



Monarch Business School Switzerland Professional Doctoral Research Plan

**A New Career Development Model For South Africa:
Addressing Inequity Of The Black WorkForce**

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A New Career Development Model For South Africa:
Addressing Inequity Of The Black Workforce

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	I
LIST OF FIGURES	II
LIST OF TABLES.....	II
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	II
ABSTRACT.....	III
1.0 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 ORIGINS OF INEQUITIES AMONGST BLACK EMPLOYEES	2
1.2 EFFORTS TO ADDRESS BLACK WORKFORCE INEQUITIES	3
2.0 THE PROVISIONAL RESEARCH QUESTION.....	4
3.0 THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	5
4.0 STAKEHOLDER SCHEMA & PARTICIPANTS	9
5.0 LITERATURE TRIANGULATION	9
5.1 THEORIES ON SOCIAL JUSTICE.....	10
5.2 THEORIES ON HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT	12
5.3 THEORIES ON EMPLOYEE WELLNESS	13
6.0 TIMELINE & BUDGET	14
7.0 RESEARCH PROPOSAL APPROVAL.....	16
BIBLIOGRAPHY	17

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1: METHODOLOGICAL TRIANGULATION	5
FIGURE 2: MONARCH STANDARD RESEARCH PROCESS FLOW	6
FIGURE 3: LITERATURE REVIEW INTEGRATION	10

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1: LEVEL OF ANALYSIS & STAKEHOLDER SCHEMA	9
TABLE 2: RESEARCH TIMELINE	15
TABLE 3: RESEARCH BUDGET	15

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AA	Affirmative Action
BBBEEE	Broad-Based Black Empowerment
EAPs	Employee Assistant Program
SCCT	Social Cognitive Theory
AA	Affirmative Action
BBBEEE	Broad-Based Black Empowerment

A New Career Development Model For South Africa:
Addressing Inequity Of The Black Workforce

ABSTRACT

It is argued that the Black employee career experience and development is different from that of their Caucasian counterparts due to their socio-economic background in South Africa (Watson & Stead, 2001). This experience results from the emerging Black workforce being subject to the ramifications of historical inequities (De Beer, Rothmann Jr, & Pienaar, 2016). These historical inequities influence various areas of career development such as education, skills development and social networks.

The contemplated research examines the above by analysing seminal literature from Employee Wellness Theory, Social Justice Theory and Human Resources Development Theory. The research aims to construct a new conceptual framework that better integrates theory with praxis. In particular, the research examines the influence of historical inequities on employee career development in South Africa through a triangulation research approach, including existing literature review, content analysis of company and government data combined with interviewing selected experts from private sector companies. The envisaged framework may provide a basis for debate, discussion, and support to promote further research in the future.

Keywords: Career Development, Employee Wellness, Occupational Justice, Coaching, Employee Assistance Wellness, Black Employee

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Career development is essential to organisations as it is a driver of organisational performance and an essential tool for appealing to, inspiring and retaining a high-quality workforce (Purcell, 2003). Career development is the evolution of the individual and the activities undertaken by them and their organisation to facilitate their growth (Smith, 2018; Hirsh & Jackson, 2004). It is argued that Black employees experience more barriers to their career development than their White counterparts in South Africa due to historical inequity.

Researchers have argued that the career development of Black employees is restrained due to limited developmental opportunities even for those considered the Black middle class (Nzukuma & Bussin, 2011; Shumba & Naong, 2013; Stead, 1996). The Black Middle class refers to the socio-economic grouping of people of African descent who emerge from a more vulnerable background and have fewer assets than their counterparts of European descent (Burger, Louw, Van der Berg, & Pegado, 2015). The limited developmental opportunities are a result of issues such as race, socio-economic status, financial support, and the tertiary graduation year of the employee (Baldry, 2016). In addition to the above issues, it appears that Black employees face higher pressure within the context of socio-economic challenges than their White counterparts due to factors, including the legacy of inequity of Apartheid (Magubane, 2017).

Coaching Black employees may be considered a strategic initiative in organisations to address these legacy issues (Sithole, 2018). As a result of financial pressure, Black employees have reduced disposable income and savings than White employees (Sibiya, 2018). This reduced disposable income cannot be invested in

A New Career Development Model For South Africa: Addressing Inequity Of The Black Workforce

career developing endeavours, such as further studies and coaching (Smith, 2018). Furthermore, this disadvantaged background has left Black employees with fewer assets than their White counterparts to create wealth and navigate their careers (Magubane, 2017; Cornileus, 2013; Barrett, 2000).

The impact of historical inequities on the career development of Black employees is not a well-researched area (Mangoma & Wilson-Prangle, 2019). Addressing the issue of the impact of historical inequity on the workforce, as a part of employee wellness is essential to improve employee retention (Kundu & Lata, 2017). Employee retention is vital, as the cost of replacing an employee who has left the organisation is higher than retaining an existing one and may be destructive to service delivery and customer experience (Samuel & Chipunza, 2009).

1.1 Origins of Inequities Amongst Black Employees

Inequities faced by the Black workforce as opposed to their White counterparts in South Africa primarily originates from the Apartheid period (Sherer, 2000; Hoogeveen & Özler, 2005; Bhorat, Van der Westhuizen, & Jacobs, 2009). Apartheid was a series of laws and regulations intentionally constructed to separate the races and ensure their subservience to White power. This has resulted in Black South Africans as economically inferior, having had inadequate education, fewer opportunities and a racially-based wealth gap (Clark & Worger, 2016). The plight of many Black South Africans emanating from previously disadvantaged circumstances influences their career journey. This is due to policies such as job reservation which excluded Blacks from participating in the economy in an impactful manner (Martin & Durrheim, 2006)

A New Career Development Model For South Africa: Addressing Inequity Of The Black Workforce

The differences in career development between Black and White employees may also, in part, be attributed to the culture which underpins the individual's approach to everyday life including their career (Watson, Stead, & De Jager, 1995).

1.2 Efforts to Address Black Workforce Inequities

To counter the historical legislation, policies such as Affirmative Action (AA), Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BB EE), National Skills Development Strategy and correctional policies were instituted (Abrahams, Jano, & van Lill, 2015). The B-BB EE Act of 2013 aimed at the viable economic empowerment of Black people through diverse socio-economic strategies (Pooe, 2013). B-BB EE was aimed to promote equal opportunities by implementing AA measures to redress the disadvantages in employment experienced by Black employees (Alexander, 2007). These attempts to address Black workforce inequities have not been as impactful as intended, as South Africa's inequity gap continues to widen despite efforts in policy to reduce it (Albien & Naidoo, 2016). These failing policies were formulated to improve Black people's income and occupation opportunities in South Africa and increase the emerging middle class (Mabandla, 2012). AA and similar legislation as a means to redress inequity is not unique to South Africa and has been executed in countries such as India; Malaysia; Sri Lanka; Nigeria and the United States without much success (Sowell, 2008). AA as a policy is prone to fail as it is subject to the quest for profit subject to competition which is the great equalizer resulting in the reduction in the prejudicial gap which if unchanged is not profitable in the long term (Becker, Block, Fraser, Sowell & Vonnegut, 1982).

A New Career Development Model For South Africa: Addressing Inequity Of The Black Workforce

The additional financial pressure on Black people and its impact is not ordinarily considered in the disciplines of career development due to traditional outlooks on careers (Bangali & Blustein, 2007). Thus, giving rise to the need to address this gap with a more inclusive study of career development. Given the above discourse, the contemplated research will examine the following objectives:

1. To gain a deeper understanding of the nexus within the academic literature regarding social justice, human resources development and employee wellness;
2. To investigate how the existing inequities in South Africa influence the career development of Black Employees;
3. To develop a new career development framework that will inform a wellness programme that will assist black employees in advancing their careers;
4. To make recommendations to key stakeholders on how to improve their wellness programmes to benefit Black employees and their career development.

The research will attempt to design a new conceptual framework that better assists Black employees in developing their careers. The research will focus on the apparent gap within the existing literature relating to the career development of the Black workforce, as well as investigate and identify the appropriate elements for a framework that may offer guidelines for career development. The envisaged framework may provide a platform for discussion, critique, and support for future research.

2.0 THE PROVISIONAL RESEARCH QUESTION

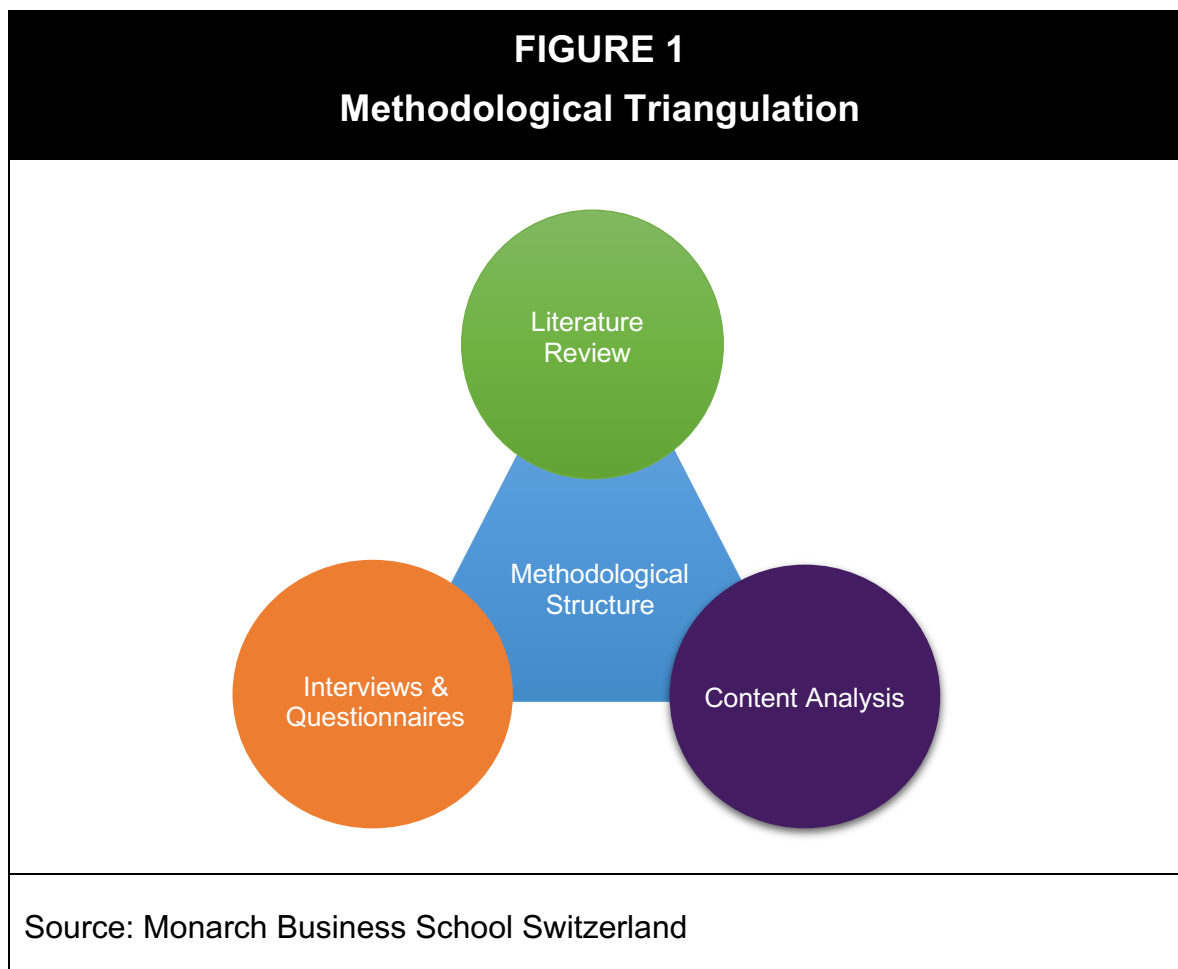
With the above discourse in mind, the following provisional research question has been developed:

A New Career Development Model For South Africa: Addressing Inequity Of The Black Workforce

“What are the characteristics of a new conceptual model or framework that promotes career advancement for the Black workforce of South Africa?”

3.0 THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

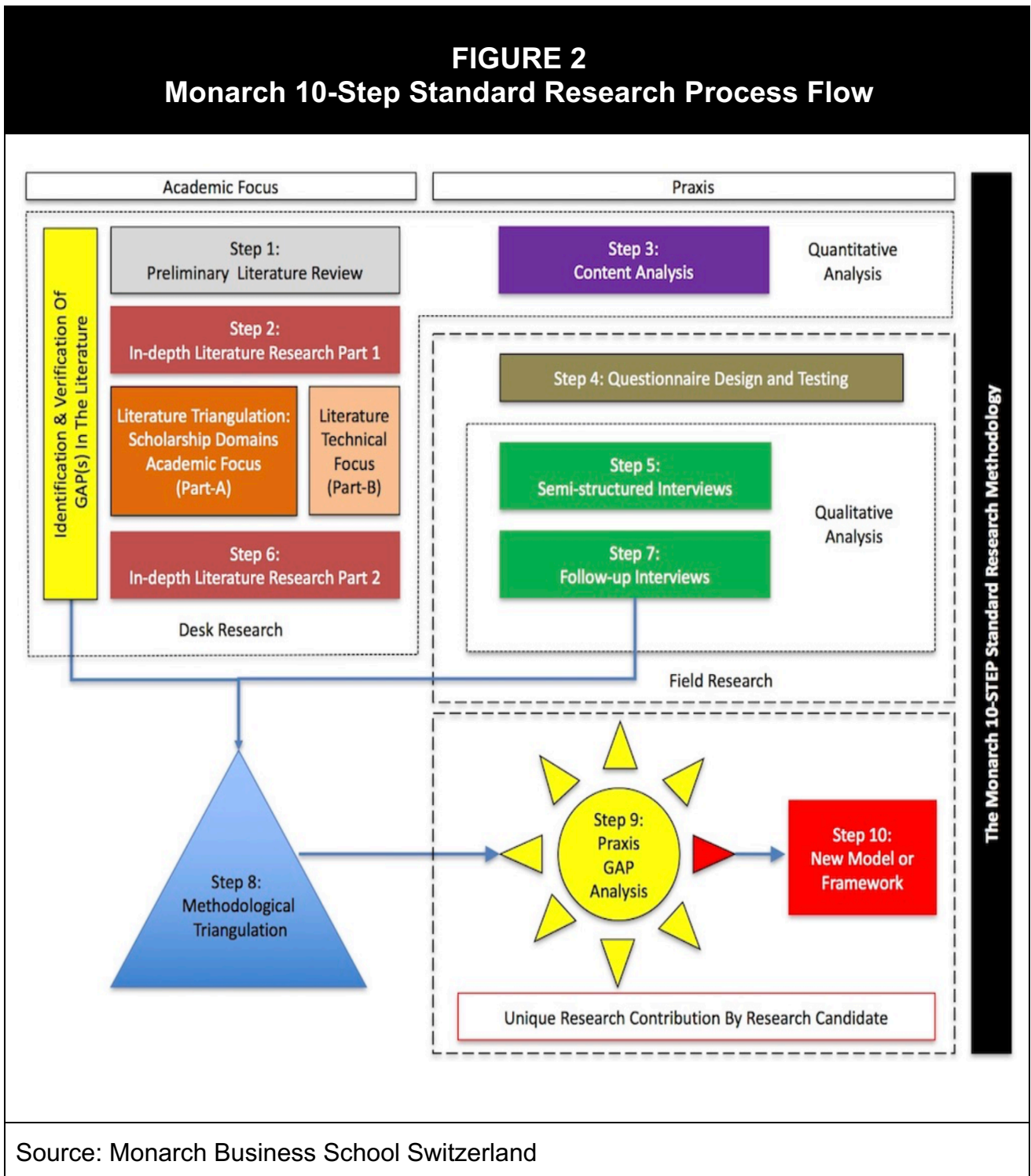
The research will adopt the Monarch Standardized Research Process Flow. Figure 1 shows that the contemplated research aims to respond to the provisional research question by way of a triangulation of research data, being: 1. literature review of existing seminal academic authors (desktop research); 2. content analysis of existing data (desktop research), and 3. interviews with primary stakeholders and experts in the industry (field research).



A New Career Development Model For South Africa: Addressing Inequity Of The Black Workforce

The contemplated research will follow the research steps, as outlined in more detail below:

FIGURE 2
Monarch 10-Step Standard Research Process Flow



Source: Monarch Business School Switzerland

A New Career Development Model For South Africa: Addressing Inequity Of The Black Workforce

Step 1: Preliminary Literature Review. The research begins with review of the seminal authors within the academic scholarship domains. The preliminary literature review provides a framework for the contemplated research, identifies vital concepts and theories, and develops a better understanding of the nexus of the academic scholarship domains and their integration. Figure 2 illustrates the 10-steps within the Monarch Standardized Research Process Flow

Step 2: In-Depth Literature Review – Part 1. An in-depth review and critique of the seminal authors and quasi-academic works within the three academic scholarship domains being: Theories on Social Justice, Theories on Human Resources Development, and Theories on Employee Wellness, will be completed to provide a solid academic foundation to the contemplated research. The "Gap in the Literature" will be presented and identified concerning the Provisional Research Question and its contribution to broader research.

Step 3: Content Analysis. An analysis of available data will be completed. The content analysis will respond to the Provisional Research Question and use annual reports, white papers, business review data and information found in professional journals and other sources.

Step 4: Questionnaire Design & Testing. The development of the questionnaire will be informed by the review of the academic literature and technical documents. The questionnaire will be based on the comprehension of existing theories and existing academic and professional literature gaps. The questionnaire will be tested with several volunteers to perfect the questionnaire from a flow and timing standpoint and ensure that questions are clear, concise, and have direct relevance on the focus of the contemplated research.

A New Career Development Model For South Africa:
Addressing Inequity Of The Black Workforce

Step 5: Semi-Structured Interview Process. All interview participants are expected to be knowledgeable concerning the contemplated research. A total of 55 face-to-face interviews will be conducted with participants representing a sample from each selected stakeholder group, as shown in Table 1. Interviews are expected to be 30-45 minutes in length.

Step 6: In-Depth Literature Review – Part 2. To add more specificity to the research analysis, a second in-depth literature review will be completed. The Part 2 literature review will also be informed by the interview responses from Step 5 to further refine the scope and consideration of the contemplated research.

Step 7: Follow-Up Interviews. To achieve a more specific view informed by the first interviews and the second literature review, a sub-set of 25 respondents from the first-round interview sample will participate in follow-up interviews. The timing and interview protocols will be similar to those listed in Step 5.

Steps 8 and 9: Triangulation of the Data and Gap Analysis. A triangulation of the research data informed by the literature review, content analysis, and interview responses will be completed. This will help determine whether the existing academic knowledge is aligned with the practical application in the field. This analysis should determine whether a Praxis Gap exists between the academic (theoretical) and the practical (applied) domains.

Step 10: Development of Framework and Recommendations. Building on the Gap Analysis completed in Step 9, an analysis of the existing models and frameworks within the academic domain will be considered. This analysis will evaluate whether the existing frameworks or models sufficiently address the requirement for practical application within the industry or whether they should be improved or modified. A list of managerial recommendations based on the findings of the research will be developed.

4.0 STAKEHOLDER SCHEMA & PARTICIPANTS

Throughout the contemplated research, a level of analysis methodology will be maintained that focuses on the critical considerations facing the research groups. The field research component consists of a two-part semi-structured interview process. The interviews will primarily be comprised of the Macro and Meso sub-groups, as shown in Table 1.

Participants at the Meso level are to be knowledgeable in the study domain with assumed managerial and leadership roles with a minimum of five years of experience who formulate and implement business strategy and have subordinates who deliver on the organisational objectives.

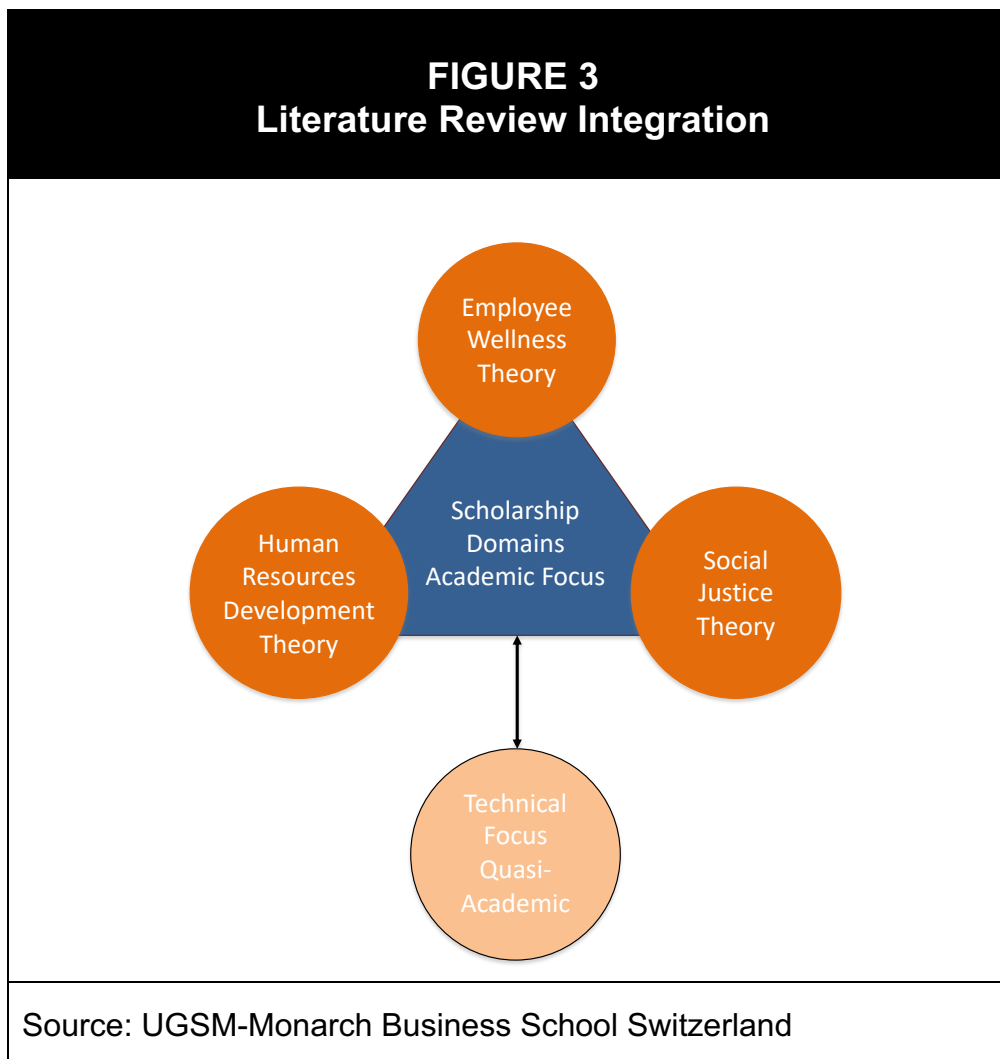
TABLE 1				
Level of Analysis & Stakeholder Schema				
Level	Type	Group 1	Group 2	Stakeholders
MACRO	Societal	5	0	State, Municipal & City Government Agencies for Business Development and Culture.
MESO	Organizational/ Institutional	50	25	Traditional Leaders Council, Business and Cultural Experts, Corporate Executive, Business Unit Leaders; Human Resource Professionals.
MICRO	Individual	-	-	Labour Force Members, Employees, Contractors
Total Respondents→		55	25	
Source: Monarch Business School Switzerland				

5.0 LITERATURE TRIANGULATION

The theoretical framework will be structured based on integrative literature review approach, as shown in Figure 3. The academic areas considered critical to the

A New Career Development Model For South Africa: Addressing Inequity Of The Black Workforce

research question are Theories on Social Justice, Theories on Human Resources Development, and Theories on Employee Wellness. Literature triangulation aims to identify the scholarship nexus between the three domains and where they converge in order to allow for greater richness in perspective and understanding.



5.1 Theories On Social Justice

Social justice in the workplace is referred to as occupational justice and is particularly concerned with enabling, facilitating and advocating for work environments where all people's opportunities to work are fair, just, equitable and meaningful (Hocking, 2017).

A New Career Development Model For South Africa: Addressing Inequity Of The Black Workforce

Social justice underpins actions that support society to give equal access to all its members (O'Brien, 2001).

The equity theory addresses the need for an equitable environment. It states that justice requires proportionality as inequity is distressing: those who over-benefit may experience guilt and shame, and those who under-benefit may experience anger, frustration and resentment (Jost & Kay, 2010). According to equity theory, individuals in an inequitable situation will try to decrease their concerns through social justice by instituting equity in the circumstance or by forsaking the situation (Hatfield, Salmon, & Rapson, 2011). In workplace equity theory, several programs can be instituted to implement social justice and avoid employees leaving by helping them share their experiences and participate in the problem-solving process, thereby empowering them to address disputes and, in so doing, benefit the organisation in retaining talent (Darden, 2009).

Social justice as a study prefers the safeguarding of human rights over the interests of securing a profit or maintaining the privilege of sub-groups. A key pillar of human rights is access to work and opportunities to grow in work (McWhirter & McWha-Hermann, 2021). An essential theory in social justice is Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT). This theory studies cognitive variables and how they interrelate with a person's environment to either aid or encumber the person's capacity to make career-related choices. SCCT emphasises the relations between self-belief, consequence, commitment, and variables within the context of career decision-making (Autin, Duffy, & Allan, 2017).

5.2 Theories on Human Resources Development

Career development is the total assemblage of psychological, sociological, educational, physical, economic, and fortuitous elements which amalgamate to shape employee behaviour to make effective career decisions (Herr, 2001). Career development is defined as the process of supervising the progression of employees, their development in learning, as well as in their work over the course of their lives (Watts, 2016). Career development includes recognition in one's profession, advancement in an organisation's ranks, as well as earning sufficient income (Santos, 2016).

Career development theories are based on psychology or sociology. Sociologists are attentive to career development primarily because of the consequences of socio-economic inequity (Brown, 2002). Furthermore, careers are not stagnant and are in a constant state of evolution (Freeman, 1993). This evolution requires employees to make choices and decisions throughout their careers. (Elder Jr & O'Rand, 1995). Individuals that are intentional and engaged in their choice of vocation tend to have positive implications psychologically, such as greater career satisfaction and higher efficiency at work (Parsons, 1909). These choices, regarding career, according to psychologists, will be influenced by the individual's background and childhood (Roe, 1956). Sociologists theorise that an individual's background will drive their pursuit of attaining status. This status will include the socio-economic status of the individual, their family and race (Osipow, 1968).

The measurement of the occupational status will include the skills required to be successful in the vocation, the complexity of the role and the socio-economic rewards the individual can acquire (Slomczynskil, 2017). The acquisition of occupational status and success is

A New Career Development Model For South Africa: Addressing Inequity Of The Black Workforce

more likely to be attained by individuals with stronger economic self-efficacy beliefs (Burger, Louw, Van der Berg, & Pegado, 2015). However, this occupational status and career development may not be achieved due to an individual's inability to comply with their cultural requirements and societal norms (Osipow, 1968).

5.3 Theories on Employee Wellness

According to Thakur (2017), employee wellness is defined as employer-sponsored strategies, initiatives, and programs that proactively seek to improve the health of employees and, at times, their families. It is argued that successfully executing this strategy will result in increased efficacy and organisational financial performance. The HSE (2005) states that employee wellness includes training and improving competencies and empowering staff to take responsibility for their well-being.

For employees to be healthy they require tools (Bloom, 2008). Employee wellness tools include integrated solutions that look at employees holistically (DeVries III, 2010). To effectively institute employee wellness assessments can be utilised (Zaver, 2018). Employers can supply these tools which will result in reduced company expenses and increased productivity due to a healthier workforce. Kumar, McCalla, & Lybeck (2009) share the sentiment that organisations should make a long-term investment in the wellness of their employees as this is considered a crucial indicator of future business results.

Employee wellness is often rolled out using Employee Assistance Programs which are designed to provide solutions for personal problems that may be affecting work performance or the health of the employee (Milot, 2019). EAPs constitute key pillars,

A New Career Development Model For South Africa: Addressing Inequity Of The Black Workforce

namely: education, a supportive work environment and the integration of the wellness program into the entity's structure (Passey, 2018). Employee wellness programs can often be perceived to be the catch-all solution for addressing the employees facing workplace and personal challenges affecting productivity (Joseph, 2017). EAPs focusing on career development are an employee retention tool using counselling, coaching and training for employees to improve their well-being and productivity (Merchant Jr, 2010).

6.0 TIMELINE & BUDGET

The contemplated research is expected to be concluded over 36 months. The field research interview process is to be completed over four months, from March 2023 to July 2023, after which time the data will be analysed and the manuscript will be completed. Each face-to-face interview should last a maximum of 45 minutes at a location and time that is amenable to participants. Telephone or online interviews will be used if face-to-face interviewing is not possible. Interviews will be conducted in South Africa in the cities of Johannesburg and Durban.

Every effort will be made to implement the steps within the proposed research timelines; however, a variation in the initial plan may occur due to unforeseen circumstances beyond the control of the researcher. Variables that may have a significant effect on the research timeline which are beyond the researcher's control are resource availability and accessibility and the availability of participants. These deviations could result in a modification of travel schedules and prolongation of the field research stages. A breakdown of the time allocation by the different phases of the research is outlined in Table 2.

A New Career Development Model For South Africa:
Addressing Inequity Of The Black Workforce

TABLE 2													
Research Timeline													
		Year 1				Year 2				Year 3			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
PART A	Initial Literature Search												
	Main Literature Search - Part 1												
	Research Plan												
	Section 1 - Background												
	Section 2 – Supporting Literature												
	Content Analysis												
		Official Submission of Chapters 1, 2, 3 and Slide Presentation to Obtain Authorisation to Continue to Field Research											
PART B	Interviews Part 1												
	Main Literature Search - Part 2												
	Interviews Part 2												
	Section 3 - Synthesis												
	Section 4 - Recommendations												
	Manuscript Perfecting &												
	Submission												
Source: UGSM-Monarch Business School Switzerland													

The research will be privately funded. No additional resources or funding will be requested from UGSM-Monarch Business School Switzerland. No funds will be received from any public body in carrying out the contemplated research. The total budget of the research exhibited in Table 3 is approximately \$11,000 US Dollars. The budget is presently fully funded, and research may begin immediately upon approval.

TABLE 3	
Research Budget	
Item	In US Dollars
Digital recorder, Books, Articles and stationery	1,600
Travel and accommodation expenses	3,500
Article publications	1,700
Manuscript publications	1,700
Miscellaneous	1,000
TOTAL	11,000

7.0 RESEARCH PROPOSAL APPROVAL

The contemplated research has been approved by the Administration, and the Candidate may commence the research immediately. The Candidate is not to deviate from the proposed research plan unless expressly confirmed by both the Supervisor and the Administration in written form.

Approved by The Administration on
21-Feb-2022 in Zug-Switzerland
By: Dr. Jeffrey Henderson, Ph.D.

A New Career Development Model For South Africa:
Addressing Inequity Of The Black Workforce

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A New Career Development Model For South Africa:
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