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INDUSTRIAL PSYCHOLOGY MASTERS PROGRAMME

**EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP WITHIN SOUTH AFRICA:
A STUDY OF THE PERCEPTIONS, EXPERIENCES AND PRACTICES OF
EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP WITHIN SOUTH AFRICAN ORGANISATIONS**

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Abstract

The notion of leadership has taxed the minds of philosophers, politicians, the military, religious thinkers and business for thousands of years. It is recognised that those who have the ability to influence the hearts, minds and behaviours of people, hold uncommon power and have the ability to change history. Generations in different parts of the world face different challenges which demand profound leadership; South Africa is no exception (Meyer & Boninelli, 2004).

Despite the volume of literature that exists, clarity and understanding of leadership has not always followed and leadership, as a concept, continues to present major challenges to practitioners and researchers. In particular: there are almost as many different definitions of leadership as there are people who have tried to define it; there are a number of theories that attempt to explain the nature of leadership; some of these theories achieve this by explaining leadership in terms of basic events or processes (psychological reductionism); each of the theories possess a different focus (leadership as a 'property', leadership as a 'process' or leadership as a combination of 'property' and 'process' elements); many of the leadership theories have been developed and tested using specific population samples (American/European) and, as the requirements of leaders change to meet evolving business demands, so new concepts and theories emerge thereby creating additional confusion around which theory offers the best understanding.

In addition to the challenges associated with leadership literature, a further challenge relates to the link between leadership theory, reality and the extent to which the theories adequately reflect leadership in practice.

The aim of the research study is to address these challenges by: reviewing the leadership literature available and extracting the patterns that emerge with regards to effective leadership; determining what effective leadership looks like in a South African context by examining the perceptions, experiences and practices of effective South African leadership and investigating the extent to which the theoretical patterns identified reflect effective leadership practices in South African organisations.

With regards to the findings, a number of patterns emerged from the literature review. In addition, a number of key leadership themes emerged from the discussions with the sample group. Themes such as Driving Results, Strategic Thinking, Leading Others and Delivering through People emerged as key capabilities that define effective leadership within a South African context.

In reviewing the findings, the perceptions, experiences and practices of South African leadership appears to support the theoretical patterns identified, thereby suggesting that American and European leadership literature can be applied and does reflect effective leadership practices within a South African context. The implications of this include: these theories can be utilised to identify, develop and implement development interventions aimed at maximising leadership capability and effective leadership in the US/Europe appears to be the same as effective leadership in South Africa.

In addition, the findings suggest that South African organisations (like their US/European counterparts) have responded to changes in traditional operating models (as a result of growing urbanisation; the explosion in information and communication technologies; the emergence of 'e-commerce' and increasing globalisation and consolidation of businesses) and the subsequent shift in leadership requirements, by producing leaders who are demonstrating the same skills, behaviours and capabilities associated with US/European leadership. The implication of this is that, despite the social, political and economic conditions that marred the South African landscape pre-1994 (the legacy of apartheid and the impact of industrial action, sanctions and international isolation), leadership within South Africa has, over the past 10 years, managed to transcend these environmental factors and evolve in the same manner as leadership in other parts of the world.

With regard to these findings, it is important, however, to recognise that the size of the sample (10) and the organisations represented in this study (established corporate organisations employing over 500 hundred employees) may limit the extent to which the leadership capabilities identified offer a true reflection of South African leadership. Research with a larger sample and wider organisation representation (e.g. the small to medium enterprise sector, start up businesses, entrepreneurial enterprises) would allow a more comprehensive list of effective leadership skills and behaviours to be identified and thereby provide a more accurate reflection of South African leadership. In addition, it may lead to the identification of different leadership capabilities which do not match the patterns to emerge from the literature.

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Declaration of Originality

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my own original work, unless it is specified to the contrary in the text. This dissertation has not been submitted for a degree at any other University.

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Effective Leadership within South Africa:
A Study of the Perceptions, Experiences and Practices of Effective Leadership within
South African Organisations

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

As organisations move into the new millennium, traditional ways of operating are becoming a thing of the past. In addition to external forces such as globalisation, information technology changes and increased competition (Horwitz, 2002), South African organisations operate in a turbulent business environment that is characterised by diversity within the labour force and changing legal and government regulations (Grobler, 2002). This means that the 21st century leader has to be able to meet the changing challenges from both within and from outside the organisation.

A question that arises with regard to this is 'why do people and organisations need leaders anyway?' The answer is that we live in a world of change. The natural human reaction to change is to become anxious and when anxious, we search for someone who can guide us and 'contain' our anxiety. Leaders adopt a 'containment' role by providing individuals and the organisation with vision, direction and the means by which the vision can be achieved (Kets de Vries, 2001).

Building the kind of leadership that is vital in today's competitive environment is not a phenomenon that develops magically on its own – it has to be deliberately cultivated (Grude, Bell, Dodd & Owen, 2002). As a result of the drive to understand, master and cultivate leadership, a wide number of theories have been proposed to define the concept and to predict

what makes effective leadership. As theories emerge, so new steps are taken to apply the theory in a practical context with the objective of developing and maximising leadership capability.

Despite the volume of literature that it exists, however, clarity and understanding of leadership has not always followed and leadership as concept continues to present major challenges to practitioners and researchers (Northouse, 2001). In particular,

- There are almost as many different definitions of leadership as there are people who have tried to define it (Stogdill, 1974 in Northouse, 2001). This, in turn, raises the issue of how best to design practical interventions to support leadership given the ambiguity in defining leadership;
- There are a number of theories that attempt to explain the nature of leadership (Channer et al, 2001). As a result of the above, leadership development interventions based on a specific theory will only serve to develop leadership as it is defined by the author of the theory;
- The theories focus on specific components to define the concept. As such, there is a risk of ‘psychological reductionism’ with regard to leadership literature i.e. the attempt to provide a complete explanation of a complex phenomenon in terms of more basic events or processes (Coleman, 2001), that ignores the need to consider the social, political and economic considerations that play a role in human behaviour (Holloway, 1991);
- The theories developed can be categorised differently i.e. certain theories define leadership as a ‘property’, others as a ‘process’ and still others as combinations of ‘property’ and ‘process’ elements (Kets de Vries, 2001). On the one hand, the vast

number of theories provides a broad understanding of the concept. However, the various categorisation approaches have the potential to add further confusion to understanding the concept;

- Many of the leadership theories have been developed and tested using specific population sample, in particular, American and European samples (Holloway, 1991).

Whilst a large number of theories may be available, there is a risk that the cultural dimension to leadership is ignored i.e. effective leadership within one country may be ineffective leadership within another (Kets de Vries, 2001). As such, there is a risk in applying these theories across national and cultural boundaries as well as population groups within countries i.e. the applicability of these leadership theories within a South African context;

- As operating processes change within organisations, so the requirements of leaders change. In response to this, new theories are proposed to explain how to develop leaders to meet these requirements. This means that leadership (and the requirements of a leader) constantly evolves as new concepts are identified to meet changing organisational requirements. In line with this, the extent to which leadership will be effective will be determined by the requirements of the organisation at a particular time. A leadership approach that has been successful in the past may not work as the organisation moves in a new direction. Similarly, different business areas within the same organisation may require multiple approaches to leadership. Given the evolving nature of leadership requirements, the challenge is to understand the leadership requirements of an organisation at a particular time and determine to what extent traditional leadership knowledge should be disregarded in favour of 'newer' leadership knowledge.

In addition to the challenges associated with leadership literature, a further challenge relates to the link between leadership theory and the extent to which the theories adequately reflect the real world from a practical leadership perspective.

Inherent in the discipline of psychology is the recurring challenge around the application of theory in the workplace i.e. the link between theory and practice and, in particular, the extent to which the theory is reflected (evident) in practice (Fisher, 1990). The traditional approach to contemporary social psychology involves the development of an idea, the formulation of a hypothesis, the testing of the hypothesis with a specific sample group and the application of the findings in different settings. In addition, the approach is noted for its reliance on experimental and laboratory methods for gathering and testing data (Fisher, 1990). According to Cooper & Locke (2000) theories of this nature will be potentially useful but will also have limitations in terms of reflecting the real world and practical application. Factors that will determine the extent to which it can be practically applied include: the completeness of a theory in relation to a given topic; the relevance of the theory; the extent to which findings are externally validated and tested (particularly where experimental and laboratory methods have been utilised), the level of risk associated with implementing the theory and the extent to which the theory contradicts or challenges organisational values and managerial perceptions.

Given the above, a key task for practitioners within South Africa is to find ways to develop an understanding of leadership that considers the literature challenges identified and makes the link between theory and practical leadership within a South African context. This should, in turn, allow for relevant leadership development interventions to be designed and implemented.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

To consider the leadership theory challenges and to assess the extent to which leadership theory adequately reflects effective leadership practices within South Africa.

In line with this, the study reviews and evaluates current leadership theories; extracts key patterns and themes to emerge from these theories, investigates the perceptions, experiences and practices of South African employees to determine what makes effective leadership and investigates the extent to which these perceptions and experiences match the patterns and themes that emerge from leadership theory and research.

1.3 Structure of the Study

To achieve the above, a review of leadership literature and research will be undertaken. In particular, this review will distinguish leadership and managership and highlight the distinction between managership and *effective* managership and leadership and *effective* leadership. In addition, the review will consider a definition of leadership, discuss key leadership theories and extract the common patterns that emerge.

On completing the review, the methodological approach adopted for the research study will be discussed. This section will highlight the research process that was adopted in terms data collection, analysis, interpretation and report writing. In addition, the study's aims and research questions will be detailed and the research design including population sample, data gathering techniques and the analysis tool utilised will be discussed.

In the Research Results section the findings from the research undertaken will be presented.

The findings from the facilitated group session and one to one interviews have been clustered

into four key themes: Driving Results; Strategic Thinking; Leading Others; Delivering through People. For each of these themes, sub themes have been identified. The Research Results section explores these themes and sub themes by proposing a title and a definition for each theme and sub theme; detailing 'why it matters' for each sub theme and identifying the behavioural indicators (positive and negative) to explain the nature of each sub theme.

The Discussion section considers the findings from the research undertaken in relation to the patterns to emerge from the literature.

Key points from the study and discussion are highlighted to conclude the study. The Appendices and References sections follow the conclusion.

2. Understanding Leadership

To address the leadership theory challenges and the extent to which leadership theories reflect leadership practices within South Africa, it is necessary to understand what is meant by the concept of leadership. The following review will describe and evaluate the work that has been undertaken in the area of leadership by:

- Distinguishing the concepts of leadership and managership;
- Proposing a working definition of leadership;
- Reviewing the evolution of leadership theory;
- Extracting key observations from the theory review;
- Highlighting the evolving nature of leadership;
- Identifying theoretical patterns as they relate to the concept of leadership

2.1 *Distinguishing leadership and managership*

The debate concerning the difference between leadership and managership has raged for some time and similarities and differentiators between these concepts have been proposed by a number of theorists. What is important to recognise is that the debate is not an either/or. Even though they are two separate systems, each with its own functions and characteristics, both activities are necessary for the success of an organisation (Kotter, 1990; Charlton, 1992). Without strong managers, an organisation risks descending into chaos; without effective leaders, the organisation becomes lethargic and fails to evolve (Landsberg, 2000).

In terms of similarities, both activities involve influence, require working with people and are concerned with effective goal accomplishment (Northouse, 2001). But leadership is also

different from managership. The primary functions of leadership include: producing change and movement through vision building, aligning people and motivating, inspiring and influencing the behaviour of others towards the achievement of a shared goal (Kotter, 1990; cited in Northouse 2001). The leader seeks out situations where change is needed, has a clear vision of the future, operates from an active attitude towards goals, cuts through differences of race, sex, age, nationality and personality and uses personal influencing techniques such as stories and celebrating heroes to guide people towards the vision (Buckingham, 2005; Landsberg, 2000; Zaleznik, 1977, cited in Charlton, 1992). The primary function of managership, on the other hand, is about making the change happen, maximising the performance of others, coping with complexity and providing order and consistency to the organisation through activities such as planning, budgeting, organising, controlling and problem solving (Buckingham, 2005, Kotter, 1990 cited in Northouse 2001; Landsberg, 2000). The manager will focus on the present and take steps to ensure that tasks are completed correctly (Zaleznik, 1977, cited in Charlton, 1992).

In summary, leaders are more proactive, visionary and emotionally involved while managers are more reactive, focused on the present and less emotionally involved. A summarised version of the differences between managership and leadership can be found in Appendix 1.

Having distinguished the leadership from managership, an additional distinction that can be made is between managership and *effective* managership and leadership and *effective* leadership. In considering the distinction between managership and *effective* managership, Buckingham (2005) proposes that the one quality that sets truly great managers apart from the rest is the ability of the manager to discover what is unique about each person and then capitalise on it. As noted above, one of the key functions of a manager is to make things

happen and maximise the performance of others. Buckingham (2005) argues that effective managers do this by identifying and deploying the differences among people and challenging each employee to excel in his/her own way. In considering the distinction between leadership and *effective* leadership, Kouzes & Posner (1993, cited in Riches 1997) suggest that effective leadership refers to the ability to not only mobilise others to achieve shared goals but to mobilise others to *want to* struggle for shared aspirations. i.e. effective leadership is distinguished by the strength and implementation of this emotional element in the achievement of shared goals.

2.2 *Defining Leadership*

There are hundreds (if not thousands) of definitions of leadership in the literature and 'there are enough words in the English language that refer to leadership to put an audience to sleep' (Kets de Vries, 2001:213). A key theme to emerge from the vast number of definitions is the lack of an integrated definition. According to Northouse (2001) there have been as many as 65 different classification systems developed to define the dimensions of leadership.

Examples include:

- Leadership as the focus of a group process whereby the leader is at the centre of group change and activity and embodies the will of the group;
- Leadership as a personality trait or characteristic that enables them to induce others to accomplish tasks;
- Leadership as an act or behaviour that brings about a change in a group;
- Leadership as a power relationship whereby leaders have power and wield it to affect change in others;

- Leadership as instrument of goal achievement, whereby a leader will transform followers through vision setting and role modelling (Northouse, 2001).

Given the above propositions, defining 'leadership' becomes a challenge because of the vast number of elements that can be included in the concept. Furthermore, attempts at a singular definition may limit understanding of the concept in that core elements of leadership may be ignored.

One way to address this challenge is to define leadership not as singular concept, but rather by extracting the components that are central to the phenomenon. In considering this approach, the following core components of leadership can be identified:

- Leadership exists for a purpose i.e. it is a tool for achieving desired results. Where the achievement of desired results is dependent upon the activities of employees, the leader must, in some way, induce his/her employees to carry out those activities (Olmstead, 2000);
- Leadership involves influencing individuals, both separately and collectively, to act in a desired manner (Olmstead, 2000);
- The degree to which a particular leadership action will influence is partly dependent upon the 'personal make up' of the leader, the 'personal make up' of his/her followers and the context or situation in which the activities take place i.e. leadership never happens in isolation (Kets de Vries, 2001);
- Leadership is a process i.e. a transactional event that occurs and develops over time between a leader and his/her followers. Thus leadership is not a linear process and is available to everyone (Northouse, 2001).

By considering these key components, leadership can (in its most basic form) be described as a process of influencing others to achieve a desired result. The broadness of this description allows the concept of leadership to be applied in a number of different contexts i.e. political leadership, business leadership, cultural leadership and religious leadership. For the purpose of this study the focus is on organisational (business) leadership.

2.3 The Evolution of Leadership Theories

As a concept, leadership has a universal appeal and much has been written about it in the popular press and academic research literature (Northouse, 2001). The demand for this understanding has been fuelled:

- At an organisational level; as companies, based on the belief that leaders add value to the success of the organisation and that the perceived task of being a leader has grown and become more challenging over the years, seek to determine scientific methods to recruit and develop individuals with leadership abilities (Channer et al, 2001);
- At the individual level; as people seek out books and information on how to develop their leadership skills, improve how they present themselves to others and develop their career prospects (Channer et al, 2001)

As a result of these the drives to understand and master leadership, theorists have been deconstructing it and developing formulae's to predict what makes effective leadership. As a result, a number of leadership theories have emerged that analyse the concept from different angles. One of the key challenges in attempting to understand the concept of leadership (from a theoretical perspective), is that it has been explained as: a 'property' i.e. a set of characteristics, behaviours and attributes that make certain people more effective at attaining

a set of goals ('personalists'); a 'process' i.e. the effort by the leader, that draws on various bases of power, to influence members and direct their activities ('situationists') and/or a combination of both 'property' and 'process' elements (Kets de Vries, 2001). Examples of 'property' theories include: the Ideal Traits and Psychodynamic approaches to leadership. Examples of 'process' theories include: the Style, Situational, Path Goal and Contingency approaches to leadership. Examples of 'property' and 'process' combination theories include: the Transformational approach to leadership, Principle Centred Leadership, the Emotionally Intelligent leader, the Spiritually aware leader and Action Logics Leadership. Each theory has been proposed to further define and explain what makes an effective leader. However, finding one's way in the domain of leadership 'is like wandering through a forbidding wilderness that offers few beacons or landmarks' (Kets de Vries, 2001:213).

Table 2.1 highlights the evolution of key leadership theories (chronologically) in terms of a 'property', 'process' or 'combination' focus. This is followed by a review of the theories.

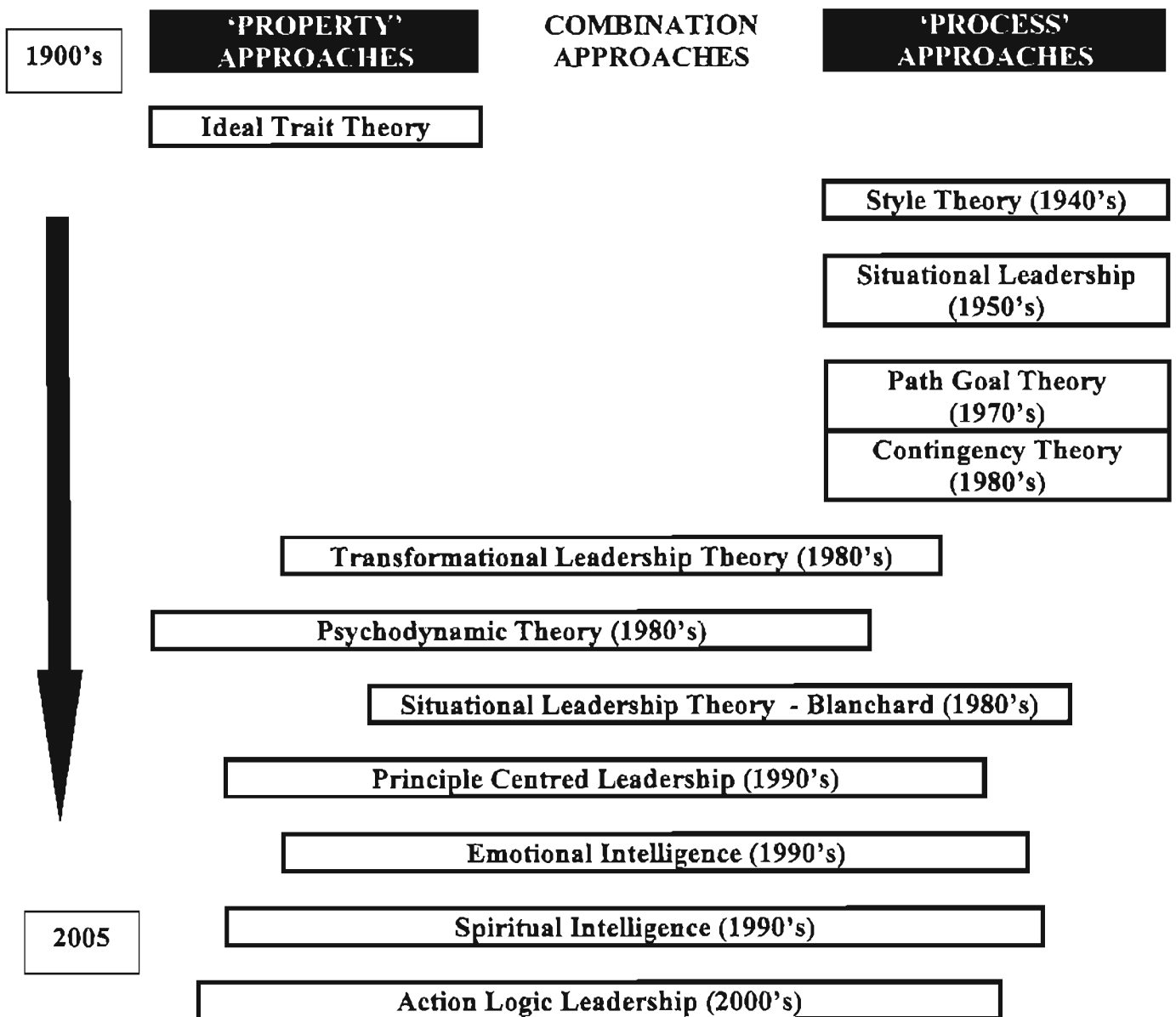


Table 2.1 – The Evolution of Leadership Theories

One of the first systematic attempts to study leadership (early 1900's) led to the development of the concept of 'trait' leadership (Northouse, 2001). The trait approach suggested that certain people were born with special traits that can be identified and measured. It is these traits that made them great leaders. The major traits that were identified included: intelligence, self-confidence, determination, integrity and sociability. According to Northouse

(2001) viewing leadership from this perspective offers a number of advantages. It is intuitively appealing and fits into the idea that leaders are 'special'; it has been well researched over the last century and as such has a measure of credibility; it provides an in depth understanding of the leader component because it focuses exclusively on the leader and it provides a bench mark against which individuals can compare their own capabilities. However, Smith & Peterson (1988) note that the studies that were used to develop the trait theory were predominantly concerned with the behaviour of children and as such the variables that were likely to be important when discussing adult behaviour, were ignored. In addition, very few of the studies considered the effectiveness of the leaders in leading teams/groups i.e. the approach does not adequately link leadership traits to outcomes such as group and team performance. The approach fails to provide a definitive list of leadership traits. Where lists were created, the identification of the 'most important traits' was challenged around the subjective nature of the identification process. The approach also fails to take into account the impact of the situation in determining leadership traits (Northouse 2001). Finally, the methods used to measure the leadership trait have been challenged. As with any personality measurement instrument, the instrument will only measure what it has been designed to measure. In addition, factors such as the test process itself, culture, individual motivation and interests will impact on the individuals' performance on the test. As a result of these limitations, the mid 20th century saw researchers challenging the trait approach which, in turn, paved the way for the growth in popularity of the notions that different settings require different types of leadership and that followers have an impact on leadership (Smith et al, 1988).

During the 1940's an alternative approach to leadership emerged, which examined leadership from a behavioural perspective. Known as the Style Approach, it focused on what leaders do

and how they act (rather than who leaders are). The approach assumes that a specifiable set of leadership behaviours can be identified and because these behaviours are not inherent they can be taught (Smith et al, 1988). The approach suggests that leaders engage in two types of behaviours: task behaviours and relationship behaviours, and it is the manner in which these two styles are combined to influence others that forms the basis of the approach (Northouse, 2001). In summary the approach suggests that effective leaders are those who show extremely high concern for the maximising of task performance (task) and for those with whom they work (relationship), as opposed to those who trade one dimension off against the other (Blake & Mouton, 1964, as cited in Smith et al, 1988). In terms of strengths, the approach broadens the scope of leadership theory by including a behavioural element; it has a degree of reliability in that it is supported by a wide range of studies and it provides a broad conceptual map that is useful in understanding leadership behaviours (Northouse, 2001). From a limitations perspective, the approach does not take into account the circumstances within which leadership acts occur. As further research was undertaken and results published it became clear that the relationship between leader style (as measured by the approach) and team/group performance was highly variable. In addition, further research was unable to adequately associate the behaviours of leaders with outcomes such as morale, productivity and job satisfaction. Finally, the approach has not been able to identify a universal set of behaviours that define effective leadership (Smith et al, 1988; Northouse, 2001)

One of the more widely recognised 'process' approaches to leadership is the Situational Approach (first proposed during the 1950's). Situational leadership focuses on leadership in situations i.e. situations will require different kinds of leadership and as such an effective leader should be able to adapt his/her style to the demands of different situations. To determine what is needed a leader must assess the situation, determine how competent,

committed and motivated employees are the time and change his/her style accordingly (Northouse, 2001). Thus the focus of this approach is the leader's ability to adapt his/her styles to the needs of his/her employees and the situation. From a strengths perspective the approach is perceived to offer a credible model that allows for the development of leadership capabilities through training; it is easily understood and easily applied in a variety of settings; it adds value in that it is prescriptive in nature i.e. it prescribes what an individual should/should not do in a particular situation and the approach emphasises leadership flexibility. Despite its strengths, the approach does have limitations. Unlike other approaches it does not have a strong body of research findings to support its assumptions and as such there is an element of ambiguity around key elements of the theory (Smith et al, 1988).

Further understanding of leadership as a 'process' emerged during the 1970's with the development of the Path-Goal Theory. The theory is concerned with how leaders motivate their followers to be productive and satisfied with their work. In contrast to the Situational approach (which suggests a leader must adapt to the level of his/her followers), Path-Goal theory emphasises the relationship between the leaders style and the characteristics his/her followers and the work setting (Northouse, 2001). In essence, the theory asserts that employees will do what leaders want if leaders ensure that employees understand how to accomplish the organisational/team goals and are able to achieve their personal goals in the process (House, 1971, as cited in Smith et al, 1988). Thus a leader should diagnose the task environment and then select a style of leadership (directive, supportive, participative or achievement oriented) that provides the missing elements for employees in a particular work setting (Northouse, 2001). In selecting a leadership style the leader will need to consider the personal characteristics of the employee (personal qualities and skills) and the environment (nature of the work group and task). In terms of strengths the theory provides a framework

for understanding how certain styles of leadership affect the productivity of employees and as such is appealing in its simplicity, it is supported by extensive research and it integrates employee motivation principles and environmental factors into a leadership theory. In terms of limitations, the scope of the research has been restricted i.e. many researchers have used the task and relationship oriented measures of leader style and have, as a result, only addressed the directive and supportive leader styles. Tests of Path-Goal theory have also yielded variable findings some of which do not fully support the assumptions of the theory. Finally, the focus on leader fails to acknowledge the impact of employees in the leadership process (Smith et al, 1988; Northouse, 2001).

A further development in leadership research with regard to the leader operating in conjunction with the situation in which he/she operates came about with the emergence of the Contingency Theory (Northouse, 2001). The Contingency Theory of Leadership is built around a personality measure called Least Preferred Co-worker (LPC) and its basic premise is that a leader's description of the person with whom he/she has the greatest difficulty working reflects a basic leadership style. The theory uses this measure to distinguish between task oriented and relationship oriented leaders (and as such has a good deal in common with the Style and Path-Goal approaches). The focus of the theory is on the leader-situation match in that it emphasises the importance of matching a leader's style with the demands of the situation i.e. a task oriented leader will be most effective in a certain situation, while a relationship oriented leader will be effective in another situation (Smith et al, 1988). From a strengths perspective the approach is seen to be plausible i.e. it has been well researched (Northouse, 2001); it broadens the understanding of leadership by considering the impact of situations on leadership; it is predictive and therefore provides information on the type of leadership that will be most effective in a particular situation and, finally, it 'makes sense' in

that it recognises that leaders will not be able to lead in every situation. In terms of limitations, one the key limitations surrounds the personality measure used to determine leadership style i.e. there have been conflicting conclusions on what the LPC measure does, in fact, measure. In addition, the theory does not adequately explain the link between styles and situations i.e. it does not explain why some individuals are more effective in some situations than others. Finally, it is not easily implemented within organisations i.e. it requires the use of a number of instruments to measure leadership style and does not provide guidance on what an organisation should do if there is a mismatch between the leader and the workplace situation (Smith et al, 1988; Northouse, 2001).

During the 1980's and 1990's the corporate world witnessed a major paradigm shift that affected the modus operandi of many organisations. This shift came in response to changes in many aspects of society, including: growing urbanisation; an explosion in information and communication technologies; a shift in traditional business operating models with the emergence of 'e-commerce' and increasing globalisation and consolidation of businesses through mergers, acquisitions and strategic alliances on a global scale (Kets de Vries, 2001). These shifts appear to have intensified the drive to master and explain the phenomenon of leadership and the last twenty years has seen an 'explosion' of new theories (written by management scholars, leaders, journalists, philosophers, psychologists and historians) that draw on the earlier 'property' and 'process' theories (Kets de Vries, 2001).

An approach to leadership that combined both 'property' and 'process' elements emerged in the early 1980's with the Transformational approach to leadership. Transformational leadership is concerned with how certain leaders are able to change, transform and inspire others to accomplish great things. The approach stresses that leaders possess certain qualities

that enable them to assess the needs and motives of followers ('property'), adapt their behaviours to the needs of the followers and situation ('process'), act as role models who create visions, empower others and behave in a way that makes others want to trust them and who give meaning to organisational life (Northouse, 2001). In terms of strengths, the approach has been well researched, is intuitively appealing, considers that notion of 'traits' and also treats leadership as a process that occurs between the leader and the followers and, provides a broader view of leadership by considering the attention a leader needs to place on the needs of followers (Northouse, 2001). However, the approach has been criticised having the potential to be treated too simplistically as an 'either-or approach' and to treat leadership as a personality trait rather than a behaviour i.e. that transformational leaders have special qualities that transform others. Finally, much of the data that has been collected to support the theory has been collected from senior leaders i.e. the data applies to the leadership of organisations rather than leadership in organisations (Northouse, 2001).

The 'property' approach to explaining leadership was revisited during the 1980's with the emergence of the Psychodynamic Approach to leadership. The approach does, however, also incorporate some 'process' elements in it's attempt to explain leadership According to Stech (cited in Northouse, 2001) the approach proposes that: leaders are more effective when they have insight into their own psychological makeup and will be more effective when they understand the psychological makeup of their subordinates. As such the theory proposes that individuals can change behaviours and feelings and develop more effective leadership 'traits' by obtaining insight into their upbringing, relationships and psychological development. The key to initiating this change is the provision of mechanisms that lead to insight, allow less effective characteristics to be overcome and facilitate the development of more effective leadership characteristics. From a strengths perspective the approach emphasises individual

'psychological make up', the need for insight and development by the leader, the need to analyse follower 'psychological make up' and the need to develop a relationship that meets the needs of both parties ('property' and 'process' elements). From a limitations perspective, the approach ignores the cultural and social norms of the organisation and limits the ability to train individuals because of its emphasis on insight rather than skills development (Northouse, 2001).

'Process' approaches to leadership were also revisited as attempts were made to explain leadership. Building on earlier situational leadership findings, Blanchard (1986) extends the notion that leaders have to learn how to use a variety of leadership styles (flexibly) based on a diagnosis and understanding of the needs and levels of commitment and competence of the followers, by proposing four basic leadership styles: directing (where specific instruction is provided and task accomplishment supervised); coaching (where, in addition to the provision of specific instruction and task supervision, decisions are explained, suggestions solicited and support provided); supporting (where follower efforts are facilitated and supported and decision making shared); delegating (where responsibility for decision making and problem solving is given to followers). For each of the leadership styles a number of leadership behaviours are identified. The strength of the approach lies in its simplicity i.e. it is clear, easily understood, can be applied in a variety of settings, offers direction on what needs to be done in a particular situation and emphasises leadership flexibility (Northouse, 2001). Despite its strengths, the approach does not have a strong body of research findings, in particular with regards to the link between leadership style and team/individual performance (Smith et al, 1988).

Further elaboration of the 'property' approach emerged with Covey's theory of Principle Centred Leadership (1990). Building on his earlier work, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* (1988), Covey (1990) identifies eight discernible 'traits' associated with effective leadership and proposes that the possession of these traits characterise effective leaders. Effective leaders: continually learn i.e. read, seek training, listen to others, ask questions and expand their ability to do things; are serviced oriented i.e. see life as a mission that involves serving others; radiate positive energy i.e. are cheerful, pleasant, optimistic and upbeat; believe in other people i.e. believe in the unseen potential of others and do not focus solely on another's' weaknesses; lead balanced lives i.e. are active socially, intellectually and physically; see life as an adventure i.e. 'they are like courageous explorers going on an expedition into uncharted territories with the confidence that it will be exciting and growth producing' (Covey; 1990:37); are synergistic i.e. believe that the whole is more than the sum of it's parts and take steps to build on team strengths and complement weaknesses; exercise for self renewal i.e. regularly exercise the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual dimensions of human personality (Covey, 1990). What distinguishes this 'property' approach from the earlier approaches is that it also includes some 'process' elements. In addition to identifying 'traits', Principle Centred Leadership is based of four levels (personal, interpersonal, managerial and organisational). As such, the 'traits' identified consider personal characteristics (learning, energy, balanced life) as well as characteristics that take into account the relationship between the leader, others and the situation (service oriented, believing in others and synergism). An additional strength of the theory relates to the fact that the inherent traits do not make an individual effective as a leader, but rather act as preconditions for effective leadership thereby suggesting that leaders can 'learn' to be effective by understanding, developing and incorporating these 'traits' into their lives

An additional approach that contains some 'trait', 'style', 'psychodynamic' and 'transformational' elements, considers leadership in relation to the level of Emotional Intelligence (EQ) held by the individual. Emotional Intelligence has been defined as the potential for learning practical skills based on five elements: self-awareness i.e. the ability to recognise and understand personal moods, emotions and drives, as well as the effect of this on others; self-regulation i.e. the ability to control or redirect disruptive impulses and to think before acting; motivation i.e. a passion to work for reason that go beyond money or status and the propensity to pursue goals with energy; empathy i.e. the ability to understand the emotional make up of others and treat people according to their emotional reactions and adeptness in relationships i.e. proficiency in managing relationships, finding common ground and building rapport (Goleman, 2004). The theory proposes that it is EQ that is the core ingredient for leadership success i.e. emotional intelligence travels through an organisation like electricity over telephone wires, the leader's mood is contagious and will spread throughout the organisation and it is the leaders' own mood that will most influence the bottom line success of the organisation (Goleman; 1998). Depressed, ruthless leaders create toxic organisations filled with negative underachievement while upbeat, inspirational leaders cultivate positive employees who are able to embrace and surmount the toughest challenges (Goleman et al, 2001). In linking this proposition to long term business success, the research suggests that leaders with high levels of emotional intelligence create climates in which information sharing, trust, healthy risk taking and learning flourish. Low levels of emotional intelligence create climates rife with fear and anxiety. For Goleman (1998), the primary task of the leader is the development of his/her emotional intelligence. In terms of strengths, the theory is appealing in that it suggests that EQ has both a genetic component and is something that can be learned. The theory also draws on key elements of a number of early theories and combines 'property' and 'process' elements i.e. it considers leadership as an interactive

process between the leader and his/her followers and as such it considers the needs of followers (style and transformational theory), it promotes self awareness as a means for improving leadership style (psychodynamic approach) and it encourages leadership adaptability (style theory). In addition the theory has a strong behavioural focus and offers a clear set of characteristics/behaviours that can be used to measure the EQ of an individual. As such it allows comparisons to be made. From a limitations perspective, the theory argues that EQ can be measured and as such, measures have been developed to assess the level of EQ held by individuals. As with all psychometric measures, the inherent limitation relates to the fact that an instrument will only measure what it has been designed to measure and as such may ignore other factors associated with leadership. In addition, the characteristics/behaviours that have been identified have a strong American focus and non American national and cultural dimensions have not been fully investigated i.e. the implications of EQ within a South African context are still being investigated. Finally, the high profile media promotion of EQ may cause distrust from an implementation perspective i.e. there is a risk that EQ is viewed as a 'fad' leadership theory.

The Spiritually Intelligent Leader (SQ) offers a further example of a current leadership approach that contains a combination of 'property' and 'process' elements. According to Hawley (1993), the key questions for today's leaders are no longer about task and structure but rather are questions of spirit. Questions of spirit are not about religion, but instead are about spirituality, which he defines as an awareness of the purpose and meaning and a true experience of life itself. This notion of spirituality has been developed into a framework which describes SQ as the ultimate intelligence with which individuals: address and solve problems of meaning, place their actions and lives in a wider, richer, meaning-giving context and assess the meaningfulness of one course of action over another (Zohar & Marshall 2000).

According to Zohar & Marshall (2000), SQ has nine key components: high self awareness, vision and values led, the capacity to face and use adversity, to be holistic (see the connections between diverse things), to celebrate diversity, to working against convention (field independence), the tendency to ask 'why?', the ability to reframe and put things into a larger context of meaning and the capacity to be flexible and spontaneously adaptive. From a leadership perspective, spiritually intelligent leaders will view individuals and objects in new relationships to each other and their surroundings and to draw on rational, intuitive and creative thinking. These abilities, in turn, provide the leader with more clarity of mind and enable him/her to make decisions that take into account multiple parameters. (Zohar & Marshall 2000). From a strengths perspective, the theory has a behavioural focus that draws on both the 'property' and 'process' elements from early theories i.e., it promotes self awareness as a means for improving leadership style (psychodynamic approach), it encourages leadership adaptability (situational leadership) and it promotes the importance of visioning (path-goal and transformational theory). In addition the theory offers cognitive elements to the understanding of leadership i.e. cognitive abilities such as using adversity and diversity, being holistic and reframing are promoted as key components of SQ. As such the theory offers a broader foundation for understanding leadership. From a limitations perspective, the theory is new. As such research into the theory, relevance from a practical perspective and the link between SQ and leadership performance has yet to be fully researched.

A more recent theory (2005) that has been proposed to explain leadership once again revisits the 'property' approach (and includes some 'process' elements) by proposing that effective leadership can be explained in terms of the 'internal action logic' possessed by an individual i.e. the manner in which the individual interprets his/her surroundings and reacts (Rooke &

Torbert, 2005). The approach proposes that an individual's inherent and dominant way of thinking will lead them to interpret their environment in a particular way ('property'). This interpretation will then lead to the demonstration of a particular leadership style (the framework identifies seven leadership styles). The framework also proposes that individuals can transform from one 'action logic' to another based on the perceived effectiveness of a particular leadership style or an external event such as a promotion, thereby incorporating some 'process' elements into the framework. The leadership styles proposed by the framework include: the Opportunist who will approach and interpret the outside world in terms of controlling external events and will adopt a leadership style based on the principles of 'winning any way possible' and 'might makes right' (Rooke & Torbert, 2005:68); the Diplomat who will approach and interpret the outside world in terms of controlling his/her own behaviour and will adopt a leadership style based on the need to belong, obeying group norms and the avoidance of conflict; the Expert who will interpret the outside world in terms of expertise, knowledge and skills and will adopt a leadership style characterised by logic, expertise and rational efficiency; the Achiever who will approach and interpret the outside world in terms of the contribution others can make to the achievement of goals and will adopt a leadership style that challenges and supports individuals within the team; the Individualist who will approach and interpret the outside world in terms of their personal understanding of how things should be done and will adopt a leadership style that may ignore the rules and needs of others; the Strategist who will approach and interpret the outside by considering wider organisational constraints and perceptions and will adopt a leadership style that focuses on getting others to see the bigger picture; the Alchemist who will approach and interpret the outside world by dealing simultaneously with many situation at multiple levels and will adopt a leadership style that integrates individual needs, managerial requirements an organisational demands (Rooke & Torbert, 2005). In term of strengths, the approach appears to draw on

both 'property' and process' theories i.e. an inherent cognitive 'trait' and the ability to adopt different styles based on the effectiveness of the style within a given situation. The approach does not, however, acknowledge the emotional and spiritual aspects of leadership in describing each of the styles.

2.4 Reviewing the Theory – Key Observations

The above review demonstrates the rich history of theorising and research on leadership and highlights the large number of variables that have been identified to explain what makes an effective leader. In reviewing the different approaches, the following observations emerge:

- Many of the leadership theories have been developed and tested using specific population samples (American/European);
- Leadership, as a concept, appears to have evolved over time. As new elements are identified, new theories emerge. These theories can be plotted chronologically from the early Trait theories to the Style approach of the 1940's, Path-Goal theories of the 1970's, the Transformational approach of the 1980's, the EQ approach of the late 1990's, the SQ approach of the early 21st century and the very recent Action Logic Approach (2005). This raises a number of questions: 'Has leadership evolved (still evolving), is it the research techniques that have evolved that provide greater insight or is it a combination of both?'
- There are variations in the focus of each of the theories as they attempt to define and explain leadership. In some approaches the focus is on leadership as a 'property; in other approaches the focus is on leadership as a 'process' between the leader and his/her environment and followers. Finally, more recent approaches combine

'property' and 'process' elements (with either the 'property' or 'process' element being the primary focus supported by the other) to explain leadership;

- As the concept has evolved, new elements that define leadership i.e. new skills and behaviours, are identified and added to the theories thereby increasing their complexity;
- The earlier theories do not appear to support nor build upon each other. Rather, new elements are identified and proposed to explain leadership. For example, as researchers challenged the Trait approach so the Style approach gained in popularity. When this approach was challenged for ignoring the circumstances within which leadership acts occur, so the Situational approach became more popular. As each new approach becomes popular so the benefits, learning's and knowledge from the earlier approaches appear to be ignored;
- The more recent theories do appear, however, to consider the findings from earlier research. The Transformational, Psychodynamic, Principle Centred Leadership, EQ, SQ and Action Logic approaches draw on key elements from earlier theories and explain leadership as an interactive process while offering different perspectives on the extent to which inherent traits, self awareness and varying styles impact on the situation and followers;
- The vast number of theories, absence of commonality and often conflicting content between some of the theories, coupled with the 'new fad' aspect as new theories are promoted, has the potential to create further confusion and debate around what makes an effective leader;
- As the theories have been developed so more complex testing and measurement methods are designed to assess leadership and despite the fact that measurement tools designed to measure leadership (as defined by the author of the tool) may be

scientifically valid, these tools will only measure the ability of the individual to do well on the particular test. As such, they are not holistic leadership tests but rather measure the specific, general or multiple leadership factors that have been identified.

2.5 Evolving Leadership Requirements

As noted above, one of the key themes to emerge from the review of the theories relates to the chronological evolution of leadership theory. This is, in many respects, driven by the evolving (changing) requirements and expectations of leaders within an organisational environment. It is this evolutionary aspect of leadership requirements that further complicates the understanding of the concept and impacts on the ability of the practitioner to create interventions to support its development.

To support changes in the organisational operating methods, leaders need to adopt new ways of leading within these organisations. As these new elements of leadership (skills and behaviours) are identified they are added to the theories and thereby increase their complexity. Naplotano and Henderson (1998) argue that whilst it was previously clear that leaders should operate as answer providers, order givers, problem solvers and brokers, new operating methods within organisations mean that leaders are now required to act differently.

Sexton & Smilor (1996) propose four key changes in organisational systems that in turn produce new demands on leaders. It is a result of these new demands that leaders are required to adopt different leadership styles and approaches. The first key change proposed relates to the shift from local, simple enterprises to global, complex and large organisations. In a local and simple enterprise the needs was for autocratic and patriarchal styles of leadership where decision-making could be held in the hands of one person. In larger, global organisations the

demand is for leaders to find order in chaos, push the organisation forward and design systems that allow it to grow. Thus the changes in operating structure have created a shift in leadership requirements from autocrat to analyst and architect. The second change proposed by Sexton et al (1996) relates to the shift in focus from meeting material needs to meeting the psychic needs of an individual. Based on Maslow's proposal that an individual's basic needs have to be satisfied to allow more abstract needs to be met, Sexton et al (1996) argue that in underdeveloped countries where an individual's livelihood is uncertain, people will be more inclined to look towards a father type figure to meet their basic needs. In developed countries, however, leaders are required to be receptive to the more abstract needs and desires of individuals. In line with this Charlton (1992) suggests that leadership involves a paradigm shift from viewing employees as children to creating adult expectation which offers meaningful work and involvement as a means of accessing human potential. In terms of leadership style, for a leader to meet the expectations of employees it is argued that such changes shift the role of leadership from a father figure role to that of a catalyst, servant and developer of people. The third key change proposed by Sexton et al (1996) relates to a shift in organisational structure i.e. many large organisations are moving away from top heavy, hierarchical organisational structures to flatter or project based organisational structures. In the 'old world' autocratic authority relationships, rigid and time consuming decision making structures and control leadership styles served to ensure that the organisation functioned (Charlton, 1992). In the 'new world' leaders are required to create organisations that allow for the expression of human potential (Charlton, 1992) and as such flexibility, negotiation and strength are the characteristics that define the new leadership style required. The final key change relates to the shift from mono-cultural and univocal organisations to multi-cultural and multi-vocal organisations. As a result of advancements in technology and shifts in social, economic and political factors, national and international boundaries that previously

isolated organisations, have disappeared. All organisations are now faced with managing cultural diversity and listening to the voices of those from different cultures. In terms of a shift in leadership style, leaders are required to act as listeners who are able to find ways bring about mutual learning and appreciation (Sexton et al, 1996).

The above framework contributes to the understanding of leadership in that it highlights the evolutionary nature of leadership requirements i.e. that different leadership styles and practices will be required as organisations grow and reinvent themselves. The framework provides a broad generalized view of how many organisations are changing also provides insight into the types of leadership styles that may be appropriate and relevant to meet the changing requirements of an organisation. Finally, the framework reinforces the notion that leadership does not sit in isolation, but rather impacts upon and is impacted upon by the environment. In terms of limitations, the framework only addresses organisational changes as they stand to date. The framework does not offer additional insight into what future leadership styles and practices will be required to ensure business success. In addition, the broad view that organisations are shifting from the 'old world' to the 'new world' ignores the fact that different parts of the same organisation may be at different stages of reinvention. As such these organisations may require a combination of 'old world' and 'new world' leadership styles.

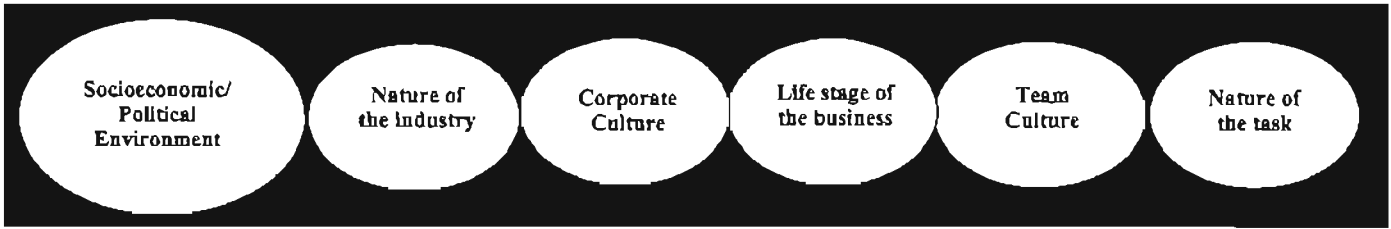
2.6 *Emerging Patterns*

Given the number of theories available and the evolution of leadership requirements, the challenge is how best to make sense of the research. Given the vast number of variables identified, it would be almost impossible to develop a comprehensive leadership model that integrates all the variables. For the purpose of this study, common patterns have been extracted to highlight the links and interrelationships between different aspects/elements of the theoretical approaches and research.

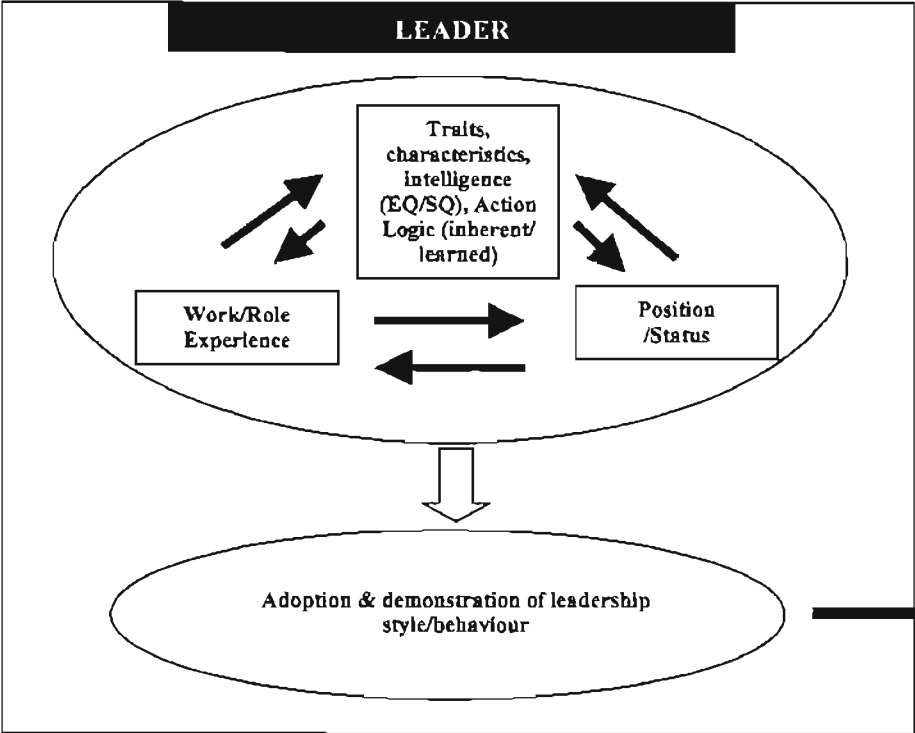
The following diagram provides an overview of these link and interrelationships.

Desired outcome:
Leadership exists for a purpose

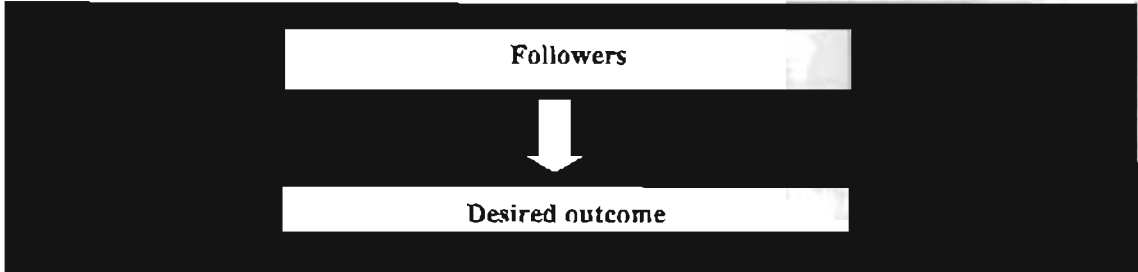
ENVIRONMENT



IMPACTS ON



INFLUENCE



- All of the approaches imply that leadership exists to accomplish a functional requirement (purpose or desired outcome);
- In this respect, a key pattern to emerge relates to the accomplishment of two broad classes of functional requirement, namely task functions i.e. activities related to the accomplishment of specific goals or jobs and maintenance functions i.e. those activities related to the maintenance of motivation, morale and working relationships;
- Founded in the 'process' approaches, a further theme to emerge relates to the fact that leadership does not sit in isolation but rather will impact on and be impacted upon by variables such as the socioeconomic and political environment, the nature of the industry, the corporate culture, the life stage of the business, the culture of the team and the nature of the task. In addition, follower variables such as needs, values, attitudes, commitment and competence will impact on the leader (Kets de Vries, 2001);
- Given the impact of these variables, it is unlikely that a definitive (all inclusive) list of characteristics, skills and behaviours of effective leadership will ever be determined. Whilst it may be possible to identify generic capabilities, specific characteristics, skills, behaviours can only be identified in relation to the organisation or environment within which the leader operates;
- In addition to the above, the impact of the environment suggests that leadership is not a linear process. The adoption of a particular style or behaviour will impact on the followers. If the style proves to be unsuccessful in terms of achieving the objective or has a negative impact on the followers, it may require the leader reviewing his/her behaviour;
- Also related to the notion that leadership is does not sit in isolation is the idea that leadership is time specific i.e. as organisations grow and reinvent themselves, so the

requirements and expectations of leaders will evolve. In some instances leaders may be required to utilise their existing skills and behaviours, they may be required to develop new skills and behaviours or they may be required to utilise a combination of existing and newly developed leadership styles;

- Key to achieving the purpose is the concept of influence i.e. the manner in which one the leader is able to persuade others (his/her followers) to accomplish a specific or set of goals or objectives;
- In relation to this, the approaches propose that the key to influencing is the demonstration of leadership skills and behaviours;
- The manner in which these skills and behaviours are acquired, adopted and demonstrated varies and each theory offers an explanation of the 'source' of the leadership skills and behaviours. Examples include the possession of a particular trait or characteristic, the level of intelligence (emotional and/or spiritual) possessed by the individual, the individual's position or status within the organisation (power) and the level of experience of the leader;
- 'Property' approaches propose that these skills and behaviours come naturally to the individual because he/she possesses inherent characteristics; 'property' approaches indicate that these skills and behaviours can be learned. Approaches that combine both 'property' and 'process' elements provide a strong argument for the notion that inherent 'traits' may act as a precondition for effective but leadership can also be developed through the implementation of relevant development interventions;
- Regardless of the 'source', the level of self-awareness and insight of the leader also emerges as a theme. The theories suggest that the level of insight a leader has into his/her own styles, strengths, limitations and blind spots as well as the cognitive ability of a leader to understand a situation, assess the needs of his/her employees (in

relation to the situation), understand what needs to be done and adapt his/her style accordingly to meet the needs of the situation and his/her employees will impact on the extent to which followers will be influenced.

In summary, leadership theory and research provides a broad understanding of how leadership may develop and be developed i.e. each theory offers insight into the concept of leadership which contributes to the overall understanding in some shape or form. The theories do not, however, define and offer an integrative list of characteristics, skills and behaviours of leadership as it applies to South Africa. It is only through a contextual analysis of leadership i.e. one which considers the perceptions, experiences and practices of leadership within a South African context, that a true understanding of effective leadership within South African organisations can be determined.

3. Research Methodology

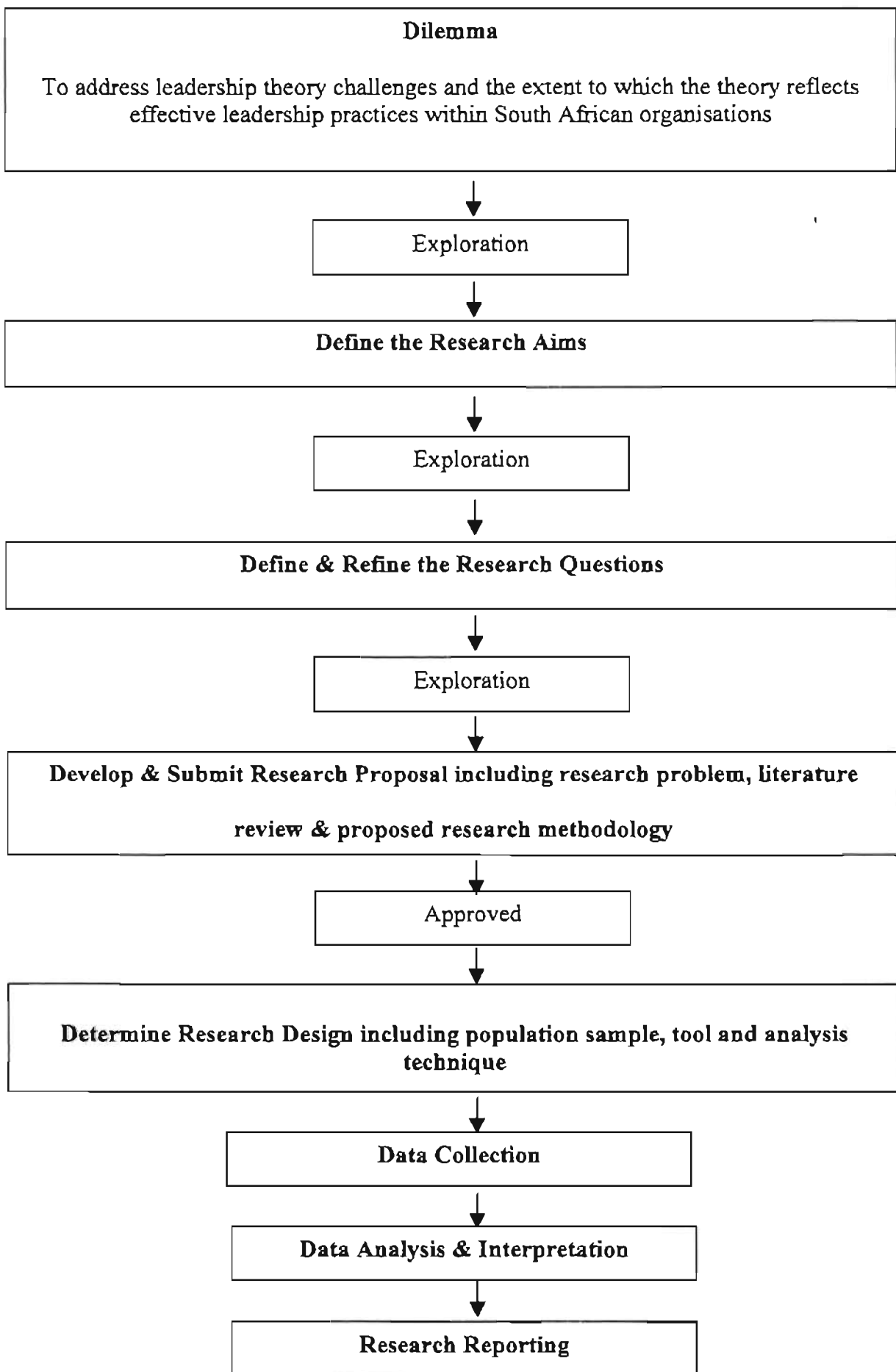
3.1 Introduction

The methodological approach adopted for this research study is a qualitative approach. The decision to follow this procedure was determined by the nature of the research topic i.e. to investigate the perceptions, experiences and practices of effective leadership within South Africa; discussions and conversations would need to take place. In this respect it was decided that a qualitative approach to data collection would yield richer data than a quantitative methodology. The decision to follow this approach, in turn, informed, the data collection methods adopted and the data analysis techniques used (Mouton & Marais, 1990).

The following section highlights the research process that was adopted, details the study's aims and research questions and discusses the research design including sample, data gathering techniques and data analysis technique.

3.2 The Research Process

In approaching the research topic the following research process was adopted.



Adapted from Cooper & Schindler, 1998 & Welman & Kruger, 1999

3.3 *Research Aim*

The aim of this research study is to examine the perceptions, experiences and practices of effective leadership within South African organisations and investigate the extent to which these perceptions and experiences match the patterns that emerge from leadership theory.

3.4 *Research Questions*

.Research questions include:

- Given the extensive literature surrounding the concept of leadership, what are the core components of leadership and what patterns can be extracted?
- What are the perceptions, experiences and practices of effective leadership amongst individuals working within South African organisations?
- In considering these perceptions, experiences and practices, what makes an effective leader within a South African context?
- How do these perceptions compare to the patterns that emerge from leadership literature and theories i.e. does the leadership theory reflect effective leadership practices within South Africa?

3.5 Research Design

3.5.1 Research Sample

Second year, part time MBA students from the University of KwaZulu Natal, Durban, were selected as a sample population. In selecting this sample, the following assumptions were made:

- The students were likely to be in full time employment and;
- Would either occupy a leadership (managerial) type role;
- Have experiences of being led (managed) by another occupying a leadership type role.

The benefits of selecting this sample group included:

- **Accessibility.** As a result of an introduction to the MBA coordinator, a meeting was scheduled which allowed for the submission of a proposition regarding access to the students;
- **Sample size.** Of the 28 students on the MBA programme, it was hoped that the commitment of at least 10 – 12 participants could be gained;
- **Willingness to participate.** It was assumed that it would be easier to persuade the students to volunteer as participants and it was hoped that, as students, they may be sympathetic to an academic research project;
- **Broad representation.** It was hoped that by selecting this population group, a broad range of perceptions, experiences and practices would be accessed since individuals on the programme occupied different leadership and managerial positions and represented a wide range of organisations and industries.

In selecting this population sample, the following limitations were considered as having the potential to impact on any findings:

- The gender demographics of the population sample i.e. the majority of the students on the MBA programme were male;
- The ethnic representation on the programme i.e. the majority of the students were Black African or Indian African. There was one White African student on the programme;
- Willingness on the part of the students to volunteer and participate in the sample given their academic and employment workloads;
- The availability of participants to participate in the follow up interviews.

It was the latter limitation that became the most problematic during the research study. In total, three interviews were conducted with the MBA students (all male, 2 Indian, 1 White).

With the sample limitations in mind, seven additional individuals occupying senior managerial roles in the private sector were approached and one to one interviews were undertaken with these individuals. In selecting these individuals, the assumptions that were applied to the MBA students i.e. full time employment, occupy a leadership (managerial) type role or have experiences of being led (managed) by another, were once again considered. Additional consideration was given to overcome some of the potential limitations of the MBA sample group i.e. different roles, professions and industry sectors were targeted and an effort was made to interview female participants representing the different ethnic groups. Willingness to participate and commit time was also a consideration. A further seven interviews were conducted.

A summary of the Sample populations for the Facilitated Group Data Gathering Session and the one to one interviews can be found in Appendix 2.

3.5.2 Data Gathering Techniques

In order to investigate the perceptions, experiences and practices of South African leaders; a qualitative approach to data collection was undertaken. It was assumed that in order to capture the ideas and thoughts of South African leaders, discussions and conversations would need to take place. It was hoped that such conversations and discussions would yield richer data. The following steps were undertaken to gather the data for the research study:

i. Initial 'Positioning' Presentation

An initial presentation was delivered to the MBA students. The key objective of this presentation was to explain the nature of the research study and to obtain commitment from the students to participate in the study as a sample population. To achieve these objectives the following was covered:

- The context of the research study. Despite the extensive literature, clarity and understanding of what make effective leadership has not always followed and the challenge of determining what makes effective leadership within a South African context;
- The purpose of the study. To review and evaluate current leadership theory; to investigate the perceptions, experiences and practices of effective leadership within South African organisations and to investigate the extent to which these perceptions and experiences match the patterns to emerge from leadership theory and research;

- The population sample requirements for the study. Individuals who have experience of being led or managed by another;
- What participants in the study would be required to do - participate in a facilitated group data gathering exercise followed by a one to one interview.

At the end of the presentation, a date was agreed for the facilitated group data gathering exercise. It was agreed that those students wishing to participate would remain behind following the completion of their lecture. Further to the student's request, it was confirmed that a 'one page' pre-session brief would be distributed to all the students (via email). The purpose of this brief was to provide participants with the opportunity to consider key issues around leadership in advance of the group session, thereby allowing more data to be discussed during the session.

ii. Facilitated Group Data Gathering Session (Focus Group)

Following the 'positioning' presentation, a 90 minute facilitated group data gathering session was scheduled. In line with the students' request, a pre-session brief was drafted and forwarded to the MBA Programme Coordinator for distribution to the students.

During the session, the students (15 in total) were divided into two groups. The pre-session brief was distributed (See Appendix 3 for a copy of the Pre-Session Brief) and preparation time provided for the students to gather their thoughts and ideas (10 minutes). The groups were then tasked with:

- Nominating a 'scribe' to capture their thoughts and ideas;
- Discussing their views on the key elements of leadership and the attributes and behaviours of an effective leader;
- Creating a list (on flipchart paper) of the key elements and the attributes and behaviours;
- Presenting their thoughts and ideas back to the other group for discussion, elaboration and clarification (approximately 30 minutes).

Following the facilitated session, contact details for students willing to participate in the one to one interviews were captured. Follow up calls were made to schedule dates, times and venues for conducting these interviews.

iii. One to one Interviews

12 students agreed to participate in the study by committing to follow up interviews. Of the nine students that were contacted, only three interviews were conducted i.e. despite date, time and venue confirmation. To address the sample size issue, seven additional private sector senior managers were approached and one to one interviews were undertaken with these individuals. 10 interviews (ranging between 60 and 90 minutes) were undertaken.

The key purpose of the one to one interview was to extract and understand the individual's perceptions and experiences of effective leadership. In this respect each participant was asked to consider an individual that they would define as an effective leader and then required to 'tell the story' of this individual. The participant was prompted with the following questions:

- What were your experiences of them as a leader?
- What did they do that makes you think of them as an effective leaders?
- How did they behave?
- What kinds of practices did they implement (things that they did)?

Each 'story' was captured on paper.

On completing the story, the key leadership points/themes/behaviours/practices were identified, summarised and confirmed with the participant to ensure accuracy of the data extracted from the stories. Where required, additional questions were asked to obtain a deeper understanding of particular points i.e. 'You mentioned that the leader did the following..., can you tell me a bit more about what it looked like, how it made you feel?'. In addition to this, further understanding of each of the points/themes/behaviours/practices was obtained by exploring the importance of each point/theme/behaviour/practice in relation to leadership i.e. 'Why do you think it is important for a leader to be?'. Finally, the consequences of not possessing or demonstrating a particular point/theme/behaviour/practice was explored i.e. 'What do you think the consequences are of a leader not being/acting in a particular way?'

3.5.3 Data Analysis Technique

To analyse the data that had been captured through the facilitated group exercise and one to one interviews, a thematic qualitative analysis technique was adopted.

Thematic analysis, as the name suggests, involves identifying particular themes that occur in the data that is being studied. Themes, in this context, refer to recurrent ideas, topics, statements, attributions or assumptions (as they related to leadership), which can be detected

in the material being analysed and which come up on more than one occasion in the data (Hayes, 2000).

In terms of a process, Hayes (2000) proposes that the following steps should be undertaken:

- The analysis should begin with the preparation of the data. i.e. preparing the data in such a way that it can be reviewed over and over again. For the purposes of this study, the data captured through the facilitated group session (i.e. the ideas and themes that were captured on flip chart paper) were collated and transcribed into one document. The data captured during the one to one interviews was not transcribed i.e. the notes taken during the interview were sufficiently clear to be able to work from directly;
- Following the data preparation stage, the second stage of the process consists of reading through the data and noting down items of interest or information which is relevant to the research topic. For the purposes of this study, items of interest were initially 'highlighted' on the transcribed data and interview notes. These items of interest were then noted on a series of 'post its'.
- The third stage involves sorting out the bits of data (notes of interest). For the purpose of this study, the 'post its' containing items which appeared to be dealing with similar topics were placed together ('clustered') in small piles. According to Hayes (2000), each small pile represents the beginning of a theme, a 'proto-theme', which will develop and change as the analysis proceeds. Once these small piles had been established, they were examined to determine the content and nature of the data contained in the pile. In addition, a provisional name was given to the pile and a first draft definition created to describe the content of the pile.
- On completing this stage, Hayes (2000) proposes that each theme needs to be taken separately and each transcript (interview note) carefully re-examined for material

relevant to the theme. In this respect, the transcript from the facilitated session and each of the interview notes was re-read to determine whether it contained any further information that related to the theme. Additional notes of interest were captured on a 'post it' and added to the relevant pile.

- Once the second round of reviews of the facilitated session transcript and interview notes, Hayes (2000) proposes that each theme can be constructed into its final form. During this study a number of key themes were identified. In addition, sub themes to support these key themes were identified. For each sub theme a title was determined; a definition was provided for the sub theme; data relating to 'why it matters' was highlighted, behavioural details, including negative behaviours to explain the nature of each sub theme (quotations were extracted from the material to achieve this) were identified.

In adopting this approach to the analysis of the data, the following 'issues' were encountered:

- Because the data was qualitative, the information varied a great deal and the same theme was described using different language and words. In addition, similar themes emerged in different contexts. To address this challenge required reviewing the data a number of times to ensure that all themes and behaviours were captured;
- As a result the process was quite time consuming i.e. each time a new theme was identified, previous data needed to be reviewed again to determine whether the theme was present but had not been noticed;
- Despite the vast amount of data available, only certain quotations and observations were selected to highlight particular points. In this respect, there was a concern around the potential for subjectivity and bias in the selection of the quotes.

4. Research Results

4.1 *Introduction*

As noted, one of the key aims of this research study is to examine the perceptions, experiences and practices of effective leadership within South African organisations. The following section presents the findings from the research in its final form.

4.2 *Effective Leadership in South African organisations – the findings*

The findings from the research undertaken (participant perceptions and experiences) have been clustered into four key themes, namely:

- Driving Results;
- Strategic Thinking;
- Leading Others;
- Delivering through People;

For each of these themes a summary has been offered to describe the overall nature of the theme. Each of the key themes is comprised of a number of sub themes that support the key theme. Table 4.1 offers a diagrammatic representation of the findings in a summarised form.

Key Themes				
Driving Results		Strategic Thinking	Leading Others	Delivering Through People
Sub Themes	Action Driven	Innovative Thinking	Strategic Influencing	Energising Others
	Results Focus	Analytical Thinking	Building Confidence	Collaborating for Success
		Flexible Thinking	Communicates with Impact	Building Capability
		Organisational & Cultural Awareness		

Table 4.1 - Diagrammatic representation of Themes & Sub Themes

Based on the findings to emerge from the facilitated session and one to one interviews each of the themes and sub themes have been structured as follows: a title for each theme and sub theme has been determined; a summary of each theme and a definition for each sub theme is proposed; data relating to ‘why it matters’ has been highlighted for each sub theme; positive behavioural indicators (a combination of researcher interpretation and verbatim participant quotations) to explain the nature of each sub theme have been detailed and negative behaviours, as they relate to the sub theme, have been identified. The following section provides a detailed description of each of the themes and sub themes.

Driving Results

Effective South African leaders appear to be extremely 'driven'. The findings suggest that at the heart of everything they do is 'a hunger' and desire to achieve, to make the organisation/team do better, to embrace necessary change and to set and exceed challenging business targets. This hunger is a 'commercial hunger' in that it appears to be focused on delivering against business goals.

The sub themes within this theme include:

- Action Driven
- Results Focus

Action Driven

Definition:

The burning drive to do whatever it takes to achieve the objectives of the business (within the relevant legal and regulatory frameworks). Effective leaders refuse to accept that something cannot be done; rather they overcome obstacles and barriers to success with their desire to 'make things happen'. They create a 'can do' culture, tackling issues and seizing opportunities that enhance performance. They focus others on the key deliverables and hold them accountable for their actions. They value proactivity and initiative and will challenge forms of bureaucracy.

Why it matters:

Being *Action Driven* (within the appropriate legal and regulatory frameworks) will keep the organisation nimble and allow it to move fast and respond to opportunities that will deliver business objectives.

Positive behavioural indicators:

- Holds self fully accountable for delivering business goals
- 'Moves quickly' to translate goals into actionable solutions
- Identifies potential obstacles that may 'derail' the achievement of objectives
- Is 'tenacious and persistent' when encountering obstacles
- Takes the initiative 'to get things moving'
- Identifies opportunities where they can add value to the achievement of business objectives
- Is future-oriented and long-term focused in their drive – 'sees more than today'
- Models a 'can do' attitude
- Displays 'energy and enthusiasm' to deliver
- Maintains high levels of personal motivation

Negative behavioural indicators:

- Fails to deliver
- Blames others and other factors for slowness and failures – 'somebody or thing as always to blame'
- Creates burn-out in self and others through over-driving – 'People in her team were always off with stress'

Results Focus

Definition:

Effective leaders possess a passion to deliver outstanding results. They set, achieve and exceed ever-higher standards for themselves and others. They are driven to continually improve against targets that will meet and exceed the expectations of customers, the organisation and team members.

Why it matters:

Being *Results Focussed* ensures that 'activities are focussed on delivering' organisational success. In a fast moving and highly competitive environment ('like our bank'), it keeps the organisation one step ahead of the competition.

Positive behavioural indicators:

- Sets stretch targets for themselves to 'raise the bar on performance'
- Remains focused in their approach to tasks
- Monitors their performance – 'She would ask me for feedback and ways to improve'
- Is known for their 'high personal standards' around delivering quality outcomes – 'Everything in the team revolved around getting things done, on time and within budget'
- Makes objectives meaningful for individuals within their team – 'My performance targets were tailored to what I could do'
- Interprets business strategy to define stretch objectives for area
- Ensures consistency between individual objectives and business goals – 'It was easy to see how my work supported the business objectives'
- Takes appropriate measures to upgrade performance and constructively deals with under-performance – 'He as not afraid to question poor performance'

Negative behavioural indicators:

- Complacent and settles for second best
- Avoids giving performance feedback – '... never knew how good or bad I was at my job'
- Sets unrealistic and unachievable targets

Strategic Thinking

To 'harness their drive', effective leaders within South Africa appear to 'apply their brains'. The findings indicate that they are able to do this in a pragmatic way and avoid getting stuck in 'analysis paralysis'. They are able to understand the complexities of the organization and make decisions that allow them to take the 'best possible course of action in an ever-changing business world.'

The sub themes within this theme include:

- Innovative Thinking
- Analytical Thinking
- Flexible Thinking
- Organisational & Cultural Awareness

Innovative Thinking

Definition:

The intellectual ability to bring a fresh insight that will add value to the business. It is about combining past experience, business knowledge, new information and 'instinct' to develop ideas for improving the business 'as is' or innovative ideas that may change the way things are done.

Why it matters:

The 'lifeblood of an organisation is the ability to come to improve the way things are done as well as to develop new ideas and ways of doing things'. *Innovative Thinking* will ensure that the organisation stays at the forefront as a business in terms of 'fresh thinking'.

Positive behavioural indicators:

- Uses past experiences, business insights and best practice to add new perspectives to known issues – 'He had worked in a number of companies and would always share these experiences to help us move forward'
- Produces imaginative solutions that create operational efficiencies
- Translates ideas into workable and appropriate solutions for their area – 'A very practical lady when it came to new ideas'
- Provides constructive challenge to the way things have been done within their area
- Is receptive and open to new ideas and concepts that challenge convention – 'Was willing to listen to my proposal for a new....'
- Is 'open to ideas' that challenge the way the organisation currently operates
- Is willing to adopt new solutions formed by others
- Builds on others' ideas
- Uses a range of approaches to gather others' ideas
- Creates an environment that is welcoming of innovation and change and challenges those who are resistant to new ideas – 'Was big into finding ways to do things better'

Negative behavioural indicators:

- Resistant to new ideas and new ways of doing things – '...was very old school with regard to new ideas...'
- Inhibits creativity in others

Analytical Thinking

Definition:

The capacity to make sense of complex information and data and understand situations by seeing patterns and trends, relationships and causal links. Effective leaders are able to 'make the complex simple' and 'get to the bottom of it'. They also encourage others to gain a sound understanding of the issues before taking action.

Why it matters:

Analytical Thinking is essential for 'cutting through' complexity and gaining clarity on business issues. It enables effective leaders to break down issues in order to identify priorities and decide on the critical issues that require action.

Positive behavioural indicators:

- Analyses information related to specific issues to increase their understanding – 'Would take the time to find out what was going on before acting'
- Breaks problems down into component parts – '...very logical; would break things down...'
- Recognises patterns, relationships and causal links
- Draws connections from disparate sources to see the bigger picture and spot relationships between seemingly different situations – 'She seemed to be able take a step back and see 'the bigger picture''
- Questions and probes information rigorously and deeply – '... was always very thorough'
- Makes decisions based on logic from clearly presented data within their area of responsibility
- Shows an understanding of the conclusions and decisions drawn from data by others

Negative behavioural indicators:

- Tackles problems without understanding their causes – 'always reacted in a 'knee jerk' way'
- Failing to take into account impact of decisions on other areas

Flexible Thinking

Definition:

The capacity to 'view a situation, problem or opportunity from different perspectives simultaneously' and develop alternative solutions to a business issue. Effective leaders understand that in a complex world, there is rarely one right answer or view, rather, multiple perspectives and possibilities need to be understood in order to develop the best possible solution.

Why it matters:

Leaders that are proficient in this competency 'allow the team to operate in a changing environment' where the future is uncertain. By considering different options the team is able to respond to changes.

Positive behavioural indicators:

- Able to view different options or perspectives
- Generates 'workable alternatives' when producing solutions
- Thinks quickly to spot several options without becoming fixated on one solution
- Maintains a sense of objectivity in their analysis
- Reviews their thinking in the light of new and conflicting information – 'Would reconsider when new information was presented'
- Keeps an 'open mind' to others' perspectives
- Is willing to go along with others' perspectives
- Changes their mind when faced with better alternatives
- Provides a context in which several options are explored by others – 'Encouraged me to think about other ways to fix the problem'

Negative behavioural indicators:

- Gets fixated on a narrow perspective and rejects relevant alternatives
- Converges too quickly on the basis of narrow information

Organisational & Cultural Awareness

Definition:

The ability to understand 'how the organisation works' i.e. being able to identify the key stakeholders, knowing how the culture works, understanding the external forces (the market, political forces and external bodies) affecting the organisation and understanding the dynamics of different cultures, backgrounds and religions of employees within the organisation.

Why it matters:

Effective leaders need to understand how the different groups, teams, business units and markets operate, so they can navigate them to best effect and maximise the potential of the differences between groups, teams, business units etc.

Positive behavioural indicators:

- Shows an understanding of and utilises formal and informal structures to get things done – 'Was well connected both inside and outside the business'
- Demonstrates knowledge of the key decision makers and asks the right questions from them – 'She knew who to talk to, to get things done'
- Takes steps to understand and leverages the dynamics of different cultures to succeed – '... works hard to understand the different cultures in the team'
- Encourages team members to do the same
- Builds a culture that encourages insight into relationships, organisational culture, politics, cultural and gender diversity and key players in order to get things done

Negative behavioural indicators:

- 'Lacks organisational and political savvy'
- Has little understanding how the organisation works and how to achieve within its context
- Takes no time to explore and understand the diversity of population groups within the organisation

Leading Others

Effective leaders within South Africa appear to know how to ‘capture the hearts and minds’ of their teams, colleagues, peers and customers. The findings suggest that they recognise the diversity of the people in the team and employ many different strategies to secure their support. The ‘best of the best’ appear to have the ability to inspire ‘ordinary people to do extraordinary things’ through their passion and communication skills.

The sub themes within this theme include:

- Strategic Influencing
- Building Confidence
- Communicating with Impact

Strategic Influencing

Definition:

The ability to influence others by planning how best to win support, gain co-operation or overcome objections in order to drive results. Effective leaders build personal networks across the organisation, clients and suppliers, and can mobilise these to secure buy-in and support.

Why it matters:

Strategic Influencing enables leaders to achieve their goals by gaining the commitment of others.

Positive behavioural indicators:

- 'Manages relationships with key stakeholder'
- Plans how and when to best get 'buy-in'
- Able to presents 'compelling logical cases' for their arguments, outlining benefits and risks
- Gets buy-in through 'persuasive' logical arguments rather than 'telling'
- Deals constructively with challenge to their proposals
- Monitors their impact on others and adapts their style to the needs of the situation
- Displays tenacity and a 'sense of mission' in influencing others

Negative behavioural indicators:

- Insular and 'siloed' approach to networking
- Relies on a narrow set of influencing skills
- Tries to force decisions through

Building Confidence

Definition:

The ability to inspire and energise others by building 'self belief'. Effective leaders create a climate where 'success is celebrated' and people are 'excited by their work' and motivated to give their all to the organisation.

Why it matters:

Having a sense of one's own self worth, the courage to make tough decisions and the ability to inspire and motivate others is what makes the difference, particularly in difficult times. *Building Confidence* is critical both for building morale within an organisation and maintaining the confidence of team members, clients, suppliers etc.

Positive behavioural indicators:

- Displays self-motivation – 'She as always driving to do better and encouraged me to do the same'
- Has a track record of delivering on their promises – '... had a reputation for delivering'
- Is regarded as 'knowledgeable' in their field
- Contributes confidently within their area of technical expertise
- 'Trusts others to deliver' and demonstrates faith in others' ability to deliver
- Recognises others' success – '... would acknowledge and praise me when I achieved my targets'
- Rewards and celebrates success – 'She email a 'well done' message to the whole department'
- Inspires excitement amongst others about their contribution to the business

Negative behavioural indicators:

- Displays a lack of self confidence and self-belief
- Avoids confronting difficult issues
- 'Quick to criticise' and blame others in the organisation

Communicates with Impact

Definition:

The ability to communicate ones' message with clarity, impact and passion. This means being able to extract the key messages from complex ideas and articulate these simply so they are understood. It is the ability to 'make oneself heard and truly understood' in any situation whether formal or informal.

Why it matters:

Communicating with Impact underpins success in a business where people need to know many things but where time is precious. This competency is essential for keeping team members, clients etc well informed.

Positive behavioural indicators:

- Communicates in a 'clear and well-structured manner'
- Able to 'make themselves understood'
- Focuses on what is important in all communications
- Uses relevant communication channels to articulate their ideas
- Uses techniques to test others' understanding – 'She would question to make sure she understood me'
- Tailors their style to the audience – '... could talk to almost anyone and make them feel good'
- Able to win audiences over to their position
- Makes themselves listened to and understood by audiences within and outside their field of expertise
- Is equally effective in getting themselves heard in both formal and prepared settings as well as informal discussions

Negative behavioural indicators:

- Lacks structure and clarity in their communications
- Is unable to make themselves heard
- Fails to keep others informed

Delivering Through People

Effective leaders within South African organizations appear to recognize the importance of harnessing and nurturing the talents of others within the organisation. In this respect, they are skilled at understanding and 'energising' others and take an interest in developing the capabilities of others within the organisation.

The sub themes within this theme include:

- Energising Others
- Collaborating for Success
- Building Capability

Energising Others

Definition:

The ability to build trust, value openness and understand the perspectives of team members, colleagues, customers and other key stakeholders. Effective leaders give their views openly and honestly and encourage others to do so. They are skilled at eliciting the viewpoint of others and probing to ensure their full understanding. They have the ability to 'see things through the eyes of others' even when this conflicts with their own views. They create a climate where people feel free to speak out knowing that they will be heard.

Why it matters:

Energising Others is the key to building loyalty, trust and commitment amongst team members, colleagues, customers and other key stakeholders in a competitive market place.

Positive behavioural indicators:

- Actively elicits others' views, listens to these views – 'Wanted to know our opinions about how things were'
- Contributes in an open and honest manner
- Demonstrates an understanding of their own motivations, drivers, strengths and shortcomings – 'He acknowledged that he was poor at developing presentations and would ask for my assistance'
- Displays integrity and 'respect for others'
- Expresses own feelings whilst demonstrating concern for others
- Openly values others' contributions and is 'non-judgemental'
- 'Sees issues through the eyes of others' and uses these insights to motivate others
- 'Walks the talk'

Negative behavioural indicators:

- Closes down others through being judgemental, over-talking and being a 'bully'
- Fails to understand self and others and to translate insights into meaningful actions
- Undermines trust by breaching confidence or 'shooting the messenger'

Collaborating for Success

Definition:

The desire and drive to work successfully with others, building effective relationships and leveraging these to the benefit of the organisation. Effective leaders value and utilise the different skills, experience and expertise of their team members and colleagues, knowing that the 'whole is greater than the sum of the parts'.

Why it matters:

Collaborating for Success ensures that interdependence between people and groups is recognised and harnessed. It is important for creating 'consensus, buy-in and ownership' and for preventing the growth of 'silos' and 'turf wars' between different individuals and parts of the organisation.

Positive behavioural indicators:

- 'Cooperates with others'
- 'Responds positively to requests for help'
- 'Good colleague' who has a desire to work successfully with others
- Active contributor and team member who adds value to team outputs
- Establishes shared goals and creates team cohesion
- Facilitates dialogue between team members – '... would encourage informal meetings (drinks) with other teams so that we could understand each other better'
- Leverages team dynamics and 'works with difference'
- Maximises others' contributions by bringing team members into discussions
- Identifies and manages conflict

Negative behavioural indicators:

- Puts own interests and personal agendas before those of the team/organisation
- Competitive
- Manages predominantly through one-to-ones and fails to leverage the power of teams
- Intolerant of difference and pays little attention to team needs or dynamics

Building Capability

Definition:

The focus on developing oneself and others in order to build capability to meet the future needs of the business. Effective leaders create a positive climate for learning and development. They are committed to their own continuous development and they take a personal responsibility for nurturing the talents of others, actively seeking opportunities for individual development and providing feedback, coaching and mentoring.

Why it matters:

By *Building Capability* leaders are able to leverage the potential of people, which in turn ensures the development of skilled people within the organisation.

Positive behavioural indicators:

- Sets a personal example around building own capability
- Is active around own personal and professional development
- Identifies professional skills gaps in others
- Provides constructive feedback on task performance
- Uses relevant structured development opportunities to develop own and others' capability - '... encouraged me to work on different projects to develop my skills'
- Develops others by acting as a coach or mentor

Negative behavioural indicators:

- Creates a blame culture in which mistakes are punished
- Lacks personal drive and insight around self development
- Is defensive towards feedback
- Fails to support others' efforts to develop

5. Research Discussion

The research study sets out to address the challenges associated with leadership theory by: identifying the leadership patterns that emerge from the literature; determining what effective leadership looks like in a South African context and investigating the extent to which the theoretical patterns identified reflect effective leadership practices in South African organisations.

The following section assesses the match between the theoretical patterns and the leadership capabilities identified in the research.

In reviewing the literature and research, a core pattern to emerge relates to the notion that leadership exists to accomplish a functional requirement or purpose. The 'Defining Leadership' section identifies the notion that leadership exists for a purpose i.e. as a tool for achieving desired results, as one of the core components of the phenomenon. The notion of leadership existing for a purpose also emerges strongly in theoretical approaches to leadership. A key pattern to emerge from theories such as the Style Approach, Contingency Theory and Path-Goal Theory suggest that leadership activities are undertaken to support two broad purposes (Northouse, 2001): the accomplishment of specific goals or jobs (task focussed) and the maintenance of motivation, morale and working relationships (maintenance focussed). The notion that leadership exists to accomplish these broad purposes appears to be supported by the findings from the research. The findings make direct reference to 'the hunger and desire of leaders to achieve, to make the organisation/team do better, to embrace necessary change and to set and exceed challenging business targets (Driving Results). The accomplishment of specific goals and targets is captured in the sub theme 'Results Focus'

which refers to a leader's 'passion to deliver outstanding results' and to 'continually improve against targets that will meet and exceed the expectations of customers, the organisation and team members'. Within this sub theme participants cited leadership behaviours such as: 'setting stretch targets to raise the bar on performance', 'remaining focused in their approach to tasks' and 'having high personal standards around delivery' as effective leadership behaviours that focus on the achievement of goals and organisational success. In terms of leadership activities being undertaken to support the maintenance of motivation, morale and working relationships, the findings clearly support this pattern. Within the sub theme 'Building Confidence', effective leaders are described as those that are able to 'create a climate where success is celebrated and people are excited by their work and motivated to give their all to the organisation'. Within this sub theme participants cited the following example behaviours as those that motivate individuals to perform: 'trusts others to deliver'; 'demonstrates faith in others' ability to deliver'; 'recognises others' success'; 'rewards and celebrates success' and 'inspires excitement amongst others about their contribution to the business'. In addition to 'Building Confidence', the ability of the leader to maintain motivation, morale and working relationships emerges in the sub theme 'Energising Others' which refers to the ability of the leader to 'build trust, value openness and understand the perspectives of team members, colleagues, customers and other key stakeholders' with the specific purpose of building loyalty, trust and commitment. Within this sub theme behaviours such as: 'actively elicits others' views', 'listens to these views'; 'displays integrity and respect for others'; 'openly values others' contributions' and is 'non-judgemental'; 'sees issues through the eyes of others and uses these insights to motivate others' and 'walks the talk' are cited as behaviours that will motivate and inspire by creating a climate where people feel free to speak out knowing that they will be heard. 'Collaborating for Success' is a further sub theme that supports the notion that leadership activities are undertaken to support the

maintenance of motivation, morale and working relationships. Within this sub theme the following behaviours were cited as example behaviours of how effective leaders could create consensus and 'buy in' from individuals and groups within the organisation: 'establishes shared goals and creates team cohesion'; 'facilitates dialogue between team members' and 'identifies and manages conflict'. Finally, the maintenance function of leadership is captured within the sub theme 'Building Capability'. In particular, the findings indicate that effective leaders take a 'personal responsibility for nurturing the talents of others and providing feedback, coaching and mentoring' by: 'identifying skills gaps in others'; 'providing feedback on task performance'; 'using relevant structured development opportunities to develop others' capability' and 'develops others by acting as a coach or mentor'.

A further pattern to emerge from the literature review suggests that leaders do not sit in isolation but rather will impact on and be impacted upon by variables such as the socioeconomic and political environment, the nature of the industry, the corporate culture, the life stage of the business, the culture of the team, the nature of the task and follower needs, values, attitudes, commitment and competence (Kets de Vries, 2001). Theories such as the Situational Approach which proposes that different situations will require different kinds of leadership and as such an effective leader should be able to adapt his/her style to the demands of different situations (Northouse, 2001) and Contingency Theory indicate that leadership will impact on and be impacted upon by the work situation, tasks and culture of the organisation (Smith et al, 1988; Northouse, 2001). Similarly, theories such as the Path-Goal theory which emphasises the relationship between the leaders style and the characteristics of his/her followers (Northouse, 2001), the Transformational Approach which stresses that leaders need to aware of the needs and motives of followers (Northouse, 2001) and the Psychodynamic Approach which proposes that leaders will be more effective if they

understand the psychological makeup of their followers (Stech cited in Northouse, 2001), indicate that leadership will impact on and be impacted upon by factors within the external environment i.e. the followers. The findings clearly highlight the impact that the organisation and culture can have on the ability of the leader to be effective. Within the sub theme 'Organisational and Cultural Awareness' direct reference is made to the ability of the leader to 'understand how the organisation works' i.e. being able to identify the key stakeholders, knowing how the culture works, understanding the external forces (the market, political forces and external bodies) affecting the organisation and understanding the dynamics of different cultures, backgrounds and religions of employees within the organisation. In essence, participants suggested that in order to make a significant contribution to the organisation, effective leaders 'need to understand how the different groups, teams, business units and markets operate, so they can navigate them to best effect and maximise the potential of the differences between groups, teams, business units etc'. Although no direct reference is made to the impact of followers, work situations and work tasks on the ability of the leader to be effective within the research findings, the 'Collaborating for Success' theme ('the desire to work successfully with others, building effective relationships and leveraging these to the benefit of the organisation) recognises that interdependence between individuals and groups is important for the achievement of goals, thereby implying that both the leader and the followers have an impact on each other and the ability to achieve organisational/team objectives.

In line with the idea that leadership does not sit in isolation is the pattern that leadership is time specific. In considering the theories that have been developed to explain the nature of leadership, the emergence of new theories (in chronological order) suggests that as organisations grow and reinvent themselves, so the requirements and expectations of leaders

evolve. In response to this new theories emerge to explain and support the new leadership requirements and expectations (Sexton & Smilor, 1996; Naplotano and Henderson, 1998). The emergence of new theories does not necessarily mean that the earlier theories are outdated. Rather, the literature suggests that in some instances leaders may be required to utilise their existing skills and behaviours, they may be required to develop new skills and behaviours or they may be required to utilise a combination of existing and newly acquired leadership styles and behaviours. With regard to this pattern, the time specific nature of leadership was not addressed directly during the interviews. However, the issue was raised as part of the discussion with two of the participants. In particular both of the participants are financial service employees who have recently participated in a large-scale merger. In summary both individuals were employees of a small financial services organisation that was run 'like a small family business'. The leadership stories recalled the 'intimacy' of the relationships between employees, managers and executives. In 2003 the 'small family business' started to merge with a larger financial service organisation. During the interviews both participants made reference to the very different business drivers, organisational culture and leadership styles in operation in the larger organisation and both were of the opinion that the leadership style and behaviours that had worked previously would no longer be effective in the larger organisation. Although brief, the stories did highlight the fact that a change in business direction and culture (either through a merger, acquisition or growth) has the potential to impact on the requirements and expectations of leaders and as such on the skills and behaviours that leaders are required to demonstrate.

A further pattern to emerge from the theory and research considers leadership in relation to the ability of one individual (the leader) to influence others (his/her followers) to accomplish a specific or set of goals (Olmstead, 2000). In the Defining Leadership section, the challenge

of multiple definitions for leadership was overcome by extracting the core components of the phenomenon. One such component makes reference to the fact that to induce employees to carry out activities; leadership involves influencing individuals, both separately and collectively, to act in a desired manner (Olmstead, 2000). The notion of influence emerges strongly in theoretical approaches to leadership. Examples include: the Style Approach which is based on the idea that it is the manner in which task and relationship behaviours are combined to influence others (Northouse, 2001); the Situational Approach which argues that leaders should adapt their style to the demands of different situations in order to be able to influence others (Northouse, 2001); the Contingency Theory approach which emphasises the importance of matching a leaders style with the demands of the situation (Smith et al, 1988); the Path-Goal theory which is concerned with how leaders motivate their followers as a means of influencing productivity and satisfaction (Northouse, 2001); the Transformational Approach which consider influencing from the perspective of transforming and inspiring others to accomplish great things (Northouse, 2001); the Psychodynamic Approach which argues that an understanding of one's own psychological makeup and the psychological makeup of ones' followers will allow the leaders to influence his/her followers more effectively (Northouse, 2001); and the Emotional and Spiritually Intelligent Approaches (Goldman, 1998; Zohar & Marshall, 2000) which argue that an understanding and management of ones own emotions and spirituality can influence others to achieve great things. In considering the findings from the research, 'influencing' has been emerged as a core element with regards to the perceptions of effective leadership within a South African context. Within the 'Leading Others' theme reference is made to the ability of effective leaders to capture the 'hearts and minds' of their teams, colleagues, peers and customers, to recognise the diversity of the people and to employ different strategies to secure their support. Within this theme, 'Strategic Influencing' emerged as a key sub theme i.e. ability to

influence others by planning how best to win support, gain co-operation or overcome objections in order to drive results. During the interviews participants recalled 'stories' of effective leaders who worked on 'developing and managing relationships with decision-makers', 'who took steps to plan how and when to best get buy-in', 'who would use 'persuasive' logical arguments to obtain buy in from stakeholders' and who displayed a 'tenacity and a 'sense of mission' in influencing others'. In addition to this sub theme, 'influencing' emerges in a number of the other sub themes. The sub theme of 'Organisational and Cultural Awareness' refers to the ability of the leader to ability to understand how organisations work i.e. 'to identify the key stakeholders, know how the culture works and understand the dynamics of different cultures, backgrounds and religions of employees within the organisation'. Within this sub theme participants cited behaviours such as 'leverages the dynamics of different cultures to succeed' and 'builds a culture that encourages insight into relationships, culture and diversity to get things done' thereby suggesting that a knowledge and understanding of culture and diversity can be used to influence others in order to achieve organisational objectives. 'Influencing' as a concept also emerges in the sub theme 'Collaborating for Success' i.e. the ability of the leader to 'build effective relationships and leverage these to the benefit of the organisation'. Within this sub theme the following behaviours were identified as positive 'influencing' type behaviours: 'establishes shared goals and creates team cohesion'; 'facilitates dialogue between team members' and 'leverages team dynamics' and 'works with difference'. In summary the findings from the research undertaken appear to support the theoretical notion that a key element of effective leadership is the ability, manner and techniques employed by one individual to influence others to accomplish a specific set of goals.

In line with this notion of influencing, is the idea that it is through the demonstration of leadership skills and behaviours that influence is achieved (Style, Situational, Contingency, Transformational, EQ and SQ approaches). In considering this pattern, the research findings clearly support the idea that it is the demonstration of particular skills and behaviours that will allow effective leaders to influence others to achieve goals by obtaining their commitment. In sharing their stories of effective leadership and through prompting on the part of the researcher, participants were able to identify specific skills and behaviours that resulted in effective leadership (thereby supporting the notion that it is the demonstration of particular skills and behaviours that will allow effective leaders to influence others). In addition to this, understanding leadership as the ability to adapt skills and behaviours accordingly also appears to be supported by the research. Although the findings do not directly address this as a specific capability, within the sub theme 'Flexible Thinking', reference is made to the capacity of effective leaders to 'view a situation, problem or opportunity from multiple perspectives simultaneously' and 'develop alternative solutions'. Examples behaviours that support this include: 'able to view different options or perspectives within a given situation'; 'generating workable alternatives when producing solutions'; 'reviewing their thinking in the light of new and conflicting information'; 'keeping an open mind to others' perspectives' and in ambiguous situations, 'changing their mind when faced with better alternatives'. Within this sub theme, there is an assumption that an effective leader will translate this ability to be flexible in terms of a thinking style into a behaviour i.e. that the ability to change their mind when faced with better alternatives will result in a behavioural change in approach to the situation thereby offering some support to the notion that the ability to influence arises from the ability to understand a situation and adapt accordingly.

With regard to the 'source' of leadership skills and behaviours, the literature review reveals how the understanding of leadership has evolved from being an inherent trait ('property') to being determined something that can be learned ('process') to theories that promote both 'property' and 'process' elements. With regard to this theme, the question of 'leadership as an inherent trait or something that can be learned?' was not addressed as a specific topic during the interviews. However, on a number of occasions, the issue did arise as part of the discussion around the individual's perceptions and experiences of leadership. In summary, the following points were raised as part of the discussion:

- 'It is easier to learn managerial skills than it is to learn leadership skills';
- '90% of being a good manager can be learned. Only 40% of being a good leader is learned; the other 60% is genetic';
- 'I think leadership can be developed. I have seen individual's change dramatically after attending a leadership development programme';
- 'Really good leaders are bright people. Not everyone can be taught to be bright';
- An effective development programme can develop a leader but there needs to be something there to start with'.

Whilst no specific conclusions were reached with regard to this debate i.e. the participants had very different views on whether effective leadership could be learned; what does emerge as a relatively common theme was the relationship that each of the interviewee's had with the leader in question. Those individuals that 'liked' and related well to the leader in question i.e. made reference to their personal relationship with the leader tended to indicate that the leadership qualities possessed were inherent. The participants who made no reference to a

personal relationship with the leader in question tended to believe that leadership could be developed.

The final theme to emerge from the literature relates to the level of self-awareness and insight that a leader has into his/her own styles, strengths, limitations and blind spots. In particular, theories such as the Psychodynamic Approach, Principle Centred Leadership, EQ, SQ and Action Logic stress the importance of understanding one's own emotional and psychological make up, cognitive abilities and the impact on of one's emotions, values and behaviours on others around them (Covey, 1990; Goleman, 1998; Zohar & Marshall, 2000; Northouse, 2001; Rooke & Torbert, 2005) . In considering this theme, the findings suggest that self-awareness and insight can support in building loyalty, trust and commitment amongst team members, colleagues, customers and other key stakeholders. In particular the following 'Energising Others' behaviours were cited as behaviours that could support the achievement of this: 'demonstrating an understanding of their own motivations, drivers, strengths and shortcomings' and 'expressing their own feelings whilst demonstrating concern for others'. In addition, self-awareness and insight emerges in the 'Building Capability' sub theme. Within this sub theme the focus is on 'leaders developing themselves to meet the future needs of the business and being committed to their own continuous development'. With regard to this, participants cited the following behaviours as behaviours that would support this: 'sets a personal example around building own capability' and 'is active around own personal and professional development'.

In reviewing the above, current perceptions, experiences and practices of South African leadership appear (in general) to support the theoretical patterns identified. This suggests that despite the cultural differences, the theoretical patterns that emerge from American and

European leadership literature can be applied and do reflect leadership practices within a South African context. The implication of this is that such theories can be utilised to identify, develop and implement development interventions aimed at maximising leadership capability.

With regards to these findings, it is important to recognise that the sample size, the different sectors and organisations represented in the sample group and the varying leadership expectations of these individuals may limit the extent to which the leadership capabilities identified as part of this study represent a true reflection of South African leadership. All of the participants interviewed were individuals working within large, established, corporate organisations i.e. those employing in excess of 500 employees. Their stories recounted effective leadership within the context of these large organisations. Whilst findings from this study match the patterns to emerge from the leadership literature, a comprehensive list of effective leadership capabilities that provide a more accurate reflection of South African leadership can only be determined through further investigation. In particular, the research would require a wider sample that includes leaders within small to medium size organisations, organisations that are in a 'start up' phase or where the focus is on business development and entrepreneurial enterprises.

6. Concluding Comments

South African organisations operate in a turbulent business environment that is characterised by diversity within the labour force and changing legal and government regulations, in addition to external forces such as globalisation, information technology changes and increased competition. Building the kind of leadership that is vital in today's competitive environment has to be deliberately cultivated to ensure that South African organisations can meet these internal and external challenges. However, adapting leadership theory and research with a view developing and maximising leadership capability is in itself a challenge given that clarity and understanding of leadership is not always available despite the volume of literature that exists. In particular, practitioners within South Africa face the challenge of developing an understanding of leadership that overcomes the challenges associated with leadership literature as well as having to find ways to link the literature (US/European) to South African reality if they are ever going to design and implement practical and relevant leadership development interventions.

The research study addresses these issues by extracting the key patterns to emerge from a review of the literature; exploring practical leadership through an investigation of the perceptions and experiences of employees working within South African organisations and investigating the extent to which the patterns that emerge from leadership theory reflect practical leadership within South Africa (although a key limitation to the study relates to the size of the sample and the organisations represented in terms of offering a true reflection of South African leadership).

A number of key patterns emerge from the literature. In addition a number of key leadership themes emerged from the discussions with the sample group. Themes such as Driving Results, Strategic Thinking, Leading Others and Delivering through People emerged as key capabilities that define effective leadership within a South African context.

In reviewing the findings, the perceptions, experiences and practices of South African leadership appears to support the theoretical patterns identified, thereby suggesting that American and European leadership literature can be applied and does reflect leadership practices within a South African context. The implications of this include: these theories can be utilised to identify, develop and implement development interventions aimed at maximising leadership capability and effective leadership in the US and Europe appears to be the same as effective leadership in South Africa.

In addition, the findings suggest that South African organisations (like their US/European counterparts) have responded to changes in traditional operating models (as a result of growing urbanisation; the explosion in information and communication technologies; the emergence of 'e-commerce' and increasing globalisation and consolidation of businesses) and the subsequent shift in leadership requirements, by producing leaders who are demonstrating the same skills, behaviours and capabilities associated with US/European leadership. The implication of this is that, despite the social, political and economic conditions that marred the South African landscape pre-1994 (the legacy of apartheid and the impact of industrial action, sanctions and international isolation), leadership within South Africa has, over the past 10 years, managed to transcend these environmental factors and evolve in the same manner as leadership in other parts of the world.

7. Appendices

Appendix 1: Managership vs. Leadership

Category	Management	Leadership
Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peacemakers – maintenance work, sustaining the present • Repeats and follows what is desirable and necessary • Administers • Maintains • First order change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pacemakers – fostering change and creating the future • Changes the way people think about what is desirable, possible and necessary • Innovates • Develops • Second order (fundamental) change
People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relies on systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relies on people
Attention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does things right 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the right thing right
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thinks of today 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic thinking – day after tomorrow
Thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on present • Focus on getting things done • Events (reactive) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision of the future and strategy to get there • Systemic structure – patterns underlying behaviour
Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bringing about, implementing • Dressmaker • Pupil • 'You serve me' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influencing, guiding • Designer (vision, social architecture) • Teacher (more insightful views of reality, challenging assumptions) • Steward (attitude of serving others)
Attitude to Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impersonal, if not impassive attitude • Goals arise out of necessity • External locus of control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active attitude to goals • Influencing and changing organisation • Internal locus of control

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responds to change • Expectations ('You owe me') 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise personal choice and responsibility for change and creating the future • Aspirations ('I can create')
Meaning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond to meaning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High degree of personal meaning • Manage and create meaning
Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reliant on planning, budgeting and other tools of management • Instinct for survival dominates need for risk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepared to invest faith in others, excitement, risk opportunity • Faith in key executives judgement • Focus on meaning as the foundation of motivation
Interpersonal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintains low level of emotional involvement, task oriented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to empathise – send and receive feedback
Sense of self	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sees self as conservative regulator of an existing order of affairs with which he/she personally identifies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of self does not depend on membership, work roles or social indicators of identity • Seeks opportunity for change
Motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threat – 'big stick' • Rewards – 'Carrots' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops intrinsic motivation • Creates purpose/hope
Power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Win/lose orientation • Relies on control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expandable – pie orientation • Gives power to get power • Counts on trust

Source: Carlton, 1992:25

Appendix 2 – Sample Population Summary

Facilitated Group Data Gathering Session (Focus Group)

Group 1					
Total Participant Number - 7					
Gender	Ethnicity				
		African	Indian	White	Coloured
	Male	4	3		
	Female				

Group 2					
Total Participant Number - 8					
Gender	Ethnicity				
		African	Indian	White	Coloured
	Male	1	3		1
	Female	2	1		

One to One Interviews

Total Number - 10						
Interviewee	Gender	Ethnicity	Job Title	Age		
				20 – 30yrs	30 – 40 yrs	40+ yrs
1	Female	African	Managing Director			√
2	Female	Indian	Training & Development Manager		√	
3	Female	White	Regional Sales Manager			√
4	Female	White	National Sales Manager			√
5	Female	White	Financial Manager		√	
6	Male	Indian	Deputy Head: Procurement		√	
7	Male	Indian	Financial Manager			√
8	Male	White	IT Technician		√	
9	Male	White	Attorney		√	
10	Male	White	Regional Sales Manager			√

Appendix 3: Facilitated Group Session – Pre Session Brief

Research Topic: South African Leadership – A Study of the perceptions, experiences and practices of Effective Leadership amongst South African Leaders

In advance of our meeting on August 23rd, please consider your understanding and experiences of leadership.

1. What do you think are the key elements of leadership?

-
-
-

2. What attributes and behaviours would an effective leader possess and demonstrate?

Attributes	Behaviours
<ul style="list-style-type: none">••••	<ul style="list-style-type: none">••••

As per our agreement, these questions will be discussed in small groups on the 23rd.

Many thanks for your support with this,

Regards,

Steven Carlin

Appendix 4 – Interview Schedule

1. Recap Research Study purpose and aims
2. Gain understanding of the role that they perform – leadership and managerial elements?
3. ‘In its most basic form, leadership can be described as a process of influencing to achieve a desired result’:
 - Can you think of an individual that you would define as an effective leader?
 - Tell me about them?
 - What were your experiences of them as a leader?
 - What did they do that makes you think of them as an effective leaders?
 - How did they behave?
 - What kinds of practices did they implement (things that they did)?
4. Summarise the key leadership points/themes/behaviours/practices.
5. Probe for further details as required. ‘You mentioned that they... can you tell me a bit more about ‘what it looked like, how it made you feel?’
6. Why do you think it is important for a leader to be...? (Refer to the points provided by the participant)?
7. What do you think the consequences are of a leader **not** being/acting...?
8. Thank the participant for their time.

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