

## 4 CHAPTER 4

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### A MEANINGFUL WORKPLACE

#### AN EMERGING PRACTICE ORIENTATED CONSTRUCT

#### (THE APPLICABILITY DIMENSION)

#### **A perspective based on three empirical perspectives**

*The purpose of Chapter 4 is to investigate from three practical/empirical perspectives, whether the construct A **meaningful workplace**, as described in the previous chapter, exist in the mindset of employees. Three empirical perspectives are investigated to ascertain whether the construct: **meaningful workplace** has a “footprint” in organizational practice. Perspective 1: The CRF Institutes’ annual research on “The Best Company to Work for’. Perspective 2: Report on: Reasons why employees voluntary leave a company when given the opportunity to do so; Perspective 3: repertory Grid data*

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## 4.1 INTRODUCTION

Does the construct **meaningful workplace** have a “footprint” in organizational practice? If, as is assumed, the construct does have a footprint in the practice of organizational life, it is bound to become *visible or audible* in the voice of employees. The question is: Can we hear the voice of employees in respect of their perspectives regarding the **meaningful workplace**, and if so how is this possible? The only way to *hear the* voice of employees regarding the **meaningful workplace** is to investigate this possibility by means of data that will provide a voice, or at least an indication of the tenets that have already been identified in Chapter 3. In this chapter three empirical datasets will be utilised to determine whether the construct: A **meaningful workplace** has a footprint in the practice of Organizational Life, or at least, whether the dimensions that have already been identified find some form of resonance with the practice of organizational life. This approach requires an explanation.

For the purpose of this chapter three datasets which most probably reflect the voice of employees in an organizational setting is utilised to ascertain whether the tenets of the construct: **Meaningful workplace** become audible in the voice of employees. The first set of data comprises information gleaned from “Best Employer” to work for, specifically in the South African context. The Corporate Research Foundation (CRF) bestows the title “Best Company to work for” on those companies who comply with a set of standardised requirements for such an award. This reward is awarded on annual basis by the CRF based on research that is conducted within the framework of research that was conducted by the Institute and has apparently stood the test of time in this regard.

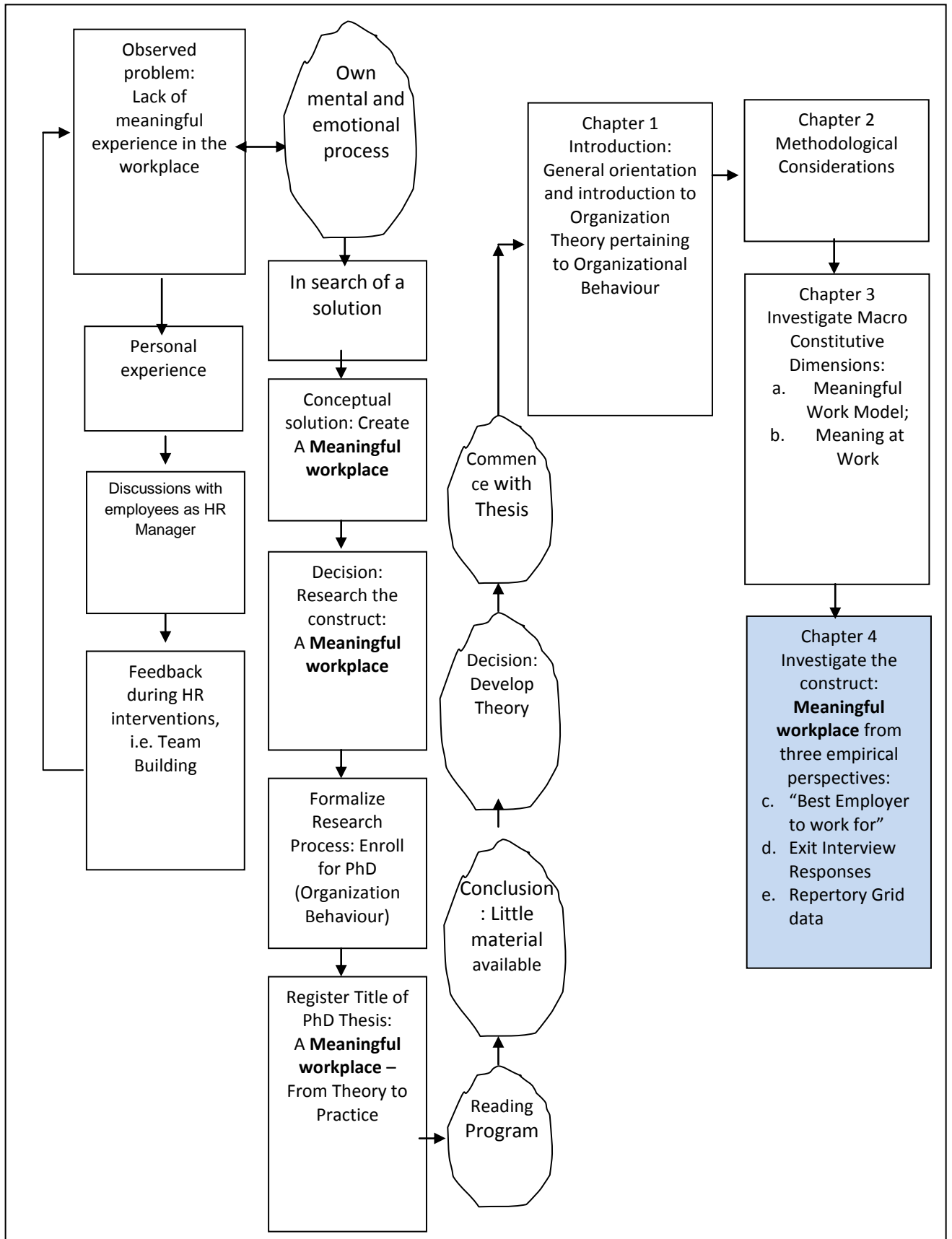
The second data set represents a discussion based on a report that was compiled by a company during the offering of voluntary exit packages to employees. The purpose was to determine why employees leave the company voluntarily when given the opportunity. The company compiled a report in this regard and the information reflected in the report will also be discussed under a separate heading.

The third data set comprises the analysis of the Repertory Grid interviews with a broad cross sectional participant group on the topic: A **meaningful workplace**. The data from the interviews are categorised and discussed within the purpose of the current study.

In conclusion the three sets of data will be integrated and then cross referenced with the information as presented in Chapter 3, to determine the whether the construct: A **meaningful workplace** is represented in the formal scholarly publications only or whether voice of the employees also echo the construct in some meaningful way. If the latter can be indicated, then it will be safe to conclude that the construct exists in both academic literatures as well as in the practice of organizational life, in the cognitive and emotional framework of employees in organizations. Thus the data sets that are used in this Chapter will then corroborate the existence of the construct in at least the mental framework of employees. It will then be safe to conclude that the construct is not only a theoretical construct, but that it is also audible in the voice of employees and that their voices somehow reflect the tenets of the construct from the perspective of lived experience in daily organizational life. Should this be achieved one dimension of the purpose of the study will have been achieved, i.e. the construct is emerging yet latent in theory and practice.

Figure 4.1 positions chapter 4 in the context of the study and indicates the three sets of empirical data that will be analysed in order to compare the theoretical research perspective with a more practical orientated perspective on the workplace.

Such a comparison will lay the foundation for a more practical orientation and provide some impetus towards justifying the title of the current study.



**Figure 4.1: Structural position of chapter 4**

## 4.2 THE BEST EMPLOYER TO WORK FOR (SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT)

In 1991, the Corporate Research Foundation (CRF) was founded as a joint initiative of academics, business journalists, trade associations, researchers and international publishers.

The objective for the founding and launching of the Corporate Research Foundation (CRF) was and remains to provide independent HR assessment and acknowledgement,

(<http://www.bestemployers.co.za/AboutCRFSA/TheCRFInstitute.aspx>).

With a head office based in the Netherlands, the CRF functions on 4 continents and thirteen countries. According to the CRF, the HR projects include:

**HR, Leadership and Strategy** Top Employers (locally known as Best Employers South Africa, Top Arbeitgeber Deutschland and Der Schweiz and Top Employeurs France) and verticals such as Top Arbeitgeber Automotive, Top IT Employers, Britain's Top Legal Employers and Careers SA).

The stated mission of the CRF is to “inspire organisations to be excellent employers by giving comparative insights to HR policy and best practices. This is beneficiary for all stakeholders, especially their current and perspective employees”. (<http://www.bestemployers.co.za/AboutCRFSA/OurMission.aspx>)

### 4.2.1 The Research Process

The research process employed by the CRF covers “all critical areas of the HR Management”. The areas included in the research methodology assess “key drivers, practices and policies for criteria such as Pay & Benefits, Training & Development, Career Opportunities, Working Conditions and Company Culture “which are thoroughly reviewed” (<http://www.bestemployers.co.za/Howitworks.aspx>)

The four steps in the research process include the following:

- **Short listing.** The first step in identifying the nation's BEST Employers™ is to prepare a shortlist of organisations that qualify for the research phase. This is based on a thorough market assessment made in close collaboration with our leading HR partners.
- **The HR Best Practices Survey.** In the research, all critical areas of the HR Management of the participating organisations are assessed. Critical areas of HR management, such as Primary Benefits, Secondary Benefits & Working Conditions, Training & Development, Career Opportunities and Company Culture, are reviewed thoroughly.
- **Review and Audit.** During the third step of the research phase, CRF Institute reviews and audits the results. The review is executed with one or more senior (HR) managers of the organisation. In conjunction with Grant Thornton, we perform an additional audit to check specific answers to the questionnaire.
- **Rating and Selection.** The ratings from the research phase determine whether or not the participating organisation is certified as a BEST Employer™. Only those organisations that meet the requirements receive the BEST Employers™ Certification Seal.

(<http://www.bestemployers.co.za/Howitworks/SelectionProcess.aspx>)

#### 4.2.2 Areas of Research

The Best Employers HR "Best Practices" Survey consists of 75 questions on HR policy and practices and include 11 dimensions that are viewed as critical data upon which to base the eventual award. Table 4.1 tabulates the 11 dimensions that are viewed as critical HR Best Practices, alongside which the description as provided by the CRF is provided (<http://www.bestemployers.co.za/Howitworks/AreasofResearch.aspx>).

The Great Place to work Institute (<http://www.greatplacetowork.com/>) follows a different approach. Great workplaces are built through the day-to-day relationships that lead to the experiences, on a consistent basis, that include trust, pride, and enjoyment as consistent experience by employees

Trust is viewed as the “defining principle of great workplaces”. Trust is created through management *credibility*, the *respect* with which employees feel they are treated, and the extent to which employees expect to be treated *fairly*. “The degree of pride and levels of authentic connection and *camaraderie* employees feel with one another are additional essential components”.

This fundamental model, so it is stated, has over a 25 year period continuously been validated through an analysis of employees’ own opinions. This model, it is furthermore stated, is “universal and consistent year-over-year, country-to-country, and applies to companies in all industries, non-profits, education and government organizations with wildly diverse employee demographics.”

The Director Corporate Research: Great Place to work (<http://www.greatplacetowork.com/>) writes on “trust in Action” in the following manner:

- The trust relationship between leaders and their followers is built on the way in which employees are treated and results in employees that look forward to going to work, who are willing to help each other out and are proud about their work
- Consumers judge the trustworthiness of an organisation by the way in which the employer treats employees
- .High trust organizations also seem to be more successful in financial returns
- Trust relationships are rooted in effective communication; sharing of information and answering questions in an honest manner
- Managers/leaders should treat their employees/followers with respect, act with integrity and ensure fairness throughout the organization

The following table (Table 4.1) presents the areas of research that are focussed on by the CRF (in South Africa) and the Great Place to Work Institute (predominantly abroad).

**Table 4.1: Areas for research: Best Employer.**

**Based on CRF Information**

<b>Research Focus Area</b>	<b>Research Dimensions</b>
<b>Organisational Strategy</b>	What are the organisation's Talent Management priorities? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maintain a positive workplace</li> </ul>
<b>The HR Function</b>	The functioning of the HR department and its alignment with the overall business strategy
<b>The Leadership of the Company</b>	What is the level of active involvement of the executive in talent management as a driver of employee engagement? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Employee input (collaboration)</li> </ul>
<b>Company culture</b>	What are the lines of communication between employees and the company, and what is the impact of this? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Social networking opportunities</li> </ul> How is the company responding to the diversity imperative (Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment)? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Diversity initiatives</li> <li>▪ Develop appreciation for differences such as:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Race</li> <li>○ Gender</li> <li>○ Background</li> <li>○ Sexual orientation</li> <li>○ Spirituality</li> </ul> </li> </ul> Corporate Social Responsibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How is the company responding to SA's social development imperatives and how are employees engaged in order to achieve this?</li> </ul>
<b>Knowledge Management</b>	How is this aspect of the business managed, and how does this translate into organisational success as knowledge is gained and shared?
<b>Talent Management and Employee Engagement</b>	Assesses 'vital' statistics on employee entry and exit, and how this is managed The following dimensions are assessed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Long term career path development</li> <li>▪ Talent Management processes</li> <li>▪ Succession planning</li> </ul>
<b>Employee Training and Development</b>	How are employees nurtured, mentored and developed in order for both them and the organisation to reach their goals?



Research Focus Area	Research Dimensions
	The following dimensions are assessed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Availability of functionally related training programs</li> <li>▪ Organisational support in terms of growth and personal development</li> </ul>
<b>Performance Management</b>	Performance agreements and competency framework assessment Acceptable and fair Performance Management policy, process and system
<b>Rewards and Recognition</b>	How are employees recognised and rewarded for their achievements and successes? Research includes dimensions such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Pay</li> <li>▪ Pension</li> <li>▪ Share Benefits</li> </ul> Non monetary benefits such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Leave allowance</li> <li>▪ Flexible working conditions</li> <li>▪ Availability of wellbeing policies</li> <li>▪ Communication Channels</li> <li>▪ Innovation</li> <li>▪ Recognition programs</li> </ul>
<b>Trust</b>	Treatment of employees with respect and dignity Open an accessible communication Honest answers to questions
<b>Leadership/Management</b>	Embody integrity in day-to-day behaviour Treat people in a dignified manner

It is once again stressed that the above does not contain detailed information. Based on face value it is obvious that areas of correspondence between the “Best Employer to Work for” research by the CRF and the current research in respect of a **meaningful workplace** can be construed. This comparison will follow towards the end of the current chapter and will therefore not be addressed at this stage. It is also important to note that the research by the CRF is based on the experience of employees

#### 4.2.2.1 Happiness, productivity, and profitability

The “Best Employer” project facilitates the insight of the organization of its own HR policies and processes thereby enabling such organizations to invest in the so called “Employer Brand” According to the CRF “Top Employers invest in engaging and recruiting happy people. Stimulating happiness is not a soft relict from the seventies, but turns out to be one of the key indicators for high performing companies” ([www.bestemployers.co.za](http://www.bestemployers.co.za))

According to the CRF institute employees that have a job in which they can develop, being appreciated and doing meaningful things, “is ranked as high as sex, a stable family and friends” when asked “What makes you happy at work?” This elevates the concept and the experience of happiness to a level of critical investment through policies, procedures and HR practices.

National governments are beginning to realize models that we use to measure productivity are outdated. That’s why French president Nicolas Sarkozy in February 2008 asked two Nobel-prize winning economists Joseph E. Stiglitz and Amartya Sen to identify the limitations of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as an indicator of economic growth and social progress. He also asked them to suggest new economic indicators in which happiness and well-being were included. When Mr. Sarkozy presented the results in September 2009 he called them “revolutionary”. The critique on the way we measure our wealth is growing broader. The problem however is which indicators related to happiness you could use to measure the output of an economy ([www.bestemployers.co.za](http://www.bestemployers.co.za)).

Research by the CRF Institute indicates “that there is no contradiction between productivity and the happiness of employees”.

Top Employers are not philanthropic institutions, but the practical measures with which they invest in their people coincides surprisingly with the factors so-called ‘positive psychologists’ identify as the ones that are crucial for being happy ([www.bestemployers.co.za](http://www.bestemployers.co.za)).

First of all there is the concept of flow, coined in 1990 by Csikszentmihalyi and which has been referred to previously in this study), is a state of mind people experience when they are fully immersed in what they are doing. Happiness results from a feeling of “energized focus, full involvement, and success in the process of the activity”.

Athletes, technical staff, those doing blue collar work and professionals alike all require a “sense of meaning, a reason why they are doing it”. They want to see a relation between what they are doing and meaningful results.

Happiness in the sense that it is used here should not be confused with the so-called “flower power happiness from the seventies, attacking capitalistic values like working hard, making money and making a career” ([www.bestemployers.co.za](http://www.bestemployers.co.za)) Happiness in this context is based on those exact values. “According to ‘positive psychologists’ talent management and investing in learning and development improve happiness of employees” thereby enabling employees to create an environment in which they are also

Is it at all possible to measure the impact of happiness on productivity?

First of all, as professor Arnold Bakker of Erasmus University Rotterdam states in his inaugural address, research shows positive emotions help coping with difficult clients or deadlines and they make you more healthy. Most of all, they are contagious, which means one or two ‘happy’ colleagues can uplift a whole team. But does that mean the companies they work for are more profitable (Bakker, [www.bestemployers.co.za](http://www.bestemployers.co.za)).

International research shows that happiness of employees in terms of being inspired, experiencing a flow regularly and doing a meaningful job has a positive impact on performance and financial results. According to Prof. Bakker positive things like feedback by colleagues and executives, autonomy, coaching, education and development opportunities make employees more creative and innovative. And as a result those ‘happy’ employees are more inclined to benefit from HR instruments offered by their employer (Bakker, [www.bestemployers.co.za](http://www.bestemployers.co.za)).

By investing in their employer brand outstanding employers simultaneously invest in happy people. But you don't need a new measuring method or model to incorporate happiness of employees in the balance sheet of your organisation. Profitability is a natural result of investing in happiness of people. Indeed, maybe money cannot buy happiness, but employee happiness surely can make companies productive and profitable (Bakker, [www.bestemployers.co.za](http://www.bestemployers.co.za)).

#### **4.2.2.2 Awards by the CRF: best employer to work for: South Africa 2011-2012**

In the South African context the following table (4.2) provides practical examples of randomly selected “Best Employers” for 2011/2012. The identification of “Best Employers” serves the purpose to indicate the dimension from a practical perspective that serve the purpose of assessing and eventually awarding the “Best Employer” seal. The HR Management of these organisations has been holistically researched.

Pay & benefits, career opportunities and training policies were all critically reviewed across a number of companies. Only these organisations received the BEST Employers™ 2011/12 Certification Seal. (All organizations and profile dimensions have been downloaded fro the CRF Institute site)

(<http://www.bestemployers.co.za/BESTEmployers/BestEmployers20112012.aspx>)

The following table provides a summarized perspective of the research results pertaining to the list of best Employers for the period 2011/2012, as provided by the CRF

(<http://www.bestemployers.co.za/BESTEmployers/BestEmployers20112012/C/tabid/5678/C/697/AbsaGroupLimited.aspx>)

The research results and company characteristics are listed in the first column while the first five Best employers (in alphabetical order, taken from the CRF list) are listed in the rows across. The number of stars in each intersecting cell indicates the score for that particular employer on a particular dimension. The summarised reports can be accessed at the URL as provided above.

**Table 4.2: Best Employers 2011/2012**

**First five best employers selected in alphabetical order**

Research Dimension	ABSA Group	Accenture South Africa	African Rainbow Minerals	AfriSam South Africa	Airports Company of South Africa
Primary benefits	****	*****	*****	****	****
Secondary benefits and working Conditions	*****	*****	****	*****	****
Training and development	***	*****	*****	****	****
Career development	****	*****	*****	****	***
Company culture	*****	*****	****	****	****
Diversity	****	*****	****	*****	*****

#### 4.2.3 The benefit of the CRF reports

The question could be asked whether there is any benefit for this particular study of the work that is currently being done by the CRF “Best employer” in South Africa and elsewhere in the world? In short the answer to this question is as follows:

*Although the CRF does not refer to the construct: **Meaningful workplace**, the tenor (i.e. the overall nature, pattern, or meaning of something, especially a written or spoken statement) of the CRF research and the current study are on a convergence course.*

The research by the CRF translates the theoretical perspectives into and projects the “translation” onto organizational practice as experienced by employees and management. The current study, accepting that the CRF research, as verbalised in the previous paragraph, represents some practical dimension of the **meaningful**

**workplace** corroborates the viewpoint – as has been alluded to earlier in this study – which the search for the **meaningful workplace** is not some esoteric and theoretical illusion. The research by the CRF is indicative that the search for joy, happiness, and meaningful experiences, is alive and indeed has a traceable footprint in the practical world of organizations.

### 4.3 EXIT INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

#### 4.3.1 The background to the report

The “report” that will be utilised to further ascertain the relevance of the **meaningful workplace**, in the field of organizational practice, is based on “Exit Interview Report” (“report”) that was provided by a Company in the Information, Communications and Technology Environment (ICT) (“the company”), under the title “Why employees applied for packages (Report on Web-based exit questionnaires)”, on the condition of confidentiality.

The report provides the verbal anonymous text responses to a web based questionnaire that requested an honest opinion of the reasons why employees chose to leave the company on a voluntary basis when given the opportunity to do so.

During the past few years the company provided opportunities for employees to exit leave on a voluntary basis. Employees were however requested to provide the reasons for leaving the company. The methodology that was followed was to post an exit questionnaire on a website. The following question was asked: “Why do you want to leave the company?” responses were then typed into the space provided and the questionnaire was submitted to a centralised database from where it was retrieved and the written comments interpreted. The process was conducted in an anonymous thereby protecting the identity of the individual. The report that was provided for the purpose of this research contained the research based on the responses for the period 11-23 March 2005. Although this might seem to be

outdated, investigation into the reasons why employees choose to leave the company on a voluntary basis still corresponds with the latest results from the CRF Institute as indicated in the previous paragraphs.

The option to exit the company was open to employees on all levels of the company and no pressure was applied to force individuals to accept the one of exit options (Voluntary Severance Package or voluntary Early Retirement Package). The company offered attractive severance packages to employees who wished to leave the company.

#### **4.3.2 The structure and discussion of the report**

The report was compiled based on 1,800 written response out of 4,500 exiting employees. This is indicative of two trends. (a) The responses were spontaneous as there were more responses than exiting employees, and (b) the written responses, presented anonymously provided a safe context for honest and open feedback.

The compilers state that the “questionnaire included questions to obtain information regarding benefits, frustration with management, and development, etc.” (p.1). The respondents were also asked to respond to the following statement: “I would have stayed with *the company* if the following issues were addressed”. The compilers of the report state that “trend results (data) is organized in three main categories. “My work experience, my opinions around the company and my future plans”.

The research team of the company interpreted the responses and categorized these in terms of three basis themes, i.e. “My work experience; My opinions around the company; and My future plans”. These themes will be retained for the purpose of this study as they correspond and resonate well with the dimensions that were identified and discussed in respect of the **meaningful workplace**.

As has been stated, the following discussion is based on the categorisation of responses as provided by the compilers of the report. Statistical indicators that appear in the report are included in the current text for the purpose of contextualising the reported information as documented by the compilers of the

report. (Statistical procedures that were followed by the compilers of the report are unknown to the current researcher as these are not discussed in the report.) In spite however of including the crude ratios that are reflected in the report these are not to be interpreted in such a way as to create a bias towards certain trends as if they were more relevant than others.

#### **4.3.2.1 Presentation of the report in the current study**

The way in which the information from the questionnaire will be used in this chapter is based on the following assumptions:

- It is assumed that exiting employees were honest in providing the information that was collated in the exit interview report;
- It is furthermore assumed that the compilers of the report were consistent in their evaluation of the verbatim feedback and that comments were clustered in a consistent manner throughout the report;
- Thirdly, it is assumed that when an employee exits an organization on a voluntary basis when given such an opportunity, that relationship has been severed on an emotional level and that the severance is operationalised by leaving the company;
- Within the context of this study it is furthermore assumed that in instances such as an employee leaving an organization on a voluntary basis, that such an employee is suffering from a loss of meaning at work (in the workplace, thus the organization);
- It is assumed that the written comments by exiting employees, stem from their own frustration and their lack of motivation to remain in the organization;

#### **Work experience**

Table 4.3 presents the different dimensions that, according to the compilers, affected employees to leave the company, based on their experience of work or as



stated “work experience”. Following on the high level reporting of the different categories, the different categories will be unpacked following the report as compiled by the company. The compilers of the report deemed it necessary to provide graphs to indicate the relative strength of the different dimensions. The current text will not use these graphs in such a manner, as there is no indication what statistical procedure was employed. Representation of the graphs will merely serve the purpose to indicate trends and do not refer to the relative strength of these trends.

What is interesting to note in this regards that the negative experiences do not only pertain to work as such but also to the dimensions of the workplace as such.

**Table 4.3: Work experience of employees serving as motivators to exit the company (“Report, 2005, p. 3 of 111”)**

Sequence number in descending order	Description f experience	Strength indicator as per the “report”
1	No career advancement opportunities	79%
2	Frustration with management	66%
3	My personal contribution is not recognized	65%
4	I’m not fully utilized	53%
5	Too much stress and pressure	52%
6	Lack of training and development opportunities	44%
7	Discrimination on the basis of race and or gender	39%

“No career advancement opportunities” refers to implicitly refers to some aspect or dimension of the workplace that prohibits advancement. This could be related to a lack of “training and development opportunities” or as indicated, “discrimination on the basis of race or gender”. If the intention of respondents were to indicate a vertical advancement ceiling, then the dimension of discrimination becomes prominent. If the intention however is top describe a lack of lateral movement, then the dimension referred to as lack of training and development opportunities becomes more prominent. In both cases however the dimensions refer to negative experiences whilst performing work in the workplace/the company. The environment creates a negative climate which impacts on the way in which employees experience the workplace as well as their work. In view of the discussion in chapter

3, it is fair to comment that such a workplace does not contribute to either meaning work or meaningfulness at work, thus a **meaningful workplace**.

“My personal contribution is not recognised” and “I am not fully utilised” both refer to or imply a lack of recognition and thereby a loss of self esteem by the individual, which further implies that one of the pillars for psychological meaningfulness, i.e. organizational based self esteem is undercut as is the whole and integrated self of the individual, thereby disabling the experience of meaningfulness in working. This impacts and, more accurately, undermines the Meaningful Work Model as positioned in chapter 3. This viewpoint is corroborated by the compilers of the “Report” by commenting that “employees appreciate the fact that the “Company” should be run effectively, but not at the expense of feelings that their contributions insignificant. Lack of worth could cause this response” (Report, 2005, p. 5).

The fact that employees report a tendency that they are not fully utilised could imply an ignorant attitude regarding the competencies of employees.

“Too much stress and pressure” is indicative of a lack of balance as argued by Chalofsky (2010) as well as Terez (2000) and presented in Chapter 3 as a condition for a Meaningful Work Model. This implies an inherent imbalance in the workflow process and –system in the workplace, because “we are constantly required to do more with fewer resources”.

“Frustration with management” can refer to a few dimensions and not necessarily to any single one. Once again the following discussion is presented against the background of the previous chapter. When the Meaning at Work was presented as one of the two macro dimensions that constitute the **meaningful workplace** the culture dimension was added within which management and leadership style was discussed. The one possibility that comes to mind is that the management culture could possibly inhibit the free flow of communication, thereby prohibiting the freedom to contribute towards work, thereby alienating the employee from his/her work and thus diminishing work ownership. This is by no means the sum total of the dynamic that possibly presents itself in this regard. A management style that prohibits contributions or discussions regarding work and work flow processes

effectively blocks the collaborative drive and need by employees and could as an after effect also quench the need for achievement.

The compilers of the report state that

“Research has shown that nearly 70% of employees quit their manager and not the company. We need to look at these employees’ immediate supervisor/manager. Research ash further shown that of all the workplace stressors, a poor manager is possibly the worst stressor, directly impacting on the emotional health and productivity of the individual (Report, 2005, p. 4).

By interpreting the categories as presented by the compilers of the report against the conceptual framework that was discussed and presented in Chapter 3, the implication, albeit by means of abduction, is evident: Neither the work itself nor the workplace is experienced as meaningful by employees and therefore the choice to exit the company.

### Opinions around the company

**Table 4.4: Opinions around the company**  
(“Report, 2005, p. 7 of 111”)

Sequence number in descending order	Description f experience	Strength indicator as per the “report”
1	Lack of job security	66%
2	Dissatisfaction with company policies and procedures	45%
3	The “company’s” reputation as an employer	37%
4	Dissatisfaction with company benefits	36%

“Lack of job security” and uncertainty around the future of the company, presents itself as a definite trend in the motivation of employees to leave. This tendency does not only refer to a lack of security emanating from a lack of a future perspective, but

could also address the issue of misalignment between employees and the company as far as the vision and the strategy of the company is concerned.

The compilers of the “report” state the following in connection with low job security as a reason for exiting the company:

Lack of job security causes stress and has a negative impact on productivity. According to comments received, job security is not about material terms, but a desperate need for a healthy, challenging, emotionally healthy, nurturing and exciting work environment” (report, 2005, p. 8).

It is very interesting to note that the last comment by the compilers resonates with not only the perspective from moral philosophy on meaningful work but also with the Meaning of Work Model in a broader sense as discussed in Chapter 3.

The reasons provided or rather that were categorized under the heading “opinions around the company”, by the compilers of the “Report” do seem to reflect directly on certain matters that pertain to the so-called “hard side” of the workplace. Policies and procedures, and benefits have a direct bearing on the way in which the company structures itself to contain chaos, to align workflow tasks, and to maintain consistency in the management of people. However, policies and procedures are very often the result of politics, influence and control in organizations (Mayes and Allan, 1977). This perspective could imply “conflict’ between parties or groups, which if it were true, would be to narrow a description of politics related to the formulation of policy. It is also possible to view politics in a broader perspective, viewing it as the structure and process of the application of power and influence to determine goals, define end states and people management parameters as such, to name but a threesome of possibilities. From a neutral perspective there does not seem to be any problem with the formulation of policy. The problem originates in the inconsistent application thereof when cascaded to lower levels. An example of such inconsistency is referred to by participants as the “inconsistent application of the performance management process, policy and system in the “company”. Further comments from participants indicate that “Company policies” do not encourage decision making on the level of execution because the decision making processes

and eventual final decisions are not only centralised but also elevated to the level of senior management.

The concept of reputation as related to the “Best employer” concept is the last expression in the “report” and provides an indication of the Company as either positive or negative. When an organization is certified as a: “Best Employer” to work for it creates an etiquette that establishes the organization as one with status wherein which an employee is bound to opt for job longevity, or *commitment*. The issue of *commitment* was discussed in Chapter 3 where it was indicated as an imperative for the workplace to be a **meaningful workplace**, or alternatively, that the creation of psychological commitment at work contributes towards a **meaningful workplace**.

“Dissatisfaction with company benefits” seems to have been stated in respect of the slow pace of improvement in benefits. A factor that seemed to aggravate employees is the disparity in business trip benefits. There seems to be a disparity between higher level and lower level employees in respect of the payment of business trips in general, more specifically in respect of fuel reimbursements. This is related to the discrepancies that have been written into policies regarding business trip reimbursements by the company. The cost of travel, specifically fuel, is the same for higher and lower level employees. Why is the reimbursement of lower level employees lower? This discrepancy is not explained nor communicated.

The compilers of the report note two concerns: (a.i) Exiting employees indicate that their future plans are to join competitors in the industry sector in South African context, and (a.ii) that such employees are leaving South Africa to work abroad in the same industry sector, and, (b) employees also indicate that they are exiting the “company” to obtain severance packages to settle debt.

The compilers of the report also noted that while evaluating the results of the exit comments, the following matters were brought to their attention:

- There is no perceivable career path;
- Failure of the “company” to provide internal; career movement and role diversification;

- Unfair promotional practices;
- The inability of supervisors and managers to create and maintain professional work environments;
- The inability to manage and resolve internal conflicts which are left to fester for long periods of time;
- Uncaring, incompetent, unprofessional managers;
- Managers setting unreasonable targets and undermining work-life balance
- Demanding employees to work more than the legally accepted maximum overtime hours;
- Wrong job fit and positioning;
- No retention efforts;
- Unequal work distributions;
- Managers tolerate and turn a blind eye to non performance;
- No understanding or concern for family issues, travelling time and health risks;

### **What would make you stay?**

The “company” also requested exiting employees to provide an indication of possible changes in the company that could result in them reconsidering their choice. The following is a list of the responses in this regard:

- Offer career progression path for high performers;
- Manage weak performers (“out-manage weak performers”);
- Ensure that appointed managers have the necessary competencies (“weed out poor managers”);
- The “company “ must take care of its employees (“There is much more value to people than just being part of statistics”);

In conclusion the compilers of the report recommend certain focus areas:

- Employees would like to experience that the “company” cares for them as human beings, which reminds of moral philosophy which states that the

humanity of the employee should be treated as an end in itself and not a means to an end;

- The “company” should create a culture of openness and provide compelling reasons why employees would want to be part of the “company”;
- The “company must assist employees to achieve a healthy work-life balance
- Focus on creating a “relaxed” working environment;

The dimensions which the compilers recommend are neither complete nor detailed. Left hanging in the air, the recommendations carry very little weight in themselves. However, when viewed against the foregoing discussion, they represent very high level conceptual formulae which is most probably a decision taken by the compilers for whatever reason(s).

The last comment in the report addresses the issue of worthlessness and the accompanying experiences in a big organizational context and is formulated as follows:

In a large company, the “company” is no exception, people often lose their identity and experience feelings of worthlessness. It is evident from the responses that our employee need to be recognised for their skills, they need to belong to something larger than themselves, they crave prestige, a sense of identity, a relaxed and happy work environment and demand the trust and empowerment of management (2005, p. 17).

The aspects that are addressed in the closing comment by the compilers of the report, echo dimensions that were discussed earlier (in Chapter 3) in both the macro streams that combine and integrate to constitute the **meaningful workplace**.

It can once again, with confidence, be stated that the report as a representative sample of employees that left the “company” address the issues that as has been indicated in Chapter 3, constitute the **meaningful workplace**, is present in the minds of employees and therefore has a grounding in organizational life and practice.

The report closes with the following comment:

In a large corporate company... people often lose their identity and experience feelings of worthlessness. It is evident from the responses that our employees need to be recognized for their skills, they need to belong to something larger than themselves, they crave prestige, a sense of identity, a relaxed and happy work environment and demand the trust and empowerment of (by) management (2005, p. 17).

#### **4.4 REPERTORY GRID DATA**

The following discussion presents the data from the Repertory Grid interviews and reflects upon the responses within the framework as provided in Chapter 3, as well as the foregoing.

##### **4.4.1 Introduction: Presentation and interpretation of Repertory Grid Data**

The data will be presented three separate Tables, one for each set which was used to solicit constructs. The presentation of the construct data in the different tables represent the raw data as solicited during the interviews for each separate element set. The tabulation of the raw data a coding system will be employed. The constructs as well as the coding sets will be presented. The results of the tabulation as well as the codification process will be presented alongside each other within the different construct tables.

##### **4.4.2 Participants in and discussion of the Repertory Grid interviews**

In Chapter 2 it was stated that for qualitative research programs participants are chosen based on the perceived value of contribution. The following list represents the different roles or work environment of the selected participants:



- Project managers in the construction industry;
- CEO of a cooperative;
- Teachers;
- Minister of religion;
- Administrative managers;
- Junior management administrative staff;
- Entrepreneurs;
- Social worker;
- Executive: HR and culture transformation;

#### 4.4.2.1 Element Set 1: A meaningful work environment/setting/context.

Interviewees were instructed to.

- (i) “Identify a work setting within which there was a predominant experience of meaningfulness.” (This environment was identified on card number 1 in whichever way the interviewee chose to, either by name or code, etc. It was emphasised that the interviewer was not interested to know which particular work environments were identified, neither were the cards collected after the interview. These remain the possession of the participants)
- (ii) “A work setting where the pre-dominant experience was that of frustration and which was demotivational in nature.” (The same comments as above apply.)
- (iii) “A work setting in respect of which the interviewee was indifferent, i.e. a neutral work environment which neither produced high levels of satisfaction nor high levels of frustration.”

**Table 4.5: Element set 1: A meaningful work environment/context/place**

Card numbers (Sort)	Positive Comments	Negative Comments
<u>1 &amp; 3</u> : 2	Work adds value to myself	Does not add value
	Working with people	Pure administrative functions
		Although adding value no involvement with people

Card numbers (Sort)	Positive Comments	Negative Comments
	Positive and value adding results	Achieving results without adding value
	Supervisor respects people	Does not care about people
	Problem management and solving problems	Just doing something mechanically
	Lasting experience of value add	
	Supervisor trusts people	Does not trust people
	Work is challenging	The work does not represent any challenge
	Challenges set and agreed up front on tasks/jobs	Top down guidelines (directives) on task/job
	Intellectual stimulation	Boring administrative work
	Accepted as part of the group	Excluded from work group (e.g. language, personality, etc.)
	People have the same goals Knowing that I make a difference in people's lives <sup>2</sup>	People fight for their own interest
		Back-biting <sup>3</sup>
	People support each other	I feel I only keep busy without actually making a contribution to the organization's well being
	Good interpersonal relationships	People around you are negative about the future of the organization
	I had all resources required to do my work	Perceived that I had no support from management and no recognition for my efforts
	My work was appreciated by my superior and management	Routine work that did not add value to my self esteem (did not feel good about work)
	My outputs had a noticeable positive influence on my business unit's results	I was not trusted and did not trust management or my direct superior
	Pleasant, friendly co-worker enhance teamwork	People very negative towards the company. Negativity spreads to rest of the workers
	Continuous communication	Poor communication
	Invest in skills upliftment Invest in emotional enhancement	Lack of training
	Provide social support	Lack of interest in employees' well being
<u>1 &amp; 2 : 3</u>	Importance of work stressed	No reference to importance of tasks
	Reasonable work load	Over-time not remunerated and regarded as reasonable <i>employees are exploited (my translation)</i>
	People work together in a team to	Uncertainty in terms of structure

<sup>2</sup> The negative (opposite) construct was recorded twice against two separate interviewees with different positive constructs.

<sup>3</sup> The construct "people have the same goals" was recorded on two separate occasions. The bipolar construct differed in each case and are therefore listed separately.

Card numbers (Sort)	Positive Comments	Negative Comments
	stimulate creativity Encourage creativity	Suppress creativity
	People are loyal to the organization	Some people receive preferential treatment
	The whole team is driven by passion	Lack of knowledge sharing
	Did challenging work that made a difference to the company's business	Lack of resources
	I worked in a team that accepted me and valued my inputs	Was not trained to do my work. I made small mistakes that were criticized out of context
	Team cooperation promoted in the execution of the job/task	Each person was responsible for own performance and thus accountable <sup>4</sup>
	Working flexi time. During busy period, personnel work extremely hard, even overtime, but took time off during quite times. Very productive	Rigid working hours create a sense of being at work without real purpose at certain times of the month. Keeping yourself busy at quite times
	Flexible work environment: No stiff dress code or unnecessary formality. Open door policy. Everyone on first name basis	Strict hierarchy. No open door policy
	Exposure on a higher level	No higher level exposure
	Pro-active	Reactive
<u>2 &amp; 3</u> : 1	My work pattern is respected	My supervisor constantly looks over my shoulder
	Self management	Policed and mothered
	I have freedom to structure my work as I see fit	I am being micro managed
	Involved in decisions taken about your area of responsibility Responsible	Decisions about your area of responsibility is made without consulting you Lack of responsibility
	Minimum policies	Bureaucracy
	Environment empowers you Empowerment	Not empowered due to a lack of resources Disempowerment
	Nice work environment – windows, air conditioning, fresh air, etc.	Sit in a cubicle with no outside view, centrally controlled air conditioning (Library example) which causes chronic sinusitis
	I learn something new every day	People are not informed about the expectations of top management
	I Feel proud to work for the company	Unclear goals
	Decisions are made based on sound business reasons, not for political reasons	People are not interested in each other's lives'

<sup>4</sup> This construct, although reported by a participant as negative in relation to teamwork (or community), can also be construed as a positive construct. This was not the case here.

Card numbers (Sort)	Positive Comments	Negative Comments
	Pleasant work environment. Nice looking furniture and new technology	Trying to cope with outdated equipment
	Regular feedback on performance and progress	Given feedback (only) on request
	Encourages risk taking	Discourage risk taking
	Celebrated success	Downplay success
	Recognized extra effort and work	Failure to recognize extra effort and hard work
	Provided feedback	No feedback
	Open to new ideas and differences – even opposing ideas Respect for diversity	Decisions based on preconceived ideas and perceptions Less tolerant. Projecting tolerance but with underlying intolerance

### **Discussion: A meaningful work environment/context/place: Repertory Grid interviews**

The discussion below follows a specific pattern which entails looking at and interpreting the positive construct pole in the framework of the result of Chapter 3. The evaluation of responses in terms of the concepts used results in assigning a certain code. Constructs that seem to allude to or directly refer to the same concept and breadth of understanding are the discussed.

- **Value dimension: Va.** This dimension includes all the responses that refer to work as having or contributing to, or aligned with values. The value dimension of work and the performance of work as well as the value emanating from the feedback of work align well with the Meaning of Work Model where values were identified as contributing towards a meaningful work and, thereby contributing to the construct: **Meaning Workplace**. What is observed in participant responses is the absence of any direct reference to work ethic as a contributing factor of a **meaningful workplace** within this element set (A Meaningful work environment/place/context).
- **Respected, appreciated and valued: ReAV.** Respect and appreciation according to respondents' constructs relate to the fact that supervisors or promoters as well as co workers demonstrate respect for the person. It also includes a dimension of respect and appreciation for the work performance

and becomes visible in behaviour within a group setting. Participants also indicate the fact that a **meaningful workplace** is an environment, in their experience where the individual is not only respected but also valued for performance. In this way the **ReAV** dimension resonates well with a few dimensions that were identified as contributing dimensions to a **meaningful workplace**. These include (a) perspectives from moral philosophy where the requirement for meaningful work is to be respected as human being; (b) the culture factor during the discussion of meaning **at** work, where the management and leadership dimension was against the background of values; (c) the community factor where it was indicated that people need to belong and to want to belong, as a contributing dimension towards a **meaningful workplace**.

- **Problem solving: Ps.** Challenging work and the opportunity to work at stretched targets to complete tasks contribute towards a **meaningful workplace**. This perspective is aligned with the discussion on the workplace as problem solving space. Closely linked to this is the opportunity to take risks without fear of reprisal and challenging work as opposed to repetitive work that does not pose challenges to employees. According to Repertory Grid data this aspect can also be linked to the reciprocal agreement (as opposed to top down unchangeable directives) regarding work challenges that are agreed to upfront and managed as such, without “moving the goal posts”.
- **Training and development: Td.** The requirement for training and development, up skilling, and the cognitive and intellectual development of employees was stressed at various junctures in Chapter 3. (E.g. Moral Philosophy, Meaning of Work Model, Meaningfulness at Work.) The matter of training opportunities or the opportunities to acquire new skills was raised as one of the reasons or trends why employees decided to leave the company. A requirement for a **meaningful workplace** according to participants in the study, (a) the opportunities to invest in skills upliftment, (b) an investment in emotional enhancement, (c) intellectual stimulation. It would also be possible to include the expression “I had all resources required to do my work” as an indication of a requisite competency or skills set for the purpose of work performance.

- **Community: Co.** Another concept that is viewed as essential or at least constituent of a **meaningful workplace** has herein been referred to as community or community building. The meaningfulness at work process flow included a discussion on culture and community building was then discussed as an integral dimension of culture. This reasoning followed the Chalofsky (2010) model which positioned the community building factor as a constituent dimension of a **meaningful workplace** within the culture domain. Participants indicated mutual support, acceptance, good interpersonal relationships, togetherness and teamwork as the elements that constitute a **meaningful workplace**.
- **Feedback from the job: Fj.** In Chapter 3 the Hackman-Oldham (1980) Job Characteristics Model was imbedded in the meaningfulness at work discussion indicating that the critical psychological conditions (experienced meaningfulness at work, experienced responsibility for work outcomes and knowledge of actual work results) result in higher work motivations, higher growth satisfaction, higher job satisfaction, and higher work effectiveness, are the results of core job characteristics which are put forth as skills, variety, task identity, autonomy, feedback from the job. The moderating factors in this regard are proposed to be knowledge and skills. Although the specific schema is not present in the responses by participants, certain elements present themselves. Feedback from the job is a category that, according to participants, belongs to a **meaningful workplace**. With comments like celebrated success”, “provided feedback”, and possibly also “I feel proud to work for the company” echo the dynamic of the Hackman Oldham model. This is more evident when taking into consideration that participants also refer to knowledge and skills and the enhancement of these as characteristics of a **meaningful workplace**. Two responses further enhance the reasoning in this regard: “My outputs had a noticeable positive influence on my business unit’s results” and “Did challenging job that made a difference to company’s business”.
- **Involvement in decisions/work: InDw.** A tends that also presents itself can be categorized or labelled as the “individual’s involvement in work and related decision making. Seen as the positive side of the construct, whereas the

opposite construct pole “micro management” and “decision about your work is cascaded down from the top” where decisions about your work is made. This not only reflects the lack of decision making and collaborating with whomever to conduct work planning, but also to a lack of autonomy in work conduct and a culture of non-empowerment a lack of trust. This particular response type also reflects back to the discussion related to the Meaning of Work Model. This tendency also requires a measure of autonomy. Workplace flexibility is further enhanced in terms of the depth of the concept by means of comments such as “control” (the Meaning of Work model) and “engagement space”, all of which contributes to the creation of a **meaningful workplace**. The fact that participants allude to autonomy and participative or collaboration work planning and execution is also aligned with the “exit” questionnaire as well as the elements of empowerment and collaboration in the “Best Employer” research. The allusion to collaboration and participation in the work role function and execution by employee stand in a specific relation to the elements that have been identified as forthcoming from the Repertory Grid interviews. Constructs that come to mind in this instance are the following: “group work role and functional performance”, “respect for the work flow and pattern of the individual”, an “environment that empowers you”, etc. Further comments from participants in this regard refer to autonomy as an important dimension for a **meaningful workplace**. These include: “I have freedom to structure my work as I see fit” and “Involved in decisions taken about you”. Further allusion stem from the following response by participants:

- **Flexible working environment: FI.** Participants identified flexibility in the workplace as constitutive of a **meaningful workplace**. Workplace flexibility is further corroborated by participant’s comments that echo informality, flexibility in terms of time and the geographical space where employees work at their best. Flexibility can also be viewed as an enabler for greater commitment resulting in greater mutual benefits for the individual as well as the organization. Participants included such factors as “informal,” “self management”, where only the required and minimum policies are required to guide employees towards the company vision and strategic objectives in

pursuit of profitability and sustainability. Flexibility in an organization can lead the satisfaction of both individual employee as well as the organization.

- **Transformation: Tr.** Participants also indicate such constructs as “reasonable work load”, “innovation”, and “teamwork with specific reference to the power of creativity within groups, are also characteristics of a **meaningful workplace**.
- **Reputation: R.** A characteristic that was also verbalised during the interviews refers to the reputation of the company and ergonomic comfort. To “be proud to work for the company” is a direct verbalisation that the employee has no need to leave the company; it indicates happiness. The same applies when participants refer to the physical workspace as a relaxed atmosphere where the required infrastructure is available to perform work. (“nice working environment”, pleasant environment”, “nice looking furniture and new technology”). In some cases the added reference attached to the work environment is the addition of the human factor as characteristics of a **meaningful workplace**.

A meaningful work environment is characterised by the (a) prevalence of a positive value system regarding people, their functioning , (b) where appreciation is expressed for not only the individual as person, but also for the work he/she does, (c) where the individual is involved in the planning and execution work, as well other decision, and where the necessary resources, training and development is provided for problem solving and where the employee sees or receives feedback from or in respect work outputs, (d) where a more informal atmosphere exists which allows for two way communication and in respect of work role performance, (e) , Where flexibility in respect of work and role function is concerned, (e) where transformation activities involve employee, and (f) where community building in the workplace is courage and protected.

#### 4.4.2.2 Element Set 2: Management style

Based on procedure that was followed in the first element set interviews participants now had three cards on which certain work environments were written either by



name or by code. (Card 1 = Meaningful Work environment, card 2 = Frustrating/meaningless work environment, and card 3 = an environment to which the participant was indifferent; it wasn't meaningful, neither was it frustrating) Using the same set of cards, participants were now requested to attach the name of a manager/supervisor/promoter to each of the cards. The instruction was that the identified manager/leader/promoter must correspond to the "type" of organization/work environment that was used during the first round interview. The card whereon the most meaningful work environment was identified now also carried a name of a manager/leader/supervisor which embodies the characteristics of the organization. The same applies with respect to cards 2 and 3.

During the interview participants were constantly reminded that this exercise now focussed on the behaviour of the manager or leader with the context of his work.

The interviews began with the following instruction:

- Place card number 1 and 2 next to each other and place card 3 on your right hand side. Think of the managers whose names are on the respective cards and indicate in which ways they are similar and or different as managers/leaders/promoters, based on their behaviour. The responses were written down on a pad on which columns were drawn. The sheets of paper were formatted as are the tables used to report the responses of the participant.
- The instruction to commence with the exercise is the following: "In what important way are the managers on cards 1 and 2 similar as managers, based on their management style, and how does this differ from the person on card 3. After the participant had exhausted this comparison, he/she was asked to place card numbers 2 and 3 next to each other and the same instruction followed as above. The last comparison is when participants compare cards 2 and 3 with card number 1.
- The responses were documented. The positive indicators were written in the left hand column and the opposites (as indicated by the participants) in the right hand column. The interview for this element set concluded after the three cards had been through the comparison process. (1 & 2: 3; 1 & 3: 2; 2 & 3: 1)

**Table 4.6 Element set 2: Managerial style**

Card numbers (Sort)	Positive Comments	Negative Comments
<u>1&amp;3</u> : 2	Work is structured	Work is not structured
	Managers/Leaders inspire confidence	Did not inspire
	Went out of their way to motivate employees	Did not engage in any form of motivation
	Lead by example	Not a role model to follow
	Strong leadership	Lack of leadership
	Applied discipline where necessary	Failed to address behavioural wrongs
	Multi tasking	No multitasking
	More independent and self reliant	Dependent on other and micro managed
	Can use own initiative	Decision making rests with other people
	The time and opportunity to complete tasks	Repetitive work without end or result
	Encouraged team work	Encouraged and created isolation
	Clear work roles	Employees left to their own devices to decide on roles and responsibilities
<u>1&amp;2</u> : 3	Encouraged decision making	Did not allow any form decision making on lower levels
	Feedback never undermined the self esteem of the employee	Feedback was harsh, negative and created a climate of anger and low self esteem in the department
	Encouraged creativity and innovation	Did not allow creativity or team work
	Mature	Emotionally and psychologically unstable
	Individual input promoted	Top down micro management approach
<u>2&amp;3</u> : 1	A clear business plan and direction	Constantly changing goals and objectives
	Clear measurements and “goal posts”	Moving “goal posts” and measures
	Walking the talk	Saying one thing and behaving/doing another
	Leading with integrity and honesty	Unethical behaviour – setting the wrong example
	Treats employees as professional	Treat employees in a non-professional way
	Goal directed	Vague goals; not measureable, not attainable, unrealistic
	Content and objectives of the job provide with time lines and action logs	Employees left to their own devices
	Deviations and corrective actions handled in an inclusive manner in order to establish real reasons for failure and to ensure collective handling of corrective measures	Individuals left on their own to make uncoordinated corrections
	Managers treat people fairly	Teat people like children
	Managers believe in people’s ability	Managers are control freaks
	Managers make sound business decisions	

## **Discussion: Managerial style in relation to a Meaningful workplace: Repertory Grid interviews**

A reading of the table uncovers certain trends that also coincide with both the Meaning of Work Model as well as the Meaningfulness at Work Model (Chapter 3). The same procedure will be followed in the ensuing discussion as was followed in the discussion of the first element set.

- **Work structure: Ws.** Participants made several contributions in respect of work structure during the interviews. These include comments such as “work is structured”, “clear work roles”, “content and objectives of the job provided with time lines and action logs”, “goal directed”, etc. Spoken within the context of the element set “managerial style”, it does convey a perspective on the perceived effectiveness and efficiency of managers. The responses echo the “culture dimension” which encompasses transformational leadership and managerial effectiveness as contributing factors toward a **meaningful workplace**. These responses also echo psychological conditions of meaningfulness which was addressed in the Meaning at Work Model (Chapter 3).
- **Inspirational: Is.** Closely aligned with the responses regarding work structure (Ws), are the responses or contributions of participants that refer to the fact that leaders/managers inspire them through behaviour that signifies “strong leadership” such as “leading by example”, “maturity”, encouraging employees to be “creative and innovation”, etc. This reminds of values based leadership and also echoes the type of organizational culture that is conducive to a **meaningful workplace**
- **Discipline: Di.** An interesting comment made by participants refers to discipline and the exercise of discipline by managers whose approach and behaviour in this respect contribute towards meaningfulness. Participants value the “application of discipline where necessary” and more specifically in the following comment: “deviations and corrective actions (are) handled in an inclusive manner in order to establish real reasons for failure and to ensure

collective handling of corrective measures”. This reminds of the Organizational Based Self Esteem (OBSE) of employees and is closely associated with the concept of self enhancement. Self-enhancement can be viewed as searching for meaning through the process of self improvement which facilitates a sense of feeling good about the self and to maintain (=conserve) the conditions that contribute to positive self esteem. Self-enhancement involves a preference for positive over negative self-views (Sedikides & Gregg, 2008). The self-enhancement motive refers to people’s desire to enhance the positivity or decrease the negativity of the self-concept (Sedikides & Strube, 1995). Self-enhancement is thus not only the act of seeking a positive self concept but also entails the process of maintaining the circumstances that continuously enhance and maintain such a self concept. This reasoning articulates well with the concept of organizational based self esteem as discussed by Milliman et al (2003), which, in a positive sense, is indicative of the satisfaction level that employees experience with their organizational role. Self enhancement and conservation as discussed above are positively facilitated if the workplace is characterised as productive space, energy space, problem solving space, activity space and engagement space, culture space, and contributes to the psychological conditions of meaningfulness at work.

- **Leadership qualities, Le.** Throughout the current discussion the measure of overlap between different concepts presents itself. In this regard, although reference has been made to leadership/management dimension within the context of culture (chapter 3), which follows the thinking of Chalofsky (2010), the measure of overlap forces additional mention of the type of leadership that contributes to a **meaningful workplace**. Comments such as “lead by example”, “walk the talk”, “encouragement” the application of fair discipline, and “feedback that does not undermine the self esteem of employees” deserve special mention as those qualities in management and leadership that participants are looking for in their place of work. These leadership qualities also echo the comments by exiting employees that resign from their manager and supervisor. In this instance behaviour that undermines psychological safety has been mentioned above (discussion of element set 1) the following emphasises the negative leadership/management style: “did not inspire, not a

model to follow, distrusts subordinates, treat people like children”, and being control freaks, are noteworthy in their own right. Participants obviously prefer the type of management and leadership behaviour that leads to psychological safety and emotional wellbeing.

- **Community: Co.** As this specific dimension has already been discussed, only a single contribution will be referred to here: Participants also referred to the encouragement by managers/leaders towards community building and identified this type of behaviour as that which contributes to a **meaningful workplace**. Yet, in spite of the positive evaluation by participants of teams and community, they also reflected positively on their individuality. (See the discussion on diversity)

A **Meaningful workplace**, according to participants, is a space where management/leadership behaviour can enhance meaningfulness or the opposite. From a positive perspective the following behaviour creates an atmosphere of meaningfulness: (a) Where work structure breakdown is clear; (b) where there is no role ambiguity; (c) where people are treated as equals in terms of respect which also reminds of egalitarianism (as discussed during the discourse on values) is enacted or where it prevails; (d) where leadership and management enhance people’s self esteem, and where discipline is applied in a fair and respectful manner and maintained.

#### 4.4.2.3 Element Set 3: Company culture

Using the same set of cards, participants were now requested to write the word “culture” on the cards. It was explained that the next would be an assessment of the “culture” of the organization in the same manner as was done in the previous two exercises. Thus participants had a card set of three cards upon each of which the following information was written down by the participant: (a) A meaningful work environment, (b) name of a manager or leader whose behaviour corresponds with “type” of organization and thirdly, a culture that corresponds with the previous indicators on the cards. This implies that a card then contained an identification of

an organization type, the name of a manager or leader whose behaviour corresponds with the organization type that was already written on the card and lastly the culture “type” corresponding with both the organization type, the manager or leader with corresponding behaviour and thirdly the corresponding culture type. The same applies with respect to cards 2, and 3.

During the interview participants were constantly reminded that this exercise now focussed on the culture of the organization. Culture was loosely described as the way in which we do things in the company.

The interviews began with the following instruction:

- Place card number 1 and 2 next to each other and place card 3 on your right hand side. Think of the culture in the companies indicated on card numbers 1 and 2 and indicate in which ways the way the cultures are similar to each other and how does this differ from the culture on card number 3. The responses were written down following the same procedure as for the previous elements .
- After the participants had indicated that they have exhausted their options, the next card shuffle cards 1 and 2 were placed next to each other and the comparison drawn with card number 3. The second card shuffle placed card numbers 1 and 3 next to each other in comparison with card 2. The third card shuffle commenced after participants reached a saturation point, comparing card number 2 and 3 with card 1.
- The positive indicators were written in the left hand column and the opposites (as indicated by the participants) in the right hand column. The interview for this element set concluded after the three cards had been through the comparison process. (1 & 2: 3; 1 & 3: 2; 2 & 3: 1).

**Table 4.7: Element Set 3: Organizational Culture**

Card numbers (Sort)	Positive Comments	Negative Comments
<u>1&amp;3</u> : 2	Create opportunities for own initiatives (empowered)	Working for somebody else's image Work is not structured
	We are encouraged to be creative	People want to do as little as possible and get away with it
	Being trusted	No trust (Given an instruction but always checked – very suspicious)
	Trust management to make sound business decisions	Top leaders make decisions for their own benefit and not for the company
	Competence accepted	Doubtful comments regarding competence
		Undermining my self esteem –
	Confer respect	No respect
		Emotional abuse and blackmail
	Boosted my self esteem	Always weighed and found wanting
	Appreciation and respect for my person	
	Interpersonal relationships civilized	Always in conflict mode
	Firm (fair) discipline	
	Well defined roles	
	We work hard but also have fun	Always a negative atmosphere
	We support each other	
	Open and honest communication	The grapevine is the most active form of communication
<u>1&amp;2</u> ; 3	Predictable, - know what to expect <sup>5</sup>	"Wishy Washy". Unpredictable
	No surprises	
	Performance driven	Just be busy
		Do not get involved in any way
	A culture of "only the best for our people"	Management always asked "what's in it for us"
	Accept responsibility for a healthy work environment	Maximize profits at the expense of workplace conditions
	Accepts social responsibility role in the community	Company ignores the environment and community
<u>2&amp;3</u> : 1	Tasks delegated and positive outcomes expected – challenged. Positive response on outcomes even though they don't comply with expectations	Irrespective of outcomes: response always negative
	Trust managers to fulfil their promises	Promises are never kept
		Create expectations but never comply

<sup>5</sup> The participant strongly indicated that predictability was preferable to a "wishy washy" unpredictable environment. The participant probably meant – a structured environment as opposed to an unstructured organization.

	I am guided by managers/leaders when I have a problem	Managers apply pressure without providing support
	Management accept that I add value	Management doesn't know what I am busy with
	Focus on outcomes and not on work process	
	I have the opportunity to be creative	
	Leaders/managers are inspirational	Detached managers/leaders
	There is a learning culture	Management does not value contributions
	We share knowledge	
	Punctual	People always arrive late for meetings
	Company is known for career growth opportunities	High frequency of disciplinary and grievance events
	Senior management listen to proposals of junior staff	New ideas were not considered
	Professional conduct	People gossip about others and management
	Encourage work-life balance	No concern fro private and social life. Can cancel leave without cognizance of fixed arrangements (e.g. holiday arrangements)
	Interest for the individual is shown	Constant performance pressure little or no consideration
	Remuneration and benefits match output	Remuneration not linked to performance and output and no benefits

### **Discussion: Organizational culture in relation to a Meaningful workplace: Repertory Grid interviews**

Table 4.5 in which the constructs as presented by participants regarding organizational culture is documented, will now be discussed. One of the first observations is that the constructs in the culture element set seem to overlap with constructs in the first Element Set (meaningful work environment). There are also overlaps with the leadership/management style constructs of Element Set 2. The same codes that were used in the discussion of the previous two element sets will be utilised in the ensuing discussion on the culture element set. The reason for this modus operandi is to minimise any confusion that might develop if other codes were to be used for constructs that have the same tenor. In essence this Element Set and the constructs that were elicited refer to the Meaningfulness at Work Model wherein which the Culture category plays a prominent role. The constructs that were elicited



also show a strong relationship with Chalofsky (2010). This relationship will become clear as the discussion unfolds

- **Respected, appreciated and valued: ReAV.** Participants indicated that a culture which is aligned with a **meaningful workplace** and leadership/management behaviour is one where they feel respected, where their self esteem was boosted, where appreciation for the (person) individual was evident, where a culture of “only the best for our people” is good enough and where management accept that “I add value”. Self esteem can also be equated with the construct of Organizational Based Self Esteem as discussed in Chapter 3. The “value” concept can also imply as in Element set 1 that the culture of the organization lends itself to alignment with personal values and thus also fits into the Meaning of Work Model (Chapter 3).
- **Empowerment: Em.** Participants responded by indicating that the organizational culture empowers employees to use initiative and where they are encouraged to be creative as far as work performance is concerned. The acceptance of employee’s competence is conducive to the type of organizational culture that contributes to a **meaningful workplace**.
- **Trust: Tr.** The indicators of trust in the context of element Set 3 (Organizational Culture) specifically relate to the relationship between manager/leaders and employees and stands in close association of work performance, outputs and delivery. Managers’ project trust and in return are trusted by employees to make decisions based on business imperatives and to fulfil the promises that are made. This dimension is closely associated with the leadership qualities (Le, Element Set 2: leadership/management style). The construct: “senior management listens to proposals of junior staff” is a further indication of the trust relationship that facilitates an organizational culture that reflects a **meaningful workplace**. An expansion of this dimension is the reference by a participant which indicates that “I am guided by managers/leaders when I have a problem”. This however is not only an indication of trust but also indicative of a learning organization, which in the following paragraph is associated with community building. It does however also imply something of the challenge by participants in the dimension of problem solving (Element Set 1, Problem Solving dimension).

- **Community and learning: CoL.** Community as an organizational culture marker features in several constructs. The reference to mutual support and the further reference to “open and honest” communication both lean towards the notion of an open community. This is further supported by the indication in the construct that “we share knowledge” and “there is a learning culture as elicited” as well as the construct “interpersonal relationships are civilized”. The two dimensions i.e. community and learning culture could (and maybe should) be separated but the definite choice here is to link these two dimensions together as they not indicate an open work society but also a supportive workplace society. “Learning” also has its links with different dimensions in Chapter 3, such as: Moral philosophy, the need to develop and grow; as well as with the indicators in the exit interview questionnaire and in both the above element sets. This does imply that a learning environment (learning Organization) and a work society where community building is purposefully established seem to stand in a reciprocal relationship. The one cannot be thought of without the other.
- **Work structure: Ws.** In this element set the constructs referring to work structure and role clarity surfaced once more. An organizational culture that leans towards a **meaningful workplace** is one where there are “well defined roles”, where “tasks are delegated” and where “we work hard (but also have fun)”. Work structure is related to the idea or notion of the management of outputs and performance as is indicated in the following constructs: “Focus on outcomes not on work processes” (this could also be an implicit reference to flexibility in the workplace whilst performing work), “there is a positive response tow outcome” and “performance driven” This tendency could also include or allude to “predictability” and “no surprises.” Work structure was also discussed in the previous element set (Management/leadership style).
- **(Inspirational) Leadership: Le.** Leadership qualities were also discussed as part of the discussion of element Set 2 (Leadership/Management Style). The dimension of “inspiration” surfaced as a construct during the interviews with participants. The construct “leaders/managers are inspirational” is indicative of a behavioural quality that apparently facilitates a culture which supports a **meaningful workplace**.

- **Social responsibility: Sr.** Both Kant (the perspectives from Moral Philosophy) and Chalofsky, address the dimension of serving the self through serving others, which does somehow also relate to the concept of (Corporate) Social Responsibility. The concept “social responsibility” means that organizational top leaders should oversee and operationalise an economic system that fulfils the expectations of the public. This implies that the means of production within the economy should be employed in such a way that production and distribution ideally should enhance total socio-economic welfare. Social responsibility in the final analysis implies a public posture toward society’s economic and human resources and a willingness to see that those resources are used for broad social ends and not simply for the narrowly circumscribed interests of private persons and firms.

In my view, CSR involves the conduct of a business so that it is economically profitable, law abiding, ethical and socially supportive. To be socially responsible .then means that profitability and obedience to the law are foremost conditions to discussing the firm’s ethics and the extent to which it supports the society in which it exists with contributions of money, time and talent. Thus, CSR is composed of four parts: economic, legal, ethical and voluntary or philanthropic. (Carroll, 1983, p. 604)

Participants indicated that a culture associated with a **meaningful workplace** is one where the organization accepts \ social responsibility role in society.

- **Safety and Health: SH.** Safety and health as articulated by participants are further characteristics of the culture of a Meaningful workplace. Whether this construct also alludes to psychological safety is not certain. It could possibly be related to the condition of psychological safety. If this relationship is possible then the connection with the research by May et al becomes relevant in the sense that (psychological) safety and health refers to the concept of engagement. The construct safety and health can thus be an indicator of the qualities of a Meaningful workplace.

- **Discipline: Di.** Participants indicate that discipline in respect of punctuality and “professional conduct” further contributes to an organizational culture that is deemed to contribute to a Meaningful workplace. The comments in this elements set can only be interpreted by means of the negative construct pole in each case to determine whether discipline here relates to the indication of discipline in the element set on a meaningful organization. The opposite of punctuality is “people always arrive late for meetings and as far as professionalism goes, the negative construct pole refers to people gossiping about others and management. Gossiping in the workplace, although it is also thought to have a place, can undeniably undermine not only the synergy within an organization but also the dignity of people and thus the organizational wellbeing of employees, to the extent of destroying workplace relations and jeopardising all attempts at community building as one of the essential culture dimensions that contribute towards a Meaningful workplace.
- **Career growth opportunities: CDev.** Career growth or development is one of the characteristics that differentiate between organizations that are viewed as Meaningful workplaces and those that do not qualify for such a definition. This dimension has been encountered in Chapter 3 where it was indicated that job security is important as implied by the need for psychological safety, the need for sufficient wages, etc. This dimension further supports and at the same time justifies the need for training and development which is apparently viewed as a manner of securing a future in the organization.
- **Sense of balance: Bal.** This dimension echoes the perspective of Chalofsky as described in Chapter 3 as a dimension of his Meaningful Work Model. A sense of balance which in the responses given by participants also includes the allocation of work load. The negative pole of the construct “Interest for the individual is shown” is verbalised as: “Constant performance pressure little or no consideration”. This reflects a loss of balance and could imply a work culture where work is dominant in all respects while the capacity of the individual is ignored possibly resulting in work overload. This reasoning not only reflects a lack of involvement in work planning but also the experience of ignoring the individual at the cost of company performance. A Meaningful workplace therefore is when the organization recognizes the work load

boundaries of the individual and where the social life of the individual is recognized and respected.

- **Remuneration: Rem.** Remuneration in the sense of fair and equitable remuneration based on outputs has been mentioned as a dimension of a Meaningful workplace culture. This is the only element set where remuneration based on output has been mentioned as a characteristic of a Meaningful workplace. This dimension is however not alien to the construct: A Meaningful workplace as it has been encountered in the moral philosophy as well as in the “best employer” to work for contexts.

The discussion in respect of the different elements sets and the constructs that were elicited is by no means exhausted. The richness of qualitative information that can still be extracted from the constructs in the above element sets is perceivably only contained by the measures that the researcher applies as boundaries. This discussion is however sufficient for the purpose of this study as it provides corroborative information in respect of the purpose of the study, i.e. to determine whether the construct: Meaningful workplace is an emerging construct and furthermore whether it does in some way or another have a presence in the experience of employees regarding the Meaningful workplace.

#### **4.5 CHARACTERISTICS OF A MEANINGFUL WORKPLACE ACCORDING TO THREE DATA SETS**

Having reported and discussed the three data sets the need arises to determine whether there are similarities that somehow cross corroborate the characteristics of a **meaningful workplace**. The reasoning behind this is based on the assumption that the data sets that were reported on, emanate from the practice of organizational life and therefore depicts lived experience in the organization. It is therefore reasonable to determine, based on the independence of the three data sets (Best employer emanating from the CRF Institute; the exit interview reports has its origins in an ICT company; the Repertory Grid interviews data have as their origin semi structured interviews with participants that are linked to various different

organizations and who occupy a variety of positions), whether these data sets somehow communicate the same type information or message as far as the **meaningful workplace** is concerned.

The manner in which this will be determined is to compare the data sets using the codes that were created for the constructs in the element sets originating from the Repertory Grid interviews. This comparison will be conducted using a table where the codes will be used as the baseline information (left hand column) followed by the construct description in the second column, and the “Exit Interviews” and “Best Employer” (third and fourth columns – counted from the left – respectively) data will be compared by indicating conformity or at least resemblance between each other and with the Repertory Grid data.

Table 4.8 provides an indication of the alignment between the different data sets as presented in the current chapter. Certain observations present themselves in the above comparisons. It is possible to match the different dimensions against each other thereby cross corroborating the data from the independent data sets.

It is also possible to position the dimensions from the exit interview report in more than one row when compared with the Repertory Grid interview data. The same applies when positioning the dimensions against the Repertory Grid interview data. This is indicative of the interconnectedness of the different dimensions and the level of complexity of the **meaningful workplace**. This is furthermore indicative of the phenomenon that the construct under discussion cannot be explained in terms of linear causality, but must be viewed as a dynamic and circular construct where dimensions build upon one another without linear cause and effect.

**Table 4.8: Comparison of data sets**

Repertory Grid Codes	Description	Occurs in Exit Interview Report <sup>6</sup>	Occurs in Best Employer to work for Research
Bal	Sense of Balance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Too much stress and pressure</li> <li>• Not fully utilized<sup>7</sup></li> <li>• Managers setting unreasonable work targets and undermining work-life balance</li> <li>• Demanding employees to work more than the legally accepted maximum overtime hours</li> <li>• Company must assist employees to achieve work-life balance</li> <li>• No understanding of or concern for family issues, travelling time and health risks</li> </ul>	
Co	Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discrimination on the basis of race and gender<sup>8</sup></li> <li>• Employees want to experience that the Company cares for them</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess social networking opportunities</li> </ul>
CDev	Career Growth and Development Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of job security</li> <li>• There is no perceivable career path</li> <li>• Failure of the company to provide internal career movement and role diversification</li> <li>• No career progression</li> <li>• No retention efforts</li> <li>• Wrong job fit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talent management and employee engagement</li> <li>• Long term career development</li> <li>• Talent management process</li> <li>• Succession planning</li> </ul>
Di	Discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not managing weak</li> </ul>	

<sup>6</sup> The wording might not be exactly the same but the intent may obviously be the same as the construct in the Repertory Grid Elements set. An Example is the following: Repertory Grid construct: “Sense of Balance”; Exit Interview construct: “Too much stress and pressure” which implies a lack of balance.

<sup>7</sup> This expression is here interpreted as a lack of balance or not being busy with work in a meaningful way

<sup>8</sup> Discrimination is here interpreted to imply the negation of positive relationships in the workplace, thus a lack of community

Repertory Grid Codes	Description	Occurs in Exit Interview Report <sup>6</sup>	Occurs in Best Employer to work for Research
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>performance</li> <li>• Managers and supervisors turn a blind eye to non performance</li> <li>• Unfair promotional practices</li> </ul>	
Em	Empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No openness</li> <li>• No collaboration</li> <li>• Dissatisfaction with company policies and procedures (disempowering)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the organization a learning organization</li> <li>• Is new knowledge shared</li> </ul>
Fj	Feedback from Job <sup>9</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Frustration with management<sup>10</sup></li> <li>▪ Personal contribution is not recognized<sup>11</sup></li> <li>▪ Dissatisfaction with company policies and procedures<sup>12</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Performance agreements and competency framework assessment</li> <li>▪ Acceptable and fair performance management policy, process and system</li> </ul>
Fl	Flexible Work Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Inability to create and maintain professional work environment</li> <li>▪ Create a relaxed work environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maintain a positive workplace</li> <li>▪ Flexible working conditions</li> </ul>
Is & Le	Inspirational and Leadership Qualities <sup>13</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Frustration with management</li> <li>▪ Appointed managers must have the necessary competencies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Level of involvement by executives in the management</li> </ul>

<sup>9</sup> This dimension is viewed in a broader sense to include performance contract as well as reviews or feedback sessions to employees regarding job performance as well as the effects of job completion

<sup>10</sup> Frustration with management can either function in respect of a lack of or no feedback or in respect of managerial incompetence. For the purpose of this report “frustration with Management” will be positioned in more than one dimension.

<sup>11</sup> This expression can also imply a lack of feedback

<sup>12</sup> Dissatisfaction in this sense is an all encompassing statement And can therefore also refer to the performance management system of the company

<sup>13</sup> Two dimensions have been combined



Repertory Grid Codes	Description	Occurs in Exit Interview Report <sup>6</sup>	Occurs in Best Employer to work for Research
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ of talent</li> <li>▪ Embody integrity in day-to-day behaviour</li> <li>▪ Trust relationships</li> <li>▪</li> </ul>
InDw	Involvement in Work related Decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ My personal contribution is not recognized<sup>14</sup></li> </ul>	Recognition programs
TD	Training and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of training and development opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Availability of functionally related training programs</li> <li>• Organizational support in terms of growth and development</li> </ul>
Ps	Problem Solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No obvious references to this dimension</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Employee input and collaboration</li> <li>▪</li> </ul>
ReAV	Respected, Appreciated and Respected <sup>15</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Discriminatory practices</li> <li>▪ Not recognized</li> <li>▪ Uncaring an incompetent</li> <li>▪ Company must take care of employees</li> <li>▪ Treat employees as human beings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The way in which employees are nurtured</li> <li>▪ Treat employees with respect and dignity</li> <li>▪ Treat people in a dignified manner</li> </ul>
R	Reputation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The company's reputation as an employer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No obvious references to this dimension</li> </ul>
Rem	Remuneration and Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Pay</li> <li>▪ Pension</li> <li>▪ Share benefits</li> </ul>

<sup>14</sup> This expression is interpreted as an indication of the absence of work related discussions and therefore no involvement in work related decision

<sup>15</sup> This dimension has been discussed by implication, but will nevertheless be presented here although some of the dimensions that have been mentioned earlier might have to be repeated



Repertory Grid Codes	Description	Occurs in Exit Interview Report <sup>6</sup>	Occurs in Best Employer to work for Research
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Leave allowance</li> <li>▪ Communication channels</li> <li>▪ Innovation</li> </ul>
SH	Safety and Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No specific reference</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Availability of wellbeing policies</li> </ul>
Sr	Social Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No reference or mention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Corporate social Responsibility as a response to South Africa's development imperatives</li> <li>▪ The engagement of employees in Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives</li> </ul>
Tr	Transformation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No obvious references to this dimension</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Functioning of the HR department and alignment with the overall business strategy</li> </ul>
Trs	Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ From the responses by exiting employees it is obvious that the trust relationship between management and employees is vast or in some cases non-existent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Trust is viewed as the "defining principle of great workplaces"</li> <li>▪ Open and accessible communication</li> </ul>
Va	Values Dimension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Uncaring, incompetent, unprofessional managers</li> <li>▪ The company should create a culture of openness and provide compelling reasons why employees want to be part of the company</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Treatment of employees with respect and dignity</li> <li>▪ Open and accessible communication</li> </ul>

Repertory Grid Codes	Description	Occurs in Exit Interview Report <sup>6</sup>	Occurs in Best Employer to work for Research
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Honest answers to questions</li> </ul>
Ws	Work Structure <sup>16</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I'm not fully utilized</li> <li>Unreasonable/unrealistic targets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employee input and collaboration in respect of work structure and work flow</li> </ul>
Tr	Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>From the responses by exiting employees it is obvious that the trust relationship between management and employees is vast or in some cases non existent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trust is viewed as the "defining principle of great workplaces"</li> <li>Open and accessible communication</li> </ul>
Div <sup>17</sup>	Diversity Management (No specific reference in Repertory Grid constructs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No reference except in the negative:</li> <li>Discrimination based on race and gender</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Diversity initiatives:</li> <li>Race</li> <li>Gender</li> <li>Background</li> <li>Sexual orientation</li> <li>Spirituality</li> </ul>

#### 4.6 INTEGRATION OF CHAPTERS 3 and 4: TOWARDS A MEANINGFUL WORKPLACE

The discussion in this chapter was guided by the results of the discussion in chapter 3. The purpose of this chapter as stated in the beginning was to "investigate from three practical/empirical perspectives, whether the construct: **A meaningful**

<sup>16</sup> Although this dimension could be clustered with either feedback from the job or employee involvement in respect of work, the preference here is to keep it separate because of the indications in Chapter 3 that Work Structure could be associated with the psychological conditions of meaningfulness

<sup>17</sup> This dimension is added from the "best employer" to work for research and because it is dimension of the Meaningfulness @ work Model

**workplace**, as described in the previous chapter (Chapter 3), exists in the mindset of employees”. The endeavour was to determine whether the construct, although it might not be called as such, is evident (implicitly or explicitly) in the lived experience of employees. It was demonstrated that empirical research (“best employer” to work for), upon which organizations are recognized as great places to work for, does indeed in an indirect manner pursue the tenets that were identified as dimensions of a **meaningful workplace**. The exit interview report also indicates that employees experience a workplace in the negative or positively. When negative experiences prevail, employees exit the organization and when requested to indicate “what would make you stay?” the responses indicate aspects that were found to be integral to the construct: A **meaningful workplace**. In the last instance the Repertory Grid data unequivocally indicate a close resemblance with the **meaningful workplace** dimensions.

The foregoing discussion in the current chapter therefore corroborates the results of the literature study, but with an added bonus: The corroborated dimensions have definite practical grounding. It can therefore rather safely be stated that theory and practice of a **meaningful workplace** meet, at least in the consciousness and lived experience of employees or, in the practice organizational existence in the world.

The next challenge is to position the constructs in a holistic and totally integrated perspective as final integrated model of a **meaningful workplace** for the purpose of the current study.

This is at the same time the biggest challenge at this juncture in the current study. The question is posed: “How do you integrate such diverse set of perspectives as presented in the preceding as well as in the current chapters?”

The content of the integrated model (Figure 3.21) will be used as a baseline for the ensuing exercise. The challenge is to match the constructs as aligned in Table 4.8 “Comparison of data Sets” with the content that is captured in the circular model where major cycles (culture cycle, commitment cycle, psychological meaningfulness cycle, work achievement cycle, and transformation cycle) were construed of two distinguishable, yet interrelated indicators (models) based on the Meaning of Work

Model and the Meaningfulness at Work Model, each construed by separately indicated yet interrelated dimensions.

The construct codes emanating from the Repertory Grid data that were used as the comparison data against which the “best employer to work for” and the “exit interview report” will be retained. However, these must now be interpreted together with the references of the other two data sets, (all three sets which have been indicated to be aligned) in such a manner as to relate to (a) a relevant “Cycle”, (b) the specific “Model” (Meaning **of** Work or Meaningfulness **at** Work), and (c) a specific construct in one (or possibly more segments in the Integrated Model as presented in Chapter 3 (Figure 3.21). The representational means will consist of a table as this mode seems to be the most appropriate and easiest mode for this purpose. The construct codes as indicated above will be evaluated and positioned within such a structure. This will not only provide a visual graphic presentation, but also lay the foundation for a more formal definition and description of a **meaningful workplace** with the view of the enhancement and expansion of the theoretical grounding of the construct.

**Table 4.9: Alignment and integration: Towards A Meaningful workplace**

CULTURE CYCLE					
Meaning of Work Dimensions	Meaningfulness @ Work Dimensions	Repertory Grid Codes	Description	Occurs in Exit Interview Report Description	Occurs in Best Employer to work for Research Description
<p><b>Transcendence:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide Cosmology</li> <li>▪ Promote Psychological Safety</li> <li>▪ Enacting Integrity</li> <li>▪ <b>Community:</b></li> <li>▪ Job Satisfaction &amp; Involvement</li> <li>▪ Align Values</li> <li>▪ OBSE</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Management Procedure Space</li> <li>▪ Leadership Behaviour Space</li> <li>▪ Diversity Space:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ideological Space</li> <li>○ Dynamic Space</li> <li>○ Community Space</li> <li>○ Identity Space</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Va	Values Dimension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Uncaring, incompetent, unprofessional managers</li> <li>▪ The company should create a culture of openness and provide compelling reasons why employees want to be part of the company</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Treatment of employees with respect and dignity</li> <li>▪ Open and accessible communication</li> <li>▪ Honest answers to questions</li> </ul>
		Di	Discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not managing weak performance</li> <li>• Managers and supervisors turn a blind eye to non performance</li> <li>• Unfair promotional practices</li> </ul>	
		Div	Diversity Management (No specific reference in Repertory Grid constructs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No reference except in the negative:</li> <li>▪ Discrimination based on race and gender</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Diversity initiatives:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Race</li> <li>▪ Gender</li> <li>▪ Background</li> <li>▪ Sexual orientation</li> <li>▪ Spirituality</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
		Co	Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discrimination on the basis of race and gender</li> <li>• Employees want to experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess social networking opportunities</li> </ul>

		Is & Le	Inspirational and Leadership Qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>that the Company cares for them</li> <li>Frustration with management</li> <li>Appointed managers must have the necessary competencies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level of involvement by executives in the management of talent</li> <li>Embody integrity in day-to-day behaviour</li> <li>Trust relationships</li> </ul>
		ReAV	Respected, Appreciated and Respected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discriminatory practices</li> <li>Not recognized</li> <li>Uncaring an incompetent</li> <li>Company must take care of employees</li> <li>Treat employees as human beings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The way in which employees are nurtured</li> <li>Treat employees with respect and dignity</li> <li>Treat people in a dignified manner</li> </ul>
		Trs	Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>From the responses by exiting employees it is obvious that the trust relationship between management and employees is vast or in some cases non existent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trust is viewed as the “defining principle of great workplaces”</li> <li>Open and accessible communication</li> </ul>
<b>COMMITMENT CYCLE</b>					
Meaning of Work Dimensions	Meaningfulness @ Work Dimensions	Repertory . Grid Codes	Description	Occurs in Exit Interview Report Description	Occurs in Best Employer to work for Research Description
<b>Work Values and Ethics:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commitment/Satisf action</li> </ul> <b>Core Values:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Personal Ethics</li> <li>Spirituality</li> </ul> <b>Moral Philosophy:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commitment Space</li> <li>Individual Space</li> </ul>	Sr	Social Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No reference or mention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Corporate social Responsibility as a response to South Africa’s development imperatives</li> <li>The engagement of employees in Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Freely entered</li> <li>▪ Sufficient Wage</li> <li>▪ Not Paternalistic</li> <li>▪ Moral Development</li> <li>▪ Rational Capabilities</li> </ul>					
		Va	Values Dimension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Uncaring, incompetent, unprofessional managers</li> <li>▪ The company should create a culture of openness and provide compelling reasons why employees want to be part of the company</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Treatment of employees with respect and dignity</li> <li>▪ Open and accessible communication</li> <li>▪ Honest answers to questions</li> </ul>
		Rem	Remuneration and Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Pay</li> <li>▪ Pension</li> <li>▪ Share benefits</li> <li>▪ Leave allowance</li> <li>▪ Communication channels</li> <li>▪ Innovation</li> </ul>
		TD	Training and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of training and development opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Availability of functionally related training programs</li> <li>• Organizational support in terms of growth and development</li> </ul>
		CDev	Career Growth and Development Opportunities	<p>Lack of job security</p> <p>There is no perceivable career path</p> <p>Failure of the company to provide</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talent management and employee engagement</li> <li>• Long term career development</li> <li>• Talent management process</li> <li>• Succession planning</li> </ul>



				internal career movement and role diversification No career progression No retention efforts Wrong job fit	
<b>PSYCHOLOGICAL MEANINGFULNESS CYCLE</b>					
<b>Meaning of Work Dimensions</b>	<b>Meaningfulness @ Work Dimensions</b>	Repertory Grid Codes	Description	Occurs in Exit Interview Report Description	<b>Occurs in Best Employer to work for Research Description</b>
<b>Sense of Balance</b> <b>Manage Tensions:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Balance Career &amp; Life</li> <li>▪ Balance Work &amp; Life</li> <li>▪ Meaningful Learning</li> <li>▪ Positive Beliefs</li> <li>▪ Develop Potential</li> <li>▪ Take Care of Self</li> <li>▪ Find Purpose in Life</li> <li>▪ Integrated Self to Work</li> </ul>	<b>Job Characteristics:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Job Redesign</li> <li>▪ Task Significance</li> <li>▪ Task Variety</li> <li>▪ Skills Variety</li> </ul> <b>Workplace as Individual Space</b>	Bal	Sense of Balance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Too much stress and pressure</li> <li>• Not fully utilized</li> <li>• Managers setting unreasonable work targets and undermining work-life balance</li> <li>• Demanding employees to work more than the legally accepted maximum overtime hours</li> <li>• Company must assist employees to achieve work-life balance</li> <li>• No understanding for concern for family issues, travelling time and health risks</li> </ul>	
		Fj	Feedback from Job	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Frustration with management</li> <li>▪ Personal contribution is not recognized</li> <li>▪ Dissatisfaction with company policies and procedures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Performance agreements and competency framework assessment</li> <li>▪ Acceptable and fair performance management policy, process and system</li> </ul>

		InDw	Involvement in Work related Decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ My personal contribution is not recognized</li> </ul>	Recognition programs
		Ws	Work Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ I'm not fully utilized</li> <li>▪ Unreasonable/unrealistic targets</li> <li>▪</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Employee input and collaboration in respect of work structure and work flow</li> </ul>
<b>WORK ACHIEVEMENT CYCLE</b>					
Meaning of Work Dimensions	Meaningfulness @ Work Dimensions	Repertory. Grid Codes	Description	Occurs in Exit Interview Report Description	Occurs in Best Employer to work for Research Description
<b>The Work Itself:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Autonomy/Sense of Control</li> <li>▪ Mastering Performance</li> <li>▪ Fulfilling Purpose</li> <li>▪ Nurturing Callings</li> <li>▪ Path Goal Leadership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Achievement Space</li> <li>▪ Problem Solving Space</li> <li>▪ Energy Space</li> </ul>	Di	Discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not managing weak performance</li> <li>• Managers and supervisors turn a blind eye to non performance</li> <li>• Unfair promotional practices</li> </ul>	
		Fl	Flexible Work Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Inability to create and maintain professional work environment</li> <li>▪ Create a relaxed work environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maintain a positive workplace</li> <li>▪ Flexible working conditions</li> </ul>
		Ps	Problem Solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No obvious references to this dimension</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Employee input and collaboration</li> <li>▪</li> </ul>
		TD	Training and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of training and development opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Availability of functionally related training programs</li> <li>• Organizational support in terms of growth and development</li> </ul>

		Em	Empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No openness</li> <li>No collaboration</li> <li>Dissatisfaction with company policies and procedures (disempowering)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the organization a learning organization</li> <li>Is new knowledge shared</li> </ul>
<b>TRANSFORMATION CYCLE</b>					
Meaning of Work Dimensions	Meaningfulness @ Work Dimensions	Repertory. Grid Codes	Description	Occurs in Exit Interview Report Description	Occurs in Best Employer to work for Research Description
<b>Meaning of Working:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work Goals</li> <li>Work Centrality</li> <li>Societal Norms About Working</li> <li>Valued Working Outcomes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dynamic Space</li> <li>Transformation Space</li> <li>Perceptual Space</li> </ul>	Tr	Transformation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No obvious references to this dimension</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Functioning of the HR department and alignment with the overall business strategy</li> </ul>
		R	Reputation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The company's reputation as an employer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No obvious references to this dimension</li> </ul>
		Di	Discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not managing weak performance</li> <li>Managers and supervisors turn a blind eye to non performance</li> <li>Unfair promotional practices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>

#### 4.6.1 Discussion of table 4.9

The discussion of table 4.9 is presented against the background of the purpose of the study which states: *To define a **meaningful workplace** model through the identification and description of the constitutive elements or dimensions in terms that can be related to Organizational Behaviour and applied as Management and Leadership practice in organizational settings, based on the emergence of the construct: **A Meaningful Workplace** in literature and organizational practice, thereby expanding on the emerging theoretical discussion in this regard.*

Table 4.9 represents a fulfilment of this purpose in the sense that various data inputs have been compared and linked to one another, indicating a measure of overlap between the different constitutive elements of the construct as initially envisaged. Elsewhere in the study it was stated that the endeavour is not to create a “grand theory” of the construct as this type of theorising belongs to another era of thought and practice. The objective is the establishment of a part theory to enhance and expand the current theoretical thinking regarding the **meaningful workplace**. Table 4.9 fulfils this purpose or objective in the sense that it is acknowledged that this study is but an initial attempt at investigating the possibilities based on insights that have been collated in this document.

The theoretical perspective emanating from this study (read together with table 4.9) should thus be viewed as a *part-theory* or a *baseline theory*, thereby implying that it is construed as a starting point for possible future development. A *part-theory* or baseline theory can be described as the result of a thinking process which acknowledges shortcomings and the fact that it is not possible to establish or construe unified theories that cover all the possible dimensions in a field of study because of (a) growing complexity in the world that people live in as a result of the confluence of a diversity of factors that present a variety of options (potentialities) to choose from, (b) the rapid evolution and expansion of knowledge in all fields of study, and, (c) the high volume and force of release of information facilitated by technology. It therefore stands to reason that in a postmodern paradigm, the flow and energy of information and new insights will of necessity lead to a choice of options. Not all options can be accommodated in theory formation; it requires a

progression line from a part theory or baseline theory that will enhance understanding of the phenomenon that is being studied, and that can gradually be expanded upon in an evolutionary manner.

The interpretation of Table 4.9 should therefore be viewed within the parameters of certain assumptions that have guided this study from the outset and which have been documented in various contexts above.

The model, as proposed through chapters 3 and 4 and culminating in the integration of dimensions, is designed to accommodate the different elements that collectively serve as the factors that contribute towards experienced meaningfulness and thus a **meaningful workplace**. This does however not imply a final result as many other factors through the evolutionary process, could still be added.

- First and foremost it was assumed and subsequently indicated that employees can experience meaningfulness in the workplace under certain conditions. These conditions come about through a variety of highly dynamic, reciprocal, constitutive dimension/factors/elements that interact on cognitive and emotive levels. The eventual culmination of the interplay between the different factors is judged to be experienced meaningfulness at work, (in the workplace) where work is performed and where the employee fulfils the work role assigned to him/her as part of the employment and psychological contract between employer and employee. The aspirations towards experienced meaningfulness take centre stage in the work life of the individual. This interplay of factors which eventually culminate in experienced meaningfulness is abductively associated with the workplace as a meaningful space, hence the construct: A **meaningful workplace**, where all of the dimensions interact in an integrated manner as indicated in table 4.9.
- Organizations have consistently been viewed from an open systems perspective and more specifically as social systems. Figure 3.21 as well as table 4.9, credit and support this perspective and though the way in which both have been construed, implies a set or sets of relationships that can overlap. The interaction between entities (the structural and other dimensions of the organizational system) primarily impact and interact and have an impact on a

human level and result in behaviour patterns and experiences related to or underlying observable behaviour. The different dimensions that have been shown to overlap or cause an interaction on cognitive or affective, emotional, levels, should therefore not be viewed as functioning or acting in isolation, but as interrelated dimensions that collude to interact on a human level that eventually facilitate meaningful experiences in the workplace. Seen from a different perspective: The space between the organizationally induced dimensions that mediate (not cause!) meaningfulness and the associated behaviour, (mental/cognitive and emotional dimensions) that the individual demonstrates represents the space that can be described as a **Meaningful workplace**.

- Although possibly overstated at this stage, it is nevertheless imperative to bear in mind that workplace as space represents a dynamic, involved, and complex socio-cultural system which represents a mirror image of a bigger social-cultural system that can be viewed as the ecological context for the organizational forms that manifest in society. A socio-cultural system may be described as having an infrastructure, a structure, and a superstructure.

A society's infrastructure (or material base) is its system of production and reproduction, which is determined by a concatenation of ecological, technological, environmental, and demographic variables. A society's infrastructure shapes its structure and superstructure. A society's structure is comprised of its domestic economy (social organization, kinship, division of labour) and its political economy (political institutions, social hierarchies), while its superstructure consists of the ideological and symbolic sectors of culture; the religious, symbolic, intellectual and artistic endeavours (Margiolis and Kottak 2008).

Both Figure 3.21 as well as Table 4.9 propose and imply an “infrastructure, structure and superstructure” on an experiential level and therefore the following as a theoretical perspective or part theory towards understanding utilising the different elements of experience, behaviour and experience by employees that lead to experienced meaningfulness by the individual in the organization, thus establishing the conditions for or towards a Meaningful workplace.

Figure 3.21 is enhanced and expanded by the addition of the empirical constructs that have been imported into the equation. All three of the dimensions that were added (“best employer”, exit interview report, and Repertory grid data) confirm the initial thinking as presented earlier. The constructs from practice that represent something of the emotional and rational “realities” by people in respect of the life in organizations, and are therefore not only informative but also formative regarding the thoughts on A Meaningful workplace. They add depth in the sense that they are verbalisations of the experience(s) of employees.

#### 4.6.2 Expanded Description of a Meaningful workplace

A **meaningful workplace** can now be described as (a) an environment (which is defined and characterised by means of the Meaningfulness **at** Work Model) where people (b) perform meaningful work (as described and defined by means of a Meaning **of** Work Model), and (c) where employees experience meaningfulness as all the requirements for psychological safety and availability are complied with.

In viewing the additional information from the experienced “reality” of organizational life by employees (Chapter 4) it has been observed that the “culture cycle” seems to dominate the meaningfulness landscape in organizations. This observation supports the statement by Chalofsky (2010, p. 158)

*It's not about the perks; it's about the culture.* Employees of **meaningful workplaces** are not there just because they have great benefits. The benefits are the result of the values based culture. The culture has to be imbedded with values of trust, fairness, challenge growth, caring and social responsibility, or else its just window dressing and employees will see through it.

The Repertory Grid interviews provided constructs that very specifically relate to organizational culture as described by Chalofsky. A superficial reading of Table 4.9 supports this observation.

It is furthermore obvious from the results of the study that the individual as unique being is totally involved in the organization and that the organization in ideal circumstances should accommodate and support the whole person in respect of the need for balance. This dimension also requires the alignment between the individual's values, purpose, etc. and mission of the organization. This perspective implies an integrated wholeness and healthiness of individual and organization.

The community dimension has also surfaced as an important dimension of meaningfulness. Being part of the community and experiencing that work makes a difference, the employee accepts ownership and experiences pride to be associated with the organization. When describing the integrated character of the dimensions in the two models (Meaning of Work and Meaningfulness at Work) and the fact that the two models integrate on a different level, the requirement for synergy on different levels has been implied. The three levels can be described in terms of the relationship between the individual and the work community, the synergy between different work community groups and when the organization becomes a community.

In essence these are the conditions that must prevail if the workplace is to be described as a **meaningful workplace**.

#### 4.7 CONCLUSION: CHAPTER 4

The purpose of chapter 4 was stated as an attempt to investigate from three practical/empirical perspectives, whether the construct: A **meaningful workplace**, as described in the previous chapter, exists in the mindset of employees.

The purpose of this Chapter has been achieved in the sense that the experiences of participants in the three areas of empirical enquiry corroborate the findings of the literature search as reported in chapter 3.

The construct: A **Meaningful workplace** has a footprint in both theory and practice.