

**LEADERSHIP IN THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN BUSINESS CONTEXT.
TOWARDS AN APPROPRIATE APPROACH.**

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

By

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NOVEMBER 2007

SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS FOR A

MASTERS DEGREE IN SOCIAL SCIENCE

IN THE SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY,

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

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DECLARATION

I, Robert William Graham Goldman, hereby declare that the thesis entitled **Leadership in the Southern African Business Context. Towards an Appropriate Approach. An Exploratory Study** is the result of my own investigation and research and that it has not been submitted in part or in full for any other degree or to any other University.

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ABSTRACT

Enormous challenges face the African continent's quest to fulfil her great potential. The success of the African wealth creation project depends to a great extent on the quality of leadership driving this vital undertaking. Leadership quality depends on its relevance and appropriateness to the context in which it is exercised.

In the light of the global dominance of Western leadership theories, this study set about to explore the question whether Western approaches to organisational leadership are universally applicable or, if not universally, at least so in the Southern African context or, on the other hand, whether there are other approaches unique to Southern Africa, not found in Western approaches.

A literature review of the four 'generations' of leadership theory as well as emerging ideas on the 'character' of leadership and the possible shape of future leadership theories was undertaken.

The study adopted a qualitative research methodological approach. Using the non-probability sampling method, samples of predominately black African leaders and their subordinates working in private sector agricultural and manufacturing companies in Southern Africa were selected. Data was gathered from the leader sample via individual interviews and from the subordinate sample by means of focus group discussions.

The data gathered was analysed using the thematic analysis method. A comparative analysis was undertaken between leader and subordinate samples, where after the research results were compared with the theory framework provided by the Kouzes and Posner and Kets de Vries leadership models, as well as with Western leadership theories. The uniqueness or otherwise of *ubuntu* as representative of emerging African leadership thought was also explored.

The study found that there is not a significant difference between what leaders in the Southern African context are required to be and to practice in order to be effective, both in their own eyes and in the eyes of their subordinates, and those identified by Western leadership theories.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank Professor Rod le Roux for his valuable supervision throughout the course of this project, Richard Devey for his feedback on the Research Design chapter, Rachel Tucker, Jo Goldman and Katie Goldman for transcribing, Mark Tucker and Mark Campbell for reviewing the research results, and all who enthusiastically participated as subjects in the research, without whom its accomplishment would not have been possible.

I also wish to thank my wife Sally for her editing assistance and for bearing more than her fair share of the parental burden to enable me to pursue my dream.

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CHAPTER ONE

CONTEXTUALISING THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In this Chapter the motivation for the research is argued by discussing the contextual challenges and opportunities facing Africa in the quest to build a more prosperous continent, as well as the pivotal role of leadership in achieving this goal. The prevalence of Western leadership theories is discussed as a further reason for the research. The research question is framed and the objectives of the research discussed. Finally, the layout of the dissertation is outlined.

1.2 RESEARCH MOTIVATION

In this section the various facets of Africa's marginalisation are explored. Positive developments and hopeful signs are then highlighted, followed by the role of leadership in transforming this hope for a better Africa into a new reality.

1.2.1 AFRICA, A MARGINALISED CONTINENT

In the global context Africa is a marginalised, and purportedly the world's poorest, continent. On the eve of the 2007 Group of Eight (G8) annual summit in Germany, Kuseni Dlamini of the SA Institute of International Affairs at the University of the Witwatersrand, bluntly stated "Africa stands out as the only continent that seems to keep asking what the rest of the world is doing to help it develop...It is the only continent that is largely spoken of in humanitarian rather than strategic terms. Africans are as much to blame for this as Westerners." (Dlamini, 2007b: 18). Below, various facets of this phenomenon are explored.

Africa suffers from *political marginalisation*. An event early in 2003 illustrates this tellingly. With the United States of America (USA) clearly readying itself to invade Iraq, the leadership of Africa, under the auspices of the African Union (AU), issued an anti-war declaration warning of the grave economic and security consequences of such a move.

A journalist covering this event observed at the time, in a newspaper article titled *Africa remains a blip on the world's radar*, "In an equal world, such a declaration by 53 statesmen, who collectively represent a huge chunk of the Earth's population and geographical space, would have shaken USA President George W Bush's war plans and swayed public opinion in favour of the international lobby against military action." (Munusamy, 2003: 12). In reality, at the time of writing the article, not one nation outside Africa, or the United Nations (UN), had even acknowledged the AU declaration.

Africa experiences *military and civil conflict marginalisation*. Conflict and economic development are, at the least, uncomfortable bed-fellows. Africa's challenge in this regard is well illustrated by the following: more than 60% of UN Security Council deliberations are on Africa, seven of the UN's 17 peacekeeping missions and nearly 90% of its peacekeepers are deployed in Africa. Yet despite this, according to one commentator, "...the major powers consider [Africa] to be a region of low strategic importance" (Adebajo, 2006: 30). The World Bank estimates that armed conflict is costing Africa 2% of its economic growth per annum (<http://www.data.org/issues/data report.html>).

Africa bears the further burden of *health marginalisation*. Health challenges place further obstacles in Africa's way in her quest for economic prosperity. Literally millions, mostly children, die annually of malaria or HIV/AIDS. While life expectancy in the First World is in the eighties and rising, in some African states it is in the thirties and dropping (<http://www.data.org/issues/datareport.html>). Sub-Saharan Africa accounts for almost two thirds of the estimated 40 million people infected with HIV worldwide (<http://www.undp.org>). According to the 2006 UNAids Global Epidemic Update (<http://www.unaids.org/en/HIVdata/epi2006/default.asp>), 37% of new HIV infections globally take place in the Southern African Development Community (SADC), as do 41% of deaths. The region is also home to 41% of all children under the age of 17 orphaned by the epidemic.

However horrific these statistics are, malaria causes more deaths in Africa than HIV/Aids, and a lack of clean water kills five times more children than HIV/Aids does. This lack of access to sanitation and clean water costs sub-Saharan

Africa 5% of its GDP annually. This is more than the region receives in international aid (<http://www.undp.org>).

Africa suffers *human development marginalisation*. The UN Development Programme (UNDP) publishes an annual human development index (HDI). This index calculates a nation's level of human development via the measures of life expectancy, adult literacy and school enrolment and per capita income. The most recent report shows that, of the 31 countries at the bottom of the index, 28 are from south of the Sahara. The bottom 10 countries are all located in sub-Saharan Africa. With regards to the life expectancy measure, Southern Africa accounts for the lowest five. Swaziland has the lowest life expectancy in the world, at 31.3 years. This is followed by Botswana (34.9), then Lesotho (35.2), Zimbabwe (36.6) and Zambia (37.7) (<http://hdr.undp.org/hdr2006/report.cfm>).

Furthermore Africa experiences *trade and investment marginalisation*, with serious implications for wealth creation. While Africa had a 6% share of world trade in 1980, this had dropped to below 2% by 2002. If Africa could regain just 1% additional share of global trade it would earn an extra \$70 billion in exports annually – several times more than its current foreign aid receipts – and this would reduce poverty by 12% (<http://www.oxfam.org.uk>).

With respect to investment, the destination of 77% of global Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in 2002 was high-income countries, while only 2% went to low-income countries, which together constitute 37% of the world's population (Abedian, 2006: 6).

High tariffs and subsidies in developed countries cost poor countries, many of them in Africa, \$100 billion a year in potential trade revenue. According to the World Bank these trade barriers cost developing countries six times more than the amount of aid they receive from these selfsame developed countries. (This aid has in any case fallen by 43% over the past ten years). Research conducted by the UN Conference on Trade and Development paints a similar picture: for each dollar of aid received from developed countries, developing countries lose up to \$14 because of trade barriers on exports of their products to these countries (Robinson, 2002: 53).

With the European Union (EU) and USA governments spending billions of dollars subsidising their uncompetitive farmers (25 times more than they spent on aid to sub-Saharan Africa), they are able to export their surplus product to developing nations at more than a third lower than the cost of production, thus putting local farmers out of business (<http://www.oxfam.org.uk>). Echoing the "Trade not Aid" slogan, Uganda's then Minister of Finance, Gerald Sendawula says "What we want is for the rich countries to let us compete" (quoted in Robinson, 2002: 53).

As to *wealth marginalisation*, Sub-Saharan Africa is one of the most poverty-stricken regions in the world: 70% of its people live on less than \$2 a day. Africa's per capita income is lower today than it was 30 years ago. Two hundred million go hungry every day (www.data.org/issues/data_report.html). While the number of people living on less than \$1 a day declined globally by 25% in the twenty years between 1981 and 2001, the number nearly doubled to 314 million in Sub-Saharan Africa during the same period (MacInnes, 2007: 5).

According to the *World Wealth Report* there are an estimated 8,7 million dollar millionaires globally. Only 1,9% of these are in Africa, with the South Africa accounting for the majority of these (Ryan, 2006: 1). The 500 wealthiest people in the world own assets valued at \$1,54 trillion, which is more than the combined gross domestic product of the African continent (Monbiot, 2003: 17).

The 13th Heritage Foundation-Wall Street Journal index report states that over the past 50 years the material wellbeing of the citizens of Sub-Saharan Africa has regressed, rather than advanced. The region's average GDP per capita is the lowest of anywhere else in the world, and is barely one-tenth of those of Europe and the Americas (SAPA, 2007: 7). Furthermore, according to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), despite healthy economic growth, Africa's unemployment rate is nearly twice that of the rest of the world. It reports that young people are three times more likely to be unemployed than older people and describes this situation as "...an economic and social waste and a socio-political risk." (quoted in MacInnes, 2007: 5).

The 2007 World Bank *Progress and Change in the Africa Action Plan* report on progress towards achieving the poverty millennium development goals (MDG)

by its 2015 target date, paints a more positive, nonetheless mixed picture. It notes that economic growth has been strong over the past few years (2005: 5,5%, 2006: 5,3%); civil wars have decreased from 16 in the late 1990's to five in 2007; major policy reforms helping to underpin improved economic growth have been undertaken over the past 10 years; and the ratio of Africans living in poverty had fallen to 41 per 1000 in 2004 from 47 per 1000 in 1990. On the other hand, progress that has been made is not sufficient to meet the MDG target of eradicating poverty by 2015. It is predicted that 37 per 1000 Africans will still be living in poverty at that stage unless other initiatives to accelerate growth come into play (Hazelhurst, 2007: 4).

The final aspect of marginalisation to be highlighted here is that of *competitiveness marginalisation*. The World Economic Forum publishes an annual global competitiveness report which measures nations across a spectrum of factors which contribute to competitiveness. These include institutional environment, market efficiency, innovation, property rights, public debt, social services and education.

The 2006/07 report makes for salutary reading from an African perspective. Switzerland topped the list. The USA and European countries shared the top ten positions with Singapore and Japan. While SA was Africa's best-placed nation at 45th, the bottom rankings were occupied primarily by sub-Sahara African countries: Angola, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Chad, Ethiopia, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique and Zimbabwe (<http://www.weforum.org/en/initiatives/gcp/Global%20Competitiveness%20Report/index.htm>).

1.2.2 CHANGE IS IN THE AIR

Many countries in Africa are emerging from, inter alia, civil war, socialist governance and accompanying parastatal paralysis and protectionism.

Great effort is being made to enhance democracy, pursue the emancipation of women and build sustainable competitiveness while at the same time confronting the scourges of malaria, HIV/Aids, grinding poverty, drought, creaking infrastructure, corruption and educational/vocational challenges.

As quoted at the beginning of this chapter, while lamenting Africa's underdog status on the international stage, Dlamini expressed the opinion in the same article that "Africa has all the leverage it requires to transform its position in global affairs. It just needs to be deployed appropriately." (Dlamini 2007b: 18).

The primary vehicle for driving this transformation is the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). NEPAD's programmes aim to build sustainable development in Africa and reduce reliance on foreign aid ('trade not aid') through creating conditions of peace and security and building institutions of democracy and good governance.

Its primary objectives are

- to eradicate poverty;
- to place African countries, both individually and collectively, on a path of sustainable development;
- to halt the marginalisation of Africa in the globalisation process and enhance its full integration into the global economy;
- to accelerate the empowerment of women;

its principles include

- building the competitiveness of African countries and the continent;
- forging a new international partnership that changes the unequal relationship between the developing and developed world;

and its priorities include mobilising resources by

- improving Africa's share in global trade;
- attracting foreign direct investment (<http://www.nepad.org>).

The environment in which the NEPAD objectives are to be achieved, is challenging. African countries and businesses operating in Africa have to deal with a continuously changing global environment. At play are power relations between the developed (chiefly the EU, USA and Japan) and the developing world, of which the countries of Africa are a component. This is a dynamic environment in which the developing world has made some hard-won gains via WTO negotiations. An example of this is the new global sugar regime to be implemented in 2009, which will result in large numbers of uncompetitive European farmers leaving the land opening up opportunities for developing

countries' farmers and sugar manufacturers to fill the resultant production shortfall for the European market.

While sounding a warning on the dangers of the next wave of globalisation, such as growing income inequality and severe environmental pressures like global warming, the World Bank's *Global Economic Prospects 2007: Managing the Next Wave of Globalisation* report predicts that global economic growth in the next 25 years will be driven more than ever more by the strong performance of developing countries. It foresees roughly half of the increase in global trade in goods and services over this period coming from developing countries. These countries, which only two decades ago provided just 14% of manufactured imports of rich countries, today supply 40% and by 2030 are likely to supply over 65%. As for benefits to individuals the report indicates that by 2030 1,2 billion people in developing countries, representing 15% of the world population, will belong to the "global middle class", up from the current 400 million. The report does, however, sound a warning that some developing regions, notably Africa, are in danger of missing opportunities for prosperity which globalisation will bring (<http://www.worldbank.org>).

Nevertheless, while Africa is currently on the fringes of global economic activity, there are signs that this will not be the case in the future. For example, Africa accounts for 78% of global platinum production. It has 9% of the world's known oil and gas reserves. In 2005 the USA sourced 25% of its oil from Africa. The next five years will see up to \$70 billion investment in upstream oil and gas facilities in West and North Africa (Mafu, 2006: 4). Within the next five years Africa will be as important a source of energy to the US as the Middle East (Dlamini, 2007b: 18). In 2006 the Spain-based World Tourism Organisation described Africa as the industry's "star performer", recording a growth rate of 10%, over double the world average (Hatton, 2006: 8).

The World Bank produces an annual report which measures the ease of doing business in 175 economies. It measures government reforms which make it easier for businesses to comply with the legal and administrative requirements associated with such issues as business start-up, operation, trade and taxation. According to its *Doing Business 2007* report, in the last year Africa introduced rapid reforms to scrap bottlenecks, red tape and antiquated laws to the extent

that it moved from last to third place in the global reform rankings. Two-thirds of African countries made at least one legislative reform, and Tanzania and Ghana ranked among the world's top ten reformers.

The report ranks South Africa as the top African business destination, coming in at 29th in the world. It ranks among the top 10 economies globally for its protection of investors, which puts it on a par with Norway. (However, compared to Denmark, where it takes only five days to import and export goods, in South Africa it takes 30) (<http://www.worldbank.org>).

Creating jobs in the formal economy is a priority for African countries as a means of addressing many of the challenges discussed above. The progress noted in the 2007 report is most encouraging and sorely needed: Africa is home to the most complex business regulations in the world.

In the opinion of political commentator John Battersby, the global centre of economic gravity is shifting closer to developing nations. While these developing powerhouses such as China, India, Brazil and South Korea are not located in Africa, nevertheless Africa, and in particular South Africa, is being drawn into the growing south-south co-operation. This, according to Battersby, "...is no longer a political slogan – it has become an economic reality" (Battersby, 2006: 10). Africa is now a major trade and investment partner of China and some of the other big-economy developing nations.

Battersby's point is backed up by the *Doing Business 2007* report. Exports from Africa to Asia have tripled over the last five years. Asia is now Africa's third largest trading partner (27%) a close 2% behind the second-placed USA (29%) and only 5% behind the first-placed EU (32%). Chinese foreign direct investment, which grew on average 65,6% between 2000 and 2005 and is expected to reach \$60 billion by 2010, flows mainly to Asian and African countries (<http://www.worldbank.org>).

There is, however, a counter view that Africa could become just a 'province' of China. Africa is well-endowed in most key resources (China's interest) yet has no structures in place to effectively manage these resources and take full competitive advantage of her natural geographic riches (as the Opec nations

have for their oil resources for example). In the view of one analyst this is a scandalous and unacceptable state of affairs "...because the market value of the continent's mineral resources alone can pay all its foreign debts and, on top of that, provide a good education and decent healthcare for most, if not all, Africans." (Dlamini, 2007a: 6).

Thus, while there is much truth in the view of George Soros that "Money always moves from the periphery to the centre. It's not an even playing field" (quoted in Matshikiza, 2002: 26), there is evidence of some movement towards levelling. There is recognition that the growth, prosperity and security of the developed world are inextricably linked to that of the developing world. This new reality has led to reforms in the key international institutions such as the UN, International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

1.2.3 THE CRITICAL ROLE OF LEADERSHIP IN MEETING AFRICA'S CHALLENGES

Effective leadership is a crucial ingredient for Africa's future success. According to Khoza (2006: 119) "...Africa must produce more capable leaders. Without them, the people of the continent will not secure their fair share of opportunities in the 21st century." While former colonial powers and other external factors are often blamed for Africa's woes, closer to the mark is the forthright view that "...in truth it is bad leadership that is chiefly responsible for the poverty, disease and under-development that continue to be the lot of the peoples of this continent." (Mgwaba, 2007: 19).

With the rapidly changing global context Africa finds herself in an environment of growing opportunities, but simultaneously there are increasing challenges. Accelerating changes particularly in the arena of information technology, escalating global competition and local deregulation are some of the more prominent considerations. Africa needs to compete for her share of global trade, investment and wealth creation in order to lift her millions of poor to a reasonable standard of living. In order to do this, numerous sectors of society have a critical role to play, not the least of which is business. It is argued that business, as opposed to other forces such as politics, is emerging as one of the

primary engines for change in Africa (Luiz, cited in Gordon Institute of Business Science Review, 2006b). Khoza (2006: 250) expresses a similar view:

...I have placed business at the centre of the recast African scenario ...because productive enterprises must play a central role in the rejuvenation of African economies ...Of course, business on its own cannot remake shattered societies and a large part of the task of doing so must rest with governments ...However, the input of business is indispensable.

Obviously an either-or paradigm is not helpful: cooperation between the major social stakeholders in the political, legal, civil society and business sectors is vital.

Turning to the business sector specifically, the arena of this research: it is the leaders within this sector who are not the only, but are a vital component in ensuring the successful outcome in dealing with the challenges referred to above. Their ability to provide effective leadership in handling the internal challenges and opportunities, and the pressures consequent to the external challenges and opportunities, is crucial.

Without effective leadership, the chances of success are slim. One of the main differentiating factors between organisational, and by extrapolation national, continental and global success or failure, is the presence of effective leadership (Burnes, 2004) and the expertise with which leadership optimises its human capital resources (Robbins, Odendaal, and Roodt, 2001). According to Kets de Vries, "A company can have all the advantages in the world – strong financial resources, enviable market position, and state-of-the-art technology – but if leadership fails, all these advantages melt away and the organisation – like a driverless car – runs downhill." (2001: 3).

1.3 DOMINANCE OF WESTERN LEADERSHIP THEORIES

Having discussed the motivation for this study, it is apparent that effective leadership is essential for realising Africa's potential. For leadership to be effective it has to be relevant to the context in which it is exercised. Western

leadership approaches are perceived to enjoy global dominance, in particular those based on thinking from the USA and Europe. The apprehension about this is that, whether consciously or unconsciously, leaders not from the Western cultural context may fall under the influence of these approaches in the manner in which they exercise their leadership responsibilities. This is problematic if the dominant Western leadership paradigm is not apposite to the needs of leaders and subordinates elsewhere in the world and, for the purposes of this study, in particular the Southern African region, and those from an African cultural background. If, on the other hand, this paradigm *is* applicable to contexts outside of the West and to the Southern African region specifically, and to those from an African cultural background, then this state of affairs is not as problematic as some fear. This is the issue which is at the heart of the research question.

Concern about the global hegemony of Western leadership approaches is based on findings that, of the more than three thousand studies into leadership which have been conducted over the past eighty years, yielding a small number of leadership theories, almost all of these theories and some 98% of their empirical evidence are North American (House and Aditya, 1997; Swanepoel, Erasmus, van Wyk, and Schenk, 2000). This, according to Maritz (2001), has led to a number of inherent cultural biases. Furthermore they are based primarily on male leadership (Pauchant, 2005).

Jackson (2004: xi) contends that "...the hegemony of Western management ideas is a heavy burden...There is a long way to go to realize the potential of an African renaissance in the area of management."

A number of Western leadership theories reflect an individualistic as opposed to the collectivistic orientation which is more characteristic of African traditions, and may therefore be culture-bound. For example LMX theory is conceived around a dyadic leader-subordinate relationship, while one of the components of transformational leadership theory is the exercise of individualised consideration by the leader to individual followers.

Commentators from the East also allude to the dominance of Western leadership paradigms. They note that this is problematic since Eastern thinking

on leadership is not the same as that of the West. In the view of National University of Singapore Asian scholar Prof. Wang Gungwu

...the prevailing assumption in the West is that all social-science theories – even those drawn entirely from American and European experiences – are universally applicable...In a monocivilisational world dominated by the West, this approach seemed to work. In the multicivilisational world of the future, these assumptions will appear both quaint and irrelevant.” (quoted in Mahbubani, 2006: 63).

Shortly before his appointment as United Nations Secretary-General, then South Korean Foreign Minister Ban Ki-Moon (quoted in Pienaar, 2006: 8) says, in reference to the Eastern as opposed to the Western approach, “Leadership is assessed in a different way”. Positing the view that it is more to do with an inner state of being than outward appearance, he continues “One can look very affable, very gentle, but inside his mind he has a strong conviction... appearance is one thing, his firm beliefs and readiness to make tough decisions is another”. Pienaar states that because of Ban and South Korea’s influence in the North Korea missile crisis, the US is (probably reluctantly) locked into a multilateral solution, “...quite at variance with the gung-ho cowboy style towards Iraq and Iran” (Pienaar, 2006: 8).

In similar vein Africa has not escaped the overwhelming influence of Western leadership thinking.

The consequence is seen by Madi (1995: 15) in these terms: "...current management structures in corporate South Africa...[hold]...the assumption that African cultural values are, by their very nature, incompatible with the Western corporate or business ethos." Khoza (1993) expresses similar sentiments, expressing the view that corporate culture and practice in SA is overwhelmingly Eurocentric.

Furthermore, little research has been undertaken in the African context (Karsten and Illa, 2005). In agreement Khoza (2006: 26) asserts that we as Africans have not disseminated our leadership ideas to the world, let alone assimilated them ourselves with the consequence that "...we have allowed other models of leadership to fill the void in our hearts and minds."

Meyer and Boninelli (2004) note a conspicuous gap in research on South African leadership while Ngambi (2004: 108) laments that previous studies into "... leadership in African countries have emphasised leadership that mostly incorporates Western approaches" and that "Literature on African traditional leadership is sparse."

Propounding a related view Hill (2000: 111 - 112) states "There is currently a paucity of cross-cultural research on leadership, and much of that which has occurred has appeared to take the cross-cultural validity of the existence of the concept for granted and rather test the applicability of Western forms of leadership to "foreign" cultures." She further argues that leadership theory must embrace world-views other than those based in a peculiarly Western cultural and historical context (Hill, 2000).

Ngambi's (2004: 109) opinion is more forcefully put: "It would be absurd to assume that what works in one country and continent would work in another. It is therefore equally absurd to assume that Western or Eurocentric leadership approaches would be applicable and effective in an organisation based in Africa with African employees."

Does Africa have a unique perspective to offer? South African black consciousness thought-leader Steve Biko has argued in the affirmative. While not referring to leadership specifically, in acknowledging the West's contribution to industrial and technological development, he contended that this came at the cost of losing its spiritual dimension. Arguing that this was the gap which Africa was uniquely placed to fill he said "...the special contribution to the world by Africans will be in the field of human relationships...the great gift still has to come from Africa – giving the world a more human face" (quoted in Motanyane, 2006: 15).

On the other hand Rosabeth Moss Kanter contends that leadership practices are constant across both time and culture: "The practice of leadership is sufficiently similar across historical eras and civilisations that lessons are often drawn from such disparate figures as Jesus Christ, Mahatma Gandhi, Attila the Hun, and Niccolo Machiavelli." (Kanter, 1996: 89-90).

John Kotter promotes a similar position, saying that leadership is "...about core behaviour on the job, not surface details and tactics, a core that changes little over time, across different cultures, or in different industries." (Kotter, 1999: 2).

In the light of the above discussion, which perspective is correct? Is there any truth in the words of ancient Africanist observer Pliny the Elder, "Ex Afrika semper aliquid novum!" ("Out of Africa always something new!") when it comes to thinking on leadership, or is the writer of Proverbs closer to the mark with the view that "There is nothing new under the sun" which is not encompassed in Western leadership thinking? This leads to the research question, discussed below.

1.4 THE RESEARCH QUESTION

When reflecting on the contribution of leadership to the wealth creation project in the Southern African context the following research problems, formulated as questions, were grappled with:

Are Western approaches to organisational leadership appropriate to this endeavour, in this context, or not?

Do African leaders and followers find Western leadership approaches, or aspects of them, problematic and ineffectual in building African business competitiveness, or not?

To what extent are the values implicit in Western leadership approaches aligned with those of Southern Africans? Are these approaches likely to bring out the best in Southern African subordinates?

Is there a unique approach to leadership in the African context which is more congruent with the needs of African leaders and subordinates, and experienced by them as more authentic, than Western leadership approaches?

Could African leaders and subordinates, in their views on effective leadership be, in the words of Miles and Huberman (cited in Denscombe, 1998: 26), the "outliers" who challenge mainstream thinking on the subject?

Is Ngambi's (2004: 109) assertion that "Studies on African management indicate that the underlying principles of management in Africa are quite different from those in the West." correct or not?

These research problems led the researcher to focus on the framing of the research question which was explored in this study. The research question, exploratory in form, is this:

Are Western approaches to organisational leadership universally applicable or, if not universally, at least so in the Southern African context or, on the other hand, are there other approaches unique to Southern Africa, not found in Western approaches?

1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

The objectives of the research are to extend existing knowledge and insight with respect to appropriate leadership practices in the Southern African context. The preceding discussion highlighted the paucity of research into leadership in an African context. This research will add to that which does exist.

Whatever conclusion is reached on the research question, the extended knowledge and insight gained from this research will enable the development of practical models of appropriate leadership practices.

Moreover, while the geographical context for this research is Southern Africa, its findings could be of relevance more broadly across Africa; and while it was undertaken within the private sector, its findings could be of relevance to others such as the public sector.

1.6 LAYOUT OF THE DISSERTATION

In Chapter Two a literature review is undertaken in order to explore the dimensions of leadership thinking as articulated in the Western world. The four main 'generations' of leadership are discussed, namely trait, behavioural, contingency and neocharismatic theories. Emerging ideas on the 'character' of leadership, and in particular the concept of *ubuntu*, which provides a useful framework of leadership thought from the African context, are then discussed

followed by possible features of leadership theories likely to evolve in the future.

The theory framework is outlined in Chapter Three. It comprises two leadership models based on Western leadership theory, namely the work of Kouzes and Posner, and Kets de Vries. It is against the backdrop of Western leadership theory generally and these two leadership models specifically that the research results are analysed.

In Chapter Four the qualitative research methodological approach used in the study is discussed, as is the research design in terms of sampling, data gathering and data analysis methods. With respect to the execution of the study the site selection and subjects are described as are the data gathering and data analysis methods which were employed. Finally, the trustworthiness of the research is discussed.

Research results, comprising data gathered from individual interviews and focus group discussions, are reported in Chapter Five. Analysis and discussion of the results is undertaken in Chapter Six in relation to the Kouzes and Posner and Kets de Vries leadership models and Western leadership theories as well as Afrocentric approaches to leadership, with specific reference to the approach of *ubuntu*. A conclusion on the research question is reached.

In Chapter Seven a brief overview and key findings of the study are made, the value of the research is discussed and two recommendations are put forward. Limitations of the research are discussed and suggestions for further research are made.

1.7 SYNTHESIS

In this Chapter the motivation for the research was argued by discussing the contextual challenges and opportunities facing Africa in the quest to build a more prosperous continent, and the pivotal role of leadership in achieving this goal. The prevalence of Western leadership theories was cited as a further reason for the research, resulting in the research question posed. The objectives of the research were discussed and the layout of the dissertation outlined.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Warren Bennis (1989a: 18) observed that “Leaders are people who do the right thing; managers are people who do things right. Both roles are crucial, but they differ profoundly.” He further expressed the opinion that most organisations are under-led and over-managed. Indeed, not all managers are leaders, even though the positions which they occupy expect that of them. By the same token, not all leaders in an organisation occupy management positions.

Much has been written about the differences between leadership and management (Swanepoel *et al.*, 2000). It is not the researcher's intention to discuss these differences in detail here. Suffice to say that both have their place in organisational life (Kets de Vries, 2001). One complements the other. While distinctions have been drawn between leadership and management it should not be assumed that these are mutually exclusive practices exercised by different people (Bass, 1990b; Mintzberg, 2006; Yukl, 1989; Vroom and Yago, 1988 cited in Burnes, 2004). According to Kotter (1999), while management has to do with coping with complexity, bringing order and consistency in place of chaos, leadership has to do with coping with change. House and Aditya (1997: 444) quote Yukl as saying that "...managers are oriented toward stability and leaders are oriented toward innovation; managers get people to do things more efficiently, whereas leaders get people to agree about what things should be done." Yukl (1989: 253) states that "...leaders influence commitment, whereas managers merely carry out position responsibilities and exercise authority." Similarly Senior and Fleming (2006) and Leuchter (quoted in Mollo, Stanz, and Groenewald, 2005) argue that leadership is an influencing process by which leaders persuade rather than coerce subordinates to pursue organisational goals.

The management role is performed through such activities as planning and budgeting, organising and staffing, and controlling and problem solving. In contrast, the leadership function is performed through setting a direction by developing a vision of the future together with change strategies for achieving

the vision, aligning people by communicating the new direction in order to secure their understanding and commitment, and motivating and inspiring them to work towards achieving the vision. Managing is "...controlling people by pushing them in the right direction..." while leading is "...motivating them by satisfying basic human needs..." (Kotter, 1999: 60).

The core functions of managing as discussed above, which can be summarised as planning, organising and controlling, are well defined and require little debate. However the same cannot be said about the other organisational activity referred to as "crucial" by Bennis. There are virtually as many definitions of leadership as there are commentators on the subject. Burns (1978: 3) has gone so far as to say "...leadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth."

The word 'leadership' comes from the old Norse word-root meaning 'to make go'. The Anglo-Saxon word for leader means 'path' or 'road' and the verb means 'to travel'. According to Kets de Vries "...a leader is one who shows fellow-travellers the way by walking ahead (2001: 2). He further notes that leadership can be seen as both a property, meaning a set of characteristics, and a process, whereby leaders act "...to influence members of a group to direct their activities toward a common goal." (2001: 215). Both are evident in the literature review and research results.

We may safely say is that leadership has to do with

- the attributes and activities of 'leaders';
- the attributes and activities of 'subordinates'; and
- the context in which both live out these attributes and activities, and the active interrelationship between these three factors (Jarvis, 2007).

The concept of leadership has been in existence for millennia (Bass, 1990b) and its aspirational qualities for centuries, as articulated by Lao Tsu some 1400 years ago (quoted in Senge, 1990b: 27)

The wicked leader is he who the people despise.

The good leader is he who the people revere.

The great leader is he of whom the people say, "We did it ourselves."

Yet the social scientific study of leadership has been in progress only since the early 1930's (House and Aditya, 1997). Leadership is a complex and dynamic concept. The literature review indicates that when one attempts to gain an in-depth understanding of the nature of leadership, it is a difficult concept to conclusively define. Researchers' understanding of it has evolved and continues to do so over time and, according to Jago (1982), there is at least some empirical support for each perspective.

Although the debates are ongoing, insight into the nature of leadership has nevertheless progressed considerably since Burns' comment of some 30 years ago. The literature shows that over the last 80 years four main 'generations' of theory have developed. The progression of thinking tends to follow a sequential path, with the next generation building on the preceding one, each in turn enriching and adding to the overall work-in-progress. The resulting contributions have been cumulative, previous theories having served an important purpose, seen by D.O. Hebb in this way: "A good theory is one that holds together long enough to get you a better theory." (quoted in House, 1996: 334).

Having said this, however, the danger of attempting to place the theories into neat mutually exclusive boxes should be guarded against because, in the words of van Maurik (2001: 3)

Although it is true that the progression of thinking tends to follow a sequential path, it is quite possible for elements of one generation to crop up much later in the writings of someone who would not normally think of himself or herself as being of that school. Consequently, it is fair to say that each generation has added something to the overall debate on leadership and that debate continues.

In this chapter the four 'generations' of theory are discussed in turn, based on their chronological development. Emerging ideas on the 'character' of leadership, and in particular the concept of *ubuntu*, are then discussed followed by possible features of future leadership theories likely to evolve in order to enable leaders and organisations to cope with an ever-changing environment.

An overview of the theories together with the key theorists associated with each can be found in Table 2.8 at the end of this Chapter.

This is followed by Table 2.9, depicting the key ideas of some of the most prominent contemporary thinkers and teachers on leadership, indicating a high level of correlation between the leadership theories reviewed.

2.2 TRAIT THEORIES

As far back as over two and a half thousand years ago attempts were made to identify leadership traits. For example Sun Tzu identified intelligence, trustworthiness, humanness, courage and sternness as worthy leadership traits (Meyer, 2004a). Likewise the first modern attempts to understand leadership, dating back to the 1930's, took the form of trait theories. Trait theory research emphasised the personal attributes of leaders and attempted, via largely atheoretical methods, to identify a set of traits that would universally differentiate leaders from followers and effective from ineffective leaders. A pioneer in the field was Allport, who identified 19 traits.

However, trait theory presented a number of difficulties. Firstly, two major trait theory literature reviews conducted in the late 1940's by Stogdill and in the late 1950's by Mann concluded that no single trait or group of traits conclusively differentiates leaders from followers (Swanepoel *et al.*, 2000).

Secondly, little consensus was found on what the essential traits for effective leadership were. For example in 1940 Bird (cited in Jarvis, 2007 and Robbins, Odendaal, and Roodt, 2001) identified 79 different traits from a review of twenty studies undertaken up to then, finding only five to be common across four or more studies.

Thirdly, not only the lack of consensus, but the large number of traits identified was also problematic. Swanepoel *et al.*, (2000: 376) sets out a summary of some of the research findings. Fifteen personality traits and eleven ability and intelligence characteristics are identified. These large numbers are unwieldy. It is not clear how one prioritises them. Surely no leader would possess all of them and if not, which would be essential and which could one leave out? The

possession of how many and which ones would make one leader more effective than another?

A fourth problem with this approach was that it made the assumption that the identified traits ensured that the person in possession of them would be an effective leader in any situation, from battlefield to boardroom. Situational variables were not afforded sufficient consideration. It is now common knowledge that someone who is a successful leader in one situation can fail miserably in another.

Fifthly, trait theorists, and later writers, on occasion confused the qualities they were describing. For example the 14 traits identified by Gardner (cited in Doyle and Smith, 2006) included aspects of a person's behaviour, skills, temperament, and intellectual ability in his list of fourteen traits.

Finally, research findings do not clearly separate cause from effect. Using the trait 'assertive' for illustrative purposes, are leaders effective because they are assertive, or do they develop assertiveness as a result of being successful leaders?

However, if the ambition of the theory was restricted to identifying traits that are consistently associated with leadership, results are more impressive. For example a meta-analysis undertaken by Lord, De Vader and Alliger in 1986 identified six traits which, in their view, could be associated with effective leadership. A subsequent study undertaken by Kirkpatrick and Locke in 1991 identified the following:

Table 2.1 Traits found to be consistently associated with leadership

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• drive (ambition, energy, tenacity, initiative)• leadership motivation• honesty and integrity• self-confidence (including emotional stability)• cognitive ability (intelligence)• knowledge of the business |
|---|

Source: Adapted from Robbins, Odendaal, and Roodt, 2001; Senior and Fleming, 2006.

There has been a resurgence of interest in trait theory since the 1970's (House and Aditya, 1997: 411), with research ongoing into the 21st century (Senior and Fleming, 2006: 252-257). An example of this is McClelland's *Achievement Motivation Theory* which, while originally developed in the 1940's, has been empirically validated some five decades later, in the 1990's (House and Aditya, 1997: 413). More recent researchers have explored which combinations of traits might be appropriate for a given situation. Stogdill, subsequent to his earlier critique of trait theory research, updated his review based on studies conducted between 1949 and 1970. He consequently conceded that some traits exhibited by leaders could well be universal (House and Aditya, 1997) and suggested that it appears possible to link clusters of personality traits to success in different situations (Wright, 1996).

Contemporary popular leadership literature reflects this current interest. For example, Covey (1997) maintains that people nowadays wish to follow leaders with integrity, courage and consideration, while Maxwell (1998) contends that consistency and respect are sought after in leaders of today. Cashman (1998) propounds the view that leaders should be guided by openness, trust and compassion. Bennis (1989b) identifies, among others, the traits of empathy and trustworthiness as effective leader traits. The research conducted by Collins and his team into the hallmarks of 'Level 5 Leadership' found humility and single-minded tenacity to be the two characteristics which set excellent leaders apart from their peers (Collins, 2001b).

The interest in traits seen in the Western world is also reflected in South African research endeavours. For example, recent research conducted in a public utility tested 11 traits in a sample of leaders (Lekganyane and Oosthuizen, 2006) while another research project conducted across a number of South African organisations found that subjects viewed integrity, empathy, fairness and compassion among the most valued leadership traits of leaders (de Braine, 2006).

The results of this study, reported in Chapter Five, reveal a similar awareness of the importance of leadership traits. Without being asked to identify traits specifically, the samples of both the individual interviews and the focus group

discussions identified a number of common traits of their own accord which they judged to be important for effective leadership in their environment.

In reviewing the trait literature, House and Aditya (1997: 418) identify three salient points: that there do appear to be a number of traits that differentiate leaders from others; that the more relevant the situation in which the leader functions to that leader's traits, the more enhanced the effect of the traits on the leader's behaviour and effectiveness; and the more latitude the situation permits for the expression of individual character and temperament, the stronger the influence of traits on the leader's behaviour is likely to be.

In conclusion, while the search for alternative theories by which to understand leadership began as early as the 1940's, the concept of traits continues to have a place today in our understanding of leadership.

2.3 BEHAVIOURAL THEORIES

The limitations outlined above led, from the 1940's through to the 1960's, to the development of behavioural theories of leadership. In essence, the direction of research was to identify specific unique behaviour practices or styles, especially in relation to subordinates, which constituted effective leadership. Theorists endeavoured to understand leadership effectiveness by analysing what leaders actually did. The most significant behavioural theories to emerge over this period are discussed below.

The first to delineate characteristic patterns, which were grouped together and labelled as styles of leadership behaviour, was Kurt Lewin. In 1939 he developed the *Three Classic Styles of Leader Behaviour* model, depicted in Table 2.2 below.

Lewin outlined the primary strengths and weaknesses of each style. The primary strength of the Authoritarian style is its emphasis on prompt, orderly and predictable performance, whereas its primary weakness is its tendency to stifle individual initiative. The value of the Democratic style is that it enhances personal commitment through participation, while its drawback is that it is time-consuming. The Laissez-faire style has the advantage of permitting self-

starters to do things as they see fit without leader interference, but its disadvantage is aimless drifting by subordinates in the absence of direction from the leader (Swanepoel *et al.*, 2000).

Table 2.2 Lewin's Three Classical Styles of Leadership

Authoritarian	Democratic	Laissez-faire
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the leader retains all authority and responsibility • the leader assigns people to clearly defined tasks • there is primarily a downward flow of communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the leader delegates a great deal of authority, while retaining ultimate responsibility • work is divided and assigned on the basis of participatory decision making • there is active two-way flow of upward and downward communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the leader denies responsibility and abdicates authority to the group • group members are told to work things out themselves and do the best they can • primarily horizontal communication among peers

Source: Adapted from Swanepoel *et al.*, 2000.

The *Ohio State Leadership Centre Studies*, conducted in the late 1940's, had as their research objectives the identification of leader behaviours which could be related to measures of performance effectiveness. The research results identified two independent dimensions of leader behaviour. These were initiating structure and consideration, which each independent of the other could be low or high in terms of leader practice (Stogdill and Coons, cited in Robbins, Odendaal, and Roodt, 2001), as illustrated in Figure 2.1 below.

The studies suggested that leaders practicing a high level of both these behaviours achieved a higher level of success than those who did not. However, research also pointed to a deficiency: situational factors needed to be taken into account and built into the theory (Schriesheim, Cogliser and Neider, cited in Robbins, Odendaal, and Roodt, 2001).

Figure 2.1 Four leadership styles derived from Ohio State Leadership Centre Studies

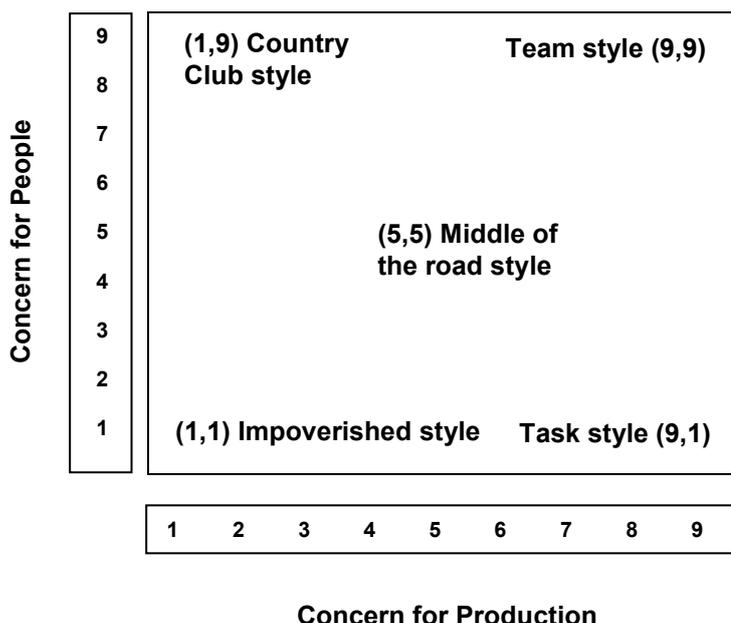
High Consideration	Less emphasis is placed on structuring employee tasks while the leader concentrates on satisfying employee needs and wants	The leader provides a lot of guidance on how tasks can be completed while being highly considerate of employee needs and wants
	The leader fails to provide necessary structure and demonstrates little consideration for employee needs and wants	Primary emphasis is placed on structuring employee tasks while the leader demonstrates little consideration for employee needs and wants
Low	Low	High
	Initiating Structure	

Source: Adapted from Swanepoel *et al.*, 2000.

The *University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research Studies* set out with similar research objectives to the Ohio State studies. Two dimensions of leadership behaviour were identified: employee and production oriented. The conclusion reached by these research studies was that leaders exhibiting strong employee orientated behaviours were more effective in terms of productivity and job satisfaction of their followers (Kahn and Katz, cited in Robbins, Odendaal, and Roodt, 2001).

Blake and Mouton (1982) developed what they initially called the management grid which subsequently became known as *The Leadership Grid*. This essentially depicted the Ohio State and University of Michigan dimensions, using the descriptors 'concern for production' (Ohio's Initiating Structure and Michigan's Production Oriented) and 'concern for people' (Ohio's Consideration and Michigan's Employee Oriented), as illustrated in Figure 2.2 below.

Figure 2.2 Blake and Mouton's Leadership Grid



Source: Adapted from Blake and Mouton, 1982; Boje, 2006a; Senior and Fleming, 2006.

The five different styles as depicted in the Leadership Grid are the result of the combined effect of different levels of 'concern for people' and 'concern for production'. The labels allocated to each style indicate its dominant characteristic. The Task style has echoes of McGregor's Theory X discussed below. The Team style is purported to be the ideal or most effective of the five styles.

While this model is useful in conceptualising various leadership style options there is little empirical evidence to support the notion that the Team style is the most effective in all situations (Burnes, 2004; Robbins, Odendaal, and Roodt, 2001).

Enormous changes in the global environment occurred in the decades following the development of these leadership theories – the collapse of the cold war East-West paradigm together with the movement towards democratic governance, globalisation of trade and communication and the growing hegemony of capitalism. Could the previous behavioural approaches, which focused on only two behaviours, provide an adequate understanding of the requirements for effective leadership in this rapidly evolving context?

The *Scandinavian Studies* sought to determine whether there was not a third leadership dimension which would take into account the dynamic environment which evolved post-1960. Strong evidence was found for a third, separate and independent dimension, which they called 'development orientation' – leadership behaviour characterised by valuing experimentation, seeking new ideas and initiating change. Leaders exhibiting this behaviour were found in the research to generate more satisfied followers and to be seen as more competent by their followers (Ekvall and Arvonen, cited in Robbins, Odendaal, and Roodt, 2001).

The main shortcoming of the behavioural theories is the same as that which beset the trait theories, namely that the researchers failed to obtain consistent results because the impact of the context on the effectiveness of leadership behaviour was not taken into consideration (House and Aditya, 1997). Subsequent researchers, as shall be seen, identified that leadership approaches are heavily influenced by factors external to themselves, in particular the people with whom they are working and the environment within which they are operating.

2.4 CONTINGENCY THEORIES

While trait and behaviour theorists took a 'one best style' approach to leadership, contingency theories sought to identify the key situational variables missing from the aforementioned theories. The premise of these theories is that a number of factors apart from the leader's qualities and behaviours influence organisational performance and therefore appropriate leader behaviour is contingent upon other factors prevailing in the situation.

In the late 1950's Tannenbaum and Schmidt developed a model illustrating an autocratic-democratic continuum of leadership behaviour, where the way in which authority is exercised is the main determinant of leadership style, as illustrated in Figure 2.3 below.

This continuum model reflects Lewin's earlier one. On the one end of the continuum is 'Boss-centred leadership' (Lewin's Authoritarian style) with high use of leader authority and little decision-making freedom for subordinates.

In the 1960's McGregor (1961) developed a *Theory X and Theory Y* formulation. The theory argued that the leader's assumptions about people are powerful determinants of leader behaviour, together with characteristics of the individuals being led, the task at hand, and the organisational environment. These assumptions may fall anywhere along a continuum, the extremes of which are described in Table 2.3 below.

Table 2.3 Mc Gregor's Theory X and Theory Y assumptions

Theory X assumptions	Theory Y assumptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People are inherently lazy and will avoid work if possible • People are extrinsically motivated and value security above any other need • People are incapable of self-discipline, prefer to be controlled by others, avoid responsibility and have little ambition. • Most people have little creative ability to solve organisational problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The expenditure of physical and mental effort in work is as natural as play or rest. • People are intrinsically motivated and seek self-actualisation. • People exert self-control and seek responsibility. • Creativity in solving organisational problems is widely, not narrowly, distributed in the population.

Source: Adapted from McGregor, 1961; Swanepoel *et al.*, 2000.

As with Tannenbaum and Schmidt, the work of Fred Fiedler (1967), who was responsible for the development of a comprehensive Contingency Leadership Model, also built on earlier research. It incorporates trait factors, it contains elements of the style approach of Blake and Mouton and Ohio State's initiating structure versus consideration dimensions. However, his major contribution to leadership thought was to elevate the importance of situational factors to the same level as leader characteristics. He contributed to shifting the emphasis of leadership research from traits and behaviours alone, to both the leader and the context (situational factors of power or influence, nature of the task, and subordinate or group factors) within which the leadership process occurs.

Thus the *Fiedler Contingency Model*, seen in Table 2.4 below, seeks to match leadership style (which is assumed to be fixed) with situation. Each of the factors determining situational favourability is combined into a contingency table.

Table 2.4 Fiedler's Contingency Model

Dimensions:								
Situation Control	High Situation Control			Moderate Situation Control			Low Situation Control	
LMR – Leader-member relations	Good			Good	Poor		Poor	
TS – Task structure	High		Low	Low	High		Low	
PP – Position power	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low
Situations	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII
Predictions	TASK MOTIVATED BEHAVIOUR LEADER IS BEST FIT TO SITUATION I, II & III			RELATIONSHIP MOTIVATED BEHAVIOUR LEADER IS BEST FIT TO SITUATION IV, V & VI			TASK MOTIVATED BEHAVIOUR LEADER IS BEST FIT TO SITUATION VII & VIII	

Source: Adapted from Boje, 2006a; Fiedler, 1967; Robbins, Odendaal, and Roodt, 2001.

Fiedler identified three contingency dimensions which define the key situational variables whose favourableness impacts on leadership performance:

- Leader-member relations: good or poor – when relations are good the group is cohesive and supportive of the leader; when poor the group is divided and unsupportive.
- Task structure: high or low – when high, tasks, goals and procedures are clear, with few pathways to goal achievement, and outcomes are easy to measure; when low, goals, procedures, paths, solutions and outcome criteria are all unclear.
- Position power: high or low – when high, leaders have official power and influence over issues such as recruiting, promoting, rewarding and disciplining subordinates; when low, all influence and power is informal.

Moving from left to right across the table one moves from the most (I) to the least favourable situation (VIII). In situation I there are good leader-member relations, high task structure and high position power. In situation VIII there are poor leader-member relations, low task structure and low position power. These combinations of contingency dimensions lead to situations of high control (situations I, II and III), moderate control (situations IV, V, VI), or low control (situations VII and VIII).

Fiedler sought to identify leaders' preferred style by means of developing a least preferred co-worker (LPC) questionnaire. He postulated that the lower a leader's LPC score, the greater the leader's tendency to be task-oriented, controlling and to operate from a position of cognitive simplicity. On the other hand, the higher a leader's LPC score, the greater the leader's tendency to be relationship-oriented, accommodating and able to differentiate between a subordinate's ability and personality.

He further identified which of the three situations (high, moderate and low situation control) were most conducive for optimum performance by leaders with a particular leadership style. He hypothesised that low LPC leaders are more effective in either highly favourable (I, II and III) or highly unfavourable (VII and VIII) situations due to their simpler cognitive styles. By contrast, high LPC leaders are more effective in moderately favourable (IV, V, and VI) situations due to their being more capable of cognitive complexity.

This theory views leadership style as fixed: either task motivated or relationship motivated. Based on this assumption there are only two options to achieve optimum performance: change the leader to suit the situation, or change the situation/ environment to suit the leader.

Subsequent to the development of this theory, Fiedler and Joe Garcia re-conceptualised the original model into a *Cognitive Resource Theory*, the leader's resources being intelligence, experience and technical expertise, which are related to subordinates' performance. Added to Fiedler's original theory is the role of stress as an unfavourable situation, and how a leader's intelligence and experience influence his or her reaction to stress. Fiedler and Garcia reached a number of conclusions about the relationship between leaders'

intelligence and experience and their leadership effectiveness under low- and high-stress situations (House and Aditya, 1997; Robbins, Odendaal, and Roodt, 2001).

Despite identifying a number of problems, such as the difficulty in practice to accurately assess the level of leader-member relations, major studies have produced significant evidence to support the validity of Fiedler's model. The relatively newer cognitive resource theory is also developing a firm body of research support (Cassar, 1999; House and Aditya, 1997; Robbins, Odendaal, and Roodt, 2001).

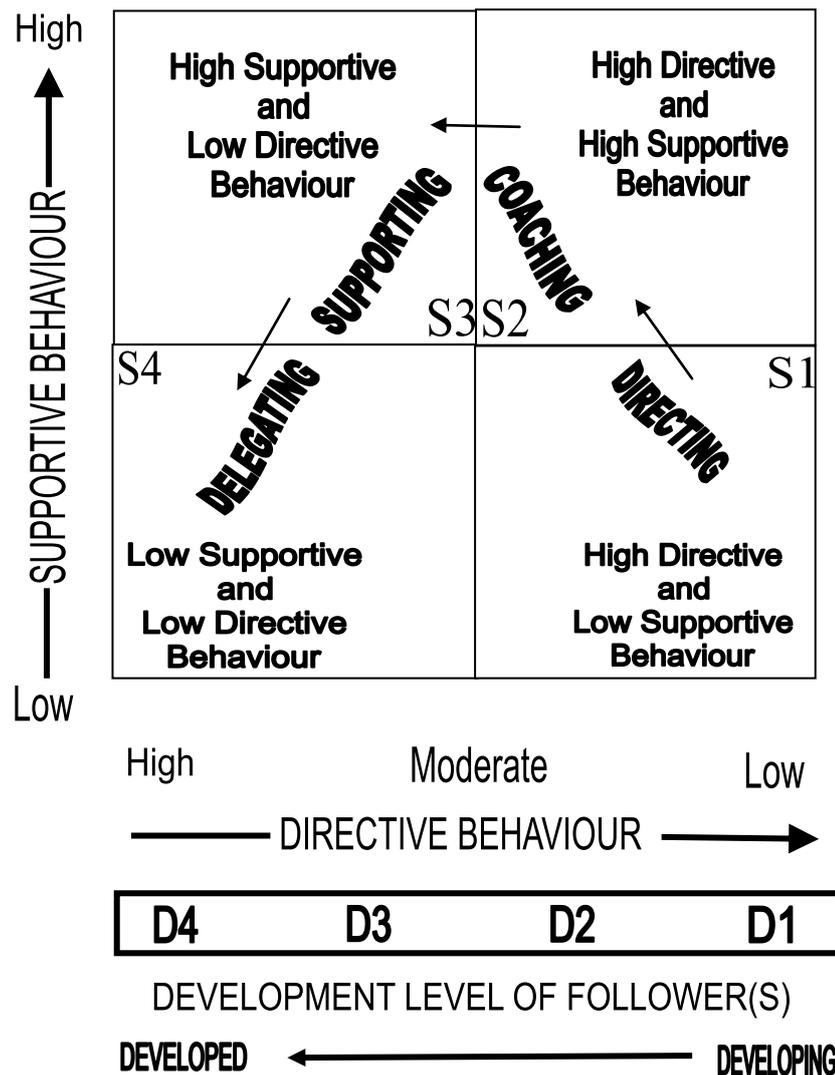
Reddin (1970) developed a *Three-dimensional Management Style Theory*. It employs a similar grid approach to the Blake and Mouton model, using style dimensions of task oriented and relationship oriented. However, it ventures beyond their model in that it takes contingencies into account. Rather than saying that there is one most effective style (Blake and Mouton's 9,9 Team style), it recognises that a number of styles can be effective or ineffective, depending on the situation. The model identifies four effective styles (Executive, Developer, Benevolent-autocrat and Bureaucrat) and four ineffective (Compromiser, Missionary, Autocrat and Deserter) styles.

This model has been criticised for being primarily descriptive and largely untestable due to its lack of specific and definitive style descriptors (Yukl, 1989).

A similar approach is taken by Hersey and Blanchard, who developed a *Situational Leadership Theory* (Hersey and Blanchard, 1993), depicted in Figure 2.4 below.

Similarities between the four quadrants and the four corners of Blake and Mouton's model can be observed. However, in contrast to their leadership grid this theory maintains that leadership style is not fixed and that leaders should exercise a style contingent on the readiness level (ability and willingness) of their follower(s). Leaders can exercise one of four leadership behaviours on a continuum from highly directive to highly laissez-faire (from Directing to Coaching to Supporting to Delegating).

Figure 2.4 Hersey and Blanchard's Situational Leadership Model



Source: Adapted from Hersey and Blanchard, 1993; Senior and Fleming, 2006.

This theory, as with the other contingency theories, recognises an important factor underemphasised by the previous 'generations' of leadership theories: the critical role of subordinates as a factor in the effectiveness of leaders. Vroom illustrates this contingency relationship by arguing that "...leaders can be more [directive] when they have task-relevant knowledge and expertise, and can be more participative when subordinates possess that knowledge and expertise" (quoted in Cassar, 1999: 62).

Unlike the Fiedler Contingency Model and cognitive resource theory however, situational leadership theory does not have a solid body of research support (Graeff, cited in Robbins, Odendaal, and Roodt, 2001).

In his more recent work, Blanchard argues that effective leadership is not so much about selecting an appropriate leadership style as it is about the capacity and process of influencing others to unleash their own power and potential, and that of the organisation – a view more aligned to neocharismatic theories, discussed below, than contingency theories (cited in *Gordon Institute of Business Science Review*, 2006a).

Another contingency theory, developed by Graen, Dansereau, Cashman and Haga, is the *Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory*, originally called the *Vertical Dyad Linkage (VDL) Theory* (Boje, 2006b; Bauer and Green, 1996; Dienesch and Liden, 1986; Robbins, Odendaal, and Roodt, 2001). The focus of research into understanding leadership in terms of this theory is the dyad, rather than the individual on the one hand, or the work group on the other. It maintains that leaders develop a unique vertical 'dyadic' relationship with each member of their team. Each dyad is viewed as a series of social exchanges or transactions through which the dyadic relationship and work roles are negotiated between leader and subordinate. The establishment, over time, of a mutually accepted pattern signals a level of maturity in the relationship.

The theory maintains that, far from treating all followers equally, leaders categorise their subordinates into 'in' and 'out' groups based on perceived levels of competence or similarities to the leader. Those in the 'in' group (where a high quality LMX relationship exists) are afforded more attention, privileges, responsibility, influence and positive tasks than those in the 'out' group (where a low quality LMX relationship exists). The subordinates in the 'in' group in turn have higher levels of satisfaction with their leader as well as with their overall work environment, higher performance ratings and lower turnover intentions than do subordinates in the 'out' group. Leaders employ a more participative style with 'in' group members and a more directive style with 'out' group members.

The distinguishing feature of this theory is that, being a relationship-based approach to understanding leadership, rather than investigating the behaviour or traits of leaders or subordinates, it examines the relationship between leader and subordinate. Unlike some other theories, it acknowledges the importance

of the role of subordinates and emphasises that both leader and subordinate mutually determine the quality of the relationship (Howell and Shamir, 2005).

Attributes of a high-quality LMX relationship include offering decision-making latitude or delegating on the part of the leader, exerting high levels of effort and commitment to work goals on the part of the subordinate, and demonstration of trust, respect and openness by both parties.

The theory argues that the quality of the dyadic relationship is more predictive of the performance of both parties and hence of positive organisational outcomes than the leader's traits or behaviours alone.

There have been a number of criticisms of this theory. One is its exclusive focus on the dyad. It "...de-emphasises the relationship between the leader and his or her followers as a group and does not consider the possibility that a leader will develop a relationship with ...[them]... as a group" (Howell and Shamir, 2005). This could prove to be problematic for leaders with followers from a more collectivist rather than individualist culture.

Furthermore, the application of this theory could be limited if the nature of what constitutes expected ways of relating among members of diverse cultures is not understood (House and Aditya, 1997). For example, expected leader behaviour in treating subordinates fairly has been found to differ between people belonging to a collectivist as opposed to an individualist culture (Erdogan and Liden, 2006). Leader behaviour based on poor insight with respect to this matter will detrimentally affect LMX quality.

Lastly, in the early years of the existence of this theory little consideration was given to the fact that relationships exist within a larger system or context since it was customary for researchers to assume that organisational behaviour was free of contextual effects. Subsequent research has shown that the situational factors in which the dyad operates are as important as the characteristics and behaviours which both dyad members bring to the LMX relationship (House and Aditya, 1997). Factors of work unit size and cohesiveness including relative effort of other team members, organisational climate, and leader power have been shown to have an influence on LMX quality (Coglister and

Schriesheim, 2000; Maslyn and Uhl-Bien, 2001). Certain work environments have been shown to influence higher individual work effort even in the presence of low quality LMX (Kacmar, Zivnuska, and White, 2007).

Nonetheless, research has provided substantive support for the concept of unique exchanges existing between a leader and each subordinate (Dienesch and Liden, 1986), that subordinates' job enrichment relates positively to LMX quality (Lapierre, Hackett, and Tagger, 2006) and that leaders do differentiate between their followers, not randomly but on the basis of the factors discussed above (Robbins, Odendaal, and Roodt, 2001). Research results have indicated support for the dimensions of affect, loyalty, contribution or performance, delegation and professional respect (Bauer and Green, 1996; Liden and Maslyn, 1998).

A further theory, developed by Victor Vroom and Phillip Yetton and later revised by Vroom and Arthur Jago, is the *Decision Process Theory*, also known as the *Leader-Participation Model* (House and Aditya, 1997; Robbins, Odendaal, and Roodt, 2001; Yukl, 1989). This model is based on that developed by Tannenbaum and Schmidt in that it identifies a continuum of leader behaviours. However, it is more than a behavioural model in that it also identifies contingencies which influence leader behaviour. It relates leadership behaviour and participation to decision making, positing that the level of participation is determined by the situation. It has five alternative leadership styles as opposed to Tannenbaum and Schmidt's seven, ranging from the leader making the decision on the one end of the continuum to consulting individually, consulting the group, facilitating and finally delegating on the other. According to Vroom (2000: 84), "Like our predecessors, we are convinced that each of the styles is appropriate to certain kinds of situations, and that an effective leader is one who explicitly tailors his or her style to demands of the immediate problem at hand." Which style is deployed is dependent on eight problem types and twelve contingency variables.

While this theory provides a number of empirically-supported contingency variables (Field and House, cited in Robbins, Odendaal, and Roodt, 2001; Lapierre, Hackett, and Tagger, 2006), it is a very complex model when considering its practical usefulness, and it omits certain situational variables

previously demonstrated to be important by other contingency theories, such as stress and experience (House and Aditya, 1997).

A final contingency theory, which extracts key elements from the Ohio State research, namely the measures of leader initiating structure and consideration, is *Path-Goal Theory*. This theory, depicted in Table 2.5 below was developed by Robert House, based on the work of M.G. Evans (House, 1971; 1996). According to House (1996: 325) "Consistent with the dominant paradigm of the time, Path-Goal Theory is primarily a theory of task and person oriented supervisory behavior."

Table 2.5 Path-Goal Theory Model

LEADERSHIP FACTORS	CONTINGENCY FACTORS	CONTINGENCY FACTORS	SUBORDINATE OUTCOMES	
Leadership Behaviour Options:	Subordinate Attributes:	Work-Setting Attributes:	Motivational Behaviour:	
1. Directive	Internal-external orientation (locus of control)	Task	Performance: expectance that effort leads to performance	
2. Supportive				
3. Participative				Experience
4. Achievement Oriented				Ability
		Formal Authority System	Satisfaction: instrumentality that performance is path to valued rewards	
		Primary Work Group		

Source: Adapted from Boje, 2006a; House, 1996.

This theory views the role of leadership as assisting followers to accomplish their goals by clarifying the path to reaching them, removing obstacles from their path, offering rewards for achieving them and providing direction and support, in line with the organisation's goals. To this end the leader may exhibit one of four behaviours:

- Directive path goal clarifying – giving specific instruction for task accomplishment, establishing ground rules and removing obstacles. This is appropriate when the task is unstructured, complex or novel or when subordinates lack skills.
- Supportive – being friendly and showing concern or empathy. This is appropriate when the task is unambiguous, boring or stressful and increases subordinate satisfaction.
- Participative – sharing information and asking for input from subordinates before making a decision.
- Achievement-orientated - challenging followers with high performance expectations, and expressing belief in their ability to increase their self-confidence and satisfaction.

Unlike Fiedler, the premise of House's theory is that a leader can display all four behaviours as appropriate according to the situation. This theory has similarities with Hersey and Blanchard's Situation Leadership Model in that it assumes leader behaviours are not fixed, and there is a continuum of four such behaviours. However, in terms of this theory, there are two classes of contingency variables which moderate the leader's behaviour. The first is in some ways similar to the situation leadership variable of follower readiness level, that is subordinate characteristics of experience, perceived ability and locus of control. The second has to do with environmental factors outside of the subordinate's control, namely task structure, the formal authority system and the work group. The theory proposes that the leader behaviour chosen must take these two contingency variables into account in order to be effective.

The 1971 version of House's theory is a dyadic theory of the effects of leader behaviour on the individual subordinate while the 1996 version is a theory of work unit leadership, addressing the effects of leaders on work unit or team performance, specifying eight classes of leader behaviour that are theoretically motivational for subordinates. The latter could therefore be more applicable to a diversity of cultures, including those with a more collectivist approach to work organisation (House and Aditya, 1997).

Research evidence lends support to the original as well as the reformulated theory, which both assert that follower performance and satisfaction are

positively influenced by leaders who moderate their behaviour depending on what is present or lacking in either the follower or the work environment (Katz, cited in House, 1996; Woffard and Liska, cited in Robbins, Odendaal, and Roodt, 2001).

Evans (1996) argues that Path-Goal Theory's focus on transactional forms of leadership such as the impact on subordinates' expectancies, exposes a gap in terms of the leader's role in subordinates' need arousal. This was the catalyst leading to the development of, in his opinion, better theories, namely those discussed below.

2.5 NEOCHARISMATIC THEORIES

The advent of neocharismatic theories signalled a significant development beyond leadership paradigms characterised by task and relationship roles and contingency approaches. While it is the latest 'generation' of leadership theories to be discussed, the concept of charisma was introduced into the study of leadership by German sociologist Max Weber as long ago as the 1920's (Bass, 1990b). However, it was only in the late 1970's to 1980's when so-called 'charismatic leadership' became the subject of experimental research. A number of theories were developed based on studies undertaken to understand leadership. These have since been classified under the title neocharismatic theories of leadership (House and Aditya, 1997).

The term 'charismatic' has become easily misunderstood because it has been popularly attached with the meaning of a personality type. According to Bass "...charisma...has become an overworked cliché for strong, attractive, and inspiring personality." (1985: 35).

The central concept of the neocharismatic paradigm is the leader behaviours which account for outstanding leadership (House and Aditya, 1997: 441). As shall be seen in the discussion below, characteristics common across the neocharismatic theories are, firstly, that they endeavour to describe how leaders are able to lead organisations to attain outstanding performance. Secondly, they set out to explain the means by which leaders are able to achieve high levels of subordinate commitment, loyalty and performance.

Thirdly, leaders make use of emotionally engaging or symbolic behaviour such as role modelling and empowering, as well as cognitively oriented behaviour, such as intellectual stimulation. Fourthly, as well as the traditional dependent variables of follower satisfaction and performance of earlier leadership theories, additional leader effects include motive arousal and identification with the leader's vision and cause beyond personal interests (House and Aditya, 1997).

Because neocharismatic theories encompass the idea that subordinates allow their leaders to influence their attitudes, values and assumptions about work (Yukl, 1989), it is essential that leaders be trustworthy and credible (Bass, 1990b; Yukl, 1989). Without being perceived so by their subordinates, their ability to influence is severely curtailed. This in turn has organisational implications. Simons (1999) cites Robinson's findings that subordinates' trust in their leaders directly influenced the level of contribution to their organisations. He argues that the source of leaders' trustworthiness and credibility is the extent of their behavioural integrity, which he defines as "...the perceived degree of congruence between the values expressed by words and those expressed through action. It is the perceived level of match or mismatch between the espoused and the enacted" (Ibid: 90).

A further common feature of neocharismatic leadership theories is that unlike, for example, LMX theory, they consider the possibility that a leader will develop a relationship with his or her subordinates as a team, not only as individuals. The additional implication is that the subordinates will influence their leader as a team, not only as individuals (Howell and Shamir, 2005). This positions neocharismatic leaders well in relating to subordinates from both individualist and collectivist backgrounds, an important factor in an increasingly multicultural environment.

Neocharismatic leadership has been viewed in change management literature as being pertinent to implementing organisational change, both in Western contexts (Eisenbach, Watson, and Pillai, 1999) and in the South African context (Handford and Coetsee, 2003). This is due to the greater demands made on leaders in environments of turbulence, uncertainty and escalating change which, it is argued, these practices equip leaders to more effectively handle than those of earlier theories (House, 1995; Van Maurik, 2001). In today's

environment of constant change, organisations require leaders who are change champions skilled at initiating change, winning subordinates over to the necessity and value of changing, and embedding new systems and processes in order to successfully navigate the changing environment (Kotter, 1995).

There is a large body of empirical evidence supporting this genre of leadership theory (House and Aditya, 1997).

The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) developed by Bass and Alovio (Bass, 1985) has acquired a history of research as the primary quantitative instrument to measure the transformational leadership construct (Lowe and Galen, 1996). However, while it has been used primarily to test transformational leadership theory, it includes three subscales relevant to other neocharismatic theories as well – charisma, individualised consideration and intellectual stimulation – which all have reputable psychometric properties (Alovio and Bass, 2002; House and Aditya, 1997). Although developed in a Western setting, it has been validated in others including, for example, Nigeria (Jamiu, 2005). Others, however, are of the view that an essential requirement is that participants in the research group used for the development of an instrument be representative of the diversity of cultures in which the instrument is to be used. To this end the use of the MLQ has been rejected by some for use in the South African context in favour of a locally developed Leadership Behaviour Inventory (LBI) (Spanenberg and Theron, 2002).

Having discussed neocharismatic theories in general terms three specific theories are now reviewed.

The first is *Charismatic Leadership Theory*, originally developed by Robert House. According to House (1996) one of the legacies of the path-goal theory was his 1976 theory of charismatic leadership. In contrast to earlier theories "...which primarily addressed the effects of leaders on follower cognitions and behaviours, the Charismatic Leadership Theory primarily addresses the effects of leaders on followers' valences, emotions, nonconscious motivation, and self-esteem." (House, 1996: 333). This theory views leadership as being based mainly on subordinates' personal identification with their leader (Pawar and Eastman, 1997) and has identified a number of leader characteristics and

activities which are typical of charismatic leaders such as creating trust and the empowerment of others (Conger, Kanungo, and Associates, 1988; Conger, cited in Bryman and Stephens, 1996). Such leaders have a vision of a better future and the ability to articulate that vision in a way that enables subordinates to understand its importance to them. They are willing to take personal risk and engage in self-sacrifice to achieve the vision. They are able to realistically assess the environmental constraints to achieving the vision. They are perceptive of subordinates' abilities and needs, and exhibit behaviour that is unconventional (Robbins, Odendaal, and Roodt, 2001).

Charismatic leaders influence subordinate behaviour via a process which mirrors the characteristics described above: they articulate an appealing vision; they communicate a high level of performance expectation and express confidence in subordinates' ability to deliver, enhancing subordinates' self-esteem and confidence; they convey, through their words and lived example for subordinates to emulate, a new set of values; they demonstrate their convictions about the vision by making personal sacrifices and engaging in unusual behaviour (Conger and Kanungo, 1998).

The Charismatic Leadership Theory has been subject to a number of criticisms. In contrast to Servant Leadership (Spears, 1995) and Level 5 Leadership (Collins, 2001b) Charismatic Leadership Theory is accused of promoting a 'heroic leadership' stereotype which portrays leaders as being capable of single-handedly determining the fate of organisations (Howell and Shamir, 2005; Mintzberg, 2006). Pawar and Eastman (1997) warn that charismatic leadership can have a number of potentially negative aspects. They cite Conger's view that it can lead to 'groupthink' among subordinates, Sashkin's (1998) concern that it could be dysfunctional, and Bryman and Stephens' (1996) opinion that charismatic leaders could be temperamental and narcissistic. While, according to Kets de Vries, leaders "...need a healthy dose of narcissism in order to survive" (quoted in Coutu, 2004: 1) and narcissistic leaders possess typical charismatic abilities such as being skilful orators and having personal magnetism, cause for serious disquiet is that they are prone to be sensitive to criticism, are poor listeners and are lacking in empathy (Maccoby, 2000). Landrum, Howell, and Paris (2000) warn of the potential 'dark side' to charismatic leaders, revealed in controlling, manipulative and self-

promoting behaviours which can be detrimental to the organisation. To militate against this possibility they advocate a team leadership approach. A similar concept, termed 'distributive' leadership, is espoused by Yukl (cited in Senior and Fleming, 2006).

This theory has nevertheless garnered empirical support via studies conducted under a wide variety of conditions (Yukl, cited in House, 1996) and the practice of charismatic leadership has been shown to augment the impact of transactional leadership (Rowold and Heinritz, 2007).

A further neocharismatic theory is that of *Transformational Leadership*, which simultaneously encompasses and is more broad-ranging than charismatic leadership (House and Aditya, 1997; Yukl, 1989). Seminal in defining this theory was Burns (1978). He advocated the uniqueness of transformational leadership as being that "The transforming leader looks for potential motives in others, seeks to satisfy higher needs, and engages the full person of the follower. The result ...is a relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation that converts followers into leaders..." (Burns, 1978: 4). This is done not only as a means to an end (to achieve the vision), but also as an end in itself (the development of the subordinate).

He characterised transformational leaders as self-actualisers and defines this, their most significant attribute, as "...their capacity to learn from others and the environment – the capacity to be taught... [and]... the ability to lead by being led." (Burns, 1978: 117). These leaders deliberately make choices to learn from and be led by others, including their subordinates, and are thus able to enter into the perspectives of the latter.

Bass (1985, 1990b) further developed this theory, identifying four dimensions of transformational leadership, the latter two being an extension of House's charismatic leadership. These are:

- charisma or idealised influence (provides vision, sense of purpose, instils pride, gains admiration, respect and trust, resulting in subordinates emotionally identifying with their leader);
- inspiration (communicates high expectations, uses symbols, expresses important issues simply);

- intellectual stimulation (promotes intelligent thinking to the point of instilling in subordinates the ability to view challenges in new ways and to question both their own actions as well as their leader's views); and
- individualised consideration (coaches, advises, gives personal attention, provides learning opportunities, and treats each subordinate as an individual; this does not equate to the 'in' versus 'out' group conception of LMX Theory).

Transformational leadership requires subordinates to be empowered with autonomy to act within the purview of the leader's vision rather than is the case in the more leader-dependent scenario of charismatic leadership theory (Lowe and Galen, 1996).

Pawar and Eastman (1997) cite Rouché, Baker and Rose as defining transformational leadership "...in terms of the ability of a leader to influence the values, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours of others by working with and through them in order to accomplish the organisation's mission and purpose" (1997: 83). A further characteristic of this relationship is that leaders and followers raise each other to a higher level of motivation (Bennis and Nanus cited in Pawar and Eastman, 1997).

Leadership is more than a cognitive action. It is the ability to inspire employees and build relationships resulting in an emotional attachment between transformational leaders and their subordinates whereby the latter go beyond the call of duty to achieve the organisation's objectives. This indicates that emotional intelligence is an essential attribute of a transformational leader. While the popular claims of the predictive value of emotional intelligence have been viewed by academic researchers with scepticism, recent studies have linked emotional intelligence to effective leadership and in particular transformational leadership (Herbst, 2007) and have found that facets of emotional intelligence may be useful predictors of transformational leadership behaviours (Barbuto and Burbach, 2006; Herbst, Maree, J.G. and Sibanda, 2006).

One criticism of Transformational Leadership Theory argued by Pawar and Eastman (1997) is that the research has placed more emphasis on the intrapersonal and interpersonal aspects than they have on organisational ones. They contend that this issue is both significant and largely overlooked and have proposed a number of contextual factors for consideration with respect to their interaction with transformational leadership practice. House and Aditya (1997) express similar disquiet while Bryman and Stephens (1996) argue that the theory erroneously regards situational factors as unimportant. As Biggart and Hamilton (1987: 437) have contended, "If ... leadership is embedded in social and cultural beliefs and values, then leadership cannot be fully understood apart from the context in which it exists." Researchers have acknowledged this weakness, conceding that these factors have a significant influence on transformational leadership practices. Bass (1985: 168), for example, notes that there is "...a need to learn the extent to which organisational climate, structure, task, and objectives can give rise to the need for more transformational and more transactional leadership."

Research has nevertheless provided considerable verification for this theory: subordinates have been shown to excel in their performance when intellectually and emotionally stimulated by their leaders (Alovio and Bass, 2002). The notion that the transformational leader's behaviours influence subordinates to exert extraordinary effort and perform beyond the call of duty, particularly by strengthening their perceptions of fairness and trust in the leader, has been validated (Engelbrecht and Chamberlain, 2005). Research results have to an extent demonstrated that transformational leaders assist their subordinates to experience purpose and meaning in their work (Schlechter and Engelbrecht, 2006) and to be less cynical about organisational change (Bommer, Rich, and Rubin, 2005). The more subordinates perceived their leader to be exhibiting transformational behaviours, the greater they reported exerting extra effort, expressing satisfaction with their leader, and believed their leader to be more effective (Bass, 1990a; Robbins, Odendaal, and Roodt, 2001; Spinelli, 2006). Transformational leadership has been shown to be positively related to subordinate job satisfaction and to impact on subordinate performance through the perceived climate which leaders created for goal clarity and their support for creative thinking (Nemanich and Keller, 2007). A meta-analysis of 75 studies found a positive relationship between transformational leadership and work unit

effectiveness across different contexts and at both lower and higher organisational levels (Lowe and Galen, 1996).

The literature contrasts transactional with transformational leadership, constructs originally propounded by Burns (1978), as being complementary rather than polar, constituting a continuum with one at each end. The former is characterised by an exchange process in which leaders provide material rewards in exchange for acceptable effort and performance delivery by subordinates. On the other hand, transformational leaders influence their subordinates to identify with the leader's vision and commit themselves to the greater cause of the team or organisation by bonding individual and collective interests rather than relying on a simple exchange relationship (Bass, 1985; Pawar and Eastman, 1997). It signals a shift from a mechanistic to a relational understanding of leadership (April, Macdonald, and Vriesendorp, 2000). The distinguishing features of transformational as opposed to transactional leadership can be seen in Table 2.6 below.

Transformational leadership is viewed as more effective than transactional leadership because "Managers need to do more than focus on the exchange of material, social, and personal benefits for services satisfactorily rendered." (Bass, 1990a: 25). Transformational leadership has been shown to augment the impact of transactional leadership on subjective performance and to have an impact on profit over and above transactional leadership (Rowold and Heinitz, 2007). Research conducted in South Africa has shown transformational practices to be superior to transactional approaches on a number of effectiveness criteria (Robbins, Odendaal, and Roodt, 2001). The changing work environment requires leaders to go beyond transactional practices only and embrace transformational ones as well (Alovio, Bass, and Jung, 1999).

However, an either-or paradigm is cautioned against. A study conducted in a Japanese-owned and a US-owned automobile plant where a combination of transactional and transformational leadership practices were institutionalised in daily practice in the former, demonstrated that subordinates in the Japanese-owned plant had a significantly higher level of commitment, sense of being valued, and job satisfaction than their counterparts in the US-owned plant

where these practices were not present to the same extent (Tang, Kim, and O'Donald, 2000).

Table 2.6 Comparison between transactional and transformational leadership

Transactional Leadership	Transformational Leadership
<p>Transactional leaders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish goals and objectives. • Design workflow and delegate tasks. • Search for deviations from standards and take corrective action (management by exception). • Recognise what subordinates want to get from work and endeavour to deliver it if their performance merits it. • Exchange rewards and promises for subordinates' efforts (contingent reward). • Are responsive to subordinates' immediate self interests if they can be met by getting work accomplished. 	<p>Transformational leaders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are visionary, raising subordinates' level of awareness about the significance and value of designated outcomes, and ways of reaching them. • Are change agents. • Are inspirational, communicating high performance expectations, using symbols to focus efforts. • Gain respect and trust, instil pride. • Are intellectually stimulating, promoting learning and problem solving, viewing mistakes as learning opportunities. • Give personal attention, treat each subordinate individually (individualised consideration). • Enable subordinates to transcend their self interest for the sake of the team, organisation or society. • Influence subordinates to expand their need levels (refer Maslow). • Are able to handle complexity, uncertainty and ambiguity.

Source: Adapted from April, Macdonald, and Vriesendorp, 2000; Bass, 1985 and 1990a; Swanepoel *et al.*, 2000; Wright, 1996).

A cross-cultural study conducted on subordinates from China, India, Kenya and the USA found that some reacted more positively under conditions of transformational leadership while others did so when their leader displayed more transactional leadership practices. Both were found to be effective depending on individual differences among subordinates (Walumbwa, Lawler, and Avolio, 2007).

Other empirical studies have found that both transactional and transformational leadership practices have a significantly positive effect on organisational identification by subordinates (Epitropaki and Martin, 2005) demonstrating a positive correlation between ratings of these two approaches, thus indicating that effective leaders display both transactional and transformational leadership practices (Alovio, Bass, and Jung, 1999; Bryman and Stephens, 1996). As an illustration of this, Bass notes that the contingent reward element of the transactional leader-subordinate relationship can be reasonably effective if the reward is valued by the subordinate (Bass, 1990a). However, to ensure that this is the case, the leader would need to exercise the transformational leadership skill of individualised consideration.

Hence transformational leadership is not an alternative to transactional leadership but rather builds on it, producing levels of follower performance beyond those achieved by transactional leadership approaches alone (Bass, 1985; Doyle and Smith, 2006). It has been argued that not only is transformational leadership complementary to transactional leadership, but the former is unlikely to be effective in the total absence of the latter (Lowe and Galen, 1996; Spanenberg and Theron, 2002).

The final neocharismatic theory to be reviewed is *Visionary Leadership Theory* (Bennis and Nanus, 1985). While the concept of vision appears in charismatic leadership theory, visionary leadership goes beyond charisma. Visionary leadership is the ability to create and articulate an inspiring picture of an attractive alternative future which offers improvements on the present both for the organisation and the subordinates and which is challenging yet attainable (Sashkin cited in Robbins, Odendaal, and Roodt, 2001).

Effective visionary leaders exhibit three skills: the ability to explain the vision to others in terms of its aims and required action; the ability to express the vision not only verbally but through behaviour which reinforces the vision by living it out; and the ability to make it relevant to the full range of contexts in which subordinates find themselves in the organisation, such as level or department.

Research has demonstrated that visionary leadership practice is positively related to employees' affective commitment to the organisation (Dvir, Kass, and Shamir, 2004).

The three neocharismatic theories discussed above all share in varying degrees the common components of inspirational, intellectual stimulation and individualised consideration (Alovio, Bass, and Jung, 1999). Commonalities between them are well illustrated by comparing the different scales developed to measure the behavioural attributes seen to be relevant for these theories, as seen in Table 2.7 below.

Table 2.7 Comparison of behaviour attributes of various neocharismatic leadership scales

Scale Author	Conger-Kanungo	Bass	House-Shamir	Sashkin
Stage 1: Evaluation of Status Quo				
Environmental sensitivity to resources and constraints	•			•
Concern for follower needs	•	•		•
Stage 2: Formulation and Articulation of Goals				
Vision:				
Formulation of goals	•	•	•	•
Setting challenging expectations	•		•	
Articulation:				
Inspirational	•	•		
Frame alignment	•		•	
Intellectually stimulating	•	•	•	
Stage 3: Means to Achieve Goals				
Empowering:				
Showing confidence in followers	•	•	•	•
Stetting personal examples (role modelling)	•	•	•	•
Displaying competence (role modelling)	•		•	•
Showing self-confidence (role modelling)		•	•	•
Taking risks (establishing trust)	•		•	•
Showing selfless effort (role modelling)	•		•	•
Unconventional tactics to transcend existing order	•		•	•

Source: Adapted from Spanenberg and Theron, 2002.

In summary, neocharismatic theories

"...share the common perspective that by articulating a vision, fostering the acceptance of group goals, and providing individualised support, effective leaders change the basic values, beliefs, and attitudes of followers so that they are willing to perform beyond the minimum levels specified by the organisation" (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, and Bommer (1996), cited in Eisenbach, Watson, and Pillai, 1999, p. 82).

2.6 EMERGING IDEAS ON THE 'CHARACTER' OF LEADERSHIP

The theories reviewed above are predominantly behaviourally or outwardly focussed on what leaders do. Little mention is made of the importance of what leaders are – the character of leadership – integrity, courage, self-awareness and so on. Covey's (1990) principle-centred leadership refers to these as 'beneath the surface' matters such as values, beliefs, morality, ethics, authenticity and character. The quality of these is the foundation upon which the quality of leaders' 'above the surface' practices and behaviours are built.

Such notions are also found in the 'servant leader' concept of Greenleaf (Spears, 1995), the construct of emotional intelligence or EQ (Goleman, 1995) and Palmer's (1990) ideas of the 'inner journey' and 'spirituality of leadership'. The Collins (2001b) research into 'Level 5 Leaders' found such characteristics as humility and spirituality present in these exceptional leaders. Zohar and Marshall (2004) discuss the concept of spiritual intelligence or SQ as having to do with harmony between one's internal and external life dimensions. A similar concept is articulated by Stark (2004) who argues for an alignment between one's work purpose and one's life purpose, resulting in a strong sense of coherence. Peterson and Seligman's classification of virtues and character strengths and Licona's components of good character (both cited in de Braine, 2006) identify a wide range of character components pertinent to effective leadership.

Ubuntu, which provides a useful framework of leadership thought from the African context, also has a strong emphasis on the character of leadership. The meaning of *Ubuntu* is captured in the slogan 'umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu',

meaning 'I am a person through other human beings' (Broodryk 2005; Khoza, 2006). Literally translated it means 'I am because we are.' It is a humanistic philosophy and an expression of collective personhood (Swanepoel *et al.*, 2000) whose key values are humanness, caring, sharing, communalism, respect and compassion (Broodryk, 2005; Khoza, 2006). It is "Humaneness or being human in relation to other human beings" (Wolmarans, 2004: 7). In the words of Khoza (2006: 254) "*Ubuntu*, as a value system, accepts that people are different but that they share a common humanity irrespective of race, gender, ethnic background, religion and history. *Ubuntu* offers a pathway towards mutual understanding based on this shared humanity."

Of the four 'generations' of leadership theory reviewed *ubuntu* fits most comfortably with the neocharismatic theories. Avolio (1995) contends that there is close alignment between *ubuntu* and transformational leadership. It is now discussed in some detail due to its relevance to this study.

The concept of *ubuntu* (Zulu), *umunthu* (Chichewa), *unhu* (Shona) or *utu* (KiSwahili), a deep-rooted aspect of African culture, has large currency in literature on African approaches to leadership (for example Broodryk, 2005; Christie, Lessem and Mbigi, 1993; Khoza, 2006, and Mbigi and Maree, 1995).

Characteristics of *ubuntu* include caring for others and treating them with dignity and respect, being gentle, considerate and sensitive to others' needs. It is about morality, integrity, humanness, kindness, compassion, and empathy. It arises in relationship and through the interaction of people. It is a belief that the group is as important as the individual, whose most effective behaviour is with others in a group (Boon, 1996). Khoza (1993; 2006) however points out that while *ubuntu* is opposed to individualism and insensitive competitiveness it does not support group identity to the point of depersonalising the individual. While affirming the importance of the collective, it simultaneously accords respect to the individual.

In the workplace specifically *ubuntu* connotes open communication, working together as a team, sharing credit for achievement with the team, working with others for the common good rather than for one's own selfish objectives, and reciprocal moral obligations. *Ubuntu* views the work environment as providing

opportunities for personal growth and involvement, where one is committed and involved in innovating and changing systems or processes which hamper harmonious work practice (Khoza, 1993; Wolmarans, 2004).

Turning to leadership in particular, according to Broodryk (2005) from an *ubuntu* perspective the leader's role includes

- Facilitating vision development
- Being kind and approachable
- Having insight and seeing actions in perspective
- Practicing empathy
- Being able to win trust and respect
- Trusting subordinates
- Being sensitive to intercultural values
- Being involved as a member of the team
- Remaining calm despite provocation
- Allowing for mistakes to be learning opportunities
- Being able to communicate accurately and listen actively
- Giving praise where it is due

Khoza (2006) posits the view that *ubuntu* leadership is about serving rather than dictating. It makes no distinction between personal success and service to one's fellows. It builds trust and inspires followers. It is about respecting people's human dignity and understanding that people develop when their worth is recognised. It encourages the full development of each individual's potential and skills, viewing these as assets to the community. Its defining features are probity, humility, integrity, compassion, humanity, competence, tenacity and efficacy. It does not shy away from difficult or unpopular decisions and it practices introspection and self-renewal. While it is practical and compassionate it is in equal measure also visionary.

2.7 THE FUTURE

What of the future landscape of leadership theory? Whilst leadership has enduring features, changes are to be expected as circumstances alter. Theory is likely to develop as theorists engage in dynamic interaction with a changing environment.

April, Macdonald, and Vriesendorp (2000: 17) are of the view that, as the twenty-first century unfolds, "...paradox and ambiguity are ever-present realities that will define the leadership process..." They assert that, in the context of these realities, important features of leadership in the future will be followership, openness and authenticity, passion, willingness to live and work with complexity and ambiguity, vision and values, storytelling, and relationships (April, Macdonald, and Vriesendorp, 2000). These are not entirely new conceptions, but will enjoy stronger emphasis in the future.

In contemplating the future setting of leadership Kouzes and Posner (2001) also identify the increased importance of relationships as being essential for leading effectively. Despite impressive developments in technology with doubtless more to come, face-to-face relationship-building, particularly with subordinates, will be essential. In order to enlist others behind a common cause leaders will need to take time to build good relationships. At the centre is trust, which is created through the practice of mutual respect and caring.

In contrast to the above external, visible practice they argue that effective leadership will also require growing self-awareness and self-knowledge of one's strengths and weaknesses, values and priorities, what one does and does not want to do, what is important, what one cares about, in other words finding one's own, authentic voice.

Effectiveness in all the above is dependent on leaders understanding that a lifelong learning journey is an essential requirement – a willingness to move into unfamiliar territory, to embrace new experiences, to discover new possibilities in self, others and the world.

Together with April, Macdonald, and Vriesendorp and Kouzes and Posner, Herbst (2007) argues that in order to ensure the long-term success of their organisations, leaders will require the capacity to build relationships. In addition, collaborative and effective change leadership skills will be required.

According to Taylor (2004: 163) the increasingly complex environment will mean that the traditional mechanistic design and functioning of organisations will become redundant. Rather, leaders will be required to have a deep

understanding of systems thinking, organisational learning and complexity theory which "...offer an alternative, viable paradigm upon which organisational practices could be built."

Meyer (2004b) highlights the increasingly complex world with which leaders are faced. Boundaries are being destroyed as financial and geopolitical systems become globally integrated. Leaders will require, as never before, the ability to navigate their organisations through issues of globalisation, hyper competition, technology, governance, sustainability, transformation, organisational design, workforce demographics and talent management, all in an environment of continuous change and uncertainty.

The future will require a more responsible leadership whose agenda will include ecological, social and economic sustainability, harnessing the planet's natural resources together with global technological and financial expertise to reduce the poverty gap and associated diseases of the poor, is the view propounded by Hardman (2004).

In light of the global leadership challenges cited by Hardman above, value could well be gained by theorists engaging in more serious dialogue with Afrocentric thinking about leadership, which has an innate concern for these challenges and possibly a gentler and more holistic approach to leadership than do most Western theories. This would also be an avenue for the first item on House and Aditya's (1997) research agenda. They suggest that future research could profitably investigate cross cultural leadership, political leadership and the delegated and peer elements of distributed leadership.

A common weakness in all the theories reviewed is their neglect of the impact of environmental and organisational factors on leadership practice (Bass, 1985; House and Aditya, 1997; Pawar and Eastman, 1997). While these factors have been addressed by some theories, they have not been accorded the same level of investigation and prominence as have leader practices and the interface between leaders and subordinates. According to House and Aditya (1997: 446) "Organizational variables such as size, organizational environment, and type of strategy, technology, and organizational form are all likely to impose different demands on leaders and, thus, require specific leader behaviours." These

areas, which have been highlighted together with others in the discussion above, provide scope for further investigation.

Will there be new leadership theories to assist leaders to navigate a future which is different from the past and the present? If so, as has been the case with their predecessors, theorists will build on those that have gone before and elements of the matters discussed above are likely to be discerned therein.

2.8 SYNTHESIS

In this Chapter the four main schools of leadership theory, namely trait, behavioural, contingency and neocharismatic have been reviewed and their strengths and weaknesses noted. It was observed that while each served as a platform for the succeeding one to build upon, elements of what went before were carried forward in what followed, with a resulting cumulative effect. Emerging ideas on the 'character' of leadership, and in particular the concept of *ubuntu*, were discussed. Finally, possible features of future leadership theories likely to evolve in order to enable leaders and organisations to cope with an ever-changing environment were discussed.

Table 2.8 Progressive generations of leadership theories

ERA	THEORY	THEORISTS
1930's to 1940's	TRAIT THEORIES	F.H. Allport, C.Bird, R.G. Lord, C.L. De Vader & G.M. Alliger J. Gardner, C.A. Gibb, W.O. Jenkins S.A. Kirkpatrick & E.A. Lock R.D. Mann, R.M. Stogdill & D.C. McClelland
1940's to mid-1970's	BEHAVIOURAL THEORIES	<u>Three Classic Styles of Leader Behaviour Model</u> K. Lewin <u>Leadership Grid</u> R.R. Blake & J.S. Mouton <u>Ohio State Studies</u> R.M. Stogdill & A.E. Coons <u>Michigan Leadership Studies</u> R. Kahn & R. Katz R. Likert, F.C. Mann <u>Scandinavian Studies</u> G. Ekvall & J. Arvonen
mid-1970's to 1980's	CONTINGENCY THEORIES	<u>Theory X and Theory Y</u> D. McGregor <u>Continuum Model</u> R. Tannenbaum & W.H. Schmidt <u>Situation Leadership</u> P. Hersey & K.H. Blanchard <u>3D Management Style Theory</u> W.J. Reddin <u>Contingency Theory (LPC)</u> F.E. Fiedler <u>Cognitive Resource Theory</u> F. Fiedler & J. Garcia <u>LMX Theory</u> G.B. Graen, J. Cashman, W.J. Haga, F. Danserau & M. Uhl-Bien Dienesch & Liden <u>Decision Process Theory or Leader-Participation Model</u> V.H. Vroom, P.W. Yetton & A.G. Jago <u>Path-Goal Theory</u> R.J. House, G. Evans & T.R. Mitchell
1980's to 1990's	NEOCHARISMATIC THEORIES	<u>Charismatic Theory</u> J.A. Conger, R.N. Canungo & R.J. House <u>Transformational Theory</u> J. M. Burns, B.M. Bass & B.J. Alovio <u>Visionary Theory</u> M. Sashkin, W. Bennis & B. Nanus

Source: Adapted from House and Aditya, 1997; Robbins, Odendaal, and Roodt, 2001; Senior and Fleming, 2006; Swanepoel *et al.*, 2000.

Table 2.9 Location of contemporary thinkers within leadership theories framework

	Trait theories	Behavioural theories	Contingency theories	Neocharismatic theories
Edgar Schein (1996)		Change agent	Institutionalise systems, processes and culture	Animator – breathe life Transfer vision and values to mental models of subordinates Role model
Warren Bennis (1989, 1998)	Deep self-knowledge Integrity – moral and intellectual honesty Dedication – passionate belief and acting on it Magnanimity – a healthy yet humble ego	Initiator of change	Empower subordinates: - feel contribution is meaningful and they can make a difference - ongoing learning - sense of being part of a community - work is challenging and stimulating	Have passion, a vision and direction for the organisation Simply but compellingly communicate the vision so that subordinates align themselves to it Generate trust by living the vision Seek to learn new things and hear new ideas
John Kotter (1999)	Integrity and trustworthiness	Produce change and set direction for change Align subordinates to	Motivate subordinates: - make connection between vision and their interests	Create vision Be a role model

	Trait theories	Behavioural theories	Contingency theories	Neocharismatic theories
		<p>direction</p> <p>Recognise and reward success</p> <p>Enhance subordinates' self-esteem</p>	<p>- impart sense of control and influence by involving them in turning vision into reality</p> <p>- support them via coaching and feedback</p>	<p>Consistency between words and deeds</p> <p>Facilitate subordinates' professional growth</p>
Peter Senge (1990a, 2000)			<p>Design policies and strategies</p> <p>Organisation seen as a system whose component parts are connected both internally and to external environment</p> <p>Teaches and mentors subordinates</p>	<p>Develop purpose, shared vision and values</p> <p>Leader is steward (rather than possessor) of the vision, which is greater than both leader and led</p> <p>Role model of the vision</p>
Jim Collins (2001a)	<p>Humility/modesty – ego needs channelled away from self to task of building the organisation</p> <p>Unwavering resolve and determination</p>	<p>Set high performance standards</p> <p>Take responsibility for poor results; apportion responsibility to subordinates and others for successful results</p>		<p>Create a compelling vision (but don't rely on charisma)</p>

	Trait theories	Behavioural theories	Contingency theories	Neocharismatic theories
Robert Greenleaf (in Spears, 1995)	Humility/servant spirit Empathy and care	Strong focus on relationship with subordinates and building community	Share power and decision making/ build autonomy Teamwork	Committed to growth of subordinates Serve and inspire others through personal example
Stephen Covey (1996)	Be a model of principle-centred leadership (e.g. equity, integrity)		Align structures, systems, processes and people to meet the vision and mission Empower subordinates to achieve the vision and mission	Pathfind – create a compelling vision, a transcendent purpose for the future
David Ulrich (1996)	Trust and commitment-engendering personal habits, values and traits Strong intellect, able to master paradox and ambiguity		Develop organisational structures to ensure competitiveness Shared leadership Master of teamwork	
James Heskett and Leonard Schlesinger (1996)		Ensure follower capability to achieve performance objectives	Listen as opposed to tell Derive power through nurturing subordinates' dignity (relational rather than positional power)	Define, communicate and live the values Build the culture

	Trait theories	Behavioural theories	Contingency theories	Neocharismatic theories
Max De Pree (1989)		Treat subordinates with respect, fairness	Provide support for subordinates Acknowledge achievement of subordinates	Define reality for subordinates Give attention to subordinates' personal development and self-fulfilment
Rosabeth Moss Kanter (1996)	Intellectually astute	Agent for change	Provide reassurance and a steadying hand in the face of challenge Empower subordinates to use and increase their abilities	Vision creator Inspirer Align subordinates in a common direction
April, Macdonald, and Vriesendorp, (2000).	Humility to admit error or failure and learn from it Deep awareness of self, others and the environment	Emphasise relational aspects of leading Willing to let go of old certainties and embrace new (openness to change)	Dynamic interaction and engagement between leader and subordinates Openness, authenticity and vulnerability rooted in strong sense of self Value conversations, information- and idea-swapping as a necessary precursor to achieving task outcomes	Passionate and ignite passion in subordinates Value story-telling to construct reality together, to build community, commitment and accountability Lead from values and vision (walk the talk) rather than from structural/positional authority

CHAPTER THREE

THEORY FRAMEWORK

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Two leadership models, rooted in aspects of the leadership theories reviewed in Chapter Two, have been selected to provide the conceptual framework for this research: those of James Kouzes and Barry Posner (1987; 2002) and Manfred Kets de Vries (2001; 2005). Each is elaborated upon below, followed by a discussion on the extent of alignment between the two models.

3.2 KOUZES AND POSNER LEADERSHIP MODEL

In terms of the leadership theories discussed in the literature review, Kouzes and Posner's Leadership Model (1987; 2002) is most closely aligned to transformational leadership theory as developed by Bass (1985) which encompasses the notions of building shared vision and a sense of common purpose, building trust and inspiring excellence, providing intellectual challenge to think in new ways and giving individual consideration. There are also, however, elements of other theories present in their model. For example, a key leadership trait identified by Kouzes and Posner is honesty. As to behavioural theories the consideration style, for instance, can be found in Kouzes and Posner's encouraging the heart practice, while the development orientation style can be seen in their challenging the process practice. Aspects of contingency theories can be seen in their model. For example, they advocate that leaders recognise individual contributions by rewarding good performance. They also recognise the impact of external factors on leadership practice.

Kouzes and Posner view leadership as different to management (which more closely resembles Bass's conception of the transactional leader). While management is short-term in focus, leadership is long-term; while management is about being analytical and rational, leadership is about passion and inspiration; while management is about control of resources, including people, leadership is about empowering others to act; while management is about positional authority, leadership is about personal authenticity.

Their model was developed firstly by analysing the results of 'personal best' surveys completed by hundreds of leaders. Their 12-page survey comprised 38 open-ended questions and explored leaders' experiences of achieving extraordinary things through people. Secondly, in-depth interviews with leaders were conducted. Extensive analysis of this research data was undertaken by them. In addition, these two sets of case study sources were independently content analysed by two outside raters.

The outcome of this process was that, while the category labels went through several iterations during the course of the analysis, a fundamental pattern of effective leadership behaviour emerged. Five distinct leadership practices consisting of ten behaviours were identified. These were "...common practices leaders used to get extraordinary things done in organisations." (ibid 1987: 279). They found that these behaviours varied little across different ethnic, cultural and gender backgrounds, as well as across a variety of sectors, industries and professions and hence concluded that they were universally applicable. These leadership practices have subsequently been confirmed to be reliable and valid by both their own and others' research (<http://www.leadershipchallenge.com/research>). The conclusion of universal applicability will be tested by this research.

The practices and behaviours comprising the Kouzes and Posner Leadership Model, based on their research findings, are as follows:

- Model the Way
 - Find your voice
 - Set an example

- Inspire a Shared Vision
 - Envision the future
 - Enlist others

- Challenge the Process
 - Search for opportunities
 - Experiment and take risks

- Enable Others to Act
 - Foster collaboration
 - Strengthen others

- Encourage the Heart
 - Recognise contributions
 - Celebrate the values and victories

Each is briefly expanded upon in turn. Under the leadership practice of *Modelling the Way* is the behaviour of *finding your voice*. This entails leaders clarifying their personal values. In the pursuit of growing self-awareness and self-knowledge Kouzes and Posner state that leaders need to "...take a journey through [their] inner territory..." (2002: 52). They argue that an inner quest for self-knowledge is integral to leadership effectiveness because "We need internal guidance to navigate the permanent white water of today's environment." (2001: 88). They warn that "If leaders are not clear about what they believe in, they are much more likely to change their positions with every fad or opinion poll. Without core beliefs...would-be leaders will be judged as inconsistent...The first step on the credibility journey is thus clarification of values" (1993: 60).

This journey entails leaders coming to know their strengths and weaknesses, what they stand for – the values, principles and priorities by which they will live and lead; knowing what is important, what they care about, are inspired by, are challenged by – finding their own, authentic voice and expressing it. The better leaders know themselves, the better equipped they are to take wise and consistent decisions and action in the face of continual and often conflicting demands thrust upon them. These are the kind of leaders that subordinates will respond to – they recognise the authenticity of leaders primarily in what they are, rather than what they do. Subordinates will follow leaders with integrity, and "To act with integrity, we must first know who we are." (2002:54). This attribute provides the foundation for the *set an example* leadership behaviour discussed below.

Flowing from that authentic state of being, effective leaders act genuinely – they 'walk the walk', not only 'talk the talk'. They *set an example* by aligning

actions with shared values. They build a community which embraces values which are consistent with the aspirations of the employees and the organisation. They model what they believe are important organisational values and practices with respect to how colleagues, employees and customers should be treated. They lead by doing. They set standards of excellence, demonstrate competence and hold subordinates accountable to similar performance standards. Subordinates are quick to note whether leaders practice what they preach – their credibility hinges on this. Kouzes and Posner quote a chief executive officer as saying "Your job gives you authority. Your behaviour earns you respect." (2001: 11). Consistency between words and actions, and not level of seniority or job title, is what earns leaders respect: "Setting an example is essentially *doing what you say you will do.*" (2002: 93). This practice engages the emotional intelligence skills of self-awareness and self-management.

With respect to the leadership practice of *Inspiring a Shared Vision* effective leaders *envision the future* by imagining exciting and ennobling possibilities. They have a picture of a desirable, different but entirely possible future state which is different from the present and which pulls them towards it. The purpose of this practice is to provide a focus for the organisation. However they are not effective leaders if that vision is kept to themselves. They therefore also *enlist others* by appealing to shared aspirations and enabling their subordinates to see the exciting possibilities which the future holds. They break through cynicism and mindsets stuck in the present. They "...create the conditions for others to build a common vision together...it must appeal to all who have a stake in it." (2002: 131). This vision is a picture of a desirable common future which meets subordinates' needs and encompasses their hopes and dreams. Effective leaders inspire their subordinates with their enthusiasm and passion for the vision.

Having set the direction the scene is set for the next leadership practice of *Challenging the Process*, where leaders *search for opportunities* by seeking innovative ways to change, grow and improve the status quo. They are proactive, and encourage initiative in their subordinates. They set meaningful challenges for themselves and their subordinates. They do not wait for things to happen – this is an active, not a passive process. This usually means

stepping into the unknown, challenging existing systems and accepted ways of doing things, and initiating changes. It requires leaders to display tenacity and courage in the face of obstacles and setbacks: "Even when everything goes wrong or when they suffer resounding defeats, leaders display constancy and unwavering commitment to the cause." (2002: 398). They keep hope alive among their subordinates in the face of hardship and turbulent change and have the courage to stand by their convictions in adversity.

Challenging the Process also involves *experimenting and taking risks* by constantly generating small wins and learning from mistakes. Effective leaders practice as well as recognise and support good ideas, innovation, experimentation and risk-taking in their subordinates. They encourage them to break out of the self-imposed limitations of what they think is possible. They recognise that risk-taking can result in failure. They view this positively, as an opportunity for learning and future improvement. Successes as well as failures are seen to provide learning opportunities. Uncertainty, risk, change and failure can generate high levels of stress. Effective leaders therefore foster psychological hardiness to deal with it. The ability to influence and persuade is also important for this leadership practice.

Turning to the leadership practice of *Enabling Others to Act*, effective leaders act from the premise that the best is achieved not through their contribution alone, but through a team effort involving others working together. They understand that teamwork and cooperation, rather than competition between team members, is the key to performance excellence. They embrace the notion that "Leadership is not a solo act, it's a team effort." (2002: 242). They therefore *foster collaboration* by promoting cooperative goals and roles, facilitating interdependence among all relevant role players – not only the immediate team, but also peers, superiors, customers and suppliers. They build trust by demonstrating sensitivity to subordinates' needs and interests. They display respect by listening carefully to their views. They understand the power of face-to-face interaction and networking and they share information and resources. The emotional intelligence aptitudes of social awareness and social skills are pertinent to this practice. Kouzes and Posner quote Daniel Goleman to illustrate their importance: "Interpersonal ineptitude in leaders

lowers everyone's performance: it wastes time, creates acrimony, corrodes motivation and commitment, builds hostility and apathy." (2002: 284).

Effective leaders also *strengthen others* by sharing power, information and discretion. They empower and build commitment in their subordinates by supporting, coaching and developing their competence; by creating a learning environment; by building their confidence through listening to and acting on their ideas, involving them in decision-making and problem solving, and giving recognition for their accomplishments. While fostering a climate of teamwork, they simultaneously hold their subordinates individually accountable and responsible for performance. They encourage self-leadership in their subordinates, understanding the paradox that leaders who share power enhance rather than deplete their own power. Subordinates in turn experience a sense that their leader trusts them and values their intelligence and contribution. They have ownership of the task and are therefore willing to commit their energies to its successful achievement.

Kouzes and Posner's research found that, in the view of subordinates, this is the most significant of the five leadership practices.

The final leadership practice is *Encouraging the Heart*. Even the most dedicated subordinates need encouragement if they are to maintain a high level of performance on a sustainable basis. The critical leadership responsibility for this is *recognising contributions* by showing appreciation for individual excellence, publicly as well as in private. Effective leaders personalise recognition and make use of a variety of rewards, both intrinsic and extrinsic. This activity "...is about acknowledging good results and reinforcing positive performance. It's about shaping an environment in which everyone's contributions are noticed and appreciated." (2002: 316). Effective leaders set clear standards, have high expectations of both their own and their subordinates' performance, and provide feedback on progress made. They are generous about saying thank you. Mindful that leadership is about relationships, they build relationships with and demonstrate care and compassion for their subordinates. Research has shown that the productivity and length of tenure of subordinates in an organisation is determined above all by their relationship with their immediate superior (2002: 317).

Encouraging the Heart also involves *celebrating the values and victories* by creating a spirit of community. Holding communal ceremonies to celebrate accomplishments is a public acknowledgement of everyone's contribution towards a common goal. It reinforces the shared vision. It sustains team spirit and focus, and builds supportive relationships. It is also about having fun. This must be done from a true motive – people can see through behaviours which merely adopt the form without genuine commitment to the content.

Kouzes and Posner note that leaders cannot implement these practices without the mediating effect of environmental factors on leaders. It is their emphatic view that "You will never, ever find, in historic or present times, even one example of a leader who controlled every aspect of the environment." (2002:395). They further assert that "...the challenges, surprises and adversities..." (2002:395) posed by the environment bring value to leaders as developmental opportunities.

Having conceptualised their leadership model, in order to further enhance their understanding of what constitutes effective leadership, Kouzes and Posner then researched the views of subordinates on the subject (1987, 1996, 2002). They rightly argue that "Leadership is a reciprocal process between those who aspire to lead and those who choose to follow." (2002: 23). It is therefore important to gain an understanding of what subordinates expect from those who lead them and not only from those who lead. Their purpose was to test the level of congruence between what leaders on the one hand, and subordinates on the other, thought as to what constitutes effective leadership.

Kouzes and Posner began conducting extensive research in the early 1980's. It is being continuously updated and, by the time the 2002 edition of their book was published, had covered seventy-five thousand people from all six permanently inhabited continents (2002: 24). The research results, validated by other research (1987: 16-17), found four leader attributes consistently identified by subordinates over this period of time as being the most important. These are:

- Honest
- Forward-looking

- Competent
- Inspiring

Each is briefly elaborated on. The research revealed that character counts. More than anything else subordinates want leaders with personal credibility. Consequently *honesty* was the leadership characteristic most frequently selected by research participants. Subordinates need to know that leaders are truthful, ethical, principled and people of integrity. In other words, such leaders are worthy of their subordinates' trust.

Subordinates judge the honesty of leaders by their behaviour. They need to see that their leaders do what they said they would do, and that there is consistency between what they say and what they do (i.e. 'walk the talk'). Possessing clarity of personal values, they stand up for their principles, demonstrating that they have the courage of their convictions, rather than following every new fad, or changing their viewpoint under pressure. They also display trust in their subordinates.

Being *forward-looking* was the second most important leadership trait according to the research respondents. Followers want their leaders to have an orientation towards the future, a sense of concern, purpose and direction for the future of the organisation. Such leaders have the ability "...to set or select a desirable destination toward which the company...should head." (2002:29).

The next most frequently selected leadership attribute was *competence*. This concept covers not only technical competence in leaders' fields of expertise but also a grasp of the fundamentals of the industry, their business and its operations. It also encompasses the ability to lead by example, inspire, encourage, enable and challenge. Put differently, subordinates are looking for leaders who are able to add value to the position over and above functional competence.

Fourthly, subordinates want their leaders to be *inspiring*. They must not only know themselves where the organisation is going, they need to communicate their vision to their subordinates, in the process thereof exhibiting enthusiasm, passion, energy and positive attitude. They need to inspire their subordinates'

confidence in the meaningfulness of the cause they are expected to commit to, and create a sense of hope in the future.

This research points to a clear alignment between Kouzes and Posner's leadership practices as identified through their research into leaders, and the most important leadership attributes as seen by subordinates.

The practice of Modelling the Way aligns with subordinates' need for an honest leader who builds trust through consistency between word and deed. Enabling Others to Act also has trust as a significant component, and Encouraging the Heart contributes to subordinates' perception of fairness and honesty in their leaders.

The leadership practice of inspiring a shared vision has relevance to subordinates' expectations of leadership being both forward-looking and inspiring. Furthermore, challenging the process by searching for opportunities, experimenting and risk-taking are also aligned to the conception of leaders who are shaping a future which is different from the present.

Finally, subordinates' desire for competent leaders who lead by example, inspire, encourage, enable and challenge is reflected in all five leadership practices.

In summarising their research findings, Kouzes and Posner concluded that, above all, credibility is the foundation of leadership.

Kouzes and Posner's Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI), based on their leadership model, has proven robustness in terms of reliability and validity in assessing individuals' leadership abilities (<http://www.leadershipchallenge.com/research>) and is widely used in leadership development programmes around the world.

The fact that it is extensively used for this purpose confirms Kouzes and Posner's assertion that their research has demonstrated "...that leadership is an observable, learnable set of practices...not something mystical and ethereal that cannot be understood by ordinary people. It is a myth that only a lucky few

can ever decipher the leadership code." (1987: 13). The richness of insight which surfaced through the interviews and focus group discussions in this research supports that view.

3.3 KETS DE VRIES LEADERSHIP MODEL

As with Kouzes and Posner, Kets de Vries' Leadership Model (2001; 2005), while being most closely aligned to Transformational Leadership Theory, encompassing such practices as empowering and energising, also includes elements of transactional leadership, resonating with elements of preceding 'generations' of leadership theory. He values certain traits, such as tenacity, in his model. The consideration, initiating structure and development orientation styles found in behavioural theories are encompassed in a number of his model's leadership practices, for example those of team building, designing and aligning, and visioning respectively.

Furthermore, aspects of contingency theories are discernable in his model. He views the allocation of reward contingent upon desired performance as a necessary leadership practice. He recognises the role and impact of stress on leadership effectiveness as identified in Fiedler and Garcia's Cognitive Resource Theory (Fiedler and Garcia, 1987), and hence the importance of developing resilience to stress. As with House's Path-Goal Theory (House, 1971; 1996), he identifies factors external to the leader which contribute to a leader's leadership style. The two contingencies which he highlights as playing a critical role are the followers – their character type, experience, competence, values, attitudes and beliefs, and strength of the group's cohesiveness; and the situation – the organisational culture, the nature of the industry and the task itself and socio-economic/political factors (2001: 216).

This is a more holistic approach to understanding leadership than, for example, McGregor's *Theory X and Theory Y* (McGregor, 1961), which takes only the leader's attitudes and beliefs into account as a factor in determining leadership practice; and than Hersey and Blanchard's Situational Leadership Model (Hershey and Blanchard, 1974; 1993), which takes into account the follower's level of development but not other external situational variables.

Kets de Vries proposes that leaders play two roles: a charismatic (transformational) one, in which leaders envision a better future and empower and energise their followers; and an architectural (transactional) one, in which leaders apply their skills to the crafting of appropriate organisational design, control and reward systems. The latter role is far more than 'management'. Leaders engage in these 'architectural' activities as essential enablers of the successful outcome of the charismatic activities in that they encourage the desired values, attitudes and behaviours among employees to achieve the vision.

More specifically, these two roles encompass twelve leadership practices:

- Visioning
- Empowering
- Energising
- Designing and Aligning
- Rewarding and Giving Feedback
- Team Building
- Outside Orientation
- Global Mindset
- Tenacity
- Emotional Intelligence
- Life Balance
- Resilience to Stress

These are each briefly expanded on in turn below.

Leaders are future-oriented and in *visioning* they develop a compelling picture of a future state for the organisation, articulate it, share it and enact it. This activity is interactive, with different stakeholders having the opportunity to give their input to crafting the vision. It involves providing a roadmap for future direction which speaks to people's imaginations, generating excitement in them, and building confidence and trust in the leadership. Leaders structure complex information to make it accessible to followers. They build pride among people, and inspire them to strive for success. They challenge the status quo and are open to change.

Leaders *empower* their subordinates to effectively execute the vision. They involve relevant people in decision-making, thereby creating a sense of ownership. They transfer authority to their subordinates so that they can make a difference, empowering them to not only voice opinions but to make decisions. They ensure that their subordinates have the necessary information, understanding and skills. They have high performance expectations and make them clear to their subordinates, and they view mistakes as learning opportunities.

Leaders *energise* their followers by being action-oriented themselves. They mobilise their subordinates to accomplish goals through their self-confidence, enthusiasm and being passionate about what they do. They are role models, 'walking the talk', leading by example. They persevere and do not give up until they have reached their objective.

The *designing* and *aligning* activity of leaders involves designing organisational systems which align employees' values, attitudes and behaviours to the organisation's vision of what it is striving to become and to achieve, and to its values and culture. Leaders set clear goals and performance standards and hold their subordinates accountable for these.

Closely aligned to the above leadership activity is that of *rewarding* and *giving feedback*. Leaders incentivise and reward desired performance appropriately and ensure that reward systems are fair to all. Leaders provide regular feedback, recognising and celebrating their subordinates' achievements, whether large or small. They also engage in feedback in instances of poor performance. They mentor and develop their subordinates.

The *team building* leadership activity involves leaders building a sense of commitment, collaboration and cooperation in the team towards the achievement of common goals. They build a sense of ownership and trust by involving team members in decision-making. They both welcome the voicing of differing opinions and resolve conflict constructively, seeking win-win solutions which everyone can support. They are team players themselves.

Leaders with an *outside orientation* recognise that an organisation cannot operate successfully in blissful isolation. They therefore take care to cultivate positive relationships with external stakeholders and strive to treat them fairly. They are focused on meeting customer requirements and ensure that customer satisfaction is the focus and driving force behind their subordinates' activities. They are socially responsible and make positive contributions to the surrounding communities.

Leaders with a *global mindset* make it their business to keep informed about global socioeconomic and political issues which may impact on their organisation. They are aware of the ways in which different cultures may cause people to behave differently. They lead, participate effectively and feel comfortable in multi-cultural teams. They recognise their own biases and avoid the trap of cultural stereotyping which assumes that their culture is superior to others.

Leaders with *tenacity* are resilient and not easily discouraged. They are prepared to take risks. They are people of principle and have the courage to stand up for views and decisions that they believe to be correct, even if unpopular.

Leaders with *emotional intelligence* seek to expand their self-awareness. They take time to engage in self-reflection. They manage their emotions well, and are able to sense where others are, emotionally, and to respond appropriately. They understand the impact of their behaviour on others and seek feedback for self-improvement, and help others to do the same. They are empathetic and listen actively. They respect and genuinely care for other people, who in turn perceive them as trustworthy and having integrity, which enables others to feel at ease and to be open with them.

Recognising the necessity for self-renewal and reflection to remain healthy, leaders with *life balance* strive to create a balanced lifestyle for themselves. They think about what they are doing with their lives and set priorities in both private and professional domains. They diversify their interests, knowledge and skills outside their area of expertise and engage in non-work-related activities such as hobbies or volunteer work. They are physically active. They take time

to build loving family relationships, and have at least one close friend with whom they can discuss very personal issues.

Finally, and related to the above dimension, leaders demonstrating *resilience to stress* understand how various life and work pressures contribute to stress. They monitor their levels of stress and take appropriate action to reduce and manage stress as necessary. They recognise the importance of good health to being effective both at work and in their personal lives.

3.4 ALIGNMENT BETWEEN THE KOUZES AND POSNER AND KETS DE VRIES LEADERSHIP MODELS

It is apparent that a great deal of common ground exists between the Kouzes and Posner and the Kets de Vries Leadership Models, as demonstrated in the summary of the above overview in Table 3.1 below. All of the Kouzes and Posner leadership practices have characteristics in common with one or more of the Kets de Vries practices. Three Kets de Vries practices do not have a counterpart in those of Kouzes and Posner. While having a *Global mindset* – an awareness of the impact of external issues on the organisation – is not covered in their model, Kouzes and Posner nevertheless do articulate this in their writings, as discussed earlier in this chapter. It can be argued that the remaining two, *Life balance* and *Resilience to stress*, have to do with emotional intelligence, in which case there is an alignment between them and Kouzes and Posner's *Find your voice* practice and the psychological hardiness aspect of their *Experiment and take risks* practice.

3.5 SYNTHESIS

In this Chapter the Kouzes and Posner and Kets de Vries Leadership Models, which provide the conceptual framework for this research, were discussed. It was seen that each encompasses characteristics of both transformational and transactional leadership. A close alignment between the two was observed.

Table 3.1 Areas of commonality between the Kets de Vries and Kouzes and Posner Leadership Models

Kets de Vries	Kouzes and Posner
<p>Visioning – compelling picture of common future; articulate, share and enact it; build pride, confidence and trust; inspire striving for success; challenge the status quo; open to change.</p>	<p>Envision the future – picture of a desirable future state different from the present. Enlist others – to see an exciting common desirable future which meets their needs and hopes; inspire and align subordinates by passion and enthusiasm. Search for opportunities – action-oriented; challenge status quo; encourage initiative; initiate change.</p>
<p>Empowering – involve in decision-making; create sense of ownership; delegate authority to take decisions; provide information and skills; high performance expectations; view mistakes as learning opportunities.</p>	<p>Strengthen others – empower, build competence; results in ownership and commitment to success of task; encourage self-leadership; win others' trust. Experiment and take risks – support innovation and risk-taking; view failure as learning opportunity for improvement.</p>
<p>Energising – action-oriented; mobilise towards goal accomplishment via self-confidence, enthusiasm and passion; role model; lead by example; persevere.</p>	<p>Enlist others – inspire and align subordinates by passion and enthusiasm. Set an example – live the values and practice how others should be treated; honesty – integrity and trustworthiness; 'walk the talk'; consistent.</p>
<p>Designing and aligning – align employee values, attitudes and behaviours with organisational vision, values and culture; set clear goals and standards and hold subordinates accountable.</p>	<p>Enlist others – inspire and align subordinates by passion and enthusiasm. Set an example – set standards of performance excellence; hold subordinates accountable. Experiment and take risks – influence and persuade.</p>
<p>Rewarding and giving feedback – reward desired performance; give regular feedback for good and poor performance; celebrate achievements, whether large or small; develop subordinates.</p>	<p>Recognise contributions – high performance expectations; acknowledge and reward good performance; build relationships through care and compassion. Celebrate the values and victories – publicly acknowledge achievement; celebrate accomplishments. Strengthen others – build competence.</p>

Kets de Vries	Kouzes and Posner
<p>Team building – ownership and trust through involvement in decision-making; build commitment and collaboration towards common goal; welcome diverse views; constructive conflict resolution.</p>	<p>Foster collaboration – understand that the best is achieved through team effort, not leader alone; engage all relevant stakeholders; involvement in decision-making. Celebrate the values and victories – build community spirit.</p>
<p>Outside orientation – build relationships with external stakeholders; focus team on meeting customer requirements; socially responsible.</p>	<p>Foster collaboration – with all relevant stakeholders, including external customers and suppliers.</p>
<p>Global mindset – aware of impact of external issues on organisation; comfortable in multi-cultural environment; avoid cultural stereotyping.</p>	
<p>Tenacity – resilient; not easily discouraged; stand up for decisions even if unpopular; principled and courageous.</p>	<p>Search for opportunities – display tenacity and courage in the face of obstacles and setbacks; keep hope alive among subordinates in the face of adversity; courage to stand by convictions. Experiment and take risks – psychological hardiness.</p>
<p>Emotional intelligence – manage emotions well; self-reflection; expand self-awareness; understand impact of behaviour on others; respect others; trustworthy; integrity; others feel at ease with them.</p>	<p>Find your voice – growing self-awareness and self-knowledge; inner quest to discover self – to know strengths and weaknesses, what is important – the values, principles and priorities by which to live and lead; finding an authentic voice to take wise and consistent decisions and action. Foster collaboration – demonstrate emotional intelligence aptitudes of social awareness and social skills; build trust through sensitivity to subordinates' needs; build respect through careful listening.</p>
<p>Life balance – set priorities in both private and professional domains to ensure balanced lifestyle; diverse interests; renewal and reflection.</p>	
<p>Resilience to stress – monitor, take appropriate action to reduce and manage stress.</p>	

Source: Adapted from Kouzes and Posner, 1987, 1996, 2002; Kets de Vries, 2001, 2006.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH DESIGN AND EXECUTION OF THE STUDY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the methodological approach selected for use in the research is discussed. The research design and execution of the research with respect to the sampling, data gathering and analysis methods employed is reported.

Finally, the trustworthiness of the research is examined.

4.2 METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

Research methods can be classified in various ways, the most common distinction being between quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative research methods have their origin in the natural sciences, where they were developed to study natural phenomena. On the other hand qualitative research methods originate in the social sciences, engaging "...the use of qualitative data such as interviews, documents, and participant observation data, to understand and explain social phenomena." (Myers, 1997: 2). While quantitative research reaches conclusions via numbers and percentages, qualitative research pays greater attention to the rich human understandings that are revealed by means of investigating individuals or groups. It recognises that the complexity of social life cannot be reduced to equations (McBride and Schostak, 2007). It takes the view that "...the goal of understanding a phenomenon from the point of view of participants and its particular social and institutional context is largely lost when textual data are quantified." (Myers, 1997: 2).

When employing qualitative research methodology, researchers must possess the insight to be aware of their own biases, interests and beliefs and subject them to continual critique in order to limit their influence on the research process. While no-one can conduct research with a completely open and prejudice-free mind, qualitative researchers need to recognise that they view the world from a particular paradigm which may not hold true for other people or cultures (McBride and Schostak, 2007). They endeavour not so much to be

neutral as to present the understandings and insights of the research subjects as well as their own interpretations and conclusions with balance and accuracy (Ulin *et al.*, 2002).

This ability is of crucial importance because the qualitative researcher's objective is to immerse the research in the context of the subjects' lived experience and understand the "...internal world of the research participant, and how they perceive events and experiences in that world. It ...involves a deep penetration into the individual's mental world." (Hayes, 2000: 171-172).

What constitutes effective leadership is a textured and complex terrain, conducive to a qualitative methodological approach. Using this approach reduces the risk that one "...would lose too much detail...and might end up failing to grasp any of the real meaning of the data." (Hayes, 2000: 179).

With the above in mind the view was taken that, while the quantitative methodological approach is a rigorous and well-established discipline, the nature of the research question lent itself best to a qualitative approach. Furthermore, this study is exploratory by nature and proposes further research in Chapter Seven, where a quantitative approach using a larger sample could be appropriate.

In this study the researcher therefore set out to generate comprehensive data and unearth rich descriptive detail and narrative which 'tells the story' from the subjects' viewpoints and in their own words (Cresswell, 1994; Ulin *et al.*, 2002; Trochim, 2006). By quoting subjects in their own words when presenting the research results in Chapter Five and empowering them to literally speak for themselves the researcher has been able to convey "...important contextual information to readers, such as depth, detail, emotionality, and nuance." (Ulin *et al.*, 2002: 168).

For the purposes of this research the words of Biggart and Hamilton, (1987: 439) are apposite:

Leadership is a relationship among persons embedded in a social setting at a given historical moment. Strategies of leadership must consider the

normative basis of the relationship and the setting, and the distinctive performance abilities of the actors involved. Theorists, no less than would-be leaders, must take these factors into account.

4.3 RESEARCH DESIGN AND EXECUTION

The choice of methodological approach influences the research design and execution in terms of the type of sampling, data gathering and analysis methods employed (Myers, 1997). These are discussed below.

4.3.1 SAMPLING METHOD

A number of sampling methods are available to social researchers. Probability sampling methods include random, systematic, stratified and multi-stage sampling, for example, while non-probability sampling methods include purposive, snowballing and convenience sampling methods (Denscombe, 1998). For this research the purposive sampling method of non-probability sampling, and more specifically the expert sampling subcategory of purposive sampling, was employed in selecting subjects for this research (Denscombe, 1998; Babbie and Mouton, 2001; Trochim, 2006). This approach was applied because the view was taken that the most fruitful source of data would be subjects with known specific expertise and experience relevant to the research topic (Cote-Arsenault and Morrison-Beedy, 1999).

According to Denscombe (1998: 15) this method is used when "...the researcher already knows something about the specific people...and deliberately selects particular ones because they are seen as instances that are likely to produce the most valuable data." The purpose of gathering the most valuable data is for the researcher to "...discover, understand, gain insight... from which one can learn the most..." (Merriam, 1988: 48).

4.3.1.1 Selected site

The selected site for the research is eight agri- and manufacturing private sector businesses which are constituent members of one Group, and are globally competitive in their industry. These businesses sell their products in

local, regional, European and other markets globally. Their combined turnover for the 2006/07 financial year was ZAR 3,9 billion.

This site was selected due to the quality of this Group of companies' performance, and the esteem with which it is held across many parts of Africa as well as within South Africa, where it is a multiple-winner of the NEPAD Award for the Most African Country listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (assets, turnover and employees in Africa, outside South Africa, expressed as a percentage of total assets, turnover and employees). The researcher took the view that in the light of this, the leaders and subordinates working in this group of companies would be a valuable source of data for the purposes of this research.

4.3.1.2 Subjects used for the research

In qualitative research, a deeper understanding or better quality are not necessarily achieved by more interviews. On the contrary, with a smaller number of interview scripts to analyse the researcher is able to engage with them in depth and "...go beyond the superficial selection of a number of illustrative quotations... (Gaskell, 2000: 43). Furthermore there comes a point where "...one feels increased confidence in the emerging understanding of the phenomenon... [and]...no new surprises or insights are forthcoming." (Gaskell, 2000: 43). For these reasons the researcher found that the number of subjects selected for the research, as described below, was adequate.

Prior to conducting the data gathering, the researcher knew all individual interview subjects and the majority of the focus group discussion subjects. This enabled the researcher to be confident that the subjects conformed to the requirements of purposive sampling and the expert sampling subcategory thereof. However, the disadvantage is that prior knowledge of the subjects is a potential source of contamination in the interpretation of the results. This is dealt with in Chapter Seven when discussing limitations of the study.

Two groups of subjects were used for the purpose of gathering data for the research. One group comprised leaders and the other, subordinates. The purpose of this approach was to replicate, to some extent, a 360 degree

process whereby views from different perspectives in terms of where people are located in the organisation, are elicited. In the case of this study it was judged to be important to obtain the perceptions of both those who are in positions of leadership as well as those who are in positions of being led. Each group is discussed below.

4.3.1.3 Individual interview subjects – the leaders

Subjects for the individual interviews, whose biographical details can be seen in Table 4.1 below, were eight nationals from countries in Southern Africa. They all possess tertiary qualifications, occupy senior Human Resources positions in their business and are members of the management team responsible for running it. The combined number of employees over which they exercise both direct and indirect influence is some 14 000. The subjects being from one, as opposed to a cross-section, of disciplines could be a limitation of the study and is addressed in the discussion on limitations in Chapter Seven.

Nevertheless, the fact that they work in world-class organisations, operate at a senior level thereby enhancing the probability that they have an acceptable amount of relevant experience, and are successful at their jobs, were all factors which enhanced the likelihood that relevant data for the purposes of this research would be forthcoming.

All subjects were Black Africans. This choice was made in order to enable as African a perspective as possible to surface from the data. They were also all male. This was not the researcher's choice but is rather a reflection of the employment reality of the chosen site. This constitutes a possible limitation of the study and as with others is addressed in the discussion on limitations in Chapter Seven.

Table 4.1 Individual interview subjects' biographical details

Subject	Age (years)	Time in current organisation (years)	Time in current job (years)	Qualification
S1	34	9	3	Graduate
S2	39	1 ½	1 ½	Masters
S3	41	7	4	Masters
S4	45	14 ½	6	Masters
S5	41	8	1	Graduate
S6	49	18	5	Graduate
S7	49	11	6	Graduate
S8	54	12	11	Graduate
Average	44	10	4 ¾	

4.3.1.4 Focus group subjects – the subordinates

Subjects for the focus groups comprised between three and five subordinates for each senior manager in the individual interview sample. A summary of their biographical details can be seen in Table 4.2 below. Individual biographical details per focus group can be found in Annexure A.

Focus group subjects comprised most of the immediate subordinates of the leaders in the individual interview sample. That they are from the same discipline raises the same possible limitation as that noted above for the leader sample.

The majority of subjects are Black Africans, and represent a balance of genders. The extent of their work experience, averaging 11 years, positioned them well to provide expert data for the purposes of this research. They occupy a range of positions at different levels in the business from clerical to 'officer' to various management levels, as shown in Annexure A, and are therefore a highly representative group. These factors indicate their suitability for purposive sampling requirements.

Table 4.2 Focus group subjects' biographical details

Average age	Average time in current organisation (years)
41	11

Gender		
Male	Female	Total
15	13	28

Race	
Black	26
Coloured	0
Indian	1
White	1
Total	28

4.3.2 DATA GATHERING METHODS

The value of quantitative research data gathering methods, based on highly structured research design, rigorous sample selection and systematic control of variables, making use of instruments such as questionnaires or surveys, is not questioned. However the highly structured nature of quantitative surveys or questionnaires means that participants have to adapt their responses to predetermined alternatives.

The alternative is to make use of data gathering methods associated with the qualitative methodological approach to research such as participant observation, direct observation, interviews and focus groups (Trochim, 2006). These possess a number of advantages. They are able to draw out insights which surveys or questionnaires may not be able to tap into. They provide subjects with the opportunity to express themselves in their own terms and enable a greater depth of enquiry therefore facilitating the collection of a richer quality of data. The objective of these methods is to develop "...a fine-textured understanding of beliefs, attitudes, values and motivations in relation to the behaviours of people in particular social contexts." (Gaskell, 2000: 45). Furthermore the researcher "...can obtain clarification and amplification of interesting points, with appropriate probing..." (Gaskell, 2000: 45).

For the purposes of the research, focus groups and interviews, both widely used qualitative research data gathering methods, were employed. One has strengths and limitations in relation to the other. It was therefore decided to use a multi-method data gathering approach where one method complements the other (Gaskell, 2000).

Individual interviews were used for the leader sample because, due to the vast spread of geographical locations, it would have been difficult to gather the subjects together in one place. Furthermore, the researcher wished to take advantage of the in-depth exploration afforded by this approach.

Focus group discussions were used for the subordinate sample due to the logistical difficulties of conducting individual interviews with the number of subjects selected. Additionally, while encouraging active participation from all subjects, the purpose was to gather a consensus view from each subordinate group. The strengths of the focus group methodology (discussed below) were conducive to achieving this objective.

The two data gathering methods deployed in the study are discussed below.

4.3.2.1 Focus groups

According to Folch-Lyon and Frost (1981: 444), "A focus group session can be simply defined as a discussion in which a small number...of respondents, under the guidance of a moderator, talk about topics...of special importance to the investigation."

This method follows an unstructured, but nevertheless carefully directed approach, creating an informal milieu characterised by dynamic group interaction. In this setting participants feel the security of being part of a group. They are less guarded in expressing opinions, are drawn into the discussion, are stimulated by and build on each others' contributions. The resultant synergy generated by such an interaction between a number of participants is likely to yield more valuable information than from individual interviews with those same participants.

The experience of moderating eight focus group discussions for this study confirmed Folch-Lyon and Frost's (1981: 445) contention that "A lively and successful session creates such a high degree of interest and cooperation that often participants are reluctant to leave once the interview is over."

A number of factors should be taken into consideration in using focus group research methodology. Firstly, thought needs to be given to the *sample design*. The most important criterion is that the sample selected must be relevant to the research subject. Participants need to have experience related to the subject and be in a position to hold express opinions on it. This factor has been addressed, as discussed in section 4.3.1 above.

Furthermore, *specific group requirements* need to be taken into account, in particular group size. If a group is too small, a sufficiently active dialogue may not be forthcoming. With too large a group it is likely that not all participants will contribute to the discussion due to time constraints or personality factors. A focus group should therefore number between three and 10 participants. This guideline was adhered to in this study, as can be seen in the size of the eight focus groups in Annexure A.

Participants should be informed of the general topic of discussion beforehand, but should not be given the specific questions, as this would give them the opportunity to prepare answers. This precaution is necessary to ensure spontaneous contributions to the discussion. This was done in setting up the meeting arrangements for this study.

The *site selection* needs to be considered. It should be at a venue convenient and acceptable (at least neutral, if not on their 'territory') to participants, as well as being comfortable, quiet and not prone to distractions or interruptions. There needs to be timely and clear communication with participants, using an appropriate medium, about the meeting time and venue. All of this was carried out for this study. Discussions were conducted at the subjects' place of work, in a meeting room, at their convenience.

The *group discussion guide* needs to be developed. This is based on the already-determined research objectives. While the discussion guide questions

are framed in language which is appropriate to the intended participants and are direct, clear, simple, jargon-free and posed in a conversational manner, the guide simultaneously ensures that the discussion is not approached in a casual manner. The same level of scientific rigour should be applied in conducting this as with any other type of data gathering methodology. For this study the discussion guide comprised one question, which served to guide the entire discussion. The question was, *'What are the things which you think are most important about good leadership?'*

Recording and documentation methods need to be decided. In the case of this study flipchart paper and Koki pens were used for recording purposes.

There is then the *conducting of the focus group sessions*. The role of the researcher facilitating the discussion, commonly called the moderator, is to set the scene, explain its probable duration, introduce and explain the topic and purpose of the discussion and the subjects' role in it, and guide the discussion. This discussion is the basis from which the required research data is gathered.

The moderator occupies a powerful position in the group dynamic and consequently exercises an influential role. The moderator should facilitate, not dominate the discussion, and exercise caution by acting in an unbiased fashion and not, for example, asking leading questions or expressing personal opinions which may influence the participants' contributions. The moderator's bodily and verbal cues should indicate attentive interest and appreciation of contributions made, while at the same time maintaining a neutral stance.

The following process was followed in conducting the focus group sessions with each of the eight groups:

- Subjects were welcomed and thanked for making themselves available. The background to and purpose of the research and the process to be followed for the discussion was explained. Subjects were put at ease and the moderator's role explained to them.

With respect to the ethical considerations related to the research, the issues of informed consent, right to privacy and confidentiality in

transcription and reporting, and consequences, as well as their rights to withdraw from the study without prejudice, were discussed with the subjects (Kvale, 1996; Schurink, 2005; British Psychological Society, 2007). They were given time to read the *Informed Consent Letter and Document* (Annexure B), ask clarifying questions, and sign it. The original signed documents are in safekeeping and are available for perusal if required.

- After a brief introduction on the topic of leadership, subjects were asked for their views on the discussion question.

The question was deliberately framed in loose and non-directive terms. It was emphasised that the researcher was interested in their thoughts, and what they felt strongly about, based on their experience and observations. It was made clear that the researcher was not interested in the 'right' answer, whatever that may be, or what they thought the researcher wanted them to say, or what the textbooks say. They were entreated to express their 'from the heart' views on the question. It was also made explicit that the purpose of the discussion was not to assess their leader. This was necessary in order to allay any fears which might have resulted in subjects holding back contributions to the discussion. The positive framing of the discussion question also eliminates the likelihood of subject reticence.

- The researcher facilitated the discussion to the point where subjects reached group consensus on each point, and on how they wished their view to be recorded. All subjects were encouraged to express a diversity of opinions and comment on, or ask questions of, the other subjects' contributions. This level of interaction and participation served to deepen the richness of the information gathered. The views which emerged from the discussion were more an outcome of this interaction between subjects than one person's understanding of the issue, as is the case with the dyadic interaction which characterises the interview method. Participation levels were monitored, guarding against domination by a few, and drawing in those contributing less to the conversation.

Subjects' opinions were captured on flipchart paper as they were expressed, the researcher confirming their agreement on the exact wording. This was recorded in short descriptive phrases, with a header which encapsulated the essence of that particular leadership theme.

The moderator also monitored subject fatigue and interest levels, as well as data redundancy. Focus group discussions are typically 60 to 120 minutes in duration, two hours being the physical and psychological limit for most people. In this case discussions lasted between 60 and 90 minutes.

- Once satisfied that the discussion had run its course, the moderator brought the discussion to a close and again thanked all subjects for offering their time and contributions to the research.

- A second round of focus group discussions was conducted for the purposes of
 - feeding back to subjects and affording them the opportunity to confirm that their input from the first round was accurately represented by the researcher, and correct it if necessary;
 - clarifying the meaning of certain points made during the first round;
 - further exploring interesting points made in the first round and
 - eliciting further data (Hycner, 1985).

Care was taken to adopt the same non-directive approach as in the initial discussions in order to avoid the possibility of bias. This process served to enrich the quality of data gathered in the first round and, having been integrated into it, was included in the reporting of research results and subjected to the analysis of data and interpretation of results.

Having collected the data, qualitative data analysis as described below was undertaken. On the basis of the data analysis a conclusion was reached on the research question (Cote-Arsenault and Morrison-Beedy, 1999; Folch-Lyon and Frost, 1981; Garson, 2007; Gaskell, 2000).

4.3.2.2 Individual interviews

Interviews range along a continuum from formal to informal, structured to unstructured. The most formal approach is similar to the method used in quantitative research in that the researcher's interview guide resembles a questionnaire. Questionnaires, in their search for 'objectivity' are typically pre-structured according to an agenda more closely aligned to the interests of the researcher than the researched. This is problematic for the qualitative research approach which aims to represent the authentic voice of the subjects.

A more informal and semi-structured interview approach was therefore preferred for this study as it affords better opportunity for in-depth exploration of the subjects' thoughts. For this purpose the researcher develops an interview guide which typically has a list of broad questions around which to engage the interviewee in conversation on the interview topics. Unlike a questionnaire or survey which has to be slavishly followed, the interview guide is designed to provide a framework for an easy and comfortable conversation where the researcher's focus is on listening and understanding (Oppenheim, 1992; Kvale, 1996; Gaskell, 2000; Stewart and Cash, 2000).

Informal should not be equated to unprepared. Careful thought needs to be given to the structuring of the interview questions – which questions to ask, how to ask them and why they are being asked. This is essential in order to "...provide a more trustworthy point of departure for the later analysis." (Kvale, 1996: 132).

Being an approach that allows for more freedom for exploration than that used by the quantitative research approach to data gathering, researchers using this methodology need to guard against a number of potential pitfalls such as imposing their own agenda on the interviewee, becoming side-tracked, talking too much, giving opinions rather than asking questions, posing leading questions which signal to subjects how the researcher would like them to answer the question, and failing to ask for concrete illustrations of the points being made, in the form of stories or anecdotes (Schostak, 1995).

While focus groups have advantages over interviews such as the output resulting from the social interaction of the group, interviews have advantages over focus groups, the chief being that this method affords the opportunity to explore an individual's views in far more depth than is feasible with a group. The researcher can ask more probing and follow-up questions and hence elicit richer details (Gaskell, 2000).

The setting-up, scene-setting and role of the researcher in conducting individual interviews are much the same as that described for focus group discussions above. Interviews were conducted at the subjects' place of work, in their offices, at their convenience.

The following process was followed with each of the eight individual interviews:

- The researcher as interviewer opened the interview in similar fashion as described in step 1 above for the focus group discussions. As is the case for the focus group subjects, the original signed documents are in safekeeping available for perusal if required. The recording methods (tape recorder and note-taking) and reasons for their use were explained to each subject.

- After a brief introduction to the subject on the topic of leadership an in-depth semi-structured interview based on an interview guide employing open-ended, explorative conversation-inducing questions was conducted. As discussed in Section 4.3.3 below, the intention of the research was not so much to prove or disprove Western leadership theories as to explore whether Southern African leadership approaches have unique attributes. The interview guide questions were therefore framed as explorative rather than hypothesis-testing, including such questions as
 - Please outline for me what you think are the most important things about good leadership and/or which make a good leader?
 - To what extent would you say how you lead is influenced by the organisational environment and kind of people you lead?
 - What are the main challenges which you face as a leader?

The full interview guide can be found in Annexure C.

As with focus groups the interviewer monitored subject fatigue and interest levels, as well as data redundancy. In the case of individual interviews, which require more intense subject involvement from the subject, the duration is usually less than for focus group discussions. In this case the interviews lasted 60 minutes on average.

- Once satisfied that the interview had run its course the researcher brought the discussion to a close and again thanked each subject for offering their time and contributions to the research.
- A second round of individual interviews was conducted for the same purposes as outlined for the focus group discussions, followed by qualitative data analysis.

4.3.2.3 Active listening and non-directive questions

Finally, practices critical for effectively conducting both individual interviews and focus group discussions are examined. These are the ability to listen actively and ask non-directive questions (Gaskell, 2000; Kets de Vries, 2001; Krueger, 1998; Kvale, 1996; Stewart and Cash, 2000; Trochim, 2006).

Active listening requires discipline, concentration and skill. It is more than not interrupting the speaker. It entails affording undivided attention, resisting allowing one's mind to wander away from what the speaker is saying, attempting to fully understand what is being said, as well as the significance of what is not being said. It requires a level of integrity on the part of the researcher: it is "...more than polite silence...altogether different from manipulative tactics masquerading as skill. It is rather a virtue, a value, a reflection of bedrock belief that learning what others have on their mind is a wise investment of one's time." (Monippally, 2006: 6).

This practice is important for at least two reasons. First, it allows the researcher to be able to pose further follow-up, exploratory, probing, testing understanding or clarifying questions for the purpose of obtaining adequate

responses from subjects. Second, the researcher is able to accurately capture the true meaning of what the individual or group wish to have recorded as their viewpoints.

Active listening does not mean being continuously still or silent. It entails appropriate body language – body posture indicating interest in what the speaker is saying, eye contact, nodding and the occasional verbal affirmation. This does not imply approval or disapproval of what was said but is rather a signal of support to continue, for example "Please continue", or "Okay, I understand that".

Active listening also entails asking non-directive questions. This type of question safeguards the researcher's neutrality as opposed to leading questions or those which signal the researcher's viewpoint or preference. Non-directive questions can take many forms. The illustrations used below have been drawn from the interview scripts from this study.

- *Initiating questions* are used to initiate the conversation, for example "I'm really interested to hear your thoughts and views about what you feel makes for effective leadership."
- *Open-ended questions* allow the subjects to determine the direction of the response, giving no suggestion of the type or manner of response expected, as in the case of "When you think about your leadership role, what for you would be the main challenges that you face as a leader?"
- Asking for elaboration with *follow-up questions* is another way to elicit added information by, for instance, saying "Can you just elaborate on that? Maybe you could give an example to explain." Repeating significant words used by the subject can prompt further elaboration as in, for example, "Why do you think it's important to have a vision?"
- *Probing questions* seek further information but not necessarily on the same subject as in the case of asking for elaboration. An example of this would be "Any other leadership practices that you think are important for someone to be a good leader?" or "Is there anything else that you want to mention?"
- *Summarising* or repeating back to subjects what they have said can also encourage subjects to volunteer further comments, for instance "Just to

summarise so far my understanding of what you're saying..." or "So being an agent of change is something that you say is important?"

- *Testing understanding* does exactly as the phrase suggests, as well as keeping the conversation going for the purpose of gathering further data, for example by saying "Just to clarify my understanding, your first point is...?" or "So you're saying an effective leader taps into the ideas of his or her team?"
- Finally, while not a question, the practice of simply keeping quiet, known as the *silent probe*, suggests to subjects that the researcher is listening for what they wish to say next.

4.3.3 DATA ANALYSIS METHOD

The qualitative analysis approach used in the research was thematic analysis. This entails analysing the data for the purpose of identifying themes based on recurrent ideas or issues, and sorting the information accordingly (Hayes, 2000). While Western leadership theories and models (those of Kouzes and Posner and Kets de Vries) formed the backdrop against which Southern African leadership approaches were explored, an inductive rather than a deductive thematic analysis approach was employed. This as opposed to a theory-driven or hypothetico-deductive approach whereby the research is designed to test a pre-existing theory by creating particular testable hypotheses.

The researcher did not wish to pursue the research with a pre-determined view or prediction about what the research would reveal or confirm but rather aimed to identify emerging themes during the course of analysing the data. The purpose was not so much to prove or disprove Western leadership theories (hypothesis-testing) as to explore whether Southern African leadership approaches have unique attributes or nuances. To test an already-existent Western framework could have had a restrictive effect on what might have emerged from the research process. New or unexpected information could have been missed which did not happen with the analysis being conducted without a pre-existent framework against which to measure the data (Hayes, 2000).

The thematic qualitative analysis method used in this research followed the stages illustrated in Table 4.3 below.

Table 4.3 Stages of thematic analysis

<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Prepare data for analysis – transcribe interviews or notes.2. Read through each transcript, become immersed in it, noting quality, patterns and items of interest.3. Sort the emerging themes into codes and arrange relevant material under each code.4. Re-read the transcripts, re-examine the codes, refine if necessary and frame a definition for each code.5. Take each theme separately and re-examine each transcript for relevant material for that theme, and select relevant supportive data for the reporting of the theme.6. Using all material relating to each theme, construct each theme's final form: name, definition and supporting data.7. Interpret the data by explaining how the different pieces of the research puzzle (themes and sub-themes) relate to each other and their context, and what it all means, while remaining faithful to the perspectives of the participating subjects. Develop visual representations to demonstrate this.

Source: Adapted from Gaskell, 2000; Hayes, 2000; Ulin *et al.*, 2002.

The analysis method employed for individual interviews is discussed first, followed by that used for the focus group discussions.

4.3.3.1 Individual interviews

Once the interviews had been conducted they were transcribed from tape-recordings and printed out. They comprised 82 single space typed pages in font sizes 11 or 12. Pages were numbered and each subject assigned an identification tag. The first was S1 (subject number one), the second S2 and so on.

Thereafter the scripts were read through a number of times for the purposes of familiarisation and to identify possible codes. Between nine and 11 potential codes per script were identified.

Codes per script were then recorded on a one-page matrix with a view to determining commonality across scripts. From this exercise codes were then pared down from 20 to a total of ten. Further analysis was undertaken with the result that the number of codes increased to 11. It should be noted that via what could best be described as an iterative process, not only the number of codes, but also a number of their descriptors changed more than once. The scripts were re-coded accordingly.

As a guide and cross-reference document for use when reporting on the interviews, a hand-written summary was made, with the key points under each code for each script being noted. This summary ran to some 19 pages.

Using different coloured highlighter pens for each code all scripts were marked and numbered according to the codes.

The codes were then analysed for possible relationships between them and classified into three clusters of codes: personal skills, interactive skills, and task accomplishment skills.

The scripts were then cut up and pasted by code on A4 sheets. Each segment was identified according to interviewee and interview page number in order to be able to trace it back to its place in the original interview script.

While the number of codes remained the same during this process it was found that a small number of passages of script seemed to fit under more than one code. In these cases duplicate copies were made, with a view to taking a final decision on where they belonged once the research results were written up. When, in due course this took place, this strategy worked well and they easily fell into place, possibly due to the fact that by then the researcher possessed even more familiarity with the text and the codes.

On further analysing the scripts segmented according to their codes during the writing-up phase, it became apparent that re-coding in some instances was required. Changes were made accordingly with the final result being 14 codes, grouped into the three clusters described above. Reference to each code was found to be present in between four and six of the eight interview scripts.

As an example to illustrate evidence from the data which supports a particular code, the code 'Hold self and subordinates accountable' is used. In the instance of leaders holding themselves accountable Subject Three said, "My job... is to ensure results... expected of this department" while Subject Seven said, "...if things are not working out all right, I think a leader should also be accountable. You should be willing to find fault even in your own leadership if that's what it takes." With respect to leaders holding subordinates accountable Subject Two said, "...you need to give your people... an honest opinion. Don't tell someone it is good when it is not good. I don't think that's a good characteristic of being a good leader." while Subject Eight said, "...if somebody's doing something wrong... if it calls for discipline, the person must be disciplined."

Finally, views expressed on the influence of environmental factors on leadership practices were analysed and reported on. These factors were identified in all eight interview scripts.

4.3.3.2 Focus group discussions

The same analysis method as used for the individual interviews was employed for the data gathered from the focus group discussions. Having analysed the focus group discussion results after typing them out from flipchart paper, 10 codes were finally identified. An average of seven of the ten codes was identified in the results of each of the eight focus group discussions.

Further examination of all individual interview and focus discussion group scripts were undertaken and slight code adjustments were made as a result of feedback from independent external reviewers (discussed below) who examined these at the researcher's request.

4.4 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE RESEARCH

There is a variety of means by which to assess the trustworthiness of qualitative research findings, namely validity, transferability, reliability or dependability, confirmability and credibility. These are discussed below.

4.4.1 VALIDITY

Validity is the extent to which the question or score measures what it is meant to measure (Oppenheim, 1992). The research must portray the reality of the world as seen and experienced by the subjects. A number of factors need to be considered in respect of the validity of the research (Polson, 2007). The selection of subjects is one. Subjects bring unique characteristics into the investigation with them. These may be learned or inherent, for example race, gender, attitude, personality and mental ability. If these variables are distributed unequally among comparison groups, this could pose a threat to the validity of the research. This was not a concern for this research since the comparison groups were deliberately differentiated according to certain criteria, as discussed in Section 4.3.1 above, employing the purposive sampling method of non-probability sampling.

Validity can be jeopardised in the event of outside events, such as significant workplace change or sociopolitical developments influencing subjects in the course of the research. Likewise, subjective change, such as illness or childbirth, may occur in subjects. While subjects were interviewed on two occasions and focus groups were conducted twice, the time span between the two events was not long. The likelihood of these variables of history and maturation impacting on the research's validity was therefore not considered to be significant. In similar vein the difficulty of experimental mortality, where some subjects may drop out before the research is completed, was not a factor in this research.

Research validity may also be compromised if the research instruments change or are applied inconsistently. The researcher took care to avoid this pitfall during the course of conducting the research. This was done by rigorously using the prepared interview guide for all interviews and following the identical focus group discussion process with all focus groups. The researcher also ensured that subjects understood the questions well in order to avoid mis-reporting.

Related to the above is researcher bias, whereby the person in direct contact with the subjects or the data is not impartial. In this instance, a researcher's

expectations of an outcome may significantly influence that outcome. The researcher was well aware of his expectations prior to commencing the research and made every effort to prevent his perspective from influencing all stages of the research.

Furthermore a form of 'investigator triangulation' was adopted whereby two independent external reviewers were engaged to analyse the scripts and scrutinise the subsequent coding assigned by the researcher. They were both qualified at Masters level in the social sciences field and between them had some 50 years' experience relevant to the research topic in private enterprise contexts. While both confirmed the general accuracy of the coding, their feedback caused the researcher to examine the texts once again with regard to specific codes. This exercise resulted in adjusting the description and content of one focus group's discussion code.

Researcher bias can also be caused by being beholden to research funders. This research was funded by no-one other than the researcher himself, so there was no likelihood of this factor being a cause of researcher bias.

The content and quality of the data collected in the form of responses to the questions posed has satisfied the researcher that they did measure what they were designed to measure and are therefore valid.

4.4.2 TRANSFERABILITY

A second means to assess the trustworthiness of research results is its transferability. Qualitative research, being firmly rooted in a specific context, is difficult to extrapolate to other contexts. Qualitative researchers therefore need to exercise caution in proclaiming the generalisability of the research findings to other persons in other places and at other times. By its very nature the nonprobability sampling method makes it difficult to know how representative the sample is of the population. Because this method cannot depend upon the rationale of probability theory, the transferability of this research may be questioned. By providing information on the specific research methodology, context and subjects, as well as rich descriptions, others will be enabled to judge for themselves the transferability of the research findings (Ulin *et al.*,

2002; Trochim, 2006). The consequent need for further research is discussed in limitations of the research in Chapter Seven.

4.4.3 RELIABILITY

Thirdly, there is the matter of reliability or dependability. This has to do with the quality of measurement in the sense of its consistency or repeatability, the probability of obtaining the same results again, if the measure were to be replicated (Oppenheim, 1992; Ulin *et al.*, 2002; Trochim, 2006). Similar to the question of transferability, further research needs to be conducted before a definitive conclusion on the repeatability of the research results can be reached. This is recommended in Chapter Seven.

4.4.4 CONFIRMABILITY

Fourthly, the trustworthiness criterion of confirmability, also known as objectivity, has to do with the extent to which the results can be confirmed by other researchers. Acknowledging that they are not detached and neutral scientists, qualitative researchers need to ensure that a distinction is maintained between their own and their subjects' ideas. Whether this has been achieved can be objectively confirmed by opening the research process to outside scrutiny. This can be done by means of providing an audit trail: collecting and storing various categories of information such as tape recordings, uncoded transcripts, data reduction and analysis products, synthesis notes, interview guides and data collection protocols (Ulin *et al.*, 2002; Trochim, 2006). In so doing "...you enable other researchers to review the analysis decisions you have made along the way and verify that your interpretations are well grounded in the data." (Ulin *et al.*, 2002: 166). In the case of this research, an audit trail is available for inspection.

Moreover, as discussed above, the data and findings were subjected to the scrutiny of two independent external reviewers, thereby reducing the likelihood of individual influence over the interpretation (Ulin *et al.*, 2002).

4.4.5 CREDIBILITY

Finally, there is the question of credibility. In order to be credible, the research results should reflect the intent of the subjects' responses to the questions posed, and should make sense and be believable to them (Ulin *et al.*, 2002; Trochim, 2006). This was achieved because the researcher was able to maintain a distinction between his own and the subjects' ideas. He was conscious enough of his own subjectivity and so was able to allow subjects to freely express their perceptions and share their experiences. The feedback from the research subjects during the second round of individual interviews and focus group discussions confirmed the credibility of the research results. The researcher is therefore confident that the research results as reported in Chapter Five accurately reflect the views and intentions of the subjects.

Additionally, a progression in the researcher's understanding of the research question, observed by comparing the final interpretation with the initial expectation of what the research would find, builds credibility. The researcher was aware of his perspectives, interests and expectations prior to commencing the research. According to Ulin *et al.*, "If there are no surprises in the data, no contradictions or revisions ...you may not have dug deeply enough, but instead, discovered only what you originally set out to discover." (2002: 165). The researcher found his standpoint being challenged through the research process, with the conclusions reached at the end, contradicting his expectations.

4.5 SYNTHESIS

Having discussed the methodological approach selected for use in the research, the research design and execution with respect to the sampling, data gathering and analysis methods employed were outlined.

The trustworthiness of the research results was examined and judged to be trustworthy. Further research is warranted, however, to confirm this as well as to address identified limitations with respect to the research sample.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESEARCH RESULTS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

One subject observed during the course of the research interviews that "You can be a leader without actually being bright..." According to him intelligence was not as important for effective leadership as "...knowing the art of leadership." Another portrayed effective leaders as those who "...know what makes the employee tick...you touch them then they buzz."

What, then, is entailed in the art of leadership? What is it that leaders need to be and do in order to "touch" their people? The views of the research subjects on these questions are reported on in this Chapter. The results of the individual interviews (the leaders) will be reported first, followed by the results of the focus group discussions (the subordinates).

5.2 INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW RESULTS

Having coded the script contents, three theme clusters became apparent:

- Personal Skills/attributes
- Interactive Skills
- Task Accomplishment Skills

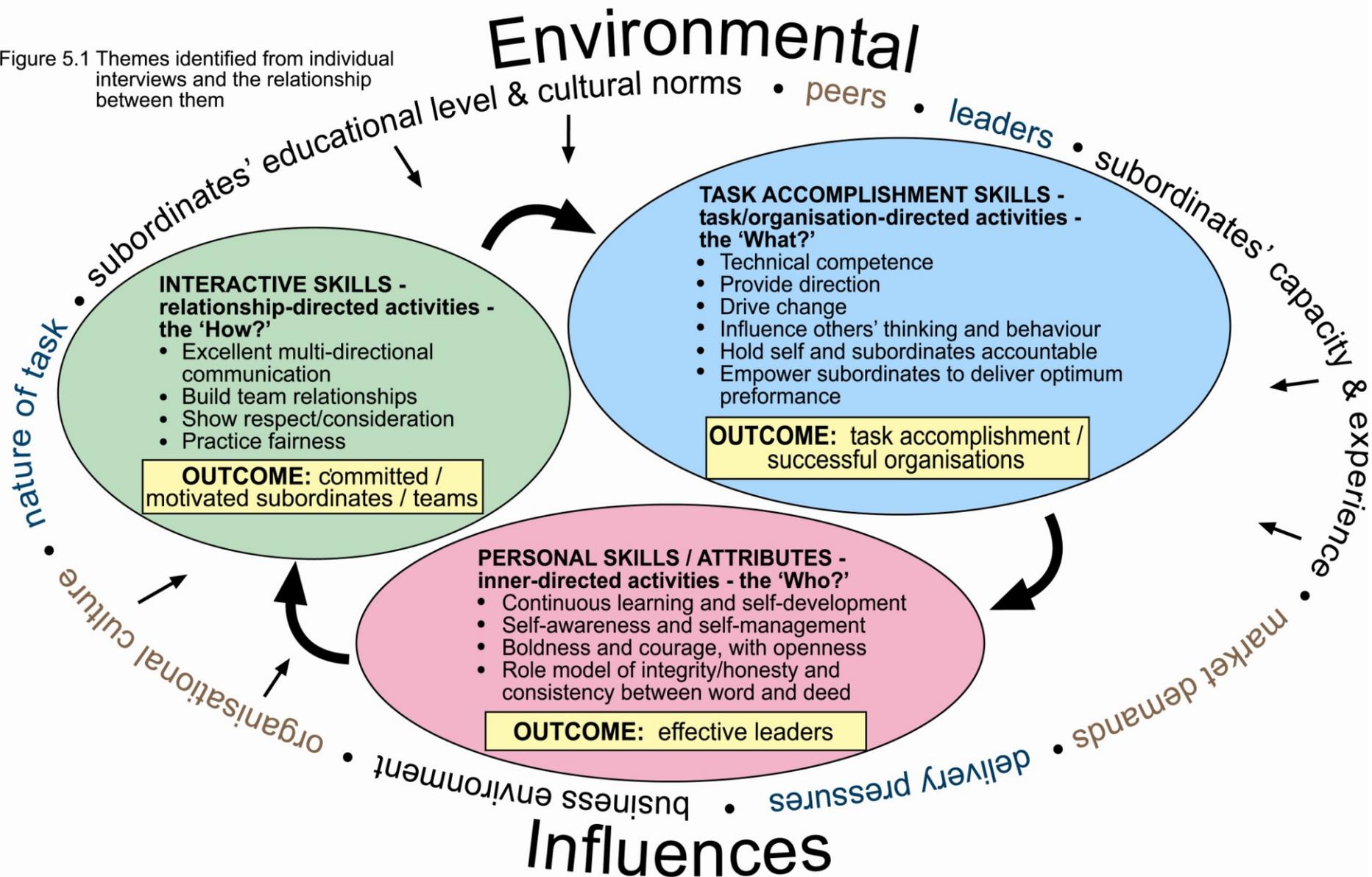
The identified themes will be reported on within each of these clusters. In addition, opinions of the research subjects about the influence of the environment on leadership practices will be reported on.

The three clusters with accompanying themes, and environmental influences, are shown in Figure 5.1 below.

5.2.1 PERSONAL SKILLS / ATTRIBUTES

While it is true that, according to one subject, "Remember you can't just be a leader without leading anyone." being an effective leader begins at a more personal level. Four leadership skills, attributes or activities were identified in

Figure 5.1 Themes identified from individual interviews and the relationship between them



the Personal Skills/attributes leadership cluster. These could be said to be inner-directed activities which relate to the 'Who?' of the leader.

5.2.1.1 Continuous learning and self-development

In order to be effective leaders need to embrace an attitude of continuous learning and self-development, as typified by this comment: "...you must be prepared to learn new things". Subjects' views on this attribute, reasons for its importance, the dangers of complacency, and possible sources of learning are reported below.

Subjects emphasised the importance of having an attitude of openness and flexibility to acknowledge mistakes and to learn and change oneself as a result of new insights gained. The main reason given for the importance and necessity of this attribute was that we live in a dynamic, changing environment and leaders need to learn and adapt accordingly in order to remain effective in their roles. One subject described the consequence of not cultivating this attribute in such dire terms as "You are your own enemy..."

Subjects warned against the complacency of thinking that one knows everything as a leader. This point was well articulated by one, who said "...as a leader you have to be in the mould of continuous learning. You don't need to come to a situation where you're complacent as a leader...there will never come a time when you will say, 'I've learnt enough'". Another expressed this sentiment in the following way: "...at times you get used to your own things and then you don't improve...because...you have got used to doing the same things the same way...look at what others are doing...open your eyes." Another expressed the opinion, "...don't be satisfied with where you are."

A number of sources for gaining the requisite new insight were cited. One, the organisation, gives leaders the opportunity to seek feedback from friends, peers and team members. In order to be able to take advantage of this rich source, leaders must be willing to be led, in the sense of being led into new learnings. This requires courage (an attribute reported on below). If they have this attitude, and are not defensive about potentially unpalatable observations, they can adjust and improve their leadership practices as appropriate. According to

one subject, "You must be able to be led in order for you to be a leader... If people are saying negative things about you, don't be defensive, but work on those negative things."

Another source of learning alluded to was to observe leadership practices in other contemporary contexts external to the organisation, with the proviso that they are not adopted in copy-cat fashion. As said by one subject, leaders should "...be able to peep through the window and see how other leaders are doing... not... wholesale... [but rather] be able to learn what they are doing and be able to improve those things with your group."

Other sources mentioned were not only contemporary ones, whether internal or external to the organisation, but those from a variety of historical era's and cultures. The Zulu nation under King Shaka was named, as was the Renaissance, the Biblical era, and the ancient Greeks.

5.2.1.2 Self-awareness and self-management

Self-awareness and self-management was seen by subjects to be an important element of effective leadership. This attribute encompasses, on the one hand, a realistic self-appraisal and ability to face up to and accept the 'shadow' side of self – that which has to do with weakness, limitations and failure. On the other hand it embraces not remaining in the 'shadows' but rather possessing a positive resolve to improve and succeed, and to control emotions. Subjects' perspectives on these are reported below.

Subjects named leaders' approach to frustration, disappointment and failure as an important element of effective leadership. They expressed the view that effective leaders *accept failure* as a reality from time to time. They do not get frustrated by this nor do they dwell on it. Rather, they learn from it, rise above it and move forward. They persevere and do not give up. They exhibit what could be termed a psychological robustness. According to one, "I think if we are able to admit that we didn't do well, then life doesn't stop at that mistake, but we must find solutions and move on." Another put it this way, "... as a leader, you should know that at times you may fail and when you fail, you shouldn't think that it's the end of the world... review... where did we go

wrong... and forge ahead." While subjects identified that being a driver of change was an element of effective leadership practice (reported on below) they nevertheless shared the view that, simultaneously, effective leaders *accept that there are limitations* to what they are able to achieve. As put by one, "... don't waste your energy on things... that you know even if you talk, even if you shout, you can't change. So as a leader you need to accept that there are things you cannot change... be... content. Don't have stress about that."

Furthermore they identified *honest self-insight and willingness to challenge oneself* about one's weaknesses as opposed to ignoring them as important. As articulated by one: "...you have to challenge yourself as a leader. Are you happy with what you are or who you are?" Additionally, effective leaders not only display the willingness to confront these 'shadow' elements of self, but a determination to change them, as articulated by this candid admission by one of the subjects: "I need to realise my weaknesses... I confront myself. Where there should be improvement let me improve... I'm not as influential as I ought to be. I wish to be more influential... Socially I think I'm reserved so I'm trying to work on that..."

While understanding the reality of failure, limitations of influence as well as personal shortcomings, effective leaders simultaneously exude a *disposition of optimism and determination* to succeed. They do not let these negative elements undermine their self-belief. One subject expressed the opinion that an effective leader is "...someone who is positive... optimistic that things will always work out, if you don't give up. As a leader you should always... keep on trying."

Finally, this theme encompasses *control of emotions*. While expressing positive emotions, as discussed above, effective leaders have the ability to harness negative ones. As expressed by one, "...you've got to be a very calm somebody... Don't react to situations... for you to hit the roof, you're not a very good leader. People will try everything to expose your weakness... Don't become overemotional..."

5.2.1.3 Boldness and courage, with openness

This theme has to do with an inner centredness and conviction about the correctness of one's actions, as expressed by this subject: "For effective leadership you need to be bold. Boldness is very important because... some decisions cannot be appreciated the moment you are actually pronouncing them." A countervailing attribute is openness to correction, without which single-mindedness can be a weakness. These are reported on below.

Effective leaders display boldness and courage even in the face of criticism or resistance. They understand that leadership is not a popularity contest. They take decisive action, accept accountability for their decisions, and stand by them. Said one subject, as a leader

... you need to be very decisive. Once you have taken a decision, you have to live by that decision... you are accountable, you are responsible for the actions that you take... when forty million people believe in a dumb idea, it's still a dumb idea, and simply swimming with the tide leaves you nowhere. So if you believe in something that's good, honest and bright, stand up for it.

Subjects cautioned, however, that there is a danger in leaders so single-mindedly pursuing a course of action that they are closed to arguments for moderation or change because, in the words of one subject, "There are some instances where your decision might not be good. You have to be careful. When you believe your decision is not OK, change." However this is a difficult challenge, for when leaders are pursuing a course of action which requires courage, according to one subject, "...it would take somebody to convince you to think otherwise. This is where we need listening... if you've got advisors you need to listen." Effective leaders continually assess the appropriateness of their course of action and seek the views of advisors to do so, who in turn are willing to put forward alternative views and not just be 'yes-people'. This advisory role is seen by one subject thus: "...sometimes you need to shout if you are an advisor, tell the guy there is danger."

5.2.1.4 Role model of integrity/honesty and consistency between word and deed

Even though leaders are appointed to a leadership position they have to earn their credibility and the trust of their subordinates – this is not a given. This theme is encapsulated by one subject in these terms: "...if one talks about trust it's not something that you can just have, you work for it, you earn it. And for people to trust you, to say 'This is a good leader', you work hard. You need to show the signs of someone who can be trusted."

Subjects identified a number of these 'signs' of effective leaders, their benefits as well as the negative consequences of their absence, as reported below.

Firstly, they name being a *role model, an example*. This idea echoes the definition of leadership discussed in the *Introduction* of Chapter 2, "... shows fellow-travellers the way..." On this theme one subject said that a leader "...is a role model...is not a good leader if he is doing wrong things." Another said, "...as a leader whatever you do it must be an example to your people... I cannot be saying I am a leader of my team but I'm seen to be dodging... What message am I sending the people that I'm leading?... I cannot expect them to do things that I'm not prepared to do".

A further attribute is *honesty*. Quite simply, effective leaders tell the truth. Untruthful leaders are not trusted. One subject said that a leader he could trust was "...someone who is honest... I like to deal with someone who tells me the truth whenever he is saying something." Another said that being honest and truthful with people was "...sacrosanct to me...which I will not sacrifice easily."

Subordinates look for reliability in leaders in order to be able to trust them. Essential for this is *consistent behaviour*. This means, according to one subject, that as a leader "...you do it by way of practicing what you preach." Or, as put by another, such a leader is "...someone who cannot say this today and something else tomorrow. Someone whom I can rely on, that I know if he says this, he will lead by what he has said." This latter comment points to the need for leaders to demonstrate consistency both between what they say from one day the next, but also between what they say and what they do. Without

consistency subordinates will lose their ability to believe their leaders. According to one subject this consistency is achieved through self-discipline while the advice of another was, "Be yourself – don't pretend to be someone else – you won't be able to keep it up."

Closely related to honesty and consistency is *openness*. By behaving in this way as a leader, according to one subject, you will "...influence your team. If you live what you believe and you don't hide anything, you have a better chance of helping others by [your] example."

The benefits of being a trusted role model are numerous. The above comment points to one: effective leaders, because they are trusted by their subordinates, can influence their behaviour. This is echoed by another subject, "If [a leader] has good manners his employees will say, 'Why must I let my leader down? Let me also practise those good tactics.'... if you are a leader, whatever you do goes down to your employees. You are like an example." The notion of influencing through example has resonance in these words of another subject, "...there is a model and they can see that you are living what you believe in and for sure they will also try to do that."

Trusted leaders are individuals "...that people can rely on in times of trouble..." in the words of one subject. This assurance will help subordinates to be secure and productive, knowing that their leader is there for them. Simultaneously trusted leaders breed trustworthy subordinates whom they can know are in turn there for them. These leaders can say of their subordinates, in the words of another, "You are like my other eyes looking behind." This concept speaks of an interdependence and synergy between leaders and subordinates.

On the other hand, the consequences of not being trusted are severe, for leaders, subordinates, and the organisation. Leaders who are not trusted will not have true followers: "If people don't trust you, I don't think they will follow you... it is a recipe for disaster..." Another subject, using the example of leaders telling their subordinates not to come to work under the influence of alcohol but then do so themselves, describes the consequences thus, "...people are going to lose respect... are not going to abide by whatever rules

that we put in place, because I'm the first one to disrespect the very rules that I expected to bind us... it revolves around credibility."

Untrustworthy leader behaviour has negative effects on subordinates' morale, which must inevitably affect performance. One subject puts it this way, "...If we've got one common goal then there has to be trust." However if the leader is untrustworthy, "...you create dissatisfaction... people will be disillusioned, demoralised, not knowing what to say to this guy because he himself is a problem. And that can have a negative effect on your team, in my view." Another was more forthright, saying "It destroys morale, it kills them."

5.2.2 INTERACTIVE SKILLS

Four leadership skills, attributes or activities were identified in the Interactive Skills leadership cluster. These could be said to be relationship-directed activities which relate to the 'How?' of the leader.

5.2.2.1 Excellent multi-directional communication

Subjects said that the ability to engage in excellent communication was a key skill of effective leadership. One subject described its importance by comparing communication with the role of blood in the human body: "...just as we have blood flowing in our bodies to make sure that our bodies stay alive..." communication is essential "...for you to know what is happening in [peoples'] areas of responsibility and for them to know your thoughts and your ideas and your expectations...". Subjects highlighted the importance of open two-way communication not only between leaders and their subordinates but also between leaders and their own leaders, as well as with stakeholders external to the organisation.

The communication described by subjects has to do with both giving and receiving information, as expressed by this subject: "Indeed there is reciprocity... communication is a two-way flow. I've got to get from them as much as I can give to them."

Each is reported on in turn. The first, *giving information*, is not merely for the sake of communicating, but for specific purposes, named by subjects as follows:

Leaders need to provide their subordinates with *direction* by clearly communicating the team's goals, as put by this subject: "...you should set your goals and say okay, team, this is where we are going."

The team's need for this and the consequences of not having it were articulated by one subject in this way: "So as a team you should actually know where you are going and it should be clear. Because if you are not clear, then it's like, you get lost. You get lost."

Subjects saw communication as a *motivating* tool. One subject said this: "...my job is to make sure that I engender sufficient enthusiasm... and... continuously create confidence through communication..." Effective leaders view their subordinates as more than mere resources of production and therefore communicate "...not only about issues around the business, but about social issues around their lives as well, so that they can freely engage and contribute to the discussion."

A number of subjects also expressed the view that leaders need to treat each of the people that they communicate with as unique individuals, understand their personalities and communicate with them accordingly. In the words of one, "...be mindful of one thing: people are diverse. So you have to learn how to manage when you are communicating with them..."

Communication was also seen as a means of *influencing* people. According to one subject, "...if you constantly and continuously speak to those guys... You manage to take them to the same wavelength as yourself." This influencing through communication is applicable not only in relation to subordinates with whom a leader has line authority, but also in relation to peers elsewhere in the organisation, as described by this subject's interaction with one of his colleagues: "...communicating with him, having to persuade him, influence him to see things differently..."

Effective leaders *challenge the hierarchy*. This requires courage if their own leaders have not cultivated the attributes of openness to feedback and lack of defensiveness discussed above under the theme of Continuous Learning and Self-development. This problem was identified by one subject in this way: "Unfortunately some people, when you start asking, they say you are challenging their authority. You end up having some conflict."

Finally, effective leaders communicate both *positive and negative feedback* to their subordinates. They understand that being a leader does not necessarily mean that one will be popular. In the words of one subject, "...if you are a leader you have got to be able to bring the good news and the bad news to the people." This subject expressed the view that leaders have failed in this area, with the consequence that people have a false understanding of their level of performance: "...it all stems from our failure as leaders... from not giving feedback to people... You just always say, 'Good, thank you', and the person thinks he is doing a good job..."

Having discussed giving information the other crucial aspect of communication highlighted by subjects, namely *seeking information, asking questions and listening*, is reported. The reason for its importance, according to one subject, is quite simple: "...because you can get more by listening." "I believe that a leader must be a very good listener. You've got to listen to your people." was how another put it. Yet another expressed the view that a leader must "...be able to hear what other people have got to say." while another said "...allow people to voice their opinion... to come up with their ideas... to have a say..."

Poor practice of this leadership skill was described in these words by a subject: "Someone is trying to... put his views across... but because you don't want to listen you are so quick to cut off and bring your own views." The result of this, in another's words, is that subordinates will then "...leave their brains as they are going to the factory, then, when they leave the factory, they take their brains with them." Leaders' neglect of this practice is to their and the organisation's detriment. The reason for this was given by one subject who described a situation where an effective leader is confronted with an operational problem. Rather than deciding on the best solution him- or herself and ordering its implementation, the leader effectively practicing this skill

recognises that the person doing the job is best placed with insight to offer solutions to the problem: "...he knows the job more than I do as a leader." This person will say to the leader "...hold on... have you tried this?', because he works on that thing every day. So I believe... [he has]... got a valuable input into the business."

While subjects stressed the importance of listening, they also highlighted the inherent difficulty which leaders find in doing this. One frankly admitted that this skill "...is a bit difficult for most of us leaders... It's difficult because often you believe as a leader that you know more... So you find that at some stage you don't listen to them, unintentionally." Leaders therefore need to take deliberate steps to both listen and signal to their subordinates that they value their contribution, even if their views contradict those of their leader.

Subordinates respond to the cues which their leaders give. If leaders fail to communicate the signal clearly there is then great danger, in the words of one subject, that "...the people you lead end up being yes-men without necessarily expressing their own opinions."

When discussing these two aspects of communication, inevitably the question arises about to what extent one as a leader involves others in decision-making. In their comments, subjects expressed the view that different circumstances warrant different levels of involvement. This varies from advising people of decisions made, to consulting and canvassing their views, to full participation. Achieving the balance between direction and participation right is, in the words of one, "...indeed a delicate balance... an art in itself." The factors impacting on leadership practice, including this important aspect of involvement in decision-making, will be explored further in Section 5.2.4 below.

5.2.2.2 Build team relationships

The following opinion of one of the subjects describes this theme well: "You also need to seek to understand your team. And at the same time I think you also need to... give them an opportunity to also know you better."

Having a good relationship with subordinates in the team was viewed by subjects as a significant element of effective leadership. This entails leaders both getting to know their subordinates, and their subordinates getting to know them. How nurturing good relationships with subordinates is to be achieved was expressed in different ways by subjects, and covered a variety of practices. This, as well as subjects' understanding of the benefits to leaders of practicing this skill, is reported on below.

Subjects advocated the idea that leaders need to get to know their team members' unique idiosyncrasies and treat them accordingly. One related the experience of leading a subordinate with very volatile moods. His approach was to ascertain the mood his subordinate was in and moderate his interactions with him accordingly. In that way he was able to maintain the relationship as well as accomplish the task. His pragmatic comment was, "...you learn to work around that."

A notion expressed by one subject was that of relational closeness rather than remoteness as being the very heart of leadership: "Let the people know you are a leader. Let people know you are available, not a remote person sitting somewhere there... People must know you are available and easily accessible."

This relational closeness can also be achieved, according to the subject, in this way:

Servanthood leadership... creates an environment where your subordinates are not going to see you as a person who is distant from them but they are going to identify you as a person who is part of the team, a person they can relate to when there are problems. They are not going to be shy... And that creates that environment where productivity is enhanced.

The same subject also portrayed this concept as being related to being transparent: "By being transparent is for you to be seen interacting with those individuals." The subject further described the dire consequences relational

remoteness: "...you are removed. You're far from them. I mean, you just lead by remote. Your effectiveness becomes non-existent."

Another subject described a similar idea in terms of being visible and accessible:

As a leader you've got to be visible. You can't tell me that you're a leader but you hide behind your office... being a leader you must be visible to your people. You need to be accessible to people... if someone's got a problem, he needs to find an easy access to you... there needs to be that kind of interaction between yourself as a leader and your constituency.

Subjects mentioned a number of benefits for leaders who nurture relationships with subordinates. One is that good relationships contribute to business effectiveness – effectiveness on the part of leaders and commitment to organisational goals and objectives on the part of subordinates. This is apparent from a number of the views expressed by subjects in the quotations above.

Associated with this is that it gives leaders the optimal opportunity to make best use of their subordinates in achieving task objectives. As explained by a subject,

...you must get to know them and that will help you use them better. They will also be motivated... you are better off knowing their strengths as well as weaknesses... if you want to achieve results from your team and you don't know them, you end up getting tasks wrong... there'll be lots of mismatches and for sure lots of frustrations in the team as well as you as the leader.

An allied benefit, also alluded to in the above quotation, is that it is motivational. This connection is illustrated by one subject in these terms: "...you also need to realise that at the end of the day they are human, and you should... care about their well-being, whether there are family issues and in general... I think that will go a long way in making them come to work willingly because they know that at least they matter."

A further benefit is that it can provide the opportunity for leaders to gain insight into personal development opportunities through feedback from subordinates. This was identified by subjects as a practice of effective leaders, as reported under the theme of Continuous Learning and Self-development above. This point was portrayed by one subject as follows: "And in allowing them to get to know you, you also have a chance to improve because you will be getting feedback from them... at a personal level it's a chance for your development as a leader." This will not happen without a good relationship, as explained by this subject: "There's a chance, particularly from a cultural background, that you are so imposing on them as a leader and you don't allow some kind of getting to know you and work well with you... they will just oblige... and they will not give you a true picture."

5.2.2.3 Show respect/consideration

This theme is articulated by one subject as follows: "...if you don't respect me I'm not going to respect you... If you are a leader you don't have to command or force people to respect you, you must earn it. How? You earn it by the way you do things..."

Leaders are not respected, and are therefore not effective as leaders, if they do not respect their subordinates. They do not automatically garner respect simply because they occupy positions of authority. Subjects' understanding of how leaders go about demonstrating respect and the reasons for its importance are reported on below.

One way of showing respect, as cited in the following quotation, has simply to do with recognising their presence through greeting and body language:

...the responsibility of the leader... [is]... to make sure that when people drive to the gate they think, 'Aah, I'm at work, I'm at home.' Just to say 'hello' doesn't cost a cent. You find people who are leaders, I'm telling you, who are on top but they're leaving people on the floor... how are those people going to feel that they are part of the mission, of the goals, of the objectives?

The power of leaders' behaviour in relation to their subordinates is described by the same subject: "You can hear a person saying, 'Hey, my leader, I've got a good manager. He greets us, he shakes our hands.' And then another one will say, 'My leader is not good. He doesn't greet us, he doesn't shake our hands, he's pulling his face and you don't know what you've done wrong.'"

The subject then makes the point that, in the latter example, "You are not a leader. You are going alone, you are not leading anyone. You're far away. They are pretending as if you are leading them... as if they are following but they are not, because you are intimidating them. Without saying anything you are intimidating them."

Effective leaders exercise the power vested in the positions they hold, with great care. In the opinion of one subject,

...if you're a leader, you don't have to shout at people... if you... [do]... then definitely that person is going to look at you differently than before... bear in mind these people are... fathers... they are respected in their homes... when he comes in to the working environment, he's coming to follow you, and at the same time he's expecting you to respect him... [and]... he's going to respect you.

Because subordinates are adults they should be treated with respect, even in a disciplinary situation, as explained by this subject who states that the leader should say, "'Look, I hear where you're coming from, but from the business point of view, this is wrong...' You're not shouting at the person... That's not the way. Respect individuals." Another said "We shouldn't... bully people around to get results but they should see that you respect them for what they are and what they are able to do."

The practice of respect is applicable when relating to all subordinates but, it was stressed by subjects, particularly when subordinates are older than their leader. When discussing how leaders should not call an older subordinate "Hey, my boy!" one subject made the point, "So it's very important as a leader to aim to know how to approach people, how to talk to your people."

The point being articulated by the subjects has to do with leaders' manner of approach to their subordinates. A bad approach stifles initiative and productivity, as related by this subject: "If you don't respect me, I'll do exactly as you told me... So... if you said to me, 'move this to here...' I'll move it exactly from point A... and then wait for you... I'm not going to use my initiative because... if I do and it doesn't work, I'm gonna be shouted at and then it will be the end of my road."

Conversely, a good approach has a positive impact on subordinate motivation and goal achievement. This point is explained by one subject in the following words: "If you lead you are an educator... once you have explained your objectives and your goals you must be able to come with a good approach to your employees in order for them to achieve those goals... don't have a bad way of making them achieve those goals." Another explained it thus: "...power is quite close to you and you can get results through use of authority... But I think if you respect others... you are now able to motivate them because they see that you value them, and... it gives them recognition and they really come willing to work for you..."

Finally, subjects saw a close connection between the practice of showing respect and being humble as a leader. One expressed the view that a leader should be able to say "I made a mistake. I am sorry". Another saw the outworking of humility in the leadership role of being a servant. Yet another described it in terms of the concept of servanthood leadership and ubuntu, which he understood as being one and the same. Leaders operating from this paradigm say, "...I respect you for who you are, the human being you are, before I respect you for whatever position you might be holding." Such leaders are able to respect anyone regardless of their position in the organisational hierarchy.

The organisation inevitably benefits from this approach because of its positive impact on subordinates. According to the same subject, "...I engender sufficient enthusiasm in those individuals... and continuously create confidence through communication, through serving [them]..."

Leaders need to be humble because, as expressed by one subject, "...everybody is a leader in their own right." whether at home or elsewhere. This subject argued that leaders who are not humble do not respect their subordinates sufficiently to listen to their ideas. This leaves such leaders and their organisations the poorer, and their subordinates reluctant to follow them: "If as a leader... you're not able to take their ideas, when you're not humble, it means that you just lead them for a moment... the people will stop following you..."

5.2.2.4 Practice fairness

The final theme identified in the interactive skills cluster has to do with the practice of fairness towards subordinates. The importance with which it is viewed is illustrated by this subject who went so far as to say that, without it, "You are not a leader."

Subjects were of the view that practicing fairness is an integral element of effective leadership to the extent that it contributes significantly to creating an environment where employees are motivated. Conversely, its absence is a cause of such dissatisfaction that it may cause subordinates to resign from the organisation.

Two aspects of the practice of fairness were raised by subjects and are reported on below.

The first had to do with not having favourites and giving them preferential treatment. Discussing this in relation to subordinates, one subject explains his point in these terms: "...you must treat them equally because I'm telling you, you might have hundreds of them, but if you have one or two that are getting that special treatment, that two then affect the other 98 employees..." The result is that "...something that is very minor... causes a lot of havoc." Another subject used the examples of leaders not being consistent and showing favouritism towards certain subordinates in the application of discipline, and giving time off, saying that, "...then once they know about it they'll expect the same thing, the same treatment."

The practice of favouritism and its impact on subordinate performance was illustrated through another example, where leaders focus their attention on one subordinate when asking for ideas, giving the impression that they do not believe the other team members have anything of value to contribute. The others feel that "...they're just there... they feel withdrawn and then they don't come up and use their initiative..." This also has detrimental consequences for the organisation, for in many instances these subordinates have "...vast experience and then if they're not given opportunity, that experience will just not be used."

The second aspect concerned being reasonable in relating to subordinates. One subject illustrated this point by describing two scenarios. The one is where subordinates are stretched and in danger of not meeting targets. The subject related his response as an effective leader in this way: "I will approach them and say, 'Are you having a problem? Don't you have time?... and I will jump in... and try and help... that is what I mean by being fair."

The second scenario is where there has been an actual performance problem. After saying that the leader should not reach a premature conclusion on the matter but should rather hear the subordinate's perspective and attempt to understand the background and cause of the problem, he goes on to explain, "You can't just sjambok the person one way. Yes there is a time when you've got to be seen to be tough with the person, but there are times when you've got to be fair... that's how I see fairness being very important in whatever we do... Especially coming from the leader in treating his own people..."

In summary, in the words of one subject, "...a leader is someone... who will be fair in terms of dealing with issues that affect his people." and in the view of another "...if you are a leader you must treat them equally... [otherwise]... they feel let down."

5.2.3 TASK ACCOMPLISHMENT SKILLS

Six leadership skills, attributes or activities were identified in the Task Accomplishment Skills leadership cluster. These could be said to be task or organisation-directed activities which relate to the 'What?' of the leader.

5.2.3.1 Technical competence

Subjects' understanding of this theme is described by one in these words, "...know your job as a leader... because everybody – your people... are looking at you... Once you lack knowledge of your discipline... then you're in for trouble because people... will pull you into different directions."

Subjects articulated a clear link between being technically competent and displaying leadership effectiveness, indicating that leaders cannot be effective in their leadership role if they are not competent in the more mundane technical and managerial aspects of their jobs. They highlighted a number of areas to illustrate their understanding of the scope of leaders' required technical competence, as reported below.

One was careful preparation and deep business knowledge, "For each and every thing that you... do, you've got to be fully prepared... you've got to understand the intricacies involved in that particular subject..."

Furthermore, "...leaders need to have long-term plans, they need to have short-term plans, and they need to organise their people."

Apart from the above-mentioned planning and organising, budgeting and cost control skills are necessary because, according to one subject, "Everything that you do in a business is money... The budget to me is always key because without money you won't have anything. So if you can't manage that money..."

Leadership credibility, then, is not necessarily built on personality or charisma but on solid job competence. As expressed by one subject, "...definitely there will be issues of competence, before assuming a leadership role – what capacity you have... the team will not only look for charisma in you, they will also need to know what you know... you need to have some knowledge base at least in your area of expertise."

5.2.3.2 Provide direction

The theme of leaders' direction-providing role is described by one subject in this way: "...a person who is showing the way... opening people's eyes... giving direction." Another expressed a similar sentiment: "...when you're leading it's very important that it should be in the forefront... to give some direction..." Subjects identified three elements of what this practice entails, reported below.

Firstly, in order to be able to provide the requisite direction, leaders need to have sound knowledge of the needs, goals and objectives of the organisation themselves. Their role is then to "...make sure that the people you lead also understand the goals and objectives..."

Secondly, subjects advocated the concept of vision. One subject noted that, while it has current popular appeal, this notion is virtually as old as humankind. He cited the Biblical text "Without a vision, the people perish" to illustrate his argument and succinctly captured the purpose of vision in these words: "...from a vision, that's where we actually drive your tomorrow."

Effective leaders not only operate in the present, within the limits of their immediate environment. They look outwards, and into the future. As argued by another subject,

...you should not just lead on the basis of what's there today but you must also seek to imagine and envisage what might possibly come in future. There should be some element of foresight in you so that you are not always surprised when things happen... also scan... what's happening around us... there might be some things influencing... how you should think...

Having scanned outwards into the environment and having envisaged what the future might be, effective leaders are in a position to craft a vision, and share that vision with the team, as expressed by this subject: "...a leader should have a vision...and if he has a vision, the team will also have a vision, and why a vision?" The answer given entails moving the organisation, through the people, to a new place: "...you are leading the team... so that you should

take... [it and]... the organisation to some place... you can't be stationary... you should be making movements, together of course with the group... and for that to happen, you should have a vision... that will take you from one place to another."

A well communicated vision that is understood by all was seen by subjects to be important for employees' sense of well-being. As put by one subject, leadership's role is to "...make sure that it's communicated, it's understood, everybody they know where the company's going... people feel more relaxed working for the organisation because they know the vision and the strategic intent..." Conversely, an absence of clear direction is detrimental to both the organisation and the employees, as the subject continued to elaborate: "...if they're not sure where the organisation's going... you'll find yourself having a high labour turnover because they're so scared... the company might collapse." Employees have a right to "...understand the vision of the company because at the end of the day, those people are stakeholders in your business..."

Finally, subjects discussed the need for alignment with the vision from the top to the bottom of the organisation. The leader's task is one of "...making sure the vision is translated down to all levels..." and to facilitate the alignment of subordinates accordingly, as explained by this subject: "...you need to be asking your question as a leader with your team to say, 'Guys, this is the big picture of the organisation, what can we do to align ourselves with the big organisational vision?'"

While being forthright about leaders' direction-providing responsibility, subjects at the same time acknowledged the interdependence of leaders with their teams in that, in the words of one, "...you can't lead when no-one is actually following you... when you're leading it doesn't always mean that it's all your ideas... ideas are coming from the group."

5.2.3.3 Drive change

Allied to the direction-providing activity, which inherently implies movement and hence change, is the activity of driving change. What leaders need in order to

be change drivers and what needs to be taken into consideration when implementing change are reported on below.

Why did subjects identify this theme as a hallmark of effective leaders? According to one, it is because "...we're living in a changing environment, you must be prepared to change... so it's important that the leader be flexible to deal with those changes that come around... if you don't know what's happening, things are changing every day, you're gonna be left behind, you'll be in trouble."

Effective change begins with leaders who are willing to challenge themselves as well as their organisation. They do not accept that the way things are is the way they should continue to be. In the words of one subject, "...a leader is someone who is able to confront, who is able to challenge situations, who is able to say, 'I'm not comfortable with the status quo.'" Their discomfort is based on their awareness of the external environment and an envisaged future, which leads them to initiate change.

Having a vision together with goals and objectives are a necessary but not sufficient requirement for driving change. One subject argues that, in addition, "A leader should have passion... and... that passion must be ignited all through the members so that at the end of the day you... achieve your purpose." The vision, goals and objectives must be more than well documented and intellectually accepted, "It should... be coming from your heart. You shouldn't have a divided heart".

To ignite that passion for change among subordinates is not an unproblematic activity for leaders. According to one subject, "People are allergic to changes..." yet, "As a leader you are bound to make those changes." Leaders therefore need to take care when driving change, by assessing the merits of the change, and involving subordinates: "...if something is working, I don't believe in changing it... simply because you're a leader... there must be a very good reason for me to change it... that is where I will involve my people..." Furthermore, "If you want to introduce changes as a leader, consult your people. Communicate with your people... with all stake-holders." Another subject emphasised the importance of subordinate involvement in the change

process and lamented the negative consequences where he had observed this not being done: "...give the team an opportunity... which I've seen lacking in most leadership, it's like they're ruled by terror... and their team members are afraid to try new things and nothing gets done..."

5.2.3.4 Influence others' thinking and behaviour

The purpose and effect of influencing, as seen by subjects, is well captured by the opinion expressed by this subject: "...influencing people to change their thinking and their approach regarding that issue and they begin to see it in a different light... It's not that people will agree with your approach, but if you are willing to explain and say why it has got to be done that way, then people tend to buy it."

Views expressed by subjects on this leadership practice suggest that effective leaders exercise the more subtle skill of influencing rather than relying on positional power. They said that this approach was preferable, not because it is easier or nicer but rather, because of its more positive impact on subordinates, it is the more effective approach.

Consistent with the Show respect/consideration theme reported above under the Interactive Skills leadership cluster, this practice was characterised by one subject as follows: "Even if someone is wrong, you don't have to shout at him and show your power. As a leader... we are there to open people's eyes, minds etc."

Another described this activity in these terms: "As a leader you don't need to change people, but you need to influence people such that they understand where you are coming from." Using the concept of 'logic bubbles' he went on to say that the leader's role is to increase other people's logic bubble through influencing them to the point that their bubbles meet each other. "Where they intersect, you will fly." was his opinion. He noted that what he had read about Jack Welch, former CEO of General Electric, "...I could sense a dictatorial element." which in his view was in stark contrast to the influencing approach.

A comparable thought was expressed by this subject who said that, by exercising this skill, those being influenced "...are uplifted to the level where they can have a similar thinking to you. You manage to take them to the same wavelength as yourself."

Relying on line authority is not always possible even if leaders wish to use it. Leaders sometimes need to influence their peers in other parts of the business, or their seniors, or others over whom they do not have direct authority. A number of subjects related stories to illustrate how they went about influencing other people's thinking and behaviours, whether under their line authority (subordinates) or not (shop stewards, senior managers, workers elsewhere in the business). Whatever the case, the methodology was the same, often, in the words of one, "...sourcing strategic allies..." typified by the story below.

After relating the way in which he influenced a chief shop steward to change his mind concerning how a Christmas party should be organised, this subject went on to say, "Can you see how I'm changing him? I didn't tell him, bulldoze him... Why?... Because even if you come with a good suggestion but you impose it, they are not going to take it... I already had my idea, I knew what I wanted to do, but I didn't want to impose it."

5.2.3.5 Hold self and subordinates accountable

These comments of one subject set the context for this leadership skill: "At the end of the day...we are in business to achieve results... to make sure that the objectives we set for ourselves, for our team and for our entity have to be achieved." On the basis of this understanding, subjects clearly articulated, firstly, the view that effective leaders take accountability seriously and, secondly, the manner in which leaders should go about holding others accountable. Each is reported on in turn below.

In the first instance, the view was expressed that effective leaders hold their subordinates accountable for their performance. They do not avoid confronting poor performance, as expressed by this subject: "...you need to give your people... an honest opinion. Don't tell someone it is good when it is not good. I don't think that's a good characteristic of being a good leader. You need to tell

someone, 'I see where you come from, but I disagree because of xyz'." Another subject put it this way: "...if somebody's doing something wrong... if it calls for discipline, the person must be disciplined." Another voiced the belief that "...there are times that you really need to confront people, deal with performance issues, and sometimes... even personal issues if they are influencing how they are working."

Subjects also advocated that effective leaders hold not only their subordinates, but also themselves, accountable for performance, as illustrated in the opinion of this subject: "My job... is to ensure results by making sure that... my subordinates... achieve the results expected of this department." Another said that when things are going well it is easy for leaders to take credit for their team's performance. However leaders must take ownership of performance at all times, including the bad: "...if things are not working out all right, I think a leader should also be accountable. You should be willing to find fault even in your own leadership if that's what it takes." Even when confronting subordinates' poor performance, according to another, "...you should also look at where you could have done better as a leader." The view was also put forward that leaders should be examples of self-discipline in striving for high levels of performance.

The idea of mutual accountability was also raised, as in these comments: "If you're not doing the right things, I will tell you. And I'm expecting the same thing – if you feel that I'm not doing the right thing, say it to me..."

There is then the manner in which leaders should go about holding others accountable. Just as there were clearly articulated opinions on holding people accountable for performance, so were there with respect to the way in which to do so, encapsulated in these words: "Be a firm leader, but firm and fair." Subjects expressed the opinion that leaders should be objective rather than emotional when holding subordinates accountable, and should display empathy.

One subject said, "...you find people saying they are resigning because their boss is always shouting at them, 'You're making mistakes, you are stupid'..." The subject used this as an example of a poor leadership practice as it is

counter-productive to the leader's purpose which is to foster a climate in which the subordinate feels able to own up to mistakes, and to instil confidence in the subordinate to rectify the performance problem. Another described it in these words: "Don't criticise... for the sake of killing someone, demoralise someone... If one of your people... deviates from the standard you've got to put him back on track... tell that person that what they are doing is wrong... but you've got to do it in a very amicable and diplomatic manner... that will help... to boost his morale."

5.2.3.6 Empower subordinates to deliver optimum performance

Once subordinates understand the goals (an aspect of leaders' direction-providing role discussed in Section 5.2.3.2 above) leaders need to empower them to deliver, as articulated by this subject, "Once they understand those goals, now you must have an approach to make them achieve those goals." A number of approaches to empowering subordinates were identified from subjects' comments. They are reported on below.

As a prerequisite to engaging in empowering actions, leaders need to have a certain mindset, or paradigm. This paradigm encompasses an understanding by leaders of interdependence between their own performance and that of their team. One subject illustrated this point as follows: "If you've got a performing team it really impacts on you because they will say, 'Look at Rob.' But if your team is not performing, not because you are not performing as a person... it reflects on you as the leader." Leaders are effective when their teams are effective.

Another subject emphasised the dependence of leaders on their team. Warning "Once you are independent you are on your own" the subject illustrated the dangers of acting independently with a story of a lone driver not noticing a danger on the road. With someone else in the car the driver is able to avoid that danger. Applying the value of interdependence to the workplace the subject continued to argue that as a leader, "You are supposed to listen to the people. And even your planning, you can't plan by yourself. Even the strategies you devise, you cannot... on your own." Another subject put it simply, "...you have to have a team in order to be a leader."

With this paradigm in place, leaders engage in a variety of empowering activities. One mentioned by some of the subjects was that of delegating tasks to subordinates. Leaders do not always find this an easy thing to do, as one subject confessed, "I used to believe that as a leader you have to do everything." The practice of delegating requires deliberate effort. According to another, leaders need to be "...giving people the authority and the power to go out there and do things and give you the results..." as opposed to "...wanting to control, wanting to direct..." Subjects emphasised that delegating means trusting subordinates with the latitude to perform the delegated tasks without constant interference and checking from leaders, or "...closed supervision." in the words of one subject. However at the same time leaders require a feedback mechanism in order to be able to keep abreast of progress, "...so that we don't have surprises at the end... because that creates a bigger problem." in the opinion of one subject.

Another empowering activity entails encouraging and expressing confidence in subordinates' ability, as expressed by this subject: "Tell people they have potential... That person will make sure that he excels... You as a leader must help people to gain confidence..." Another advocated this idea as follows, "...innately, people are very capable... all I've got to do is... create that environment where they will feel confident and... able..." The task of leaders is to "...engender enthusiasm... and... create confidence..." in subordinates.

Allied to the above is rendering support to subordinates, as articulated by this subject, "...make sure that you are there as their servant to support in whichever area they are falling short."

A further activity concerns involving subordinates in decision-making. The level of participation mentioned by subjects varied from informing to consulting and soliciting opinions to full decision-making authority, depending on the issue at hand. It was noted that leaders should practice this skill honestly in order to avoid pseudo-participation. An example given by a subject to illustrate this point was that when leaders have made up their minds about a particular issue, they should tell their subordinates of the decision, rather than asking for their ideas to give the impression of consultation while knowing full well that what the subordinates say will not influence the outcome.

Empowering leaders develop their subordinates, handle them according to their unique attributes as individuals and harness the strengths of individual team members, as put by this subject, "...we need to look at the weakness of people, the strengths of people, and these should complement one another."

All-in-all, according to one subject a leader who empowers subordinates "...creates that environment where productivity is enhanced." That, after all, is what leaders are in business for.

5.2.4 ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

The personal, inner-directed skills which focus on the 'Who' of leaders, and the interactive, relationship-directed and task-directed skills which focus on the 'How' and 'What' respectively, have been reported on. The first concerns the individual as a leader while the latter two have very much to do with the dynamic interface between leaders and subordinates. However there is a further variable which needs to be taken into account in considering effective leadership, that being the influence of environmental factors.

Subjects unanimously expressed the view that a variety of environmental factors impact on leadership practice, as typified by this subject: "The environment tends to impact or influence the way you lead your team." In analysing the opinions put forward a number of environmental factors were identified. These are reported on below and are reflected in Figure 5.1 on page 102.

Changes in the business environment can have an impact on leaders' behaviour. To illustrate this point one subject gave the example of the Africa-based business where he is employed being bought out by a UK-based one. While much would continue as before, inevitably new ownership would necessitate some adjustments on the part of leaders' behaviour. This is a typical consequence of mergers and acquisitions.

A related factor is the organisational culture. In comparing his previous and current employer one subject, noting that the previous culture was characterised by adversarial relationships, said "I'm not that type of a person,

but I had to adapt to that style." Referring to the current culture he continued, "Now I'm here I've taken all that away. I'm coming with soft ways of dealing with people here." Another, describing the differences in business culture between his previous and current employer, said of the new environment, "Now I had to inculcate this kind of leadership into my bloodstream. It wasn't there."

The nature of the business itself, or the task which has to be accomplished, can impact on leaders' behaviour. One subject described how much more pressure there was on the business where he is currently employed compared to the previous one. Although in the same industry, the product was different and destined for a different market with more stringent market demands. Another cited delivery time and another, quality pressures. All contended that these business factors were often likely to cause leaders to adopt a more directive and hands-on rather than participative leadership approach. According to one of these subjects, "This then creates a very unhealthy atmosphere because people say... 'Don't they trust us?'"

Subordinates are also a factor. The first of the subjects referred to above identified the education level of subordinates as a significant feature which exacerbated the pressures on leaders in his business. The consequence was that the leaders in this environment "...are under such huge pressure... not only... of having to do the business of business, but it's also the pressure of having to translate their thinking into the thinking of their subordinates, which is a big gap." This had the same negative impact on their leadership approach as described above. At the subject's previous place of employment this "big gap" did not exist, therefore "The benefit there was that we could speak the same language with very few people having to ask for things like interpretation."

Associated with, but not the same as education level, is the capacity of subordinates to contribute to business solutions. This constraint could be caused by limited education level, but there could be other causes, such as lack of experience. Whatever the reason, subjects reported that this limitation was a factor that would cause leaders to modify their behaviour appropriately. For example one subject related that, while his preferred style was participative, on certain matters subordinates "...will be blank, they won't know nothing." in which case "...there is a need to have some elements of dictatorial."

Conversely, another subject noted that the opposite is also true: "...your team... [can]... unlimit you... In other words, can contribute positively... to your leadership."

A further factor related to subordinates is that of cultural norms. Leaders' approaches to their subordinates need to take this into account because, in one subject's view, "You must know where to touch him in order for him to tick." This subject used the example of the different ways in which a leader should relate to an older subordinate compared to a younger one. "Surely my approach to these two people is not going to be the same." he said. Referring to how he would address an older subordinate, he said that his approach would be, "I'll say, 'Baba, we want to achieve this...'. And then you speak to him like Baba... he is so proud when this young boy understands that he's Baba. What I'm doing, I'm tackling the culture issues..." On the other hand, "Same thing applies to a young person. I cannot like call him Baba. You must know their language... the way that they talk to each other and... also like have a way of dealing with a young person."

Subjects reported that not only subordinates but peers and also one's own leader have an influence on one's leadership practices. One put forward the view that "...apart from leading, you are also led. So that also has a bearing on how you deal with your team."

A final observation is that a number of subjects expressed the opinion that, reflecting on their leadership practices over the years since assuming leadership responsibilities, these had matured and changed for the better.

In summary, subjects indicated the requirement for flexibility in the outworking of leadership practices. This was typified in the words of one, "...leadership is situational." and according to another, "It's very important to adapt and adjust." Another expressed the opinion that "...there is also a time when your leadership should be executed within different environments, so you have to adapt."

However, in propounding this view subjects by no means implied that the personal, interactive and task accomplishment leadership skills which they

identified should in some situations not be practiced or are not relevant or important. Rather, it is only their application which may differ from one circumstance to another, in interaction with the environmental factors reported on above. Despite these environmental factors, in the words of another subject, "...the principles at the end of the day should hold, they should remain there."

5.3 FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

Subordinates are not passive recipients of leadership or empty vessels waiting to be led by leaders in whatever manner the latter deem fit. Subordinates have expectations of their leaders as well as, in many instances, their own experience in leading.

Leadership theories have been criticised for being too 'leader-centric' in that "...they focus almost exclusively on the impact of leader traits and behaviours on followers' attitudes and behaviours" (Howell and Shamir, 2005: 96).

Without subordinates there are no leaders. By virtue of the fact that leaders lead people, there is a relationship, an interaction, between leaders and subordinates. Views of leadership as expressed by the leader subjects in this research have been reported on. However the other party in this relationship, that which comprises the subordinates, also has a perspective on leadership. It is therefore important to ask the question, 'What do subordinates think makes for effective leadership?' or, 'What do subordinates want from their leaders?'

This argument is supported by Robert Lord and his associates, who developed what they termed an Implicit Leadership Theory (cited in House and Aditya, 1997). They define leadership as the process of being perceived as a leader by others. According to this theory, "...leader behaviours would still not make an individual a leader *unless that person is also perceived as a leader.*" (House and Aditya, 1997: 437). However, subordinates are not a homogenous group. Understanding what makes for effective leadership from a subordinate's perspective is complicated by the presence of individual differences among subordinates based on, among other factors, their attachment styles (Berson, Dan, and Yammarino, 2006). Nonetheless, an impressive consistency of

viewpoints was found among the focus groups, the results of which are reported on below, together with typical descriptive phrases taken from various focus groups to illustrate their understanding of that leadership attribute.

5.3.1 ROLE MODEL / EXAMPLE

Focus groups emphasised the importance of leaders as role models worthy of emulation. They should be trusted examples of integrity, honesty and openness. Examples of these sentiments are:

- "walks the talk – if you don't do yourself what you say needs to be done, how can you expect others to do it?"
- "leads by example/practices what he/she preaches"
- "integrity/good practices, not corrupt practices"
- "behaves in a respectable manner, in and out of the workplace – aware that he/she is representing the people and the organisation"
- "integrity of character (outside work/private life)"
- "someone people want to emulate – fair, consistent, moral – this earns people's respect"
- "does not run people down in front of others"
- "has clear standards"
- "open motives/transparent, no hidden agenda – this builds trust"
- "honest"

5.3.2 COURAGEOUS

Two aspects of courage were identified by focus groups. One was courage to admit fault and the other was to stay true in the face of opposition, as illustrated by these examples:

- "does not blame others for his/her mistakes"
- "able to admit mistakes and say "I'm sorry"
- "able to stand up for his/her staff even if it means being unpopular/defends their interests"
- "won't abandon followers when things get tough"

- "doesn't abdicate responsibility when it comes to bad news – is a bearer of good *and* bad news"
- "supports and explains decisions made by management; doesn't give the impression that he/she doesn't support it in the face of opposition"
- "pursues cause even in adversity or stiff opposition"
- "able to protect his/her decision under pressure"
- "stands firm in difficult times"
- "able to make unpopular decisions which have to be accepted and implemented by the team"

5.3.3 COMMUNICATOR

Focus groups identified two facets of communication as being important for leaders to be good at. One was to do with giving information, generously and clearly. The other was the ability to listen effectively. Well practiced, both demonstrate respect for the people being communicated with. These samples illustrate the point:

- "communicates with respect to people at *all* levels irrespective of seniority in the organisation, and in return they will respect and support him/her"
- "informs subordinates of *anything* that affects them – good or bad, vision, strategies, changes; grapevines are very dangerous and more powerful than the actual facts"
- "keeps team members informed of what is going on in the business, and his/her direction/objectives"
- "doing this helps team members to understand their shortfalls, which will lead to improving these, which will in turn benefit the business"
- "explains and simplifies complex issues"
- "listener – causes team members to love, respect and follow him/her"
- "good listener – listens to team members, not rushing to take quick decisions"
- "listens to other people otherwise you won't be leading anyone and people won't say anything"
- "listens to followers' problems *and* acts on them"

- "willing to receive challenges/constructive criticism – is not defensive"

5.3.4 TEAM DEVELOPER / EMPOWERER

Both task and relationship aspects of a leader's role with respect to teams were identified by focus groups. Regarding the former, effective leaders develop their team members, fully utilise their capabilities and ideas, and provide feedback. In addition, they build unity in the team and empathise with their subordinates' difficulties. These views are expressed in the following examples:

- "builds unity; builds teamwork to achieve the objectives as a team, not individuals"
- "respects and elicits ideas of team members"
- "gives support for people's ideas, encourages their creativity and proactivity"
- "takes team members' views into account when taking decisions which affect the team"
- "utilises *all* team members to the full, enabling them to reach their full potential, not focusing on just some of them"
- "knows their strengths and weaknesses and builds on them, to get the best out of them; gives them appropriate tasks to utilise their strengths"
- "knows that 'knowledge is power' and must be shared"
- "ensures team members have both responsibility *and* authority"
- "develops others, multiplies him/herself"
- "recognises employees who do well/go the extra mile, and not only when they are doing badly, i.e. they give positive as well as negative feedback"
- "gives positive *and* negative feedback, in a constructive, not destructive way"
- "has empathy/team members' interests at heart, as well as the organisation's"
- "understands team members' problems – this will ensure the team works together with trust towards a common objective"
- "a leader who has these qualities will result in people treating the business as their own and they will 'go the extra mile'"

5.3.5 APPROACHABLE / OPEN

According to the focus groups, effective leaders have well-developed social skills. They build closeness with subordinates and have a manner of approach which puts them at ease, as described by these examples:

- "has a genuine liking for people; able to interact with others"
- "sociable/approachable, someone you feel free to speak to – are not intimidated"
- "builds rapport; subordinates are then at ease communicating with him/her; they get to trust their leader; they will then do anything for him/her because they won't be questioning him/her motives"
- "no matter how stern you are: don't have to be soft: if you've already built rapport it creates a good working environment – subordinates can approach you about anything"
- "is visible, not always in his/her office"
- "is not distant, but 'closes the gap' between him/her and team members – this leads to trust"
- "understands cultural diversity"

5.3.6 CONSISTENT / IMPARTIAL

Focus groups expressed the opinion that effective leaders are people of principle who are consistent in their behaviour and treat others with impartiality irrespective of their position in the organisation. They are therefore trustworthy and reliable. This is encapsulated in the following examples:

- "not impulsive"
- "not moody or temperamental"
- "treats others the way he/she wants to be treated"
- "his/her "no" is a "no" and "yes" is a "yes" to *everybody*; example: doesn't allow one person to do something, e.g. clock in at the boom gate (for cars), but everyone else has to clock in at the turnstile"
- "recognises people for the role/responsibility/contribution they make, rather than their rank in the hierarchy - i.e. does not show favouritism to someone more senior because of their rank"

- "unbiased/impartial/ fair – no favouritism; no nepotism; treats people equally"
- "consistent but not rigid; doesn't change his/her mind from one day to the next"
- "trustworthy – does what he/she says he/she will do; people can rely on him/her"
- "sticks to his/her principle no matter who the person is whom he/she is dealing with"
- "is not influenced by personal feelings – bases his/her decisions on facts and the merits of the issue, not on what he/feels about the person making the case"
- "is incorruptible, not influenced by attempts to corrupt"

5.3.7 COMMITMENT BUILDER / INFLUENCER

Focus groups portrayed effective leaders as those who are able to influence and build enthusiasm and commitment among their subordinates in pursuance of a common goal, as depicted by the following examples:

- "encourages team members when things have gone wrong – when they are shaking/scared, he/she spreads calm, stills the heart"
- "induces excitement, enthusiasm (people nodding before he/she's finished speaking)"
- "gets people 'on sides'/'buy-in' to the cause"
- "builds commitment; able to inspire"
- "motivates his/her people"
- " can persuade and influence team members"
- "influences others to change"
- "influences people to resolve issues; has skills to bring people to a common agreement"
- "helps the team solve problems constructively, focusing on the problem, not the person"
- "understands the culture of people *vis a vis* organisational values, and able to bring alignment between the two"

5.3.8 TECHNICAL / BUSINESS EXPERT

Focus groups shared the opinion that effective leaders have expertise in their own functional discipline as well as the broader business, and pass on this knowledge to their subordinates. They are, however, at the same time, able to acknowledge their limitations. These points were made in the following examples:

- "does not have to be told what to do"
- "has technical expertise in his/her own area of the operation"
- "the whole business, not only his/her area"
- "knowledgeable, a knowledge resource"
- "able to guide, mentor and develop team members"
- "builds subordinates' knowledge and understanding of the business – result: they will look up to you"
- "by virtue of his/her knowledge, skills, experience and attitude, enables me to trust him/her, *without coercion*"
- "able to acknowledge that he/she doesn't know everything"
- "willing to take advice"

5.3.9 VISIONARY / ALIGNER

Effective leaders, in the opinion of the focus groups, build vision and direction for the future of the organisation, and harness and align the energies of their subordinates behind the achievement of the vision. This leadership activity is seen in the following examples:

- "shows the way/gives direction"
- "mobilises and inspires people towards a vision"
- "has clear and open vision, aligned to the organisation's goals, well communicated to his/her team"
- "is passionate about it"
- "shares where he/she wants the team to be in order to achieve the organisation's vision"

- "coaches them to reach the vision – this builds motivation, and they feel accountable and responsible"
- "ensures that employees understand the business in such a way that they are able to align their individual objectives to the departmental goal"
- "is not only focussed on the past, but looks to the current situation, *and* the future"
- "sets goals for the future"

5.3.10 CHANGE AGENT

Finally, effective leaders are flexible, willing to embrace change at a personal level, take risks and encourage their subordinates to be innovative, and drive organisational change in response to or in anticipation of changes in the external environment. The following examples illustrate these attributes:

- "embraces change, displays a positive attitude towards change – people look to their leader and if he/she is negative, people will mirror his/her attitude and behaviour – the leader is a window through which the people view the outside world"
- "willing to change his/her mind, but *only* for the better (i.e. not for wrong reasons), in the interests of the people and the business"
- "is a change agent – initiates change for the good of the organisation"
- "enables new insights, resulting in team members saying 'Why didn't I think of that?!'"
- "enables his/her people to change to new situations"
- "is a step ahead of team members, more knowledgeable; can see further than others (in his or her head)"
- "prepared to take risks; not scared to see team members try out new ideas"
- "does not confine them to the status quo ('this is how we do things here')"
- "willing for them to make mistakes in the process and defends them re the consequences"
- "thinks 'outside the box', i.e. does not operate in isolation/own silo; understands the bigger picture, and the possible impact of change on other areas of the business"

- "dynamic, flexible, able to adapt to a changing environment, e.g. socio-political/ economic changes"
- "understands the society's culture *and* the organisation's culture, but is above both and therefore is not stuck, but able to influence people to take them beyond the current situation to a future of different possibilities"

5.4 SYNTHESIS

It is apparent from the presentation of the individual interview results that subjects found 14 skills or attributes which they judged to be requirements for leadership effectiveness. These were perceived to fall into three clusters. The first was a personal skills or attributes cluster comprising four inner-directed leader activities. These were termed the 'Who?' component of leadership. The second was an interactive skills cluster comprising four relationship-directed leader activities. These were termed the 'How?' component of leadership. The third was a task accomplishment skills cluster comprising six task or organisation-directed leader activities. These were termed the 'What?' component of leadership.

The focus group discussion results were also reported on. Ten skills or attributes perceived by the subjects to be requirements for leadership effectiveness were identified. A cursory reading of the findings indicates a remarkable similarity of opinion between the two samples. This is explored in the analysis and discussion of results in the following Chapter.

CHAPTER SIX

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the results of the individual interviews (the leaders) and the focus group discussions (the subordinates) will be analysed and compared. Thereafter the research results as a whole will be compared with the Kouzes and Posner and Kets de Vries leadership models, and with the leadership theories discussed in the literature review. Afrocentric approaches to leadership as embodied in the concept of *ubuntu* will be discussed. Conclusions will then be drawn on the research question framed in Chapter One.

6.2 COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS: INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

It is readily apparent from the research results as reported in Chapter Five that there is a strong correlation in the conceptions of what constitutes effective leadership between the leader sample individual interviews and the subordinate sample focus group discussions. No important differences are discernable upon close analysis.

For example, the focus groups identified the need for leaders to "acknowledge knowledge gaps" and be "willing to take advice", while the individual interviews expressed the view that effective leaders "understand continuous learning to be essential". The individual interviews said that leaders need to "treat subordinates equally, without favouritism", while the focus groups stated that leaders must be "unbiased, impartial and [apply] equal treatment without favouritism". As a final illustration of the similarity of thinking between the two samples, the individual interviews stated that effective leaders "delegate, involve, develop and harness individual strengths" of subordinates, and the focus groups were of the opinion that leaders should "assign responsibility and authority, develop subordinates, and utilise all to the full".

The key dimensions of every attribute or skill identified by the focus group discussions are encompassed by those from the individual interviews. Likewise the salient features of every attribute or skill identified by the individual interviews are covered by those from the focus group discussions. This conclusion is illustrated via a comparative analysis between the focus group discussion results and those of the individual interviews, undertaken below.

A summary of the correlation between the two, from which the illustrative examples above were taken, can be found in Table 6.1 at the conclusion of this section, on pages 150-152. For each attribute or skill, a representative sample only of key phrases is recorded in the Table for illustrative purposes since they are reported on in detail in Chapter Five.

6.2.1 PERSONAL SKILLS / ATTRIBUTES

Beginning with the four personal skills or attributes identified in the individual interviews, the first is *Continuous learning and self-development*. Subjects recognised this as essential in an ever-changing environment. This quality is characterised by willingness to be led, non-defensiveness when receiving feedback, readiness to acknowledge mistakes, and openness to learning from a variety of learning sources. While the focus groups did not identify this characteristic specifically, a number of others which they identified made reference to it. Their *Communicator* leadership practice identifies effective leaders as those who are open to constructive criticism as opposed to being defensive. Leaders demonstrating the *Technical/business expert* practice readily concede that they have knowledge gaps and display a willingness to take advice, while *Courageous* leaders freely acknowledge their faults.

Individual interview subjects recognised *Self-awareness and self-management* as an important leadership attribute. Leaders with this attribute exhibit a psychological robustness in that they accept rather than become frustrated by their own limitations and failures, and move on to the next challenge. They exhibit honest self-insight with a willingness to challenge themselves, optimism and determination and control of their emotions. As with the individual interview subjects' first skill/attribute, focus groups did not identify this characteristic specifically. However, a number of others which they identified

did contain similar features. Leaders exhibiting the *Consistent/impartial* leadership practice are not impulsive, moody, or temperamental and *Courageous* leaders do not blame others for their own mistakes. The notion of emotional intelligence was not mentioned by any subject in either the individual interviews or focus groups. Yet these attributes speak directly of the concept (Goleman, 1995).

A further leadership attribute identified by individual interview subjects was *Boldness and courage, with openness*. Leaders showing evidence of this attribute are decisive and they stand by their decisions even in the face of criticism. Yet simultaneously they are not so single-minded as to not be open to changing their stance if presented with convincing reasons to do so. Focus groups identified a similar attribute. *Courageous* leaders stand firm in the face of opposition. They are willing to be unpopular but are at the same time flexible enough to admit fault.

Individual interview subjects identified *Role model of integrity/honesty and consistency between word and deed* as a further important leadership attribute. Leaders displaying this attribute understand that credibility and trust are earned and do not automatically come with the position. They earn these through being examples of integrity and honesty and consistent behaviour, typified by the term 'practice what you preach'. Focus groups identified attributes which encapsulate the same ideas. Their *Role model/example* attribute highlights effective leaders as those who earn respect through the integrity of their character, which includes being honest, having good practices and leading by example or 'walking the talk'. Their *Consistent/impartial* attribute describes leaders who do not continually change their minds, but are at the same time also not rigid.

6.2.2 INTERACTIVE SKILLS

Turning to the interactive skills identified in the individual interviews, the first was *Excellent multi-directional communication*. This entails giving information to direct, motivate and influence, and giving positive and negative feedback. As important is seeking information and listening. Focus groups identified a comparable attribute. Their *Communicator* shares relevant information

generously with people at all levels, gives both positive and negative feedback and is a good listener.

The next leadership skill identified by individual interview subjects was *Build team relationships*. Leaders practising this skill build relational closeness. They take care to get to know their subordinates' strengths and weaknesses, harnessing their strengths, as well as enabling their subordinates to know them. They are visible and accessible. Again, the focus groups identified an equivalent skill, namely *Team developer/empowerer*. This entails building teamwork, developing subordinates, knowing their strengths and assigning tasks accordingly, and empathising with their problems.

A further skill identified in individual interviews was *Show respect/consideration*. This involves earning respect by respecting subordinates, even when undertaking disciplinary action, acknowledging their presence and contribution, and being humble, with a respectful manner of approach, particularly with elders. While the focus groups did not identify this skill specifically, a number of others which they identified made patent reference to it. For example, leaders practicing the *Approachable/open* skill are not distant or intimidating with subordinates. They are approachable, build rapport and understand cultural diversity, while the *Team developer/empowerer* respects subordinates' contributions.

The final interactive leadership skill identified by individual interview subjects was *Practice fairness*. This entails treating subordinates equally, without favouritism, and being fair and reasonable. The focus groups identified a similar skill, namely *Consistent/impartial*. This skill entails executing impartial, equal and unbiased treatment without favouritism irrespective of whom the person is or their position in the organisation.

6.2.3 TASK ACCOMPLISHMENT SKILLS

Proceeding to the task accomplishment skills identified in the individual interviews, the first was *Technical competence*. Leaders with this skill have proven knowledge in their own discipline as well as deep general business knowledge, and are able to exercise an array of management skills. The focus

groups identified an equivalent skill in *Technical/business expert*. Leaders with this skill demonstrate technical expertise in their own area of operation as well as across the whole business, and they develop their subordinates by passing on their knowledge.

According to the individual interview subjects, effective leaders also *Provide direction*. They envisage the future, they craft, share and align subordinates behind a vision for that future, and they communicate the goals of the organisation. Focus groups identified a corresponding skill in *Visionary/aligner*. Visionary leaders are future-focused, with a clear vision for the future. They communicate it, mobilise, inspire and align people around it, and they set goals to achieve it.

Effective leaders also *Drive change*, according to the individual interview results. They are responsive to a changing environment, as well as being willing to change themselves. They communicate with and involve people in the change process, and are people of passion. Again the focus groups identified a corresponding skill, namely *Change agent*. Such leaders are able to adapt to a changing environment and are willing to change personally. They also enable others to change, and encourage subordinates to take risks and learn from their mistakes. Under their *Visionary/aligner* skill the focus groups identified effective leaders as being passionate.

The ability to *Influence others' thinking and behaviour* was a further skill identified in the individual interviews. This entails influencing others, rather than relying on positional power, to change their thinking or approach to a new level or to see things from a different perspective. Focus groups also identified this skill in their *Commitment builder/influencer*. Such leaders inspire enthusiasm and commitment, influence others to solve problems constructively, and encourage their subordinates.

The individual interview subjects further identified effective leaders as those who *Hold self and subordinates accountable*. They do not avoid confronting poor performance in subordinates, but do so in the right manner. They also take personal responsibility for poor performance if appropriate. They recognise good performance. The focus group results highlight the same

practices. Their *Team developer/empowerer* skill identifies effective leaders as those who give positive and negative feedback constructively and recognise good performance.

Individual interview subjects understood effective leaders as those who *Empower subordinates to deliver optimum performance*. They delegate, involve and express confidence in their subordinates. They develop them and harness their individual strengths and have an understanding of interdependence with them. Focus groups expressed a similar view in their *Team developer/empowerer* skill. Leaders exercising this skill assign responsibility and authority, develop their subordinates and build on their strengths and weaknesses, utilising them all to the full.

Finally, individual interview subjects' understanding that environmental factors can influence leadership practice is seen in the focus group subjects' *Change agent* skill which encompasses, among other things, the ability to adapt to a changing environment.

That there is considerable correlation between what the leader and subordinate samples believe to be the key characteristics of effective leadership has been established. It therefore also follows that the themes identified in the focus group results fit well into the individual interview results model of personal, interactive and task accomplishment skills as depicted in Figure 5.1, page 102.

Further important features common to both samples are now discussed.

6.2.4 INSEPARABLE LINKS

One of the most significant ideas which becomes apparent from an analysis of the results of both the individual interviews and focus group discussions is an understanding by both of the close interrelationship and inseparable link between relationship-directed and task-directed leadership practices, reminding one of the behavioural theories' dimensions.

For example the relational closeness discussed under the individual interviews' *Build team relationships* leadership practice, "...creates that environment where

productivity is enhanced." It was also reported under this practice that leaders' knowledge of their subordinates and care for their welfare, even beyond the workplace, impacts on their motivation. Similarly, the views articulated under the individual interviews' *Show respect/consideration* leadership practice describe a direct relationship between leaders being respectful and showing consideration in interactions with their subordinates, and the consequent initiative, motivation, productivity and goal achievement displayed by the latter. Likewise the discussion reported under the individual interviews' *Influence others' thinking and behaviour* leadership practice illustrates subjects' understanding that leaders' manner of approach has an impact on the effectiveness of their influencing ability.

As with the influencing skill, the discussion reported under the individual interviews' leadership practice of *Hold self and subordinates accountable* demonstrates subjects' understanding that the manner in which leaders go about holding subordinates accountable is critical to the effectiveness of this activity. This sentiment was similarly expressed by the focus groups as reported under the *Team developer/empowerer* leadership practice.

The views of focus groups as reported under the same practice also show an appreciation of the positive correlation between effective communication and treating people with respect on the one hand, and business performance on the other. Under the individual interviews' leadership practice of *Excellent multi-directional communication* the value of the skills of seeking information and listening for the purpose of solving business problems was plainly expressed, as were the negative consequences to business performance of not practicing these relationship-directed skills.

A comparable relationship can be discerned in the report on the focus groups' views regarding both the *Team developer/empowerer* and *Approachable/open* leadership practices. A clear link was understood to exist between the relationship aspects of these practices, such as rapport-building and having empathy with subordinates' problems, and the subordinates' identification with the business and commitment to working towards achieving the business objectives. The observation "...they will then do anything for him/her." portrays the power of this relationship.

Moreover, not only is there an inseparable link between the relationship-directed and task-directed leadership activities, but also between them and the inner-directed personal skills or attributes. Analysis of both the individual interviews and focus group discussions illustrates this. For example leaders' ability to control their emotions and impulses (the *Self-awareness and self-management* individual interview skill and the *Consistent/impartial* focus group discussions skill) will determine their ability to interact with subordinates appropriately (the *Show respect/consideration* individual interview skill and the *Approachable/ open* focus group discussions skill). Leaders' integrity, honesty and good example (the *Role model of integrity/honesty and consistency between word and deed* individual interview skill and the *Role model/example* focus group discussions skill) will have an influence on their effectiveness in exercising fair and consistent treatment towards their subordinates (the *Practice fairness* individual interview skill and the *Consistent/impartial* focus group discussions skill). Leaders' ability to stand up for their decisions and their subordinates even in the face of opposition (the *Boldness and courage, with openness* individual interview skill and the *Courageous* focus group discussions skill) will earn subordinates' loyalty and commitment to deliver mentioned in a number of both the individual interview skills and the focus group discussions skills.

Leaders' willingness to continually learn, be challenged, take feedback and change at a personal level (the *Continuous learning and self-development* individual interview skill and the *Communicator* and *Courageous* focus group discussions skills) is seen to be a prerequisite to drive change at an organisational level (the *Drive change* individual interview skill and the *Change agent* focus group discussions skill). In other words, the same paradigm applies to both. Leaders' observations on the gradual evolution and maturing of their leadership practices, which reflects the dynamic interaction between them and their environment, is also evidence of the practice of these skills.

6.2.5 BALANCING OPPOSITES

Furthermore, analysis of the research results points to a significant challenge faced by leaders. That is, in order to be effective, leaders need to have the ability to maintain a delicate balance between seemingly opposite practices and

attributes which have been identified by both research samples. The following examples serve to illustrate this point. Leaders need to be bold (the *Boldness and courage, with openness* individual interview skill and the *Courageous* focus group discussions skill) but also humble and willing to admit mistakes (the *Show respect/consideration* individual interview skill and the *Courageous* focus group discussions skill).

Discussion under the same skills indicates that boldness and courage alone are not sufficient for ensuring leadership effectiveness. Single-mindedness and holding one's position under pressure on the one hand, and flexibility and openness on the other, need to be held together in creative tension. Similarly under the *Change agent* leadership practice, focus groups expressed the opinion that leaders need to be flexible enough to change their viewpoint but at the same time do so only for good reason, "...in the interests of the people and the business."

A comparable dexterity and wisdom is required to balance providing the direction expected of leadership (the *Provide direction* individual interview skill and the *Visionary/aligner* focus group discussions skill) and enabling a level of subordinate contribution to crafting that direction (the *Empower subordinates to deliver optimum performance* individual interview skill and the *Team developer/empowerer* group discussions skill). This is indeed "...the art of leadership." as expressed by the subject quoted in the Introduction of Chapter Five.

6.2.6 MOTIVATION

A final observation is that comparatively little reference was made, in either the individual interviews or the focus group discussions, to the idea that effective leaders motivate their subordinates. It did not come close to meriting consideration as a code during the analysis of the scripts. This leads one to conclude that if leaders develop the attributes and practice the skills identified by the subjects, that in itself generates a motivational context. Leaders cannot motivate subordinates by telling them to be motivated. What they can do, taking into account relevant environmental factors, is craft the conditions in which subordinates are self-motivated. They do this through who they are and how they relate, and by doing the right things. What comprises these three

elements has been identified by both the individual interviews and focus group discussions, with remarkable consistency between the two.

In concluding this part of the analysis it can be said that the quality of leaders' personal skills and attributes form the foundation for excellent interactive skills, which in turn determine the effectiveness of their task accomplishment skills. All of these are moderated but not sacrificed as they play themselves out in relationship with a variety of environmental factors, and in subtle tension with each other. Leaders who have mastered the personal skills and attributes are effective at creating an environment where subordinates are committed and motivated, which in turn leads to effective task accomplishment and organisational success. This is depicted in Figure 5.1 on page 106.

Table 6.1 Comparison of leadership practices identified by individual interview and focus group discussion research results

PERSONAL SKILLS / ATTRIBUTES inner-directed activities – the 'Who?'	
Individual interviews	Focus groups
Continuous learning and self-development – understand continuous learning to be essential in an ever-changing environment; willing to be led; not defensive; acknowledge mistakes; variety of learning sources.	Communicator – open to constructive criticism; not defensive. Technical/business expert – acknowledge knowledge gaps; willing to take advice. Courageous – acknowledge faults.
Self-awareness and self-management – accept own limitations and failures and move on; psychological robustness; honest self-insight; willing to challenge self; optimism and determination; control of emotions.	Consistent/impartial – not impulsive, moody, temperamental. Courageous – does not blame others for own mistakes.
Boldness and courage, with openness – decisive, stand by decisions even in the face of criticism; not so single-minded not to be open to changing stance.	Courageous – stand firm in the face of opposition; willing to be unpopular; flexible enough to admit fault.
Role model of integrity/honesty and consistency between word and deed – earn credibility and trust; example of integrity and honesty; consistent behaviour – 'practice what you preach'.	Role model/example – earn respect; integrity of character; good practices; honest; lead by example; 'walk the talk'. Consistent/impartial – do not continually change mind, but also not rigid.

INTERACTIVE SKILLS relationship-directed activities – the 'How?'	
Individual interviews	Focus groups
Excellent multi-directional communication – give information to direct, motivate and influence; give positive and negative feedback; as important is seeking information and listening.	Communicator – share relevant information generously with people at all levels; give positive and negative feedback; good listener.
Build team relationships – relational closeness – know subordinates' strengths and weaknesses, and be known to them; harness their strengths; visible, accessible.	Team developer/empowerer – build teamwork; develop subordinates; know their strengths and assign tasks accordingly; empathise with their problems.
Show respect/consideration – earn respect by respecting subordinates, even in a disciplinary situation; acknowledge their presence and contribution; humble; willing to apologise; respectful manner of approach, particularly with elders.	Approachable/open – not distant or intimidating with subordinates; build rapport; approachable; understand cultural diversity. Team developer/empowerer – seek out and respect subordinates' contributions.
Practice fairness – treat subordinates equally, without favouritism; fair and reasonable.	Consistent/impartial – unbiased, impartial and equal treatment without favouritism irrespective of who they are or their position in the organisation.

TASK ACCOMPLISHMENT SKILLS task/organisation-directed activities – the 'What?'	
Individual interviews	Focus groups
Technical competence – proven knowledge in own discipline, as well as deep general business knowledge; array of management skills.	Technical/business expert – technical expertise in own area as well as whole business; develop subordinates with this knowledge.
Provide direction – envisage the future; craft, share and align subordinates behind a vision for the future; communicate the goals of the organisation.	Visionary/aligner – future-focused; clear vision for the future; communicate it, mobilise, inspire and align; set goals to achieve it.
Drive change – responsive to a changing environment; willing to change oneself; communicate with and involve people in the change process; have passion.	Change agent – able to adapt to a changing environment; understand the 'bigger picture' and its change impact; willing to change personally; enable others to change; encourage subordinates to take risks and learn from mistakes. Visionary/aligner – passionate.

<p><i>Influence others' thinking and behaviour</i> – influence others to change their thinking or approach to a new level, to see things from a different perspective, rather than rely on positional power.</p>	<p><i>Commitment builder/influencer</i> – inspire enthusiasm and commitment; influence others to solve problems constructively; encourage subordinates.</p>
<p><i>Hold self and subordinates accountable</i> – do not avoid confronting poor performance in subordinates, but in the right manner; take personal accountability for poor performance; recognise good performance.</p>	<p><i>Team developer/empowerer</i> – give positive and negative feedback, constructively; recognise good performance.</p>
<p><i>Empower subordinates to deliver optimum performance</i> – delegate; involve; express confidence; develop and harness individual strengths; have an understanding of interdependence with subordinates.</p>	<p><i>Team developer/empowerer</i> – assign responsibility and authority; develop subordinates; build on their strengths and weaknesses; utilise all to the full.</p>

6.3 COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS: RESEARCH RESULTS AND ESTABLISHED LEADERSHIP MODELS AND THEORIES

Having analysed the research results of the individual interviews and focus group discussions, these are now discussed in relation to the Kets de Vries and Kouzes and Posner leadership models as laid out in Chapter Three, and the leadership theories discussed in Chapter Two.

6.3.1 RESEARCH RESULTS AND THE KETS DE VRIES AND KOUZES AND POSNER LEADERSHIP MODELS

Analysis indicates a strong correlation between the research results and the Kets de Vries and Kouzes and Posner leadership models.

For example, under the common theme of visioning, aligning and inspiring, the focus groups said that leaders must have a "clear vision for the future", and must "communicate it, mobilise, inspire and align" subordinates, and be "passionate". The individual interviews expressed the view that leaders need to "craft, share and align subordinates behind a vision for the future", and "have passion". In the opinion of Kouzes and Posner leaders must have a "picture of a desirable future state different from the present", and "align subordinates by passion and enthusiasm." Kets de Vries states that leaders should have a

"compelling picture of a common future", and "articulate, share and enact it" with "enthusiasm and passion".

Comparative analysis shows that there is a correlation between all of the leadership skills identified by the focus group discussions, individual interviews and Kouzes and Posner, and eight of Kets de Vries' 12 leadership skills, namely *Visioning, Empowering, Energising, Designing and aligning, Rewarding and giving feedback, Team building, Tenacity and Emotional intelligence*.

This conclusion is demonstrated in Table 6.2, from which the illustrative examples above were taken, at the end of this discussion, on pages 156-160. As with Table 6.1, a representative sample only of key phrases for each theme is recorded in Table 6.2 for illustrative purposes since they are reported on in detail in Chapter Five, and likewise for the Kouzes and Posner and Kets de Vries leadership practices, which were discussed in detail in Chapter Three.

The three Kets de Vries practices which do not have a counterpart in those of Kouzes and Posner's model, namely *Global mindset, Life balance and Resilience to stress* have been discussed in Section 3.4 of Chapter Three. It was shown that, while not present in Kouzes and Posner's model specifically, they are nevertheless encompassed in their research findings and writings.

The three Kets de Vries practices which were not found in the research results, namely *Outside orientation, Life balance and Resilience to stress* are now discussed. The first, also identified by Kouzes and Posner, is *Outside orientation*. A possible explanation for this omission is that it is a reflection on the nature of the sector and industry from which the research sample came, which has less emphasis on external stakeholders than other sectors and industries do.

The remaining two, *Life balance and Resilience to stress*, were also not found in the Kouzes and Posner model. It can again be argued, as was done in Chapter Three, that these have to do with emotional intelligence. In this case elements of other skills identified in the research find resonance with these, such as the psychological robustness and honest self-insight skills of the *Self-awareness and self-management* practice.

The only skill identified by the individual interviews and focus group discussions which is not covered by Kets de Vries or Kouzes and Posner is that relating to technical expertise, namely *Technical Competence* and *Technical/business expert* respectively.

The planning and organising, budgeting and cost control activities highlighted by the research subjects typify those associated with classical management theory discussed in the introductory section of Chapter Two. The fact that subjects identified them as integral to leadership effectiveness supports the widely held view that the debate should not be an 'either-or' one *vis-à-vis* management versus leadership. Rather, both have their place in organisational life with one complementing the other.

The fact that they are not articulated in the Kets de Vries and Kouzes and Posner models does not *ipso facto* imply that they view them as unnecessary skills for leaders to possess. Rather, these two leadership models conceivably assumed them to be a given and so foundational in nature as not to be worth mentioning. For example such skills would be understood to be in place for a leader to be able to design systems to align subordinates with the organisation's vision and goals (Kets de Vries), and to be able to be an example of performance excellence and develop subordinates' competence (Kouzes and Posner). In terms of the research question, therefore, it is argued that this omission is not significant.

It should be noted that, while Kouzes and Posner's model does not include the attribute of competence, their research, as discussed in Chapter Three, nevertheless found this to be one of the four most important leader attributes by which subordinates define effective leaders (the other three, honest, forward-looking and inspiring, are encompassed in their model. (Kouzes and Posner, 2002: 25-31).

Furthermore, while not encompassed in his model, Kets de Vries (2001: 290) nevertheless argues elsewhere that "Task-relevant knowledge is ...essential."

Both Kouzes and Posner and Kets de Vries assert that factors external to leaders play a significant role in their leadership practice. The research results

unequivocally support this view. The factors identified by the research and reported on in Chapter Five section 5.2.4 were the business environment, the organisational culture, the nature of the task, the subordinates' education level, capacity and experience, and cultural norms, and the leaders' peers as well as their own leaders. These influencing factors are all encompassed by one or the other of Kets de Vries' two categories of followers or situation.

In summary, a correlation exists between the leadership skills identified by the research and all but one of the Kouzes and Posner and all but three of the Kets de Vries skills. All but one of the skills identified by the research correlates with those of Kets de Vries and Kouzes and Posner. The gaps have been discussed and argued to be not significant. Furthermore, there is an alignment of views about the impact of environmental factors on leadership practices between the research results, Kouzes and Posner and Kets de Vries.

Table 6.2 Comparison of leadership practices identified by Kets de Vries, Kouzes & Posner, the individual interview research results and the focus group research results.

Kets de Vries	Kouzes and Posner	Interview Subjects	Focus Groups
<p>Visioning – compelling picture of common future; articulate, share and enact it; build pride, confidence and trust; inspire striving for success; challenge the status quo; open to change.</p>	<p>Envision the future – picture of a desirable future state different from the present. Enlist others – to see an exciting common desirable future which meets their needs and hopes; inspire and align subordinates by passion and enthusiasm. Search for opportunities – action-oriented; challenge status quo; encourage initiative; initiate change.</p>	<p>Provide direction – envisage the future; craft, share and align subordinates behind a vision for the future; communicate the goals of the organisation. Drive change – responsive to a changing environment; willing to change oneself; communicate with and involve people in the change process.</p>	<p>Visionary/aligner – future-focused; clear vision for the future; communicate it, mobilise, inspire and align; set goals to achieve it. Change agent – able to adapt to a changing environment; understand the 'bigger picture' and its change impact; willing to change personally; enable others to change.</p>
<p>Empowering – involve in decision-making; create sense of ownership; delegate authority to take decisions; provide information and skills; high performance expectations; view mistakes as learning opportunities.</p>	<p>Strengthen others – empower, build competence; encourage self-leadership; results in ownership and commitment to success of task; win others' trust. Experiment and take risks – support innovation and risk-taking; view failure as learning opportunity for improvement.</p>	<p>Empower subordinates to deliver optimum performance –understand interdependence with subordinates; delegate; involve; express confidence; develop and harness individual strengths. Excellent multi-directional communication – give information to direct, motivate and influence; as important is</p>	<p>Team developer/ empowerer –assign responsibility and authority; develop subordinates; build on their strengths and weaknesses; utilise all to the full. Change agent –encourage subordinates to take risks and learn from mistakes. Communicator – share relevant information generously with people at all</p>

Kets de Vries	Kouzes and Posner	Interview Subjects	Focus Groups
		seeking information and listening.	levels; good listener.
Energising – action-oriented; mobilise towards goal accomplishment via self-confidence, enthusiasm and passion; role model; lead by example; persevere.	Enlist others – inspire and align subordinates by passion and enthusiasm. Set an example – live the values and practice how others should be treated; honesty – integrity and trustworthiness; 'walk the talk'; consistent;	Drive change – have passion. Role model of integrity/honesty and consistency – earn credibility and trust; example of integrity and honesty; consistent behaviour – 'practice what you preach'.	Visionary/aligner – passionate. Role model/example – earn respect; integrity of character; good practices; honest; lead by example; 'walk the talk'. Consistent/impartial – do not continually change mind, but also not rigid.
Designing and aligning – align employee values, attitudes and behaviours with organisational vision, values and culture; set clear goals and standards and hold subordinates accountable.	Enlist others – inspire and align subordinates by passion and enthusiasm. Set an example – set standards of performance excellence; hold subordinates accountable. Experiment and take risks – influence and persuade.	Provide direction – align subordinates; communicate the goals of the organisation. Influence others' thinking and behaviour – influence others to change their thinking or approach to a new level, to see things from a different perspective, rather than rely on positional power.	Visionary/aligner – mobilise, inspire and align; set goals; passionate. Commitment builder/influencer – inspire enthusiasm and commitment; influence others to solve problems constructively; encourage subordinates.
Rewarding and giving feedback – reward desired performance; give regular feedback for good and poor performance; celebrate achievements, whether large or small; develop subordinates.	Recognise contributions – high performance expectations; acknowledge and reward good performance; build relationships through care and compassion. Celebrate the values and	Hold self and subordinates accountable – do not avoid confronting poor performance in subordinates, but in the right manner; take personal accountability for poor performance; recognise good	Team developer/ empowerer – give positive and negative feedback, constructively; recognise good performance; develop subordinates.

Kets de Vries	Kouzes and Posner	Interview Subjects	Focus Groups
	<p>victories – publicly acknowledge achievement; celebrate accomplishments.</p> <p>Strengthen others – build competence.</p>	<p>performance as well.</p> <p>Excellent multi-directional communication – give positive and negative feedback.</p> <p>Empower subordinates to deliver optimum performance – develop and harness individual strengths.</p>	
<p>Team building – ownership and trust through involvement in decision-making; build commitment and collaboration towards common goal; welcome diverse views; constructive conflict resolution.</p>	<p>Foster collaboration – understand that the best is achieved through team effort, not leader alone; engage all relevant stakeholders; involvement in decision-making.</p> <p>Celebrate the values and victories – build community spirit.</p>	<p>Build team relationships – relational closeness – know subordinates' strengths and weaknesses, and be known to them; harness their strengths; visible, accessible.</p> <p>Empower subordinates to deliver optimum performance – understand interdependence with subordinates; delegate; involve; express confidence.</p>	<p>Team developer/ empowerer – build teamwork; know subordinates' strengths and assign responsibility and authority accordingly; utilise all to the full; seek out and respect subordinates' contributions; empathise with their problems.</p> <p>Commitment builder/ influencer – influence others to solve problems constructively.</p>
<p>Outside orientation – build relationships with external stakeholders; focus team on meeting customer requirements; socially responsible.</p>	<p>Foster collaboration – with all relevant stakeholders, including external customers and suppliers.</p>		

Kets de Vries	Kouzes and Posner	Interview Subjects	Focus Groups
Global mindset – aware of impact of external issues on organisation; comfortable in multi-cultural environment; avoid cultural stereotyping.		Drive change – responsive to a changing environment. Show respect/ consideration – respectful manner of approach, particularly with elders.	Change agent – able to adapt to a changing environment; understand the 'bigger picture' and its change impact. Approachable/open – understand cultural diversity.
Tenacity – resilient; not easily discouraged; stand up for decisions even if unpopular; principled and courageous.	Search for opportunities – display tenacity and courage in the face of obstacles and setbacks; keep hope alive among subordinates in the face of adversity; courage to stand by convictions. Experiment and take risks – psychological hardiness.	Boldness and courage, with openness – decisive, stand by decisions even in the face of criticism; not so single-minded not to be open to changing stance. Self-awareness and self-management – accept own limitations and failures and move on; psychological robustness; willing to challenge self; optimism and determination.	Courageous – stand firm in the face of opposition; willing to be unpopular; does not blame others for own mistakes; flexible enough to admit fault.
Emotional intelligence – manage emotions well; self-reflection; expand self-awareness; understand impact of behaviour on others; respect others; trustworthy; integrity; others feel at ease with them.	Find your voice – growing self-awareness and self-knowledge; inner quest to discover self – to know strengths and weaknesses, what is important – the values, principles and priorities by which to live and lead; finding an authentic voice to take wise and consistent decisions and	Self-awareness and self-management – honest self-insight; willing to challenge self; control of emotions. Continuous learning and self-development – understand continuous learning to be essential in an ever-changing environment; willing to be led; not defensive;	Consistent/impartial – not impulsive, moody, temperamental. Communicator – open to constructive criticism; not defensive. Technical/business expert – acknowledge knowledge gaps; willing to take advice. Approachable/open – not

Kets de Vries	Kouzes and Posner	Interview Subjects	Focus Groups
	<p>action.</p> <p>Foster collaboration – demonstrate emotional intelligence aptitudes of social awareness and social skills; build trust through sensitivity to subordinates' needs; build respect through careful listening.</p>	<p>acknowledge mistakes; variety of learning sources.</p> <p>Show respect/ consideration – earn respect by respecting subordinates, even in a disciplinary situation; acknowledge their presence and contribution; humble; willing to apologise; respectful manner of approach, particularly with elders.</p> <p>Practice fairness – treat subordinates equally, without favouritism; fair and reasonable.</p> <p>Role model of integrity/ honesty and consistency – earn credibility and trust; example of integrity and honesty.</p>	<p>distant or intimidating with subordinates; build rapport; approachable; understand cultural diversity.</p> <p>Consistent/impartial – unbiased, impartial and equal treatment without favouritism irrespective of person or position.</p> <p>Role model/example – earn respect; integrity of character; good practices; honest.</p>
<p>Life balance – set priorities in both private and professional domains to ensure balanced lifestyle; diverse interests; renewal and reflection.</p>			
<p>Resilience to stress – monitor, take appropriate action to reduce and manage stress.</p>			

6.3.2 RESEARCH RESULTS AND ESTABLISHED LEADERSHIP THEORIES

It was noted in Chapter Two that new 'generations' of leadership theory did not 'disprove' and replace those that went before. Rather, they enhanced and enriched the preceding ones. One would therefore expect to see elements of each 'generation' in the research findings. This has proved to be the case, and is discussed chronologically in the comparative analysis undertaken below.

6.3.2.1 Trait theories

In the discussion of trait theories in Chapter Two it was concluded that, despite a number of difficulties with the trait theory approach, the concept of traits continues to have a place in today's understanding of leadership. This has been borne out by this research, with a number of traits having been identified as necessary for effective leadership. For example the trait of *honesty and integrity* cited in Chapter Two in a study undertaken by Kirkpatrick and Locke (in Robbins, Odendaal, and Roodt, 2001; Senior and Fleming, 2006) and also identified by Kets de Vries in the *Emotional intelligence* skill, was named by both the individual interview (*Role model of integrity/honesty and consistency skills*) and focus group discussion (*Role model/example skill*) samples. *Courage and resolution*, identified by Gardner and also cited in Chapter Two (in Doyle and Smith, 2006), is another. In Kets de Vries it is *Tenacity*, in the individual interviews, *Boldness and courage, with openness*, and in the focus group discussions, *Courageous*.

Furthermore, no traits identified by this research as being essential for effective leadership were not encompassed in those identified by Gardner, whose research context was North American organisations.

6.3.2.2 Behavioural theories

Strong support for the leadership dimensions of behavioural theories as articulated by the Ohio State Studies' two dimensions of *initiating structure* and *consideration* and the University of Michigan Studies' *production oriented* and *employee oriented* dimensions, and an understanding of the inseparable

relationship between the two, was evident in the research results, as well as being present in the Kets de Vries and Kouzes and Posner leadership models.

With regards to the first dimension, Kets de Vries (*Visioning, Designing and aligning* and *Team building* skills), Kouzes and Posner (*Envision the future* and *Set an example* skills), the individual interviews (*Provide direction* and *Hold self and subordinates accountable* and *Empower subordinates to deliver optimum performance* skills) and focus group discussions (*Visionary/aligner, Team developer/ empowerer* and *Communicator* skills) name alignment of behaviour, passion for performance, building commitment, goal and standard setting and accomplishment, delegating, performance feedback and holding subordinates accountable as relevant task-oriented leadership activities.

As to the second dimension, Kets de Vries (*Empowering, Energising, Rewarding and giving feedback, Team building* and *Emotional intelligence* skills), Kouzes and Posner (*Strengthen others, Enlist others, Recognise contributions, Foster collaboration* and *Celebrate the values and victories* skills), the individual interviews (*Empower subordinates to deliver optimum performance, Excellent multi-directional communication, Build team relationships* and *Show respect/consideration* skills) and focus group discussions (*Commitment builder/influencer Team developer/empowerer, approachable/open* and *Communicator* skills) cite involving, informing, expressing confidence, inspiring, encouraging, empathising, building trust and commitment, recognising and celebrating achievements, being consistent and fair, and respecting subordinates as relevant relationship-oriented leadership activities.

The additional leadership dimension of 'development orientation' identified by the Scandinavian Studies (Robbins, Odendaal, and Roodt, 2001), characterised by such leadership behaviour as *valuing experimentation, seeking new ideas* and *initiating change*, was also identified by Kets de Vries (*Visioning, Empowering* and *Team building* skills) and Kouzes and Posner (*Search for opportunities* and *Experiment and take risks* skills), as well as by both the individual interview (*Drive change* skill) and focus group discussion (*Change agent* skill) samples.

This study did not support the notion of an ideal leadership style in all circumstances as posited by behavioural theories. However, the fact that it independently identified the three behavioural theory dimensions as being essential to effective leadership, affirms their relevance to the context in which this research was conducted. This is significant for considering the research question.

It is apparent from the research results that subjects were of the view that any one of a range of leadership styles could be apposite, as per Lewin's Three Classical Styles of Leadership (Swanepoel, Erasmus, van Wyk, and Schenk, 2000: 377) and Tannenbaum and Schmidt's (1973) Continuum of Leadership Behaviour Model discussed in Chapter Two. Which approach is most appropriate is dependent on one or a combination of variables. This leads on to a discussion of the relationship between the research findings and the next 'generation' of leadership theories, namely contingency theories.

6.3.2.3 Contingency theories

The correlation between Kets de Vries' two categories of followers or situations and those variables identified by the research results has already been discussed. Similarly the research results lend credence to contingency theories such as the Reddin (1973) Model, Situation Leadership Theory (Hershey and Blanchard, 1993), Path-Goal Theory (House, 1971; 1996), Cognitive Resource Theory (House and Aditya, 1997) and the Decision Process Theory (House and Aditya, 1997) by virtue of their highlighting the same contingency variables as those identified by these theories. For example, the element of a leader's technical expertise identified by cognitive resource theory was one of the skills identified as necessary by the research. The Path-Goal Theory includes two classes of contingency variables of subordinate characteristics such as experience and perceived ability, and environmental factors such as task structure and nature of the work group. Similarly, among the variables identified by the research were subordinate capacity and experience, and nature of the task. As with the contingency theories, the research subjects expressed the view that, rather than there being one best leadership approach regardless of the situation, different behaviours were appropriate depending on

the contingencies as discussed above. This view would fit comfortably with, for example, the Leader-Participation Model's continuum of five leader behaviours.

The research results yielded a number of points of disagreement with aspects of contingency theories. The first has to do with Fiedler's (1967) Contingency Model. While agreeing with the notion of contingency factors, the agility expected of leaders articulated by the research subjects appears to contradict the model in respect of its assumption of fixed leadership style.

The second area of disagreement concerns elements of the Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) theory (Boje, 2006b; Bauer and Green, 1996; Dienesch and Liden, 1986; Robbins, Odendaal, and Roodt, 2001). The research results demonstrate strong support for a relationship-based approach to understanding leadership. However, both individual interview subjects and focus groups strongly opposed the theory's contention that leaders categorise their subordinates into 'in' and 'out' groups based on perceived levels of competence or similarities to the leader and relate to them accordingly.

According to the research subjects, while leaders should indeed take subordinate contingencies such as their individual preferences, personalities, abilities into account, this should not be done in an unfair way as the notion of 'in' and 'out' groups implies. On the contrary, the individual interviews' *Practice fairness* leadership skill states that effective leaders treat their subordinates equally and without favouritism, while the focus groups' *Consistent/impartial* leadership skill articulates the practice of unbiased, impartial and equal treatment without favouritism irrespective of position in the hierarchy as being a hallmark of effective leadership. While each subordinate is viewed as being unique, each is also treated as one of the 'in' group. Taking into consideration the positive impact on subordinate satisfaction, and therefore performance, of being one of the 'in' group as described in the theory, it seems sensible for leaders to endeavour to make all of their subordinates feel part of that group.

This concern with LMX Theory echoes that expressed by House and Aditya (1997). They note that the 'in' group and 'out' group scenario is descriptive of a naturally occurring process and not necessarily indicative of intentional favouritism towards one or discrimination against another on the part of the

leader. They advise that leaders should be made aware of this naturally occurring tendency and its potentially negative consequences on the organisation and be trained "...to offer high-quality LMX relationships to *all* subordinates." (1997: 436).

Nevertheless in spite of these two areas of difference there is clearly considerable alignment between the research results and contingency theories. Again, this conclusion carries some significance for reaching a view on the research question.

6.3.2.4 Neocharismatic theories

Finally, the relationship between the research findings and neocharismatic theories is discussed. A strong showing of numerous neocharismatic leader attributes and activities in the research findings has been demonstrated in the foregoing analysis. They are discussed below.

The concept of personal integrity, reflected in the practice of 'walking the talk', central to all three neocharismatic theories, was strongly emphasised by the research subjects as constituting a key element of effective leadership. However the emerging ideas on the 'character' of leadership, while present in neocharismatic (and trait) theories (as in the case of integrity), have greater prominence in the research results as seen in the personal skills or attributes identified by subjects, reported in Chapter Five.

The visioning leadership activity common to neocharismatic theories of articulating an appealing vision for the future, providing a sense of purpose, inspiration and mobilisation towards its achievement, was identified by the research subjects as an essential component of effective leadership.

Charismatic Leadership Theory's leader activity of understanding subordinates' needs and abilities, expressing confidence in them and enhancing their self-esteem was identified by the research results, as were transformational leadership's individualised consideration and development of subordinates, and pride, respect and trust-building leadership activities. The practice of living out the values and behaviour aligned to the vision, thereby being an example for

subordinates to emulate, as articulated in both charismatic and visionary leadership theories, was also found in the research results.

Transformational Leadership's attributes of leaders actively seeking to learn from the environment and others, including subordinates, with leaders willing to be led and providing intellectual stimulation by encouraging subordinates to dispute their views resulting in a relationship of mutual challenge and stimulation, have resonance with the research results.

Lastly, leaders' providing inspiration through articulating high performance expectations found in Charismatic and Transformational Leadership Theories was also identified in the research results.

All the above skills and attributes found in neocharismatic theories, Kets de Vries (*Visioning, Empowering, Energising, Designing and aligning, Rewarding and giving feedback, Team building and Emotional intelligence* skills) and Kouzes and Posner (*Envision the future, Enlist others, Strengthen others, Set an example and Foster collaboration* skills), are found in the individual interview (*Provide direction, Empower subordinates to deliver optimum performance, Role model of integrity/honesty and consistency, Build team relationships, Show respect/consideration and Continuous learning and self-development* skills) and focus group discussion (*Visionary/aligner, Role model/example, Team developer/empowerer, Commitment builder/influencer and Approachable /open* skills) results.

When transformational leadership is discussed it is invariably contrasted with transactional leadership. It was noted in Chapter Two that both have a legitimate contribution to make. Kets de Vries' and Kouzes and Posner's leadership models fit most comfortably into the 'generation' of neocharismatic, and hence transformational, theories, yet elements of transactional leadership practices such as goal-setting and rewarding are also present. Similarly, while the research results demonstrate substantial evidence of transformational leadership practices, so too are transactional ones in evidence. For example the individual interviews' *Provide direction* leadership skill encompasses both goal and objective-setting (transactional) and visioning (transformational) activities. The focus group discussions' *Team developer/empowerer* skill

includes both the transactional activity of assigning responsibility and authority and the transformational activity of understanding subordinates well, drawing the best out of them and enabling them to reach their full potential. The research results therefore support the view that effective leaders display both transactional and transformational leadership practices.

A criticism of Transformational Leadership Theory discussed in Chapter Two was its neglect of consideration of the interaction of contextual factors on leadership practice, as well as its focus on the leader rather than the subordinates. The research results, by contrast, demonstrate an appreciation of their relevance.

One element of neocharismatic theories which does not explicitly come to the fore in the research results is Transformational Leadership Theory's emphasis on engaging and developing the full person of the subordinate not only as a means to an end (such as effective business performance) but also as an end in itself.

That said, the research results reach the unambiguous conclusion that there is considerable alignment between neocharismatic theories and this research. As with the analysis of the research results with respect to the previous leadership theories, this conclusion has a bearing on the answer to the research question.

In summary, in considering the research results compared with established leadership theories, there is strong evidence of congruence between the two, whether it be in relation to trait, behavioural, contingency or neocharismatic theories. Furthermore, nothing of significance in the research results was found which is not encompassed by the established leadership theories.

6.4 AFRICAN / WESTERN APPROACHES – A COMPARISON

Are there distinctively African as opposed to Western approaches to leadership? As discussed in Chapter One, the 'cultural fit' of Western leadership approaches in African contexts is often questioned. Such concerns represent legitimate disquiet and should be treated with respect. Before reaching a conclusion on the research question, consideration of the uniqueness or otherwise of African leadership thought is given. For this

purpose the concept of *ubuntu*, discussed in Chapter Two, being a representative framework of leadership thought from the African context, will be taken as the departure-point.

The success of attempts to make a case for the uniqueness of Afrocentric leadership as articulated by the *ubuntu* concept is open to question. What is taken for Western leadership is possibly sometimes misunderstood. Broodryk (2005: 208-209), for example, lists features which purportedly distinguish African from Western leadership, among them being

- facilitating vision development;
- being able to win trust and respect;
- allowing for mistakes to be learning opportunities;
- being able to communicate accurately and listen actively; and
- giving praise where it is due.

These, and others which he identifies, are present in the Kets de Vries and Kouzes and Posner models as well as the research results of both the individual interviews and the focus groups, as seen in Table 6.2 on pages 156-160.

A University of South Africa (UNISA) doctoral thesis student advocated *ubuntu* as "...an antidote to mainstream management style, which was often seen as dictatorial and autocratic." (Soggot, 1994: 3). The literature review indicates that these attributes are hardly representative of Western leadership theory. To the contrary, a number of the *ubuntu* qualities of "...humanness, empathy, humbleness, mutual respect, compassion, dignity, and mutual caring and sharing" (ibid: 3) have been found in Western leadership theories and models discussed in this study. Perhaps the perceived disparity lies more in differences in emphasis in practice rather than differences *per se*.

So-called Afrocentric leadership models abound. However, it is questionable whether they offer anything distinctive which is not found in the leadership theories and models discussed in the research. For example, Sichinga and Grimbeek (2006: 20) profess to have developed a uniquely African leadership model which will afford South African organisations a competitive advantage over those which use a European model. In this model the key features of

Afrocentric leadership are "...about creating the conditions where people can perform to their full potential...creating a vision of the organisation then articulating it so that others believe in the vision and successfully implement it."

They outline the qualities of an Afrocentric leader in terms of

- 'Personal Attributes' such as 'Passionate', 'Integrity';
- 'Strategic Perspective' such as 'Aligns the organisation', 'Challenges the status quo';
- 'Communication' such as 'Is a team member', 'Respects others'; and
- 'Achievement' such as 'Sets high standards', 'Leads by example'.

None of these activities and qualities quoted above, nor the others mentioned in their model are distinctly Afrocentric as opposed to being European. They are simply human, and they are encompassed within the scope of the leadership attributes and practices of the Western leadership theories and models discussed in the research.

Two of the five components of Khoza's (2006: 18-25) tentative *ubuntu* leadership model are familiar Western concepts: servant leadership and emotional intelligence. The latter was shown in the comparative analysis conducted above to be a common feature identified by the focus group discussions, individual interviews, Kets de Vries and Kouzes and Posner.

The esteemed King Shaka Zulu is purported to be an example of African leadership in the popular literature. For example, Madi (2000) expounds on Shaka's leadership competencies as follows:

- having a clear sense of vision and mission creating a common sense of identity among followers;
- leading by example;
- taking risks; and
- celebrating accomplishments.

As has been seen in earlier discussion, these are practices common in Western leadership models and theories. The fact that they are espoused as practices of an effective African leader suggests that, if not universal in nature, they are relevant to leadership in the Southern African context.

Ngambi (2004: 129) advocates the view that "...African leadership based on the chieftaincy and village community reveals practices that can foster effective leadership in Africa." These practices are identified as including

- inspiring a shared vision;
- building trust, integrity and relationships based on ubuntu;
- leading by example;
- communicating through stories;
- challenging the process and supporting risk-taking;
- fostering collaboration; and
- creating a culture of celebration.

She argues that leadership based on these practices "...is more likely to succeed in the 21st Century and beyond than that based on the Western approach." (2004: 128-129). Again, the difference between traditional African and Western leadership practices is not clear. On the contrary there appears to be a remarkable similarity between the two. All of these practices are to be found in Kouzes and Posner's Leadership Model and are elements of Transformational Leadership Theory.

Khoza (2006: 269) observes of *ubuntu* that, "Although it is culturally African in origin, the philosophy can have universal application." His description of it illustrates that the values it espouses are found in many if not all cultural settings: "It is a worldview characterised by such values as caring, sharing, compassion, communalism...and related predispositions." (ibid: 269).

Similar values are found in concepts of Western origin, such as stewardship, which places service above control and community above self-interest (Block, 1993). Another is servant leadership, the notion which Robert Greenleaf was instrumental in developing in the 1970's and which Ngambi (2004) sees as having parallels with the traditional African chief's leadership qualities. As the name suggests, it approaches leadership from a perspective of humility, service and persuasion rather than of exercising positional power to enforce compliance. Servant leaders have a strong focus on relationships with their subordinates and on building teamwork and community. They demonstrate empathy, care for their subordinates and are committed to their personal growth. They share power, involve subordinates in decision-making and build

their autonomy. They serve and inspire others through personal example (April, Macdonald, R. and Vriesendorp, 2000; <http://www.greenleaf.org/leadership>; Spears, 1995). Khoza (2006: 268) defines it as "...a term that implies that leaders derive their legitimacy and power from serving their followers with humility, introspection and respect for humanity. It also implies collaboration with, rather than command over followers. While acknowledging his indebtedness to Western academics who have influenced his own leadership thinking, Khoza (2006: 248) argues that their excellent works "...spring from a culture that is tilted towards individualism... they represent both a reaction to this culture and a further reinforcement of it. They detect its deficiencies and aim to correct them." He wonders whether a reactive stance is the right basis for developing a new leadership approach and promotes *ubuntu* as a better starting point because it "...is organically self-consistent as a philosophy" (ibid) embedded in its surrounding culture rather than being reactive to it.

De Pree (1989) likewise, influenced in his own thinking and practice by Greenleaf, defines the leader's role as being to treat subordinates with respect and fairness, provide them with support and acknowledge their achievements, and give attention to their personal development and self-fulfilment needs. Jaworski and Senge (1996: 60) state that to be a servant leader entails "...serving with compassion and heart..."

Covey (1990) refers to the optimal way of relating as people being in relationships of interdependence, as opposed to dependence or independence and the synergy evident in teams which work together in this way. Again, this concept aligns well with the *ubuntu* notion of sharing.

Furthermore, while storytelling, symbolism and ceremonies are encompassed in the *ubuntu* concept, they are also seen by both Kouzes and Posner (2002: 97-101) and Kets de Vries (2001: 260-261) to have an important role in (Western) transformational leadership.

Echoing Khoza's comments above, the similarity and therefore universality between these concepts was remarked upon by one of the research subjects in these terms:

To me, servanthood leadership and *ubuntu* are basically the same, because I respect you for who you are, the human being you are before I respect you for whatever position you might be holding. Servanthood leadership is the same: you are a human being first before anything else. So that's *ubuntu*, that's servanthood leadership... Those two concepts exist in whichever culture, be it African with its *ubuntu* it will still apply there. If you go to Western you will still find it... I have not seen anything unique...

It has been argued that *ubuntu* is not restricted to indigenous black people. Khoza (1993) suggests that there are similarities between Japanese management practices and the basic tenets of *ubuntu*. It has been said that the values of 'freedom, equality and brotherhood' which inspired the French Revolution are at the core of the *ubuntu* philosophy, as is the social responsibility concept found in European humanism. Most of the *ubuntu* values were seen in the leadership of Nelson Mandela and F.W. de Klerk which led to the birth of democracy in South Africa in 1994. Joe Ndaba of the Department of Philosophy at the University of Zululand concurs that *ubuntu* is not peculiar to black people, arguing that South African whites underestimate the presence of *ubuntu* in themselves (Wolmarans, 2004). Khoza (2006: 253) expresses the view that current Western thinking in the literature, with particular reference to elements of transformational leadership, was present in African wisdom in oral form all along and that "Almost without realising it, the gurus of management have stumbled on some central beliefs of the African way." If this is the case it may provide reason for the conclusions reached on the analysis of the research results, as discussed below.

Other revered African values other than *ubuntu* such as *uvelo*, meaning compassion, and *inhlonipho*, meaning respect, have been seen to be present in the leadership theories and models discussed in this research.

In the light of the above discussion, the argument for the distinctive nature of *ubuntu's* leadership offering therefore begs to be questioned. The leadership practices highlighted by writers on *ubuntu* are indeed important, but they are not uniquely African. This study has shown that there is a strong alignment between African approaches to leadership as embodied by the attributes and

practices espoused by *ubuntu*, and Western leadership theories and models, which in turn have been found to be closely aligned to the research findings.

Madi (1995: 15) posits that "...these two sets of values [Western and African] must hastily embrace each other." From the foregoing discussion it can be concluded that this project may not be as formidable to implement as possibly imagined. How it can be achieved is discussed in Chapter Seven.

6.5 CONCLUSION

In Chapter One a number of research problems were outlined, which led to the framing of an exploratory research question. Research was undertaken in order to answer the research question. Having gathered, reported on and analysed the data and compared the findings with the literature and the theory framework based on two chosen leadership models, a conclusion can now be reached on the research question.

As to the first part of the question, namely 'Are Western approaches to organisational leadership applicable, if not universally, at least so in the Southern African context...?' the research findings demonstrate a close correlation between the research samples' views of the skills and attributes necessary for effective leadership, and those of Western leadership theories and contemporary Western approaches. Based on these results the conclusion must therefore be reached that Western approaches to organisational leadership do command a high level of applicability to the Southern African context, taking into consideration the research limitations outlined below.

With regard to the second part of the question, being '...or, on the other hand, are there other approaches unique to Southern Africa, not found in Western approaches?' the findings of the research lead to the conclusion that there are not. Moreover, it has been shown that the key features of a representative of leadership thought from Africa, namely *ubuntu*, are closely aligned with those of Western leadership theories. This subject's comments would seem to capture the research findings:

My view is that there is nothing unique. Leadership is leadership irrespective of culture. The difference lies in the application... be it by Americans with a totally [mono] cultural view, or us with our cultural diversity and leaders coming from different aspects... leadership remains that: leadership.

The research therefore points to the conclusion that what leaders and subordinates in the research sample value as effective leadership attributes and practices is largely aligned with established Western leadership theories and models. Leadership practices viewed as important in Southern Africa are encompassed by those enumerated in Western leadership theories and models. A similar conclusion was reached by Carlin (2005: 82-83), who said "...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."

It does not follow from the conclusion reached on the research question that cultural sensitivity should not be exercised in the application of these practices. As suggested by the research subject quoted above, it is in the application of the practices where differences may become apparent, not the practices themselves. Therefore, for example, the practices of communication or showing respect, while identified as an excellent leadership practice in both Western theories and models and the research sample, may be expressed differently in practice in the two different contexts. Nevertheless they will be recognisable and experienced as communication and respect in both. This point is made by House and Aditya (1997: 451) who agree that while there may be universally accepted leadership practices, depending on the situation or culture there will be a difference in "...the *manner* by which leaders express specific behaviors..." Similarly, according to Javidan (2006: 75), while there are leadership attributes seen as desirable across cultures "...there may still be differences in how leaders enact such attributes." In similar vein, talking about the benefits accruing from effective leadership, both material, such as wealth creation, and intangible, such as the sense that everyone is a stakeholder in the process, Khoza (2006: 245) says "The mechanisms by which leadership seeks to achieve these benefits will vary across organisations and societies, depending on the customs that they embrace."

Returning to the question posed in Chapter One about the correctness or otherwise of Ngambi's assertion that "Studies on African management indicate that the underlying principles of management in Africa are quite different from those in the West." (2004: 109) the research results call its veracity into question. To the contrary, while their application in practice may present some differences, this study has revealed a remarkable congruence between African and Western leadership principles.

The conclusion of this research, therefore, is that

- Western approaches to leadership were found to be applicable, if not universally, certainly in the Southern African context;
- there is not a significant difference between what leaders in the Southern African context are required to be and to practice in order to be effective, both in their own eyes and in the eyes of their subordinates, and those identified by Western leadership theories as embodied in the models of Kouzes and Posner and Kets de Vries;
- no leadership practices were found which could be deemed to be unique to Southern Africa, either in the eyes of leaders or in the eyes of their subordinates, or in the practices encompassed in the concept of ubuntu.

This should not be taken to mean that the value of Afrocentric thinking or *ubuntu* be taken lightly. There is much truth in Khoza's (2006: 26) observation that "...Africa is not isolated from the rest of the world, nor the rest of the world from Africa. We have much to learn from each other." It is the hope of this researcher that an intensification of dialogue on leadership will take place in the future between scholars from Africa and the rest of the world, for mutual enrichment.

6.6 SYNTHESIS

In analysing the research results it is apparent that there is considerable correlation between what the leader and subordinate samples believe to be key elements of effective leadership. These can be grouped into personal, interactive and task accomplishment skills. The quality of leaders' personal skills and attributes form the foundation for excellent interactive skills, which in turn determine the effectiveness of their task accomplishment skills. All of

these are moderated but not sacrificed as they interact with each other as well as a variety of environmental factors. Leaders who have mastered the personal skills and attributes are effective at creating an environment where subordinates are committed and motivated, which in turn leads to effective task accomplishment and organisational success.

Furthermore, a close correlation exists between the leadership skills identified by the research and the Kouzes and Posner and Kets de Vries Leadership Models outlined in Chapter Three. An alignment of views also exists with respect to the impact of environmental factors on leadership practices between the research results, Kouzes and Posner and Kets de Vries.

Comparing the research results with established leadership theories discussed in Chapter Two points to strong evidence of congruence between the two, whether it be in relation to trait, behavioural, contingency or neocharismatic theories. In addition, nothing of significance in the research results was found which is not encompassed by the established leadership theories.

Afrocentric approaches to leadership and in particular the concept of *ubuntu* was discussed. Very little difference was found between these approaches, the research results and Western leadership theories and models.

The conclusion of this research is consequently that there is not a significant difference between what leaders in the Southern African context are required to be and to practice in order to be effective, both in their own eyes and in the eyes of their subordinates, and those identified by Western leadership theories as embodied in the models of Kouzes and Posner and Kets de Vries.

Therefore the part of the research question which asks 'Are Western approaches to organisational leadership universally applicable, or if not universally at least so in the Southern African context?' must be answered in the affirmative while the part which asks 'or, on the other hand, are there other approaches unique to Southern Africa, not found in Western approaches?' must be answered in the negative.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

In this Chapter concluding remarks are made on the study. A brief overview is conducted and key findings are reviewed. The value of the study is discussed and two recommendations are put forward. Limitations of the study are discussed and a conclusion is reached.

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

In Chapter One the motivation for the research was argued by discussing the contextual challenges and opportunities facing Africa in the quest to build a more prosperous continent. The pivotal role of leadership in achieving this goal was outlined as the motivation for the research. The prevalence of Western leadership theories was discussed as further reason for the research, resulting in the research question posed.

In Chapter Two a literature review was undertaken in order to examine the dimensions of leadership thinking as articulated in the Western world. The four main 'generations' of leadership were discussed, namely trait, behavioural, contingency and neocharismatic theories. In addition emerging ideas on the 'character' of leadership, and in particular the concept of *ubuntu*, were explored, as were the possible features of future leadership theories likely to evolve in order to enable leaders and organisations to cope with an ever-changing environment.

In Chapter Three the theory framework was outlined. This comprised two leadership models based on Western leadership theory, namely the work of Kouzes and Posner, and Kets de Vries.

In Chapter Four the research design and execution of the study were discussed. The qualitative research methodological approach used in the study was explained, as was the research design in terms of sampling, data gathering and data analysis methods. With respect to the execution of the study, the

subjects and site used were described as were the data gathering and data analysis methods employed. Finally, the trustworthiness of the research was discussed.

In Chapter Five the research results, comprising data gathered from individual interviews and focus group discussions, were reported.

In Chapter Six analysis and discussion of the results were undertaken with respect to the alignment between the data gathered from the interviews and focus group discussions. Thereafter the research results as a whole were compared with the Kouzes and Posner and Kets de Vries Leadership Models and Western leadership theories. The question of the uniqueness of *ubuntu* as a framework of leadership thought from the African context was discussed. A conclusion was then reached on the research question.

KEY FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

In comparing the findings of the leader sample individual interviews and the subordinate sample focus group discussions, a strong similarity in their conceptions of what constitutes effective leadership was found. The key dimensions of every attribute or skill identified by the focus group discussions are encompassed by those from the individual interviews. Likewise, the salient features of every attribute or skill identified by the individual interviews are covered by those from the focus group discussions.

Analysis of the results of both samples revealed a mutual understanding of the close interrelationship between what may be termed relationship-directed and task-directed leadership practices. The effective practice of the former impacts positively on the outcome of the latter. Moreover, an interrelationship was found to exist between these and the inner-directed personal skills or attributes. The results further revealed that in order to be effective, leaders require the ability to maintain a delicate balance between the various practices and attributes which have been identified by both research samples.

This aspect of the analysis concluded that the quality of leaders' personal skills and attributes form the foundation for excellent interactive skills, which in turn

determine the effectiveness of their task accomplishment skills. All of these are moderated but not sacrificed as they play themselves out in relationship with a variety of environmental factors, and in subtle tension with each other. Leaders who have mastered these personal skills and attributes are effective at creating an environment where subordinates are committed and motivated, which in turn leads to effective task accomplishment and organisational success.

The comparative analysis between the research samples and the Kets de Vries and Kouzes and Posner Leadership Models found that a strong correlation exists between the leadership skills identified by the research and these models. The few instances of non-correlation were discussed and shown not to be material. An alignment of views on the impact of environmental factors on leadership practices between the research results, Kouzes and Posner and Kets de Vries was also found.

Analysis of the research results in relation to established leadership theories found that despite the research subjects placing somewhat more emphasis on the foundational importance of the 'character' of leadership (the 'Who?' of a leader) than the majority of Western leadership theories, nothing of significance was found which is not encompassed by the established leadership theories. Strong evidence of congruence between the two was found, whether in relation to trait, behavioural, contingency or neocharismatic theories.

Afrocentric approaches to leadership as encompassed in the concept of *ubuntu* were discussed. Very little difference was found between this approach, the research results and Western leadership theories and models.

The conclusion reached regarding the research question was that Western approaches to organisational leadership were found to be applicable in the Southern African context while the research did not find other approaches unique to Southern Africa, which were not found in Western approaches. No significant difference was found between the requirements for leaders in the Southern African context to be effective, both in their own eyes and in the eyes of their subordinates, and those identified by Western leadership theories as embodied in the models of Kouzes and Posner and Kets de Vries.

The study was embarked upon with an expectation and indeed a hope that some unique angles to leadership from an African perspective would come to light. That this did not happen was a disappointment. Nevertheless, the experience of engaging in the research process was a thoroughly absorbing and fulfilling one from beginning to end. Disappointment has since made way for excitement as to what the alignment of thought between the research findings and established Western leadership theories can mean for practice in the Southern African context and perhaps beyond.

VALUE OF THE RESEARCH

The research is of value in two respects, namely its contribution to the already-existing body of research and, secondly, its contribution to leadership practice. These are discussed below.

CONTRIBUTION TO BODY OF EXTANT RESEARCH

It was stated in Chapter One, the predominant leadership theories have been developed and empirically tested in Western contexts. This research adds to the body of research in existence from a different context: the South and Africa, bringing more balance in terms of other countries and cultures.

Bennis (1999) is of the view that some leadership competencies are universal; while House and Aditya (1997) also contend that there are likely to be a number of universal or at least near-universal leadership practices. They, however, argue that the literature is largely anecdotal and in need of serious empirical research, observing that "...there is only sparse empirical evidence relevant to this issue which, as yet, represents theoretical speculation that needs to be demonstrated empirically." (quoted in Hamlin, 2005: 6).

This research contributes to reducing the need for theoretical speculation and adds to the empirical evidence noted as lacking by House and Aditya.

While acknowledging that certain leadership practices are idiosyncratic and studies have found significant differences in emphasis on key leadership capabilities across countries (Javidan, 2006; Morrison, 2000) the research

findings lend support to House and Aditya's view that "There is reason to believe that some generic leadership functions may be universally acceptable and effective, regardless of the dispositions and norms of diverse groups..." (1997: 461) and "...across organizations, industries and cultures." (1997: 451).

CONTRIBUTION TO LEADERSHIP PRACTICE

The results of this research could serve a useful purpose in at least two spheres of practical activity. The first is in giving direction for the content of leadership development programmes. The second is in providing direction for leaders in their responsibility for building a shared organisation culture within a culturally diverse employee population. These are discussed in turn below in the form of recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

Leadership *can* be developed

The premise of this suggestion is that leadership attributes and skills can be developed in people. According to Adair all "...leadership qualities can be developed... by practice and experience." (2003: 10).

Kouzes and Posner (2001) hold a similar view, contending that leadership is for everyone. Research which they have conducted since the early 1980's offers convincing evidence that leadership is an observable, learnable set of practices, and leadership is for anyone, of any age and at any level in an organisation.

The future is doomed to a paucity of leadership if viewed otherwise, for example as being a fixed set of character traits which you either have or do not have; or as applying only to certain elevated positions. They describe the view that leadership is reserved for the chosen few as "...the most pernicious myth of all... [which]... has done more harm to the development of people and more to slow the growth of countries and companies than any other." (2001: 82).

Kets de Vries also expounds the view that leadership effectiveness can be developed (2001: 245-250, 265; 2006: 194-207, 211-247, 277-301) while Bass (1990a: 27, 29) has shown that transformational leadership can be learned and contends that it should be the subject of leadership development and mentoring programmes. Herbst (2006) cites current research that supports Bass's findings.

"We believe in human beings' ability to grow... They can and do reinvent themselves" Charan, Drotter, and Noel, (2001: 5-6) assert. In order to address the seeming lack of balance between supply of and demand for leaders they expound a 'leadership pipeline' concept which identifies six organisational levels, each requiring different levels of leadership skill. They recommend that organisations focus on identifying and developing leaders at each level.

House and Aditya (1997: 460), however, cite Fiedler in cautioning that research needs to be undertaken with respect to the extent to which training programmes contribute to business performance, in terms of both content and process. They also warn that "...there is reason to believe that many individuals are not able to substantially vary their cognitive style or orientation [or] their dominant motives..."

Nevertheless, the relevance and importance of leadership development for the concerns of this research, namely the building of a more prosperous Africa, is affirmed.

Leadership development programme content

The attributes and practices revealed by this research as being important for effective leadership, and confirmed by the models of Kets de Vries and Kouzes and Posner and related leadership theories, could provide the focus and content of organisational leadership development programmes. As discussed in Chapter Six, while these attributes and practices may be universal, their expression may well be particular. Therefore it is important for leadership development to be 'indigenous' and rooted in context, not simply imported from the West (Mintzberg, 2006).

In particular, one attribute was found to be prominent in this study which has been omitted or covered only superficially in traditional development programmes: namely self-awareness, self-management and the character or the 'Who' of leadership as reported in the research results, should be given serious consideration for inclusion. This is of particular relevance in the case of narcissistic leaders who, of Freud's three main personality types (erotic, obsessive and narcissistic), are the most likely to be found in leadership positions. While being highly gifted, the negative attributes typical of these leaders can outweigh the positive, with catastrophic consequences, in the absence of restraining anchors brought into play through self-knowledge (Maccoby, 2000).

It was shown in Chapter Three that Kouzes and Posner identified this attribute as essential for effective leadership. Self-knowledge equips leaders to make wise and consistent decisions and to be the kind of leaders that subordinates will respond to – they recognise leaders' authenticity not so much in what they do as in what they are. Kouzes and Posner (2001: 87) quote Warren Bennis as saying "Management of self is critical because without it leaders and managers can do more harm than good. Like incompetent doctors, incompetent managers can make life worse, make people sicker and less vital...causing their employees to be ill."

Similarly Kets de Vries includes this attribute in his leadership model. In his estimation "Greater self-awareness is the first step toward becoming more effective as a leader. If leaders want to reinvent or renew themselves they have to look within; they have to explore their inner theatre." (2006: 192). He argues for the inadequacy of Mintzberg's taxonomy, saying "He studied manifest behaviour and believed that what he saw was all there is to see. But is behaviour really only that which the observer sees – the gestures, the comments...?...I am of the opinion that it's not." (2001: 75). In a discourse on authenticity he elaborates on what comprises that which observers see in leaders apart from outward behaviours (2006: 375). These attributes fall into the realm of self-knowledge.

Palmer (1990: 8-9) articulates comparable sentiments:

...education for leadership should be not simply about the skills to manipulate the external world but also the personal and corporate disciplines of the inner world...The failure of leaders to deal with their own inner lives is creating conditions of real misery for lots and lots of folks and unfulfilled missions for lots and lots of institutions...We must come to understand that if we skimp on our inner work, our outer work will be diminished as well...New leadership is needed for new times, but it will not come from finding new and more wily ways to manipulate the external world. It will come as we who lead find the courage to take an inner journey..."

It was shown in Chapter Six that the views expressed above on self-knowledge and an authentic state of being as necessary requirements for leadership effectiveness are well supported by the research findings. Therefore, in the Southern African environment the inclusion of the 'Who?' as well as the 'How?' and the 'What?' in programme content would be highly appropriate.

The presence of multicultural teams in the workplace presents a challenge for leaders. Direct versus indirect communication, differing attitudes towards hierarchy and authority, conflicting norms for decision-making, as well as language barriers, for example, pose a test for team effectiveness (Brett, Behfar, and Kern, 2006). Developing in team leaders a number of the personal, interactive and task accomplishment skills identified in this research will facilitate their ability to build well-functioning teams. This can be accomplished through leadership development or team building programmes.

The benefits of leadership development programmes should not be restricted to upper organisational levels as the impact of the application of effective leadership skills is as great at lower as higher levels (Kouzes and Posner, 2002; Lowe and Galen, 1996).

Simons, (1999: 94) citing findings by Zucker in 1996, notes the irony that leaders' credibility has been undermined precisely by their efforts to enhance it. The reason for this is the pursuit of the latest leadership fashions and fads. Far better, it would seem, is to build the capacity of leaders to exercise practices

which both leaders and subordinates admire, as revealed by this study and as expounded in the leadership theories and models.

Other leadership development methodologies

While leadership development programmes are valuable development tools, leadership development should not be confined to this methodology alone. In this regard Klann's (2003: 5-6) "Five E's" approach to character development is useful in its advocacy of a multi-faceted methodology. Thus apart from Education, via the use of leadership development programmes as discussed above, attention should also be given to Example (leaders practicing as well as talking about desired behaviours), Environment (building the desired organisational culture), Experience (job-related, coaching – which has been shown to have the added psycho-physiological benefit of reducing stress in leaders who assume a coaching role (Boyatzis, Smith, and Blaize, 2006) – and mentoring) and Evaluation (assessment, feedback and reinforcement).

Charan, Drotter, and Noel, (2001: 156-162; 213-224) similarly advocate a number of alternative leadership development strategies, including action learning, performance management and coaching. Thus desired leadership practices are developed and reinforced through a variety of mutually complementary and reinforcing means.

This research, then, has provided pointers as to the content which possible leadership development programmes in Southern Africa should encompass.

BUILDING A SHARED ORGANISATION CULTURE

Both the research results and literature review have shown that developing alignment within the organisation is one of the responsibilities of leaders. Building a shared organisation culture is an integral aspect of this activity.

Cultural diversity in society

It is common cause that there are cultural and other differences between peoples, with resultant diverse world-views and behaviours. Extensive

research has been undertaken in an attempt to understand the complex nature of culture. Prominent in the literature is the work by, among others, the Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness (GLOBE) research project (<http://www.thunderbird.edu/wwwfiles/ms/globe/>), Hofstede (1994), Schein (1992), and Trompenaars (1996).

These studies, which delineate various levels of culture and dimensions of cultural differences, contain significant insights relevant for leaders. The most important for the purposes of this discussion is that there are both divergent, idiosyncratic or context-specific cultural dimensions and hence leadership practices on the one hand, and convergent or generalisable ones on the other. They indicate that the quest to successfully build a shared organisation culture within a culturally diverse organisation is a realistic proposition.

The opportunities presented by cultural diversity are well articulated by Trompenaars (1996). Although he employs the oppositional preposition 'versus' when contrasting the various cultural dimensions which his research identified, his viewpoint on what can be done about these differences is far from pessimistic. He points out the positive aspects of the seemingly polar cultural views expressed in each dimension and advises that effort should be made to embrace these for the collective good. He proposes that this will be an enriching experience in that "...we have everything to learn from discovering how others have travelled to their own position." (ibid 1996: 67) and recommends that we should strive "...towards riding the waves of intercultural differences rather than ignoring them or leading to one specific culture." (ibid 1996: 66).

Similar sentiments are echoed by Tutu (2006: 8) who exhorts us to be "...proud of our diversity, celebrating our differences that make not for separation and alienation but for a gloriously rich unity."

According to Hofstede "The survival of mankind will depend...on the ability of people who think differently to act together." (quoted in Robbins, Odendaal, and Roodt, 2001: 23). This comment and the challenge implicit therein are equally applicable to the increasingly globalised nature of the business environment, to which the discussion now turns.

Cultural diversity in the workplace – opportunities and challenges for leaders

De Pree (1989: 9) emphasises the value which diversity brings to the workplace and to achieving the business's goals: "The simple act of recognising diversity in corporate life helps us to connect the great variety of gifts that people bring to the work and service of the organisation. Diversity allows each of us to contribute in a special way, to make our special gift a part of the corporate effort."

Kets de Vries expresses a similar view, asserting that effective organisations "...see diversity of all kinds as a competitive advantage..." (2006: 380) while Meyer says "Effective leaders in the modern global economy will need to have the skills not only to 'manage' diversity but value and celebrate it." (2004: 14).

Clearly while the existence of cultural differences when present together in a common workplace presents opportunities, as articulated above, it nevertheless also poses a challenge to harmonious work relationships and therefore to organisational effectiveness, and ultimately to leadership. Prahalad (2000) notes that globalisation is forcing leaders to deal with increasing levels of cultural diversity on an unprecedented scale. Leading subordinates who operate out of different paradigms, provides leaders with a peculiar challenge, as articulated by Chowdhury (2000: 4): "The true challenge facing the organisational world is not geographic distance but cultural distance."

With increasing globalisation the phenomenon of growing diversity in the workplace is a reality in Southern Africa with which leaders have to deal. Two policy developments in the region will ensure its acceleration. The one is the Southern African Development Community's (SADC's) intention to remove employment barriers between member nations, as is already the case in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The second, in South Africa, is government's Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (Asgisa) programme and the Joint Initiative on Priority Skills Acquisition (Jipsa), whose objective is to identify scarce skills required by the economy, and to remove barriers to employment of people from other nations around the globe who possess those skills.

The extent to which members of an organisation identify with the organisation and its goals has a significant impact on the success of that organisation. The task of building a shared organisation culture and aligning a diverse workforce towards a common organisational vision is therefore imperative for leaders, who according to Nkomo and Kriek (2004: 101) "...must be diversity architects", to address.

Understanding and respecting others, which encompasses issues of culture, is an attribute identified by this study, and also present in the Kouzes and Posner and Kets de Vries models, as necessary for effective leadership. However while understanding and being respectful of cultural differences is necessary for leaders of culturally diverse organisations, a balanced view is necessary. Citing a study which "...found ethnic diversity to make little difference in the kinds of leader behaviors practiced and accepted in an organisation with members from ...various ...ethnic backgrounds" House and Aditya (1997: 452) caution that consideration should be given as to whether the commonly assumed problems which accompany diversity are not exaggerated. They believe it to be likely that there are a number of generic leadership functions which are "...universally expected, accepted and effective across organizations, industries and cultures." (1997: 451). This contention has found support in the results of a South African study of 586 middle managers using the Hofstede dimensions. A similarity on these dimensions was found between the ethnic groups with both management culture and perceived management effectiveness being independent of both race and the dimensions of culture (Bendixen and Thomas, 2000).

Culture-specific versus universal leadership practices

Subsequent to House and Aditya's (1997) comments above a number of studies undertaking extensive empirical research have been undertaken.

While some (cited in Hamlin, 2005: 21) claim that what constitutes effective leadership practice is specific to the context and culture of organisations or countries and therefore cannot be generalised, other significant studies have found the presence of universal as well as culture-specific leadership practices. These are discussed below.

Research by Black, Morrison and Gregersen (Morrison, 2000) over a three year period examined leadership practices in more than 50 multinational companies in North America, Europe and Asia. It concluded that "...two-thirds of the characteristics of effective global leaders are generalizable. The other third are idiosyncratic or context-specific" (Morrison, 2000: 124).

Generic or universalistic leader behaviours have been found within diverse organisations across Britain, Canada and the USA (Hamlin, 2005). A cross-cultural study of charismatic leadership across eight diverse countries found the existence of functional and variform universals (Hamlin, 2005). Studies across a number of countries in the East and West found transformational leadership practices to be positively related to leader effectiveness and subordinate satisfaction (Bass, 1997).

In arguably the most comprehensive global empirical research ever undertaken, the GLOBE study (Javidan, Dorfman, Sully de Luque, and House, 2006), an ongoing study of over a decade in duration conducted in 62 societal cultures, including Southern Africa and encompassing 17000 participants, found that "...while different countries do have divergent views on many aspects of leadership effectiveness, they also have convergent views on some other aspects" (Javidan, Dorfman, Sully de Luque, and House, 2006: 74-75).

This general finding was reflected in the results which compared the 'Sub-Saharan Africa', culture cluster, representative of the majority of the subjects of this dissertation, and the 'Anglo' culture cluster, in which white South Africans were located for the purposes of the GLOBE research. Of relevance to this discussion is that the two leadership dimensions for which the two culture clusters scored the same were Team-Oriented and Humane-Oriented. These are both important components of *ubuntu* philosophy and point to a common platform for leadership practices of the white and black components of Southern African workplaces (Javidan, Dorfman, Sully de Luque, and House, 2006: 74).

Returning to the overall GLOBE results, the research found 22 leadership attributes, all typical of those articulated by neocharismatic theories, that were universally considered to be descriptive of outstanding leader performance

across the 62 participating countries. It also found eight attributes universally held to be undesirable (Javidan, Dorfman, Sully de Luque, and House, 2006). This study and others mentioned above support House and Aditya's (1997) earlier view that leadership practices from the neocharismatic theories in particular might be universally accepted and preferred across a wide range of cultures.

While the researchers in the GLOBE project are of the view that cultural differences "...are real and woe to the leader who ignores them" (Javidan, Dorfman, Sully de Luque, and House, 2006: 72) they nonetheless assert that common ground for leadership practices can be found across cultures: "Should we, however, conclude that cultural differences are so vast that common management practices among countries are the exception rather than the rule...? Not necessarily" (ibid: 72).

The studies discussed above indicate that while there are different approaches to leadership in different cultures, there are enough similarities with which to work in order to build a common leadership approach and consequent shared organisational culture. The results lend credence to House and Aditya's note of caution above concerning exaggeration of the difficulties posed by cultural diversity and indicate that the task of building a shared organisation culture is within the bounds of realistic possibility.

Indeed, the value of this study is that it has identified a range of attributes and practices which could be used by leaders as the basis of a shared organisation culture building initiative, as reported in Chapter Five. Examples of these are the practices of integrity, honesty, consistency, fairness and respect, excellent communication and empowerment of subordinates. These could be translated into agreed common organisational values and practices thereby serving as a foundation for building a shared organisational culture which would meet the needs of both the organisation and the individual members of the organisation.

According to Kets de Vries, development programmes "...must not focus exclusively on appreciation and accommodation of cultural diversity, but also create awareness of the need for a shared organisational culture" (2001: 250). How an organisation may approach this task is now considered.

Building a shared organisation culture within a culturally diverse organisation

To be able to address this issue it is helpful to understand the meaning of 'organisational culture' since it is the relationship between this and the cultural norms, values and paradigms which an increasingly diverse workforce brings into the workplace and about which leaders have to concern themselves. An alignment between the two can be a source of sustained competitive advantage (Tang, Kim, and O'Donald, 2000).

Brown (quoted in Thornhill *et al.*, 2000: 69) provides a useful definition: "Organisational culture refers to the patterns of beliefs, values and learned ways of coping with experience that have developed during the course of an organisation's history, and which tend to be manifested in its material arrangements and in the behaviours of its members."

Tang, Kim, and O'Donald (2000: 536) quote Schein (1986) as saying that it is "...the pattern of basic assumptions that a group has invented, discovered or developed in learning to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration." Put more simply, culture is "the way we do things around here." (Armstrong, 2001: 204, quoting Furnham and Gunter).

It follows that organisational culture can or should change when its current manifestation no longer meets the needs of the organisation or its members, or when changes in the external environment render it inappropriate or even redundant (as happens with cultural practices in society over time). It is part of leadership's responsibility to be a catalyst for and facilitate this change. This role is seen by Kouzes & Posner in the *searching for opportunities* behaviour which is part of their Challenging the Process practice. It is part of Kets de Vries's *visioning* leadership practice: "...the envisioning component of charismatic leadership involves *shaping and preserving the organisation's culture*. Leaders are, in effect, the high priests of their organisation's culture." (2001: 268), its "...cultural architects..." (2006: 377).

Kotter (1998) articulates the view that a leader (from one culture) can effectively lead people of a multiplicity of cultures within an organisation to find common

ground in their diversity by appealing to their common humanness. While employees in an organisation may be from different cultures, and identify themselves as being culturally different from each other, there is nevertheless a common humanity which is shared by all. An effective leader is able to appeal to this common human element.

Prahalad (2000: 149-150) suggests two strategies for leaders to use in this endeavour:

- Build a *shared competitive agenda* – a sense of direction and an approach to shaping the future – to which followers can commit themselves (This is another way of talking about building a shared vision to create alignment).
- Create a *set of values and behaviours* for all employees to live by.

Kets de Vries (2001: 304) proposes similar solutions:

- Create a *sense of purpose* for employees. Leaders do this by clearly articulating the organisation's fundamental purpose, culture and vision for the future. By building support for the vision they create a strong and cohesive group identity, purpose and meaning.
- Because *how* things are done says as much about meaning as *what* things are done, leaders need to develop a strong *sense of shared values* among all employees.

Kouzes and Posner (2002: 78-83; 111-169) advocate leader activities of building shared values and inspiring a shared vision across the organisation in their model of effective leadership discussed in Chapter Three.

A final suggestion is that the leadership task of building a shared organisation culture within a culturally diverse organisation be approached by identifying commonalities around which employees can rally, while simultaneously according respect to the deep-seated diversity among them. A prerequisite would be the need to approach such a project with a 'both-and' rather than an 'either-or' paradigm. In other words, to both respect the diverse cultures, traditions and values of different employee groups, and at the same time craft a common vision, culture and value set with which these diverse groups can all

identify and to which they can commit themselves as members of the organisation.

This would entail firstly enabling employees to gain insight into cultural differences and their consequent behavioural manifestation in society in general and in the workplace in particular. This would serve to build understanding, appreciation and respect for people of different cultures, a worthwhile exercise in itself. A further step would be to surface those 'values' or 'basic underlying assumptions' which are common to all the various cultures in the organisation, and build them meaningfully into the visible 'practices' and 'artefacts' of the organisation, to use Hofstede's (1994) and Trompenaars' (1996) terminology respectively. In this way one is doing two things simultaneously. One is recognising and respecting the diversity of cultures in the organisation. At the same time one is affirming that there are sufficient commonalities between all members of all cultures, by simple virtue of them being human beings, which bind them together with certain common values and practices, and which enable a working together towards a common goal which is in everyone's interests.

Building a shared organisation culture means change

Such an initiative has to do with implementing change to which, as one research subject quoted in Chapter Five noted, people are "allergic". Leaders therefore need to be skilled in their shared organisation culture building role.

Proposing a three stage change process of unfreezing, moving and refreezing based on a review of change management process models, Handford and Coetsee (2003: 22-25) argue that transformational leadership is pivotal for implementing effective change in South African society and workplaces. They identify the transformational leadership practices of creating a shared vision, aligning people towards that vision, creating a motivating climate, being a role model and creating opportunities for personal growth as being particularly relevant in this regard and propose practical guidelines on the application of these skills (Handford and Coetsee, 2003: 31-32). The findings of Bommer, Rich, and Rubin (2005) cited in the literature review concur with Handford and

Coetsee in showing that transformational leader behaviours reduce subordinate cynicism about organisational change.

If Handford and Coetsee's contention concerning the importance of transformational leadership skills in effecting change is correct then leaders in the Southern African context are well placed to facilitate shared organisation culture building initiatives, since the research identified a number of transformational leadership practices, as reported in Chapter Five.

LIMITATIONS / IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

There are a number of limitations to this research, as noted in Chapter Four. Principal among these are that the research field was limited to two particular sectors (agriculture and manufacturing), and a particular industry within those sectors. The former is highly labour-intensive in comparison to the latter, while the latter requires higher skill levels than the former. Caution should be exercised in reaching conclusions with respect to other sectors or industries based on the research findings. It is important that future researchers conduct further studies across a range of sectors and industries to test these findings.

Secondly, the research was restricted to the private sector. It has been argued that research into leadership should not be restricted to a field whose success is measured chiefly by materialistic criteria. Research should also be conducted in fields where leaders "...focus rather on the well-being of people and of the world at large, at the physical, psychological, social and spiritual levels." (Pauchant, 2005: 218). It is therefore recommended that future research be conducted in the public, non-government and public benefit sectors.

The research purposely focused heavily on the views of 'indigenous' Africans. The results may therefore not be generalisable to other population groups.

Moreover, while both genders were represented in a balanced way in the focus groups (subordinates), the same cannot be said of the interview subjects (leaders), who were all male. In both instances, nevertheless, this was a fair reflection of the reality of the industry in which the research was conducted. It

might be that a more gender-representative sample would add nuances to future research findings which are not present in this research.

Research subjects all work within the Human Resources discipline. This could have coloured their responses in that they may be more exposed to reading and learning about leadership than people in other disciplines such as engineering or agriculture. It is recommended that future research covers a cross-section of disciplines in the research sample.

Furthermore, it is possible that the researcher's familiarity with the subjects contaminated the interpretation of the results, despite taking care to avoid this possibility.

While the research found close alignment with Western leadership theories, it possibly did not adequately explore dimensions of cultural differences, such as individualism versus collectivism, power distance and time orientation identified by Kluckhohn-Strodtbeck (Robbins, Odendaal and Roodt, 2001), Hofstede (1994), Trompenaars (1996) and the GLOBE study (<http://www.thunderbird.edu/wwwfiles/ms/globe/>), and the extent of their influence on perceptions of what constitutes effective leadership practices. This could be an area for future researchers to investigate.

The *ubuntu* approach to leadership was found to have somewhat, but not significantly more emphasis on the 'character' of leadership than Western leadership theories. Testing this finding via further investigation may prove to be a profitable avenue of future research.

As stated in Chapter Four, in order to establish the trustworthiness of the research there is a need to confirm its reliability and transferability in terms of its repeatability and generalisability beyond the sample. The research should therefore be repeated in a variety of contexts, with a greater variety and possibly number of subjects, over a period of time (Trochim, 2006).

CONCLUSION

The research found commonly held views among both leaders and subordinates as to what constitutes effective leadership. These attributes and

practices were found to be closely aligned with Western leadership theories and the two leadership models based on these theories with which the research results were compared.

It has been noted that the predominant leadership theories have been developed and empirically tested in Western contexts. The value of this research is that it adds to the body of empirical research in existence from a different context: the South and Africa, bringing more balance in terms of other countries and cultures.

Furthermore, it provides pointers to leadership practices and organisation culture appropriate to the Southern African context. Recommendations were made with regards to the implementation of these practices and culture in order to harness the commitment and energy of employees to build globally competitive organisations and thereby a more prosperous Africa.

A number of limitations to the research were identified. Further research was recommended in order to address these limitations and to verify whether its findings could be applicable to sectors other than that in which it was conducted and whether it could be of relevance more broadly across Africa than the Southern African context.

Finally, Khoza (2006: 260) expresses the opinion that:

We in Africa know ...that good leadership is imperative to get us out of the morass into which numberless Africans have fallen. It will not be through moral exhortation that Africa's chaos will be reduced and finally eliminated. It will be through practical steps to address the economic and security issues that bedevil the continent.

It is hoped that this research has identified the "good leadership" to which Khoza refers, relevant to the Southern African context and perhaps beyond; that its findings will be tested and implemented for the purposes of guiding content for leadership development programmes and organisation culture development initiatives; and that in so doing it will make a contribution to building Africa into the great continent it has the potential to be.

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ANNEXURE A

BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS OF PARTICIPATING FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION SUBJECTS

Focus Group One
Black male – Assistant HR Manager
Black male – HR Officer
Black female – HRD Officer

Focus Group Two
Black female – HR Officer
Black female – HR Officer
Black male – HRD Manager

Focus Group Three
Black male – HRD Manager
Black male – Corporate Affairs Manager
Black female – HRD Officer
Black male – HRD & Admin. Manager

Focus Group Four
Black female – Senior HR Officer
Black male – Senior HR Officer
Black female – Senior HR Officer
Black male – Assistant HRM
Black male – Assistant HRM

Focus Group Five
Black female – HR Officer
Black male – Assistant HRM
Black male – Assistant HRM
Black male – Medical Officer

Focus Group Six
Black male – HR Officer
White female – HR Assistant
Black female – HR Assistant

Focus Group Seven
Black male – HR Assistant
Indian female – HR Administrator
Black male – Assistant HRM

Focus Group Eight
Black female – HR Assistant
Black female – Admin Clerk
Black female – Senior HR Officer

Paterson Band (Organisational Level)	Job Title	Number of Subjects
B	HR Assistant; HR Administrator; Administration Clerk	6
Lower C	HR Officer; HRD Officer	7
Upper C	Senior HRO	4
Lower D	Assistant HRM; HRD Manager	8
Upper D	HRD & Administration Manager; Corporate Affairs Manager; Medical Officer	3

ANNEXURE B

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER AND DOCUMENT

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Dear

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my research project. I have requested your participation either because you are a senior manager in your organisation, or you are a subordinate who reports to a participating senior manager.

I am doing this research for my Masters in Social Science at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I am contactable either via my cell phone (084 569-9193) or email, on rgoldman@ilovo.co.za. If you have any concerns or wish to verify anything in this letter, you are welcome to contact my supervisor for this research project. His name is Prof. Rod le Roux, and can be contacted on 082 801-7614, or via email on Lerouxr@ukzn.ac.za.

I would like to share some information with you about this project, so that you are completely comfortable with your participation. Its title is 'Leadership in the Southern African Business Context. Towards an Appropriate Approach. An Exploratory Study'.

What I am proposing to do is explore whether there are any leadership practices which are especially appropriate to leading in a Southern African business environment. I want to determine what differences and similarities there are with the dominant Western approaches to organisational leadership.

What I require from you as a senior manager is to participate in a one-to-one interview or, rather, conversation with me. We will explore together your thoughts and experiences of leadership in your organisation. This will take about two hours, followed by one or more follow-up discussions of a similar duration some weeks thereafter.

What I require from you as a subordinate of your senior manager is to participate in a group discussion with other members of the team which reports to your manager. I will facilitate the discussion, in which we will attempt to reach consensus on what the group thinks are important leadership practices. This will take about two to three hours.

I will make use of written and audio recordings during these discussions. These will be shredded once my research has been written up. There will be no way for any reader to identify you in my report. In other words, all you say in our discussions will remain completely confidential, and your anonymity in my report will be guaranteed.

I am unfortunately not in a position to pay you for your participation! However, knowing that your contribution will ultimately contribute in some small way towards better leadership practices and development programmes appropriate to the Southern African context, should give you a sense of satisfaction.

I would like to emphasise that participation is voluntary and that you are free to withdraw from this project at any stage and for any reason. If you decide not to participate, this will not result in any form of disadvantage for you.

Finally, once you have had a good opportunity to read, understand and question the information above, I would appreciate it if you would complete the Informed Consent declaration, below. You will be given a copy of this.

Many thanks, and I look forward to an interesting interaction with you!

ROB GOLDMAN

I..... (full names of participant)
hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

.....

ANNEXURE C

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR MASTERS RESEARCH:

Leadership in the Southern African Business Context. Towards an Appropriate Approach. An Exploratory Study

Introduction

- Thank you very much for giving me your time. I am sure that we are going to have a very interesting conversation around this very important issue!
- Can you first tell me a bit about yourself, your work-related history...your qualifications, previous jobs, how long you have been in your current job?

Body of discussion

GENERAL VIEWS ABOUT EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

- Leadership is such a topical issue these days. Libraries of books have been written on the subject! But I am interested to hear *your* views on the subject. Please outline for me what you think are the most important things about good leadership and/or which make a good leader?
- Why do you say these are important? Can you elaborate?

INTERVIEWEE'S OWN LEADERSHIP PRACTICES

- How do *you* lead, or how would you describe your leadership style?
- Can you describe specific leadership practices/activities that you employ in your leadership style? Can you give examples or tell stories to illustrate these practices?
- Do you think that these practices are effective? Why/why not?
- To what extent would you say how you lead is influenced by
 - the kind of people you lead? Can you elaborate?
 - the environment/culture/circumstances in which you lead? Can you elaborate?
- What are the main challenges which you face as a leader?

Rounding off of interview

- Is there anything that I've left out or anything else you would like to say about what you believe is important about good leadership?
- Again, many thanks for giving me your time, and sharing with me your insights into this important subject of leadership.