self-image was confirmed in the following question when the participants were asked to describe how their colleagues see them at work. Again the women mostly responded positively and were proud of the support they gave their colleagues.

Participant 10: Someone who's responsive, I guess hardworking, they can come to me for answers to their questions...

...because the role that I'm in requires me to have a lot of knowledge about AUT and study and administrative processes and support so I could be seen as being quite knowledgeable in the role has certainly done that.

One participant who was relatively new to the university setting described how she felt about this situation. Overall her comments indicated that her working environment and colleagues were supportive and she was confident in herself.

Participant 11: Well in the workplace sometimes I feel like a baby because I'm quite new to AUT and it's a university, ... so there's stuff I'm struggling with, but I'm feeling a lot better about that now. I feel like I'm in control and have got a good handle on things and if there's stuff I don't know I have no problem with going to someone and finding out, getting help.

....But I feel like I'm a valued member of staff and people come to me for information or support and I'm usually able to help them out.

One of the participants described how now she is older that it matters less to her how others see her as she is more confident and relaxed than when she was younger.

Participant 2: I distinctly feel – I care a little less about how people see me. I was a lot more conscious of my peers in the past. And as an older person I can walk around xxxx feeling comfortable and confident. I guess you start to relax a lot more about who you are as you're older and I think in that sense it's an advantage.

Ten out of eleven of the participants were very positive about their age in relation to how they related to their colleagues. Whilst still positive about the relationship, two of the participants working in a team of mostly younger people, proposed that their colleagues saw them as older and because of their age and gender they were cast into the role of confidant or advisor.

Participant 1: I don't know, I think they see me as helpful. But my team other than my direct manager are younger, but I guess they see me as an older woman...I don't know perhaps they see me as someone they can ask if they want something. A couple of them come and confide in me.

Participant 5: I'm becoming well not a 'mother figure' to them anymore, I'm a 'grandmother figure', it's a bit depressing.

Researcher - Do you feel like that?

Participant 5: Not quite, but it's quite funny having adult conversations with them.....working with people that are your children's age and not looking at them as you look at your children, you know, they're work colleagues. But then you start feeling....like they ask advice and stuff and totally outside work because you're there and I think I get on easily with people...

One participant indicated younger staff had a negative effect on her confidence and she suggested they may have a better understanding when they were older. Her comments indicated she could have been experiencing a lack of respect.

Participant 3: There's one part of me that feels I'm quite confident and there's another part where I'm oh just wondering a little bit if this is what they want - I feel that there's a lack of ... and I also feel too, that particularly again from younger staff members who have been here a long time who I have involvement with, they tend to be not patronising but, well something a little not so strong as patronising, but that kind of thingthey'll understand when they're older .

In some cases the participants worked in an environment where the majority of employers could be categorised as 'older workers' and this was a reason they did not 'stand out'. The following excerpt illustrates this:

Participant 6: I suppose in our school we have a lot of older people - academics and admin staff - a lot of them are older, I mean a good percentage of our school are 60 plus , we're working in that kind of environment.

Most of the woman saw age was beneficial when relating to other people. Through their years of experience they had developed skills which helped them deal with different situations.

Participant 2: I feel I have a lot of getting on with people experience I've been through a learning curve of coping with different personalities so I think I bring a certain wisdom to the way I deal with people and relate to them which I didn't have 10 or 20 years ago. Just because I leapt out and do stuff in life I think it's important to get on with people ...That's just something you have to learn as time goes by.

Participant 9: I'd like to think that they would think I'm quite friendly, I'm helpful; I'm more than willing to get up and help somebody. I like to share information with people who lack skills or something like that, so I think they would pick up on that.

Overall the interviewees comments appeared to show their confidence had grown through the experiences they had encountered. Confidence in their ability had also increased, something the participants associated with ageing.

Participant 9: ... as you get a little older you get more confident I think.

Participant 4: I think you become more confident, simply through knowing your area, your work....

Participant 11: *Confidence in my own ability and belief in myself. All the networks I've established over the years that's a huge strength....*

Intertwined with self-identity was the question of “what are the advantages and/or disadvantages of being an ‘older worker’?” Most of the women felt the experience they had gained with age was a real advantage. This experience was not only work experience and the knowledge and skills they had accumulated over the years of being in the workforce but also their life experience. Participants were proud of what they had to offer and regarded their life experience and personal growth as something to be valued. Their comments indicated now they were older they had developed better judgment and more ability to rationalise. For example:

Participant 1: *....the older workers like me have still got a lot to offer, experience and knowledge...*

Participant 3: *The advantages are my life experience... ok... being out and having worked in other organisations and general life experience and your own personal growth.*

Participant 4: *I think you develop to be more assertive. Being more up front, just communicating with things, I think you develop hopefully better communication skills as you get older. I still worry about things unnecessarily but not to the same extent I think I used to and I certainly think I handle things in a more level way – it's taken me a long, long time to learn that. I think it's from being in the workplace whatever kind of things you've been doing you kind of amass a whole lot of capability.*

Participant 7: *I think the advantages are the knowledge and your work history... you perhaps see a broader picture because of the experience that you've had.*

Participant 9: *Advantages to me is definitely experience – you have more arrows in your quiver to draw from because you've been through situations, you gain judgment as you get older. So you're able to rationalise things there as well. So if something's not working you look behind it and think why is it not working, what's not right about it? What can be done about it? So you tend to draw on your experience to do the job really.*

Participant 8: *....I feel like I'm more in control now about how I see work and do work than probably when I was in my early 20's sort of thing you know. You're just able to prioritise better being an older worker.*

Participant 10: *And does it give me advantages? – definitely advantages. It's just through sheer experience of people.....and I think I'm probably... when you've had a wider experience you're a little bit more tolerant of some things. There's definite advantages....*

Participant 11:... *every now and then I make errors but it doesn't worry me now like it used to when I was a lot younger. I think that age thing is a real plus because you're happy to admit mistakes, sort them out and move on. Whereas, in earlier days when you're still trying to prove yourself, it's a bit scarier.*

Longevity was mentioned by several of the participants. These participants had worked in AUT University for many years, through the transition from Polytechnic to University status and had grown with the organisation. The length of time they had been in the organisation was viewed as beneficial. Three out of the eleven participants interviewed cited this factor as being important because they had built up networks and had strong organisational knowledge. The following examples highlight this finding:

Participant 4: *The advantages are absolutely the experience and the expertise that you have. You just build that up over years and years particularly if you, like I've stayed in tertiary education so having done loads of different roles even though I've stayed in the same place. But it's a big employer. You really, really fundamentally understand the place and you know all the people, you don't know all of them but you certainly know how the organisation works, you know who to go to, you know all the systems in the organisation you feel comfortable. You're lucky enough to have your own people around you who work with you. You've got all your networks both internal, external.*

Participant 1: *I think there's so many advantages particularly if you have worked in one workplace for so long. You know the system, you know the people. You are friendly with so many people.*

Participant 6: *...the knowledge that you have of systems and people that is a big advantage. The ability to show others how things could and should be done.*

Participant 4 spoke about other people of a similar age to her who are comfortable staying in the same job because they saw this as security but she thought it was more exciting to move around.

Participant 4: *I see different people around me who are probably about my age and I'm constantly surprised by the different attitudes that come out in that age group, and some people are very comfortable, they love the security of being in a job they have been in a long time... I have done a lot changing around in my life and been in jobs for 2 years and moved on to another one. Quite like the excitement of living a life.....*

On the other hand, one participant also suggested that being in the organisation for a long period could result in being taken-for-granted. She questioned whether

people saw her as 'part of the furniture' and if this was related to the length of time in the university or whether it was related to her age.

Participant 6: Well I don't know if I would probably confuse...being older to longevity in the job...

Sometimes I suppose people think you're part of the furniture if you've been around too long, that's part of longevity in the job rather than being older. I don't particularly perceive myself as old so I just don't think along those kind of lines. I am what I am is what I think of myself.

There was also some frustration for this participant and a possible sense of stagnating in her career or more specifically not given the acknowledgement she deserved. She attributed this to the evolving nature of her role and responsibilities that had shifted over time.

I don't know whether it's the historical thing with how our xxxxx has always been run.....I was the only kind of person who did any of that kind of work around the place I always worked really closely with xxx but it wasn't a role.

The division between the academic and allied staff was mentioned by several of the participants when they spoke about their self-identity. These participants referred to a difference in the status accorded to each.

Participant 6: I guess there's much more emphasis in our xxxx on academic staff than allied.

..... you're working in such an academic environment and academics are on such a different plane and it's not that they don't want to encourage you or that sort of thing it's just they don't think about it (training and development).

Participant 8: Sometimes people think there's them and us between academics and allied and I don't worry about that 'cause I think we're all here to do a job and we're all working for the same person and we've just got to all work together to make it all happen.

Seeking another job was the one area where most of the participants showed they had no confidence. Whilst nearly all the women felt positive about their identity in their present circumstances this was not the case if they were to change work places. Many of the women in this study appeared to hold stereotypical attitudes of how they thought they would be perceived in other work places. Most of the women were concerned age would be a major factor if they applied for a job

outside of the university. Several felt their age would also have a negative influence when applying for different roles within the university.

Participant 1: Yes, that's stopped me applying for jobs – the trauma of going for jobs and really feeling that I wouldn't have a show anyway because of my age has stopped me.

Participant 2: ...if I'd really stopped and thought I would have to leave the job and find another tomorrow there is a certain... slight anxiety that sets up in me that I didn't used to feel 20 years ago... it's about whether I would find a job 'cause you do feel that the job market is for the young and the innovative and the new ones coming out that don't need to be paid quite so much.

One participant gave an example of a situation which confirmed her belief that the university would not give an opportunity to an older applicant.

Participant 1: In one case the person was told they really want someone younger. I guess if we're looking at someone 60 the assumption is that they are going to leave at 65 but that's not always the case so I think AUT do generally want a younger workforce and that's understandable.

Participants showed they had confidence in their own ability and skills to do the job; however it was clear most felt they would be overlooked for a younger applicant if they were applying for the same position now. One participant mentioned she would have a concern about being accepted because of her age. The researcher assumed she meant accepted by the group because she was older and perhaps not in the same age group as the majority of the staff.

Participant 7: My concerns I guess are being accepted. But mostly I think they're unfounded. If I were to go for a job interview I'd have a lot more concerns because I think a younger one would get the job.

Another participant spoke about other older colleagues who had the perception they were too old to apply for another job and therefore were in a position where they were not happy but had no confidence to make a change.

Participant 2: Sometimes I've come across people who are in a job, (I'm thinking of a couple now), who have felt they are too scared to move out, apply for another job they'd never get one, like that they're too old for it or something. This is what they are telling themselves and so they hate what they are doing and therefore it's no longer about enjoying their work.

One participant highlighted a specific experience she had at AUT University when applying for another administrative role. She had the perception that even if both applicants had the same qualifications, age would be the deciding factor.

Participant 1: My understanding and it's just that at a certain age AUT prefer a younger workforce coming through. But the older workers like me have still got a lot to offer, experience and knowledge..... My experience is I have seen people in my level apply for other jobs for whatever reason either they would like a new challenge and I'm talking about myself as well, apply for new jobs and although we seem to have the same skills that are required, we don't get the job.

Researcher: Is this internal?

.....Yes internal jobs. We're not offered the job in the end. In fact I've had experience of a couple of friends who have been for jobs and of course I haven't been on the interview panel but they seemed to be qualified, they seemed to have what..[is required]. They've not got the jobs.

When asked if she felt she was qualified to apply for another position Participant 1 felt she was qualified to apply for jobs but was not confident because of her age.

I do I do, I feel that I'm qualified for the job But don't feel comfortable because of my age.

Even in the case when the researcher asked if training and development might improve their chances of securing the position the participants did not believe it would make any difference.

Participant 7: I still think if it was between me and someone younger the younger one would probably get the job..... I wouldn't be very confident going outside the university to get a job.

Most of the participants intended to remain at AUT University at the time of the interviews with the exception of two participants who were nearing retirement age. One of the participants that had plans to resign from AUT University stated

Participant 8: "I don't want to apply; no I would only do it if it was offered. I'm not going to go out looking for anything".

To summarise, all participants had a positive self-identity in their current workplace and were confident in their ability to perform. Overall most participants thought there were more advantages than disadvantages in being older and cited experience as the main advantage. Comments showed they were

proud of the attributes they brought to the workplace. They saw themselves as valued and important members of their work team. When referring to self-identity, some of the women highlighted the length of time they had worked in the organisation. The association between age and longevity highlighted the difficulty identifying whether it was age or longevity in the workplace that influenced how these participants viewed themselves and how others saw them. In addition, the perception of a difference in the academic and allied was referred to by several participants. There was evidence to suggest the participants' self-identity could also be associated with the belonging to a particular group perceived to have lower status.

Many of the participants mentioned the increase in their confidence as they had aged. The one exception was if they were to apply for a new position or change workplace. The participants' comments clearly illustrated that in this situation many lacked confidence and their perception was that their age was a significant factor when applying for a new position. One of the participants indicated she believed she had experienced age discrimination when applying for a position within the university. The perception of several of the women was that a younger candidate would be employed over an older person regardless of whether both candidates had the same qualifications and level of experience.

4.3 Theme 2: Stereotypical attitudes

To assess participants' perception of whether stereotypical attitudes affect older administrative women's self-efficacy in regard to training and development, it was important to establish if the interviewees had an awareness of stereotypes or were influenced by stereotypical attitudes. The participants were not directly questioned about stereotypes, however, many mentioned stereotypical attitudes and traits that surround older workers. These findings are significant because they confirmed the participants had an awareness of stereotypes. Some of the women talked about these stereotypes in relation to themselves and others acknowledged the stereotypes but disputed they applied to them.

The following excerpts are examples where the participants spoke about stereotypical traits older workers are assumed to possess:

Participant 11: *I think probably the young people look at me and think that I'm incompetent but you know I just think they look at older people in general and think that we're really old... so it may be breaking down that little barrier.*

Participant 3: *I mean obviously the older one is the slower to pick up on new things not that you just need more time to assimilate and have it clearly explained. I find with dealing with some of the younger staff members who are very familiar with their roles they kind of flash through it, you know, they're not very clear at communicating ... step by step by step....and I'm often going back and saying you know what about so and so and ... it's like they kind of anticipate that you read between the lines and I think it's their familiarity with their role.*

The comments from one participant emphasised she did not associate with the stereotypical vision she had of someone nearing the traditional retirement age and had an assumption their ability would be less because of their age.

Participant 2: *I get a bit of a shock when I think in 10 years it's retirement age. I honestly don't feel in terms of my abilities that I'm as old as someone who might be going to retire.*

Another participant highlighted the positive stereotypes usually attributed to an older worker.

Participant 9: *Older people I think are really... come on let's get the job done and will put – I tend to put the job ahead of me because that's what it's all about. Whereas younger people are very good at saying enough's enough...*

One participant disputed that the stereotypical traits associated with older workers applied to her. She suggested these negative attitudes however could be a disadvantage, as other people perceived that older workers possessed them.

Participant 10: *I think there are some disadvantages but only because of perception not what the reality is. I personally don't feel there's any disadvantage to me being older. My brain still works really well but there is some perceived disadvantages to how people see maybe older people aren't as receptive to new ideas. Maybe older people don't pick up the technology as well as younger people... so I guess the disadvantage for me is about perception rather than the reality.*

Another participant spoke about older workers having to try harder and she associated this as similar to the barriers that women have to overcome.

Participant 4: *I think older workers have to push that level more, it's like women have to push harder. It's whether they are male or female they have to push harder.*

The researcher asked this participant who she would class as an older worker. In responding, Participant 4 discussed how she thought older workers were perceived by others. This participant also agreed that she had a similar perception of some older workers, however she attributed this more to their personality than their ability.

Participant 4: *Probably over 50. Otherwise you are probably perceived by people as being in it for ages. One way you could be perceived as nothing new, nothing innovative, someone else could come in from outside or a new one and just bring a different dimension to a job. So if I look around at different older workers at work in some ways it's probably my perception too ... some of them. But I don't see people that way I just see them as having all of the skill and talent. There would be some that never try, never change, but that's more to do with their personalities I think than their age. There's other people of our age or above that actually are changing and doing different things. I've seen them maybe move from an executive role to another kind of leadership role, one with less maybe responsibility to a certain extent, or go into a less whole university role and go into one that's more targeted.*

Several of the participants held views on younger workers and made assumptions about younger people's ethics or values.

Participant 9: *It can be quite challenging dealing with younger people because they have different ethics and values.*

The researcher assumes participant 9 is referring to older workers being perceived as having better work ethics because of stereotypical traits attributed to older workers and younger workers.

One participant perceived that an employer would rely on stereotypical traits such as; younger people are more flexible, as a reason why a younger person would be chosen first for a job. This participant further commented on the stereotypical traits that she perceived older workers to possess such as loyalty and confidentiality.

Participant 7: *Just because I think they tend to go for a younger person thinking probably they are more capable, more flexible you know, where as we know the older ones not going to flit off here there and everywhere and will be more loyal. I think there's greater confidentiality with older ones. They know what you can talk about and what you shouldn't talk about.*

To summarise, the data revealed there was a strong link with the theme of self-identity and stereotypical attitudes. Whilst the comments the participants made describing how others saw them and how they saw themselves were mainly positive, it was evident that stereotypical attitudes around older and younger workers were still prevalent. One participant who was at the younger end of the age scale did not associate with someone old enough to retire because she still felt she had ability. However, overall, the participants indicated older workers were capable and their experience was an asset and positive stereotypes such as loyalty and confidentiality were confirmed. On the other hand negative traits were disputed with the exception of older workers being slower to adapt to new technology. Seeking new employment was one area where comments confirmed there was a lack of confidence. Those participants who were felt more confident to secure another position outside the organisation were in their early 50's and were working at a higher level and already had formal qualifications. One participant gave several examples of example of situations where she had experienced perceived discrimination.

4.4 Theme 3: Women and careers

It became evident during the interviews that being female had a significant effect on the participants' career trajectories. The women discussed how families had been a primary influence on their working life. The participants were not asked specific questions about their family situation or if they had children at home, but many mentioned their personal circumstances. Family appeared to be the top priority for several of the participants with comments signalling how they organised their working life and career development around family responsibilities.

Participant 7: I felt that my family came first before work and I couldn't be fair to an employer by taking on full time employment. I was told I should and then you get time off for this and time off for that but I couldn't because that's not my work ethic.

The following excerpt illustrates how family commitments can change as children get older.

Participant 7: *Yes, it's been a bit of a struggle. I found it a struggle with a family and then I've got mum and dad as well, so family commitments. It wasn't only the children. I found that as they got independent mum and dad became more dependent.*

Many of the women had career breaks for child rearing. When re-entering the workforce they had to retrain or up-skill as over the time they had been away their skills had become outdated. For example, one participant spoke about needing computer skills which had not been required previously.

Participant 9: *When I came back into the work force I needed.. sort of computer skills 'cause that was all fairly new to me 'cause I left the workforce for a quite a long time and ...*

Participant 7: *I came here because, partly because I was on my own with 2 young children and I wanted to be at home for them so through xxxx they suggested I retrain....*

In most cases, being a mother/wife/daughter had a large influence on the career path they had taken. One participant reflected on a previous role she had applied for and got but it did not give her the work/life balance she required.

Participant 7: *So I got that and realised that management wasn't much good for a mother and part time worker.*

Her comments also showed some disappointment in attitudes towards a woman's role in society and highlighted how these have changed over the years. She spoke about society's expectation for women to manage both a career and a family.

Participant 7: *... people seemed to frown on you being at home, you know attitudes have changed so much and I think it's very sad children need you at home and.... I just enjoyed being a mum yesyou know some people need to go out to work don't they and I'm the other way I like to be available at home.*

When one of the participants reflected on her past she spoke of missed opportunities and the realisation that it was too late to pursue a new path.

Participant 2: *I feel dare I say, too late for that... There are times at the moment where I think gee, I have had some opportunities presented to me and I didn't take them, the path not taken not chosen and sometimes... I tend to opt for something that's safe you know.*

Appearance was another factor that was mentioned by one of the participants. When asked whether she could see any disadvantages of being an older worker this participant mentioned physical appearance as a disadvantage. She spoke

about new, younger female employees who outwardly appeared to be very confident and explained how it made her feel.

I'm starting to. I didn't probably until recently. You look in the mirror and you're getting older and you think it's the same person and there's all these wrinkles and stuff.... I look at particularly the new women around the place and they're flash and out there....

The 'glass ceiling' was referred to by a participant who was working in a higher level role. This participant felt that being an older woman had prevented her from moving forward and getting to the next level. Furthermore being older made promotion even more difficult.

Participant 4: I think women reach this what they call the glass ceiling and I look at our organisation and there's a prevalence of female students, a lot of female employees and in certain areas there's more female than males but, the males seem to move through to the most senior positions.

..... it's definitely a disadvantage being female.

..... it wouldn't make any difference what training I did I wouldn't get there, right. I think one it's because I'm female doesn't help, doesn't totally preclude it but doesn't help. Two because I'm older now.

Another of the participant's mentioned the challenges of gender role stereotypes in relation to the role of an administrator.

Participant 9: I just think administration is a very undervalued role in any organisation by most people. I think it comes from the days when it was the blonde in the typing pool you know. I think that's a perception that it's not necessarily a career it's what people do 'cause they can't do anything else....

Men treat women administrators reasonably roughly in my experience – that's the experience I've had.... I think he [referring to a senior manager] had difficulty dealing with an older woman who was subordinate to him. I think the difficulty was with him rather than with me.

In summary, the interviews showed being female had an influence on the career trajectories of the participants and family commitments had an influence on career choices. Raising children had meant many had a career break and when they returned to the workforce needed to update their skills. Several of the women still had children at home and they were their priority. Several of the women mentioned societal shifts from valuing 'stay at home mothers' to the expectation

that women had meaningful careers in addition to managing family responsibilities.

One of the women commented that the 'glass ceiling' was a reality for her career development and she indicated that being an older woman in the workplace was the reason her options were now further limited. The ageing process had meant the physical appearance of women was a factor in how they were perceived and there was competition from younger women because of their youthful looks and their display of confidence. In other words, the data highlights the perception that it did not matter whether they undertook any further training and development or not, they would still be categorised as an older female and as a consequence, perceived as less valuable than their younger female counterparts.

4.5. Theme 4: Training and development

AUT University has a policy - Individual Development Plan which is an entitlement for professional development of their employees. The interview questions did not differentiate between formal study towards a qualification, specific training for up skilling or, personal development courses. All of the women interviewed had been involved in some form of up-skilling and most had instigated this training or professional development themselves or in conjunction with their manager.

Participant 2: AUT's really good at offering plenty of courses and I've made as good of use as I can.....

Participant 2:when I've had my individual performance review with my manager we've suggested potential courses to go to or suggested I have a good look and see if there's anything there I would like to do because they are proactive in encouraging us to up skill if need be

Participant 3:then take advantage of... the courses here that you can do especially on the technical side, the IT, word processing and all those sorts of things

Participant 5: I've done lots of Excel courses, I don't know if I've learnt anything but I've done a lot of Excel..... I've done web sites, web training, I've done Excel, Access, Arion ones. I've done all the ones that were offered through Centre for Professional Development as it was. A lot of stuff I already knew but it was just doing the ones from it.

Participant 8: *I've up skilled on a few courses like Word and Excel and leadership courses, health and safety courses and also started the Grad Dip in Business [Graduate Diploma in Business].*

However, it did appear from the responses that the degree in which the participants engaged in training and development was dependent on a line manager's support and encouragement.

Participant 1: *Have a very supportive manager as far as staff development goes. I've been to number of conferences so I've been very lucky.*

Some managers were more encouraging than others, for example, when asked about any concerns or challenges around training and development participant 4 replied "*Mainly that I don't feel supported by my boss*".

Another participant cited 'time' as a challenge.

Participant 9: *There's a lot more demands made on administrative people these days because of funding mainly. Especially now in the recession, so the expectations are higher on people which is why skills are really important. But it's also finding the time to do the skills training is a challenge.*

Time was a challenge for Participant 8 as well. She found a challenge finding time for assignments because of work pressures and family pressures.

Participant 8: *The main challenge is time to do assignments and that sort of thing. You're working full time and going home to family and stuff and its finding that time – yeah I seem to have... I've only done one paper at a time so it shouldn't be too onerous but some days it is you know – those deadlines but yeah I seem to have managed it. And that's sort of the only real challenge I've had. The actual work I didn't find that challenging so it was all pretty much things that you know instinctively and it was just formalising it and the theories behind it and all that sort of thing.*

Finances were also a consideration for undertaking further study. Participant 9 highlighted that to change direction and get a higher level position she would need to study full time and could not afford to do so.

Participant 9: *Yes I would have to keep up the development and part of that development is..... depends on the area. Depends on what it is. It's like everything, depends what level it is etc. You know obviously if you're going into a high flying role you would have probably need to do a degree or something like that. Having said that, doing a degree at our age is you know, 'cause I've never even been to a university I came here so I'd have to do ... the whole 9 yards.*

Researcher: How would you feel about it?

Participant 9: *Well funding would be a huge part of it for me – funding it because I'd want to do it full time.*

.....The government wants me to do it full time, the university wants me to do it full time cause that's the way it seems to be going so I would not and I think they are pulling the support away as well so funding would be the issue. The major issue. I'd jump at it tomorrow if I thought it was feasible. Oh absolutely – never had the opportunity before.

When asked if the training was directed or voluntary, participant 5 firstly indicated that she did not want to participate in professional development because she was a part time employee, however, she did appreciate her manager's encouragement.

Participant 5:.. *encouraged - because I'm awful at wanting to do professional development. ... because working part time, I object to giving up weekends because it's quite hard to have a day off.*

....but it's been great, the encouragement...it might be my particular manager, I've had encouragement to go and do things.

Participant 4 raised the issue as to whether those in lower paid roles get less encouragement to participate in development activities. She also raised the question of whether being older was a factor in the lack of encouragement.

..for people who are working at a lower level with less pay I think they are more trapped in their roles because unless they've got a manager that really supports them and helps them and says, hey look there are possibilities for you if you do this development, they just stay there. It's more likely the older you get.

One of the younger participants interviewed who was in her early 50's felt supported in her development but questioned whether this would be the case when she was older. This participant was working at a high level and already had a formal qualification.

Participant 11: *I think this place supports us – I've never had a sense of oh xxx what are you going to do after 10 years because you'll be 65 and gone.maybe when I'm 60 it will be interesting to know how women in that 60-65 [age-group]...how that works.*

Most of the women talked about enjoying the training opportunities to up- skill and one suggested that she would stagnate without the stimulation of training and development opportunities.

Participant 2: *I enjoy it. I think I'd feel in a back water stagnating if I didn't feel there were courses there that I could refresh what I already know or up-skill – so I'm glad – I feel the opportunities are there anyway and I'm usually quite keen to take them.*

Participant 8: *Oh it's been great. I think I've benefited from it and that whole development thing and just keeping the mind active and keeping up to date with things..you know things change so quickly nowadays that you soon get left behind if you don't keep up- skilling.*

While some felt they found the courses useful and enjoyed them, the way the training was presented made it difficult at times to grasp the concepts. These comments mostly applied to updating of technology skills rather than more formal career development.

Participant 2: *Oh love it – the older I get I must admit the harder it is to remember some things I forget and certainly in some areas of technology and so on its steeply increasing new stuff and particularly in my role*

Participant 3: *I do find that sometimes depending on whose running the course they tend to gear it towards the fastest person in the class and perhaps being one of the older attendees - you know I'm slower to pick up - and yeah, they don't cope with that very well. They say - oh well ask the person next to you.*

Participant 3: *When you're learning new stuff it's great 'cause you've just been doing the same thing for a long time and you get comfortable with it but learning new stuff you find it harder to pick up. Juggling balls in the air, I like to think nothing falls through the cracks but the old memory's not quite as reliable as it used to be and those sorts of things so that is a slight disadvantage. But having said that, given the time and space to come to terms with it can be done and I'm willing to learn too. Some people I think aren't as receptive to new stuff.*

Participant 7: *Disadvantages are modern technology and not quite as confident with it and in my case, in particular, I think I'm a bit slower or a lot slower with the modern technology. I need to actually do it to pick it up whereas the young ones have grown up with it and they're just di di di di. Whereas, I'm like hang on, hang on, back up.*

Other participants suggested there was a gap in what was offered.

Participant 5: *... but there doesn't seem to anything geared to people who know absolutely nothing. When I went you did a bit and then everyone else must have known more so it kind of leapt- the next huge leap forward and I just used to be sitting there thinking... no but it was good and I did get a bit out of it and I'm confident about changing a website*

Participant 2: *Sometimes I just need a more comprehensive course because a lot of the time at my age I've learnt a lot of the preliminary or beginners skills*

needed to do Excel or Word or Power point and the leap to the next stage is quite a steep one. And I would like to be able to pay somewhere between those prices and get a course that was you know took into account my skill set that I've got now.

Another participant talked about her experience of learning alongside younger students and when asked if she had experienced any disadvantages she highlighted some differences between the generations.

Participant 8: Not really other than feeling slightly uncomfortable in the classroom where you're with all these younger people and when lecturers ask questions and you find you're always the one answering. You think I'm just going to shut up and wait and see if anyone else says anything because a lot of the younger ones don't seem to be very forthcoming with answers ...

Researcher: So you feel confident in saying it, in speaking up?

Participant 8: Yeah – it doesn't worry me and when you have to get up and do a group presentation or something that's not a problem but you feel their anxiousness about things and the other challenge or disadvantage was group work. You know because I have to be so organised. I like to get on to it early as younger students will leave it till the last minute and find you just don't connect there.

Several women were involved in career development and had studied for further qualifications or were in the process of doing so. Participant 8 noted that her study was formalising some of the situations she had already experienced. Both of the following examples showed the women had experienced some personal growth and while it had been challenging, they had benefited from undertaking further study.

Participant 8: So that's been a real boost to get back into that study sort of frame of mind. Yeah, it's been interesting, a lot of it... I think when you get to this stage in life you've already been there and done that and it's not like you're a 20 year old just starting out in the workforce. A lot of it you already knew but it's just putting it in black and white for you basically.

Participant 10: Really comfortable and I really just love the input, I love the learning and finding new ways to do things. So there's been no level of discomfort with any of it really. And some of it pushed me to a higher level if you like, I think because of what I've learnt. It's been a little bit challenging, well the study was certainly challenging, because I hadn't done any study for a long time so the study was a challenge but it was a good challenge.

There were varying reasons for undertaking further study towards developing their careers. Participant 8 spoke about the importance of taking on the new

challenges and commented on friends who without opportunities felt like they were in a rut.

Participant 8: I know I've got friends that are in places where they're not getting anything to train and develop and they just feel like they're in a rut and so I wouldn't like to be in that position. I think that's when you start chopping and changing jobs – you find that you develop by just changing jobs. So it's advantageous to be here and if you did want to change jobs you've got other opportunities within the organisation to go into some other field and do something different.

Several of the women talked about the need to engage in training to up skill so they were able to re-enter the workforce. Whilst this may have been the catalyst they cited other outcomes such as confidence building and the feeling of achievement as beneficial outcomes. One of participants saw this as 'me time'.

Participant 7: Yes it's been good – it's sort of been 'me' time although..... if I had a choice I don't think I'd do it, but it's been a challenge that I've achieved and so it's made me feel good.

Participant 9: Oh definitely. It's helped for lots of reasons. It's helped with confidence, getting back into the workforce takes a huge leap of confidence as well. It's helped with confidence and it's helped with knowledge –the technical knowledge. Some of it has been about soft skill training as well, how to deal with people and that sort of thing. So it's helped from those perspectives.

On the other hand, two of the participants suggested that it was too late to progress their careers but on reflection they indicated that it was more about their personality than the issue of age.

Participant 1: I feel that now it is too late to progress any further.

However when questioned further about whether she would have liked to do something else participant 1 reflected.

In a perfect world I would like to see myself doing something similar or something perhaps managerial but in a different area it would be at AUT or outside.

....I think it harps back to what I said earlier I'm probably lazy, I don't feel that I want to study or doing anything else. I'm just trucking along.

Participant 7: AUT is wanting everyone to get degrees and do things and I just don't want to...I'm quite happy where I'm at...I'm not an ambitious person which might not be all that great but the pressures not been there, but having said that if I'd come into AUT, (I could have done) when I was about 40

(but another company said I'll have you first so I didn't come), I might have done something else, I might be completely different. But coming in at 54 I was quite happy just to work and tootle along.....but the encouragement is there to do it if I'd wanted to.

Those who didn't want to do further development cited other issues - for example, family, ageing parents, travel and personality type.

Several of the women mentioned the need to consider family and family commitments when anticipating taking on further study towards career development.

Participant 11: I guess the other thing is am I taking on too much because at this age we've got family, no grandkids yet but that will probably happen? And my mum's still alive so at some point dealing withso - yeah there's all of those things to consider. Young people don't have all those dependants, you know wouldn't even think about that.

Participant 4 already had several qualifications and highlighted as well as family commitments it takes a lot of energy to make career changes. Her comments also indicated even though she would undertake further training if necessary she did not think further development would make any difference.

Participant 4: In terms of change it takes a lot of energy to change. I think my life will have to change. I have a father that is dependent on me. Until something changes in my personal life I won't change. I've quite consciously made the decision to remain where I am because of those circumstances. After that I would do training but I don't think I'd get into major degree or anything, I actually don't think it would help me.

Another participant also indicated that she felt confident about moving forward without further development and cited her experience, age and personality as positive attributes.

Participant 3: I think that my whole work experience thing, my age, my personality as well, yeah I feel confident taking on the next thing as long as you've got some kind of guidelines...

New Zealand no longer has a compulsory retirement age therefore people can continue to work after they reach the age of 65. Amongst the participants only two had plans to leave the workforce in the near future, most intended to continue working and several mentioned shortened hours. For example

Participant 10: *...I'm pretty committed to AUT and I'm committed to the students... I don't want to move on unless the role I'm in is not giving me what I want in a job.*

Participant 9: *I'd never be able to sit at home you know I'll be 60 next year yah! But I don't know because I suppose my work is important to me, so I really enjoy it and it's important that I'm in a collegial atmosphere. I could not work in a non collegial atmosphere. I basically just give up and move on.*

Participant 8: *Well I'd like to think I'd progress upwards in it and to get into more managerial position, to take on more responsibility. So yeah I've still got a career path. I feel some people just feel they are going to just see out their time until they retire but I can see I can develop something. I probably still see myself being here I can't see myself as wanting to change a lot.*

Participant 3: *As long as I can.....yeah as long as the brain holds out.*

Depending on their personal circumstances the participants talked about cutting down their hours rather than focusing on when they would retire from the workforce. Finances were also highlighted as a reason to continue to stay in paid work.

Participant 2: *That 10 years seems awfully close and 10 years before passed awfully quickly between 45 and now. So I'm a bit shocked at the passage of time I have to say and when I think of the future I just hope...I don't see any reason why I wouldn't continue to do all the things I enjoy doing. So I'm not actually looking at retirement myself. I see myself continuing to do exactly what I am doing right now without any end to. Tailoring my work – my creative work to suit so I'm continuing to enjoy what I am doing – it might mean cutting down my hours here and increasing what I am doing at home.*

Participant 1: *What I would love is to probably do 3 or 4 days a week. At this stage, no plans of retiring.*

Participant 9: *.....I think as time goes by I will want to cut back on my hours but then that depends on how much money in the bank account. So the way inflation is going and the way things are going I think it's possible that I will have to be working most of my life. But hopefully shortened hours.*

To summarise, the participants had either undertaken or had contemplated some form of training and development in the last ten years. All participants felt comfortable about being involved in training and development offered at AUT University and indicated that the opportunities provided were worthwhile. However there was some mention of feeling older in situations when in courses with younger learners. Several of the women mentioned that the training sessions

could be challenging and attributed this to their age. This particularly referred to technology.

Whilst there was a policy for professional development, training and development opportunities for all staff, it was subject to the manager's encouragement and support. Issues such as family, personality and age were also mentioned as reasons why the participants did not want to further their career development.

With the exception of two participants who were nearing retirement, all the participants intended to remain working at AUT University at the time of the interviews. Several spoke about working shorter hours in the future so they also had some leisure time. The two participants who were retiring said once they left they would only consider future employment if the job was offered to them. Most of the women would undertake further training and development if they felt it necessary to remain in the workforce.

4.6 Summary of findings

Four themes emerged from the data and it was these themes that provided the structure of the findings chapter; self-identity; influence of stereotypical attitudes; women and careers; and training and career development for the future. Each theme was illustrated using excerpts from the semi-structured interviews. Overall, the findings show the self-identity of the participants was positive and the examples outlined how their experience in both life and work was viewed as a positive attribute of the older worker. Longevity within the University was strongly linked to the self-identity of three of the eleven participants. These three participants mentioned the length of time they had worked at AUT University in the context of their self-identity. They saw longevity of employment as an asset and spoke about the advantages of building networks and relationships over this time. However, one of the participants also questioned whether she was seen by colleagues as 'part of the furniture' because she had been at AUT University so long.

Experience was seen as a definite advantage for the older worker and consequently all the participants believed their confidence had grown because of

it. Seeking employment beyond AUT University however, was the one exception where many participants indicated they had no confidence. Here age was anticipated to be a definite disadvantage for future employment prospects.

The findings showed stereotypical attitudes definitely had influenced participants. To what degree this influence affected the participants will be discussed in more depth in the next chapter. It was evident from the participants' comments they were aware of stereotypical traits attached to both older and younger workers. Whilst they disputed the 'older worker' traits applied to them, several perceived that 'others' viewed older workers based on prevalent stereotypes. The participants' comments around training and development also showed that to some extent, they agreed with stereotypical traits about the older workers adaptability and when discussing training and development, many mentioned how they as older workers, learn differently.

The participants' comments illustrated that 'being a female' had an effect on how their careers had progressed. Family responsibilities were mentioned by most of the participants. Several mentioned they still had children at home to consider and others had elderly parents that needed care. Being an older female in the workforce was cited as a disadvantage towards further career progress. For example, one participant working at a higher level saw being an older female as a definite disadvantage for any future career progression.

Training and development opportunities were undertaken by all the participants in the last ten years. Most thought these were beneficial although several felt they would not need to do any more development to progress further.

In the next chapter the findings will be expanded upon and discussed within the context of the literature.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Concluding Thoughts

5.1 Introduction to discussion and concluding thoughts

The previous chapter sought to categorise the data from the semi-structured interviews into four main themes. The themes were identified as:

- Self-identity
- Women and careers
- Influence of stereotypical attitudes
- Training and career development for the future

Chapter Five, will discuss the research questions in relation to the data from these themes. The chapter is divided into three main parts.

The first part of the chapter outlines the reasons why the study is important and the relevance of the topic in the context of the rhetoric that surrounds ageing populations and employment in organisations. Within this outline, the aim of the study and the main research question is reiterated, alongside the two sub-questions that emerged over the course of the study.

Following this, the discussion shifts to findings from Chapter Four and reflects on these in relation to the two sub-questions and the main research question. The discussion draws on findings from previous studies discussed in the Literature Review in Chapter Two.

In the final part of the chapter, conclusions are drawn from the research. The contribution of this study to both the body of knowledge surrounding older women workers and future development is identified. Next, the implications of the study to AUT University where the study was undertaken, is discussed. Finally, the limitations of the study are outlined and suggestions made for further research areas.

5.2 Revisiting the aims of the study

The aim of the study was to gain an insight into how stereotypical attitudes affect self-efficacy towards training and development from the perspective of older women working in administrative roles. Therefore, the main question that guided the research process was:

- How do stereotypical attitudes affect older administrative women's self-efficacy in regard to their training and development?

Firstly, the literature reviewed in Chapter Two highlighted the issues the ageing population is predicted to have on the future workforce and further identified the need for organisations to enhance and develop the skill base of the older worker. In spite of organisations having an awareness of demographic shifts, the literature suggested ageism is prevalent. In terms of the focus of this study, attitudes towards training and development of older workers do not appear to have shifted (Loretto & White, 2006b). A range of studies highlight older workers are less likely to be involved in training and development opportunities than their younger colleagues (e.g., McGregor & Gray, 2002). One of the key reasons given for the lack of investment in training and development for older workers was uncertainty of getting a return on money spent (e.g., NZIM, 2008). Previous research also referred to stereotypical traits associated with older workers such as, lack of flexibility and adaptability and being slower to learn than their younger colleagues, as other reasons why organisations did not invest in older employees (McGregor & Gray, 2002; Perry & Parlamis, 2006; Alpass & Mortimor, 2007).

Studies, such as McGregor and Gray (2002) argued negative stereotypes create a self-fulfilling prophecy and suggest this de-motivates older workers. Research does agree stereotypical attitudes have an influence on older workers' behaviour and this is a reason why some are not taking up training and development opportunities (Maurer, 2001; McGregor, 2001; McGregor & Gray, 2002). Maurer (2001) also proposed there is a link between these stereotypical attitudes and older workers' self-efficacy towards undertaking further training. Thus, it becomes a vicious circle and even in the situation where organisations offer training and development for their older employees, they are not engaging to the

same extent as their younger colleagues (McGregor, 2001; Maurer et al, 2008; Buyens et al, 2009; Gaillard & Desmette, 2010).

Secondly, after reviewing literature pertaining to the stereotypical attitudes surrounding older workers and training and development, it appeared most studies investigated 'older workers' as a homogenous group. There was very little research focused specifically on older women and issues around training and development. Statistics showed there had been a dramatic boost in the number of women in the workforce in the later decades of the 20th century (O'Neil et al, 2008), particularly in the 50 plus age group (McGregor, 2009). The age profile of women working in traditionally female occupations has also increased (EEO Trust, 2006). Furthermore, studies suggest, older women are more likely to be working in 'backroom' occupations such as administration rather than more visible 'front-of-house' roles (Davy & Handy, 2007; Moore, 2009).

The literature agreed gender inequality is still prevalent in the workplace for all women and women are treated differently to men as they age (Perry & Konrad, 2004). Ageing therefore complicates existing gender inequalities in the workplace (Duncan & Loretto, 2004; Moore, 2009). Stereotypical attitudes about older workers, such as those cited above, adds to the raft of gender based inequalities older female workers are exposed to.

Finally, the study aimed to improve practices and contribute to the body of knowledge on training and development of older women administration workers for a specific site, AUT University. This study is the first on this topic at AUT University. To some extent this is surprising given that AUT University's role as an institution of 'learning' is reflected in part through its' Staff Development Policy. Thus, the study aimed to add depth to understanding the link between stereotypical attitudes and the self-efficacy of older women working in administrative roles in a university environment.

5.2.1 Development of sub-questions

From previous studies briefly summarised above there was evidence older workers were influenced by the stereotypical attitudes that surround them (e.g., McGregor & Gray, 2002). There was also some evidence stereotypical attitudes would have a negative effect on the older workers' self-efficacy to undertake training and development (Maurer, 2001). Also highlighted in the literature was the disadvantage older women face as they age in the workplace (Pringle et al, 2003; Duncan & Loretto, 2004; Moore, 2009). In order to answer the research question it was necessary to focus on the participants' perceptions of their self-worth as an older female in the workplace. Considering this, the following two sub-questions evolved:

- How do stereotypical attitudes to ageing and older workers affect older administrative women's confidence?
- What influence does being female have on the future career development of older administrative women?

5.3 Discussion on findings

The following discussion addresses the two sub-questions and the participants' views on training and development in more depth. Comparisons to earlier studies from the literature review in Chapter Two are discussed and similarities and inconsistencies highlighted.

5.3.1 How do stereotypical attitudes to ageing and older workers affect older administrative women's confidence?

To explore this question, it was important to gain an understanding of the participants' own self-concept. In other words, to establish how the participants viewed themselves and to ascertain whether they accept the label 'older workers'. Further, it was necessary to explore the participants' views on the influence of stereotypical attitudes and their effect on them.

Overall, the participants had a positive self-image and spoke about making a valuable contribution to their work team. When asked to describe how their colleagues saw them in the workplace the participants also responded positively.

Most of them gave examples of complimentary remarks their colleagues had made to reinforce this positivity. From the participants' comments one could initially assume they had a positive self-identify. This positivity waned somewhat at other stages during the interview, notably when referring to seeking other employment opportunities. In this situation many of the participants' remarks had more negative connotations, a point discussed in more depth later in this chapter.

Chronological age was not a significant factor when the participants were asked to describe themselves in the workplace. Whilst many of the participants spoke about their age and age related traits over the course of the interview, nine out of eleven participants did not mention their age to initially describe their self-identity. This was contrary to the researcher's expectation as all the participants would have been aware from the onset the study was about 'older workers'. Moore (2008) suggests because age is not a 'fixed state', such as race or gender, people could be reluctant to define themselves as 'older'.

Two of the participants spoke about being identified as a 'mother' or 'grandmother' figure, as a confidante or advisor to their younger team members. This aligns with Pringle et al (2003) who note social roles as well as work play a large part in a woman's personal identity and feelings of self-worth. In the situations the participants described, the identity of confidante or advisor was a voluntary undertaking, perhaps because of their age they considered they had more experience in the ways of the world and could offer advice to their younger colleagues. Again, because of a stereotypical notion around gender and age some older women may perceive there is an expectation they should assume a 'motherly or caring role'. In other words, because women are classified in caring roles and possess good interpersonal skills as Austen and Giles (2003) suggested, they see themselves in this way and behave accordingly.

The literature shows, defining 'who is an older worker' varied depending on what type of measurement is used or how one perceives one's self (Claes & Heymans, 2008; Peeters & Van Emmeriki 2008). The term 'older worker' therefore is rather subjective. One participant seemed unconcerned about how others perceived her now she was older. She stated "*... I care a little less about how people see me*"

(participant 2). Peeters and Van Emmeriki (2008) stated as people age they become more unique. Maybe this is because people become more comfortable with themselves as they get older. Another participant had said she did not see herself in the same light as someone who had reached retirement age as she still had ability to do her job. This participant's comments were stereotypical as they indicated that a person's ability diminishes with age.

One of the participants identified 50 years of age as the starting point for classifying an 'older worker'. However, she proposed people should be categorised on their "*skill and talent*". Her thoughts were "*there would be some that never try, never change, but that's more to do with their personalities I think than their age*" (participant 4). Several studies (e.g., McPherson, 2008a; Peeters & Van Emmeriki, 2008) concur with these sentiments and further recommend organisations manage their employees in accordance with their abilities and potential rather than categorise 'older workers' as such. Ability and potential as a way to categorise people in the workforce appears to be fairer, however this does not take away subjective elements. Peeters and Van Emmeriki (2008) maintain people can differ within age groups and conceptualisation of a person's age can be measured in a functional way, for example, cognitively, physically and socially. Peeters and Van Emmeriki (2008) highlighted experience as one of the positive attributes when using functional age as a measurement. The findings in this study would agree that experience is considered an asset by employees as they age. Participants spoke of the advantages ageing had brought in terms of personal growth and the experience they had gained dealing with others. Through experience in both the workplace and life they had gained a confidence they had not had when they were younger. Moreover, comments from many of the participants indicated they were not as reliant on others to measure their worth as they had been in the past. However, comments also indicated the participants felt their experience was not valued enough by others and questioned the reason for this.

Thus, in agreement with prior studies, findings showed defining who is an older worker is difficult and subjective. One of the participants summed this up by stating, "*I am what I am is what I think of myself*" (Participant 2).

Social Identity Theory

As discussed previously, the participants' positive self-image and their comments indicated they believed being older was a definite advantage to both the organisation and the employee. As AUT University has a high percentage of older women workers (Auckland University of Technology University payglobal system, 2011) this raises the question - is being older less significant when older workers are not in the minority? If so, this situation could have contributed to the women's positive self-image. This assumption would support Chui et al (2001) who found that when an organisation recruits large numbers of older workers, it helps to counteract discrimination.

This finding also has similarities to both overseas and New Zealand studies which showed older workers have a more positive view of themselves than their younger colleagues or employers have (e.g., Chui et al, 2001; McGregor & Gray, 2002; Loretto & White, 2006a). Chui et al (2001) argue the reason older people rate themselves more positively is because they want to maintain a positive social identity as a member of the 'older in-group'. Those members of the group then consider they possess the status of this group and this is how they are perceived by others and how they perceive themselves. Whether this was a factor influencing the participants in this study was unclear, as it was beyond the scope of this study to identify the age of the colleagues and compare their perceptions with those of younger colleagues.

Whilst the study showed there was evidence the participants rated older workers positively, this was not necessarily the case when they classified themselves as an allied staff member. Several of the participants spoke about 'them' and 'us' attitudes between the academic and allied (administrative) staff. These comments indicated these participants perceived 'others' considered them to be of less value than their academic colleagues. The exclusion of allied staff in the New Zealand Census of Women's Participation (2011) highlights a perception only female academic staff 'count'. Eveline and Booth (2004) also argue female administrative staff in universities are 'invisible', taken-for-granted and devalued. Similarly, Stein et al (2000) noted a perception that academic staff are valued as they aged, whereas the contrary applied to administrative staff.

Furthermore, Participant 9 spoke about the role of an administrator being undervalued as she suggests 'others' view it as something people do when they cannot do anything else. In other words, not a career one would do out of choice. Participant 9's perception was this attitude prevailed in many organisations and not just in a university setting. These sentiments are consistent with Moore (2009) who argues that administrative type roles are gendered and women become more invisible in these occupations as they age.

Longevity in the Workplace

Longevity of employment at the university was another factor mentioned by several of the participants. Many spoke about the strong relationships and networks they had built up over the time they had been at the university and saw longevity in the workplace as an asset and something to be valued. There appears to be contrasting views on whether or not longevity of employment in the one workplace is valued. Whilst older workers are deemed to be loyal employees, is this necessarily what organisations want from their employees in today's work environment? Moreover, even though experience is considered to be important, there could be an association with being 'stuck in their ways'. Kooij et al (2006) refer to the length of time a person has been in an organisation as 'organisational age'. Kooij et al (2006) maintain there is an association between 'organisational age', skill obsolescence and career plateauing. In other words, when a person has longevity in an organisation they are considered to have outdated skills which, in turn, leads to their career plateauing. Organisational age could then result in people being subject to stereotypes solely on their longevity and not their chronological age.

As participant 6 stated, it is unclear whether her age or the length of service influenced how her colleagues viewed her. Comments she made of being taken for granted suggested that maybe she was seen by her colleagues as 'stagnating' because she had been in the role for so long. Van Veldhoven and Dorenbosch (2008) maintain older workers have a risk of stagnating where there is no opportunity for career development. In the situation of Participant 6, the reason there was no strategic direction for development was most likely because her role had evolved overtime. While, Kooij et al (2006) agrees there is often a lack of

opportunity when a person has been in an organisation a long time, maybe with more focus on her career development over the years, Participant 6 may have had a different perspective. Eveline and Booth (2004) on the other hand, argued the relative lack of career opportunities for allied university staff is symbolic of the everyday devaluing of their role.

Future employment

Boyd and Dixon (2008) found as people age they tend to stay in an organisation longer. However, the reason for this could be, as older workers face more barriers when changing jobs (Loretto and White, 2006a; Wilson & Kan, 2006) they make the decision to remain where they are. Most of the participants said they would not be seeking work outside the university. In contrast to the positive attitudes the participants portrayed when describing their self-identity in their current workplace, a lack of confidence was very noticeable when many participants spoke about changing their job. This was an area where the relationship between stereotypical attitudes and age was very negative. Comments from many of the participants showed the experience they had gained and the confidence in their ability to perform in their current position did not filter through to job seeking behaviours. These findings are in line with those of Loretto and White (2006a) who argued that while the older workers were confident in their ability they had little optimism if they were to seek a new position. Whilst McPherson (2008a) suggests older workers' perception limits their confidence, the participants' comments reflected their belief that there is discrimination against older workers in recruitment.

One participant described the experience of applying for another job as 'a trauma.' Although, she believed she had the qualifications and experience for the position she applied for, her perception was she did not get the job because of her age. The experience had affected her confidence and she did not want to put herself forward for another position as she was convinced she would not get it. This was limiting because she would have liked the challenge of a new role. This finding would support Hassell and Perrewe (2008) who argue discriminatory practices affect the older workers self-esteem. Without challenges older workers can lose their motivation and as Desmette and Gaillard (2008) highlighted, this in turn can

devalue their self-image. Participant 1 further spoke about a situation where an older applicant was told someone younger was wanted for the job. Overall, many of the participants had a real fear about being in the job market and having to compete with younger applicants.

Previous studies show these fears are not without substance (McGregor & Gray, 2002; Loretto & White, 2006a; Wilson & Kan, 2006). Wilson and Kan (2006) agree younger workers were more likely to be shortlisted regardless of the applicant's qualifications and experience (Wilson and Kan, 2006). Moore (2009) suggests older women, in particular, have the perception they will be overlooked for a younger applicant and the examples the participants gave in this study would confirm these perceptions. Maurer et al (2008) argue stereotypical attitudes have a significant influence on older workers behaviour. Considering the participants' comments on seeking other employment roles this would be deemed to be true.

The OECD Report (2006b) highlighted opportunities for changing jobs as an important factor to encourage older workers to remain in the workforce. McPherson (2008b) also suggested the employers and recruiters attitude towards older workers is now more positive. However, this did not appear to be the reality in this study. As Billett et al (2011) maintain more needs to be done to change employers' attitudes about the older worker. McGregor and Gray (2002) agree there is discrimination against older workers while Billett et al (2011) found employers only see older workers as a last resort.

Stereotyping

Most of the participants perceived 'others' had stereotypical attitudes about older workers, but said they did not take these stereotypes on board nor did not believe they applied to them. One reason for this could be, because of good feedback over their years in the workforce, participants had a positive perception of their worth. This finding is similar to other studies where older workers have a perception 'others' have stereotypical attitudes about them. McGregor and Gray (2002) suggest these perceptions could be misplaced.

Several of the participants referred to negative stereotypical traits associated with younger workers. Comparisons were made with older workers who participants

saw as having a 'better work ethic' and 'loyalty'. Again, these generalisations about generational traits are without evidence and not necessarily based on reality. Macky et al (2008) maintain evidence from empirical studies showed there are more differences among generations than between them.

Whilst these stereotypical attitudes about both older and younger workers keep stereotypes alive, the participants' comments were mostly to illustrate the advantages of older workers. In general the participants spoke about having a good relationship with their younger colleagues. This finding tends to reinforce the assertion by Chui et al (2001) that when a positive relationship is formed between older and younger colleagues it decreases discrimination and negative stereotypes. It does raise the question as to whether, given a situation where older workers have the same opportunities as their younger colleagues, overtime would these stereotypes disappear? Rocco et al (2003) refers to this as an age-aware organisation where training and development opportunities are based on how the workers perform rather than on an age basis.

To conclude, stereotypical attitudes to ageing and older workers were evident in the findings of this study. Initially, participants perceived being older as a real asset and disputed stereotypes associated with older workers applied to them. However, while the participants were confident in their ability to perform in their current position, stereotypical attitudes did appear to have an effect on the confidence of many of them in regard to seeking future employment opportunities. This finding has similarities to previous New Zealand studies (McGregor & Gray, 2002; Wilson & Kan, 2006).

Overall, the findings showed participants had a positive self-identity and were optimistic about the contribution they made to their work teams and AUT University. They felt confident in their ability and believed their confidence had grown with age. However, questions were raised as to whether longevity within the university is seen as an advantage or disadvantage. For example, where the employee is both older and has been in the organisation for a lengthy period they could be subject to discrimination because of longevity and their age. There were also questions as to whether administration roles are perceived to be lower level

roles and whether the university environment had an influence on how allied, administrative staff were perceived and valued.

Finally, even though none of the interview questions directly referred to stereotypes associated with 'older workers', many of the participants spoke about stereotypical attitudes and stereotypical traits of both older and younger workers. This confirms the importance of stereotypes, their impact on older women who work in a feminised occupation, and a significant factor in contribution of this study. This finding is similar to previous studies on older women, such as Moore (2009) and stereotypical attitudes about older women in the workplace (Duncan & White, 2004).

5.3.2 What influence does being female have on the future career development of older administrative women?

In line with other studies on women's career interruptions, issues significant for women and their careers were apparent for many of the participants (Ginn & Arber, 1995; Pringle et al, 2003; O'Neil et al, 2008). In most cases, the roles of mother/wife/daughter had an influence on their careers. O'Neil et al, (2008) suggested many women put their careers on hold to care for children for a variety of reasons. Concerns such as maintaining a work/life balance were the priority for many participants in this study. As a consequence any form of possible career progression was secondary. Participants attributed their behaviour to societal expectations and being female. Perhaps this is a reflection of the age of the participants who are a product of an era where traditional attitudes revolved around the expectation women took responsibility for the family supported by a male breadwinner (Ginn & Arber, 1995). Duncan and Loretto (2004) argue because of the gendered nature of organisations, skills associated with caring and servicing the needs of the organisation are devalued, whereas values linked to continuous employment persist. Consequently, women are penalised when they have a break in their career.

Changing attitudes

One of the influences on the career and career development of older women is the change of attitudes towards stay at home mothers and societal expectations that women should be part of the workforce. Comments from one participant showed some disappointment at the devaluing of motherhood and domesticity and she would have preferred to stay home and care for family rather than re-enter the workforce. This internal struggle for women is highlighted by Levinson and Levinson (1996, cited in Pringle & McCulloch Dixon, 2003). In New Zealand, women in this age bracket or 'the baby boomer' cohort possibly had the idea they would leave the workforce once they had their children and be able to stay at home to care for them. Overtime, a woman's role has changed and the expectation is now they manage both a career and their family. However, studies showed women still struggle to combine paid employment and family (Ginn & Arber, 1995; Bailyn, 2004).

Recollections highlighted how traditionally employers had a definite bias against female applicants with children and applicants were often asked how they would manage their family and their job. One participant in particular, said she did not consider she could take on a full time working commitment because she did not feel that would be fair to her employer. This participant explained her work ethic would not allow her to take time off to deal with family issues therefore she would stay in a part time role. One might question if this is an example of her enacting the stereotypical trait of good work ethic attributed to older workers, given that AUT University, as a public sector organisation and EEO employer, is required to recognise the employment requirements of women.

Managing work, family and further study was also highlighted by several participants. One participant spoke about the need to upgrade her skills because she had been out of the workforce for a long time and was endeavouring to gain qualifications so she could secure a better position which would fit in with her family commitments. Shadbolt, Brunetto and Nelson (2009) point out, when women return to work they are seen as having outdated skills and re-enter at a lower level with less pay than their male counterparts. This is not the case for their male colleagues. Time out of paid work does not appear as detrimental for

men. As Eagly and Carli (2007) posit marriage and parenthood is considered in a positive light for men and a contributor towards higher wages and promotion.

Ageing population

Ageing parents was a concern mentioned by three out of eleven participants. Austin and Giles (2003) highlighted that as the population ages it will mean conflict between paid work and unpaid roles in families and community. Bailyn (2004) argues whilst some of the issues of work/life balance have been addressed for younger women, as mothers through legislation, there is no recognition for older women who care for ageing parents or grandchildren. Considering the ageing population this is an important factor for organisations to address. Participants spoke about increased parental responsibility with comments highlighting that as their children became independent, their parents had become more reliant. Whilst no specific questions were directed to the participants around childcare or care for the elderly, none of the participants spoke about sharing care for children or ageing parents with partners. This would concur with much of the literature which argues women continue to take the main responsibility for family (e.g., Ginn & Arber, 1995; Bailyn, 2004) and balance their careers and family life (Pringle et al, 2003).

Being an older female also appeared to influence participants' choice of occupation. Moore (2009) highlighted how the gendered occupational division is more pronounced as people age. Older women are more likely to work in administrative or secretarial roles, with younger females employed in more visible roles in customer services. These sentiments are also in line with Duncan and Loretto (2004) who suggest women become more invisible as they age. Duncan and Loretto (2004) refer to this as 'gendered ageism' and consider it to be a double jeopardy as women are discriminated for both their age and their gender.

Perception of a male world

Being an older woman was also perceived as having an influence on the career progression of one of the participants working at a higher level. She commented it would not matter what she did she would not be able to proceed in her career. Closed promotion opportunities had prevented her reaching the next level and she

also felt it was easier for men to move up. She referred to male networks and the difficulty in breaking into the group. These findings are consistent with Still and Timms (1998) who found, regardless of the emphasis on equality for women in the workforce in recent years, older women managers still struggled with the male culture and could not break into the male networks. Furthermore, Armstrong-Stassen and Cameron (2008) believe older women are treated differently and argued there are particular inequalities around promotion. According to Pringle et al (2004) there had been some progress made by individual women in New Zealand who held the top five public positions: Governor-General, Prime Minister, Attorney general, Chief Justice and CEO of the largest private business organisation. This has since changed and as noted earlier New Zealand women only represent a small portion of key leadership roles in the public and private sectors (Human Rights Commission, 2010). Thus as Duncan and Loretto (2004) argue, no matter what age, it is never the right age for woman to progress their career.

Appearance and ageism

Still and Timms (1998) agree appearance for older women is an issue and found it as a reason older women managers' experienced some discrimination as they aged. Ageing physical appearance is seen to disadvantage females more than men and one participant in this study believed because she was visibly ageing it had a negative influence on her career. Perkins, (1992 as cited in Still and Timms, 1998) maintained ageism is linked to sexism and as women age they are seen to lose their youthful beauty, so are disadvantaged by being older and female. Moore (2009) argued because physical ageing is seen in a negative light this is one reason why people are sometimes reluctant to perceive themselves as older.

Retirement

Lastly, an important influence on some participants' choice to continue working was financial. The literature highlights financial necessity as one of the reasons that have an influence on people's engagement at work (Armstrong-Stassen & Schlosser, 2007) and the reason they stay in the workforce longer (Chui et al , 2001). Participant 7 explained finances were the main catalyst for doing her study

as she needed to up-skill and secure a good position. She admitted through the experience she had gained confidence and had enjoyed the challenge.

Nine out of the eleven participants intended to stay in the workforce and only two had plans of retiring. Others however, mentioned wanting to continue to work for social reasons. Loretto and White (2006a) suggest women rather than men continue to work for social reasons and are more likely to continue working after retirement age. This is consistent with other studies, such as Loretto and White (2006a), who suggest many women have a strong attachment to work and August and Quintero (2001) who suggest contextual factors have an influence on whether or not they stay.

Even though it could be assumed that because of their age the participants would be considering retirement, this was not necessarily the reality. Several participants mentioned 'now' is their time. In particular, participant 7 spoke about it being 'me time' where she was able to spend some time pursuing her career. As noted earlier, women's careers progress differently than men and traditional models of career development do not fit with women's career patterns (Kanter, 2003). Wolf (2009) agreed and maintained, as people are living and working longer some women perceive this age, mid-life, is the time to grow and develop career aspirations.

In summary, the findings indicated the participants' age has had an important influence on their careers and career development. The changing attitudes around women's family and work responsibilities were evident from the findings. Whilst some of the participants spoke about being at an age where they could think about their own needs and identify some goals they wanted to reach in their careers, the expectation for women to manage both a family and a career was also highlighted. Both these findings are similar to previous studies on women career paths and the argument they are traditionally built on family responsibilities (e.g., Ginn and Arber, 1995; Eagly & Carli, 2005).

The male dominated culture in the workplace, highlighted in the literature (Still & Timms, 1998; Duncan and Loretto, 2004; Pringle, et al, 2004) was still perceived as being a reality for some of the participants. In line with previous studies, such as Moore (2009), there was some indication that appearance can play a part in how women progress in their careers as they age, or at least because of self-perception it has an influence on their self-esteem. Whether it is a reality, an ageing appearance has a negative influence on career progression, is beyond the scope of this study.

Finally, the influence of the ageing population was also highlighted by several participants who needed to consider elderly parents in addition to managing their careers. This finding supported Bailyn (2004) who suggests older women are more likely to be responsible for eldercare.

5.3.3 Training and development issues

The main question the study sought to answer was

How do stereotypical attitudes affect older administration women's self-efficacy in regard to training and development?

In this study all of the women had been involved in some form of training or development in the last ten years. The literature agrees women's career development is an important issue organisations need to consider (e.g., McPherson, 2009). As highlighted in Chapter Three, AUT University has a professional development entitlement for all staff regardless of age. Armstrong-Stassen & Ursel (2009) concluded from their study that when an organisation invests in training and development, older workers are more likely to participate. Taking this into consideration and the comments from the participants, AUT University's Professional Development Policy had a positive influence on participants and attributed to the participants being proactive in undertaking development opportunities.

Positive attitude

Overall, most of the women indicated they enjoyed the training and found it a positive experience. Armstrong-Stassen and Ursel (2009) highlight that when an

organisation invests in their older workers they feel more valued. Much of the training and development the women referred to was up-skilling in new software applications, such as Excel or Word. This finding supports Pillay et al (2006) who maintained office workers had a more positive attitude to training because of continual changing technology and the need to up-skill when new technology is introduced. However, whilst the participants had positive attitudes around the training they had been involved in, there were also reasons why they did not participate in more formal development. Participant 9 indicated she would love to do some formal study such as a Bachelor Degree, but she would want to study full time and would still need to be earning money. This finding is consistent with Wolf (2009) who highlights the tension for some older women between wanting to engage in higher education and needing an income.

Managers' support

Other issues, such as lack of time or managers' support, were also cited by the participants as a reason for not undertaking further training and development opportunities. According to Maurer (2001) a lack of equality to training and development opportunities can result in older workers having less belief in their ability to participate. One participant said she did not have the time because of her heavy work load. Another participant felt unsupported by her current line manager. Whilst AUT University Staff Development Policy does have an allocation of both money and time, it is clear in this study that the level of success of the policy is dependent on manager approval and support. In the first instance managers' support is required to encourage the staff member to find the right path or direction and then, making a decision on the type of training or development required. Secondly, manager support is also needed to approve the time for the staff member to go and do whatever training has been agreed to.

Davey and Cornwell (2003) suggested older workers may need more support and encouragement towards their development than their younger colleagues. Eveline and Booth (2004) found in their study of an Australian university, there was overall, a lack of encouragement for development of general staff. Whilst there appeared to be encouragement to undertake on-the-job skill training it seemed more formal career development would depend on the manager. Participant 4

raised the question as to whether those in lower paid roles are encouraged by their managers as much as those in higher paid roles. As McGregor and Gray (2001) suggest older workers need guidance from their managers for their future development. One would presume lower paid roles would be positions with less responsibility at lower levels of the organisation. If this suggestion was true it could become a vicious circle as these staff would not get the qualifications needed to progress to higher positions.

Furthermore, stereotypical attitudes about workers becoming less productive as they age would become more significant for those in lower paid roles, particularly if they have not been involved in any training or development. Maurer et al (2008) found employers' negative belief in older workers ability was more significant than the older workers motivation, and this was a reason for low participation. However, there was no evidence in this study to suggest the participants' managers had negative attitudes solely based on participants' ability.

Suggestions for training older workers

This study revealed several insights into ways to help train and develop older administrative workers. The importance for organisations to introduce strategies to maintain older workers skills and knowledge is one of the issues highlighted by the EEO Trust (2006). Many of the participants valued the organisational knowledge they had accumulated over their time in the workplace. The literature agreed preserving organisational knowledge is also an important factor in retaining the older worker (e.g., Davey and Davis, 2006). Whether this was valued by AUT University was questioned by several participants. One participant spoke about learning through others. Networking was also highlighted as an important way to pass on knowledge. Some studies argue learning informally is the best way to keep older workers skills current (Armstrong-Stassen and Schlosser, 2007). Role models were also highlighted as being an important motivator for older workers to continue to develop (Gibson & Barron, 2003). Wallace & Marchant, (2009) suggested in their study that older female workers be engaged in mentoring roles as a pipeline initiative for younger colleagues.

Several of the participants highlighted difficulties around the delivery of training courses and made suggestions as to how it could be easier or less frustrating. Much of the literature referred to tailoring training to suit older learners. Pillay et al (2006) suggested one size does not fit all when it comes to developing training programmes and older workers learn differently to their younger colleagues. Whilst it is important to implement training programmes and encourage older workers to participate, it is also important to consider how these programmes are delivered. Walker and Taylor (1999) suggest organisations involve their older workers in developing training courses .

The participants in this study may well be in the workforce for many years. Many were prepared to undergo further development. Prior studies such as Gibson and Barron (2003) proposed even in late career older workers are still keen to learn new skills. McGregor and Gray (2002) also argued older workers have more ambition than their employer perceives them to have.

Influence of stereotypes

Similar to previous studies (e.g., McGregor, 2001) many of the participants highlighted technology as an area they were not as confident in. From their comments it was unclear whether this was because they had difficulty learning new technology or whether it was the influence of stereotypes surrounding older workers and technology. Reed et al (2005) found a decline in older workers' computer skills was specifically related to their belief they would be able to learn successfully. In other words, older workers did not engage in up-skilling their computer skills because they thought they would not succeed. As a consequence, overtime, their skills declined. Claes and Heyman (2008) proposed when older workers are labelled as such, they take on the stereotypical behaviour associated with being an older worker. These stereotypes can then become a self-fulfilling prophecy as the older worker believes them to be true (McGregor, 2001; Maurer et al, 2008; Buyens, 2009; Gaillard & Desmette, 2010). When an older worker has a lack of self-efficacy they will not feel they are capable to undertake new training and therefore, will not choose to take up the opportunities (Maurer, 2001; McGregor & Gray, 2001).

The influence of stereotypes on the participants in this study was similar to previous studies. There were similarities to the findings of McGregor and Gray (2002) where older workers perceived 'others' held stereotypes. Several participants who had undertaken formal study spoke about a perception their younger colleagues held stereotypical attitudes about their ability. In spite of this they had still engaged in further development. One could assume they were not affected by these attitudes, or at least not enough to prevent them from going ahead. Whilst there is no evidence from this study to support previous findings that older workers do not participate in training and development opportunities as often as their younger colleagues (Maurer, 2001; McGregor, 2001), this could be attributed the level of support for older workers through the AUT University's Individual Development Policy. Previous studies, such as Armstrong-Stassen and Cameron (2005), found when older employees perceive they are valued by the employer they are more inclined to undertake opportunities.

Summary of findings

In summary, overall the participants had enjoyed the training they had been involved in and perceived it to be beneficial. Some participants were currently involved in study towards formal degree qualifications. Several others were considering formal study in the future, such as graduate and post graduate qualifications. Those who did not want to do further development cited other issues - for example family issues, ageing parents, travel or personality type. Pringle et al (2003) propose a woman's career is not necessarily age-related and some aspects of their life activities such as study, paid work, or travel, can occur at any stage.

Participants referred to stereotypes about the older worker's ability to learn, however all had been involved in training and development. McGregor (2001) suggested when older workers perceive 'others' hold stereotypical attitudes about the older worker this can become a self-fulfilling prophecy. To some degree this finding is inconsistent with previous studies that argued, when older workers perceive 'others' hold negative stereotypes about older workers ability, it has an effect on their self-efficacy to undertake training and development.

5.4 Concluding thoughts and recommendations

The third part of this chapter is divided into five sections. Firstly, it outlines the concluding thoughts from the study and highlights significant factors from the findings. Following on, the next section highlights the implications the findings of the study have for organisations. The following section identifies and acknowledges any limitations of the study. In the final section, recommendations for the future are outlined.

5.4.1 Concluding thoughts

The findings would agree with the literature that it is imperative for organisations to introduce strategies to maximise the potential of their older workers through training and development. The literature also highlighted the barriers older women face in the workplace and the discrimination surrounding them (Duncan & Loretto, 2004; Moore, 2009). The findings from this study have some similarities to previous studies and the following points were identified as important contributions towards the conclusion of the research.

Determining older workers

Previous studies found determining ‘who is an older worker’ and what measurement should be used to categorise an older worker, was problematic (e.g., Claes & Heymans, 2008; Peeters & Van Emmeriki 2008). From the findings of this study it was also evident the participants had differing views on the term ‘older worker’. Whilst this study was about older women workers, most of the participants did not use their gender or age to categorise themselves. As the findings show, while there was an assumption the participants would mention their age when asked about their identity in the workplace, this assumption was not valid. Age was only referred to in one or two instances.

Self-identity/self-efficacy

Most of the participants felt very positive about their identity in the workplace. They felt good about themselves and their contribution to the workplace. The literature suggested that older workers rate themselves more positively than their

younger colleagues rate them (e.g., Chui et al, 2001). This study did not however, identify the age of the participants' work colleagues so no comparison could be made. Overall, the participants were optimistic about their contribution to their work teams and AUT University.

The self-identity of many of the participants was also strongly linked to the support role of the allied staff group they belonged to. Whilst overall the participants were positive about the support they gave their academic colleagues, comments from several participants indicated they perceived they were considered to be less valuable than a member of the academic staff. Maybe this was because the perception in a university environment is that the level of education is the measure of one's worth (e.g., EEO Trust, 2011). Therefore, because allied (administrative) staff work in a support role, it is presumed they are less educated and their contribution is devalued. Moreover, as Stein et al (2000) found, there was a perception older administration staff were devalued as they aged while their ageing academic colleagues were rewarded. There was no evidence in this study to suggest academic staff and allied staff were treated differently as they aged. There could be further investigation on this issue in another study.

Stereotypes

The findings from the study gained some understanding of how stereotypes affected older administrative women at AUT University. Even though the participants talked about their confidence growing with age, this was paradox. There was evidence to show that age had a negative influence on their confidence in certain situations. For example, the women had a positive self-identity and did not outwardly associate with the stereotypes of the older worker.

On the other hand, most of the woman perceived 'others' held stereotypical attitudes about older workers and nearly all the woman indicated they would lack confidence if they were to seek another job. In other words, whilst all the participants had confidence in their ability to perform in their current role, the perceived stereotypical attitudes of 'others' had an influence on their confidence to seek other employment opportunities. Both the overseas and New Zealand

literature showed that these fears would more than likely be realised (Loretto and White, 2006; Wilson & Kan, 2006).

Future training and development

The study gave a good insight into the participants' views on training and development. It appeared most of the participants agreed, or at least in part, that they did not adapt to technology as readily as their younger colleagues. These findings support earlier New Zealand studies, such as McGregor (2001). However, whilst participants referred to these stereotypical traits about older workers, there was no evidence in this study of claims from McGregor and Gray (2002) and similar studies that negative stereotypical attitudes can become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Contrarily, many of the participants intended to continue to be involved in training and development.

Many of the participants spoke about 'job related' training rather than 'career related'. It could be the reality that training and development for older administrative workers at AUT University is targeted towards training for the current job rather than their career development. Several of the participants were involved in development activities, such as degree level programmes for the purpose of career progression. It was questionable as to whether these participants were at the younger end of the age scale and possibly working at a higher level. Whilst there is a staff development policy, permission needs to be sought from managers for career development and work pressures can preclude participation. Therefore, the question could be asked as to whether the policy for older allied staff supports vocational on-the-job training rather than encourage future career development?

Age and gender was an issue for one participant who perceived being an older woman had a negative influence on any further career progression, no matter what qualifications she gained. The view women are 'never the right age' (Duncan & Loretto, 2004) aligns with this participant's thoughts on career mobility.

Discrimination in the workplace

The literature shows older women are subject to discrimination due to their physical appearance (e.g., Moore, 2009). Moore (2009) also argues as women age

they become less visible when working in a gendered occupation such as administration. Whilst, the finding would agree there was some evidence of perceived discrimination, referred to as 'gendered ageism' (Duncan & Loretto, 2004) this was not conclusive. The study did show, however, some consistencies with Still and Timms (1998) who suggested older women have more difficulty breaking into the male-centric culture in organisations, particularly at higher levels. Similar to other studies (e.g., Duncan & Loretto, 2004; Pringle et al, 2004; Early and Carli, 2007) this study highlighted how a woman's career journey has multiple barriers for women throughout their working life. Moore (2009) notes the increasing visibility of older women in administrative roles. This is supported by New Zealand research that shows the highest growth rate in the labour force between 1991 and 2006 was women aged 50 plus (McPherson, 2009).

Future workplace

The study agrees with the literature that contextual factors had an influence on how long individuals stay in the workforce (August and Quintero, 2001). Participants cited varying reasons, such as family commitments, grandchildren or travel, as reasons for not pursuing their careers. There was also mention of limited opportunities within the university for older women in administrative roles to move to higher levels. Loretto and White (2006a) highlighted the importance of social reasons as a motive for older woman to remain in the workforce.

During their working life most women arranged paid work around family commitments instead of a planned career (Ginn and Arber, 1995; Eagly & Carli, 2007). Prioritising family was the expectation when the participants were younger and first in the workforce and these attitudes appeared to have stayed with them. However, while some of the participants still have family responsibilities to manage, several others have moved from childcare to eldercare, so 'me' time is limited. EEO Policy in New Zealand tends to focus on the needs of women with young children and maternity obligations. Bailyn (2004) highlighted how there is a growing need for the 'baby boomer' generation to manage the needs of ageing parents and this could become a dilemma for 'older workers' if they continue to remain in the workforce.

Summary of concluding thoughts

Finally, in answer to the research question this study aimed to explore, the findings clearly show that stereotypical attitudes do affect older administrative women to some extent. While the participants were not asked directly about stereotypes nearly all the women mentioned stereotypical traits commonly associated with older workers. Most of the participants disputed that negative stereotypical traits about older workers were related to them, but there was evidence to show that to some degree, there was an association. Many of the participants also spoke about the positive traits of older workers, such as loyalty and confidentiality. The findings highlighted specific issues older women need to overcome, for example, their visibly ageing appearance and devalued status in the workplace, which concurs with previous studies (Moore, 2009). Thus, this study found some evidence of perceived discrimination, termed 'gendered ageism' (Duncan & Loretto, 2004) where older women are disadvantaged through both age and gender.

All of the participants perceived 'others' held stereotypical notions about older workers. Previous studies have argued that even though organisations have implemented policies to help eliminate ageism, it is still an issue (Alpass & Mortimer, 2007; Lorretto & White, 2010).

Finally, the study found there was no conclusive link between stereotypical attitudes and the participants' self-efficacy in regard to undertaking training and development. However, maybe because AUT University had a development policy for all staff this had a positive effect on the participants' self-efficacy towards undertaking training and development, hence most were continuing to participate. The study did identify some links between stereotypical attitudes and the participants' self-efficacy towards seeking future employment. This finding concurred with previous New Zealand studies (e.g., Wilson & Kan, 2006) on older women and stereotypical attitudes. Overall the participants were positive about any training and development they had already undertaken. There is still a lot to learn about this area and although there are limitations to the outcomes of this research, the insights gained were nevertheless, significant.

5.4.2 Limitations of the study

The research was conducted in one New Zealand organisation with a small group of eleven women. The chosen age-group of women was relevant to a study on older women workers. However, the fact that these women worked in an administration role limited the findings to this specific group. The small number of women interviewed may impact on the results and this could also be considered a limitation. It is worth noting however that this group are under researched in university study. Consequently, results may vary depending on the type of work the older women workers do, the level of their role and the number of participants involved. The study was conducted in a university that has a staff development policy and teaching, learning and research is the core business, therefore these factors may have influenced the outcome. As such, the findings are not intended to be applicable to other organisations either in New Zealand or overseas.

To conclude, whilst these limitations are acknowledged they do not detract from the findings in this study but do provide a much needed platform for further research.

5.4.3 Implications of the research

The findings showed there are still some stereotypical attitudes evident in AUT University. As the literature indicated it is important for organisations to implement age proof policies to counteract ageist attitudes (McGregor, 2001). While some progress has been made in recent years to support younger women achieve a work/life balance, initiatives to support older women with ongoing family responsibilities such as grandchildren or eldercare would be beneficial. Moore (2009) also highlights the lack of language to describe ageism in the workplace, emphasising the importance of ensuring policies in place to counteract it are fully understood and more visible. In other words, older workers need to be able to identify when they have experienced discrimination and have confidence to report it.

Comments from several participants suggested they were perceived by 'others' as being less valuable than a member of the academic staff because they were allied staff. There was no conclusive evidence in this study to suggest academic staff and allied staff are treated differently as they aged. There could be further investigation on this issue in another study. However, this study did find the way the Staff Development Policy is applied can differ depending on whether the employee is academic staff or an allied staff member. Whilst the AUT University Staff Development Policy requires all staff to have a current Individual Development Plan many of the participants spoke about 'job related' training rather than 'career related'. This suggests the reality for older administrative female employees is their development is targeted towards training for their current role rather than their career aspirations. Is it assumed at policy level that the focus for allied staff should be on-the-job training rather than future career? However, whether the level of the allied staff person's current position and previous qualifications makes a difference to the future type of training or development undertaken could be further investigated.

While the intent of the policy is to be fair and equitable, this study has shown the problematic nature of its' application. It is dependent on a manager's approval and therefore subjective as to the value attributed to what is proposed. Time can also be an obstacle because of ongoing work commitments. Therefore, support, whether it is for line managers or administrative staff, may be needed to help resolve these tensions. Teaching, learning and research is AUT University's core business, but the question could be asked - is the same importance placed on the development of an administrative staff member as it is on an academic staff member? In other words, does the same expectation for career development apply to administrative staff and in particular older administrative female staff?

A need to take the learning styles of older workers into consideration when designing training programmes seems an important factor for AUT University to be aware of, especially in light of the ageing demographics. Many of the participants highlighted technology as an area they were not as confident in. Whether this was because of stereotypes around older workers that suggest this group is slower to adapt to new technology than their younger colleagues could

also be an area for further research. The findings also showed the participants' faced some challenges when they engaged in training sessions and as an administrators' job often revolves around the use of technology this is important to address. Possibly tailoring programmes to suit older workers would help to resolve this issue in the future.

Overall, the participants felt supported by AUT University to undertake training and development. The participants had all taken advantage of different forms of training and development and many intended to participate in the future. The findings also show that all of the participants believed they made a positive contribution to the workplace. They highlighted their experience in both life and work as one of the main advantages of being an older worker. While experience was regarded highly by the participants, some showed frustration at not being valued for it, particularly those who had longevity of employment. The question could be asked: Do organisations need to look at ways to capitalise on the 'organisational knowledge' employees such as the women in this study have gained over the years?

Further initiatives to support training and development were identified, such as mentoring roles for older workers to capture this experience. With more emphasis on career planning, training and development opportunities aimed at the older worker, longevity in the workplace could be a 'win-win' situation for both employee and employer.

Finally, in light of the impending demographic shift, organisations need to be proactive in the training and development of their older workers (Buyen et al, 2007; McPherson, 2009) and give them some guidance as to the direction to take (McGregor & Gray, 2001). Older women workers and those in female orientated roles in particular, need recognition and support to fulfil their career aspirations. Women have more barriers to overcome as they age including stereotypical attitudes about older workers ability to learn and adapt. These stereotypes are well-defined in New Zealand's workplace culture, however these attitudes will need to change if older adults are to continue their lifelong learning journey and be productive in the future (McGregor, 2001).

So here ends the journey
or maybe it is the beginning of a new journey?
I will close now with the words I began with
“age should not define who we are”.

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Advertisement

Are you a female aged between 50-65 years working in an administrative role at AUT?

I am looking for participants to be part of a research project investigating issues around training and development for older women workers.

To participate you must:

- **Female**
- **50 - 65 years of age**
- **Working in an administrative role at AUT University**
- **Be available for a 1 hour interview**

Contact: Nonie Kirker

Email: nonie.kirker@aut.ac.nz

Ph: 921999 ext 7655 or mob 021774354

Confidentiality will be respected.

Participant Information Sheet

Date Information Sheet Produced: 3 April 2011

Project Title

Older Women workers – will they be ready for the future workplace?

An Invitation

I am Nonie Kirker, a staff member and a student in the Post-Graduate programme in the Business Faculty at AUT. This research project is part of my thesis which will contribute to a Master of Business qualification. Participation in this study is voluntary and participants may withdraw at any time prior to completion of the data collection. Participants do not need to answer any question if they do not wish to do so.

What is the purpose of this research?

The aim of the research is to improve understanding of the specific issues in relation to stereotypical attitudes surrounding older women administration workers. It also investigates older women workers motivation to undertake training and development opportunities.

The research may also be part of a presentation at AUT and conference presentations.

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

Participants are required to be female within 50- 65 age group working in an administrative role at AUT.

This is a voluntary process.

What will happen in this research?

The participants will be required to meet me (the researcher) for an interview (approx 50 minutes) which will be audio-taped and later transcribed for analysis by me. The interview will take place in a meeting room at AUT or a mutually agreed venue to ensure confidentiality and privacy. The participant will be asked several questions but can choose not to answer any questions they feel will cause them embarrassment or discomfort and can withdraw from the process at any stage.

Participants will be encouraged to discuss their experiences and feelings on the following:

- training and development opportunities within the organisation
- stereotypical attitudes about older workers within the workplace
- perception of own identity within the workplace
- future development expectations

The participants will be assured of confidentiality at all times.

What are the discomforts and risks?

1. As this research intends to investigate the participants own experiences and feelings I am aware that some of the discussion could be of a sensitive nature and participants may feel vulnerable.
2. The participants are women between 50 - 65 years therefore are a specific cohort within the allied staff group.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

1. I will be respectful and show empathy to the participants towards any sensitive issues that arise during the interview.
2. Confidentiality and personal information will be respected and all practical steps will be taken to ensure interviewees are in a safe environment. Fictitious names of participants will be used in the final report. There will be no identifying details (eg department). No information about specific individuals will be divulged to participants' employer.

What are the benefits?

Participants will be contributing to research and knowledge for improved understanding about older women in the workforce.

There will be an opportunity for participants to read the research summary.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

The amount of time required to be given by participants is approximately 1 hour.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

Two weeks from receiving.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

If you agree to be part of this research please complete and sign the attached Consent Form and return it me.

Nonie Kirker at mail code A25

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

Yes I will send an executive summary to participants on completion of the thesis if required

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, *Dr Irene Ryan*, Irene.ryan@aut.ac.nz, 9219999 ext

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary, AUTECH, Madeline Banda, madeline.banda@aut.ac.nz, 921 9999 ext 8044.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Researcher Contact Details:

Nonie Kirker – 9219999 ext 7655 or mobile 021774354 Email; nonie.kirker@aut.ac.nz

Project Supervisor Contact Details: *Dr Irene Ryan*, Irene.ryan@aut.ac.nz, 9219999 ext 7852



Consent Form

Project title: **Older Women workers – will they be ready for the future workplace?**

Project Supervisor: **Dr Irene Ryan**

Researcher: **Nonie Kirker**

- I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 25 February 2011
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.
- If I withdraw, I understand that all relevant information including tapes and transcripts, or parts thereof, will be destroyed.
- I agree to take part in this research.
- I wish to receive a copy of the report from the research (please tick one):

Yes No

Participant's signature:

Participant's name:

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....
.....
.....

Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 5 APRIL 2011
AUTEC Reference number 11/40

Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.

Appendix iv

Case Study: The aim of the research is to investigate to how stereotypes affect older woman workers' self-efficacy in regard to training and development?

Proposed questions to frame semi-structured interviews (to be adjusted depending on response of interviewee)

1) Introduction

- a) Tell me about the types of administrative roles you have held in the last 10 years.
- b) Are you a fulltime staff member?

2) Training and Development

- a) Outline any training and development you have done over this time?
- b) how have you felt about doing this training?
 - i) Prompts: What concerns/challenges have you had around the training and development you have done?
 - ii) Prompts: Have you enjoyed it?; have you ever felt you didn't want to be part of it?

3) Workplace Identity

- a) How would you define yourself at work?
Prompt: How do you see yourself, describe yourself in your work role?
- b) If someone was to ask you to describe how your colleagues see you at work what would be your reply?

4) Older workers

- a) What do you feel are the advantages or disadvantages (if any) about being an 'older worker'?
- b) Can you give any examples of any occasions when you have experienced either of these?
Prompt: How did you feel; how did you deal with this

5) Looking to the Future

- a) Tell me about how you see your future in the workplace?
Prompt: What do you see yourself doing in 5 years times;
- b) Have you put anything in place to make this happen?