4.1 INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapters of this thesis have demonstrated the various concerns of modern adult workers, their attitudes and beliefs as determinants of their career status, as well as the role of exogenous influences in vocational adjustment. Factors such as changing organisations, family commitments, interpersonal harassment and geographical barriers are only a few of the influences on the career paths of the modern adult. The Career Attitudes and Strategies Inventory (Holland & Gottfredson, 1994) is indicative of the fact that certain personality styles such as the risk-taking and dominant styles, as well as traits such as agreeableness or extroversion can contribute to effective vocational adjustment. According to Super et al. (1988) the changing work and working conditions should be met by the coping skill of career adaptability, which as seen before, implies the ability to complete vocational development tasks successfully. In the light of this knowledge, questions about the meaning and role of the career resilience construct are important to address.

In the introduction of the thesis the need for resiliency as a result of shifts in the workplace has become evident. Bridges (1995) defines resiliency as “the ability to bend and not break” (p. 57). Its components include flexibility, learning that which is new, bouncing back from disappointment, and accepting uncertainty and insecurity. The career resilience concept is relatively new to vocational psychology literature (Gordon & Coscarelli, 1994), and no theoretical model exists according to which this construct may be understood (Fourie & Van Vuuren, 1998). The notions of resilience and career resilience belong to a new paradigm in psychology, aptly named positive psychology. This new approach goes beyond the deterministic views of behaviourism and the occasional self-centred views of humanism. Benefiting both the individual and the community, the principle aims of positive psychology are that of developing talent, as well as increasing the productiveness and fulfilment of the lives of all people. In many ways it is a departure from, yet not replacement of, the disease
model of human functioning, which principle aim is to cure mental illness. Instead the purpose of positive psychology is to improve the quality of individuals’ subjective experiences, increase positive individual traits, and enhance virtues, such as altruism and work ethics that entail better citizenship (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). As will be seen in the following discussion, the concept of career resilience is a prime example of how positive psychology principles may apply in vocational psychology.

In this chapter various conceptualisations of resilience will be examined. The Career Resilience Questionnaire (Fourie & Van Vuuren, 1998) will then be described as measure of career resilience. In order to further understand the role of this concept within vocational psychology, other concepts relating to resilience will be discussed in broad terms. Lastly, the concept of resilience will be evaluated in terms of its relevance to career development psychology in the twenty first century.

4.2 VARIOUS CONCEPTUALISATIONS OF RESILIENCE

According to the Collins English Dictionary the word “resilient” may be defined as “recovering easily and quickly from shock, illness, hardship, etc.”. This definition already identifies the role of environmental influences in the process of resilience. In the field of psychology, resilience has been used to define development and competence displayed despite environmental adversity, or resistance to stress (Fourie & Van Vuuren, 1998). In this section the resilience concept within the context of psychiatry and psychopathology will be investigated. Thereafter three perspectives on resilience pertaining to the domain of vocational psychology will be presented.

4.2.1 Resilience within the paradigm of psychiatry and psychopathology

Since the late 1980’s there has been progressive emphasis in psychiatric literature on the factors that prevents high risk children from developing psychiatric disorders or maladaptive behaviour, as will be seen in the discussion below. Along with this investigation in literature, and in line with the paradigm of positive psychology, the construct of resilience and its negation of
simple linear causation models of psychosis have come under the spotlight. The following discussion will provide some of the basic findings concerning resilience, and will also incorporate a discussion of its possible applicability in terms of career resilience in adulthood.

4.2.1.1 Resilience according to Beardslee (1989)

According to Beardslee (1989) resilience may be detected in individuals who have had a confiding relationship in early life, and whose temperament and psychological characteristics are expressed in their coping styles, positive self-esteem, self-efficacy and locus of control. Apart from these factors self-understanding also plays an important role in resiliency. Self-understanding may be defined as “an internal psychological process through which an individual makes causal connections between experiences in the world at large and inner feelings” (Beardslee, 1989, p. 267-268). Stated differently, resilient individuals’ self-understanding enables them to have a “total organizing conceptualization of who they are and how they came to be” (Beardslee, 1989, p. 275). In terms of developmental psychology resilient individuals have the capacity to progressively see the world in more complex terms, and to achieve intimate relationships.

Beardslee (1989) bases this description of self-understanding on the findings of studies of the role of self-understanding in the resilience of civil rights workers, survivors of childhood cancer, and children of parents with affective disorders. Self-understanding resilient individuals can adequately appraise stressful events and personal change. They can also realistically appraise their personal ability for taking action and the effects or consequences of such action. Moreover, resilient individuals actually put their plans into action. Self-understanding is not stagnant, but develops over time and becomes a protective factor in people’s lives, helping them to anticipate future experiences.

The role of self-understanding pertaining to career resilience specifically, still needs to be investigated. Beardslee (1989) hypothesises that self-understanding may be strongly associated with resiliency in terms of intense stressful events, but not in terms of general adaptation tasks. Nevertheless one may argue that resilient adults will have realistic opinions of themselves and
their careers, and how to overcome career obstacles through goal-setting and action plans.

4.2.1.2 Resilience according to Masten, Best and Garmezy (1990)

The concept of psychosocial resilience explains normal development and the ability to overcome adversity. Three distinct conceptualisations of resilience associated with positive developmental outcomes in research are reviewed by Masten et al. (1990). The first group of studies defines resilience as the ability to overcome the odds of high-risk circumstances, such as being subject to socio-economical strains, parental psychopathology, and the cumulative effect of multiple risks. These studies show the protective effect of factors such as childhood intelligence, past social, family and school functioning, a warm relationship with other adults, competent parenting, positive school experiences, and support from other systems, such as a church.

A second group of studies identified by Masten et al. (1990) defines resilience as stress resistance, or sustained competence under threat, for instance the threat produced by the effects of divorce. In these studies protective factors associated with resilience include low levels of interparental conflict and living with the same-sex parent in the case of divorce. Likewise, children's resilience in danger and loss is associated with protective factors including caring adults, self-efficacy beliefs, faith and religious beliefs, intellectual, social and cognitive skills, an internal locus of control and an easy temperament. These factors may all be moderated by age and gender differences.

A third group of studies defines resilience as recovery from trauma or maltreatment. Findings show that the effect of adverse circumstances may be ameliorated by parental behaviour or supporting families in the case of trauma, or a loving foster mother for instance, in the case of maltreatment. Masten et al. (1990) conclude that the development of resilience is non-linear, and may vary in terms of gender, developmental level, and cultural and historical context. General resilience may nonetheless be fostered by facilitating psychological development. Resilience can be fostered by reducing vulnerability, risk and stressors, and by increasing available resources, and mobilising protective processes such as positive relationships and self-esteem (Masten, 1994).
One may hypothesise that for adults the ability to be resilient in spite of career obstacles and threats may also require social support, intelligence and other adaptive skills, beliefs of self-efficacy, an internal locus of control, and faith.

4.2.1.3 Resilience according to Fine (1991)

Since he came to the conclusion that trials and tribulations in life are inevitable, the psychiatrist Fine (1991) analysed life narratives to determine the factors that influence resilience. He believes that the “inner life (affective and cognitive processes and content) holds the potential for transforming traumas into varying degrees of triumph” (p. 493). In response to his question “Who rises above adversity?”, Fine (1991) identifies four abilities comprising resilience and adaptability, namely competence, coping, creativity and confidence. These abilities are not static but are both phase-specific and inconstant. A resilient person encountering a career barrier will firstly direct his energy to lessen the impact thereof (acute phase), before the new reality is accepted and assimilated (reorganisation phase). The resilience learnt in this way then continues for the duration of his life. Resilience is nevertheless changing and personal in nature, as each individual also has a unique adaptive style. In each specific circumstance the individual needs to integrate personal meaning, behaviour and reality (Fine, 1991).

One may therefore infer that a career resilient person will find personal meaning in each obstacle experienced in the career, and deal with any accompanying emotions. He will also develop the necessary skills and behaviour that will result in the fulfilment of personal potential, and will objectively consider the reality and consequences of the current career condition. Resilience thus have cognitive, affective and behavioural components.

4.2.1.4 Resilience according to Garmezy (1993)

Despite certain cumulative family-linked risk factors of psychiatric disorders, criminal activity and other negative cognitive, social or emotional development, many children still have positive life outcomes. In response to the question as to
what protects children from maladjustment following exposure to violence, Garmezy (1993) identified certain protective factors of resilient individuals. Resilience does not denote the incapacity of being harmed (invulnerability), but the ability to regain functioning after negative experiences, and to return to one’s ‘pre-stress competencies’. It is not a stable trait, but may diminish over time if stressful experiences cumulate, if a support structure is absent, or if the environment is critically altered. Resilience may be operationally defined in terms of competence, or the completion of age-related adaptational tasks, but not in terms of the absence of emotional distress. A resilient individual has three categories of protective factors, namely the right temperament, a warm, cohesive family with at least one supportive member, and external support, for instance from a church or teacher. In as far as temperament is concerned, a resilient individual is active and reflective, and has an internal locus of control. Moreover, the resilient individual is sociable, and possesses good communication skills and other cognitive skills.

Once again it is apparent that resilience is co-determined by environment and personal characteristics. There is a need to identify the environmental factors that will foster career resilience in adults, and to specify the personal characteristics of resilient adults.

4.2.1.5 Resilience according to Egeland, Carlson and Sroufe (1993)

Resilience may be depicted as a process which takes place within a organisational framework (Egeland et al., 1993). Adaptation or alternatively negative development outcomes are the result of the interaction of genetic, biological, psychological and sociological factors, and is dependent on the level of environmental support. The interpretation of environmental stimuli however, is based on the individual’s active participation in the process, through attitudes, expectations and feelings emanating from prior person-environment interactions. A child’s adaptation is dependent on a variety of constitutional and environmental factors, but is dependent on a progressive and hierarchical development of a system of behaviours. Thus a child who has learnt to competently deal with risk factors at one time, will in a following period have the capacity to learn the competence required. In this context resilience is defined as “the ability to use internal and external resources successfully to resolve
stage-salient developmental issues” (Egeland et al., 1993, p. 518). The outcome of resilience is the ability to effectively co-ordinate social, emotional and cognitive systems in different challenging situations. The continuity of the resilience process is not identifiable in the repeating of identical behaviours at different times, but in the display of the same level of behavioural organisation (Egeland et al., 1993). Egeland et al. (1993) quote findings showing poverty to be one of the greatest risk factors, with emotionally responsive caregiving, early competence, an organised home environment, intelligence and language abilities as some of the more salient protective factors in poverty and maternal stress.

This transactional developmental perspective on resilience may have some implications for the career resilience construct. One may argue that since development continues beyond childhood, the process of resilience may also develop and continue throughout the adult career. The risk factors of adult career resilience still needs to be specified, as well as mediating variables between career risks and career resilience.

4.2.1.6 Resilience according to Wolff (1995)

Wolff (1995) also reviewed the resilience construct from a psychiatric perspective, in particular as it pertains to children. The resilience concept is useful since it accounts for the exceptions to the rule in simple causal models of psychiatric disorders. Wolff (1995, p. 566) adopts the definition of Masten and Garmezy (1990) who define resilience as “the process of, capacity for, or outcome of successful adaptation despite challenging or threatening circumstances”. This definition is preferred to one that limits resilience to external behavioural success or overt social competence, whilst ignoring covert mental health. The process of resilience identified by Wolff (1995) may be schematically represented in accordance with Figure 4.1.

```
GENETIC FACTORS | elicit | POSITIVE RESPONSES FROM THE ENVIRONMENT | which develops | RESILIENCE
```
Genetic factors identified include (a) high intelligence, (b) temperament (easy, adaptable, sociable, positive mood, motorically active, absence of high emotionality, and a capacity for empathic relationships), and (c) physical attributes, including attractiveness. Environmental sources of positive feedback include (a) primary family relationships, (b) a network of other relationships, and (c) prior competence and achievements. The resultant resilience can be divided into three components: (a) a sense of self-worth, (b) competence, and (c) self-efficacy.

Instead of a chain reaction of negative events, resilience can have “the reverse effect of shielding the person from a negative consequence of adversity and ensuring a life trajectory of mutual interactions with the social environment that are more positive” (Wolff, 1995, p. 567). Evidently resilience is both genetically determined and environmentally developed. Resilience is not uniform and may be moderated by age or be a factor of gender. High risk individuals may even develop resilience when they become integrated in subsequent positive environments.

One may once again note the need for studying the environmental factors that may maintain, enhance or initiate adult career resilience from this discussion. “Careful evaluation of contextual factors would be necessary in research involving resilience” (Dyer & McGuinness, 1996, p. 281).
4.2.1.7 Resilience according to Dyer and McGuinness (1996)

As point of departure, Dyer and McGuinness (1996) explain that all humans are faced by distressing life events at some point in time, but the outcome of such events or the reaction to them are based on the level of resilience of individuals. The resilience concept has historically been used synonymously with concepts of pliancy, malleability, elasticity, rebounding, adaptability, buoyancy, and in very early psychiatric literature, invulnerability and invincibility. Resilience is defined as “a process whereby people bounce back from adversity and go on with their lives” (Dyer & McGuinness, 1996, p. 277). In criticism of Rutter’s (1990) concept that limits resilience to the absence of less desirable outcomes in adversity, their conceptualisation also include the presence of protective factors. More specifically, certain protective factors or competencies are prerequisites for the process of resilience to take place. Such competencies may be subdivided into domains of individual, interpersonal, as well as familial skills. The antecedents, critical attributes and consequences of resilience (Dyer & McGuinness, 1996) may be represented in accordance with Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Antecedents, attributes and consequences of resilience according to Dyer and McGuinness (1996)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANTECEDENTS</th>
<th>CRITICAL ATTRIBUTES</th>
<th>CONSEQUENCES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Adversity</td>
<td>- Rebounding and carrying on;</td>
<td>- Primary: effective coping;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- One caring, emotionally</td>
<td>- A sense of self;</td>
<td>- Personal toughening;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>available person</td>
<td>- Determination;</td>
<td>- Active mastery of other situations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Prosocial attitude.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Inconsistencies in resilience occur when individuals do not have all the critical attributes thereof. One may tentatively extrapolate this notion of resilience to the career domain. A career resilient adult may then be described as someone who, when experiencing a career obstacle, or a negative career event, copes effectively, but also becomes stronger, and effectively takes control of other situations. Such a person will have a sense of self and equanimity, and will base a negative event, such as losing a job on his enduring values, seeing the
event in perspective, and will also maintain a high level of self-esteem, without losing sight of his own identity. He will display determination. A career resilient unemployed person for instance will set a goal to find, or create work. In his perseverance he will employ resourceful problem-solving skills. Dyer and McGuinness (1996) explain such determination as “a value of fortitude with conviction, tenacity with resolve (p. 277). The career resilient adult, based on this conceptualisation of resilience could display a prosocial attitude, by not isolating himself and seeking the support of others.

4.2.1.8 Resilience according to Foster (1997)

Foster (1997) regards resilience as one of the components of the tripartite coping, adaptation, and resilience (CAR) construct. Resilience is defined as “positive changes in maintaining active or latent coping and adaptation capacities through mechanisms (such as healing, restitution, refinement and enhancement) that may not be immediately apparent but become evident over time” (Foster, 1997, p. 190). Resilience thus include both defensive and proactive abilities. The primary focus of CAR for the individual is promotion of security in terms of basic needs and both physical and psychological health. Apart from security, positive outcomes of life crises and CAR activities include better social responses, relationships, personal resources and new coping skills. It also protects against both psychological and physical disease. Resilience as a component of CAR can be seen as a resistance mechanism against disease that may increase with age. In Foster’s (1997) own words: “Aging creates survivors. We should not be surprised that the elderly as survivors demonstrate increased attributes of acquired experience and wisdom and excellent psychological resilience” (p. 213).

The organisational structure of the CAR construct consists of 5 domains, which may be subdivided into 29 components, which in turn contain 169 subdividable sectors. The five domains are demographic functions, socio-economic functions, resources, adaptive experiences and approaches, and current adaptive efforts. An individual’s resilience is part of a continuous process. Demographic functions, socio-economic functions and resources interact resulting in adaptive experiences and approaches which in turn bring about current adaptive resources (Foster, 1997).
This discussion once again brings to the light the complexity of the antecedents of resilience. One may summarise that a career resilient adult will attempt to maintain security in his career by drawing on past adaptive approaches and resources within his environment to be resilient and adaptive in his reactions.

4.2.1.9 Resilience according to Jew, Green and Kroger (1999)

Resiliency according to Jew et al. (1999) may be defined as the skills and abilities that render a person resistant to psychological harm. Such skills that may be both genetically inherited and environmentally developed, are also based on the person’s belief system. Research findings suggest the following characteristics of children who successfully overcome the effects of negative life events: (a) high levels of autonomy, (b) independence, (c) empathy, (d) task orientation and (e) curiosity, as well as relatively better (f) problem-solving skills and (g) peer relations.

Based on the theory of Mrazek and Mrazek (1987), Jew et al. (1999) developed and validated a measure of resiliency containing subscales of (a) future orientation, (b) active skill acquisition, and (c) independence or risk-taking. Each of these subscales relates to skills and abilities identified by Mrazek and Mrazek (1984). Accordingly, a person who is future-oriented can imagine himself in the future having overcome the current difficulty, and displays attitudes of optimism and hope. The resilient individual also actively acquires skills of formation and use of relationships for survival, information seeking, altruism, identification with the competence of their aggressor, and in the case of children, engaging in role reversal with parents. The independence or risk-taking component of resiliency manifests in skills of rapid responsivity to danger and decisive risk-taking.
4.2.1.10 Conclusion

Together, the preceding perspectives on resilience in the field of psychiatry and psychopathology indicate the complexity of the construct and disparities in terms of the ascribed critical attributes thereof. Evidently resilience consists of affective, cognitive and behavioural components. It entails an innate disposition, attitudes and beliefs such as self-efficacy, and internal locus of control, as well as a skills dimension, and external social support. Resilience is also not static, but is a process, and thus unstable and contextually determined. The skills acquired and resources obtained through resilience in one context may nonetheless be modified and applied in further circumstances.

The findings regarding resilience in the field of psychiatry and psychopathology bring to the light that there is a need for uniform definitions of resilience within the career domain in order to accurately research, describe and differentiate the antecedents, components, correlates and consequences of adult resilience. It seems however that the boundaries between the protective factors leading to resilience, the critical attributes of resilience, and the consequences thereof, are difficult to demarcate. The diagram presented in Figure 4.2 is a tentative integration of most of the resilience-related variables found in the field of psychiatry and psychology, as has been described above.
**INTELLIGENCE**
- Childhood intelligence (Masten et al., 1990; Wolff, 1995)
- Intellectual skills (Garmezy, 1993)

**TEMPERAMENT**
- Active and reflective (Garmezy, 1993)
- Easy (Masten et al., 1990)
- Easy, adaptable, positive mood, absence of emotionality etc. (Wolff, 1995)

**PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES**
- Attractiveness (Wolff, 1995)

---

**ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSES / INFLUENCES**

**POSITIVE RELATIONS**

**PRIMARY CAREGIVERS**
- Early confiding relationship (Beardslee, 1989)
- Emotionally responsive family (Egeland et al., 1993)
- Low levels of interparental conflict (Wolff, 1995)
- Warm, cohesive family (Garmezy, 1993)
- Warm relationship, competent parents (Masten et al., 1990)

**OTHER ADULTS**
- Early confiding relationship (Beardslee, 1989)
- Warm relationship, caring adults (Masten et al., 1990; Wolff, 1995)
- Caring emotionally available individual (Dyer & McGuinness, 1996)

**SCHOOL**
- Positive experiences (Masten et al., 1990)

**EXTERNAL SUPPORT**
- Church or other groups (Garmezy, 1993; Masten et al., 1990)
ACQUIRED RESOURCES

SKILLS
- Early competence (Egeland et al., 1993)
- Positive coping style (Beardslee, 1989)
- Positive peer relations and problem-solving skills (Jew et al., 1999)
- Self-understanding (Garmezy, 1993)
- Social, cognitive and language skills (Masten et al., 1990; Egeland et al., 1993)
- Successful prior functioning (Wolff, 1995)

ATTITUDES
- Towards Self
  - Autonomy and independence (Jew et al., 1999)
  - Internal locus of control (Beardslee, 1989; Masten et al., 1990; Garmezy, 1993)
  - Positive self-esteem (Beardslee, 1989)
  - Self-efficacy (Beardslee, 1989; Masten et al., 1990)
- Towards Others
  - Empathy (Jew et al., 1999)
- Towards Experiences
  - Curiosity and task orientation (Jew et al., 1999)

BELIEFS
- Faith and religious beliefs (Egeland et al., 1993)

RESILIENCE

ABILITIES AND SKILLS
- Creativity (Fine, 1991)
- Competence (Fine, 1991; Garmezy, 1993; Wolff, 1995)
- Coping (Fine, 1991)
- Rebounding (Dyer & McGuinness, 1996)

ATTITUDES AND STYLES
- Confidence (Fine, 1991)
- Determination and prosocial attitude (Dyer & McGuinness, 1996)
- Future orientation, active skill acquisition, independence, risk-taking, altruism, independence (Jew et al., 1999)
- Self-efficacy and sense of self-worth (Wolff, 1995)

ACHIEVEMENTS
- Adaptation (Dyer & McGuinness, 1996)
- Completion of adaptational tasks (Garmezy, 1993)
- Completion of developmental tasks (Egeland et al., 1993)
Figure 4.2  Antecedents, correlates and consequences of resilience as defined in the field of psychiatry and psychopathology.

In the preceding discussion certain tentative inferences have been made with regards to the applicability of the resilience construct in the domain of work. Under the following three headings indications of the usefulness of the resilience construct in vocational psychology will be advocated. Strümpfer’s (1990, 1995) ‘fortigenesis’ concept will set the stage, by describing the necessity of psychology of health, or positive psychology in every facet of human experience, including the domain of work. Thereafter Gordon and Coscarelli’s (1996) definition of resilience, which is directly related to the work environment will be mentioned. London’s (1983, 1993, 1998) definition of career resilience will then provide many answers as to the possible role of career resilience in career motivation specifically.

4.2.2  Strümpfer’s (1990, 1995) concept of ‘fortigenesis’

Although Strümpfer (1995) did not directly analyse the concept of resilience, the notion of ‘fortigenesis’ seems similar both in meaning and effects. This construct is based on Antonovsky’s (1979) concept of ‘salutogenesis”. In sum, ‘salutogenesis’ means having strength when faced by adverse life circumstances. In this context strength refers primarily to physical health, but also entails well-being in other domains of life, for instance positive family relationships. ‘Salutogenesis’ occurs when a person has manifold “generalised resistance resources”, which include material, intellectual, relational and macro-
sociocultural resources. This, in accordance with Antonovsky (1979), brings about a ‘sense of coherence’, implying that the person is functioning well in the face of trauma with inevitable consequences, and has a belief in the predictability of his environment. A strong ‘sense of coherence’ in turn brings about well-being, primarily in the area of physical health, but presumably also in other domains of life, for instance in effective work performance and career development.

Strümpfer (1995) advocates the replacement of the ‘salutogenesis’ concept with the idea of ‘fortigenesis’, meaning the origins of strength and courage. In practical terms, when an adult faces the adverse work circumstances of the modern age, his well-being in all areas of his life is dependent on a strong sense of coherence, which in turn is reliant on the availability of a vast amount of resources. An individual facing a career obstacle, such as in the case of job loss may rely on religious practices, positive family relationships, intelligence, money and other resources. In this regard Moen (1997) found that the resilience of women in late adulthood is dependent on social and psychological resources, in particular having multiple roles, and a sense of self-esteem, and satisfaction. Research findings also show that the resource of social support can reduce the work strains experienced, alleviate perceived stressors, and moderate the relationship between stressors (such as role conflict, work overload and so forth) and strains (such as job dissatisfaction, burnout, withdrawal intentions etc.) (Viswesvaran, Sanchez & Fisher, 1999). The Career Transition Inventory (Heppner, Multon and Johnston, 1994) is indicative of some of the psychological resources used during career change, in particular (a) readiness, (b) confidence, (c) perceived social support, (d) control and (e) decision independence. A person with these psychological resources at his disposal is motivated to make a career transition and willing to take risks, is confident in the effects of his own behaviour, believes the transition is in his own control, and that others will support him, but also that the decision can be made independently from others.

Similarities may be seen between ‘fortigenesis’ and other concepts, including hardiness, potency, stamina, learned resourcefulness, self-efficacy, locus of control (Strümpfer, 1995) and implicitly, resilience. Some of these constructs will be discussed later in this chapter.
4.2.3 Resilience according to Gordon and Coscarelli (1996)

According to Gordon and Coscarelli (1996) the meaning of resilience cannot be limited to stress management in the work environment, but it refers to the ability to (despite environmental adversity) thrive, mature and increase competence. This ability to be resilient comes from biological, psychological and environmental resources. The multifaceted nature of resilience is reflected in these three resources or components.

Gordon and Coscarelli (1996) argue that resilience is not a psychological trait, but resilient people share a few characteristics. The psychological domain of resilience consists of traits of intelligence, autonomy, androgyny, internal locus of control, and social skills such as interpersonal sensitivity. In as far as the environmental domain is concerned, resilience is enhanced when a stressor or barrier is removed, the negative chain of events is stopped, self-esteem is increased or maintained, or an alternative route to success is provided. The meaning of resilience should also be reinterpreted for different contextual frameworks or different developmental phases. Practically speaking one could say that different abilities are required by those entering the job market, those who want to establish themselves in a career, or those who are seeking to maintain a career.


London (1983) regards career resilience as one of the three dimensions of career motivation, along with career identity and career insight. Whereas career identity and career insight are the directional and arousal components of career motivation respectively, career resilience is the maintenance component (London, 1983). Each of these dimensions of career motivation can help overcome the occurrence of career barriers (London, 1998). The career resilience dimension is defined as the ability to adapt to changing circumstances, as opposed to “psychological fragility” or career vulnerability. It also encompasses the ability to cope with negative work situations, to demonstrate initiative, to structure problems, and to strive to maintain quality of performance despite situational barriers (London, 1993). In order to overcome
career barriers, an adult must not merely understand himself and his work environment (career insight), and follow a set of goals (career identity), but should have the ability to conquer difficult work situations, of which job insecurity is but one example. Resilience develops insight, which in turn develops identity (London, 1998).

To be resilient in the face of disruptive circumstances does not only entail adaptability, but also risk-taking, acceptance of job and organisational changes, belief in one’s ability to deal with work-related problems, and willingness to work with dissimilar and new people. A resilient individual may display behaviours indicating belief in himself, a desire for autonomy, and in the event of change, adaptive behaviours as well as control taking and development (London, 1998).

Similar to Gordon and Coscarelli (1996), London (1993) recognise both situational and personality domains of this concept. Certain situational factors may strengthen resilience. An organisation could instil resilience in an adult worker through constructive feedback on performance, opportunities to practice autonomy, individual control and discretion, and through insistence on quality, learning, skill development and organisational change. As a personality style, resilience is developed in childhood through reinforcement, but may be adjusted by situational variables as mentioned above. Traits relating to resilience, such as adaptability and conscientiousness, although innate, may be developed. In this context career barriers may be seen as positive events that develop resilience, insight, and identity (London, 1998).

Career resilience principles are echoed in well-established vocational theories, for instance Holland’s (1997) statement that career decisions are influenced by the ability to face barriers, and also in the concepts of perseverance, flexibility and reactivity in the Theory of Work Adjustment (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984). Career resilience can also be associated with traits of hardiness, self-efficiency, achievement motivation and career maturity (London, 1993).

Research findings suggest that situational variables of career resilience include reinforcement contingencies, organisational career plans, and managerial support (London, 1993). Noe, Noe and Bachhuber (1990) found that work role salience, perceptions of motivating job characteristics, and managers'
supportive interpersonal skills correlate positively with the career resilience dimension of career motivation. London (1993) found that self-perceived empowerment and support for career development relate to career resilience as rated by supervisors. Personality traits associated with resilience in research findings include low trait anxiety, Type A personality (aggressive, ambitions, driven), internal locus of control, high self-esteem, optimism, a sense of self-efficacy, a predisposition to satisfaction, as well as good problem-solving skills (London, 1998). The level of career resilience of individuals may in fact affect all aspects of career behaviour. In one study it was found that low levels of career motivation and implicitly career resilience for very experienced individuals result in negative training behaviours (Wolf, London, Casey & Pufahl, 1995).

4.2.5 Conclusion

Strümpfer’s (1990, 1995) concept of ‘fortigenesis’ suggests that the applicability and value of the concept of resilience extend beyond the field of psychiatry. It is evident that career resilience is dependent on the availability of resources from different sources in one’s life. Gordon and Coscarelli’s (1996) commentary on resilience brings it directly into the domain of work, and also shows that resilience is dependent on the availability of internal and external resources. London’s (1983, 1993, 1998) description of career resilience indicates it’s role in career motivation, but also echoes the fact that resilience is dependent on psychological and circumstancial resources. Figure 4.3 summarises the resources of resilience, and the descriptions and consequences of career resilience that are mentioned in this section.
**RESOURCES OF RESILIENCE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MATERIAL</th>
<th>INTELLECTUAL</th>
<th>RELATIONAL</th>
<th>MACRO-SOCIO-CULTURAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BIOLOGICAL</th>
<th>PSYCHOLOGICAL</th>
<th>ENVIRONMENTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**RESILIENCE**

- Showing strength and courage (Strümpfer, 1995)
- Thriving, maturing and increasing competence (Gordon & Coscarelli, 1996)
- Adapting to change, coping with negative circumstances, demonstrating initiative, maintaining performance (London, 1993)

**CONSEQUENCES OF CAREER RESILIENCE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CAREER INSIGHT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CAREER IDENTITY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OVERCOMING CAREER BARRIERS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(London, 1993)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 4.3*  Resources, descriptions and consequences of career resilience
4.3 RESILIENCE AND RELATED CONSTRUCTS

It is impossible within the scope of this chapter to list and describe all the factors that partially share the meaning of, or relate to resilience. Focus will be placed on concepts of hardiness, locus of control, self-efficacy, future orientation, planfulness, self-direction, transformational coping, potency, stamina, learned resourcefulness, hope and optimism. The following discussion on these resilience-related constructs serves to clarify the concept and to indicate its usefulness within the field of career psychology.

4.3.1 Hardiness

Although the construct of hardiness belongs to a different field, London (1998) believes that it is analogous to resilience. Kobasa (1979) distinguishes three components of hardiness, namely commitment, as opposed to alienation, control, as opposed to powerlessness, and challenge as opposed to threat. In other words, a hardy individual believes that life’s activities are important, valuable and meaningful, that life’s experiences, events and outcomes are predictable and controllable, and that life changes are incentives and opportunities for growth, rather than ominous experiences. He therefore engages in varied activities and many situations, and incorporates changes into his life plan. According to Dyer and McGuinness (1996) however resilience and hardiness differ in meaning. Children in many instances, may not be in the position to display the control component, but may nonetheless be resilient.

A question may be asked as to what the role of hardiness is in human functioning and adjustment. Strümpfer (1990) points out that although research findings suggest that hardiness is a predictor of health, there is only mixed support for the moderating effect of hardiness in stress-illness relationships. In a short review of research pertaining to hardiness, London (1998) quotes findings indicating positive relationships between hardiness and an overall positive quality of life, health, happiness, athletic performance, job satisfaction, and attitude towards evaluations, as well as negative relationships between hardiness and reaction to discrimination. In a study of the three components of hardiness, Ramanaiah, Sharpe and Byravan (1999) found that individuals with high levels of commitment, control and challenge beliefs had different
personality profiles than those who were relatively less hardy. Hardy individuals were less likely to be neurotic, but had stronger traits of extroversion, openness and conscientiousness. In terms of mental health, higher positive emotionality and lower psychoticism scores were recorded for the hardy individuals. In as far as the effects of hardiness are concerned, research findings also suggest a direct positive effect of hardiness on job satisfaction. Hardiness was also found to reduce levels of stress and the effect of pressure for change (Ramanaiah et al., 1999). Rush, Schoel and Barnard (1995) found negative relations between hardiness and self-reported illness as a result of stress or burnout. According to Maddi (1999) a positive relationship between hardiness and performance, conduct, morale, stamina and health has been supported in research. The conceptual validity of the construct has also been supported in as far as high levels of hardiness is positively associated with commitment to one’s activities, feelings of control over them, and challenge or sense of learning through them. Hardiness has also been found to be negatively related to subjective and objective measures of physiological strain.

4.3.2 Locus of control

The concept of locus of control (Rotter, 1975) also belongs to the domain of psychology of health. Strong relations may be expected between internal locus of control and resilience. In other words, a resilient person may ascribe control over the events of his life to his own actions, rather than to external forces. The following research findings demonstrate the role of locus of control in positive life outcomes. DeMello and Imms (1999) found for their sample of adolescents that those with internal locus of control also had high self-esteem, a productive problem-solving coping style, a more positive attitude towards school, and positive perceptions of their academic performance. Perceptions of control over positive outcomes (but not negative outcomes) in life are related to lower depression and better academic and social adjustment (Njus & Brockway, 1999). When students in a study of the effects of locus of control in academic performance attributed success in previous examinations to external factors, results for a subsequent examination were found to be lower than for those who internalised the results (Morris & Tiggemann, 1998). It is probable that externalisation of one’s career success will also be associated with behaviour resulting in poorer performance. Fournier, Jeanrie and Laval (1999) brought
the locus of control concept into the career psychology domain by developing the Vocational Locus of Control Scale. Five locus of control belief types are identified: (a) defeatist, (b) dependence, (c) prescriptive, (d) self-responsibility, and (e) proactive, of which the last two relate to internal locus of control. Self-responsibility is associated with individuals’ beliefs that they are entirely responsible for their career outcomes, denying the role of fate. Proactive type beliefs may relate to resilience as individuals with such beliefs take into account both individual and environmental aspects of vocational outcomes, allowing for vocational planning within the limitations set by the environment. In one study of the four possible combinations of internal external locus of control and Type A-B personality, participants with internal locus of control associated with Type B personality had the best health, and associated with Type A personality had the most job satisfaction and better health for a British sample of managers (Kirkcaldy, Cooper & Furnham, 1999).

4.3.3 Self-efficacy

Within the domain of social cognitive theory Bandura (1977) explains ‘self-efficacy’ as a person’s perception of how efficiently he can function in a situation. The person’s ‘efficacy expectations’ are regarded as coping mechanisms as they determine the person’s belief in his ability to produce the desired outcome through the necessary behaviours. When individuals persist in their selected occupational field despite obstacles or environmental pressures, they have strong career-related self-efficacy. Both self-efficacy and locus of control could relate to the control component of hardiness. Interestingly both locus of control and self-efficacy or perceived competence are related, yet distinct constructs, which accounts for improved academic and social adjustment and lower levels of depression (Njus & Brockway, 1999). According to Gardner and Pierce (1998) self-efficacy is “a belief about the probability that one can successfully execute some future action or task or achieve some result” (p. 50). Career self-efficacy relates to the belief in one’s abilities to successfully complete career-related tasks, duties and responsibilities. The distinctiveness of constructs of resilience and career self-efficacy when it is task-related, is apparent. Heise (1990) hypothesises that self-efficacy can be predicted from current and future career roles. Self-efficacy as such was also found to relate positively with work performance (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). Another study
shows that the effect of self-efficacy on job performance and job satisfaction is mediated by organisation-based self-esteem (Gardner & Pierce, 1998).

Giles and Rea (1999) illustrate the role of career self-efficacy in career decision-making in their study suggesting that men’s intentions to pursue sex atypical careers is mostly predicted by career self-efficacy. Career decision-making self-efficacy, or the belief in one’s own ability to make effective career decisions, relates strongly to career choice behaviour. Commitment and motivation in career decisions, as well as overall self-efficacy and self-esteem also relate to career decision-making self-efficacy (Lent & Hackett, 1987). Another study shows that students’ beliefs about exploratory behaviour are significant predictors of career decision-making self-efficacy, implying that if students expect to reach their career goals and that career opportunities exist, they will also believe in their own abilities to produce the desired outcome in their career choice (Brown, Darden, Shelton & Dipoto, 1999). Career decision-making self-efficacy, as seen in tasks of goal selection, gaining occupational information, problem-solving, realistic planning and self-appraisal, also relates to stable and multiple trial career patterns. In contrast, individuals with unstable or uncommitted career patterns have lower career decision-making self-efficacy beliefs (Gianakos, 1999).

4.3.4 Future orientation

In view of the goal-setting abilities of resilient individuals, a future-oriented time perspective may relate to the concept of resilience. Marko and Savickas (1998) found that a positive and optimistic view of the future, and a belief in the achievability of goals, relate to coping skills, as well as goal formation and fulfilment. Such an orientation to the future may be enhanced by a career time perspective intervention, in which clients are helped to become optimistic and aware of the future, to set goals and plan for the future, and to practice planning skills, and cognitively integrate present behaviour and future outcomes (Marko & Savickas, 1998). Future orientation has also been found to relate to higher levels of academic goal setting, but only in as far as it was mediated by the motivational self, as seen in levels of self-efficacy, locus of control, and internalisation (Lasane & Jones, 1999).
4.3.5 Planfulness

In contrast to future orientation, resiliency may also be reflected in an attitude of willingness to accept, and preparation for, unexpected events. Krumboltz (1998) presupposes that unplanned, unexpected or serendipitous events affect everybody’s careers, and therefore occupational decisions cannot be reached through rational decision-making processes. However, even if career decisions are unplanned events, the consequences thereof are nonetheless a result of the action taken by the individual, or put in Krumboltz’ own words “Serendipity is not serendipitous” (p. 390). The resilience required in the modern changing or protean career (Lifton, 1993) could be manifest in the action taken by the individual. Likewise “Serendipity requires action on the part of the recipient - action to create favorable circumstances, action to recognize opportunities when they arise, and action to capitalize on unplanned events in a timely manner” (Krumboltz, 1998, p. 392).

4.3.6 Self-direction

Self-direction may be seen as a facet of resilience. A self-directed adult, according to Kohn (1977), takes actions that are based on personal judgements, is open-minded and trustful of others, and has personally responsible morals. Rim (1993) regards self-direction as one of the motivational domains of values, which may be affected by family structure and age. Watson and Tharp (1989) describe the tasks of self-direction as self-control (resisting temptation) and self-modification (changing behaviours). The aim of self-direction is to establish harmony within oneself or between oneself and the environment and therefore the primary aim of self-direction is adjustment. It involves processes of goal-setting, self-knowledge, self-regulation, reinforcement, planning and problem-solving. Shapiro (1996) presents a developmental perspective on self-direction where development takes place from the immediate reactivity of infants to progressively more self-directed behaviours in adulthood. Self-direction is associated with characteristics of self-control, self-discipline, transcendence, self-regulatory strength, and willpower. It is positively associated with high social class, but may be developed through certain occupational and work-related experiences, such as
opportunities for autonomous decision-making (Strümpfer, 1983). Kohn and Schooler (1982) indicate that actual work that requires self-directed behaviour leads to ideational flexibility (a component of intellectual flexibility) and to a general self-directed orientation to self and society. These in turn lead to more responsible jobs and occupational self-direction. Interestingly, higher positions in social structure can account for greater opportunities to be self-directed in one’s work (Kohn & Slomczynski, 1990).

The self-direction required in the modern workplace according to Vann (1996) includes openness to continuous and independent learning, acceptance of responsibility, creativity, future-orientation, as well as learning and problem-solving skills. Vann’s (1996) review of research findings indicate that self-direction is dependent on past experiences and is learned in attempts to avoid group sanctioning and inner disequilibrium. Self-direction is thus directly impacted by the socialisation process, for instance in the workplace.

4.3.7 Transformational coping style

According to Foster (1997) resilience and coping go hand in hand. Maddi’s (1981) description of transformational as opposed to regressive coping may be considered a consequence of resilience. When confronted by a distressful event, a person may instead of avoiding it, not only confront it, but also transform it into an experience that encourages growth (Strümpfer, 1983). Aldwin (1994) believes that transformational coping is the key to health. From a physiological perspective studies suggest that stress in the form of aversive stimulation can have positive developmental effects within given contexts. Growth can occur and resilience can develop in children from stressful experiences. In adulthood stress can have an inoculation effect, increase one’s mastery, change one’s perspectives and values, strengthen one’s social ties and develop wisdom and self-understanding. Interestingly, Maddi and Hightower (1999) found that hardy individuals were less likely to engage in regressive coping and more likely to attempt transformational coping strategies, such as problem-solving and planning, than optimistic individuals. This applied both in terms of current and life-threatening stressors. A positive relationship between transformational coping strategies and hardiness in response to work stressors were also found (Maddi, 1999). This once again
illustrates the interrelatedness of concepts of transformational coping, hardiness, and implicitly resilience.

4.3.8 Potency

Strümpfer (1990) also discusses the ‘potency’ concept of Ben-Sira (1985) within the salutogenic paradigm, as this concept may also relate to resilience. An individual with potency has a stable belief in his own abilities. The individual also believes in and is committed to his social environment, and sees this environment as meaningful, predictable, reliable, and impartial in terms of rewards. Potency is developed through successful coping with experiences and includes mastery and self-appreciation. Ben-Sira (1989) regards potency as a mechanism that stabilises a person’s emotional homeostasis in the coping process, and as the opposite of learned helplessness. It requires commitment to, as opposed to alienation from, the social environment. Research findings confirm the capacity of potency to buffer stress, and to moderate the effect of ineffective coping on emotional homeostasis and health (Ben-Sira, 1989). Research findings also suggest correlations between potency and among others stress, general health, somatic complaints, exhaustion, trait anxiety, depression, and drinking habits (Strümpfer, 1990).

4.3.9 Stamina

Thomas’ (1981) stamina concept entails the ability to resist disease, fatigue and hardship based on physical and moral resources and strength. Although stamina is an innate potentiality it may be moulded through life experiences. Stamina in old age according to Colerick (1985) is seen in positive behaviour, capacity for growth, personal insight, a positive life perspective, lesser likelihood of breakdown, and general competence. It is a result of effective coping with the environment and change (Strümpfer, 1990).

4.3.10 Learned resourcefulness
A person’s ability to manage stress through beliefs, skills and self-control behaviours is termed learned resourcefulness (Rosenbaum, 1988). It involves the internal processes of regulating emotions, inner pain or cognitions through phases of representation, evaluation and action. In terms of this model one may say that an individual who is interacting in a resourceful way with his environment would, in the face of a career barrier, experience the event, evaluate it as desirable or threatening, and then minimise the negative effect thereof. Successful self-regulation may become a habit, hence learned resourcefulness. Research findings suggest that highly resourceful individuals believe in their own abilities to cope with change, tolerate pain longer, and use self-control methods more than those with less resourcefulness (Strümpfer, 1990).

4.3.11 Hope and optimism

Since the construct of hope relates to self-efficacy, optimism and general well-being (Magaletta & Oliver, 1999), it clearly also belongs in the paradigm of psychology of health, and may also relate to resilience. Hope refers to an expectation of gaining what one desires, and consists of components of will (or a sense of agency in goal attainment) and ways (or a belief in the attainability of goals). Research findings indicate that hope plays a role in human adaptation and may even moderate the impact of stress on health (Magaletta & Oliver, 1999). As another related concept, optimism is a generalised expectancy of positive outcomes in life, and brings about persistence in goal-directed activities. Magaletta and Oliver’s (1999) research supported the relatedness yet distinctness of hope, self-efficacy, and optimism.

4.3.12 Conclusion

The following list of affirmations summarises the concepts relating to career resilience discussed in this section. Together these concepts embody a belief system which, in terms of careers, relates to one’s competency to create a successful career, and the likelihood of positive career outcomes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affirmations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. I am committed to my career.
2. I am in control of what happens in my career.
3. I see career obstacles as challenges, not threats.
4. I can function efficiently in my career and produce the desired results.
5. I am looking forward to the future, and believe that I will achieve my career goals.
6. I am prepared for the unexpected in my career.
7. I am self-directed in my work behaviours and attitudes.
8. I transform career obstacles into opportunities for growth.
9. I believe that my work environment is meaningful, predictable, reliable, and fair.
10. I have the necessary resources and strength to resist the impact of difficulties experienced in my career.
11. I can regulate my emotions and thoughts to overcome negative experiences in my career.
12. I expect to and believe that I can reach my career goals.
13. I believe that something good is going to happen in my career.

The preceding discussion also shows the interrelatedness of these concepts. Glaser, Butler and Pryor (1998) describe resilient individuals as optimists who feel in control of events and their outcomes and have high self esteem and self-efficacy. They are also described as autonomous, independent, task-orientated, and curious. They possess effective coping, problem-solving and verbal skills. In their study Glaser et al. (1998) also found moderate negative relations between resilience and apprehension about communication. Resilience in this study was defined in terms of The Personal Resilience Questionnaire (1994) that assesses resilience as positive attitudes toward the work, the self, clarity of purpose, flexibility in thoughts and social behaviour, and being organised and proactive. Resilience may also relate to other concepts, such as career commitment. Carson and Bedeian (1994) included career resilience factor items in their Career Commitment Measure, along with dimensions of career identity and career planning. Career resilience was associated with items indicative of the costs, problems or burdens of a particular line of work or career field. They hypothesised positive relations between age and career resilience, but stronger relations between career resilience and tenure.
Since all these concepts seemingly relate to resilience, a model of resilience encompassing these and other related concepts is necessary in order to enhance the usefulness of the concept, particularly in view of the challenges of the modern world of work. Also, the many disparities in definitions of resilience underline the need for conceptual and theoretical integration of these and other concepts in psychology of health.

The preceding discussion also brought to the light that these constructs that apparently relate to resilience, are associated with a variety of positive life outcomes, for instance improved performance, and job satisfaction, health, social adjustment, lowered depression, etc. Resilience may also have a positive impact on a person’s career. In fact, career barriers in the modern world of work make resilience an inevitable prerequisite of career adjustment. Due to the discontinuous rather than linear nature of modern careers, managers need career insight, identity and resilience (London, 1998). Managers also need self-efficacy, a risk-taking tendency, and self-dependency (London, 1993). According to Grzeda (1999) some of the characteristics of modern organisations and careers that necessitate career resilience include discontinuous as opposed to linear career paths, ‘job hopping’, employability through adaptability, the free agency career (being self-employed), and a subjective career perspective, according to which success is measured by personal standards. Moreover, perceptions of career-related barriers can affect the career development of individuals. In accordance with Bandura’s social cognitive career theory perceived career barriers may prevent an individual from setting goals based on interests and putting goals into action. Such perceived barriers could include financial needs, limited education, and lack of support from family, to mention but a few. In accordance with Weiner’s attribution theory again when career barriers are perceived as uncontrollable, external and stable effective career development may be inhibited (Albert & Luzzo, 1999). Therefore an individual’s resilience, or lack thereof, has substantial influence on his career development.

4.4 THE CAREER RESILIENCE QUESTIONNAIRE

The various conceptualisations of resilience and related constructs described above have demonstrated the need thereof in human adjustment. Several
references have already been made to how resilience affects the career adjustment of individuals. In this section the Career Resilience Questionnaire (Fourie & Van Vuuren, 1998) will be briefly described. The career resilient adult as characterised in the Career Resilience Questionnaire will then be discussed so as to shed further light on this construct.

4.4.1 Factors of the Career Resilience Questionnaire

The Career Resilience Questionnaire (Fourie & Van Vuuren, 1998) measures individual responses to several work and career situations or career contexts, and also includes questions relating to career history. Of the original 60-item Career Resilience Questionnaire of 1997 fifteen items were discarded as per item analysis due to inefficient indices of reliability. Fourie and Van Vuuren (1998) extracted four second-order factors for this 45-item measure: (a) belief in oneself; (b) own success ethic, implying disregard for traditional sources of career success; (c) self-reliance; and (d) receptivity to change. The psychometric properties of the instrument are discussed in the following chapter. Van Vuuren and Fourie (2000, in press) investigated possible relations between the dimensions of career resilience as defined by means of the Career Resilience Questionnaire (Fourie & Van Vuuren, 1998) and Schein’s (1975; 1978; 1990; 1992) concept of career anchors. They found positive relations between belief in oneself and more differentiated career orientations, but negative relations between own success ethic and the extent of differentiation of career anchor patterns. The fact that no significant relations were found between differentiated career orientation patterns and either self-reliance, or receptivity to change, may be explained in terms of differences between past and present career paradigms. The researchers caution against generalisation of the findings, due to the inconclusiveness of both the definitions of resilience and of support for the reliability and validity of the Career Resilience Questionnaire.

4.4.2 Description of the career resilient adult

The definition of resilience specifically pertaining to adjustability in the modern career is reflected in the four factors of the Career Resilience Questionnaire (Fourie & Van Vuuren, 1998). This description of the scales provides an
exposition of the practical meaning of the construct. In particular the career resilient adult can be personified in relation to these factors.

In accordance with the belief in oneself factor, a career resilient adult finds his career identity within himself and not the employer, takes independent action and also does not seek the approval of others in his career. This is manifested in an internal locus of control towards career and self management. Employers' merits are subjacent to the actual type of work engaged in. Career resilience is also associated with risk-taking behaviour. In terms of the second Career Resilience Questionnaire factor (Fourie & Van Vuuren, 1998) (own success ethic) the career resilient adult does not link his own success to traditional symbols, such as job titles, promotion, life long loyalty, or a relational psychological contract. Success is internally defined, and therefore cyclical or lateral career moves are not regarded as less successful than vertical career moves. One prerequisite of career success however is opportunities for continual skill development, with the aim of constantly increasing employability. The self-reliance factor is indicative of the career resilient adult’s personal protection against being dependent on the employer, as well as an orientation to networking activity in order to open doors to new career opportunities. In other words, the career resilient adult does not strive for prolonged employment with a single employer or for the security offered by large organisations. Lastly, the career resilient adult is willing and confident to have frequent changes in the work context, contents and relationships, if it entails the furthering of his career. This is associated with the belief that he possesses the resources to cope with indeterminate and unstable work circumstances (C. Fourie, personal communication, March 15, 2000).

The Career Resilience Questionnaire (Fourie & Van Vuuren, 1998) measures cognitive, affective as well as behavioural components of career resilience. For instance, belief in oneself may be reflected in items assessing a personal opinion of oneself as an expert in one’s field (cognitive), absence of fear of not living up to the career expectations of others for oneself (affective), or having introduced some innovation, albeit method, product or procedure into one’s job (behavioural).

4.5 EVALUATION
The various definitions of resilience presented above still leaves many unresolved problems. Firstly, since the different definitions and measures all focus on different facets of resilience, the limitations and scope of the resilience construct are difficult to demarcate. Gordon and Song (1994) comment on the fact that the term resilience has been used to describe a variety of human behaviours, circumstances and achievements, and that resilience is in fact relative, situationally determined, attributional and a dynamic phenomenon. Although the construct of career resilience has not been described in terms of any theoretical model, the definitions formulated by Gordon and Coscarelli (1996) and London (1983, 1993) clarify the importance of the concept in an understanding of adult vocational adjustment. A comprehensive model of resilience, encompassing, psychological, behavioural, as well as environmental components thereof is nevertheless needed. Hence resilience cannot be seen as random or a personality trait, but rather the result of personality, social context, and opportunities (Rigsby, 1994). Moreover, Bartlet (1994) indicates that there are validity problems with a definition of resilience as a psychological trait, which denies the contextual nature thereof. The dynamic perspective of resilience of Freitas and Downey (1998) implies that resilience is contextual and can only be understood if the interrelating structure of psychological mediators, including competencies, expectancies, values and goals, as well as the interrelation of these psychological features and the environment, are identified. Also, according to research findings environmental factors, and not only personality factors may be predictive of perceptions of job insecurity. In particular individuals’ perceptions of safeguards and the industrial relations climate of the organisation, along with personality traits such as optimism can be predictive of whether a threat to one’s job security are perceived or not (Van Vuuren, Klandermans, Jacobson & Hartley, 1991). Research findings also show that the degree of distress associated with a stressor in the workplace is dependent on cognitive appraisal of stress. Therefore modern adult workers need to learn to tolerate disruptions and cognitively appraise the obstruction posed by the stressor (Elliott, Chartrand & Harkins, 1994).

Secondly, there is a need for correlational studies of the various resilience-related concepts, such as hardiness and self-efficacy in order to identify their
position in a model of resilience. The relation of resilience to each of these constructs still need to be identified. For instance, it is not clear whether hardiness is a facet of resilience, or vice versa. Only within a contextual perspective of resilience can the antecedents, correlates, mechanisms and consequences of this multidimensional concept be adequately described.

The ontological value of the resilience construct can only be established based on a model encompassing these related concepts. The value of the resilience concept indeed lies in the fact that it belongs to the paradigm of a psychology of health. Strümpfer (1990) advocates an acceptance of both the traditional pathogenic paradigm in psychology, and one that links notions of normality, adaptability and actualisation. Stated differently, psychology should no longer place its emphasis exclusively on the diagnosis and rectification of disorders, but rather on psychological wellness. Concepts such as resilience, but also competence, social system modification and empowerment all belong to this alternative psychological paradigm (Cowen, 1991). Benard (1999) believes that the replacement of a pathology model with a resilience model can engender optimism and hope in therapy, to name but one of its benefits over a model focusing on disorders, problems, deviance and psychological risk. Masten et al. (1990) summarised the future direction of resilience research as follows: “The study of resilience has restored important and once neglected pieces of the puzzle of human adaptation. The greatest gains, however, will come from integrating these pieces into the full context of human development and the diversity of environments in which such development inevitably must proceed” (Masten et al., 1990, p. 440). The career environment is probably one of the most important environments in which adult development and adaptation takes place. The career resilience construct therefor provides an essential explication of successful adult adaptation processes within a developmental context.

A model of resilience should also describe the mechanism thereof. In other words, there is a need for greater clarity on how resilience brings about positive life outcomes. According to the social work commentary of McMillen (1999) some people may derive benefits from adversity through one or more of the following routes: (a) by becoming inoculated against future stress through self-efficacy and coping skills; (b) through changes in the life structure that enhances health and happiness; (c) through changed views of others as a result of support
received and feelings of vulnerability; (d) by finding meaning in the circumstances. A model of resilience also needs to include a description of causal structures and processes (Rigsby, 1994). Distinctions should however be made between the mechanisms underlying resilience and resilience as an outcome of such mechanisms (Staudinger, Marsiske & Baltes, 1995). The role of cultural factors in the development of resilience also needs to be researched (Cohler, Stott & Musick, 1995).

Resilience could form part of a general model of coping. One such model proposed by Payne (1989) depicts personality traits, which could include the resilient style, as only one of the determinants of coping. Cognitive, social and environmental factors are also recognised. Depicting resilience as a personality style or trait factor of coping may be insufficient. Traits, according to Payne (1989) cannot be used as predictors of actual coping behaviour, as coping is not invariable and unchanging in different situations or at different times. Schuldberg (1993) identifies resilience as a single factor in a complex set of variables of positive adaptation to life’s demands. Specifically distinction is made between protective or internal factors and compensatory or external factors of personal resourcefulness. The former comprise personality attributes such as hardiness and resilience, and buffers an individual against the effects of negative events, and refers to optimism, positivity, realism, stress tolerance and so forth. The latter comprise observable problem-solving behaviours, and ‘real-world’ skills and competencies, and is associated with sociability, creativity and risk-taking (acceptance of challenges). Interestingly though, the Career Resilience Questionnaire (Fourie & Van Vuuren, 1998) embodies some of both the internal and external facets of personal resourcefulness. Moreover, Schuldberg (1993) indicates four domains of personal resourcefulness in psychological functioning, namely perceptual, cognitive, affective/motivational, and behavioural, which one may argue are essential in coping with the career demands of the modern world. Based on this exposition, personal resourcefulness in the work domain requires an individual to perceive potentially stressful situations as manageable and challenging, rather than a threat. Cognitive requirements are constructive thinking, learned resourcefulness, problem solving and salutogenic expectations. In terms of affect a resourceful worker will display ego strength in as far as he will manage negative affect, deal with setbacks, and have a general sense of well-being.
Lastly, he will display actual coping behaviour in a preference for problem-solving activities.

Thirdly, the role of resilience particularly in careers can be studied in relation to other career-related variables, as will be done in the present study. The factors of the resilience construct as seen in the Career Resilience Questionnaire (Fourie & Van Vuuren, 1998) may be related to constructs in major vocational psychology theories, such as Super’s (1980) concept of career concerns. Also, since different developmental phases affect the type of resilience required according to Gordon and Coscarelli (1996), the question may be asked as to whether there are any communalities or links between the career concerns in the various career stages on the one hand, and career resilience on the other hand. Goodman (1994) suggests that career resilience defined in terms of tolerance of career uncertainty, flexibility and autonomy is similar to Super’s notion of adaptability in adult career development.

The social cognitive career theory (SCCT) of Lent, Brown and Hackett (1994, 2000) is a useful framework of possible relations between career resilience and barriers. It combines cognitive-person variables such as self-efficacy, and implicitly resilience, with contextual variables, for instance career barriers. Career barriers represent both intrapersonal and environmental factors that may inhibit career development (Lent, Brown & Hackett, 2000), such as may be measured by means of the Career Attitudes and Strategies Inventory (Holland & Gottfredson, 1994). In other words, according to the SCCT career choice and behaviour are not only determined by personal factors and choice, but a person’s immediate as well as societal contexts affect career interests, goals and actions. The environmental influences on career development include both objective and perceived factors, as well as distal or prior and contemporary influences (Lent et al., 2000). Interestingly, De Bruin (1999) states that social-cognitive career theory may be more applicable than career development theories of Super (1990) and Holland (1973) to explain career behaviour in the South African context, as it embraces contextual factors of career development and the notion of self-efficacy.

Moreover, the need to investigate the heuristic value of the Career Resilience Questionnaire (Fourie & Van Vuuren, 1998) in terms of established vocational theories is evident. Although the authors warn against the limitation of the
extent of the operationalisation of career resilience according to the Career Resilience Questionnaire (Fourie & Van Vuuren, 1998), it is nevertheless an instrument that is needed to explore a newly identified facet of adult vocational adjustment, that may be especially relevant in terms of the modern paradigm of work discussed in the introduction. Analysing factors of the Career Resilience Questionnaire (Fourie & Van Vuuren, 1998) and relating these to factors of career concerns of the Adult Career Concerns Inventory (Super et al., 1988) or barriers identified by the Career Attitudes and Strategies Inventory (Holland & Gottfredson, 1994) may overcome the problem of the lack of the representation of situational or developmental dimension of career resilience on the Career Resilience Questionnaire (Fourie & Van Vuuren, 1998).

Fourthly, although the methodological value of the career resilience construct has been greatly enhanced by the development of the Career Resilience Questionnaire (Fourie & Van Vuuren, 1998), this instrument still seems to have some shortcomings. For instance, the usefulness of the Career Resilience Questionnaire (Fourie & Van Vuuren, 1998) is currently still limited by the lack of norms for interpretation of scores. Furthermore, as the wording of many of the items seem cumbersome, the utility of the instrument may be confined to populations of professionals and educated testees.

4.6 CONCLUSION

It is certain that every adult worker in the modern world of work will face many obstacles or barriers, that may inhibit vocational adjustment. Every worker requires a positive belief system regarding his role in his career. Career resilience may be seen as a component of such a belief system. It enables the worker to overcome career obstacles, and sets the stage for future career successes. In accordance with the Career Resilience Questionnaire (Fourie & Van Vuuren, 1988), the adult worker needs to believe in himself, have a personal ethic of success, rely on himself for career development, and be open to change. Inferring from conceptualisations of resilience in psychiatry one may assume that career resilience is developed through prior successful career adjustment tasks, and is dependent on external support.

There is a need for this career resilience construct to be theoretically grounded and integrated in a model encompassing other career-related
variables. The research described in the following chapters of this thesis is aimed at showing possible interrelations among the career resilience construct and concepts of career concerns, attitudes and strategies.