

CHAPTER 3

DIMENSIONS OF MANAGEMENT

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 2 explicated the philosophical perspective on management and also confirmed the premise of this study, that communication is the binding element that keeps the various interdependent parts of the organisation together. An introduction to Western, Japanese and African management styles started the construction of the framework.

This chapter refers to circle II (conceptual framework), of the Mitroff & Kilmann (1978) model as explained in Chapter 1.

For the purpose of this investigation, Schein's (1985) description of organisation culture applies. He outlines some commonly-used meanings of organisation culture such as observed behavioural regularities, norms, dominant values, espoused philosophy, rules and feeling or climate. However, he goes on to say that these aspects merely *reflect* culture, but none of them are the essence of culture. Culture should be reserved for the deeper level of basic assumptions and beliefs that are shared by members of an organisation and that operate unconsciously. These responses by groups of people are learned responses to a group's problems of survival in its external environment and its problems of internal integration. Leaders or managers design and create the components of structure or context within which the group function. In this sense, structure consists of organisation, information flows, capacity, control mechanisms, reward systems, personal values, emotions, perceptions and expectations.

Leadership is therefore directly involved with the creation of culture. Schein (1995) further adds that when culture becomes dysfunctional, leadership is needed to help the group unlearn some of its cultural assumptions and learn new assumptions, thereby adapting to the new conditions.

3.2 SOCIAL, ENVIRONMENTAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT:

3.2.1.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 clearly illustrates that the Western model of business, which was born in the Industrial Age, has been a mechanistic one. Organisations have been economic agents in an efficient market system, parts of an ever expanding, ever more complex machine. Caught now in the Information Age, it has stretched the models of the Industrial Age to the limits of implosion. It is time to replace the mechanistic view of business with a more organic one, and to endow the recently discovered biological nature of organisations with a new spirituality that recognises the sanctity of individual human life and has compassion for individuals (Gouillart & Kelly 1995:4).

The developed Western world has moved beyond the Industrial Age, but their business model is still rooted there. The ability to manage the flow of information represents the basis for the new business model of the Information Age. Gouillart & Kelly (1995:4) argue, however, that more is involved than fundamental social and business influence; an unstoppable trend toward increased connectivity. As more and more parts of the machine have learned to talk to each other, connectivity has become the dominant feature of modern business. As the trend continues, the role of organisations within society is changing.

The entire history of civilization, and therefore of business, is one of increased connectivity. Verbal and written communication represented the level of connectivity needed to form the earliest civilizations. Gutenberg's printing press raised connectivity to a new level, spreading knowledge that would eventually undermine the simple tyrannies of church and monarch. The rights of church and monarch were displaced by the rights of individuals, giving birth to the democratic movements and culminating in the great revolutions of the eighteenth century (Gouillart and Kelly 1995:5).

The Industrial Revolution had most important social manifestations. It freed the individual from drudgery and physical isolation, and led to urbanisation. The rhythm of life changed profoundly, and because the spirit of the Industrial Age was mechanical, the qualities of the social institutions it created (bureaucracy, hierarchy, command-and-control systems, specialisation) were machine-like as well. The line worker became a cog in a wheel, with no sense of personal connection to the company and often with no sense of communion with the environment (Toffler 1980:23).

3.2.1.2 Social complexity

The developed Western societies have entered the Information Age, replacing the Industrial Age. As was true of earlier social transformations, this one is increasing the level of social complexity and leading to profound changes in society, to which the organisation - the dominant institutional creature of the Industrial Age - must adapt.

Viewed from the perspective of the individual, speech, writing, printing, telephones, radio, and television all represented technological advances

that increased the size and scope of connectivity networks. The Westerner can fax, videoconference, and computer-network with all parts of the world, on demand. Networks are growing inexorably in both size and complexity, and that growth will probably continue (Gouillart and Kelly 1995:7).

3.2.1.3 Individual versus organisation

What is true at the individual level, is also true for organisations. Companies are forming alliances and partnerships with their suppliers and customers, becoming parts of networks, even networks of networks. The physical and financial boundaries between organisations are blurring, and the trend will probably continue (Ohmae 1994).

But while the individual networks expand and business networks become knowledge networks, there is a human element that warrants careful attention and nurturing. Connectivity can be a double-edged sword, triggering either greater individual isolation or a greater sense of community, depending on the role organisations choose for themselves in the future.

On the pessimistic side, increased electronic connectivity may cause a loss of genuine human contact. Encounters become simulations, contrived by electronics. Individuals do not touch, smell, or feel emotional about the things and people they interact with, because they are not there. (Gouillart & Kelly 1995:8).

Another more optimistic scenario is possible. Organisations can provide the new caring that so many seek. This will not happen in the paternalistic fashion of the previous generation, and employees are not likely to see

a return to guaranteed employment. But it will happen in different forms. Successful organisations will develop a new role built around the invention of a new social contract. Gouillart and Kelly (1995) argue that the developed West will see organisations taking responsibility for the renewal of individuals, helping them to acquire new skills. Organisations are redefining the boundaries of their responsibility, accepting accountability for the way they use resources and contribute to the environment. Organisations probably will play a major role in the renewal of education in many countries, and become involved in the solution of major social ills.

3.2.1.4 The virtual organisation

A new paradigm of organisation, one that will dominate the theory and practice of business organisation, has crystallised in recent years. Called virtual organisation, this new paradigm is clearly manifested in the operations of some innovative organisations; it is undergoing refinement and elaboration in a variety of contexts, and experience of this organisation is accumulating. This concept was introduced by Mowshowitz (1994) in the early 1980s in lectures on computers and the globalisation of business, and has been elaborated in a number of reports and articles over the past decade (Mowshowitz 1985, 1986a, 1986b, 1987, 1992, in Mowshowitz 1994:268). The notion of the virtual organisation rests on a fundamental principle, one as basic as the division of labour itself.

Although Davidow and Malone (1992) do not provide a precise definition of the virtual organisation, their notion is based on what they call the virtual product: that is, “one that is produced instantaneously and customized in response to customer demand” (Davidow and Malone

1992 and Mowshowitz 1994:270). The virtual organisation is depicted as an organisation geared up to produce virtual products, one characterised by *just-in-time* supply, work teams, flexible manufacturing, reusable engineering, worker empowerment, organisational streamlining, computer-aided design, total quality and mass customisation. This collection of features, characteristic of various innovative organisations that rely heavily on advanced information technology, equates virtual organisation with specific corporate practices and structures.

The intellectual origins of the concept lie in three disparate fields: Computer science, foundations of mathematics, and international business. These fields have contributed the phenomena of virtual memory, meta-mathematics, and global management, respectively. Contemplation of the advantages in virtual memory to be gained through switching, the dependence of virtual memory on the logical separation of an object system from a meta-system, and the (almost certainly unconscious) utilisation of switching by global managers eventually led to the theory of virtual organisation presented here. The theory is offered as an explanation of real phenomena in the world of business, not as a prescription for how managers should or should not behave. However, like division of labour, virtual organisation can increase efficiency, lower production costs, and improve the co-ordination and control of functions. Because these effects are generally deemed desirable by managers, the theory provides a basis for projecting economic and social changes in the future (Mowshowitz 1994:273-277).

The economic and social significance of virtual organisation in the future is likely to be comparable to that of the factory in an earlier period. This

new approach to organisation is likely to become a dominant paradigm because it offers unique advantages in the efficiency cost and the effectiveness of goal-oriented activity, Equally important, the requisites for the exploitation of this new approach are in place. Properly implemented, the virtual organisation may deliver increases in efficiency and effectiveness on an unprecedented scale.

The role of technology in virtual organisations warrants special attention. Advances in technology - especially in the fields of transportation, communication, and computing - have made it possible to manage complex enterprises efficiently and effectively. With these technologies, the process of making a product or providing a service can be differentiated and the component task distributed in different places and executed at different times - with complete assurance that the whole process can be integrated and controlled effectively (Mowshowitz 1994:279).

The essence of virtual organisation is the management of goal-oriented activity in a way that is independent of the means for its realisation. This implies a logical separation between the conception and planning of an activity, on the one hand, and its implementation, on the other. By activity Mowshowitz means anything undertaken in an organisation, be it in production, marketing, distribution, research and development, or any other domain.

Walsham (1994) argues that Mowshowitz places too much emphasis on the dehumanisation as associated with the transition to virtual organisation. Handy (1995:47) argues that a virtual organisation can only exist in an environment of trust. Organisations will have to trust

independents, the part-times and the small contractors and suppliers. Another threat to the virtual organisation is the growing “underclass” (Handy 1995:48). They want “hamburgers and heating” not computers. Virtuality will be a recipe for a divided society unless we take from the present to ensure the future, instead of borrowing from the future to ensure the present.

3.2.1.5 Cultural concepts

Managers need to have a grasp of cultural concepts in order to perform their role satisfactorily (Viljoen 1987). Firstly a manager in the workplace must be able to understand and manage different groups characterised by different cultures. For example, the employees in the packing and despatch department of an organisation may have a different set of values and shared meanings from the employees in the audit section. Secondly, managers have to react to, initiate and manage change on a cultural level in their organisations. An extreme example of such a challenge has faced managers in the former public sector who had to foster a culture more appropriate to life in the private sector. Thirdly, more managers have to manage across borders and by definition across national cultures as markets become more global (Vielba 1995:4).

To manage successfully in the contexts described above, managers need more than an instinctive grasp they have of their own culture. Managers need models, frameworks and concepts which they can articulate in order to talk to those in other organisations and from other cultures. They also need to be able to analyse the underlying values of their own organisation and understand how these are linked to the organisational structures and processes of the organisation and the corporate behaviour they see around them.

Vielba (1995:6) found some evidence that managers lack the appropriate exposure to ways of thinking which would facilitate understanding organisational culture in an academic way. He also found that managers find it difficult to discuss the underpinnings of aspects of their own organisational culture. A brief glance at what is taught on management programmes suggests that more could be done to help managers in this area. He argues that a large number of students may benefit from imaginative indirect approaches to culture over and above strictly academic approaches

This area contains many issues, both about how managers think and operate and also about how management education can be made more effective. Recent research pointed to two paradigms that dominate Western approaches to management teaching. The first paradigm focuses on the approach to teaching managers about culture whereby they are taught formal theories and models of organisational and national cultures and are then given an opportunity to play with their new knowledge by applying it to cases or real organisations. The second paradigm focuses on the fusion of knowledge and practice and is closer to some of the innovative approaches described here. In this paradigm, learning begins from the point of view of a manager's experience and proceeds to transfer ideas and tools that help the manager make sense of and operate more effectively in a particular situation. Both approaches are equally valid, but it has been strongly argued that the limited prior academic exposure most managers have and the silence that exist in many organisations supports greater use of the second approach.

3.2.1.6 Nationalism

Contrary to what has been said about the similarities between the US

and Europe in Chapter 2, nationalism acts as a differentiating factor between them. In Europe, residual nationalism can incapacitate the sort of centralisation common in the US. At best, European-based companies find it prudent to keep a few managers in each country, to untangle local laws and sweet-talk local politicians. At worst, they risk being blackmailed by governments into keeping open unnecessary plants (Hammer and Champy 1995:67).

Corporate culture can also be a problem. Hammer and Champy (1995:68; Lincoln, Kerbo & Wittenbaum 1995:417) suggest that German bosses tend to regard themselves as corporate father-figures, while French bosses have not caught up with the elementary notion that the customer is king. They also worry that many European firms are too confident of their own managerial traditions, and too insulated from market pressures, to be bothered to re-invent themselves. Germany could also find that, if re-engineering really is crucial to its organisations' future, its much-praised education and training may turn into an impediment. Germany excels at producing functional specialists, whereas re-engineering requires flexible generalists.

3.2.2 JAPANESE MANAGEMENT

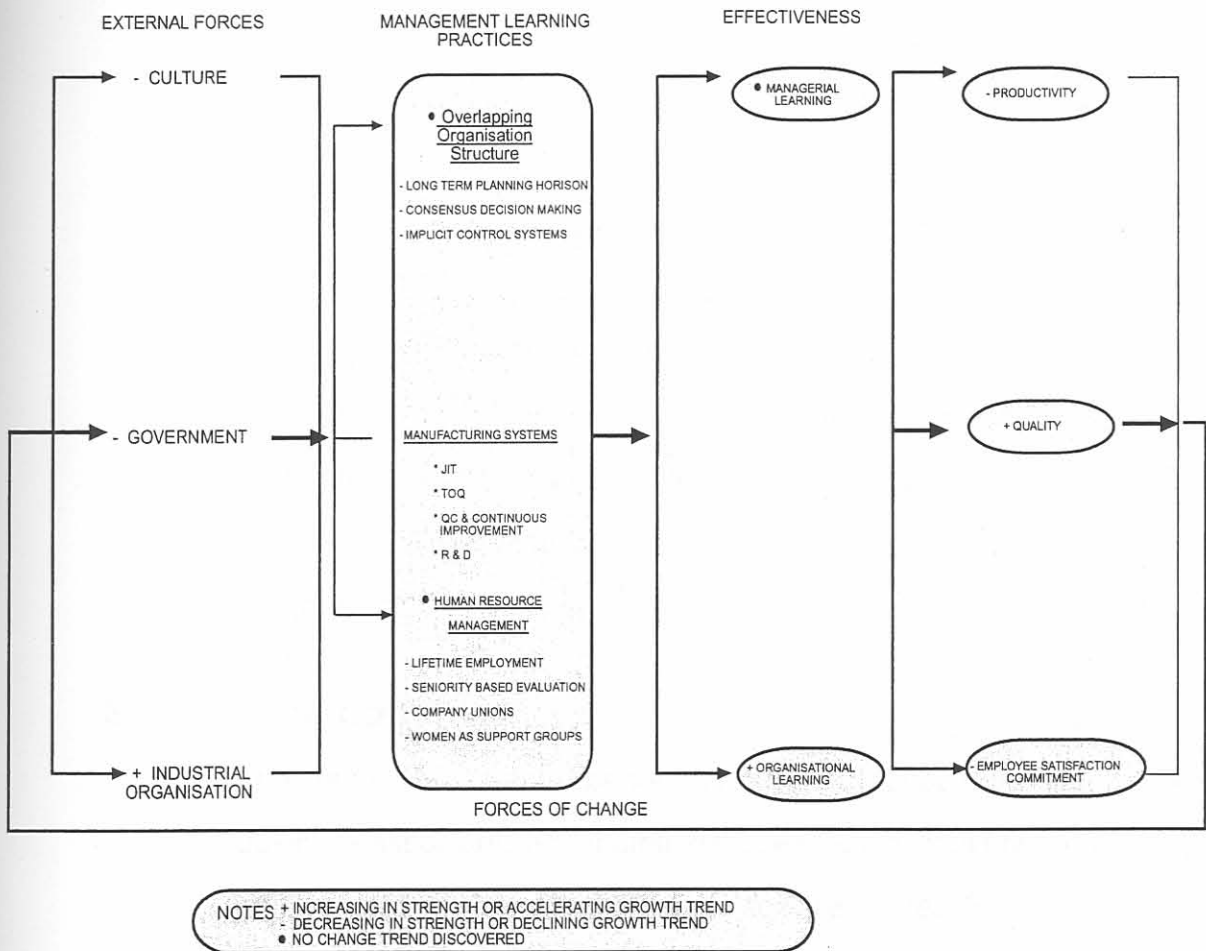
3.2.2.1 Introduction

Japanese management practices are influenced by culture, by industrial organisation, primarily the *keiretsu*, and by government, especially the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI). (See section 3.5.1 for a definition on *keiretsu*).

A number of cultural influences serve as the foundation for current

Japanese management practices. These include the presence of a collective mentality, a great persistence in the face of difficulty, a strong emphasis on social reciprocity as the governing principle of relationships, a physically concentrated and culturally homogeneous society, and an uncommon appreciation for education and learning (Keys and Miller 1994:386). Figure 3.1 illustrates the forces of change on the Japanese management theory, and indicates which forces are not changing, accelerating in strength or decreasing in strength.

Figure 3.1 Paths through the Japanese management theory jungle.



Source: Keys & Miller (1994:384).

The philosophies of Confucianism and Zen Buddhism, widely taught in Japan, have profoundly affected the Japanese work ethic. Confucian philosophy regards the ideal society as one in which relationships, largely based on family and hierarchy, are maintained in perfect harmony over time. An individual's identity is invariably described in terms of group values, consequently, most social and work activities in Japan are group activities. Although individual motives are prevalent among the Japanese, it is not acceptable for these to be displayed publicly (Befu 1989:47). Apparently influenced by the philosophy of Confucianism, Japanese companies enshroud themselves with many of the characteristics of families, since Japanese workers depend on companies for social as well as economic sustenance; for example lifetime employment.

The Samurai remains the most popular folk hero in Japanese society and is admired for his ability, through the use of Zen, to overcome human emotion in pursuit of honourable objects. Today, the philosophy of Zen is used to discipline the mind within the Japanese educational and social systems. Zen maintains that life is a process, not a destination. This belief materialises as an unending drive for improvement (Fry 1994:387) which is embodied in the concept of Japanese long-term planning.

3.2.2.2. Relationships

The Japanese attach special value to personal relationships with business associates and maintain these relationships primarily through adherence to the law of reciprocity in social activities. Such relationships are cultivated over time and often take precedence over what Westerners would consider rational business decisions. New foreign participants in business systems are accepted reluctantly. This strong

emphasis on relationship maintenance frequently allows conflicts to be resolved without resorting to the legal system. In a corporate setting, social reciprocity requires that superiors make personal investments in their subordinates. This approach is thought to build stronger bonds than rewarding employees with corporate resources, such as promotions and salary increases as is common in the Western world.

Japanese society is remarkably homogeneous and, due to the lack of usable land, physically concentrated. In Japan, group membership determines one's status, and products play a defining role in identifying group members. Land and housing are so scarce that the Japanese are unable to invest conspicuously in them, consequently they are demanding about other high status products that can serve as indicators of social status (Mueller 1994:381).

3.2.2.3 Natural resources

Keys and Miller (1994) argue that limited natural resources have forced the Japanese to promote trade with foreign markets, spurring them to make technological and managerial advances in the area of logistics. The space and energy-efficient products of Japan became quite attractive in international markets in the 1970s because of the oil embargo, automobile downsizing and emerging concern for the environment.

3.2.2.4 Education

Japanese society greatly values education and learning. Japanese students are usually considered to be about four years ahead of their US counterparts upon graduation from high school and their test scores are consistently higher than those of American students at all levels

(Stevenson, Chen and Lee 1993). Traditionally the Japanese have provided their employees with excellent education and training through lifetime investment in development and job rotation.

The factors credited with producing this high level of achievement include family involvement, personal discipline and high expectations. The Japanese believe academic success is determined by diligence and persistence, not by innate ability. Therefore, mothers, who seldom work, devote themselves to the task of guiding the education of their children. Consequently, the Confucian philosophy of valuing family relationships produces the motivating force for educational attainment while the Zen philosophy provides the mental discipline for successful study habits (Befu 1989:49).

Much of their great zeal for education, especially international education, springs from cultural imperatives following World War II when Japanese governmental employees were forced to communicate in English with the Western world. The persistence of Japanese expatriates to remain in international assignments for long periods, encourages Japanese companies to invest heavily in international training.

3.2.2.5 Industrial organisation

Many have argued that the secret to Japan's global economic success is due to the rise of the post-World War II *keiretsu*. The leading *keiretsus*, the modern equivalent of the pre-war *zaibatsu*, are often centred in large banks, *Kinyu keiretsu* (financial lineage) or *kigyo shudan* (enterprise group), and include as members other financial institutions, a highly diversified set of large manufacturing firms, and the principal player, the general trading company. The post-World War II McArthur administration broke up the family-owned *zaibatsu*, blaming them for

the military machine that fostered imperialism. However, since 1952, the six largest groups have reacquired control of more than 25 per cent of industry, a concentration similar to the one that existed before the war (Keys and Miller 1994:389).

Keiretsus have numerous ways in which to aid affiliates. They can offer sizeable scale economies, highly integrated vertical relationships, networking that limits competition, leverage with highly favourable repayment schedules, considerable foreign direct investment, and significant governmental influence. Most analyses of Japanese practices have overlooked the importance of the small-to-medium-size supplier firms, *chu-sho kigyo*, that have made Japan so technically proficient, and at the same time, highly flexible. Small subcontractors, who negotiate with the large *keiretsu*, must share design and development costs of the large firms, *dai kigyo*, absorb losses and layoffs when business encounters a recession, agree to prices imposed from above, and often provide jobs for retiring executives when central organisations are unwilling to retain them. Induced hiring by smaller firms does not only include corporate managers, 50-55 years of age, but retiring senior officials from government ministries as well. In this manner, strong political and legal skills are imparted to top managers and strong information networks are ensured between government and business (Suzuki 1989:8). Suzuki (1989:8) says, "This flow of human resources from the upper institutions to the lower ones is called *amakudari*, ... *i.e.* a person descending from heaven."

3.2.2.6 Government

Political power in Japan lies in the strength of the 21 government ministries, the strongest of which is the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) (Morgan and Morgan 1991). According to several

3.2.3.1 writers, MITI orchestrates the economy with five year plans and rewards strategic industries that fit well into Japan's vertically integrated economy, promoting a planned emphasis and guiding new technology development and implementation. Cutts (1988:52) calls this relationship a "managed competition that fosters acceptance of informal cartel management."

There is little doubt that MITI uses government regulations in a discriminatory manner to restrict Japanese imports. Compared with US successes in Europe, trade with Japan has produced an unfavourable result that some blame on excessive lobbying expenditures by the Japanese. One prolific and rather articulate critic of Japanese unfair trade practices, says, "Japan has developed an insidious program of US influence by propaganda dissemination through funding of US universities and think tanks, by attempts to shape elementary and secondary school reading materials, teaching programs, and all-expense-paid trips to Japan for social-studies teachers, including the rewriting of World War II to omit Japan's atrocities ..." (Choate 1990:102).

Only a portion of the difficulty faced by US firms when entering the Japanese market can be attributed to Japanese government policies. Difficulty of entry is exacerbated by the reluctance of the Japanese to seek what they fear is less stable employment with American organisations. Similarly, customers are reluctant to buy high technology equipment, which requires considerable support, from foreign companies whom they view as less dependable than Japanese firms (Keys and Miller 1994:394).

3.2.3 AFRICAN MANAGEMENT

3.2.3.1 Introduction

A great deal has been, and continues to be, written about Africa's seemingly endless economic crises. Prognostications range from gloomy to ominous to catastrophic. In line with global trends, current prescriptions for the continent's economic ailments, led by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), involve rigorous austerity budgets, import restrictions, currency devaluations, reductions of government subsidies, stimulation of exports, encouragement of the private sector and foreign private investment, performance incentives, imposition of fees for public services like education and health, and drastic reductions in the size and role of the public sector.

These measures appear to be drastic, but if the descriptions of Africa's economic predicament are accurate, urgent action is certainly needed. According to Kiggundu (1988:191) and Kaijage (1993:42), the crisis in Africa south of the Sahara is "severe, general and worsening"; production is generally stagnant; internal and external balances are in crises; there is a crisis in agricultural performance; there is an institutional crisis with weak and ineffective government decision making and implementing capacity, poor investment and resource allocation decisions, weak industrial sectors, and inefficient and compromised parastatal sectors. Nti (1989:127), Thomas (1996:5) and Hauchler (1992:4) point to low rates of growth, falling outputs of goods and services, and food shortages. Two graphs that are showing upward trends are population, at about three per cent annually overall, and inflation. Some African countries spend up to 50 per cent of their export earnings on debt servicing, an issue that currently enjoys a lot of interest

from lobbying groups in Europe.

Exogenous economic factors contributing to this depressing state of affairs include drastic oil price rises, global recessions, and deteriorating terms of trade. As if these were not enough, nature has conspired in parts of Africa to produce severe deterioration in climatic conditions, through droughts, changing rainfall patterns and desertification (Blunt 1983:147).

Restorative measures of the type described earlier are naturally controversial. To an IMF economist they make eminent theoretical sense, but their social repercussions may be serious. As Nti (1989:127) notes, for example, mass retrenchments of public sector employees - for some reason the imposed target figure always seems to be around 30 per cent - in the context of the African extended family dependency system is likely to cause more serious problems for more people than might be the case in other socio-cultural settings. Few African nations can afford comprehensive social security systems of the type taken for granted in the wealthy industrialised countries; redundancy for one employee is likely to cause hardship to many.

Are there then any alternative or associated steps which African nations can take to escape this economic morass? It certainly seems important that they should search for alternatives, because it is by no means clear that the current pattern of imposed recovery measures will work. Nti (1989:128) is unambiguous: Structural adjustment programmes "do not lead to the restructuring of the economy. The structure remains the same except for readjustment of the budget figures".

Balogun (1989:54) finds some encouragement in what he refers to as “recent concerted efforts” by African governments to consider other ways of overcoming these problems. Asserting that in the past policy responses to alarm signals of the dangers of economic collapse, and associated social upheaval and political instability, were largely inadequate, he points to what he calls recent “radical policy initiatives,” which actually amount to calls for:

- The formulation of effective human resource development and utilisation policies, especially in relation to the development of entrepreneurial skills;
- improved economic management through efficient allocation of resources;
- better management systems;
- reshaping of public services to be more development-oriented;
- improvement of public enterprise performance; and
- the formulation of balanced population policies.

As Kiggundu (1988:193) points out, however, there is little guidance about how such obviously desirable improvements are to be achieved.

Some analysts have argued that although clear similarities exist between Western and African management on the macro (structural) level, significant differences emerge on the micro (behavioural) level (Child 1981). Hofstede (1980, 1984) states that differences in national culture would have an impact on organisational behaviour. In a comparative study of African (Kenyan and Nigerian) and UK managers, Seddon (1985:102), using the Hofstede’s value survey module (VSM), found clear differences in all four dimensions (power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism/collectivism and masculinity/femininity).

3.2.3. The major argument in favour of the applicability of Western management in different cultural settings, is the existence of striking similarities between the bureaucracy of developed and developing countries. All developing countries, including those which escaped Western colonisation, have consciously tried to introduce some version of modern Western management.

3.2.3. The application of Western management to the conditions in developing countries has been defended on the grounds that several of its prescriptions have been successfully employed in such countries. In an evaluation report of 19 case studies, Hage and Finsterbusch (as cited in Vengroff *et al*, 1991) found that the American literature on organisational change (organisational development, organisational design and organisation theory) is relevant to Third World contexts. Their fundamental conclusion is that cultural values may play a role in development management, but the connections are not clear and their argument vague. Leonard (1987) also finds that Western management proves to be a remarkably useful tool for understanding the effects of subordinate staff behaviour on productivity in Kenya's Ministry of Agriculture and that it provides a valid body of theory applicable to any region of the world. Leonard's conclusions are largely supported by more recent work by Belhaj (as cited in Vengroff *et al*) in a very different geographic and cultural setting, the Yemen Arab Republic. See more arguments on the application of management in section 3.4.2.

Jones (1989:69) provides a useful summary of findings regarding the impact of the organisational context (culture) as a "contingent factor in management practice" in Africa. He concludes by saying that a *common theme that emerges again and again from the various contributors to*

our knowledge of this area is the insistent call for more empirical research.

3.2.3.2 The political context

African politics is complex and sometimes baffling, as new nations experiment with different systems in attempts to find suitable patterns for governance. It is not the intention to delve into these complexities, but it is clear that political realities are a crucial element of the context in which African organisations function.

One factor that emerged in an investigation done by Thomas (1996:4) as essential to managerial success, was the building and maintenance of political connections. This consisted not in building an independent political base, but in gaining regular access to top politicians in order to influence policy decisions, supply of resources, and protection against politicisation and inappropriate policies. Such political support has to be earned through loyalty and careful network building.

3.2.3.3 The socio-cultural context

An issue of the Journal of International Studies of Management and Organization (Summer 1986) consists of five articles on issues regarding management in African organisations. The guest editor, Augustine Ahiauzu, comments that *it is becoming increasingly widely accepted among social scientists, especially managers and organizational theorists, that patterns of management and employee behaviour in the workplace are largely culture-bound* (1986:3). The five articles in the journal provide examples to support this view. In agreement with the five contributors, Ahiauzu stresses the need for empirical research in this field, particularly into "questions of persistent interest," including:

- The nature and evolution of African management thought and work;
- the meaning of work for Africans;
- frameworks for analysis, theoretical perspectives and methodological consequences, in African organisations;
- cultural variations in African societies and their influences on organisational behaviour;
- tradition and modernity in work organisations; and
- what can be learned from the experiences of industrialised countries.

The most influential large-scale cross-cultural studies are those of Haire, Ghiselli and Porter (as cited in Blunt 1983:11) and Hofstede (1980, 1984). The investigation by Haire and his colleagues produced evidence indicating that in some respects managers had common views that cut across national boundaries. There was also evidence that cultural factors were significant in differences between clusters of countries with common cultural attributes. However, in the three developing countries in the study it was the *shared stage of economic development* that accounted for some common characteristics. Replications of the Haire *et al* study in African countries by, among others, Blunt (1973, 1976), Howell, Strauss and Sorenson (1975), Blunt and Jones (1986), and Jones (as cited in Blunt 1983), similarly have produced evidence of “convergent” and “divergent” elements in the thinking and behaviour of managers.

Hofstede’s massive investigation (1980), was based upon a model developed from his view that culture is essentially the collective mental programming of people in their environment. His data revealed marked differences in national cultures that would be expected to have a significant impact on organisational behaviour.

Murrell (1986) draws attention to the realities of organisational environments in Africa that clearly do not possess the same history of modern organisational or industrial life as the West. Western management models cannot be merely adopted or copied in such environments; they have to be adapted in the “most culturally appropriate manner” (Murrell 1986:29).

Leonard (1987) has provided some specific examples of cultural influences on African managers, and argues that differences in organisation behaviour between them and their counterparts in the industrialised West are due to fundamental differences in values. Leonard stresses the need to develop an understanding of the effects of such cultural realities on organisational behaviour and cautions against the unthinking transfer of alien management concepts and practices. Western social science makes assumptions about the functioning of formal organisations, according to Leonard (1987:903):

- The assumption of purposive rationality, implying commitment to organisational goals; and
- the assumption of economic rationality, which views economics as the fundamental social process that provides an understanding of all human transactions.

He asserts that such assumptions are not applicable in all societies, and that their validity in Africa is particularly limited.

3.2.3.4 Transportation, communications and technology

In Africa, trade links often have to be maintained across vast distances and difficult terrain. Transport links such as roads and railways are

3.2.3 relatively undeveloped, often old and in need of updating and regular maintenance. These and other factors make the job of the African manager additionally problematic, especially if they are combined with political instability in surrounding countries.

In terms of technology, as Kiggundu (1988:216) remarks, sub-Saharan African is “lagging behind in the importation and effective utilisation and management of foreign technology ... Africa is not a technology developer because almost no research and development takes place on the continent ... Africa is also a poor copier of technology, and there is a tendency to view new technology as static, fixed ...” Nsibambi (1993:36) characterises African management by “... inferior technology, lack of basic decision-making data and problems of national integration,” a description echoed by Gahan (1992:5).

To some extent African agriculture is a victim of its colonial past and an unforgiving and uncaring world economy that is geared to serve the interests of the industrialised countries. But the agricultural crisis is also a function of internal factors, subject to internal control. The imbalance between population growth and food production, together with inept and wasteful government policies and management practices are major contributory factors - although the latter can sometimes be grossly exaggerated, and will in any case vary greatly between countries (Jamal 1988:661).

An article in the *Economist* titled “Africa’s cities” (1990:20) notes: “Africa’s comparative advantage may well be in farming. But efficient agriculture needs efficient towns to provide banks, marketing systems, agricultural training, and so on.”

3.2.3.5 Population growth and urbanisation

The population of sub-Saharan Africa has doubled in size since 1965. By the year 2010 it is expected to have risen to over one billion. These growth rates far exceed those of any other continent (including Latin America and Asia). The sheer magnitude of these increases is complicated by population distribution, density, age, and patterns of migration.

Urban migration and the age distribution (high proportion of young people) of Africa's population have contributed to agriculture's reduced "percentage share of the economically active population, while the growing proportions of female and child labour have qualitatively worsened the composition of labour resources" (Macgregor 1990:7).

These factors clearly have major implications for public policy and the strategic management of organisations.

3.2.4 SUMMARY

It is important to note that the idea that culture, both societal and corporate, has an impact on organisations, is not accepted by all researchers. Based on the literature explored in this section, it can be concluded that although corporate culture (culture internal to an organisation) is a factor that affects management, societal culture (external to an organisation) is equally important because it has a significant impact on an organisation's human resources as well as corporate culture.

In section 3.3 and 3.4 the discussion will include both macro- and micro-research as identified by Smircich (1983). Macro-research studies the

organisation as a whole system and analyses formally described structures such as decision making and conflict resolution. Micro-research studies the work group of the organisation (sub-system) - an organisation's human resources - career and attitude toward employees, the latter which will be discussed in section 3.3.

3.3 CAREER AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS EMPLOYEES

3.3.1 INTRODUCTION

In a previous era, organisations looked after their employees and gave them job security. Job security was appropriate in a static world with routine work. In the Information Age, routine work is done by machines, competition is intense, and the employee skills needed are changing fast.

The purpose of this section (3.3), is to discuss the career of and attitude towards employees, and includes the so-called changing employment contract, the reasons for these changes, entrepreneurship, career planning and communication. The discussion is categorised in similar but non-identical categories, under Western, Japanese and African management.

3.3.2 WESTERN MANAGEMENT

3.3.2.1 Introduction

Hennesy, Killian and Robins (1995:161) argue that trends are now apparent that seem to indicate we may be in a transitional period between two different ways of dealing with the challenges of business and of society as a whole. The outgoing order is the age of specialisation, and the incoming, the era of integration. The world is becoming more integrated, customised, individualised and global. Each