

CHAPTER 1

GENERAL ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

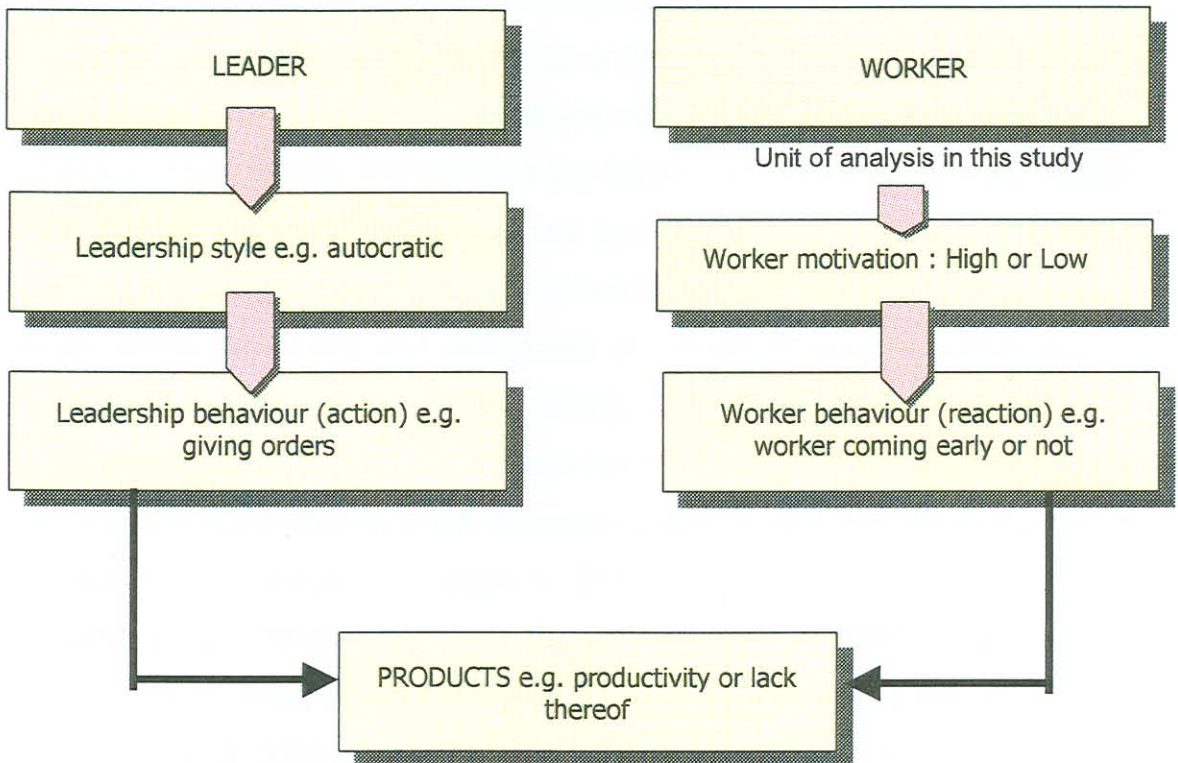
1.1.1 Background of the study

Our future and quality of life depend on the quality of our leaders. Leadership is a crucial factor in the success, or failure, of South African organisations. Leaders in organisations have to realise that good leadership largely determines the smooth running of an organisation. The ongoing working relationship between the leader and the worker calls for leadership styles that stimulate employees to give of their best. The organisation under investigation here requires high productivity from employees as it operates in a highly competitive market. It has to meet stringent monthly targets and produce products of consistent high quality.

Falke Hosiery, as a manufacturing company with interdependent sections (products moving from one section to the other), requires leaders who can influence subordinates to work willingly to avoid backlogs in the overall production; in other words leaders who can motivate employees to contribute to the success of the business. In order to maximise production from workers, to satisfy customers, to maintain a competitive advantage and to compete globally, the leaders at Falke have to employ work behaviours that will stimulate employees to work consistently towards achieving organisational goals. This is depicted in the following model:

The leaders have to identify the work behaviours of their subordinates and see such behaviours in the context of the situations and problems brought to their attention. As a result they will interact with their subordinates on a more individual level and consequently know which leadership style to employ to motivate them optimally.

Figure 1: Relationship between leadership style and worker behaviour



In employing different leadership styles, leaders have to ensure that their work behaviours are congruent with employees' work behaviours so that organisational goals such as high productivity can be achieved.

Leaders have to assess the nature of their business to ensure appropriate leadership behaviour. In the case of Falke Hosiery the following factors determine the nature of the business: black labourers from different ethnic groups, level of literacy in the organisation – postschool qualifications, geographical location of the company and the gender composition of the workforce. The leaders have to identify the work behaviours of their subordinates and see such behaviours in the context of the situations and problems brought to their attention. As a result they will interact with their subordinates on a more individual level and consequently know which leadership style to employ to motivate them optimally.

It is also essential to realise that organisational structures are changing. Organisations are becoming flatter as entire layers of hierarchies are being done away with. Many organisations are restructuring their operations due to changes in technology, mergers and the introduction of virtual offices. These changes have a powerful impact on production and workers, compelling leaders to ascertain how well their subordinates can work on their own: in other words the ability and willingness of people to take responsibility for directing their own behaviour (motivation). Once the maturity level (ability to work autonomously) of the employees has been established, the leaders will know which leadership style will be most consistent with specific motivational factors in a particular situation – this is called situational leadership. Situational leadership is based on the interplay between (1) the amount of guidance and direction (task behaviour) a leader gives, (2) the amount of socio-emotional support (relationship behaviour) a leader provides, and (3) the readiness (maturity) level that followers exhibit in performing a specific task or function (Hersey and Blanchard, 1982: 150). The basic assumption of situational leadership is therefore that there is no one best way of influencing people. The leadership style a person should use with individuals or groups will depend on the maturity or motivation level of the people the leader is attempting to influence in a given situation.

1.2 Statement of problem

There is a growing need for a situational approach to leadership in South African organisations, that is matching leadership styles to the maturity level of employees, to different situations and to the problems encountered in the workplace. An adversarial approach to labour conflict, which attributes blame and focuses on past injustices rather than attempting to resolve conflict jointly, currently pervades in many South African businesses. According to Saunders (1998:32), over the last ten to fifteen years, the power base in

organisations has shifted from management to labour. Managers can no longer coerce employees. To obtain the co-operation of people in organisations, managers need to develop co-operative relationships with employees, based on an understanding of employees' needs. Failure to achieve this kind of relationship between management and labour often results in psychological withdrawal on the part of workers. They will produce just enough to keep their jobs and no more. In other words, they become alienated from a work environment that provides no personal satisfaction or fulfillment.

The onus is therefore on managers not to coerce their subordinates to get work done, but to adapt their leadership styles to particular situations in order to gain the co-operation of workers. The various labour movements in South Africa in the pursuit of democracy enlightened employees about their rights in the workplace. Employees, too, pursue "win win" situations and not "I will work and you pay" situations. Thus the need for managers to take into consideration task behaviour and relationship behaviour when working with subordinates. According to Hersey and Blanchard (1982: 96), task behaviour is the extent to which leaders are likely to organise and define the roles of the members of their group (followers); to explain what activities each member has to carry out, and when, where and how tasks are to be accomplished.

Relationship behaviour is the extent to which leaders maintain personal relationships between themselves and members of their group (followers) by opening up channels of communication, providing socio-emotional support and facilitating behaviours. Relationship behaviour involves actively listening to people and supporting them in what they do; it includes motivating employees. Once the leader has established the task and relationship behaviours of his/her subordinates, he/she then decides which leadership

style to employ in a particular situation. Therefore the appropriateness of the leadership style chosen will be evident in the willingness of the employees to do their work efficiently or not.

1.3 Aims of the study

The aims of this study are:

- To use Hersey and Blanchard’s Situational Leadership Theory to explore the relationship between leadership styles and worker motivation in a South African context (Falke Hosiery). The theory serves as a theoretical framework for this study as it deals with the relationship between different leadership styles, the maturity level of employees and the different motivational factors derived from Maslow and Herzberg’s research. The theory will be explained in more detail in Chapter 2.
- To investigate employee perceptions of the leadership styles used at Falke Hosiery.
- To examine the level of worker motivation at Falke Hosiery.

The following are some of the factors that will be looked into to determine the level of worker motivation in this company.

Table 1: Difference between high and low worker motivation

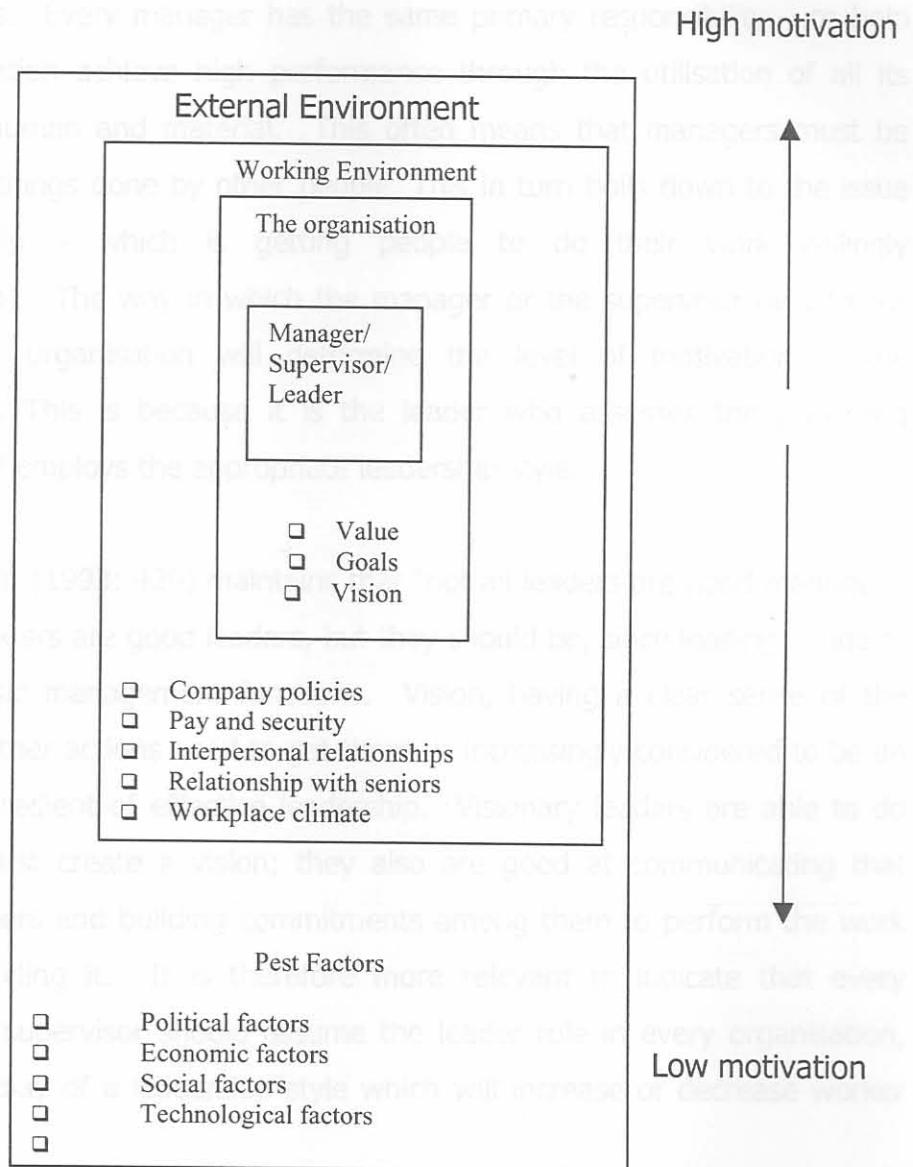
HIGH WORKER MOTIVATION	LOW WORKER MOTIVATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less complaints about superiors. • Feelings of togetherness. • Willingness to work extra hours. • Optimism about the organization. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complaints about superiors. Isolation. Unwillingness to work extra hours. Pessimism about the organization.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Willingness to share problems with superiors.• Willingness to have continuous supervision and guidance.	<p>Unwillingness to share problems with superiors.</p> <p>Unwillingness to have continuous supervision and guidance.</p>
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1.4 Basic assumptions of the study

After considering the background of the study, the problem statement and the aims of the study, the researcher had to create a model on which to base the study. The model has four dimensions, namely the manager/supervisor dimension, the organisation dimension, the working environment dimension and the external environment dimension:

Figure 2: Relationship between leadership style used and worker motivation



The manager/supervisor dimension: The principal assumption of this model is that the manager or supervisor is the driving force in an organisation. Among other things he/she determines the level of worker motivation. According to Schermerhorn (1993: 4), a manager is a person in an organisation responsible for the work performance of one or more other persons. Serving in positions with a wide variety of titles (supervisor, team leader, section head, administrator, vice-president, and so on), managers are

starts with articulating a realistic vision. Every employee needs to know persons to whom others report. These other people are usually referred to as subordinates. Every manager has the same primary responsibility – to help the organisation achieve high performance through the utilisation of all its resources, human and material. This often means that managers must be able to get things done by other people. This in turn boils down to the issue of leadership – which is getting people to do their work willingly (followership). The way in which the manager or the supervisor gets things done in an organisation will determine the level of motivation in the organisation. This is because it is the leader who assesses the prevailing situation and employs the appropriate leadership style.

Schermerhorn (1993: 429) maintains that “not all leaders are good managers. Not all managers are good leaders, but they should be, since leading is one of the four basic management functions. Vision, having a clear sense of the future and other actions need to get there, is increasingly considered to be an essential ingredient of effective leadership. Visionary leaders are able to do more than just create a vision; they also are good at communicating that vision to others and building commitments among them to perform the work required fulfilling it. It is therefore more relevant to indicate that every manager or supervisor should assume the leader role in every organisation, thus the display of a leadership style which will increase or decrease worker motivation”.

Organisation: Schermerhorn (1993: 5) says an organisation is a collection of people working together to achieve a common purpose. The assumption is that these people should be guided by others in terms of values, goals and vision. The values of the organisation are its mission, purpose, beliefs and what it stands for. The goals are articulated values which are more specific and in measurable form. Vision, as discussed earlier, is an important factor in any organisation. Furthermore it is valid to mention that good communication

starts with articulating a realistic vision. Every employee needs to know where the company is headed and whether it is meeting its mark on an ongoing basis". Those in the higher echelons (supervisors/managers) are the chief initiators of values, goals and visions in organisations. Suggestions and modifications may be made by subordinates but senior staff have the final say.

Working environment: The working environment is characterised by factors such as company policies, pay and security, interpersonal relationships, relationship with supervisors, and the workplace climate. These factors directly or indirectly affect the level of worker motivation in an organisation. In the company under discussion, the supervisors or managers are the key role players in creating a working environment conducive to greater productivity, profitability, performance and worker motivation.

Outside environment: Various external factors directly or indirectly affect worker motivation in an organisation: political factors (such as association with specific political parties), economic factors (e.g. the collapse of the rand in the case of South Africa), social problems (e.g. family problems) and technological factors. These factors are external to the organisation and beyond the control of the manager or supervisor.

The supervisor or manager should ensure that all the needs, including the physical needs, of workers are met in the organisation. The responsibility of the supervisor or manager is to encourage and motivate workers to do their work irrespective of any external factors that may affect them. This will also determine the leadership style used and the level of worker motivation. In the final analysis, the manager or supervisor is the captain of the ship (organisation) and determines the destiny of the organisation (level of worker motivation, profitability, productivity, workplace climate and level of job

satisfaction). This theoretical model will be used in Chapter 5 (Findings) to establish whether the basic aims of the study were achieved.

1.5 Operational definitions

According to Singleton et al. (1988: 100), "operational definition is the detailed description of the research operations or procedures necessary to assign units of analysis to the categories of a variable. The complete operational definition would consist of specific questions asked, together with response categories and instructions for gathering the data and assigning cases to categories". Basically, operational definitions are helpful as they indicate how variables are measured and whether good indicators were used to describe variables. For the purposes of this study the researcher formulated the following definitions:

1.5.1 Leadership

- According to Hollander (1978) quoted in Muller (1991: 10), leadership is a process and not a phenomenon. The central figure in the leadership process is the leader. Without the leader, leadership cannot take place, and leadership styles cannot be determined. Consequently it is crucially important to differentiate between leadership, leadership styles and leaders.
- According to Rue and Byars (1995: 375), leadership is the ability to influence people willingly to follow one's guidance or adhere to one's decisions.
- Daft (1995: 376) maintains that leadership is the ability to influence people to strive for the attainment of organisational goals.
- Hemphill (1980) quoted in Muller (1991: 11) believes that leadership is the initiation of acts that result in a consistent pattern of group interaction directed toward the solution of common problems.

1.5.4 Worker motivation

1.5.2 Leader

- Bateman and Zeithmahl (1990: 481) state that a leader is someone who influences others to attain goals. The greater the influence, the greater the number of followers. The more successful the goal attainment, the more evident the leadership.
- Homans (1976: 35) quoted in Muller (1991: 11) maintains that the leader is the person who comes closest to realising the norms the group values the most. This conformity gives the leader his high rank, which attracts people and implies his right to assume control of the group.

Figure 3: Sources of worker motivation

1.5.3 Leadership style

According to Fiedler and Chemers (1974: 49-50) quoted in Muller (1991: 17), a leadership style is a relatively enduring set of behaviours characteristic of the individual regardless of the particular situation.

Aspects of leadership derived from the definitions. From the above definitions it appears that leadership consists of the following:

- Interaction, that is communication between leader and followers.
- The leader and followers work towards a specific goal.
- The leader must fulfil his role in such a way that the followers do what is required of them in order to meet organisational and individual goals.

Hersey and Blanchard (1982: 83) concur and assert that leadership is the process of influencing the activities of an individual or a group toward goal achievement in a given situation. Thus it follows that the leadership process is a function of the leader, the follower and other situational variables – $L = f(s, f, s)$.

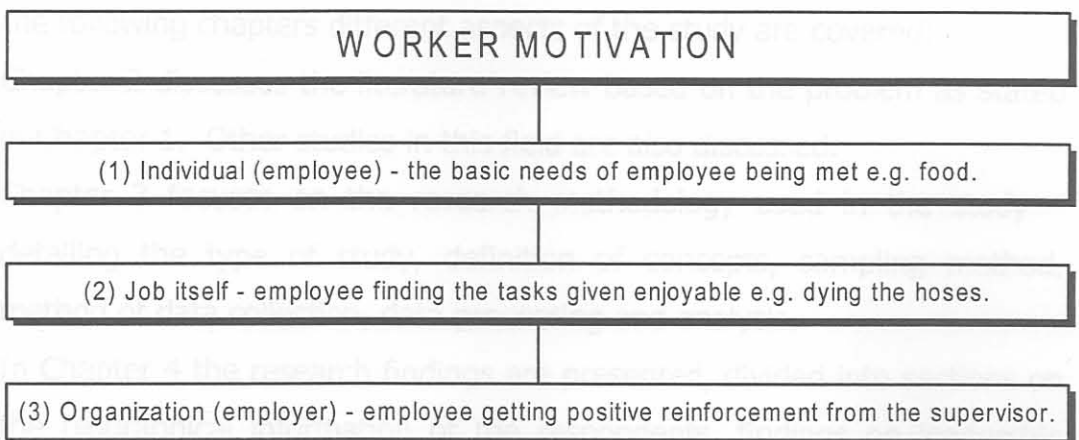
1.5.5 Leader and supervisor

Leader, supervisor and manager are used interchangeably in this study. Leader or supervisor refers to any person who is in direct contact with his/her subordinates, especially on a daily basis.

1.5.4 Worker motivation

In this study the focus was on the worker's motivation to work hard day in and day out. Worker motivation is not only difficult to define but also difficult to identify and apply. Steers and Porter (1991: 37) maintain that motivation is a complex concept largely because of the nature of motives. Motives are not observable; they can only be inferred. If one sees people working a great deal of overtime, one is not sure whether they are doing so because of the extra money they will earn or because they enjoy the work. For the purposes of this study, work motivation is traced to three sources:

Figure 3: Sources of worker motivation



Factors such as punctuality and willingness to work extra hours were used to determine worker motivation. Questions relating to worker motivation were based on these factors and inferences drawn from the responses given.

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CHAPTER 2

1.6 Rationale for the study

- In South Africa insufficient research has been done on the textile industry (e.g. the hosiery industry), particularly on leadership and worker motivation.
- The researcher believes the study can help develop an awareness of the need for situational leadership styles in organisations.
- The researcher believes that the study will help leaders develop structures and styles that will increase worker motivation and thus also productivity and profitability.

1.7 Outline of chapters

In the following chapters different aspects of the study are covered:

- Chapter 2 discusses the literature review based on the problem as stated in Chapter 1. Other studies in this field are also discussed.
- Chapter 3 focuses on the research methodology used in the study – detailing the type of study, definition of concepts, sampling method, method of data collection, data processing and analysis.
- In Chapter 4 the research findings are presented, divided into sections on the biographical information of the respondents, findings on leadership styles and worker motivation, and relationships with other variables.
- Chapter 5 focuses on the research results and interpretations.
- Chapter 6 reviews the study and also makes recommendations on the research findings. Certain conclusions are drawn and the limitations of the study addressed.