An explorative study into the effectiveness of an Accelerated Development Programme within a South African organisation.

Sharon Sehannie

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

An explorative study into the effectiveness of an Accelerated Development Programme within a South African organisation.

By

Sharon Sehannie

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree

Magister Commercii

(HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT)

In the

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

FACULTY OF ECONOMIC AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES

At the

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

Pretoria   **April 2009**

DECLERATION

Herewith I, Sharon Sehannie, declare that this Master's dissertation titled:
"An explorative study into the effectiveness of Accelerated Development Programmes within a South African organisation"
Is my own work and that acknowledgement has been given to all sources of reference.

…………………………..
Sharon Sehannie
April 2009

Table of Contents

List of table of figures

Abstract

The aim of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of the accelerated development training program by using a pre and post-tests in order determine whether learning transfer actually took place-that is, whether competencies developed. The research focused on the following competencies: action orientation; planning and organising; analysis and problem solving; relationship building; and impact and influence.

From the statistical analysis conducted, significant differences were obtained for three competencies: action orientation, problem solving and impact and influence. The results could not be attributed directly to the training programme though as the separation of variables proved problematic.

The results are discussed as well as the design of the evaluation being critically reviewed. Recommendations are made to improve the design of the evaluation and direction is given for possible future research.

Chapter One: A revision of Leadership Theories to date

1.1.   Introduction

There are many, many definitions of leadership. The root of all emphasise leadership as the ability to influence others to be more effective in working and the achievement of goals (Robbins, 2005:332).

The English word lead is more than a thousand years old, and came from the Anglo-Saxon root *laedare*, meaning "to lead people on a journey" (Johnson and Johnson, 2006:167). The world has changed since then, organisations changed and leadership needs are beginning to change in response.

1.2.   Developments and shifts of emphasis in leadership theories

Different leadership theories and approaches evolved over the past century. In order to understand the progression of these theories, it is important to discuss it against the conditions of the context in which these theories evolved.

1.2.1.   'Great person' theory of leadership

This theory was developed in the pre-industrial and pre-bureaucratic era where most organisations were small and were run by a single individual. The size and simplicity of organisations as well as the stable environment made it easy for a single person to have a personal vision, acquire resources, coordinate all activities, and keep things on track. (Daft, 1999:48-49)

The 'Great person' theory adopted the belief that great leaders were born, not made, and that great leaders are discovered, not developed. It was believed that leaders are exceptional people, born with innate qualities, destined to lead (Sadler, 2003:11). The 'Great person' theory led to the next school of thought on leadership, namely the Trait Theorists.

1.2.2.   Trait theories of leadership

In the early twentieth century, the dominance of these great figures spurred research into identifying the key characteristics of successful leaders. It was believed that through this approach critical leadership traits could be isolated and

used to differentiate leaders from non-leaders by focusing on personal qualities and characteristics. (Robbins, 2005:333)

The problem with the trait theories however, is the fact that almost as many traits as studies undertaken were identified. After several years of research, it became apparent that no consistent traits could be identified. Also, researchers realised that different traits may be needed under different conditions. (Bolden, Gosling, Marturano and Dennison, 2003:16).

A breakthrough, of sorts, came when researchers began categorising traits according to a bigger personality framework. Similar traits could be subsumed under one big personality characteristic which led to stronger predictors of leadership. For example, five basic dimensions of personality:

- Extroversion
- Agreeableness
- Conscientiousness
- Emotional stability
- Openness to experience

(Robbins, 2005:333-334)

### 1.2.6.	**Behavioural theories of leadership**

The failures of early trait studies led researchers in the late 1940s through the 1960s to go in a different direction. Also, organisations saw the emergence of hierarchy and bureaucracy. Organisations have begun to grow large so they require rules and standard procedures to ensure that activities can be performed in an efficient, effective manner. Hierarchy of authority provides a sensible mechanism for supervision and control of workers, and managers developed standard methods for doing each job, select workers with appropriate abilities, train workers in the standard methods, and provide wage incentives for workers to accomplish tasks. (Daft, 1999:49)

The focus was therefore shifted from traits identified, to behaviours exhibited by specific leaders.   Researchers recognised that leadership is a process involving relationships between individuals that cannot be understood by focusing solely on the traits of the leader. The focus should rather be on the specific leadership

behaviour and leadership style displayed, the typical leader behaviour patterns and differences in behaviour between effective and ineffective leaders. (Sadler, 2003:11)

1.2.7. Douglas McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y

In 1960 Douglas McGregor defined two assumptions (labeled Theory X and Theory Y) about the behaviour of humans in the work place. The theory is based on the idea that a manager/leader will behave towards an employee according to the way he views this employee (Robbins, 2005:172).

In short, theory X assumes that employees dislike work, will attempt to avoid it and must be controlled. The manager will therefore retain most of his authority, make decisions on his own, and refrain from delegating responsibility. The manager would probably be highly task oriented with a great deal of concern towards getting the job done, with little concern for the needs and opinion of the employee. (Robbins, 2005:172)

On the other hand, theory Y assumes that employees will exercise self-direction and self-control, that they are committed to the objectives and that they can learn to accept, even seek responsibility. This type of manager would most likely be much more democratic and participative in his leadership style. He would encourage group discussions and take decisions which reflect the consensus gained by the group. (Robbins, 2005:172)

1.2.8. Blake an Mouton's Managerial Grid

The Managerial Grid (sometimes called leadership grid) focuses on the styles of 'concern for people' and 'concern for production', also called people orientation and production orientation. Leadership styles are depicted on a grid with 'concern for people' on the vertical axis, and 'concern for production' on the horizontal axis (Robbins, 2005:336-337). Figure 1.1 depicts this approach.

Figure 1.1. The Managerial Grid

The Managerial Grid
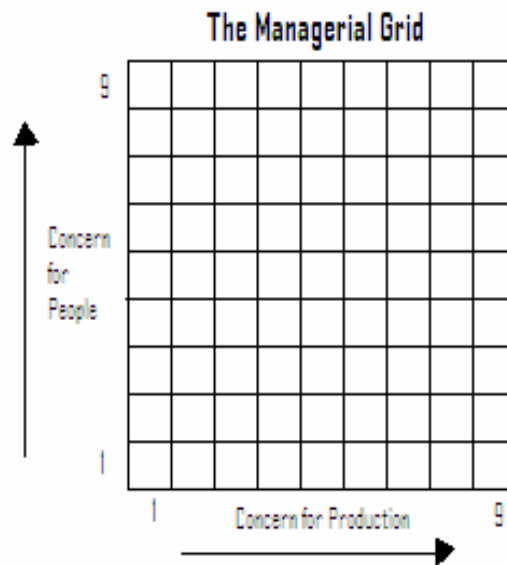
The most successful leaders are those that show great concern for both people and production indicated by 9.9. 9.1 can be described as the authority leadership style, and 1.9 as the Laissez-faire (tolerant) leadership style (Robbins, 2005:337).

1.13. Situational theories of leadership

Suddenly, the world was no longer stable and rational management was no longer working. The effects of World War Two caused the United States to enjoy great economic success with Europe picking up the pieces and living the after effects of the war. This era of confusion for management was a time for downsizing, expectations of doing more with less, and of getting greater motivation from employees. (Daft, 1999:49-50)

It was soon recognised that attention should be given to the context in which leadership is being exercised. Great leaders were identified as being able to vary their behaviour from situation to situation to provide the appropriate leadership actions at the appropriate time (Johnson and Johnson, 2006:190).

1.13.1. The Distributed-Actions theory of leadership

This theory emphasises that certain functions need to be provided if a group is to achieve its goals and maintain effective working relationships among members. This function must take place in order for the group to be effective. It is a given

that the group will need different functions in different situations (Johnson and Johnson, 2006:191-192). In some instances, the primary function of a leader would be to establish focus and foster team work, in others it might be more people oriented whereby providing motivational support and empowering others. According to this theory, an effective leader would be the one able to correctly interpret and manage the situational demands (Cripe, 2002:41-42).

1.14.   **Contingency theories of leadership**

Late twentieth century represents a rather chaotic world where leaders started to recognise the need to create learning organisations, in which each person is intimately involved in identifying and solving problems so that the organisation continues to grow and change to meet new challenges (Daft, 1999:50). This era, the contingency era, established that leadership was not found in any of the pure, unidimensional forms discussed previously, but rather contained elements of them all. In essence, effective leadership was contingent or dependent on one or more of the factors of behaviour, personality, influence and situation. (Sadler, 2003:12)

Several approaches/theories to isolate key situational variables needed to be acted on in order to ensure effective leadership will be discussed next.

1.15.   **Fiedler's Contingency model**

According to Fiedler (Johnson and Johnson, 2006:193), the effectiveness of a leader is determined by the degree of match between a dominant trait of the leader and the favourableness of the situation for the leader. The dominant trait is a personality factor causing the leader to either be relationship-oriented or task-oriented. The individual's leadership style depends upon his personality and is, thus, fixed. In order to classify leadership styles, Fiedler has developed an index called the least-preferred coworker (LPC) scale. (Robbins, 2005:339)

The LPC scale asks a leader to think of all the persons with whom he has ever worked, and then to describe those persons (on a scale of 1 through 8) with whom he worked the least well with. The responses to these scales are summed and averaged. Leaders who describe their preferred co-worker in favourable terms, with a high LPC, are purported to derive major satisfaction from

establishing close relationships with fellow workers. High LPC leaders are said to be relationship-oriented. These leaders see good interpersonal relations as a requirement for task accomplishment. Leaders who describe their least preferred co-workers in unfavourable terms, with a low LPC, derive major satisfaction by successfully completing a task. These leaders are said to be task-oriented. They will be more concerned with successful task accomplishment and will see to establishing good interpersonal relations at a later stage. (Sadler, 2003:74-75)

Identifying the leadership style is important because it means that if a situation requires a task-oriented leader and the person in that leadership position is relationship-oriented, either the situation has to be modified or the leader replaced if optimal effectiveness is to be achieved (Robbins, 2005:339).

Therefore, the second major factor in Fiedler's theory is to match the leader with the situation. In order to do this, situational factors that determine leadership effectiveness needs to be identified. He labels these situational factors as contingency dimensions and defines them as:

- *Leader-member relations*: the degree to which the employees accept the leader.
- *Task structure*: the degree to which the subordinate's jobs are structured and described in detail.
- *Position power*: the amount of formal authority the leader possesses by virtue of his position in the organisation.

(Robbins, 2005:340)

Fiedler then continued to identify eight possible sets of circumstances capturing each of these contingency dimensions in a combination of Good, Strong, Low, Weak or Poor (Sadler, 2003:76).

With knowledge of a person's LPC and an assessment of the contingency dimensions, Fiedler proposes matching them up to achieve maximum leadership effectiveness. The task-oriented leader for example, is effective when he is on good terms with the group members, the task is clearly structured, and the leader has a position of high authority and power. In this situation, the group is ready to be directed and is willing to be told what to do, and the leader can focus attention

on completing the task. On the other hand, the relationship-oriented leader will be more effective when the leader has a position of moderate power, when the task is moderately clear, and when moderately good relations exist between the leader and the group members. The relationship-oriented leader will then be able to emphasise member participation in decision making which over all will be more effective. (Johnson and Johnson, 2006:196)

There are some difficulties with Fiedler's theory, as it was found that many group situations fall into the moderate range and that it is difficult to use in the fast changing competitive and demanding world we live in. However, Fiedler recently focused on the role of stress as a form of situational unfavourableness and how a leader's intelligence and experience influence his or her reaction to stress. He called it the cognitive resource theory (Robbins, 2005:341-342).

1.16. __Hersey and Blanchard's situational theory__

The Hersey-Blanchard Leadership Model also takes a situational perspective of leadership. Therefore, it is called the Situational Leadership Theory (SLT). In this theory, other than Fiedler's Model, the focus is on the followers. Successful leadership is achieved by selecting the right leadership style which is contingent on the level of the followers' readiness and capabilities. (Robbins, 2005:342)

The focus on the followers makes sense as in the end leadership effectiveness depends on the reality that it is the followers who ultimately accept or reject the leader. Therefore, to determine the appropriate leadership style in a given situation, the leader must first determine the maturity level of the followers in relation to the specific task at hand (Johnson and Johnson, 2006:198).

Hersey and Blanchard (Robbins, 2005:343) refers to maturity as the willingness and ability of a person to take responsibility for directing his own behaviour. If the follower is unable and unwilling to do a task, the leader needs to give clear and specific directions; if followers are unable and willing, the leader needs to display high task orientation to compensate for the lack of ability and high relationship orientation to get the follower to follow; if followers are able and unwilling, the leader needs to use a supportive and participative style, and if the employee is both able and willing, the leader doesn't need to do much. (Robbins, 2005:343)

It is quite clear that Hersey and Blanchard also place a big emphasis on task-orientation and relationship-orientation such as Fiedler. They do however focus on specifying the combination of task and relationship behaviour as deployed by different leaders towards different followers. These more specific leadership styles can be defined as:

- *Telling* - High-task/Low-relationship leadership – characterised by one-way communication in which the leader defines the roles of group members, tells them how, when and where.

- *Selling* – High-task/High-relationship leadership – provides clear direction about role responsibilities, but also uses two-way communication and socio-emotional support to get the group members to accept and support decisions.

- *Participating* – Low-task/High-relationship leadership – where group members have the ability and knowledge to complete the task, so the leader and followers share in decision making through two-way communication and the leader's facilitating behaviour.

- *Delegating* – Low-task/Low-relationship leadership – where group members are both willing and able to take responsibility for directing their own task behaviour. The leader allows group members considerable autonomy in completing tasks.

(Johnson and Johnson, 2006:198-199)

1.17. Adair's Action-Centred leadership model

Adair is of the opinion that the action-centred leader gets the job done through the work team and the relationships with fellow managers and colleagues. An action-centred leader must:

- direct the job to be done (*task* structuring)

- support and review the *individual* people doing the job

- coordinate and foster the work *team* as a whole

(Lee-Kelley, 2002:466)

Adair proposed a simple diagram to indicate the integration of these three actions, this is depicted in figure 1.2.Action-Centred Leadership Model.

Figure 1.2. Action-Centred Leadership Model. (Lee-Kelley, 2002:467)

Three-circle Action-Centred Leadership Model

Task   Team

Individual
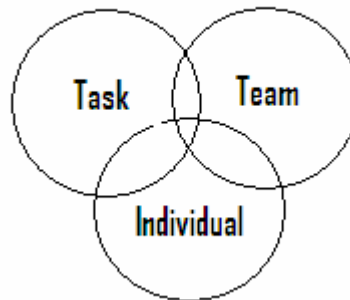
This three-circle diagram is a simplification of the variability of natural human interaction and can be used as a useful thinking tool on what constitutes an effective leader in relation to his work environment. The challenge for the leader is to manage all three sectors in different situations (Lee-Kelley, 2002:466).

1.18. <u>Path-Goal theory</u>

According to the path-goal theory, it is the leader's responsibility to provide followers with all the information, support and resources necessary to achieve their goals. The main focus of the leader should be to clarify the path and steer clear of stumbling blocks. (Robbins, 2005:345)

Four leadership styles were identified and compared with two classes of contingency variables which should be considered in order to lead effectively. This approach recognises the fact that the situation determines the type of leader style required, while the personal characteristics of the employee determine how the situation and leader style are interpreted. In other words, leadership behaviour will be ineffective when it is not in line with the situation structure (environment contingency factors), and when it is incongruent with employee characteristics (Subordinate contingency factors). (Robbins, 2005:345-346) The path-goal theory which is depicted in Figure 1.3.

Figure 1.3. Path-Goal Model. (Robbins, 2005:345)
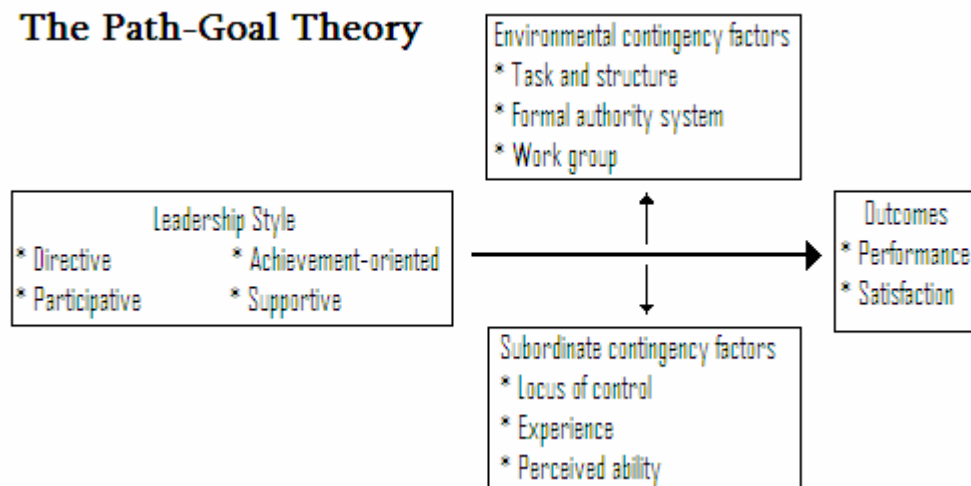
1.19. Transactional theory of leadership

In today's world, the transactional leadership theorists further emphasise the idea that leadership resides not only in the person or the situation but also in role differentiation and social interaction (Sadler, 2003:12). It focuses on the exchange process between leaders and followers-how leaders are able to distinguish specific follower desires and to provide resources that meet those desires in exchange for followers achieving specified objectives or performing certain duties (Daft, 1999:427).

Transactional leadership can be quite effective. By clarifying expectations, leaders help build followers' confidence. In addition, satisfying the basic needs of subordinates may improve productivity and morale. It does however involve a commitment to rules and procedures, and a transactional leader should therefore be able to maintain stability within the organization rather than promote change, something that is extremely important in the fast changing 21st century (Daft, 1999:427).

1.20. Transformational leadership theory

Transformational leadership is built on the idea of transactional leadership. It is characterised by the ability to bring about significant change. It is believed that those that have the ability to initiate changes in the organisation's vision, strategy and culture, as well as promote innovation in products and technologies are

effective leaders. Transformational leadership is based on the personal values, beliefs and qualities of the leader rather than on an exchange process between leaders and followers. (Daft, 1999:247)

Transformational leadership will be discussed in full in the next section which focuses on current thinking on leadership and leadership development.

1.14. <u>How the developments and shifts of emphasis in leadership theories contributed to the latest trends in leadership</u>

Only the key concepts that contributed to recent day thinking of leadership will be discussed, (adapted fro, Bolden et al; 2003).

- *Great person theories* – Based on the belief that leaders are exceptional people, born with innate qualities, destined to lead. This theory contributed in the sense that it was recognised that some people do things in exceptional ways. It spurred researchers to investigate the concept of leadership.
- *Trait theories* – Helped researchers discover certain personality traits, characters, temperaments, cognitive abilities and special aptitudes or skills that certain successful people portray. Some of these qualities of leaders are still valid, and previous research helped to refine those concepts to competencies as they are referred to today.
- *Behaviourist theories* – Concentrate on what leaders actually do rather than on their qualities. These theories encouraged thought on leadership to shift to the effect that certain people have on others - the leadership style and behaviour orientation that makes effective leaders.
- *Situational leadership theories* – Sees leadership as relatively specific to the situation in which it is being exercised. It provided valuable insight into the fact that successful and effective leadership behaviour is dependent on the situational demands.
- *Contingency theories* – These theories helped refine the situational viewpoint and shifted the focus to identifying the situational variables which best predict the most appropriate or effective leadership style to fit the particular circumstances. It constitutes certain aspects of all previous theories and made it practical to identify and utilise.

- *Transactional theory* – This theoretical thinking inspired the recognition of the importance of the relationship between leader and followers, focusing on the mutual benefits derived from a 'common agreement' through which the leader delivers such things as rewards or recognition in return for the commitment or loyalty of the followers.
- *Transformational leadership theory* – Stretches the importance of change and the role of leadership in envisioning and implementing the transformation of organisational performance.

These contributions to modern thinking will be reflected in the next section dealing with the latest thinking on leadership development.

1.15. Latest trends in thinking on leadership development

Transformational leadership and emotional intelligence are probably the two most popular views of leadership at the moment (Tarplett, 2004). Current thinking on leadership also shifted from traits, behaviour and skills to what is now called competencies.

1.15.4. Transformational leadership

Transformational leadership is the notion of the inspired vision, communicated in a way that motivates people to give extra effort and thereby achieve extraordinary results, often in times of change and very demanding circumstances (Tarplett, 2004). Transformational leaders have the ability to inspire followers to exceed their own self-interests and are capable of having a profound and extraordinary effect on followers in every aspect of the work environment (Robbins, 2005:367).

Figure 1.4 is a summary of what many of the writers about transformational leadership highlighted:

Figure 1.4. Transformational Characteristics and Key Features

Characteristics	Key features
Charismatic:	• Highly esteemed role models whom followers strive to imitate. • Aligns others around a vision, common purpose and mission. • Gains respect and trust of subordinates.
Inspirational:	• Provides meaning and optimism about the mission and its attainability. • Communicates high expectations and expresses important purposes in simple ways.
Intellectually Stimulating:	• Encourages followers to question basic assumptions and to consider problems from new and unique perspectives. • Promotes intelligence, rationality, and careful problem solving.
Individually Considerate:	• Works with followers. • Diagnoses their needs. • Motivate followers to transcend their self-interests. • Enhances expectations and develops their potential. • Treats each employee individually, coaches, advises.

(Tarplett, 2004), (Robbins, 2005:367-368) and (Daft, 1999:427-428).

1.15.5. Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence can be described as the capacity for recognising one's own feelings and those of others, for motivating oneself and for managing emotions effectively in ourselves and others. It is about influence, based upon a realistic and accurate assessment of oneself in a given situation. (Tarplett, 2004).

Leadership is largely about a relationship between leaders and followers. Therefore, a central task for all leaders is to build and maintain solid and effective relationships with others (Power, 2003:46). Emotional intelligence can be

summed up in the following behavioural framework of five competency clusters as depicted in figure 1.5.

Figure 1.5. Emotional Intelligence Competencies and Key Features

Competencies	Key features
Self-awareness::	• Emotional self-awareness and Self-confidence. • Accurate and realistic self-assessment. • A self-depreciating sense of humor.
Self-management::	• Emotional self-control. • Transparency, trustworthiness and integrity. • Adaptability and comfortable with ambiguity. • Optimism and openness to change.
Self-motivation:	• Achievement orientated. • High organisational commitment.
Social awareness / Empathy:	• Expert in building and maintaining talent. • Cross-cultural sensitivity. • Sensitive towards clients and subordinates.
Relationship management:	• Able to lead change. • Influential, persuasive and inspirational. • Facilitates effective teamwork and manages conflict. • Develops others.

(Power, 2003:47) and (Robbins, 2005:368-369)

One criticism on emotional intelligence leadership thinking however is that it pays insufficient attention to the context in which leadership takes place (Tarplett, 2004).

1.15.6. Leadership competencies

Competencies can be described as the behaviours that leaders must have, or must acquire, to apply in a situation in order to achieve high levels of performance. It is all inclusive in terms of skill, knowledge, traits and behaviour, and is generally seen as essential in a person in order to be successful, (Cripe, 2002:2).

Cripe (2002:40-43) describes several competencies in terms of abilities that leaders should possess:

- *Establishing Focus*: The ability to develop and communicate goals in support of the business's mission.

- *Providing Motivational Support*: The ability to enhance others' commitment to their work.

- *Fostering Teamwork*: As a team member, the ability and desire to work cooperatively with others on a team, the ability to demonstrate interest, skill, and behaviours for team members.

- *Empowering Others*: The ability to convey confidence in employees' ability to be successful, especially at challenging new tasks – delegating significant responsibility and authority, allowing employees freedom to decide how they will accomplish their goals and resolve issues.

- *Managing Change*: The ability to demonstrate support for innovation and for organisational changes needed to improve the organisation's effectiveness – initiation, sponsoring, and implementing organisational change, helping others to successfully manage change.

- *Developing Others*: The ability to delegate responsibility and to work with others and coach them to develop their capabilities.

- *Managing Performance*: The ability to take responsibility for one's own or one's employees' performance, by setting clear goals and expectations, tracking progress against the goals, ensuring feedback, and addressing performance problems and issues promptly.

1.16. The Leadership pipeline

With so many factors contributing to the changing requirements of leadership and job roles in general, the traditional notions of what a leader (and employee for that matter) needs to be and do are no longer valid. The multilevel, multidimensional concept of leadership is a reality of modern business life. More leaders at more levels are needed than ever before, and organisations should attempt to build them rather than buy them. (Charan et al., 2001:5)

It is important to approach leadership development with knowledge and insight into the different levels of leadership and the skill and value transitions at each

level. The core competencies and experiences necessary to be successful at each level should be acknowledged and developed in order to ensure future leadership potential.

The starting point therefore is an understanding of the natural hierarchy of work that exists in most organisations. The required results change dramatically at key breakpoints in the hierarchy. Each passage requires that people acquire a new way of managing and leading and leave the old ways behind and a transition is therefore required in:

- Skill requirements – the new capabilities required to execute new responsibilities.
- Time Application – new time frames that govern how one works.
- Work Values – what people believe is important and so becomes the focus of their effort.

(Charan et al., 2001:8)

The challenge for organisations is to make sure that people in leadership positions are assigned to the level appropriate to their skills, time applications, and values (Charan et al., 2001:8).

In addition, all the transition points require a letting go of things that make you successful at one layer and adopting entirely new ones in order to succeed at the new layer; and make those around you successful (Charan et al., 2001:12).

The pipeline takes the form of *6 career passages*, each passage representing a change in organisational position. The pipeline typically includes two interlinked hierarchical structures, one for technical work and one for Leadership.

Figure 1.6. The Leadership Pipeline

LEADERSHIP PASSAGES

Lead Enterprise

Manage Group

Manage Country

Seven

Six

Manage Business

Manage Group Function   Manage Enterprise Function

Manage Function

Five

Four

Manage Business Unit

Manage Managers
(MO – UM)

Two

Manage Others
(Supervisor – Miner)

Manage Self (Technical)   Manage Self (Professional)

Three

Manage Self (Operator – Team Leader)

One
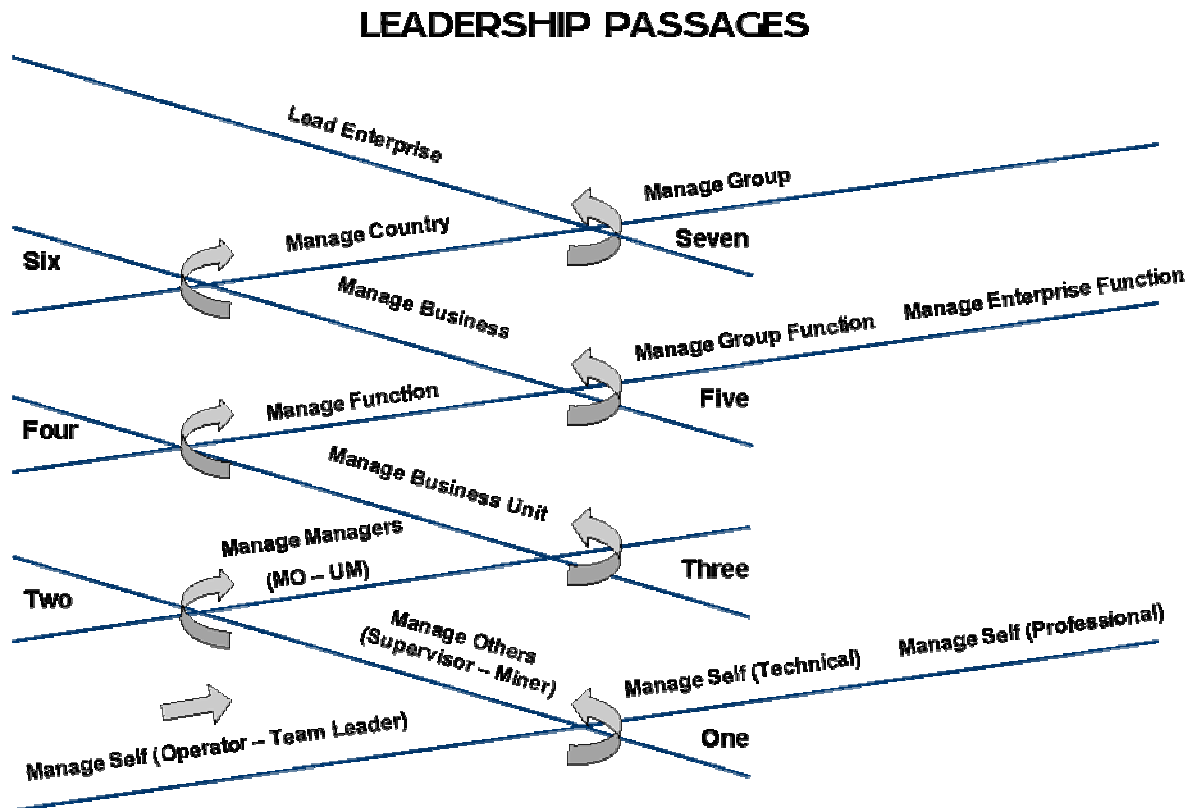
Note: Each passage represents a major change in job requirements that translates to new skill requirements, new time horizons and applications, and new work values.

(Charan et al., 2001:7)

PASSAGE ONE: From Managing Self to Managing Others

At *Level 1* employees make an individual contribution with skill requirements primarily being technical or professional, doing assigned work within given time frames and in ways that meet set objectives (Charan et al., 2001:16-17).

This involves a degree of planning, punctuality, content, quality and reliability. The work values to be developed include acceptance of the company culture and adopting professional standards. When people become skilled individual contributors who produce good results, especially when they demonstrate an ability to collaborate with others, they usually receive additional responsibilities. When they demonstrate an ability to handle these responsibilities and adhere to

the company's values, they are often promoted to first-line managers. (Charan et al., 2001:17-18).

At *Level 2,* people need to learn to reallocate their time so that they not only complete their assigned work, but also help others perform effectively. They must shift from "doing" work to "getting work done through others". The most important shift that has to take place during this passage is a value shift – they need to learn to value managerial work rather than just tolerate it; they must believe that making time for others, planning, coaching are necessary tasks and are their responsibility. (Charan et al., 2001:18).

It is a choice to remain in a single contributor functional job role, or to assume managerial and leadership responsibilities. The latter requires a paradigm shift and a transition (Charan et al., 2001:18).

PASSAGE TWO: From Managing Others to Managing Managers

At *Level 3* managers must be pure management. Whereas individual contributions were still part of their job descriptions in Level 2, they now need to part themselves of individual tasks.

The skills that must be mastered during this transition are: selecting people to turn Passage One, assigning managerial and leadership work to them, measuring their progress as managers and coaching them (Charan et al., 2001:18).

At this level managers must also begin to think beyond their function and concern themselves with strategic issues that support the overall business. Coaching is essential at this level because first-line managers frequently don't receive formal training in how to be a manager; they are dependent on their bosses to instruct them on the job. (Charan et al., 2001:19-20).

PASSAGE THREE: From Managing Managers to Functional Manager

Functional heads must manage some areas that are outside their own experiences. They must be able to effectively communicate with at least two

layers of management, meaning that they must not only endeavour to understand this "foreign" work, but also learn to value it. (Charan et al., 2001:20).

During this passage, managers need to become proficient strategists, not only for their function, but blending their functional strategy with the overall business strategy. It requires an increase in managerial maturity. In one sense maturity means thinking and acting like a functional leader rather than a functional member, and also means that managers need to adopt a broad, long-term perspective, creating functional strategy that enables them to do something better than the competition. (Charan et al., 2001:20-22).

PASSAGE FOUR: From Functional Manager to Business Manager

During this leadership passage managers continue to grow and develop the abilities rooted in the previous level, i.e. becoming more strategic and cross-functional. They are now in charge of integrating functions whereas before they simply had to understand and work with other functions. (Charan et al., 2001:22).

The biggest shift during this passage, however, is a change from looking at plans and proposals functionally to a profit perspective and a long-term view (Charan et al., 2001:22).

Not only do they need to learn to manage different functions, but they also need to become skilled at working with a wider variety of people than ever before. They need to become more sensitive to functional diversity issues and communicating clearly and effectively. Even more difficult, is the balancing act between future goals and present needs and making trade-offs between the two. They need to meet quarterly profit, market share, product, and people targets and at the same time plan for goals three to five years into the future. At this level, managers need to stop *doing* every second of the day and reserve time for reflection and analysis. (Charan, et al., 2001:22-23).

PASSAGE FIVE: From Business Manager to Group Manager

Leadership becomes more holistic at this level, thinking in terms of community, industry, government and ceremonial activities. Group Managers need to evolve

their perspective to the point that they see issues in the broadest possible terms. (Charan et al., 2001:23).

This passage requires a critical shift in four skill sets:

- Proficiency at evaluating strategy for capital allocation and deployment purposes
- Development of Business Managers without stepping on their toes
- Portfolio strategy development that creates horizontal synergy among various business units, and entering new business to ensure future earnings.
- Becoming astute at assessing whether they have the right core capabilities to win.

(Charan et al., 2001:23-25)

PASSAGE SIX: From Group Manager to Enterprise Manager

Transition at this passage is largely focused on values rather than skills. There needs to be a shift in responsibility from strategic to long-term visionary thinking and a shift from an operation- to a global perspective (Charan et al., 2001:25)

.

At the same time Enterprise Managers require a well-developed external sensitivity – the ability to manage external constituencies, sense significant external shifts and manage change effectively (Charan et al., 2001:25-26).

At this level, inspiring the entire employee population through a variety of communication tools is also essential. They must be able to assemble a team of highly-achieving and ambitious individuals and establish a commitment towards the organisation's vision and mission. (Charan et al., 2001:26-27).

1.19. Recommendations for leadership development in the 21st century

It is currently assumed that leaders who perform well at one job on a certain level will be likely to perform well at the next one. Human potential is not fixed, human beings have the ability to grow and progress. The six passages in the pipeline, as discussed, are major events in the life of a leader. They represent significant passages that can't be mastered in a day or by taking a course. *This provides*

the organisation with an immense challenge, to manage leaders and develop leaders on all respective passages/levels. (Charan et al., 2001:15).

Furthermore, the 21st century's organisation is rapidly being transformed from a structure built out of jobs to a field of 'work needing to be done'. New ways of working will require new technological skills and the 'skill' of finding and doing work in a world without clear-cut and stable jobs. It has become almost a truism that *today's careers must be self-managed, that leaders should take responsibility for their own personal development.* (Charan et al., 2001:8).

The recommendations in this section will be discussed under headings which stipulates the fundamental aspects related to leadership needed in the 21st century, emphasising both the organisation's and the leader's responsibilities for developing the appropriate skills, knowledge and competencies.

1.20. Develop global leadership

Globalisation is here to stay and increasingly all leaders will need to think and operate within a global business environment. With that said, global leadership will take many forms and leaders should be prepared to assume various different roles. (Watt, 2007).

The Global Leader plans and executes strategies developed at a broad level. They have an appreciation of what is required to enter new markets, establish operations and manage political/cultural sensitivities and dynamics. They will often manage multiple locations needing a high degree of adaptability and resilience to realise the benefits of globalisation.

Organisation responsibilities:

- Reconfigure existing leadership responsibilities.
- Provide leaders with a broad and considered range of experiences (real and simulated).
- Expose leaders to the critical organisational and industry knowledge that guides the context of their judgments.

- Provide strategic management processes designed to clarify what the business will be like five to ten years ahead and how many/what kind of leadership roles will be needed.

(Sadler, 2003:103; Watt, 2007).

Leader responsibilities:

- Joint Responsibility – ensure that you have the support of your manager and from company training and development specialists.
- Learn by reading – develop an intellectual understanding of a new process, reviewing existing information to analyse a variety of ideas and approaches.
- Learn how different organisations operate by attending conferences etc.
- Serve on different boards or committees.

(Byham, Smith and Paese, 2000:176-177).

1.20.1. The right leader for the right moment

In an increasingly complex and dynamic business environment, organisations will need to ensure that leaders are deployed against specific business priorities based on their capabilities, experience and personal attributes. Organisations will need to assess the readiness and suitability of leaders to drive specific initiatives (Watt, 2007).

Organisation responsibilities:

- Provide the leader with opportunities to learn and apply more traditional models of decision making and more contemporary models of rapid decision making.
- Provide developmental assignments that stretch people. The organisation could sponsor the necessary resources for development.
- Make available information on job opportunities.
- Special programmes for those with leadership potential.
- Support leaders with transitions to higher levels.
- Source the right leaders in order to meet business goals – external leaders to provide new ideas and challenges, and provide opportunities for internal leadership development along the pipeline.

(Byham et al., 2000:65), (Gandossey and Effron, 2004:152), (Sadler, 2003:103 & 116) and (Watt, 2007)

Leader responsibilities:

- Organise career planning discussions with organisation.
- Take control over the process of your own development – have a career map.
- Identify learning and development opportunities – on the job and / or formal training in relation to the competency to be developed.
- Review and feedback – continuous review of your development plan is essential, in order to ensure that it remains relevant in terms of your own career development.
- Learn by being coached – someone else observes your application of new skills and techniques and then gives you feedback as to how you did.

(Sadler, 2003:102-110)

1.20.2. Identify leadership talent, develop talent, and retain talent

The demand for leaders is rapidly outstripping the supply. If organisations are to adequately resource the leadership needs of the future, they will need to identify and develop leaders through all stages of the leadership pipeline. This will not happen through aspiration alone. It will demand business processes focused on early identification; the management and support of individuals through key leadership transitions and significant executive involvement. (Charan et al., 2001:6).

Organisation responsibilities:

- Focus on training and external development programmes.
- Managers can help to design action plans in line with development needs and business strategy.
- Managers can review your development plan/career map to check progress and assess the results.
- Reward people for developing the leadership skills needed on future levels.
- Leadership development – driven from the top with specialist support.
- Succession Planning – identify candidates and match them with developmental opportunities, using competencies as a primary screen. Serves to operate as both talent-growth and talent-retention mechanisms.
- Retain key leaders by providing guidance and coaching around both personal performance and relationship building.

- Reward leaders by an increase in base pay, annual incentives or encouraging long-term incentives.
- Accurately select the talent to bring into the organisation.

(Byham et al, 2000:125), (Gandossey and Effron, 2004:152-153) and (Sadler, 2003:103 & 112).

Leader responsibilities:

- Identify what needs to be learned – look at recent successes or problems you have experienced in your job.
- Identify specific behavioural changes you need to make in order to be consistent with your next level of leadership.

(Joiner and Josephs, 2007:204)

1.20.3. Building agile and adaptive leadership

Leaders of the future must learn to adapt their style and approach to suit both individual and organisational needs. Adaptive leadership raises leaders' awareness of the differences among people and situations. It will enable leaders to enhance the effectiveness of their interactions with people. By better meeting the needs of each individual, a leader creates higher levels of engagement and organisational results. Agile leaders will be able to change as the needs of the organisation changes. They should be able to adapt to a turbulent world economy and achieve sustained success, accelerating change and interdependence. (Joiner and Josephs, 2007:212).

Organisation responsibilities:

- Allow short-term experiences in functional areas of the organisation.
- Organise and sponsor professional coaching.
- HR/Training department can act as a facilitator to enable the leader to discuss change issues with his manager.
- Establish a definite sense of purpose.

(Joiner and Josephs, 2007:146,203)

Leader responsibilities:

- Set development objectives: what you need to do

    : by when you need to do

    : how you will know when you have achieved it.

- Obtain different perspectives by means of discussions and discourse with other professionals.

- Implement a change, or generate change on a small scale – learn from your experience.

- Be critical and evaluative, not restricted by systems and procedures.

(Byham, Smith and Paese, 2000:176 & 212) and (Joiner and Josephs, 2007:203 & 210)

1.20.4. Inspire vision and build the employee value proposition

In an increasingly competitive and demanding environment, leaders need to be able to inspire people to give extra effort. They must be charismatic, inspirational, intellectually stimulating and individually considerate. They need to be able to clearly articulate and promote the organisation's vision and value proposition. The vision and employee value proposition must be linked to the organisation's values and all HR systems and processes, thereby achieving extraordinary results. (Robbins, 2005:367).

Organisation responsibilities:

- Establish a tangible vision and values of the organisation.

- Provide greater integrity and transparency in all organisation processes.
    (Byham, Smith and Paese, 2000:263) and (Sadler, 2003:109)

Leader responsibilities:

- Be reflective – assess your situation and the results obtained, diagnose the problems and causes, implement strategies to rectify the situation.

- Work horisontally.

- Lead a committee that requires strong partnerships across various functions of the organisation.

- Work as an advisor to a group that was recently restructured or downsized.

(Byham, Smith and Paese, 2000:212), (Charan et al., 2001:144) and (Joiner and Josephs, 2007:210).

1.20.5. Leadership excellence

While decision making has always been fundamental to the role of management, leaders of the future will be required to make more decisions to navigate a business environment characterised by increasing complexity, competition, rapid change and uncertainty. A leader's success will therefore depend on the frequency and accuracy of their judgments, and their competence to establish focus, provide motivational support, empower others, develop others, manage performance and manage challenge. (Cripe, 2002:40-43).

Organisation responsibilities:

- HR/Training department support and guide the leader's development process.
- Provide the opportunity to attend assessment/development centres.
- Motivate people to develop the capacity to manage their own development.
- Provide constructive feedback – helping leaders to gain insight into strengths and weaknesses.
- Provide challenge relatively early on in people's career, motivating them to take responsibility and cope with setbacks and successes.
- Provide competency frameworks and performance management.
- Be flexible and allow leaders the opportunity to accelerate up the pipeline, becoming efficient in multiple management positions.

(Byham, Smith and Paese, 2000:162) and (Sadler, 2003:113)

Leader responsibilities:

- Take responsibility for your own leadership development.
- Ensure that you develop within your current level of leadership.
- Learn by doing – learn by actively trying to master a new process or procedure, often by trial and error and self-review.
- Continued education.
- Asks for guidance from professional coaches or mentors.

(Byham, Smith and Paese, 2000:177 & 273), (Charan et al., 2001:67) and (Joiner and Josephs, 2007:204).

1.18.6. Drive employee engagement

While multiple factors influence employee engagement, the most influential factor is the quality of leadership. In fact, how employees feel about their leaders is

often synonymous with how they feel about their jobs and the organisation. As HR professionals search for the best way to execute their organization's strategies through people, they need to ensure that employees are engaged. This calls for an 'emotionally intelligent' leader. (Watt, 2007)

This kind of leadership shows regard for the rights and feelings of others, within the context of established institutional procedures and guidelines. In order to build productive relationships, these leaders must deal with their own uncertainties and gain the personal confidence that will enable others to respond positively. (Power, 2003:48).

Organisation responsibilities:

- Give insight into leader's own personal style and how this impacts their judgments.
- Provide support and counseling when managers reach critical points in their careers.
- Enable others to be successful.

(Charan et al., 2001:144) and (Watt, 2007)

Leader responsibilities:

- Be aware – gain insight into your behaviour by stepping back and assessing the impact of it.
- Learn by observing others – watch others perform a task or process observing the skills and behaviour leading to success.
- Engage a team emotionally as well as physically or intellectually.
- Coaching and counseling.

(Charan et al., 2001:35 and 144) and (Joiner and Josephs, 2007:212).

2.2. Human Resource Planning

According to Cascio (1998: 154), human resource planning is a two step process, the primary emphasis is on anticipating and responding to needs emerging within and outside the organisation to determine priorities and to allocate resources where they can do the most good. The analysis of needs leads to the planning of programmes to be conducted. Activities and programmes in turn relate directly to current and anticipated issues and must be evaluated in terms of needs, costs and expected benefits. Figure 2.1. describes the process of human resource planning.

Human resource planning reflects three areas of primary concern to management:

1. *Needs forecasting*: improved planning and control over staffing and organisational requirements, based on analysis of conditions.
2. *Performance management*: improving the performance of individuals, teams, and the organisation as a whole.
3. *Career management*: activities to select, assign, develop and otherwise manage individual careers in an organisation.

A fundamental reason for planning is that planning leads to success (Millar and Cardinal, 1994 in Cascio, 1998). Planning also helps organisations do a better job of coping with change and requires managers to define the organisations objectives and provides a context, meaning and direction for employees' work.

Figure 2.1.   **The Human Resource Planning Process** (Cascio, 1998: 155)

1. Needs Forecasting

Analysis of external conditions
- Economic, social, political factors
- Government and legislation
- Population and work force
- Markets and competition
- Technologies

Future human resource requirements
- Organisation and job design
- Plans and budgets
- Management policies and philosophy
- Technologies and systems
- Affirmative action / BBEEE goals and plans

Future human resource availability
- Current inventory of talent
- Forecasted attrition
- Forecasted movement and development
- Effects of past human resource programmes

Forecast of human resource needs
- Immediate and longer term
- External hiring needs
- Reductions and reallocations
- Improved utilisation
- Development

2. Programme Planning

Performance Management
- Organisation
  - Activities
  - Relationships
  - Responsibilities
  - Standards
  - Quality of work life (climate

- Performance Appraisal
  - Performance plans and goals
  - Coaching
  - Evaluation
- Reward Structures
  - Compensation
  - Benefits

Career Management
- Policies and systems
  - Recruitment
  - Selection and placement
  - Promotion and transfer
  - Development and training
  - Termination or retirement
- Management Succession
  - Individual assessment
  - Position Requirements
  - Replacement Charting
  - Succession Planning
  - Tracking career progress
- Career opportunities
  - Job requirements
  - Career paths
  - Career communications
- Individual career planning
  - Self-analysis
  - Personal career plans
  - Development action plans

2.2. Succession Planning

Succession Planning as part of human resource development is becoming increasingly important. Succession Planning requires a substantial allocation of financial, human and time resources.

Within the SA Context,   there is increasingly more public policy on human resource development and diversity being formulated. The task facing SA is to find creative solutions for integrating economic growth and HRD (Horwitz et al, 1996).

Leadership transitions can be pivotal performance points for organizations. Succession planning — identifying the best internal talent to lead the organization in the future — can ensure leadership continuity and enhance performance potential. When the right candidates are identified, not only can the organization provide them with the experiences necessary to prepare them for broader roles, but also it can ensure the retention of these key employees.

A succession planning system must meet the needs of the organization and its employees.

2.2.1. Steps in Succession Planning (Adapted from Rothwell, WJ,2005)

2.2.1.1. Pre-plan

This step has several components, which include creating a succession planning team, establishing programmeme objectives, establishing measures of success, establishing programmeme design, and developing an implementation plan.

2.2.1.2. Communicate Plan

Inform stakeholders about the purpose and value of succession planning and the objectives and specific contents of the agency's programmeme. The sub-steps include determining communication goals and measures, identifying target audiences, and determining communication methods.

2.2.1.3. Identify Leadership Characteristics

Particular emphasis is placed upon the concepts of leadership levels, the demands of each level, and capacity to meet those demands. Each is discussed

in terms of competencies and results required of each leadership level. Because leadership is multilevel, different leadership characteristics are needed in order to successfully perform at each level. In this step, three leadership characteristics are identified for each leadership level: competency levels, competency scope of impact, and leadership results. The intensity and impact dimensions of competencies are introduced, and their assessment is explored. A measure of "balanced leadership results" is presented. These characteristics are used as the basis for assessing, developing, and selecting future leaders. The importance of leadership competency models and their use in assessing candidates' match to the demands of leadership is addressed.

2.2.1.4.   Assess Bench Strength and other Pre-Measures

The concept of bench strength is presented, and its importance as both a primary goal and an assessment of succession planning validity is discussed. Bench strength is defined as the number of critical leadership positions that have at least one person ready to successfully assume the role and responsibilities of each of these positions. Bench strength assessments can serve as a baseline measure of an organization's ability to fill positions from within. In such cases, organizations evaluate the effectiveness of a succession planning programme by comparing the number of positions that have someone ready to successfully move into them before and after implementation of the succession planning programme. Other pre- and post-measures of succession planning success are suggested.

2.2.1.5.   Assess Talent

The identification of leadership potential and its measurement is explored in detail. The tutorial introduces "the potential-results matrix" and demonstrates its use in differentiating leadership talent and identifying high potential. This step involves assessing employees on multiple dimensions and comparing them with successful characteristics that have been determined to be associated with a specific leadership level. The results of these assessments provide useful information regarding employees' potential to take on greater leadership responsibilities and their strengths and areas for development. Employees who demonstrate appropriate competency levels, scope of impact, and a history of getting successful results are identified as having high potential and may be

selected to participate in a structured set of activities to rapidly prepare them for higher leadership positions.

2.2.1.6. <u>Develop Talent</u>

In this step, development strategies are outlined for members of the succession planning pool based upon the results of the assessment in the previous step. Development strategies for each member of the pool should be based on information gathered during the talent assessment process. The potential-results matrix is converted into a "development matrix", and its implications for structuring developmental actions are illustrated. The relative value of various developmental methods is compared, and methods for identifying priority developmental assignments are shared. Different approaches to development may be necessary to address issues related to competency levels versus issues related to scope of impact or results. Although many strategies are available to develop employees, the key is to identify the right combination of strategies that prepares them to successfully take on higher leadership roles within the organization. Effective in developing future leaders are key assignments, developmental feedback, mentoring, coaching, formal classroom training, and professional membership. The pivotal importance of key assignments, their identification, and the removal of blocks to key assignments are emphasized.

2.2.1.7. <u>Evaluate Succession Planning</u>

This step involves measuring the impact of the succession planning programme upon established objectives. After sufficient time following implementation, programme processes and results should be periodically reviewed to assess whether programme objectives have been achieved and to identify areas for improvement. Once the evaluation has been completed, modifications to the programme should be made as appropriate. There are many approaches to programme evaluation, which vary in complexity. Measures used to evaluate the effectiveness of programmes may range from simple methods such as an assessment of stakeholder satisfaction to more sophisticated processes, such as a return on investment or cost-benefit analysis.

Steps for Completing a Programme Evaluation of a Succession Plan as suggested by Rothwell, WJ (2005):

2.2.1.7.1. Step 1 - Assemble a committee to conduct the programme evaluation.

Assemble a group of 5–8 individuals who have their own roles to play in the succession planning programme (ideally the group should consist of the CEO, succession planning coordinator, Vice president of Human Resources, and two or more key operating managers).

2.2.1.7.2. Step 2 – Brief committee members on the need for evaluating the succession planning programme and the steps to be followed in the evaluation effort.

- Call a meeting, providing briefing materials to committee members beforehand.

- Explain the value of evaluating the succession planning programme.

- Provide benchmarking information from other firms, if available.

- Provide information from "incident reports" and other indicators of the programme's progress.

- Agree on evaluation objectives, approaches, and steps.

2.2.1.7.3. Step 3 - Conduct background research on the relative effectiveness of the succession planning programme. Conduct research

2.2.1.7.4. Step 4 - Analyze results, make recommendations for programme improvements, and document evaluation results.

- Analyze results.

- Prepare recommendations for programme improvements.

- Write report and prepare oral presentation.

2.2.1.7.5. Step 5 - Communicate results.

- Circulate written report.

- Present oral report/briefing to those responsible for the succession planning programme.

2.2.1.7.6. Step 6 - Identify specific actions for improvement.

- Ask those with responsibility for succession planning, such as key operating managers, to establish improvement objectives.

2.2.1.7.7. Step 7 - Take continuing action for programme improvement.

- Take continuing action for improvement through training, briefings, and other means.

2.3.   Training and development

Marx (2002:265), states that although closely related and difficult to distinguish in practice, there is a difference between training and development.

"Training is the planned, systematic and organised process of providing employees with the specific knowledge (and skills needed for them to perform their present jobs effectively, not only to achieve the objectives of the organisation, but also their own. The goal of training is master the skills and knowledge that the employees apply in their daily work activities."

"Development is a systematic, planned experience to provide employees with knowledge, skills , abilities, insights and attitudes to prepare them to perform jobs the organisation will need in the future."

Training therefore assists in the development process or is the tool used to increase development. There are several training and development methods and techniques as shown in figure 2.2. The choice of which one to make use of is influenced by factors such as cost-effectiveness, facilities available and the content of the training programme.

According to Marx, (2002), there are eight principles of learning that help to accelerate the learning process during training.

They are:

- Readiness of the employee for training
- Active participation in the learning process
- Repetition and practical application
- Timely feedback and results

- Meaningfulness and relevance of the learning material or work that should be learned
- Acknowledgement and encouragement to perform
- Whole or part training
- Transfer of training to the work situation

The South African Government places a high emphasis on training and development, as is clear from the Skills Development Act, No. 97 of 1998. The workplace should therefore be used as an active learning environment to provide employees with the opportunities to learn the necessary skills to function effectively and for self improvement.

Figure 2.2. **Training and development methods and techniques** (Marx, 2002:267)

Training and development

Presentation Methods
- Classroom instruction
- Distance learning
- Audiovisual techniques
- Programmemed learning

Hands-on methods
- Self-directed learning
- Apprenticeships
- Simulations
- Business games
- Case studies
- Behavioural Modelling
- Interactive video
- Web-based training
- Job instruction training
- Coaching techniques
- Multiple role methods
- Sit-by-me techniques
- Assistant methods
- Project method
- Vestibule training
- Role-playing techniques

Group-building methods
- Adventure learning (outdoors)
- Action learning
- Team training
  - o Cross training
  - o Coordination training
  - o Leadership training
- Group methods
  - o Conference methods
  - o Panel discussion
  - o Brainstorming

2.4.   Coaching as a development tool

Coaching can be divided into the following three types:

- Skills Coaching

- Performance Coaching

- Development Coaching

This can be shown on the following continuum, depicted in figure 2.3.

Figure 2.3. **A training to development continuum of coaching**. West, LW & Milan, M. (2001: 3).

Skills Coaching   Performance Coaching   Development Coaching
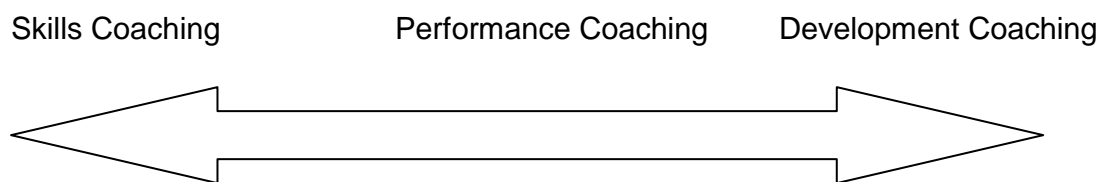
	Training	Development
Coaching objectives	*finite / concrete*	Complex / emergent
Implied coaching style	Directive	Non-Directive
Typical duration	Short term	Longer term

For the purpose of this research article the researcher will focus on Development Coaching as it is the primary mentoring method that the accelerated development programme makes use of.

2.6.   Mentoring as a form of Development

One of the most useful ways to help employees advance in their careers is mentoring. This involves establishing a close link between manager or someone more experienced and another organisation member who is less experienced. Mentoring is a powerful intervention that assists members in the establishment, advancement, and maintenance stages of their careers. A mentor takes a personal interest in the employee's career and guides and sponsors it. This ensures that a person's hard work and skill translate into actual opportunities for promotion and advancement (Cummings & Worley, 2001).

According to Lewis (1996:10) mentoring has a number of characteristics that makes it a powerful means from which people can learn:

- Flexibility - mentoring can happen is so many ways and in a wide variety of circumstances. There is no prescribed minimum set of rules or requirements for it to happen. The only necessities are time and at least two people.

- It is an off-line activity - it takes place out of the run of normal operational activity. Thus it has an element of informality and is more like a social than a purely professional or work-based activity.

- It does relate to work and the job – although the style is not prescribed by work conventions, the substance con be highly work focused, and is therefore seen as practical.

- It is individual – it relates directly and uniquely to the needs and interests of the individual, in a way that few group development activities or remote development activities can.

- It is people-centred – it engages people as people, with all of their values, motives and feelings. It engages hearts as well as minds. Again, many other methods of delivering learning can't match this.

- It is a feedback system – feedback is a structural component of a mentoring relationship. It is known to engage interest and attention, and also to enhance learning.

- It is broad n focus – many of the other methods of learning, by their very nature, are located in specific personal, technical or functional skill areas. Mentoring, on the other hand, can encompass the whole range of working and human activity.

- It is not exclusive – on of the great advantages of mentoring is that it can be a co-ordinating, stimulating and monitoring process that operates in parallel or in addition to any or all of the other learning methods. If mentoring is chosen it doesn't meant that other methods can not be used, thus it can be seen as a value adding activity.

Chapter Three: Theoretical Perspectives on Assessment Center Methodologies

3.1. Introduction

Under the controlled conditions within an Assessment Center (referred to in the text as AC), promising candidates can be observed in action and objectively evaluated both for specific job capabilities and for management abilities. From an assessment report a company can get an excellent "gut feeling" whether a person will fit into its organisation in the future. It will also give a clear indication where the person will excel, and how he/she ought to adapt and develop when facing challenges up the management ladder (Le Roux, 2005).

3.2. Definition of an Assessment Center

Spangenberg in Steyn (2003) describes the AC as a process using a number of measuring techniques to evaluate employees. In a typical Center, six to twelve participants will partake in a series of exercises and simulation tasks related to certain positions. While these people are working on the exercises (simulations) they are observed by trained observers. These observations are done by means of a series of management dimensions which have been pre-determined and which are considered important for the effective functioning on a particular level of management.

One of the most comprehensive descriptions is that of the "Task force on Assessment Center standards" in Steyn (2003, p 4):

"An Assessment Center consists of a standardised evaluation of behaviour based on multiple inputs. Multiple trained observers and techniques are used. Judgements about behaviour are made, in part, from specially developed assessment simulations. These judgements are pooled by the assessors at an evaluation meeting during which assessment data are reported and discussed, and the assessors agree on the evaluation of the dimensions and any overall evaluation that is made".

3.3. Origins of the Assessment Center

Adapted from Munchus & McArthur (1991, p 5-9); the multiple assessment method had its root in the field of psychology in the 1930's. The first occupational use was for officer selection during the Second World War when it was used initially by both the German and British armed forces. After the Second World War, the method was further adapted by the British Civil Services for the recruitment of its administrative level staff.

The American Telephone and Telegraph Company (AT&T) began experiments with this approach in the 1950's as a part of a wide programme of management development. The AT&T Company designated a particular building where the assessment where carried out. This building became known as the Assessment Center and the name has stuck as a way of referring to the method.

The first to the "new" approach to management evaluation in South Africa was only at the start of the seventies.

The Assessment Center method is now regarded as one of the most accurate and valid assessment procedures and is widely used.

In order for an AC to be successful, there are a number of stages that have to be completed.

The following diagram depicts these stages:

Figure 3.1.   Essential stages of the Assessment Center

(Adapted form Saville & Holdsworth Limited, date unkown)

```
                    ┌─────────────────────────────┐
                    │  Define Organisational      │
                    │        Objectives           │
                    │     Gain Commitment         │
                    └─────────────────────────────┘
                                │
            ┌───────────────────┴───────────────────┐
            │                                        │
  ┌──────────────────────┐              ┌──────────────────────┐
  │ Review/Validate       │              │    Job Analysis       │
  │ Existing procedures   │              │                       │
  └──────────────────────┘              └──────────────────────┘
            │                                        │
            └───────────┐     ┌──────────────────────┘
                        ▼     ▼
                 ┌──────────────────┐
                 │  Define Criteria │
                 └──────────────────┘
                        │
         ┌──────────────┴──────────────┐
         ▼                             ▼
  ┌──────────────────┐        ┌──────────────────┐
  │ Select Exercises │        │ Develop Exercises│
  └──────────────────┘        └──────────────────┘
         │                             │
         └──────────────┬──────────────┘
                        ▼
                 ┌──────────────────┐
                 │ Design Programme │
                 └──────────────────┘
                        │
                        ▼
                 ┌──────────────────┐
                 │  Train Assessors │
                 └──────────────────┘
                        │
                        ▼
                 ┌──────────────────┐
                 │    Pilot Run     │
                 └──────────────────┘
                        │
                        ▼
            ┌───────────────────────────┐
            │ Implement Assessment Centre│
            └───────────────────────────┘
```

50
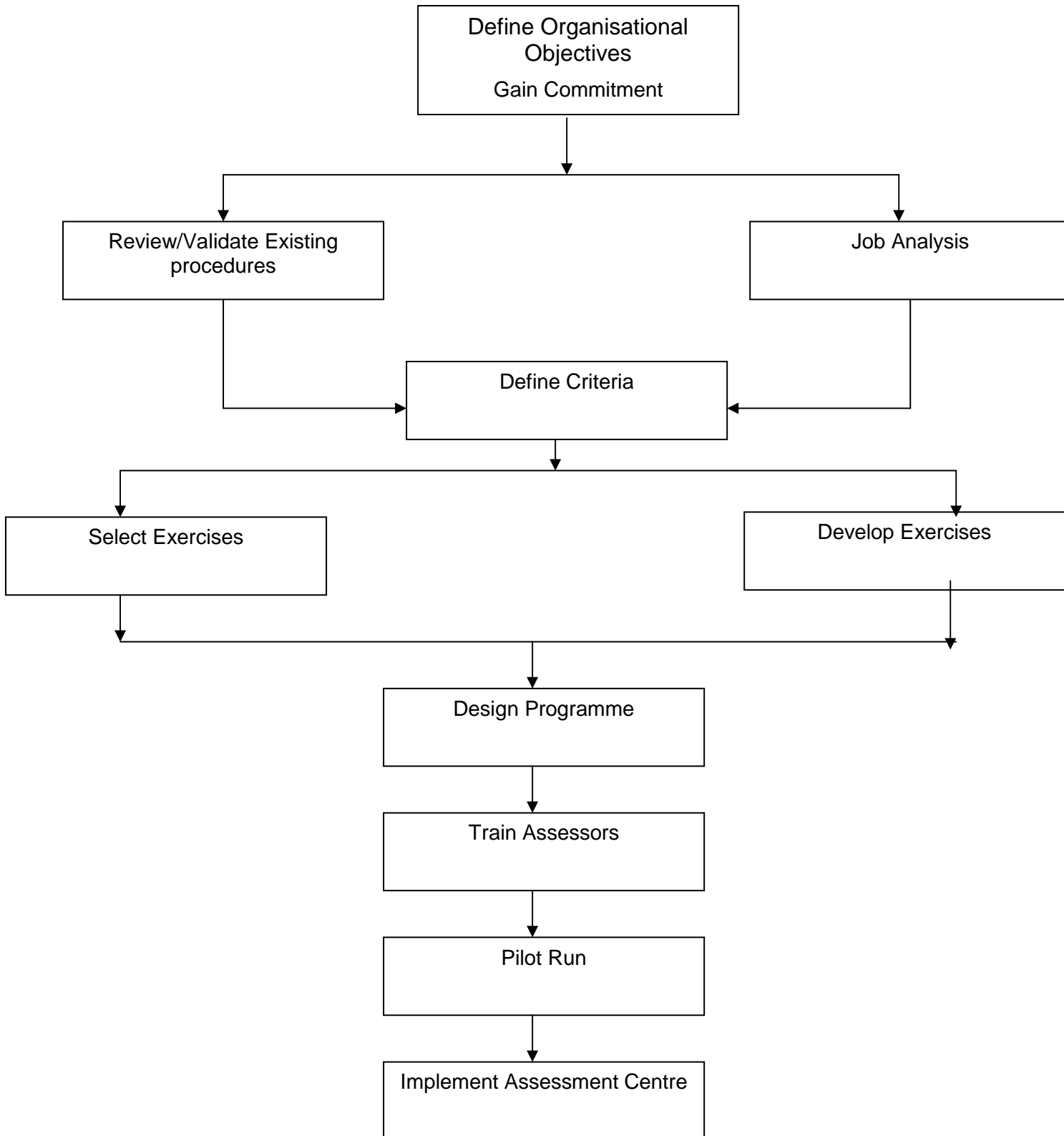
3.4. Main methods of Assessment Centers

3.4.1. Group Discussions

During a leaderless group discussion candidates are brought together as a committee of project team with one or a number of items to make a recommendation of. Candidates may be assigned specific roles to play in the group or it may be structured in such a way that all the candidates have the same basic information.

3.4.2. In-Basket Exercise

Candidates normally undertake this type of exercise individually. The materials comprise a bundle of correspondence and the candidate is placed in the role of somebody, generally, one who has just assumed a new position or has replaced a predecessor at short notice and has been asked to deal with the accumulated correspondence. The evidence gathered from this exercise is from the annotations that the candidates make in response to the items in the in-tray – normally in the form of emails or memos.

3.4.2. Interview Simulations / Role Plays

In these exercises candidates meet individually with a role player or resource person. Their brief is to either gather information or form a view and make a decision, or alternatively, to engage in discussion with the resource person to come to a resolution on an aspect or issue of dispute.

3.4.3. Case Studies / Analysis Exercises

In this type of exercise the candidate is presented with the task of making a decision about a particular business case. They are provided with a large amount of factual information, which is generally ambiguous, and, in some cases, contradictory. Candidates generally work independently on such exercises and their recommendation of decision is usually to be communicated in the form of a brief written report and/or a presentation made to the assessors.

3.5. The Reliability and Validity of Assessment Centers

The qualitative value of any testing or selection process is a function of its ability to accurately predict future performance. Hulin, Henry and Noon in Caldwell, Thornton iii

and Gruys (2003), report that the predictive validity of many selection instruments do decrease over time. Tziner et al (2001), attributes part of the decrease in validity to changes that occurred in organisations regarding the requirements of functioning as a successful performer. The primary concerns regarding selection based Assessment Center validity is its ability to accurately measure and correctly predict the future performance of candidates.

3.6.   Assessment Center Validity

The most important consideration in evaluating an assessment method is its validity (Lowry, 1996; Pulakos, 2005). Validity refers to the characteristics, competencies, skills or abilities (dimensions or constructs) a test measures and how accurately the test measures them,as this will show whether or not the assessment method provides useful information about how effectively an employee will actually perform on the job (Cascio and Aguinis, 2005). Validity is the most important factor in considering whether or not to use an assessment method, because an assessment that does not accurately identify performance on a job has no real value to the organisation (Pulakos, 2005).

According to Lowry (1996),

- Validity lets one know whether the dimensions measured in the Assessment Center are related to job qualifications and requirements.
- Validity gives meaning to the assessment scores – showing that there is a link between performance in the assessment and performance on the job. If an assessment has been proven to be valid, the conclusion can be made that persons scoring high on the assessment are likely to perform well on the job.
- Validity also describes the degree to which specific conclusions or predictions about people based on their assessment scores can be made.

An AC's validity is established in reference to a specific purpose for a specific group (Winfred et al., 2003). For example, an AC designed to assess a lower level position where technical proficiency is important may not be valid for predicting leadership skills or commercial awareness. A correlation coefficient is a statistical measure that indicates the validity of the assessment content, constructs, and the strength of the

relationship between scores on an assessment and career progress, overall performance ratings, dimensional performance ratings, potential ratings, and training performance (Howard, 1997). The larger the validity coefficient, the more accurate the predictions made (Pulakos, 2005).

Three main types of validity (criterion-related, content, and construct validity) should be used to provide Assessment Center validation support (Cascio and Aguinis, 2005).

3.6.1. <u>Criterion-Related Validity</u>

Winfred et al. (2003), state that criterion-related validity can be defined as a meaningful relationship between how well people perform on assessments and how well they subsequently perform on the job. There are two types of criterion-related validity:

- Concurrent validity – the accuracy with which a measure can identify the current behaviour (or skills, competencies etc.) of an individual.
- Predictive validity – the accuracy with which a measure can predict the future behaviour or performance of an individual.

Criterion-related validation is a quantitative procedure which involves the calculation of a correlation coefficient between a predictor, or more than one predictor, and a criterion (Foxcroft and Roodt, 2001). Criterion-related validity is usually established by means of a technique called meta-analysis whereby criterion-related validity is calculated across different evaluations of a given AC (Howard, 1997).

Several authors (Caldwell, Thornton and Gruys, 2003; Howard, 1997; Pulakos, 2005; Spychalski et al., 1997; Winfred et al., 2003) report that Assessment Centers generally have acceptable criterion-related validity and that it has remained by large, stable over time. However, there are certain characteristics of Assessment Centers and the way they are used that influences their validity coefficients.

3.6.1.1. <u>Factors influencing criterion-related validity</u>

Correlation coefficients that measure the validity of Assessment Centers never reach 1.00 because performance on an assessment can never perfectly predict how well individuals will perform on a job. Factors inevitably influence job performance, such as

an individual's motivation, relationships with co-workers and supervisors, cognitive abilities and countless other factors (Shore et al., 1990; Pulakos, 2005).

Winfred et al. (2003) report that estimates of the criterion-related validity of Assessment Centers might be underestimated because of the common practice of combining scores on separate dimensions (or exercises) into a single overall Assessment Center score, making comparative validity statements problematic as some tests used in the Center may be more predictive of job performance than others. How much criterion-related validity is lost depends primarily on the inter-correlation between dimensions or exercises. If the inter-correlations among dimensions or exercises are high, then the overall Assessment Center score will not result in a great deal of loss, but if the inter-correlations are not high, then the loss could be substantial (Winfred et al., 2003).

In another meta-analysis of Assessment Center validity, Spychalski et al. (1997) found that criterion-related validity increased along with the number of female assessees, psychologist assessors, number of assessments used, and the use of peer evaluation in Assessment Centers. Howard (1997) confirms this statement as it was found that Assessment Centers producing greater validity have a wider variety of exercises, psychologists in addition to managers as assessors, peer evaluations, and more women and fewer minorities as assessees. Criterion-related validity also varies regarding the purpose of the Assessment Center with centers used for selection and development showing higher validities than those used for promotion purposes (Shore, Thornton and McFarlane-Shore, 1990).

Caldwell et al. (2003) furthermore reports that organisations that are large and professional, where staff are more likely to be well trained and knowledgeable about Assessment Center guidelines and testing standards, have overall a higher criterion-related validity than smaller organisations lacking professional and technical sophistication.

Overall, assessment centers work, but how the center is constructed makes a difference in how well it works. (Howard, 1997).

3.6.2. <u>Content Validity</u>

Inferences about validity based on content-related evidence are concerned with whether or not a measurement procedure contains a fair sample of the universe of behaviours involved in the job it is supposed to represent (Cascio and Aguinis, 2005). It is important to be able to demonstrate that the content of the Assessment Center represents the job-related behaviours test items are relevant to and that it measures the behaviour, requirements and qualifications it is expected to measure for the specific job (Lowry, 1996).

Content validity is a non-statistical type of validity (Foxcroft and Roodt, 2001). This type of validation requires thoroughly analysing the job to identity the tasks that are performed and the key performance area's (KPA's) that candidates must possess to perform those tasks effectively. The job analysis information is then translated into work sample tasks that mirror the tasks candidates are required to perform on the job (Pulakos, 2005). Content validity is established through a series of expert judgments by a panel of subject experts who evaluate the items during the test construction phase (Cascio and Aguinis, 2005).

Content validity is usually not the most appropriate aspect of validity to establish for aptitude and personality measures, but is a basic requirement for domain-referenced/criterion-referenced and job sample measures (Foxcroft and Roodt, 2001; Lowry, 1996).

A concept related to content validity is face validity. Face validity means that the contents of an assessment tool appear to be related to performance at a given job (Klimosky and Brickner, 1987). For example, in-basket exercises (simulations) have very high face validity because they include tasks that closely resemble those faced on the job.

Face validity however is not valid in psychometric terms as it refers not to what the assessment measures, but to what it appears to measure (Foxcroft and Roodt, 2001). When measurement procedures are being used to help make decisions about individuals, face validity may be an issue of signal importance because it affects the candidates' motivation and reaction to the procedure (Cascio and Aguinis, 2005).

3.6.2.1. **Factors influencing content validity**

The Job Analysis process is a critical element in effective assessment center development and validation processes. Well-developed Assessment Centers pay close attention to matching dimensions with information gained through thorough job analysis, and content validity is heavily dependent upon this information. Inadequate job analyses, as well as the use of out-dated job analyses will have a direct impact on content validity, lowering validity on all dimensions assessed. (Caldwell et al., 2003).

The experts and the role of expert judgment in confirming content validity ultimately has the biggest influence on content validity. Their knowledge, perceptions and confirmation forms the base for establishing content validity (Cascio and Aguinis, 2005).

Furthermore, if the content of the procedure is valid but appears irrelevant, inappropriate or silly, the result will be poor regardless of the technical superiority of the assessment procedure. To be sure, if the candidates' performance is likely to be affected by the content of the assessment, then, if at all possible, select a procedure with high face validity. (Cascio and Aguinis, 2005).

3.6.3. **Construct Validity**

One of the biggest concerns regarding Assessment Centers these days is the challenge to prove the construct validity of Assessment Centers (Howard, 1997). The construct validity of a measure is the extent to which it measures the theoretical construct or trait it is supposed to measure (Foxcroft and Roodt, 2001).

Construct validation is a process of gathering evidence to support the use of a test as a measure of a construct, demonstrating that the test measures the construct it claims to measure, and that this construct is important to successful performance on the job (Lowry, 1996; Shore et al., 1990). Construct-related evidence should provide a framework which specifies the meaning of the construct, distinguishes it from other constructs, and indicates how measures of the construct should relate to other variables (Cascio and Aguinis, 2005).

Shore et al. (1990), Winfred et al. (2002) and Winfred et al. (2003) provide strong evidence for the convergent and discriminant validity of Assessment Center dimension

ratings. Older research, such as Reilly et al. (1990) among others, report that there is a consistent lack of evidence in support of the construct validity of dimensions.

A lack of discriminant validity poses no practical problems for selection, but people need accurately rated dimensions if they are to guide development, an important task related to performance management in modern organisations (Howard, 1997).

Before the discussion continues, it is important to note the variety of terms used to name that which an Assessment Center tries to measure. Some authors (Foxcroft and Roodt, 2001) refer to it as variables; others (Cascio and Aguinis, 2005) call it traits; Pulakos (2005) calls it competencies and Lowry (1996) among others, calls it constructs. Most authors (Howard, 1997; Reilly et al., 1990; Shore et al., 1990; Winfred et al., 2003 and Winfred, Woehr and Maldegen, 2000) on the subject of Assessment Center validity however refer to that which is measured as dimensions. For the purposes of the following discussion the word 'dimensions' will be used. A dimension refers to a cluster of behaviours that can be defined and observed with consistency. A well-defined dimension includes a statement of the behaviors that make up the dimension, the conditions under which the behaviours are demonstrated, and the level of effectiveness on the dimension expected of someone in the target job (Caldwell et al., 2003).

Criterion-related, content, and construct validity strategies are not easily distinguishable from one another (Shore et al., 1990). Neither content – nor criterion-related validity strategies have as their basic objective the understanding of a trait or construct that an assessment measure. Content-related evidence is concerned with the extent to which items cover the intended domain, and criterion-related evidence is concerned with the empirical relationship between a predictor and a criterion (Cascio and Aguinis, 2005).

Construct validation is not accomplished in a single study and requires an accumulation of evidence derived from many different sources (Foxcroft and Roodt, 2001). Several approaches may be used to study the construct validity of Assessment Centers (Shore et al., 1990). Two main techniques to determine construct validity are; factor analysis (Howard, 1997) where dimensions are clustered together based on similarities; and the multitrait-multimethod matrix approach. Within this framework,

dimensions serve as traits, and exercises are the methods. Several other techniques exist of which the findings will be discussed in the next section.

Winfred et al. (2000) demonstrated an application of generalisability theory to examining the convergent and discriminant validity of Assessment Center dimensional ratings and found that person, dimension and person by dimension effects contribute large proportions of variance to the validity in Assessment Center ratings.

3.6.3.1.   Factors influencing construct validity
3.6.3.1.1.   Dimensions

- Amount of dimensions -
Construct validity improved when fewer but more observable dimensions were selected to be used (Howard, 1997). In fact, Shore et al. (1990) found that assessors typically do not utilise more than a few (e.g., three to seven) dimensions in arriving at overall assessment ratings, and that between two and four factors typically underlie assessor's ratings. Winfred et al. (2003) confirm these findings and states that practitioners does not need as many dimensions as have typically been used, especially in light of the large possible dimension intercorrelations in the use of Assessment Centers.

The results of research conducted by Shore et al. (1990) provide evidence for the construct validity of two categories of final dimension ratings in an Assessment Center, interpersonal- and performance-style dimension categories. Some assessment dimensions also correlated more highly with conceptually similar personality factors than with dissimilar factors.

- Dimension focus -
When the focus of measures is on the important and most relevant domains, it would lead to an increase in the construct validity of Assessment Centers. Only subtle chances in construct validity will occur on dimensions related to the same theme (Howard, 1997). Reilly et al. (1990) also found that focusing on the various essential domains improved the pattern of convergent and discriminant validity, with convergent validity slightly higher than discriminant validity.

- Dimensions defined -

Reilly et al. (1990) contend that definitions of dimensions that are written in general terms and that are not clearly related to the operational definitions explain why within-exercise correlations for different dimensions are higher than across-exercise correlations for the same dimensions. Without clear operational definitions it is left to the already cognitively overburdened assessors to decide which behaviors belong to each dimension. Dimensions should therefore be clearly and unambiguously defined (Howard, 1997), and it is essential that assessors follow those agreed-upon definitions (Reynolds and Consentino, 2003).

This problem is complicated further as some behaviours overlap and belong to more than one dimension. Inconsistency or errors in categorisation will further contribute to poor convergent and discriminant validity. (Reilly et al., 1990).

- Increase the discrimination of dimensions -

Construct validity increase as Assessment Center practitioners employ methods that have been shown to increase the discrimination between dimensions. Such methods include reducing the number of dimensions to be scored, using psychologists and human resource professionals as assessors rather than managers, having assessors make within-dimension ratings instead of within-exercise ratings, and training assessors using scientific-frame-of-reference techniques. (Winfred et al., 2003).

- Exercises and dimension overlap -

Poor discriminant validity can be related to an overlap of measurable dimensions along different exercises, for example, a candidate with an independent work preference might be a good autonomous decision maker, but when decision making skills is measured in a Leaderless group exercise this skill might not come into play (Joiner, 2002). Also, exercises in an Assessment Center do not allow enough dimension-related behaviors to be observed by assessors to make valid ratings of individual dimensions and provide little evidence as to the number or frequency of behaviors that are elicited (Reilly et al., 1990)

It is therefore important to include various different exercises in the Assessment Center in order to provide the opportunity to measure the various dimensions which the Assessment Center is supposed to measure, increasing construct validity

(Goldstein et al., 1998). Using different assessments increases overall accuracy and contributes to assessment fairness (Reynolds and Consentino, 2003).

3.6.3.1.2.   Ratings

- The process of rating -

Winfred et al. (2003) implicates the level of covariation in assessor ratings on assessees' performance as causing difficulties in demonstrating construct validity. Ways to overcome covariation and increase construct validity is to provide specificity and structure by identifying key behaviors on which to focus ratings, and to use behaviour checklists (Howard, 1997).

Reilly et al. (1990) established that assessor use of behavior checklists increased the average convergent validity and decreased the average discriminant validity. In a more recent study conducted by Howard (1997), convergent validity improved significantly from .24 to .43 and discriminant coefficients declined slightly from .47 to.41, proving the use of checklists as a valid means to standardise assessor observations.

Key behaviors (also called key actions) are an alternative to checklists (Howard, 1997). Approximately three to eight key behaviors characterise a dimension, enough to add structure and reliability but not so many that they distract assessors. Unlike checklists, which focus on frequency, they capture both the quality and quantity of relevant actions and offer structure to events or behaviors that lead up to an outcome. Key behaviors may offer the best hope for cleaner and more precise dimension ratings. (Howard, 1997)

Advanced inquiry into their (Reilly et al., 1990) initial results suggested that appropriately categorised, observed behaviors influence dimension ratings, especially when assessors have adequate opportunity to observe behavior relevant to the dimension being evaluated.

- Within-exercise ratings vs. across-exercise ratings -

Klimosky and Brickner (1987) found that construct validity increased when dimensions were rated after a sufficient amount of credible behavioral evidence was obtained. It is however important to keep in mind is that it may happen during integration sessions

that assessors base their final dimension ratings on only one convincing exercise and discount those 'sufficient' other dimensions, or the lack of those dimensions, reflected in other exercises, causing detrimental effects for construct as well as criterion-related validity (Howard, 1997).

In their literature review, Reilly et al. (1990) reports that there is a consistent lack of evidence in support of the construct validity of dimensions and that the majority of research on the topic found evidence that within-exercise correlations for different dimensions were higher than across-exercise correlations for the same dimensions. Shore et al. (1990) provide evidence for convergent and discriminant validity of dimensions along within-exercise and across-exercise dimension ratings. Their results are in contrast to the general lack of support found in previous studies of the construct validity of within-exercise dimension ratings. Shore et al. (1990) suggest several explanations for this contrast:

within-exercise ratings may be affected by the characteristics of a particular assessment exercise, which may cause fluctuations in assessee behavior over the course of the assessment center, lowering estimates of convergent validity

the amount of behavioural evidence generated by a particular exercise relevant to a given dimension may be rather limited. By contrast, final dimension ratings are based on an accumulation of evidence across a set of exercises.

within-exercise dimension ratings are subject to rating errors and biases of a particular assessor.

- Collapsing the dimension ratings into an overall Assessment Center score -
The use of overall Assessment Center scores does not only influence criterion-related validity, but also results in a loss of construct-related information (Winfred et al., 2003). Consequently, it is conceptually unclear what an overall assessment center score represents as the specificity related to the nature of different dimensions are lost.

Overall Assessment Center scores influences construct validity in a number of ways:

- It results in comparisons made between dimensions of different Assessment Centers that are not the same and should not be compared. For example, some Assessment Centers may focus more on cognitive abilities whereas others focus on problem solving skills. Comparing the composite Assessment Center scores of

the two centers are neither scientifically, nor conceptually, very meaningful or informative.

- It results in an improper comparison of Assessment Centers that uses different measures, comparing the validity of a single dimension (e.g., cognitive ability or decision making) to that of an aggregate of constructs (i.e., multiple assessment center dimensions).

- It leads to misleading validity statements as some Assessment Center dimensions may be more predictive of job performance than others.

(Winfred et al., 2003)

3.7.   The Assessor

There are considerable demands placed on assessors (Foxcroft and Roodt, 2001). They may be required to rate two or three assessees on multiple dimensions. In order to make these ratings assessors must observe and recall behaviours for each assessee and then categorise these behaviours into relevant dimensions, creating space for subjective error. (Reilly et al., 1990).

The validity and reliability of ratings will furthermore be negatively influenced when assessors are not thoroughly trained in the competencies to be rated, in standards, in use of scales, and in the intricacies of particular assessment techniques (Reynolds and Consentino, 2003).

3.8.   Multi-rater Assessments

Today a new competitor to Assessment Centers is the multi-rater assessment, which has similarities to the Assessment Center method but differ substantially in behaviors observed, characteristics of observers, and types of observations (Howard, 1997).

Howard, (1997) further states the following:

- measures perceptions of skill usage in the natural work environment, focusing on the current assignment that the individual is working on.
- usually receive no special training for their task having a negative impact on construct validity as they are susceptible to distortion of their ratings because

they are familiar with the person being rated and might experience difficulty remaining objective in their judgments.

- often do not have pooled dimensions structuring their observations, and must consider a wide variety of frequently irrelevant behaviours extending over long periods of time.
- must rely on their memories of behaviours they might have observed when there were many competing demands on their time.

It is obvious from the discussion in the previous section that the combination of a lack of training, susceptibility to bias, and unfocused observations of multi-raters giving similar ratings across dimensions will impact directly on the construct validity of their assessments. (Howard, 1997).

3.9. Influencing construct validity directly

Howard (1997) reports that several attempts have been made to increase the construct validity of Assessment Centers directly by:

- changing definitions of dimensions or adding ambiguous definitions to the dimensions, for example, motives – to – need for advancement.
- Adjusting assessment ratings in order to rid them of halo and other inaccuracies.

A last issue related to construct validity is the findings of several researchers, (Cascio and Aguinis, 2005; Howard, 1997; Shore et al., 1990; Reilly et al., 1990) indicating that it is possible that Assessment Center dimensions display content-related and criterion-related validity, but not construct-related validity. Winfred et al. (2000) provides two explanations for this:

- Assessment Center procedures, implementation and other methodological factors may add measurement error that prevents appropriate convergent and discriminant validities from being obtained.
- Assessment Centers may be measuring constructs other than those originally intended by the assessment center designers, suggesting that the lack of convergent and discriminant validity is not attributable to measurement error, but instead to miss-specification.

- That a given performance dimension may be more observable in some exercises than in others.

3.10. Other factors influencing the validity of Assessment Centers

The location of the Assessment Center can influence validity when measuring job performance, as Schmitt and Schneider (1990) found that Assessment Centers developed to serve a specific district showed lower validities than Assessment Centers adapted to serve several districts.

Goldstein et al. (1998) found that subgroup differences (black vs. white participants) influences Assessment Center validity, and that subgroup differences appeared to be a function of the cognitive component of Assessment Centers. They argue that the validity of some Assessment Center exercises in predicting job performance is based, in part, on their cognitive component. They established that the magnitude of differences in Assessment Center validities resulting from subgroup differences is dependent on the assessment methodology used. (Goldstein et al., 1998).

'Subtle' criterion contamination, a concept researched by Klimosky and Brickner (1987) also affects Assessment Center validity. Their reasoning is based on the fact that a great deal of evidence for the validity of Assessment Centers is based on the predictions of performance that ensure good performance on a specific job (Klimosky and Brickner, 1987). They propose that, instead of looking for behavioural evidence of specific traits or personal qualities, those dimensions created for the center, Assessment Center staff in fact observe and evaluate candidates on what they think (subjective judgments) is needed to get selected or promoted in a specific job (Reynolds and Consentino, 2003).

Changes in validity has been linked to changes that have occurred in organisations regarding the requirements of functioning as a successful performer (Caldwell et al., 2003), as well as the changing nature of managerial work, new demands on leaders and new applications of assessments or the uses of Assessment Centers (Howard, 1997).

Another concept that is critical to understand in order to evaluate Assessment Centers is adverse impact. Adverse impact can occur against protected demographic groups,

such as South Africa's black-and-white groups, male-and-female groups (Pulakos, 2005). Adverse impact results in a disproportionately small number of individuals in a protected group versus the majority group being selected for a job, or evaluated as better performers (Schmitt and Schneider, 1990). It is important to know how to interpret the effect of size (or group difference in standard deviation units), because these numbers should be reported when establishing validity and reliability (Pulakos, 2005).

Many of the Assessment Centers that produce the highest levels of validity also produce the highest levels of adverse impact, especially such assessments that assess candidates' abilities to perform technical aspects of a job (Pulakos, 2005)

It is important to understand the differences between validity and reliability. Validity concerns how good an assessment is for a particular situation, whereas reliability is concerned with the trustworthiness of the assessment. (Cascio and Aguinis, 2005).

3.11. **Assessment Center Reliability**

Reliability refers to how dependently and consistently a test measures what it measures (Lowry, 1996; Foxcroft and Roodt, 2001; Schmitt and Schneider, 1990). Before embarking on measurement by using an Assessment Center, it is important to determine if its reliability is acceptable (Lowry, 1996). There are several types of reliability estimates (Cascio and Aguinis, 2005; Foxcroft and Roodt, 2001; Lowry, 1996), which are:

Test-retest reliability – indicates the repeatability of test scores with the passage of time, reflecting the stability of the characteristic or construct being measured. Thornton (1992) found that some dimensions in an Assessment Center are more stable than others in that, for example, a person's administrative skill are more stable over a particular period of time than that individual's work preference style.
Alternate or parallel form reliability – indicates how consistent test scores are likely to be if a person takes two or more forms of a test. High parallel form reliability coefficient indicates that the different forms of the test are very similar for example, Technical skill batteries, whereas a low parallel form reliability coefficient suggests that the different forms are probably not comparable, they may be measuring different

things and therefore cannot be used interchangeably, for example different simulation exercises for the same job level (Winfred et al., 2000).

Inter-rater reliability – indicates how consistent test scores are likely to be if two or more raters score the test. Differences in judgments among raters are likely to produce variations in test scores (Howard, 1997).

Internal consistency reliability – indicates the extent to which items on a test, or dimensions in Assessment Center exercises measure the same thing. Joiner (2002) found that some items related to the same dimension sometimes measures different dimensions all together, but also that some dimensions measured in one exercise in an Assessment Center actually overlaps with another.

All types of reliability estimates are concerned with the degree of consistency or agreement between two sets of independently derived scores (Cascio and Aguinis, 2005). The reliability of an assessment is indicated by the reliability coefficient "r" ranging between 0 and 1.00, with r = 0 indicating no reliability, and r = 1.00 indicating perfect reliability (Lowry, 1996).

3.11.1. **Factors that influence reliability**

Reliability of a measurement procedure refers to its freedom from unsystematic errors of measurement (Cascio and Aguinis, 2005). There are several sources of errors of measurement and the degree to which assessment scores are unaffected by measurement errors is an indication of the reliability of the test (Lowry, 1996). These sources include:

- The participant's temporary psychological or physical state – differing levels of anxiety, fatigue, motivation or familiarity with the content of the questions.
- Environmental factors – temperature, noise and even the assessment administrators.
- Test form – many tests have more than one version or form which are designed to have similar measurement characteristics, but contain different items. A individual might do better on one form than on another.
- Multiple raters – scoring is determined by a rater's judgments of the assessment performance and responses. Differences in training, experience, and frame of reference among raters can produce different test scores.
- Regional location – whether assessment takes place in the same geographical location or not.

(Cascio and Aguinis, 2005; Lowry, 1996; Reynolds and Cosentino, 2003)

It is also important to note that each of the previously discussed reliabilities is influenced by different sources of measurement error (Foxcroft and Roodt, 2001) impacting directly on the suitability of the specific Assessment Center chosen for measurement. Winfred et al. (2000) provided evidence that Assessment Centers demonstrated considerable reliability in the measurement of individual performance and discriminability of individual performance across dimensions. It is however imperative to review the types of reliability confirmed in the various assessments, how reliability studies were conducted, and the characteristics of the group to be measured when planning to use a specific Assessment Center as performance management measure.

3.12. The Psychological and Ethical issues related to feedback to participants of Assessment Centers

3.12.1. Psychological aspects

In order for any performance management system to be effective, feedback must be provided (Cascio and Aguinis, 2005; Cummings and Worley, 2005; Grobler et al., 2002; Jansen and Vloeberghs, 1999).

Feedback does not guarantee a positive effect on future performance. It is how the feedback is perceived by the individual that determines the success of performance management (Handler and Hunt, 2002). In research conducted by Jansen and Vloeberghs (1999), they observed different reactions to Assessment Center feedback:

- the participant completely neglects the feedback
- the participant only takes positive feedback into account
- the participant is only motivated by negative feedback, resulting in positive experiences when the participant took ownership of the reasons for negative feedback.
- the participant is only interested in feedback which is given by someone who is considered as important (e.g. manager), resulting in a positive experience then they perceived that they were treated with respect, were dealt with in a consistent way, and were regarded as an individual person instead of a number.

They (Jansen & Vloeberghs, 1999) furthermore attributed these reactions to:

- the participant's emotional intelligence
- internal vs. external locus of control
- the participant's performance in the past

Other aspects related to positive acceptance of feedback is increased individual awareness, letting go of negative expectations and misunderstandings, and performance satisfaction (Klimosky and Brickner, 1987). Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006) also found that when participants felt they were given the opportunity to be involved in the design of the Assessment Center, and when their opinions, expectations, needs and individuality were taken into consideration, Assessment Center feedback were well received and positively experienced.

Foxcroft and Roodt (2001) also provide valuable insights into increased motivation due to the developmental nature of feedback, increase in self-confidence when feedback is received from someone with whom they have built a close interpersonal relationship, and how effective feedback can reduce assessment anxiety.

Jansen and Vloeberghs (1999) concluded that feedback obtained in an Assessment Center has a positive effect on job performance, provided that it is detailed, behaviourally specific, and perceived to be useful.

3.12.2. <u>Ethical aspects</u>

According to Cascio and Aguinis (2005:455), "to be ethical is to conform to moral standards or to conform to the standards of conduct of a given profession or group". Organisational ethics refers to generally accepted standards that guide behaviour and other organisational contexts (Peterson and Ferrell, 2005).

Ethical behaviour is not governed by hard-and-fast rules; it involves a general philosophy of human conduct with an emphasis on the determination of right and wrong (Peterson and Ferrell, 2005). Because ethics is not 'black-and-white', many organisations are to follow ethical guidelines, as well as the requirements set out by institutionalised agencies for surveillance of practice (Cascio and Aguinis, 2005). For example, the South African Board for Personnel Practice developed a Code of Professional Conduct where registered members of the human resources profession are obliged to uphold certain standards in their practice, both in the interests of the public and of their calling. These include:

- Conducting themselves at all times in keeping with the dignity, standing and reputation of the profession.
- Doing their work to the best of their ability and so discharging their duties to employers, employees and clients.
- Not undertaking work for which they are inadequately trained or experienced.
- Not canvassing or soliciting for work in an improper way.
- Refraining from presenting themselves or advertising their services immodestly or in any way undermining to the profession.
- Refraining from any conduct arising from malice or negligence that would harm, directly or indirectly, the business, reputation or prospects of any other person or organisation.

- Refusing to disclose confidential information acquired in the course of their professional practice. (In a court of law, professional confidence may be breached only under protest and at the direction of the presiding officer).
- Always obeying the rules and conventions, as prescribed by the Board, in their professional life.

(South African Board for Personnel Practice)

Such a Code serves to set standards of behaviour with respect to clients, colleagues, and the public in general by regulating inappropriate behaviour and promoting optimal behaviour (Voskuijl and Evers, 2007).

Cascio and Aguinis (2005) states that among the social and behavioural science disciplines, psychologists have the most richly developed and documented ethical guidelines and are expected to abide by guidelines, standards and obligations related to their profession, those who are evaluated, their employers and the implementation of corporate ethics. Foxcroft and Roodt (2001) go further and specify certain practical and ethical considerations to be taken into account when feedback is given on assessment results. The main considerations are those related to:

- Confidentiality – none of the aspects related to the test-taker may be discussed or shared with anyone without their consent, and the professional has to take responsibility for whatever action is taken, always remembering that serving the best interests of the test-taker is paramount.
- Accountability – the psychologist is at all times accountable for the way in which assessment measures are used and interpretations that are made, as well as for protecting the security of test results.

Beyond these considerations, the following is also important:

- Assessment Center practitioners should guard against invasion of privacy;
- Respect participant's right to know what is expected of them;
- Treat participants with respect and consideration;
- Protect participants from possible negative consequences of the assessment.

(Cascio and Aguinis, 2005; Peterson and Ferrell, 2005; Voskuijl and Evers, 2007)

Chapter Four: The Accelerated Development Programme

The information for this chapter is adapted from Kleinhans (2005) and on information obtained from the organisation.

4.1.   Scope

This procedure, Accelerated Development Programme (ADP), applies to all employees (excluding broad band 6 and 7) with special emphasis on targeted designated groups. If candidates as per employment equity targets cannot be obtained internally, then external candidates will be recruited.

4.2. Objectives

- To support and encourage the quick, effective development and empowerment of identified employees.

- To support and encourage the quick, effective development and empowerment of identified externally recruited candidates selected to enhance the Hillside Employment Equity targets with special emphasis on targeted designated individuals.

- To provide necessary competencies for all those involved in this process.

- To have a transparent process for identifying, selecting and developing employees with leadership potential.

4.3. Procedure Statements

The Accelerated Development Programme is part of the overall business strategy to ensure a competitive edge by investing in people and realizing their maximum potential for the benefit of the company and the individual. The company binds itself to providing opportunities for learning to selected candidates. These candidates are expected to achieve all required company and individual outcomes.

4.4.   Organisational design

Figure 4.1 depicts the organogram of the organisation from this diagram one can see that the organisation has a flat structure and consists of two employee groups, namely leadership and specialists teams (LST) and operations maintenance expertise teams (OMET).

Differentiation is on the basis of the job title and focus area of the positions. LST positions are classified as professionals and team leaders, whereas OMET positions are classified as technical and maintenance. Each employee group makes a contribution in terms of the above-mentioned areas.

According to the Hay methodology of broad banding and job analysis, five levels can be distinguished from general manager to operator. For each position, a minimum qualification has been determined.

All positions are linked to minimum qualifications, years of experience required, key performance areas, and behavioural competency profiles.

Figure 4.1. Example of organisational organogram
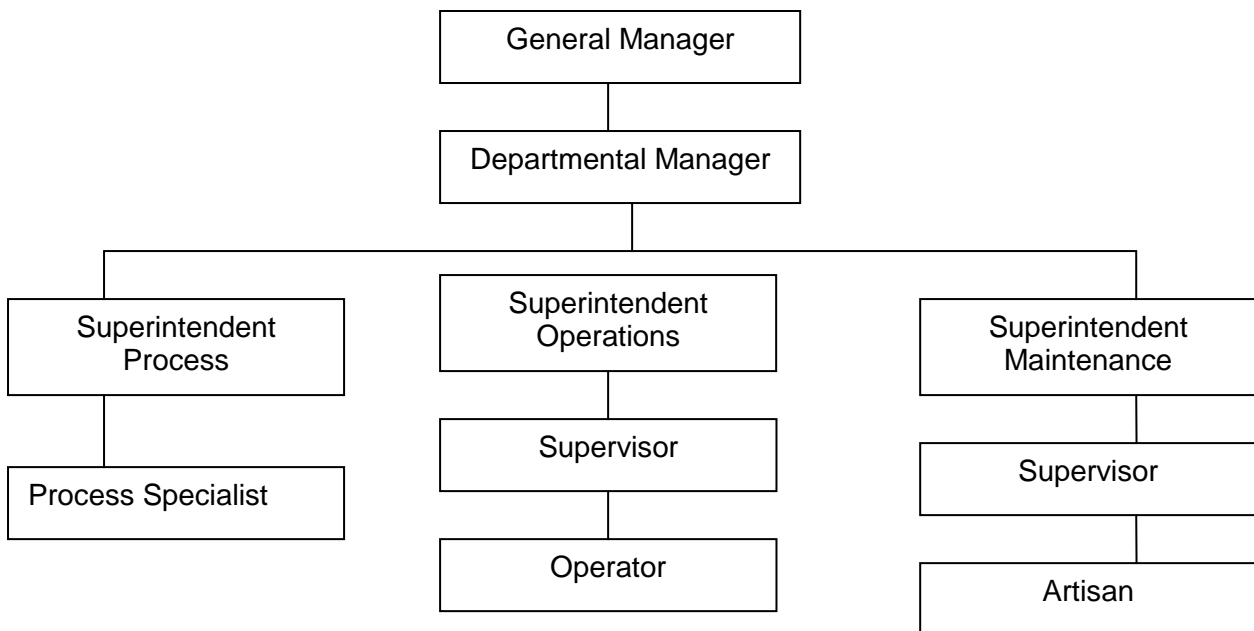
4.5. <u>Training and development in the organisation</u>

The organisational key performance measures in the past tended to focus mainly on training and the enhancement of organisational skills levels in a mechanistic fashion. There was little focus on the evaluation of the effectiveness of the training that had taken place in relation to achieving organisational goals. The organisation moved to a flatter organisation structure resulting in a greater need for a competent and skilled workforce. The following benefits were foreseen with the implementation of skills-based pay system: an improvement of competencies plant-wide; a homogeneous and better equipped workforce,

promotion from within, facilitation of multi-skilling, establishing a learning organisation culture, portable skills, transparent integrated career path, and equal pay for equal expertise.

A problem area that was identified was that a limited number of operators and artisans were being promoted, because the training system did not favour promotion from within. Increasingly more internal applicants were disillusioned by the fact that the technical skills of this group were regarded as superior, while the behavioural competencies required to function within a higher level position were underdeveloped because of the nature of the skills-based pay system.

One of the aims of the accelerated development training programme is to facilitate movement from one employee group to the next, by developing the competencies and skills of employees who participate in the programme. Another aim is to develop organisational capability through the creation of a learning culture and increased self-awareness in order to develop competencies required to function at the next level of position.

This will increase the organisation's available talent pool, and more employees will be able to move from one level to the next level, limiting external recruitment and minimising recruitment costs.

Figure 4.2. shows the various levels within the organisation as well as the different levels within which accelerated development programmes exist.

Figure 4.2 *ADP intended direction of development*
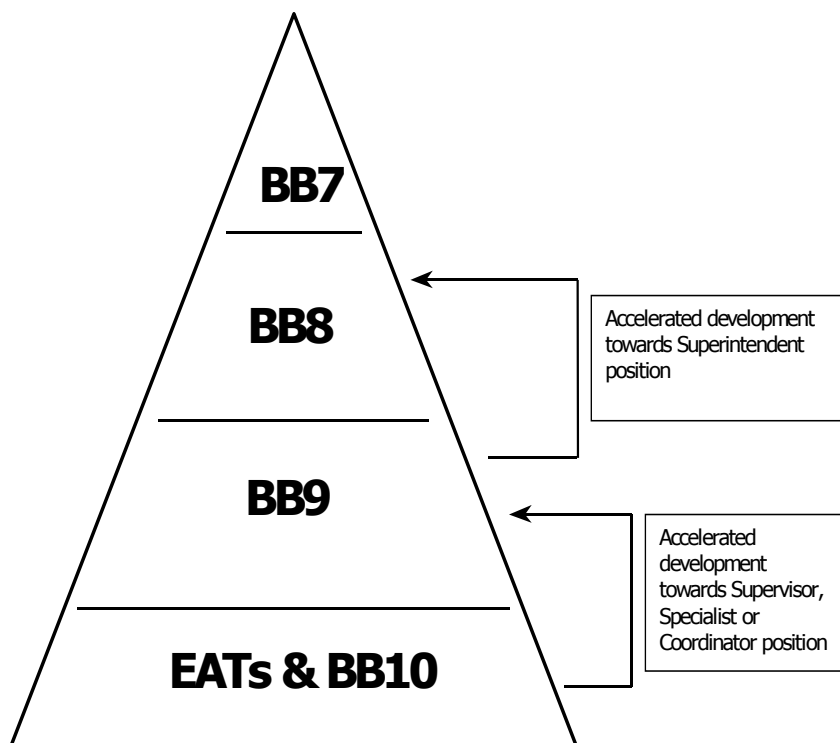
4.6. Design of the Accelerated Development Programme

The accelerated development programme consists of various phases. The focus of the research study is the evaluation of the accelerated development training programme, according to its impact on identified behavioural competencies.

4.6.1. Drafting the development programmes

- The Coordinator Human Resource Development and the Accelerated Development Programme candidate will meet to draft the development plans, as per the guidelines.

- The development programme will be specific to the individual and will focus on 2 main aspects, the first being a focus on business / management skills (based on assessment outcomes) and the second focus on the specific technical skills required by the department. The developmental programme must endeavor to develop the potential of the candidate to perform at a level higher than the candidate's previous position.

- Once the development programme is finalised and approved by the Departmental Manager, it is captured onto the business information system by the coordinator human resource development.

4.6.2. Identification of mentors and coaches

- The human resource development co-ordinator will create a pool of competent mentors for selection by the candidates. The mentors should at least be one level higher than the candidate's current position and not his direct supervisor.

- Any employee possessing the necessary expertise as required by the candidate at a particular time, may assume the role of a coach (preferably his direct supervisor) and will be the person responsible for declaring the candidate competent i.e. pass out from the section.

- The accelerated development programme candidates will meet the Mentorship Steering Committee every third month to review progress against the approved development programmes.

Phase I - Identification and selection of candidates

- The Manager HR will propose and the General Manager approves the number of ADP positions required based on the future manpower requirements of the departments and growth strategy requirements.

- The recruitment of ADP candidates shall be in line with the approved employment equity plan.

- The positions are advertised and candidates interviewed.

- The successful candidates will occupy developmental positions in their departments' organograms – selected as accelerated development programme candidates will move into broad band 10 while selected candidates will remain in their current broad band.

- Accelerated development programme candidates are obliged to abide by the terms and conditions detailed in this procedure.

Phase II – Compiling the full ADP

- The Departmental Coordinator Training is responsible for the compilation of the development programme.

- The compilation of the candidates' individual development plan should adhere to the guidelines.

- It is the responsibility of the ADP candidate to compile a portfolio of evidence based on the individual training programme.

- A list of competent mentors will be made available to all candidates. Coaches and assessors may be identified within the relevant departments.

- The ADP candidates will meet the Mentorship Steering Committee every third month to review progress.

Different types of training methods are used during the programmes. These vary from classroom to experiential learning. Transfer of learning is further enhanced by individual job assignments. On completion of each training module, the participants are required to complete an assignment utilising learning from the module in the workplace.
All the participants are divided into teams and assigned work-related projects.

These groups are referred to as syndicate groups. The participants are assigned to syndicate groups to ensure that individuals from different departments and employee groups are represented in each group.

Workplace topics and relevant problems are integrated into the programme to further enhance the transfer of knowledge and understanding of new concepts in the work environment. This is done during all the modules to ensure not only an increase in knowledge, but also a change in behaviour. Relevant topics are included as part of the project delivery, where a team is assigned a relevant work problem to solve and identify possible solutions and cost savings for the organisation. On completion of this task, the groups present the information to a panel comprising of the general manager and managers in the organisation.

The compilation of the candidates' individual development plan should adhere to the guidelines as presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1. Guidelines for compilation of development plan

SOURCE OF INFORMATION	RECOMMENDATION
Assessments	This is used to identify development areas where the candidate's capabilities are matched against the required job. Strengths, weaknesses and gaps in the candidates' performance are indicated. Training, development or other interventions could be determined using this information. balance the candidates development with behavioural and technical skills. Note: Other interventions could include, but are not limited to, benchmarking, research, interviews etc.
Procedures	Could be used as a library to collate relevant training modules.
Mentorship and Coaching	It is recommended that the candidates meet their mentor on a regular basis. The coach could be any person who is proficient in any specific area as required by the candidate.
Career Aspirations	The candidates' direction of study should be considered in the compilation of their individual plan.
Feedback Meetings	As stipulated in this document, the three-monthly feedback meetings should be adhered to.
Portfolio of Evidence	The candidate must create a portfolio of evidence. This portfolio of evidence should include minutes of meetings, results of assessments and other related information.

Phase III – Implementation

- Each candidate will be issued a new letter of amendment.

- The candidates attend all classroom training identified in their development programme, which will be organised by the Departmental Coordinator Training.

- The accelerated development programme candidates will from time to time act in different positions within the department, relevant to the development programme. This progress from one position to the other will only be allowed once the candidate has demonstrated both competence and proficiency in the previous position.

- The coach / assessor must declare the candidate competent on the various modules outlined in the development plan. Assessments will be conducted in accordance with the guidelines. All declarations of competence must be sent to the human resource development officer for capturing on the business information system.

- Formal feedback sessions will be held every three months with relevant line management. The minutes of these meetings should be filed in the candidates' portfolio of evidence.

- As with all, candidates remuneration packages will be reviewed annually. This review will be based on how the candidates performed with respect to their development programmes.

Phase IV Appointment at the completion of ADP

- It is recommended that ADP candidates not be appointed to permanent promotional positions until having spent at least 12 months on the programme.

- Candidates may be seconded to other organisational subsidiaries to further enhance their development before a position becomes available.

- Appointment of candidates is based purely on the availability of positions.

- Those candidates who have successfully completed the process are required to apply for vacant positions that they are interested in. Company management, however, has the prerogative of appointing any ADP candidate who is ready for appointment into a vacant permanent position without necessarily advertising the same position.

- Candidates not meeting the competency and / or qualification requirements after 24 months of being appointed will be removed from the programme to a similar position they occupied prior to joining the programme.

- Candidates who have successfully met the competency and qualification requirements but who cannot be accommodated due to the unavailability of a suitable position, will be removed from the ADP to a similar position they occupied prior to joining the programme. They can apply for any suitable vacancy as and when they occur.

- ADP candidates who have been on the programme for longer than 12 months, who have met the competency requirements for promotion, can be appointed to permanent promotional positions on a probation basis. The probation period is not to be longer than the candidates remaining period on ADP. The probation period is to be used to complete the minimum qualification requirements for the promotional position. Failure to obtain the minimum qualification will result in the candidate being removed from the position as well as the ADP to a similar position they held prior to joining the ADP.

4.8. Content of the ADP

Coaching forms a critical part of the accelerated development training programme.

As part of the design of the programme, the supervisor of the participants play the role of coach. This decision was based on the fact that the supervisor has consistent and daily interaction with the participants of the training programme and is able to give valuable feedback as the individual progresses through the programme.

The content of the accelerated development training programme is based on the competency models used for the organisation. The competency models for each job family was identified using a job analysis method, the work profiling system administered by the consulting firm, SHL (*Work profiling system technical manual*, 1995).

The programme, as the foundation of future learning, enables the participant to decide at a later stage if he or she would choose to focus his or her development on a supervisory or specialist career path. Another aim of the programme is to equip the individual with the required organisational cultural competencies as described in table 4.2. (action orientation, relationship building, delivering quality results, and innovation).

Table 4.2. Identified behavioural competencies

Competency Area	Competency Description
	Leading
Action Orientation	**Action Orientation:** Proactive, self-starting, seizes opportunities and takes responsibility for action. Actively influences events, even if this is outside your specific area of responsibility and drives work activities along. Is solutions driven and focuses on achieving outcomes and ensures that key objectives are met. • Makes things happen • Makes contributions on own initiative • Is focused on meeting objectives • Is proactive • Initiates action when necessary • Takes ownership of own work • Has a sense of responsibility
	Co-operating
Supporting Others	Supporting others **Teamness:** Co-operates and works well with others in the pursuit of organisational objectives and team goals. Shares information. Develops supportive relationships with colleagues and creates a sense of team spirit. • Recognises the value of individual contributions • Shares information with the team • Encourages and gains willing co-operation between team members • Appropriately supports colleagues • Contributes positively to team effort • Appropriately challenges team members • Deals with team conflict effectively
	Communicating
Persuasiveness	Persuasiveness **Impact:** Presents the key points of an argument persuasively coming across assertively and with credibility. Makes an immediate positive impression on others and is able to change their views when required. • Gains willing co-operation • Pitches message at the right level • Is effective in getting ideas across • Handles objections convincingly • Influences people's behaviour • Commands respect and credibility • Understands the personal needs and motives of others
	Analysis
Problem Solving	Problem Solving **Problem Solving:** Identifies and diagnoses problems and finds solutions to them. Isolates problem areas through effective evaluation of available information and facts, solving problems through the use of appropriate knowledge, procedures and techniques. • Probes to gain better understanding • Effective at identifying relevant information. • Stays objective in the analysis of different options • Integrates data from different sources • Evaluates an appropriate number of alternatives before making decisions or recommendations • Draws appropriate conclusions for the situation at hand • Considers all relevant facts • Effectively breaks procedures into logical steps • Asks appropriate questions to solve immediate problems
	Organising
Planning and Organising	**Co-ordinate and Control:** Ensures the efficient co-ordination of activities by effective scheduling and the establishment of clear priorities, organises activities and people to ensure best use of time and resources. • Monitors performance against schedules and priorities. • Ensures the efficient co-ordination of activities against clear priorities • Regularly reviews progress against goals • Anticipates potential problems and pitfalls in area of work to ensure best use of time and resources • Ensures deadlines are met • Takes into account the impact on all parts of the process when planning • Produces comprehensive action plans • Ensures that plans and actions are aligned with disciplinary goals • Plans for related conditions • Matches resources and expected outputs

Source: Organisation, (200b)

Appropriate training modules were identified to address the specific behavioural competencies as mentioned above. These are described in table 4.3.

Table 4.3. Content of training modules of the accelerated development training programme

	Module 1	Module 2	Module 3	Module 4
Name of the Module	Self-management	Relationships (value diversity)	Team development	Organisational understanding (service, quality and business understanding)
Behavioural competency to be developed according to defined competency model	Action orientation Adapting (coping with pressure) Planning and organising Impact & influence	Teamness Impact & influence	Teamness Impact & influence Building and maintaining relationships	Delivering quality results
Other competencies that will be developed that do not form part of the competency model	Self-knowledge Objective setting Development of personal vision	Cultural sensitivity Conflict management	Understanding team dynamics, how to solve team conflict	Business understanding Commercial awareness

Source: Organisation, (2000a)

4.8. Chapter Summary

During this chapter the basic organisational structure as well as the reasons for implementing an ADP are given. A short description of the programme highlights the competencies that the organisation consider as important for individuals to possess in order to be successful at the next level.

Chapter Five: **Research Methodology**

5.1. Research aim

The purpose of this study is to assess the effectiveness of an Accelerated Development Programme within a South African Organisation.

The rationale to execute this research project is to ascertain whether the current ADP is effective in terms of the following competencies: Commercial Awareness, Action Orientation, Planning and Organising, Problem Solving, Supervising, Teamwork and Impact and Influence, and if it includes the correct information as well as sufficient opportunities for the employees to practically apply the skills they have learnt.

5.5. Research variables

The independent variable takes the form of an experimental stimulus which is either present or absent. The independent variable is the cause (Babbie, 1992).

For the purpose of this research, the accelerated development programme is the independent variable.

The dependent variable is the effect. That is if the variable has been affected by the independent variable (Babbie, 1992). The variable may refer to characteristics or attributes of individuals or the conditions to which they are exposed (Huysamen, 1994).

5.6. Type of Research

An experimental research design was adapted in this study. Quantitative methods of data collection were employed. A pre-test / post-test single group design was used. The subjects were measured in terms of a dependent variable (pre-tested), exposed to a stimulus representing an independent variable, and then re-measured in terms of the dependant variable (post-tested). Differences noted between the first and the last measurements are then attributed to the influence of the independent variable (Babbie, 1992).

5.7.   Unit of analysis

The effectiveness of the accelerated development programmeme (ADP) will be evaluated to determine if the programmeme has a significant impact on the identified behavioural competencies as discussed latter in this chapter.   The focus will be the ADP, in order to test the general hypothesis.

5.5.   Validity and reliability

Reliability of measurement has to do with the consistency of the measurement. Of particular concern is whether or not selection tests measures demonstrate consistency (Pett, 1997).   Reliability refers to the extent to which the obtained scores ma be generalised to different measuring occasions, measurement / tests forms and measurement / test administrators (Welman & Kruger, 2003).

Validity has to do with whether or not a test or measuring instrument measures what is supposed to measure. It refers to the kinds of inferences or decisions that can be made based on the strength of the test score. Decision makers using a test with "high" validity may be more confident than those using a test with relatively low validity (Avery & Faley, 1992).

Internal validity is of critical concern to the researcher. Internal validity refers to the causal relationship between the dependent and independent variable. The question arises about whether this relationship can be interpreted as being of a causal nature. The internal validity of a conclusion ascribing changes in the dependent variable to the independent variables involves the degree to which these changes are in fact caused by the latter rather than by other explanations (Huysamen, 1994 & Welman & Kruger, 2003).

5.9.   Formulation of Hypothesis

The following general research hypothesis was stated and tested:

> An accelerated development programme will not have a significant impact on the development of the identified behavioural competencies.

5.10. Sample

For the proposed study a non-probability sample was used. The total number of participants in the ADP was taken as a sample. This sampling strategy has many flaws, but as the results need to be taken at the same time to avoid other threats to internal validity from arising, it is the most appropriate.

The sample has many limitations to the external validity of the study's results. However, since this is an explorative study the external validity is of less concern.

The purpose of explorative research is to see whether a particular phenomenon exists, and not to compare the results with another phenomenon, therefore the threat to external validity, though it does exist, can be disregarded as the results will not be generalized to a larger population.

The sample consisted of fourteen artisans and included six white males and eight black males. Ages of participants varied from 25 to 36 with a minimum qualification equivalent to grade 12.

Table 5.1 - Demographic characteristics

Candidate	Age	Race	Qualification
A	35	White	N5
B	28	White	N6
C	26	Black	N5
D	29	White	N5
E	30	White	N4
F	33	Black	Grade 12
G	36	Black	N6
H	28	White	N6
I	25	Black	N4
J	30	White	N5
K	25	Black	Grade 12
L	33	Black	N6
M	29	Black	N5
N	26	Black	Grade 12

The sample represents a limited selection of two ethnic groups, black and white. The dominant population was black. This is in line with meeting employment equity targets on specialist levels in the organization.

A minimum qualification of grade 12 was used as selection criteria to determine participation in the programme. This is to ensure that only a percentage of the population could gain entry into the specialist levels in the organisation. The minimum qualification requirements for the specialist level are a National diploma or National certificate (N6).

5.8. Data collection procedure

5.8.1. Assessment results

An assessment centre was used to assess the competencies as discussed below. The validity of assessment centres has already been discussed.

5.8.2. Description of the assessment centre

The Assessment Centre makes use of various instruments including: the Personal Profile Assessment instrument (PPA), the 15 FQ+ and a cognitive measurement Instrument the Figure Classification Test (FCT).

These are used in conjunction with an In-basket exercise that is a work based simulation that the candidate has to complete within a given time period in order to determine his / her level of skill development.

The in-basket exercise consists of nine items. The exercise required the participants to deal with a typical set of written materials similar to tasks required in day-to-day functions of specialists. The items range from situations where no actions should be taken, to more complex problems, such as those an employee would face on a daily basis.

The candidates also take part in a Leaderless Group discussion. This ensures that a holistic picture of the candidate is gathered.

The competencies that are measured by the assessment centre are:

- Commercial Awareness - Business skills and knowledge applicable to the specific position and which are required in order to make decisions / plan strategies which will be in the best interests of the unit / organisation.

- Action Orientation – "Making Things happen" - To proactively take action, manage projects, drive change and learn continuously to ensure that the highest standards of performance are met.

- Planning & Organising - Ensures optimum use of time and resources.

- Problem Solving - General Definition: To analyse a situation/problem and identify the core issue prior to recommending or taking a course of action.

- Teamwork – Working Effectively with "People".

- Impact and Influence - The ability to have an impact on and to influence the opinions and behaviour of others and to gain agreement to one's own ideas or projects.

The rating scale:

Ratings are done on a 5-point scale where a <u>3-rating means competent behaviour</u> at a given job level.

- 5 : Superior performance (Competency significantly higher developed that criteria required for successful job performance).

- 4 :Generally exceeds criteria relative to quality and quantity of behaviour required; competency developed to a higher degree than required by the job level in question

- 3 : Competent (Behaviour meets criteria relative to both quality and quantity required).

- 2+ : Just short of the norm (Either quantity or quality of behaviour lacking – indicates good potential).

- 2.5 : Emerging strength (Behaviour was inconsistent with respect to both quantity and quality).

- 2 : Full development (Behaviour does not meet criteria relative to quantity and quality).
- 1+ : Weak (Very little evidence of competency - usually of poor quality).

- 1 -: Very weak (Virtually no evidence of appropriate behaviour).

The ratings are then translated into percentages as follows:

1   = 15%

1+ = 20%

2   = 40%

2.5 = 66%

2+ = 86%

3   = 100%

Table 5.2. The percentages translate into descriptions as follows:

PERCENTAGES	DESCRIPTION
81 Plus	Very well developed
70 – 80	Well developed
61 – 69	Reasonably developed
56 – 60	High Average
45 – 55	Average
40 – 44	Low Average
30 – 39	Weak
Below 30	Very weak

For the purpose of the research, the researcher focused on the use of the in-basket as the pre-test and post-test. The reliability of the in-basket used was 0,7 (Aluco in-basket technical manual, 1997). The validity of the in-basket exercise was (r=0,9). Face validity seemed to be high in terms of job relevance of the custom-designed in-basket.

The high validity indicates that the inferences drawn from the test scores can accurately determine success in a specialist role at the organisation.

5.9. Data analysis

The statistical package (SPSS) was used in all the statistical procedures. The pre-test and post-test data was analysed using the sign test. The sign test, a nonparametric alternative to the t-test for dependent samples, was used to determine if the competency rating (variable) in the pre-test was larger than that of the post-test.

5.11. Discussion of results

The following general research hypothesis was stated and tested: an accelerated development programme (ADP) will not have a significant impact on the development of the identified behavioural competencies. The descriptive statistics ate depicted in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3. Descriptive statistics: pre-test and post-test

	Pre-test		Post-test	
Competency	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation
Commercial Orientation	52.57	15.89	65.14	12.83
Action Orientation	53.42	19.85	59.14	18.80
Planning and Organising	53.85	17.96	67.57	17.52
Problem Solving	57.71	21.00	62.85	17.01
Relationship Building	42.71	18.73	58.14	14.97
Impact and Influence	46.00	18.48	64.71	15.70

The data shows that the reported means for all pre-test are significantly lower than that of the post test.

- Commercial Orientation: 12.57

- Action Orientation: 5.72

- Planning and Organising: 13.72

- Problem Solving: 5.14

- Relationship Building: 15.43

- Impact and influence:18.71

The competency that featured at the higher levels in the pre-test (highest mean score) was problem solving and at the lower levels in the pre-test (lowest mean) Relationship Building. The competency that featured at the higher levels in the post-test (highest mean score) was planning and organising and at the lower levels in the post-test (lowest mean) relationship building.

The data further reflected an increase between the mean for the pre-test and the post-test on all the competencies. This may indicate improvement in the candidates proficiency for all the competencies as well as a significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores.

The sign test was used to determine the significance level. Significance level is the probability with which the researcher is willing to reject the nul hypotheses. The sign test computes the number of times the value of the variable (competencies in pre-test) is larger that that of the second variable (competencies in post-test). Under the general hypothesis (stating that the two variables are not different from each other) one expects this to be the case about 50% of the time (Statica 6.0, 2001). The null hypothesis is rejected when the probability obtained is less than equal to the predetermined significance level (Howell, 1999). The level of sign in terms of the pre-and post testing in indicated in table 5.4.

Table 5.4. Level of Significance: Pre-test and post-test

Competency	Significant Value
Action Orientation Pre & Post	0.015
Planning and Organising Pre & Post	0.125
Problem Solving Pre & Post	0.003
Relationship Building Pre & Post	0.250
Impact and Influence Pre & Post	0.007

From table 5.4. it seems to be evident that there is no relative difference in planning and organising and relationship building. A relative difference was indicated in the following competencies: action orientation, problem solving and impact and influence.

After examining the results of the sign test, it was clear that three of the five dependent variables (competencies), differed statistically significantly namely impact and influence and action orientation and problem solving.

The general hypothesis "an accelerated development programmeme will not have a significant impact on the development of the identified competencies" can thus be rejected. The ADP, based on statistical analysis, did have a significant impact on the development of the identified behavioural competencies. After examining the results it should be noted that the competencies planning and organising and relationship building did not differ significantly statistically.

The learning of each participant was measured to estimate the overall growth in proficiency per competency and in so doing, determine the effectiveness of the ADP, to what extent behaviours did in fact change. By administering an in-basket before and after the ADP, a before and after approach was used. Due to organisational constraints no control group was used during the research.

5.11. **Limitations of the study**

5.11.1. **Pre-test / post-test, no control group design**

The defining characteristic of this design is that it compares a group with itself. In theory, there is no better comparison, since all possible variables associated with characteristics of the subjects are controlled. In practice, however, when the

objective is to measure change, this design is fraught with difficulties, for there are numerous plausible rival hypotheses for observed changes in criterion score (Casio, 1991: 287).

5.11.4. <u>Size of the research sample</u>

According to Aron & Aron (1997) sample size has a major influence on power. Basically the more people in a study, the more power that study has. Sample size influences power because the larger the sample size the smaller the standard deviation of the distribution of means.

In many cases small sample designs lead to the false conclusion that training had no effect, when in fact, use of a more powerful design would produce the opposite conclusion (Arvey et al., 1992).

5.11.5. <u>Isolating the impact of the training programme</u>

Cascio (1991), states that experimental designs are used so that causal inferences can be made, that is, by ruling out alternative plausible explanations for observed changes in criterion behaviour, we want to be able to say that training caused the changes. Unfortunately, most experimental designs and most training studies do not permit the causal arrow to be pointed unequivocally towards training as the explanation for observed results.

Various threats to valid interpretations of findings from research have been identified. In the context of training these may be described as threats, history, maturation, testing, instrumentation, statistical regression, differential selection, experimental mortality, interaction of different selection with training and the reactive effects of the research situation and multiple treatment interferences (Casio, 1991; Goldstein, 1993). According to Cascio (1991), the threats may affect the following:

- Statistical conclusion validity – conclusions about whether a presumed cause and effect covey.

- Internal validity – conclusions about whether changes in one variable caused change in another.

- Construct validity – the possibility that the operational definition of a cause or effect can be constructed in terms of more than one construct.

- External validity - conclusions about the extent to which results can be generalised across populations, settings and times.

5.11.4. Type 1 and Type 11 Error

Bless (1993: 133), states that type one and two errors may occur.

Type 1 error is when the null hypothesis is rejected when it is actually true. The obtained result, although quite extreme and rare, still belongs to the population and is explained by unfortunate but normal sampling variability or other extraneous variables.

Type 11 error is the opposite of the previous error. It involves not rejecting the null hypothesis when it is actually false.

5.12. Recommendations

The following are recommendations for future studies:

- Make use of methods that isolate the impact, for example, using control groups.
- Utilise more than one criterion measure at different strata of evaluation.
- Improve the rigour and reliability of methods used for evaluation (excluding assessment centres).
- Use a more encompassing larger sample size.

5.13. Ethical issues surrounding the study

Permission to use the data was obtained from appropriate members of the organisation. The name of the organisation and data used in the study will be treated with the highest level of confidentiality. Privacy of participants' identity is reserved to ensure non infringement with constitutional right to privacy and the right to be treated with dignity. (See appendix A)

References

Aluco in-basket administrator's manual. (1997). Richards Bay: Profiled Appointments.

Aron, A. & Aron, E.N. (1997). *Statistics for the behavioural and social sciences.* New York: Prentice Hall.

Avery, R.D. & Faley, R.H. (1992). *Fairness in selecting employees*. (2nd ed.). Boston: Addison Wesley.

Babbie, E. (1992). *The practice of social research*. (6th ed). Blemont: Wadsworth.

Bless, C. & Kathuria, R. (1993). *Fundamentals of Social Statistics an African perspective.* Cape Town: Juta and Co, Ltd.

Bolden, R., Gosling, J., Marturano, A & Dennison, P. 2003. *A Review of Leadership Theory and Competency Frameworks: Edited Version of a Report for Case Consulting and the Management Standards Center.* Exeter: University of Exeter.

Byham, W.C., Smith, A.B., & Paese, M.J. 2000. *Grow Your Own Leaders: A New Method of Succession Management.* Pittsburg: DDI Press.

Caldwell, C., Thornton, G.C. & Gruys, M.L. 2003. Ten Classic Assessment Center Errors: Challenges to selection validity, *Public Personnel Management*, 32(1):73 (16p). [Online] Available from: EBSCOHost: Academic Search Premier: http://search.global.epnet.com/ [Accessed: 2007-05-10].

Cascio, W.F. & Aguinis, H. 2005. *Applied Psychology in Human Resource Management*. New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc.

Charan, R., Drodder, S., & Noel, J.L. 2001. *The Leadership Pipeline*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc.

Cripe, E.J. 2002. *The Value-Added Employee: 31 Competencies to Make Yourself Irresistible to Any Company.*. New York: Butterworth-Heinermann

Cummings, T.G. & Worley, C.G. 2005. *Organization Development and Change*. USA: Thomas South-Western.

Daft, R.L. 1999. *Leadership: Theory and Practice*. Orlando: The Dryden Press.

Foxcroft, C. & Roodt, G. 2001. *An Introduction to Psychological Assessment: in the South African context*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Gandossey, R., & Effron, M. 2004. *Leading the Way: Three Truths from the Top Companies for Leaders*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Gebelein, S.H. et al. 2004. *Successful Manager's Handbook.* Minnosota: Personnel Decisions International.

Goldstein, H.W., Yusko, K.P., Braverman, E.P., Smith, D.B. & Chung, B. 1998. The Role of Cognitive Ability in the Subgroup Differences and Incremental Validity of Assessment Center Exercises, *Personnel Psychology*, 51(2):357 (18p). [Online] Available from: EBSCOHost: Academic Search Premier: http://search.global.epnet.com/ [Accessed: 2007-05-17].

Grobler, P.A., Wärnich, S., Carrell, M.R., Elbert, N.F. & Hatfield, R.D. 2002. *Human Resource Management in South Africa* (2nd ed). London: Thomson Learning.

Handler, C. & Hunt, S. 2003. Estimating the Financial Value of Staffing-Assessment Tools, *Workforce Management*, March 2003. [Online] Available from: http://www.workforceonline.com. [Accessed: 2007-05-05].

Howard, A. 1997. A reassessment of assessment centers: Challenges for the 21st century, *Journal of Social Behavior & Personality*, 12(5):13 (40p). [Online] Available from: EBSCOHost: Academic Search Premier: http://search.global.epnet.com/ [Accessed: 2007-05-17].

Howell, D.C. (1999). *Fundamental statistics for the behavioural sciences* (4th ed.). Pacific Grove, Ca: Brooks/Cole.

Huysamen, G.K. (1994). *Methodology for the social and behavioural sciences.* Halfway House: Thomson.

Jansen, P. & Vloeberghs, D. 1999. Multi-Rater Feedback Methods: personal and organizational implications, *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 14(6):455-476. [Online] Available from: Emerald: http://www.emeraldinsight. com [Accessed: 2007-05-29].

Johnson, D.W. & Johnson, F.P. 2006. *Joining Together: Group Theory and Group Skills* (9th ed.)*.* Boston: Pearson Education Inc.

Joiner, B., & Josephs, S. 2007. *Leadership Agility: Five Levels of Mastery for Anticipating and Initiating Change*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Joiner, D.A. 2002. Assessment Centers: What's new?, *Public Personnel Management*, 31(2):179 (7p). [Online] Available from: EBSCOHost: Academic Search Premier: http://search.global.epnet.com/ [Accessed: 2007-05-17].

Kaplan, R.S. & Norton, D.P. 1996. *The Balanced Scorecard*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business Press.

Kleinhans, E.K. 2005. *The Evaluation of an Accelerated Development Training Programme.* University of South Africa.

Klimosky, R. & Brickner, M. 1987. Why do Assessment Centers Work? The puzzle of Assessment Center Validity, *Personnel Psychology*, 40(2):243-260. [Online] Available from: EBSCOHost: Academic Search Premier: http://search.global.epnet.com/. [Accessed: 2007-05-17].

Lee-Kelley, L. 2002. Situational Leadership: Managing the virtual project team. *Journal of Management Development*, 21(6):461-476. [Online] Available from: http://www.emeraldinsight.com/10.1108/02621710210430623. [Downloaded: 2007-03-27].

Lewis, G. 1996. *The mentoring Manager strategies for fostering talent and spreading knowledge.* Great Britain: Pitman Publishing.

Lowry, P.E. 1996. A Survey of the Assessment Center Process in the Public Sector, *Public Personnel Management*, 25(3):307-322. [Online] Available from: EBSCOHost: Academic Search Premier: http://search.global.epnet.com/ [Accessed: 2007-05-03].

Nieman, G. & Bennett, A. 2002. *Business management a value chain approach.* Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Nicol, D.J. & Macfarlane-Dick, D. 2006. Formative Assessment and Self-regulated Learning: a model and seven principles of good feedback practice, *Studies in Higher Education*, 31(2):199-218. [Online] Available from: EBSCOHost: Academic Search Premier: http://search.global.epnet.com/ [Accessed: 2007-05-28].

Peterson, R.A. & Ferrell, O.C. 2005. *Business Ethics: New challenges for business schools and corporate leaders.* New York: M.E. Sharp, Inc.

Pett, M.A. (1997). *Nonparametric statistics or health care research.* London: Sage Publications

Power, P.G. 2003. Leadership for Tomorrow: Once more, with feeling. *MT Eliza Business Review*, Summer/Autumn: 43-49. [Online] Available from: http://www.hcmglobal.biz/pdf/leadershipfor.pdf. [Downloaded: 2007-03-27]

Pulakos, E.D. 2005. *A guide to implementing formal assessments to build a high-quality workforce.* Alexandria: SHRM Foundation.

Reilly, R.R., Henry, S. & Smither, J.W. 1990. An Examination of the Effects of using Behavior Checklists on the Construct Validity of Assessment Center Dimensions, *Personnel Psychology*, 43(1):71 (14P). [Online] Available from: EBSCOHost: Academic Search Premier: http://search.global.epnet.com/ [Accessed: 2007-05-10].

Reynolds, D. & Cosentino, C. 2003. The Strategic Value of Assessment: Building business advantage with accurate information about people, *Development Dimensions International*.

Robbins, S.P. 2001. *Organisational Behaviour.* New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc.

Rothwell, W.J. 2005. *Effective Succession Planning ensuring leadership continuity and building talent from within.* USA: Amacom.

Sadler, P. 2003. *Leadership* (2nd ed.). USA: Kogan Page Ltd.

Sanger, M. 1998. Supporting the Balanced Scorecard, *Work Study*, 47(6):197 (4p). [Online] Available from: Emerald: http://www.emeraldinsight. com [Accessed: 2007-05-28].Statistica 6.0 [computer software]. (2001). USA: Statsoft Inc.

Schmitt, N. & Schneider, J.R., 1990. Factors Affecting Validity of a Regionally Administered Assessment Center*, Personnel Psychology*, 1943(1):1 (12p). [Online] Available from: EBSCOHost: Academic Search Premier: http://search.global.epnet.com/ [Accessed: 2007-05-10].

Shore, T.H., Thornton, G.C. & McFarlane Shore, L. 1990. Construct Validity of two Categories of Assessment Center Dimension Ratings, *Personnel Psychology*, 43(1):101 (16p). [Online] Available from: EBSCOHost: Academic Search Premier: http://search.global.epnet.com/ [Accessed: 2007-05-10].

South African Board for Personnel Practice*, Code of Professional Conduct*. [Online] Available from: http://www.sabpp.co.za [Accessed: 2007-05-10].

Spychalski, A.C., Quinones, M.A., Gaugler, B.B. & Pohley, K. 1997. A Survey of Assessment Center Practices in Organizations in the United States, *Personnel Psychology*, 50(1):71 (20p). [Online] Available from: EBSCOHost: Academic Search Premier: http://search.global.epnet.com/ [Accessed: 2007-05-10].

Tarplett, P. 2004. *Leadership: Current Thinking and How it Developed.* [Online] Available from: http://www.opm.co.uk/download/papers/newLeadership_ Current_thinking.pdf. [Accessed: 2007-03-27].

Thornton, G. C. 1992. *Assessment Centers in Human Resource Management*. Reading: Addison-Wesley.

Ting, S & Scisco P. 2006. *Handbook of coaching a guide for the leader coach.* USA: Jossey-Bass.

Voskuijl, O. & Evers, A. 2007. Tensions between the Prescriptive and Descriptive Ethics of Psychologists, *Journal of Business Ethics*, 72(3):279-291. [Online] Available from: EBSCOHost: Academic Search Premier: http://search.global.epnet.com/ [Accessed: 2007-05-28].

Watt, B. 2007. Leading *the Past. Preparing the Future*. [Online] Available from: http://www.ddiworld.com/pdf/au_LeadingthePast_researchreport.pdf. [Accessed: 2007-03-27].

Wellman, J.C. & Kruger, S.J. (2003). *Research Methology* (2nd ed.).South Africa: Oxford

West, L. & Milan, M. 2001. *The reflecting glass professional coaching for leadership development.* New York: Palgrave.

Winfred, A., Day, E.A., McNelley, T.L. & Edens, P.S. 2003. A Meta-Analysis of the Criterion-Related Validity of Assessment Center Dimensions, *Personnel Psychology*, 56(1):125 (30p). [Online] Available from: EBSCOHost: Academic Search Premier: http://search.global.epnet.com/ [Accessed: 2007-05-10].

Winfred, A., Woehr, D.J. & Maldegen, R. 2000. Convergent and Discriminant Validity of Assessment Center Dimensions: A conceptual and empirical re-examination of the Assessment Center construct-related validity paradox, *Journal of Management*, 26(4):813-835. [Online] Available from: http://jom.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/ 26/4/813 [Downloaded: 2007-05-10].