

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The tendency to separate the opposites as much as possible and to strive for singleness of meaning is absolutely necessary for clarity of consciousness, since discrimination is of its essence. But when the separation is carried so far that the complementary opposite is lost sight of, and the blackness of the whiteness, the evil of the good, and the depth of the heights, and so on, is no longer seen, the result is one-sidedness, which is then compensated from the unconsciousness without our help. The counterbalancing is even done against our will, which in consequence must become more and more fanatical until it brings about a catastrophic “enantiodromia”(being torn asunder into pairs of opposites). Wisdom never forgets that all things have two sides, and it would also know how to avoid such calamities if it ever had any power.

(Jung 1953)

8.1 INTRODUCTION

The need for a unique management style, addressing both Western and African values, has been highlighted in Chapter 1. It is however difficult to address the problem when there are no benchmarks or if a conflict of interest exists. Furthermore, all research on the topic done to date has concentrated on one aspect of the South African business environment only.

This study, which starts from the premise that communication is a basis for human organising and therefore a management function, has maintained throughout that the organisation has elements that interact in a constantly changing set of meanings constructed through communication.

2.2 The overall problem identified in this study was to formulate a basis for theory development by comparing Western, Japanese and African management theories and philosophies, enabling the researcher to juxtapose these with the core value system, Ubuntu. These theories and philosophies are neither exhaustive nor mutually exclusive, but rather interrelated so that categories support or compete with one another. In general, the comparative analysis was roughly grouped into dimensions based on macro-, socio-structural processes and those based on interpersonal processes. Although this dichotomy is a simplification of a range of views, it provided a parsimonious way to begin discussing issues of management. Furthermore, throughout the study, cultural comparisons between identity groups presented a mixture of similarities and differences. A description of a measurement instrument to monitor the existence and applicability of a uniquely South African management communication style has not been described, and the broad aim of the study was to take the first steps in constructing a model that will, with further research, eventually result in such a measurement instrument. The initial and perhaps most important contribution of the framework was to create an awareness among management of the differences (and similarities), that may exist in an organisation found in a multicultural society.

In this chapter a uniquely South African management model is formulated. In order to do this concisely, a framework has been derived from the theoretical foundations laid in the previous chapters, as explicated in Chapter 6. The theoretical basis for the framework of the model was described and graphically presented in the previous chapters and is now used to explain the recommendations based on the results from the empirical research.

This chapter starts with an overview of the research. The conclusions reached as a result of the research are discussed and the contributions made to research are summarised. Finally, the areas requiring further research are identified, and brief comments are made on the implication of this study on communication in organisations.

8.2 OVERVIEW

Chapter 1 motivated the study by focusing on the background to the problem. It highlighted the value of a “South Africanised” approach and its contribution to the complexities experienced in South Africa, but also pointed to the lack of an explanation on how this could be applied and the absence of an holistic approach to the problem. It further highlighted the need for a better understanding of the phenomenon. This was the need addressed in this study. The scope and the structure of the study were explicated, using the systems view of problem solving, giving a holistic view of the different varieties of scientific activities. Systems theory provided a general conceptual framework or meta-theory for this study. The study started from the premise that communication forms a basis for human organising and provides a rationale for understanding how people organise.

Chapter 2 gave a philosophical perspective on management based primarily on the arguments of Peter Drucker, illustrating the relative short history of management as a profession. The chapter also explicated the premise of this study, that communication is the binding elements that keeps the various interdependent parts of the organisation together. The society of organisations were described, where management became a key social function with management the constitutive, determining and differential organ of society. Negative perceptions of the ‘corporation’ *inter alia* its so-called unnatural development and one that suggested a ‘conspiracy of some sort’, with Henry Adams as one of its proponents, portrayed a picture of an evil, illegitimate ‘corporation’. But almost 100 years after management arose in the early large business enterprises of the latter half of the nineteenth century, it was clear that management pertained to every single social institution. Management had become the pervasive, universal organ of a modern society. The overwhelming majority of people in the developed societies were directly or indirectly linked to an organisation. They derived their

livelihood from the collective income of an organisation, saw their opportunities for career and success primarily linked to an organisation and defined their social status largely through their position within an affiliation to an organisation. An introduction to Western, Japanese and African management styles in this context, started the construction of the framework.

Chapter 3 presented an overview on the literature on management. The three management styles, Western, Japanese and African, were discussed in various dimensions, as determined by the literature, *inter alia* the social, environmental and cultural context; decision making and conflict resolution in the organisation, and the career and attitude toward employees.

To understand the multi-faceted nature of management, different theories on management were discussed throughout the chapter. A closer look into these theories revealed common elements on Western management:

- 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 and the management of knowledge represents the basis for the new business model of the Information Age, a dilemma that is being addressed by management philosophers.
- The entire history of civilisation, and therefore of business, is one of *increased* connectivity and interaction, either by personal interaction or technological means.
- This connectivity can become a double-edged sword, leading to either

greater individual isolation or a greater sense of community, depending on the role the organisations choose for themselves in the future.

- The human element warrants careful attention and nurturing. Care has to be taken not to further divide society, for example the dehumanisation as associated with the transition to virtual organisations.
- Organisations are redefining the boundaries of their responsibility, accepting accountability for the way they use resources and contribute to the environment.
- Managers have to be sensitised for the softer issues of management, suggesting a rethink on their training and curriculum. Managers need more than the instinctive grasp that they have of their own culture. They need models, frameworks and concepts which they can articulate in order to successfully interact with people from other cultural groups.
- Popular (*buzz words*) concepts and the exponential growth of management literature over the past decade, for example on re-engineering, all imply the *need* for new management thought, as the current thought and practice do not satisfy the fast changing needs of organisations. However, disillusioned authors argue that these 'new' concepts appear to be a revolution, change or revision, but are actually just more of the same.
- The trend in Western theory has been to view organisations as autonomous bodies and to examine how they can accomplish their goals most efficiently and rationally.

Theories on Japanese management also reveal common elements:

- Japanese management practices are influenced by culture, industrial organisation and by the government, especially the Ministry of International Trade and Industry.
- Japanese society greatly values education and learning.
- Japanese society is remarkably homogeneous, and maintains that life is a process, not a destination, which may account for the Japanese being masters at benchmarking and continuous improvement.

Common elements on African management includes:

- African nations are constantly involved in a fight for survival: Pressing issues include: hunger, (civil) war and poor infrastructure resulting in foreign debt, involvement of foreign agencies, for example the IMF.
- Western management models cannot merely be adopted or copied in African third world countries, but what should be done in its stead is conspicuous in its absence, although all arguments suggest that *culture* should play a central role.
- The large class of unskilled workers will not be able to compete in the demanding new world of knowledge work, resulting in African countries falling even further behind the industrialised West.
- Power is concentrated at the top of the organisation.

- Managers are not concerned with issues pertaining to the organisations' purpose and objectives.

Chapter 4 attempted to explore the basic principles of Ubuntu, as it appeared in the literature. It was noted that fewer than five primary authors were responsible for most of the literature on Ubuntu, concentrating the current thought and knowledge base. The exponents of Ubuntu are Van der Post, Koopman and Mbigi, whose arguments formed the basis of the chapter. Three other business spheres were identified which fall outside the parameters of this study.

To understand Ubuntu is to understand its origins. As discussed in section 4.2, *poor* African societies thrive on the solidarity principle of Ubuntu, and in return for the security offered by the group, the individual will have to conform to the group on *survival* issues. Ubuntu is the belief in the central sacredness, and foremost priority of the human being in all his/her conduct, throughout his/her life. Furthermore, it does not exist unless there is interaction between people in a community, manifesting through the actions of people.

After Ubuntu was defined, its origins, as well as the background on Africanisation and Afrocentricity were discussed. A distinction was drawn between these three concepts, as they are often used interchangeably in the literature. A conclusion was reached that Africanisation is further removed whereas Afrocentricity closer associated with Ubuntu, justifying the latter to be used, in some cases, a synonym with Ubuntu.

The social, environmental and cultural context of Ubuntu were discussed, followed by career and attitude toward employees, and decision making and conflict resolution, thereby following the structure as set in Chapters 2 and 3.

Chapter 5 structured a comparative analysis based on the literature survey described in Chapters 2 to 4. The dimensions identified were tabulated, wielding the qualitative data into a few manageable groups and presented in a format for further analysis.

Methodology and

Chapter 6 discussed the two objectives of the literature study, the first was to provide a conceptual foundation for the development of a theoretical framework for a model of South African management communication. The second was to condense large volumes of data into manageable clusters to formulate guidelines for the empirical investigation.

The research problem was briefly discussed, referring to Chapter 1 for more detail. The research design as the conceptual structure within which the research was conducted was then discussed. Three kinds of decisions involved in any research process, *inter alia* strategic, tactical and operational decisions were then described.

The general orientation and departure of the study determined the choice between a nomothetic and an idiographic approach. The position on the continuum between the idiographic and nomothetic approaches was illustrated and motivated.

In the discussion on the tactical decisions, it was explained that there was no simple classification system of research designs. This study was described as a formal, exploratory/descriptive, cross-sectional and *ex post facto* study. This meant that this was a study that covers a specific domain, eliciting responses from purposively selected participants, categorised on an agreement scale, with statements derived from an extensive literature survey and the subsequent analysis thereof. The motivation for these tactical decisions was then given.

The two important operational decisions related to what instrumentation was to be used and from whom the information had to be obtained. With this purpose in mind, the role of the literature survey was contextualised

The Q-methodology and the importance of *contextuality* was highlighted in a discussion on methodology. The principle of contextuality is connected to self-reference and also to Q-method's premise as a method of *impression*, as opposed to *expression*.

Chapter 7 summarised and reported on the data collected, the statistical treatment of the data, and dealt with the results of the empirical study.

The field research took place over a two-month period at business schools from a number of institutions of higher learning. The frequency tables for age, gender, title, industry sector, number of years in position and cultural groups were discussed, giving a description of the profile of the participants, and thus putting it in context with the results of the Q-sort.

The majority of the participants were male, between 25 –39 years of age, more than half were either managers, directors or part of senior management, primarily involved in general management and had been in their current jobs for between one and seven years.

Nearly half the participants were white South Africans ($f = 117$), and one third black South Africans ($f = 77$). This ratio was not representative of the broader population, but the researcher was satisfied that both groupings were adequately represented. This ratio will improve and become more representative in the foreseeable future, as previously disadvantaged cultural groups catch up. The backlog experienced to date will be cancelled out.

Four principle component factors were extracted from the correlation matrix:

- Factor 1: Individualism
- Factor 2: Collectivism
- Factor 3: External locus of control
- Factor 4: Group think – decision making

Factor 1, individualism, has its roots in the Western management philosophy, whereas factors 2 to 4 can be grouped under African and Ubuntu, and in the case of factors 2 and 4, Japanese management philosophy.

The research was carried out in accordance with the Mitroff and Kilmann (1978) research model described in Chapter 1 (Figure 1.1). Chapters 2 to 5, formed the activity of 'conceptualisation' used to develop the conceptual framework. From the conceptual framework, a process of 'modeling' (activity 2) took place and a scientific model (not to be confused with the 'model' that is the aim of the study), was developed (Chapter 6). The constructs of the study were defined, demarcated and classified in Chapter 6 to form the basis of the scientific model. The 'model solving' activities were described in chapter 7. Chapter 8 derives at the 'solution', being the operationalisation of the 'model solving' activities described in Chapter 7

Systems theory provided a general conceptual framework in terms of which more specific theories could be discussed. Such a meta-theory identified classes of variables and logical relationships among them, but did not specify particular relationships between specific sets of variables, as do substantive theories.

8.3 CONCLUSIONS

The following general conclusions can be drawn, based on this study:

- The core elements of Ubuntu are respect, dignity, acceptance and care, need elements that proved to be universal. These elements are therefore not exclusive to Ubuntu and thus South Africa, but is pervasive among any society. To refer to Ubuntu as *the* solution to South African managerial problems, is to give these elements a group name, while suggesting a more humane, softer approach to management in general. Furthermore, to describe this approach as being an Afrocentric approach to management is to move toward an exclusive rather than inclusive term. The recommendation in this regard is to refer to it as a South African approach. A South African approach suggests an approach taken 'by the people, for the people' whereas an Afrocentric approach suggests an approach 'moving *from* white associated values *to* black associated values' .
- However, the use of traditional Western mechanisms of getting a message across will have to be integrated with the traditional African mechanisms.
- Three of the four factors identified as important to South African managers, are closer to the communalism end of the continuum, with one factor closer to the individualism end. Nothing is therefore clear-cut. Integration of both individual and communal values into the organisation, and the understanding and knowledge of values representing both ends are needed.
- The empowerment drive in organisations is universal. It is the *method* by which such empowerment is dealt with in the organisation that differs from culture to culture.
- The secondary research questions, as formulated by Khoza in Chapter 1, are being answered implicitly throughout this chapter. A condensed version will be described now:

- Is the continent's business environment sufficiently homogeneous? The answer to this will have to be that it is not. Most African countries are in a state of survival and pre-occupied with survival issues which change the rules that are applicable to South African organisations.
- Can we look at the South African situation and superimpose its values on the rest of Africa? South Africa has a responsibility to other African countries, in its role as strongest economic power in the region. But its value system is not applicable to other African countries, based on the fact that we have different problems, systems and infrastructure unique to South Africa. Once again, what works for South Africa will not necessarily work in another culture (refer to middle layer of proposed model). However, when considering the core elements of Ubuntu which are universal, the answer is yes, for reasons discussed at the beginning of this section.
- Are values that are characteristically African, transcending African boundaries? Values that are characteristically African do transcend African boundaries in that they are mostly universal. The symbols of African culture differ, even amongst African countries.
- Are these values relevant to economic development, business management and communication management in particular? These values are relevant provided they are understood (by management and non-management), interpreted and *integrated* into the existing mechanisms of the organisation.

Based on the research, the following conclusions regarding the transferability of management styles have been reached:

- Most large organisations in the US were created decades and even centuries ago, and have subsequently been managed at top level, at least until recently, by a fairly homogeneous group of people. These 'founding fathers' naturally reflected their own cultural value systems in establishing the rules, policies, and practices that have shaped the organisation. For the most part, the policies and practices remain intact today despite the enormous changes that have occurred in society and the workplace in the course of the previous century. However, relations based on race, culture, gender, nationality and other group identities were overtly less tolerant and inclusive than they are today. Loden & Rosener (1991:28) explain that the American businesses have been shaped primarily by the values and experiences of Western European white men. One major consequence of this has been the continuous undervaluing of others with core identities different from themselves.
- Culture is specific to a group or society of people and no *absolute measure* exists for evaluating culture. Instead, culture is described based on its manifestations: symbols, heroes, rituals and values. Symbols, heroes and rituals are subsumed under the term 'practices', since these are visible manifestations to outside observers. Values, on the other hand, are considered the core of culture. They are developed at an early age and can be inferred by outside observers.
- The debate around whether management know-how is universal or culture-bound is not a new one (Neghandi & Estafen 1965). Research attention on the issue of cross-cultural transfer of management know-how has been growing steadily since the 1960s. Research in the field can be classified into two types of studies: The applicability and transferability of Western management know-how to developing countries since the 1960s, and the

transfer of Japanese management know-how to both developed and developing countries since the 1980s. Western and Japanese management are deeply rooted in their own socio-cultural soil, wholesale import of this know-how is impractical since the content must be suitable to the new environment and local circumstances. Western economy is in the post-industrial stage, with well-developed infrastructure, a complete market mechanism and a buyer's market, whereas Africa is in the early stage of industrialisation, with an under-developed infrastructure, embryo market systems and very low personal income. It is obvious that post-industrial management models are not suitable to the African context, especially on the micro-level (with some relevance to the macro-level). What African managers need is useful, acceptable and affordable know-how which can be used to address their problems. In a nutshell, no matter which source African managers borrow from, adaptation to local customs holds the key to the success of the transfer.

- Fan (1998:213) argues that learning consists of absorbing, digesting, adapting and applying of which the latter two are the most important stages in the transfer of management know-how. Adaptation has to be made both *conceptually* and *contextually* because: (a) Western and Japanese management know-how are defined on the basis of assumptions and norms which are fundamentally different from their African counterparts, and (b) African organisations operate in an environment that differs from the Western and Japanese environments in almost every aspect. The purpose of the adaptation will be to identify those *factors* which would be inappropriate or unacceptable in the African setting and modify them to fit into the African context.
- African organisations operate in an environment that differs from those in

South Africa in most aspects. Similarities are found in informal business operating throughout South Africa but (specifically in rural areas), which have little or nothing in common with formal business in the rest of South Africa. As of January 1998, South Africa ranked 25th in the world for Internet-linked host computers per capita, an indicator of Internet-based economic activity within given countries. South Africa was behind Spain and Italy. The only developing countries ranking higher than South Africa was Singapore (10th) and Hong Kong (17th) (Economist 1998). With an estimated 122 025 host computers compared to second-ranked in Africa (Egypt, with only 2 013) South Africa is well positioned to be a knowledge-based economy (Network Wizards, 1998).

As a result of the interdisciplinary literature survey and systems approach adopted in this study, a number of other conclusions regarding human resource management, change, flexibility and management emerged as the research progressed:

- The business environment is changing rapidly because of political, economic, social and technological developments. The nature of the change has progressed from somewhat predictable to unpredictable change. Past events and patterns are less likely to be repeated in exactly the same form in an increasingly uncertain and competitive business environment. In addition to these global changes, South Africa has unique problems typical to a first *and* third world environment and has had a heterogeneous population for over three centuries, which has shared nothing except geographical area.
- As a result of the rising uncertainty and complexity in the business environment, the survival of organisations is increasingly being threatened. It follows that organisations that are flexible and thus able to adapt rapidly

and efficiently to change, are more likely to survive and succeed than their less flexible counterparts. This implies that the *value* of flexibility and adaptation measures increases as the levels of uncertainty in the environment increase.

- Concepts like *rethinking* and *re-engineering* (which are, at the beginning of the 21st century, better known as knowledge management, enterprise software, Internet technology, organisational agility, value engineering, and growth strategy), all imply the call for continuous, innovative approaches to management and the way organisations are managed. Two schools of thought, the 'management works' (of which Peter Drucker is a leading voice), and 'creative destruction' including 'complexity theory', (of which Joseph Schumpeter is the prophet), are relevant when studying management communication. The first school of thought argues that the quality of management determines a business's fate. The opposing view ('creative destruction') is that, while good management may make a difference for a short time, an organisation's fate is determined by forces outside management's control. If management determines an organisation's fate, then why do 'good' management, sound strategy, and plenty of resources not guarantee strong performance or even survival? The advocates of management answered this question by arguing that casualties among traditionally strong organisations can be expected, as some managers are coping better with change than others, and some industries are particularly unstable. Complexity theorists reject that explanation, arguing that radical uncertainty is not limited to certain industries - it is now endemic. Management as we know it is too cumbersome for today's fast, unpredictable pace, and is now moving in a nonlinear fashion. It can be concluded that not one, but both of these

schools of thought are still relevant in today's organisation, as (a) the management school over-emphasised the influence of the 'good' manager on the future/success of the organisation and (b) underestimate the influence of the volatility of the system within which their organisation operates. Furthermore, (c) the complexity school undervalue the lessons of experience and adaptation, and (d) overemphasise the role and interpretation of evolving threats and emergent strategies. Arguments from both schools of thought have to be considered for an organisation to survive. It can also be noted that as this is the realm within which western management thought and practice have developed, again stressing the great divide between the first world and third world organisations. The same solution (western management) cannot be an answer to their different problems.

- The transition to a more technological work environment obviously calls for massive re-education of the existing workforce. It is not only going to revolutionise management, but also *how* and *what* they learn. Management and executive development are increasingly going to focus on cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary education of business and professional leaders. In this new emerging work culture, human information and technology resources take center stage. Wide-ranging issues are to be addressed by organisations, from the use of technology to update the workforce to human-machine interface, from changed needs about occupations and organisational relations to coping with a diversified and decentralised workforce. The approach to people and their development within human systems are changing.
- To the extent that 'external locus of control' is one of the four factors

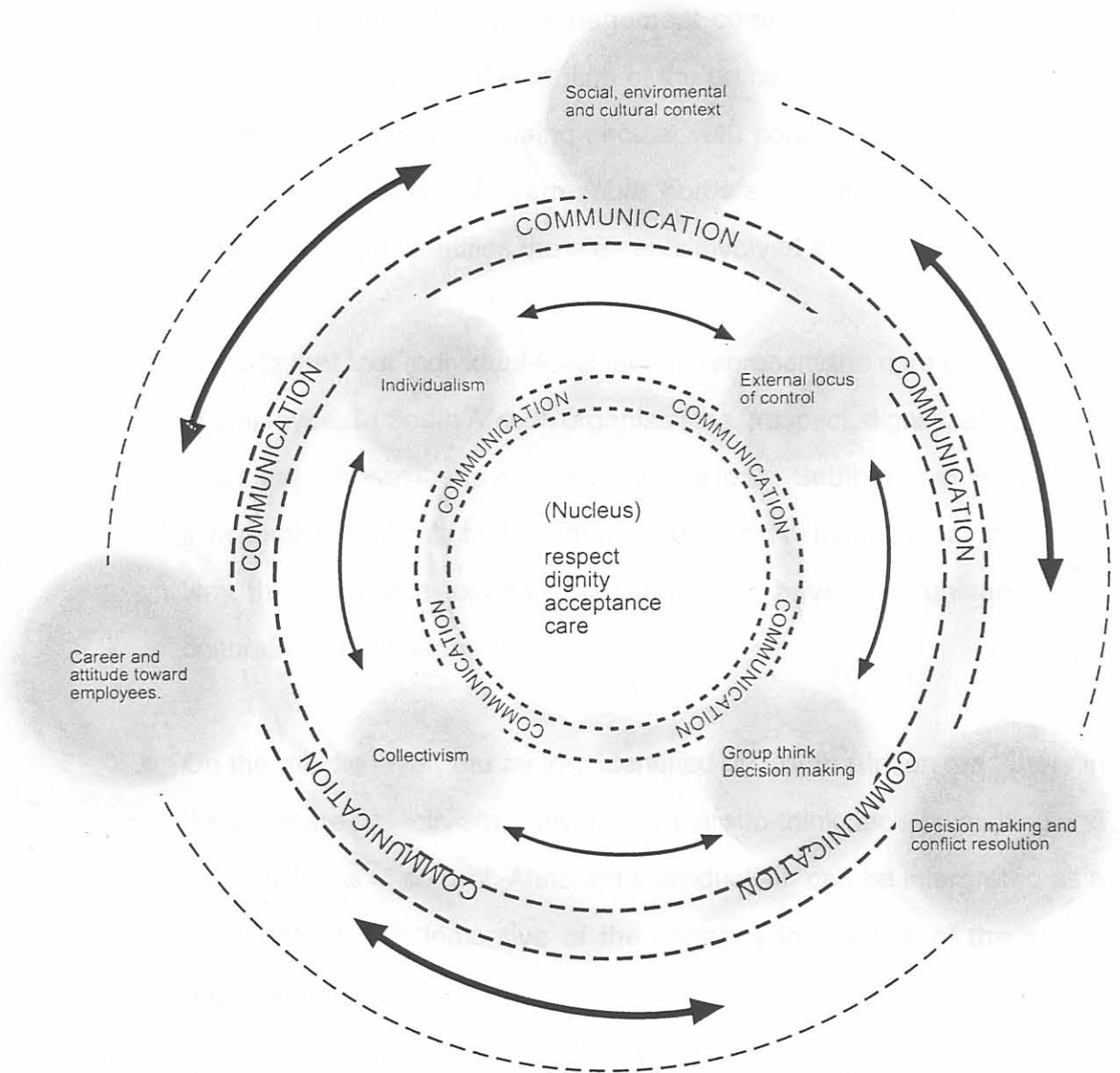
identified in the empirical research section of this study, motivation and reward systems in organisations tend to be build on assumptions of *internal* locus of control. These two areas (motivation and reward systems), need to be relooked.

- The authoritarian personality as discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, involves a range of traits such as aggressiveness, power orientation, political conservatism and cynicism. In addition, the Dutch researcher Ijzendoorn (in Cox, 1993) has shown that persons with authoritarian personalities are less tolerant toward members of other cultural groups. This may have a significant impact on the screening processes for new employees, as well as training and development efforts of organisations.

8.4 THE FRAMEWORK FOR A SOUTH AFRICAN MANAGEMENT COMMUNICATION MODEL

The construction of the theoretical framework for a South African management communication model is described in Figure 8.1

Figure 8.1 Framework for a South African management communication model



Source: Researchers interpretation

8.5 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Figure 8.1 presents the framework for a South African management communication model, which was developed as a result of the research activities described in Chapters 2 to 7. There are features of the model that can be viewed as somewhat distinctive:
- This is a general model designed to explicate constructs *influencing* the process of South African management communication, and does not provide a substantive description of the process itself. It does however, suggest the process as being circular with core values relevant to the start of the process, with permeable 'borders' between the constructs of the model and it identifies the elements involved in the process.
- It posits that four individual-level factors represent the core expectations of employees in South African organisations, (respect, dignity, acceptance and care). These needs are not exclusive to the South African workforce, irrespective their cultural background, but tend to be universal. It is in the way the workforce *express* them that may have *both* universal and culturally-specific elements.
- On the middle layer, the factors identified by South African managers in the study are collectivism, individualism, group-think decision making and external locus of control. Although individualism can be interpreted as a discrepancy, it is indicative of the changes in the role of the self in organisations.
- The structural level, decision making and conflict resolution, career and attitude toward employees, and social, cultural and environmental context constitute the outer layer.

- Holding these factors together is communication, which constitutes the glue that keeps the layers together, the medium that facilitates interaction.
- These three layers collectively define the elements present in a South African management communication model.
- The core layer (affective processes) starts with the softer issues of management, moving to the harder issues of management on the outer layer. Management thoughts and philosophy are part of the softer issues, followed by concepts, theories and models, and on the harder side, techniques, methods and practices.
- It follows then that the middle layer (cognitive processes) represents the unique layer (unique to South African organisations) and will be the independent variable for future research.
- It should be noted that the model proposes that the process is a complex interaction of individuals, individuals within groups, and their environment. The environment includes both intergroup, intra-organisational dynamics and organisational forces. In this regard, the model builds on the systems theory, explained elsewhere in this study.
- This model assumes that management thought and philosophy are best understood by examining the interplay between the individual, group and the environmental situation.
- Although the concepts/constructs of the model have boundary spanning features, it was necessary for illustration purposes to divide them into an open systems, layered style.

- Factors that constitute South African management are made salient by this proposed model and may be used as a teaching tool.

8.6 IMPLICATIONS FOR COMMUNICATION

- This study acknowledges the importance of communication in general, within an organisation.
- This study verifies communication as a basis for human organising and a form of human behaviour derived from a need to connect and interact with other human beings. Furthermore, it proved to be complex, multidimensional and occurred whenever meaning was attributed to behaviour or the residue of behaviour.
- A term which originated with and was developed by Hall (1983) and illustrated in Chapter 5, describes language characteristics of high-context cultures, such as black South Africans, and low-context culture, such as white South Africans. The way in which one communicates and especially the circumstances surrounding that communication have been described by other authors, such as Triandis (1976) and Hofstede (1980) to be categorised into countries which fall between collectivist to an individualist orientation. Whether the high-low model will work among the various culture groups in South Africa calls for further research.
- Communication is seen as the *substance* of culture. Symbols, core values, and rules of culture are all enacted *in* communication.
- Communication structures cannot be imposed upon a workforce in South Africa. Understanding through dialogue, means that the current *systems* of information and communication would have to be restructured to allow for a more participatory process.

- Communication plays a critical role in stimulating innovation in organisations. Van de Ven (1986) argue that effective interpersonal transactions help people combine and integrate their ideas, so that they make the whole greater than its parts. Katz (1982) and Katz & Allen (1985), found that communication patterns distinguish successful from less successful project teams in Research and Development organisations. Drucker (1985) and Keller & Hovland (1983) argue that effective communication appears to characterise innovation companies. But how do these constructs as explicated in the proposed model (earlier in this chapter) influence, distract or add to innovation in organisations? This question warrants further research.
- As mentioned elsewhere, the use of traditional African mechanisms of getting a message across will have to be integrated with traditional Western mechanisms. Note that it is suggested that the one will not be replaced with the other, but *integrated*. On an abstract level, it can be described as a whole set of communication mechanisms that are chosen and combined, based on the circumstances and communication objectives.
- Collectivist cultures value harmony with others, dislike competition that may create confrontation and circumvent disagreement. Dependency upon the group offers them a sense of security and it does not serve as a drive to be personally assertive. Consequently, tentative styles of communication are preferred among collectivists. These and related consequences of the resulting styles of communication need to be understood by the communicating manager, as well as the communication department within the organisation.
- A large number of research studies regarding intercultural communication

have been undertaken since the early eighties. Although this body of knowledge exists, it serves no purpose if it is not studied and shared in the workplace. The communication department in the organisation in particular, in its role as change agent, should take the responsibility to study and interpret this knowledge for the organisation.

8.7 CONTRIBUTIONS TO RESEARCH

The study has made mainline contributions to management communication and some ancillary contributions to related disciplines.

The contributions to management communication are the following:

- It identified and exposed, through an interdisciplinary literature survey, the major issues confronting management communication and managers in adapting to a highly competitive and rapidly changing business environment. Based on this literature survey, a framework of the major management styles and African management was formulated, to compare with Ubuntu as core value system. These challenges may be used as: (a) criteria for assessing the contribution of research, improvements or innovation in management communication; (b) a means of focusing on those areas of management communication requiring change or further research; and (c) a point of departure for studying the interrelationship between management and its environment from an open system perspective.
- It provided a model (as a point of departure) for South African organisations with which it can compare itself, benchmark against or simply use as a sounding board for current management practice.

- It exposed the relevance of Ubuntu as value system for a unique South African management philosophy, and considered its uniqueness *per se*.
- Through a comparative analysis, it considered the similarities and differences between African management and Ubuntu, whilst considering the applicability of Ubuntu throughout the continent of Africa.
- It suggested that problems confronting management be solved by viewing it as an open system which interacted freely with its environment. The demand of the environment should drive the nature of change required in management and management training.
- It emphasised the need for interdisciplinary research in management, so that the problem areas identified may be approached in a holistic manner/perspective.
- New areas of research were suggested. It illustrated the importance of communication and management to be approached holistically and in an integrated way.

Ancillary contributions to other disciplines include:

- It provided an overview of the available literature on the *status quo* of relevant issues facing the organisation of the day.
- It took a construct, management communication in organisations, and explicated its relevance to the survival of the organisation, by including functions and roles traditionally belonging to other areas in the organisation.
- It focused on the importance of using the core competencies of the organisation to identify the areas where change is needed.

- It provided and sensitised management to the different attributes of the various managerial styles.
- It created a greater awareness of the value of softer management issues in organisations, which may be used to competitively position or reposition the organisation and its human resources strategy.

Two ancillary contributions are made to research methodology:

The successful application of the Mitroff & Kilmann (1978) model described in Chapter 1 constituted empirical proof of the model's validity. The model was found to be a valuable research tool in that:

- it helped to delineate the scope of the research;
- the circles and activities suggested an appropriate chapter arrangement;
- it encouraged a holistic approach to the research process; and
- as the model has no specific starting point or end it made provision for a process related approach.

The use of Systems Theory as metatheory for the study provided structure to the research, in that:

- it made it possible to use an interdisciplinary approach;
- it provided an effective means for explaining the complex relationships between the management function in the organisation and its suprasystems and subsystems;
- it provided a useful method for studying the constructs in the study from a holistic perspective; and
- it emphasised the importance of continuous feedback to enable the system to reposition itself or influence its environment in response to change.

The use of Q-methodology as tactical research decision proved to be a valuable research method in that:

- it facilitated the strategic decisions as stipulated in Chapter 6;
- it was a qualitative technique which allowed for quantitative data-analysis, which was a research objective;
- it permitted subjects to construct models of their belief systems and provided a systematic means to examine and reach understandings about experiences;
- it allowed to make the study of human subjectivity intelligible and rigorous, through the operational medium of a Q-sort;
- Q-method's premise as a method of impression, as opposed to expression, was a distinction relevant to this study; and
- it lent itself to factor analytical procedures, another research objective.

The procedure suggested by Churchill (Chapter 6) were followed and served the following purpose:

- it outlined a procedural process to follow ensuring a better measure of variables;
- it represented an attempt to unify the scattered bits of information on how one goes about developing improved measures;
- it assessed the quality of measures to be advanced;
- it validated the execution of the minimal steps 1-4 as illustrated in the procedure; and
- it facilitated a more careful planning of data collection and analysis.

8.8 AREAS OF FURTHER RESEARCH

A number of areas of further research can be identified within the domain of this study. Many of these areas tie up with the recommendations made earlier in this chapter.

- As regards the analysis of the data on *cultural groups* of this study, it was mentioned in Chapter 6 that no comparison was made on the data (or between various cultural groups). Further analysis should be done on these data, to determine whether any significant differences/similarities exist, using a two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA).

- Although the phenomenon of a South African management style exists in South African organisations as indicated by the model earlier in this chapter, it is not visible and has not been described in the format used in this study. The model therefore needs to be validated in the construction of a measurement instrument by testing it in the broader management corps in South Africa, thereby facilitating generalisation.

- Potential pitfalls and questions left unanswered as a result of the delimitations of this study that need to be addressed are:
 - South Africa has to be careful not to ‘integrate’ cultural groups who do not understand why they have to pull together. On the failure of the two Germanies to integrate :‘Unification has come to encourage cultural and political separation and even generate a distinct East German ethnicity’ (Grabher 1995:178). The author goes on to say that eastern Germany is a land that has developed a capitalism without (eastern German) capitalists.

 - Empowerment means (at least in the West), that resources are being widely shared in the organisation, top to bottom, enabling everyone to first determine what requires to be done then doing it effectively. But do individualistic and collectivist cultures understand it in the same way? Empowerment efforts may be sidetracked if there is a difference in their interpretation of the concept.

- There lies a danger in group decision making when it takes place at all costs. Porter (in an article in *Harvard Business Review* 1996) argues that the Japanese 'decision-by-consensus' system impedes the radical choices and creativity that are prerequisites of successful competitive strategies. Care have to be taken that decision making processes and creativity are not hampered as a result.
- Tjosvold & McNeely (1988) found that staff members who believed that they had *cooperative goals* expected to discuss a problem productively, communicate their information and ideas effectively, felt positive about discussions, used their resources efficiently, made progress on tasks, developed creative, high-quality solutions and were confident they could work together in the future. In comparison, employees who had competitive goals had pessimistic expectations, thought they communicated ineffectively, had negative feelings about discussions, worked inefficiently and were unable to develop quality, creative solutions. How does culture influence goal formulation? And if it does have an influence, how does a multicultural workforce such as they are in South Africa achieve synergy on their organisational goals? Further research could determine the significance of such influences and indicate solutions to the problem.
- Darling & Fischer (1998) argue that management team-building within a multinational organisation is greatly enhanced if the interactive style reflected by each person is considered. The blend of behavioural style can affect the collective achievements of the entire management team, as well as the accomplishments of each member of the team. In this context, behavioural style is a pervasive, enduring and culture-free set of interpersonal characteristics focusing on how one acts – on what one says and does. The above authors identify four behavioural styles, *inter*

alia, Relater, Analyser, Director and Socialiser – no one of which is necessarily better or worse than any other. The concept of behavioural style and a consideration of its elements are useful in helping to understand *one self* and the interpersonal behaviours of *others*. In addition to employees understanding their own behaviour or the behaviour of others in the multicultural organisation, Darling & Fisher stress the importance of the four behavioural styles in facilitating *style flex*, a term they use to describe the way to interact and communicate within another person's comfort zone, without losing one's integrity or naturalness of expression. The idea is neither to change one's basic behavioural style nor to imitate the other person. Further research could (together with the sensitising application possibilities of the model discussed earlier in the chapter), sensitise employees to better understand one another, desensitising cultural and racial issues in the organisation. This recommendation is complementary to 'third culture building' that was proposed by Beesley (1995). The emphasis here is not to build a new form of management as suggested by 'third culture' building, but rather to improve self-knowledge, insight and empathy for others in the organisation, resulting in a better utilisation of existing resources. This way no sacrifices need to be made, but differences accommodated, retaining cultural identities throughout the process.

- Further studies need to address the practical problems which may arise during the adaptation and application stages of the processes described in the recommendations, elsewhere in this chapter: How to overcome conceptual barriers, how to reduce the resistance to change, how to reconcile new practice with the existing system, and how to assess the effectiveness and measure performance after the integration process, to name just a few.

8.9 SUMMARY

This study has attempted, at least in part, to critically formulate a basis for a South African management communication framework. At the very least, it has provided impetus to explore other avenues of research.

The expectation is clear that today's employee wants a more caring, supportive management style, irrespective his or her cultural background, whilst becoming accustomed to continuous instability in the work environment. These changes require that two factors – corporate and human – have to mesh. If they do not mesh, no amount of corporate visioning, planning and strategy will enable business to survive, much less hold their competitive ground. Management, especially in South Africa, will have to think and argue more from a post-modern (human behaviour is not exclusively motivated by independent rational thinking), and less from the modernist, rational (all humans are rationally thinking subjects) perspective.

Management in South Africa has to encourage diverse perspectives, but be sensitive to cultural difference *and* similarities, and to *integrate* the positive aspects of both into the mechanisms of the organisation. Mutual acceptance of different culture groups in an organisation will not happen on its own accord. It will take visionary leadership to show the way.