

**A MEANINGFUL WORKPLACE: FROM THEORY
DEVELOPMENT TO APPLICABILITY**

by

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PRETORIA

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Declaration

I declare that the thesis which I hereby submit for the degree Philosophiae Doctor (with specialisation in Organizational Behaviour) at the University of Pretoria is my own work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at another University.

Petrus Leonard Steenkamp

Signed

DATE

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ABSTRACT

“A meaningful workplace: from theory development to applicability”

by

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Employees experience a loss of meaning in the workplace as a result of fragmentation and alienation (Casey, 2002). This seems to be the result of a change in the way in which people view their world and their experiences in the world, including their place of work. The purpose of the study was to investigate the loss of meaning at work. The investigation indicated a variety of factors as described by Terez (2000), Casey (2002), and Chalofsky (2010). The problem is not a singular problem which can be discussed in isolation, but tends towards a problem-complex, which relates to negative work-life-experiences and that result in the alienation of the individual from the self, work, the organization and others at work. The purpose of the study: “A meaningful workplace: From theory development to applicability” is to construe a **meaningful workplace** model through the identification and description of the constitutive dimensions which construe the underlying theoretical base. It was purposefully structured within the Organizational Behaviour domain, to indicate the applicability of the construct and its underlying theoretical base, in management practice in organizational settings. This purpose was pursued along the boundary lines of three objectives: To conceptualize the constitutive elements of the construct: **meaningful workplace**; to expand (develop) the theoretical base of the construct **meaningful workplace** and to present evidence for the existence of the construct based on empirical evidence from the world of work.

The study follows a qualitative research methodology consisting of a constructivist approach, utilizing two data gathering methods, and interpreted from a phenomenological perspective with a consistent focus on the lived experience of people at work. Two data gathering methods were utilised. Firstly a literature review, of formal scholarly publications was undertaken to identify the constitutive dimensions of the construct. The research followed the lead of the Meaning of Work Project Team (1987), Terez (2000), and Chalofsky (2010), and others. Secondly three empirical data sets were investigated. The first data set consisted of the annual research results of the CRF Institute in relation to the “Best employer to work for”. The second data set consisted of information gleaned from verbatim responses in an exit interview report, being made available for the study. The third data set consists of Repertory Grid interview data. Results of the research indicate that the construct **meaningful workplace** is an emerging construct in literature and that the tenets exist as an ideal in the lived experience of employees. The study contributes to the expansion (development) of the underlying theory of a **meaningful workplace** while simultaneously also providing a parallel understanding of human behaviour at work.

Key words: Organizational Behaviour, Meaningful Workplace, Meaning at work, Meaningful work; Postmodernism, Phenomenology, Constructivism, Repertory Grid, Qualitative Research.

OPSOMMING

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DEPARTEMENT:	Human Resource Management
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GRAAD:	PhD in Organisasiegedrag

Werknemers ervaar 'n verlies aan sinbeleving in die werkplek as gevolg van fragmentasie en vervreemding (Casey, 2002). Uit die navorsing blyk dit dat 'n verskeidenheid van faktore soos deur Terez (2000), Casey (2002), en Chalofsky (2010), beskryf word, hiertoe bydra. In hoofsaak blyk dit die gevolg te wees van 'n verandering in die perspektief en ervarings van mense in die wêreld, wat die wêreld van werk insluit. Die doel van hierdie studie was om 'n potensieële oplossing vir hierdie problematiek deur die daarstelling van 'n teoretiese raamwerk vir 'n prakties implementeerbare model aan te bied. Meer spesifiek: Die doel van studie: **“A meaningful workplace: From theory development to applicability”** was om 'n **betekenisvolle werkplek** model te konstrueer deur middel van die identifikasie en beskrywing van die konstituerende dimensies wat op 'n teoretiese vlak daartoe bydra, maar wat tegelykertyd ook in die daaglikse praktyk van organisasies voorkom. Die probleemveld wat aangespreek word is egter nie 'n enkelvoudige verskynsel wat in isolasie bespreek kan word nie, maar 'n probleem kompleks, wat verband hou met negatiewe werk-lewe ervarings. Dit is juis hierdie ervarings wat die vervreemding van die individu van sy/haar werk, van die self, van ander in die werkplek en van die organisasie tot gevolg het. Die studie is doelbewus in die Organisasiegedrag domein geposisioneer, om sodoende die toepaslikheid van die die konstruk en die onderliggende teoretiese raamwerk in bestuurspraktyk in organisasieverband aan te dui. Hierdie doel is uitgevoer aan die hand van drie spesifieke doelwitte: Om die konstituerende dimensies van die konstruk **betekenisvolle werkplek** te konseptualiseer; om die teoretiese onderbou van die konstruk **betekenisvolle werkplek** te ontwikkel en/of uit te brei en om bewyse vir

die bestaan van die konstruk, op grond van empiriese data uit die wêreld van werk aan te bied.

Die studie volg 'n kwalitatiewe navorsingsmetodologie vanuit 'n konstruktivistiese benadering. Twee datainsamelingstegnieke word gebruik en die resultate word vanuit 'n fenomenologiese strategie geïnterpreteer, met 'n konstante fokus op die geleefde ervarings van mense in die werkplek. Eerstens is 'n literatuurstudie van akademiese publikasies onderneem ten einde die konstituerende dimensies van die konstruk te identifiseer. Hierdie navorsingsdimensie is gebaseer op die "Meaning of Work projekspan,(1987), Terez (2000), Chalosky (2010), en andere. Tweedens is drie empiriese datastelle ondersoek en geanaliseer. Die eerste datastel is afkomstig van die "CRF Institute" wat navorsing doen in verband met die beste werkgever om voor te werk ("Best employer to work for"). Die tweede datastel bestaan uit verbatim response wat opgeneem is in 'n uitdienstredingsvraelys, wat op voorwaarde van vertroulikheid beskikbaar gestel is. Die derde datastel bestaan uit response van deelnemers aan "Repertory Grid" onderhoude. Resultate van die navorsing is aanduidend daarvan dat die konstruk **betekenisvolle werkplek (meaningful workplace)** as 'n ontluikende konstruk in die literatuur te vind is en dat elemente daarvan op die konstrukte (as geleefde ervarings) van werknemers opgemerk word. Die studie dra by tot die uitbreiding (ontwikkeling) van die onderliggende teorie van die konstruk **betekenisvolle werkplek ("meaningful workplace")** terwyl dit gelyktydig ook 'n paralelle verstaansmoontlikheid ten opsigte van menslike gedrag in die werkplek aanbied.

Sleutelwoorde: "Organizational Behaviour, Meaningful Workplace, Meaning at work, Meaningful work; Postmodernism, Phenomenology, Constructivism, Repertory Grid, Qualitative Research".

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“There’s a soul-searching epidemic afoot in the workplace. Employees are no longer content with just a pay cheque and good benefits: they want meaning and passion”.
(Shari Caudron: Training and Development, September 1997)

1 CHAPTER 1

A MEANINGFUL WORKPLACE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

This chapter 1 provides an overview of an identified problem area in the work life of employees and positions the study in the context of Organizational Behaviour. Organization Behaviour is imbedded in a broader framework that is commonly referred to as Human Resource Management or People Management. The implication is that content emanating from Organization Management and -Theory will also contribute towards the current research. The purpose is to provide the reasoning whereby the specific problem (loss of meaning at work) was identified and the process that gave rise to the embarkation on this study. The chapter engages literature in an effort to substantiate the identified problem; to formulate the purpose of the study and to provide an overview of the structure of the written document.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Work has been the centre-piece of human existence since times immemorial, whether the purpose was to gather food or to defend the tribe; to bury the dead or sustain life or security; whether as individuals or collectively, the expenditure of energy towards goal attainment was and still is a common trait of humans. Irrespective of the goals that were pursued, then and now, the common underlying denominator with modern times is that it requires a coordinated effort and therefore some form of work-organization to attain goals. The under-girding fundamental factors in this respect are (on the one hand) that people had to (and still have to) demonstrate behaviour that, in the broadest sense of the word, could be termed as "work related behaviour", and, on the other hand, it is assumed that this behaviour was and still is, goal orientated (Hersey and Blanchard, 1988, p. 18). In a certain sense, therefore, all of mans behaviour since earliest times can be defined as "organized" and goal directed behaviour.

In essence a study of the way that people behaved in respect of their collective (or individual) efforts to achieve certain objectives, although the formal terminology in the stricter sense of the word might not have been used, is the study of Human Behaviour, in the broadest sense of the word. With the advent of more formally structured Human Organizations, and the scientific study of management, against a background where individuals are integrated into a formally structured work or organizational environment, the study of human behaviour in that particular context is typified as the study of Organizational Behaviour (OB). (We should however bear in mind that field of OB is not limited to a job, role or work which is remunerated. In voluntary organizations such as social, non profit NGO's, the Church, and the like, human behaviour in respect of work tasks is still within the field of OB.)

The way in which behaviour is described is determined by the intent and the point of departure, but the observable content from which deductions and conclusions are derived remains fundamentally the same – human behaviour. Any endeavour to establish an understanding of such behaviour cannot be undertaken without taking

cognisance of the contexts within which this behaviour is demonstrated; nor can the different contributory fields, from latter and more "formalised thought" be ignored. These contributions include contributions from such diverse fields as Management Science, Organizational Behaviour (OB) (which has its roots in Psychology, Sociology, and other subject fields), Organizational Theory, Communication Theory, and Anthropology to name but a few.

A third factor that cannot be ignored in the study of human behaviour at work is the reciprocal influence of all the contexts within which an individual functions. The different contexts have been described by authors such as Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) and Hattingh (1996). The question pertaining to the balance between life and work has also been addressed, as has the issue of the Quality of Work life context (e.g. Luthans, 1989). It is accepted that the individual human being, having to contend with various life roles, must somehow cope, not only with the different life roles, but must also adapt to continuous change and transition between these roles that are performed in various changing contexts. Coping with life roles, whilst at the same time adapting to a variety of changes, inevitably impacts on the consciousness; the mental-, emotional experiences, and behaviour patterns of humans. Coping with the work role, adapting to change and fulfilling new roles, within the work *context* and balancing this role with other life roles, is the subject of the field of OB.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY PROGRAM

The primary concept that struck a chord of interest for further research is the concept "meaning" and "meaningfulness" which seemed to be amiss in the work life of the individuals with whom the current researcher came into contact with on a professional level within a work setting. This initial observation was accompanied by a second, albeit initially a superficial observation, that the individual seems to have become trapped in a framework of labels that are somehow perceived to be *the answer* towards managing and predicting his/her behaviour. Not only has the individual been trapped in a framework of labels, but it is also perceived that the

work environment and the behaviour of the individual can be managed in such a way as to create a predictable and therefore a linear cause and effect chain of events related to the behaviour of employees in organizational settings. This perception is borne out by the current perception in organizations that individual and group behaviour can be managed by policy and regulatory statutes in the organization for the employees of the organization. The observed and experienced problem which served as the initial stimulus for this research was/is perceived as a loss of meaning at work. It would seem that human Resource practitioners and managers alike tend to assume that if a certain cause is created the individual will respond in a predictable way. Other practices that are operationalised in organizational settings result in the atomization of the individual and the subsequent suspension of the individual into a team/group and the bigger organization.

The paradox in the study of organizations and OB is to be found in the strange and complex relationship between the individual (on the one hand) and the organization (on the other hand). The paradox is situated in the phenomenon that the individual is at one and the same time also the “organization”. On the one hand, the individual constitutes the organization together with many other individuals that are somehow (based on the work breakdown structure of the total organization) grouped together in smaller teams or groups that constitute a specific task or sequence of tasks in the workflow process of the “organization”.

A further dimension that compounds the problem is the colonization of everyday life by managerialist markers, reducing the individual to a project-object. This is a further indication of the pervasive effect of organizational managerialist and rational culture into everyday life. Thus the individual is further atomized and manipulated into a framework of the achievement and performance imperative that is a characteristic of organizational life. These and other tendencies (that are addressed below) lead to the very pertinent question whether the organizational work space (and the pervasive effect of certain characteristics into the sphere of everyday life), can be described as contributing towards a meaningful existence; specifically meaningful work experiences? Or, more specifically, **do individuals experience the workplace as a meaningful environment?**

1.2.1 The initial journey: Towards formulating the study program

The original idea to pursue this specific study programme was born during a PhD seminar at the University of Pretoria during 2003. As an HR Manager the researcher was often confronted with employees who indicated that they do not enjoy their work and that work has become a burden (see also Chalofsky and Griffin, 2005). Employees came to work “feeling as if they were carrying a huge burden” complaining that they felt “unmotivated”; that they did not derive “satisfaction” from their work because work had become a slur (Personal interviews with employees as HR Manager/Business Partner for a particular division). In addition other opportunities presented themselves such as team building exercises, where employees were encouraged to voice their frustrations with the company, their work, supervisors, and management. In a safe surround these opportunities were fully utilised and many comments (in addition to the above) were noted. (These comments will be discussed during a later chapter when feedback and the interpretation on the content of the Repertory Grid Interviews are presented.) From all of these discussions it seemed as if employees had lost a sense of meaning and direction as a result of certain organizational aspects that were experienced as depressing and inhibiting of their energy and needs to contribute in a meaningful way. The dimensions that were identified as inhibitors in this sense, included such dimensions as policies and their application; remuneration structures that did not allow for flexibility; the general culture of the organization which appeared and was experienced as punitive; supervisory and management incumbents that were seen as being incompetent as managers and furthermore lacked leadership capabilities, as evidenced by the tendency to micro manage subordinates; not respecting the individual as a unique contributor; the breakdown of trust relationships; and many other comments that breath the same type of frustrations.

In addition to the above comments, the researcher personally also experienced some of the above at work. In an attempt to analyse the lack of motivation, introspection also created awareness that it was not only a lack of intrinsic

motivation, but a loss of meaning at work. The workplace had lost its sense of meaning and resulted in a measure of disengagement and self inflicted isolation. The short background provided above, of necessity gave rise to the researchers own mental and emotional processes. The question however, is how to transcend the intrapersonal emotional bias? One way of doing just this was to embark on the process of bracketing, which, in this particular case, implied a disciplined program of investigation.

The awareness motivated the current researcher to enrol and register for the PhD in Organization Behaviour with the intent of discovering the underlying dynamics of the loss of meaning and associated behaviour at work. This train of thought can be presented as in Figure 1.1.

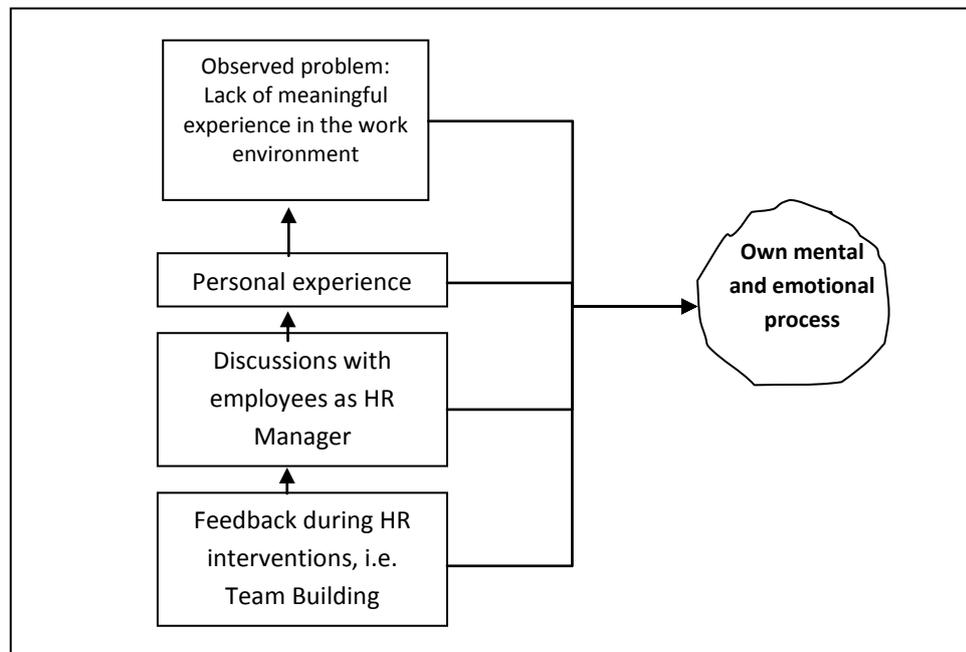


Figure 1.1: The initial motivation leading towards the research

This route facilitated a reading program that focussed on Organizational Behaviour. The reading program and seminar work gradually provided a framework for an understanding of not only behaviour *in* working, but also behaviour *at* work. The difference between the two expressions can be summarised in the words of Chalofsky, who distinguishes between meaningful work or meaning in work on the one hand and meaning at work on the other. (2010, pp. 11-12)

Meaning *in* work, or *meaningful work*, suggests an inclusive state of being. It is the way we express the meaning and purpose of our lives through the activities (work) that take up most of our waking hours...Meaning *at* work implies a relationship between the person and the organization or the workplace in terms of commitment, loyalty and dedication...Meaning *of* work implies a sociological and anthropological concern for the role of work in a society; it is discussed in terms of the norms, values and traditions of work in the day-to-day life of people.

Behaviour *in* working thus refers to the behaviour of individuals whilst performing their work based on their competencies, skills, experiences, emotions, values, and the sense of meaning that is derived from performing that particular piece of work. Behaviour *at* work on the other hand, refers to the behaviour of people whilst performing their work *within* their workplace and as such provides the visible and audible markers of the underlying emotions and experiences regarding the workplace as such. Figure 1.2 presents a further step in the development of the interest and eventual embarkation on the current study program.

It is noteworthy that in addition to the literature addressing the *meaning of work* construct, there seems to be an emerging literature that actually pursues the construct of meaning *at* work. Pratt and Ashforth (2003) (a worthy example of such theoretical grounding) for instance, distinguish between factors (or organizational practices) that foster meaningfulness *in* work and distinguish these from organizational practices that foster meaningfulness *at* work, and, in the third instance, identifies those factors that foster transcendence. (This distinction will be discussed in a further chapter of the current study.)

Having provided a short background of the motivation that initiated the study program, it is now time to turn to a discussion of the perceived problem

See Figure 1.2 for a graphic presentation of the above paragraph

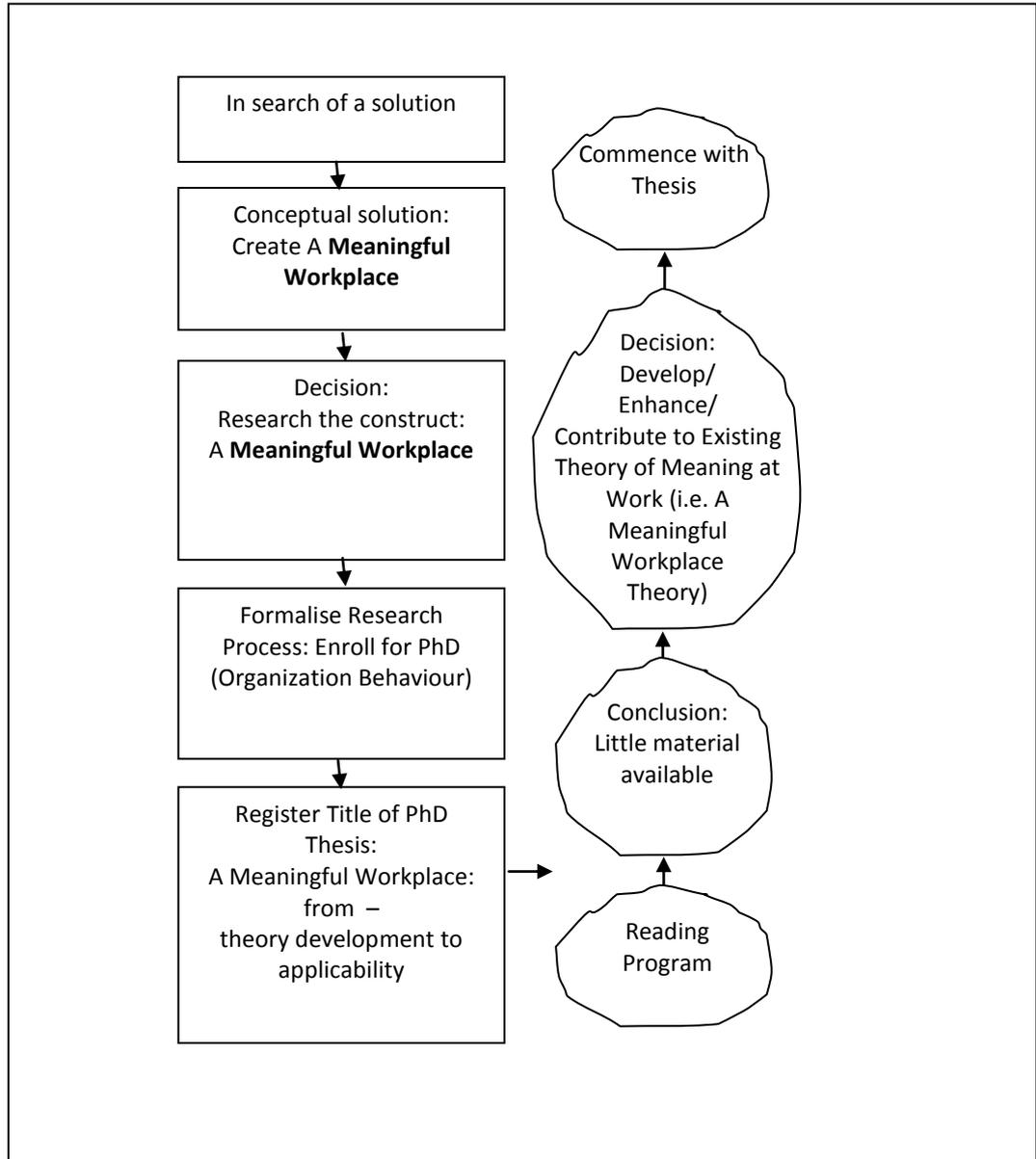


Figure 1.2: Background: Registering the title of the thesis

1.3 BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM AREA

Although the above has already alluded to the development of a potential problem for the purpose of study, it is nevertheless also necessary to discuss the background to the perceived problem area prior to defining the problem for the purpose of this study.

1.3.1 Preliminary description of the observed problem: Behaviour is dynamic and unpredictable

There seem to be a confluence of factors that somehow give rise to the perceived problem, i.e. that employees experience a lack of meaning *at work*.

1.3.1.1 The legitimization and channelling of behaviour in organizations

The first strand emanates from the field of Organizational Behaviour (OB) which seemingly has been reduced to a perceived set of predictable dimensions, described by means of institutionalised concepts which appear to be regulated by fixed organizationally manipulated interventions.

In this regard, Cilliers and Koortzen (2000) assert that managers and scholars alike perceive OB as only being “conscious, mechanistic, predictable, uncomplicated and easy to understand”. Yet, when people react to the pressures of the workplace and the organisation, their behaviour becomes *unintelligible*.

As early as 1978 Katz and Kahn referred to the fact that Organizational Behaviour was not static. They refer to the interdependence of the behaviour of humans in organizations, implying two levels of interdependence. The one level of interdependence that is implied in their statement, although they might not necessarily have meant it to be so, reflects the interdependence of behaviour amongst and between people and, secondly, the interdependence between humans and the flow of inputs into the organization as system. They however also state that the “...classical organizational theory...was not suitable to understand or conceptualise behaviour at work. The reason they offer is that classical organization theory implicitly assumes a “...closed character of social structures” (1978, p. v).

Open systems theory on the other hand furnished a more dynamic framework for the conceptualisation of OB. One of the implications of an open system assumption,

specifically in relation to conceptualising behaviour at work, is that it facilitates dynamic and unpredictable behaviour due to its lack of constancy. In an open system where no inflow consistency (1978, p. 31) can be assured, “much of organizational behavior becomes unpredictable”. Humans tend to drift as a result of many factors which somehow influence the choices that they make. The drift might not necessarily be of a physical nature, but can also be of a cognitive, emotional and/or spiritual nature, resulting in psychological closeness or aloofness in organizations, which can be translated as engaged or disengaged. The reason for this drift is related to the fact that humans make up the so called “walls” (or perimeters) of the organizational system (1978, p, 41). The organization thus employs measures to force employees into certain (at least) observable behaviour patterns so as to contain its own boundary. These measures can be viewed as mechanisms to stabilise the organization by seeking to formalise or institutionalise “all aspects” of organizational behaviour (1978, p. 81).

To prevent any misconstruance at this stage of the discussion it must be very clearly stated that the problem area for the purpose of this study is not entrenched in the experience of the individual *in* working, but the experience of the individual *at* work. Standard operating procedures, work instructions, work guides, business processes, do *not*, as far as this study is concerned, present the observed problem. The root of the problem for a loss of meaning *at* work is searched for in the misalignment between employees and the features that influence the organizational landscape and therefore the dimensions of engagement and commitment towards the work environment. Superficially this can be construed as a lack of loyalty, however the experience of meaning at work is found beyond the boundaries of loyalty and engagement and even beyond the boundaries of motivation. Meaning and meaningful experience at work represents a deeper dimension than motivation and engagement and even a deeper dimension than loyalty for that matter (Sievers in Chalofsky and Griffin, 2005). The focus therefore is on the lack of meaningful experience at work as a result of the fragmentation and alienation of the individual at work. However, having stated this, it is not possible to investigate the experience of meaningfulness at work without also considering the meaning in work.

1.3.1.2 The fragmentation and alienation of the individual at work

Fundamentally this dimension of the problem revolves around the fragmentation of the individual in an organizational setting. The approach in literature whereby a rational-economic and mechanistic approach towards the functioning of the individual in the organisation is accepted as normative, without due cognisance of the intrapersonal and emotive experiences based on an open systems and constructivist position, has created a "knowledge chasm" whereby the former perspective is accepted as normative, whilst the emotive and irrational dimensions of OB have been "ignored". The tendency in the conventional literature (and wisdom) pertaining to OB is to dissolve the individual in a suspension of organisational processes, systems and structures within which an eclectic mix of interventions, to motivate the individual towards ever increasing achievements and productivity is designed. In addition the individual has been reduced to a "unit of analyses" in the true sense of the word and has become an object to be manipulated through job descriptions (thereby not taking cognisance of the implosion of jobs and the emergence of expanded roles), reward and recognition systems; and managed and led by managers and leaders that have been moulded into a contemporary mould utilising vision statements, mission statements, and collective value systems of which the most outstanding is: "we value our people", whilst at the same time subjecting valued employees to processes of re-engineering and resultant retrenchments.

This happens without necessarily calculating the human, organizational and societal costs of such interventions, specifically in the South African context, which is described (a) as a developing economy, (b) regulated by a legal framework that has resulted in a semi-closed labour market to correct past injustices, (c) with a new political dispensation that has been successfully established and seemingly has proven itself over the past ten to 15 years, (d) subject to continuous and fundamental structural change, (e) resulting in the alignment of corporate and organizational life towards the forces of transformation and globalism.

In practice the employee experiences a measure of alienation from the work and the organization itself. Cummings and Manring (1977, p. 167) conclude that “five dimensions of alienation” (i.e. “work-powerlessness, normlessness, meaningfulness, self-evaluative involvement, and instrumental work orientation”) are positively related to certain work behaviour patterns (i.e. “effort, performance, absenteeism, and tardiness”). It is furthermore also assumed that

...alienating work has negative behavioural consequences, e.g., work that provides for little self-control, meaning, and intrinsic satisfaction leads to reduced motivation in the work process and to various forms of withdrawal (1977, p. 168).

The five dimensions are described by Cummings and Manring (1977, p. 169)

1. Powerlessness-the feeling that an individual is an object, dominated and controlled by other people or a technical system of production. This dimension is similar to Rotter’s (1966) concept of “internal vs. external control,” and DeCharms et al. (1965) “origin vs. pawn.”
2. Meaninglessness--” the inability to understand the events in which one is engaged” (Shepard, 1971, p. 14). This form of alienation results when work roles are seen as lacking integration into other work roles as well as into the goals of the organization.
3. Normlessness-the feeling that the attainment of culturally prescribed goals demands illegitimate means. Here the primary concern is the extent to which a worker perceives that upward mobility in the organization requires illegitimate means as opposed to advancement on the basis of merit.
4. Instrumental work orientation-the feeling that work is “valued primarily as a means to nonwork ends rather than valued for its intrinsic rewards” (Shepard, 1971, p. 16). This dimension is similar to Seeman’s (1959) notion of self-estrangement in which work becomes an instrumentalized means rather than an end in itself.
5. Self-evaluative involvement -the degree to which a worker feels his role is a more important referent for evaluating self than his

nonwork activity. This variant of alienation is similar to Lodahl and Kejner's (1965) concept of "job involvement" or the extent to which the job situation is central to a person's identity, and Wilensky's (1964) "prized self-image."

See also Seeman (1959), who identifies the same dimensions and basically agrees on the descriptions/definitions. The question that arises is whether alienation and meaninglessness are the same?

Based on the discussion thus far it seems that meaninglessness is represented as a type of alienation, together with other types such as powerlessness, normlessness, and estrangement. In all of these types of alienation, there seems to be pointers towards a common type of denominator, which can be identified as a lack of control on the part of the individual over his environment, which produces in him a sense of frustration, powerlessness. Accordingly, the individual negates the environment and could possibly withdraw from such an environment. In the work environment, thus whilst *at work* the individual employee does not physically withdraw as he/she is overpowered by an over powering force, i.e. the need to work and thus to be self-sufficient. The employee thus succumbs but harbours a dislike and therefore disengages psychologically from the workplace, thereby leaving an emptiness or meaningless experience work. Eventually the employee can develop contempt towards his own self. His existence becomes meaningless.

Powerlessness according to Ashforth (1989, p. 208) involves a "three stage process of psychological adjustment". The first stage is described as "reactance, the individual attempts to gain the control initially expected or desired" (Ashforth, 1989, p. 208). The second stage is referred to as "helplessness", during which the individual "learns that such attempts are largely futile and abandons them".

In the third stage, 'work alienation', the individual comes to desire no more than the status quo affords. Work alienation is defined as a cognitive sense of separation of the individual from work **and the workplace** that is a lack of job involvement and organizational identification

This trend has major effects as far as issues of performance, satisfaction and organization self esteem is concerned, hence the loss of meaning at work, which inadvertently gave rise to the emerging conceptual construct of **Meaningful workplace**. (Chalofsky, 2010; Terez, 200)

Sendjaya and Sarros (2002, p. 285) examined the extent to which leadership behaviour and aspects of organizational structure, influences, or relates to elements of “work alienation such as powerlessness, self-estrangement and meaninglessness”, and conclude that:

Results show that transformational leadership was associated with lower work alienation, whereas transactional leadership was associated with higher work alienation. Organizational structure was not significantly predictive of work alienation, but was negatively associated with transformational leadership and positively associated with transactional leadership. The significant indirect effects between organizational structure and work alienation, and between organizational structure and transformational leadership, provide further evidence that the leadership style of the organization has a more significant impact on feelings of work alienation than antecedent conditions such as organization rigidity.

1.3.1.3 Legitimized domination

"Strategic Management" as the mechanism towards these changes, still contains the principle of legitimised domination that originated in Bureaucratic Philosophy, although now much more refined and sophisticated. The individual thus remains trapped in a vacuum of powerlessness that is governed by systems, process, structures, procedures and prescriptive regulations. This not only leads to a fragmentation of the individual's existence (on an emotional level), but also lays down barriers that prevent the individual from fully fulfilling his/her potential life roles including his/her work role. Individuals are "forced" under the threat of being

"managed out" to perform to the highest possible level of output, without the conditions that contribute towards psychological fulfilment and meaningfulness.

Chalofsky and Griffin (2005) indicate that not only did the community become separated from work during the Industrial Era, but it created a situation whereby people did not own their work anymore. Work that is performed by the individual employee, either as an individual or within a group setting became the "property" of the organization. The result of the process of disowning work from the individual, also created a process of alienation through which the individual within the different contexts of life, missing out on real meaning making and connectedness which transcends the work environment and even encroaches upon the social life of the individual (Chalofsky, 2010).

Chalofsky and Griffin (2005) refer to Sievers, a German organizational development scholar, who ..."hypothesizes that it was only after meaning disappeared from work—when work separated from life and community—did motivation become an issue. Meaning always played an integral part of work when work was an integral part in the community".

Work behaviour does not rest on the conscious alone, but is rather more sub-conscious and unconscious; not mechanistic and linear but dynamic; not predictable but in the true sense of the word, unpredictable. An individual acts in a dynamic way to the impulses and variables that confronts him/her (Cilliers and Koortzen, 2000). Without balance and cohesive behaviour patterns resulting in a balance (not equilibrium) within him/her and without role fulfilment the individual cannot function optimally and effectively, thereby contributing to profitability and sustainability, within the organisation.

1.3.1.4 Separation of Organizational Theory and Organizational Behaviour

A second dimension related to the perceived problem emanates from the chasm between Organizational behaviour and Management Theory pertaining to the

management of Organizations.

Koontz (1980) typifies management theory as a jungle. Koontz originally identified 6 so-called schools of management theory, which were identified as “(1) the management process school, (2) the empirical or ‘case’ approach school, (3) the human behavior school, (4) the social system school, (5) the decision theory school, and (6) the mathematics school”. Twenty years after the initial study, the so-called schools of management theory proliferated to the extent that he identified 11 schools of thought, some of which were new schools, whilst others built on the original foundations. Without embarking into the depths of this discussion, it is sufficient for the purpose of this study to refer to the origins of the confusion between the different schools, which, in its ramifications, leads to confusion in the minds of practicing managers.

These varying schools, or approaches (as they are better called), led to a jungle of confusing thought, theory, and advice to practicing managers. The major sources of entanglement in the jungle were often due to varying meanings given common words like “organization”, to differences in defining management as a body of knowledge, to widespread casting aside of the findings of early practicing managers as “armchair” rather than what they were – the distilled experience and thought of perceptive men and women, to misunderstanding the nature and role of principles and theory, and to an inability or unwillingness of many “experts” to understand each other (Koontz, 1980, p. 175).

1.3.1.5 The straitjacket of Organization Science and Organizational Behaviour

Daft and Lewin (1990, p. 2), conclude that organization science has been strait-jacketed because of the phenomenon that a so-called “publication barrier”, based on the perception that only publications anchored in established theories or

"legitimate" methods may be published. The implication is that only certain theoretical concepts and themes are put forward as acceptable pointers for study and practice, in organisational settings, resulting in a limited set of topics". The background to this particular set of circumstances is the result of the establishment, or the growth, of a paradigm with a defined set of problems for a community of scholars. This is defined as the problem of "normal science" (Daft and Lewin, 1990). The particular scholarly community draws its conceptual and theoretical boundaries through the "creation of a common language and "accepted modes and protocols of" (Daft and Lewin, 1990, p. 2)

The normal science concept forces the field of study into methodological boxes. New entrants are forced into the assumptions of the paradigm and thus perpetuate the tradition. As a result, conclude Daft and Lewin (1990, p. 2): "The boundaries of the paradigm can put the field in an intellectual strait jacket."

As classical management theory was gaining momentum, other academic approaches also emerged. The Foundation of organizational behavior was launched by the Hawthorne studies...and by the concept of organizations as cooperative systems. Bureaucratic sociologists such as Merton, Selznick began to appear in' the 1950's. The characterization of organizations as problem- noting, decision-making systems also appeared about the same time. During 1959 a shift towards systematic research and away from Common-sense prescriptive approaches to teaching occurred (1990, p. 4).

This "shift" as Daft and Lewin (1990), refers to it, was the first crack that started the separation of organizational science and organizational behavior. Consider the paradigmatic influence which created an assumed "stable field" for theoretical research, based on "normal science" assumptions and the momentum for the separation were initiated. The consequence of this "moving away" or separation resulted in organisational theory not transforming into an applied science. It further resulted in a chasm forming between the theory of organisations and the behaviour of people within organisations. The theoretical perspectives as mentioned earlier resulted in a boxed approach which restricted the thinking and research to the

paradigmatic topics or themes that were fixated.

Organizational Behaviour suffered as a result of this separation because it became a de-contextualised endeavour functioning under the premise that behaviour is predictable and manageable through the implementation of certain interventions that are mentioned elsewhere in this chapter.

A superficial survey of the field of OB provides sufficient information indicating a rather static treatment of the field. On the one hand, scholars and practitioners have wittingly (or unwittingly) created an ecology which, although interdependent, can still be distinguished in terms of its own language, purpose, and the products that is created by means of theoretical, experimental, experiential, empirical, and other means of research. How does such ecology come into being? In addition to the evolutionary process and the ever increasing ecology of OB, the tendency towards Management theory and behaviour has deposited its seeds in this ecological wonderland of OB, and has borne its own fruits with time.

Very little changes have come about by means of expanding this ecology. It has remained rather static in approach and discourse, mainly being influenced by modernism. The problem for McFillen (1985) (and which is supported), is the lack of a macro context within which the study of Organizational behaviour is studied, i.e. the organization. In this regard, McFillen (1985, p. 355) states that textbooks on Organizational Behaviour are as abundant as the ways to

...interpret and assemble the variety of knowledge, facts, and educated guesses that make up the field. A glance at the available textbooks in organizational behavior indicates at least three things. First, an established core of OB knowledge has developed to which almost every business student in America is exposed. Although one may quarrel with a topic's treatment in some text, a fairly standardized set of topics has emerged, even to the point of some "must" references. Second, the material is assembled and packaged in a multitude of ways. Any faculty member should find a text or combination of texts that serve her/his purpose. Third, too many

organizational behavior texts currently are available for any reviewer to examine them all.

In spite of the multitude, McFillen nevertheless reports on a survey of 10 Organizational Behaviour Textbooks and eventually concludes that (1985, p. 364)

Somewhere along the road to respectability, OB lost management. In the field's apparent quest to right the previous wrongs of prescriptiveness without theory or data, organizational behavior books turned to theories and research without much attempt to apply those critical elements to the process of managing...the role of applied scientists does require prescription...customers demand it...Another observation about organizational behavior texts past and present is how poorly they cover the more macro-oriented issues...an OB textbook that provides any semblance of significant coverage of OT is hard to find.

As far as the coverage of the individual in the organization is concerned, McFillen continues to state that (1985, p. 364)

Most OB textbooks provide twice the coverage for groups than for organization theory and two to three times the coverage for individual behavior than for groups. On the other hand, maybe the reason the textbooks do not cover OT well is because the authors are uncomfortable with OT. This would be an equally damaging indictment of the profession. A review of most OT chapters gives the impression that the study of organizations at the macro level stopped with Woodward, Lawrence and Lorsch, and Burns and Stalker.

1.3.1.6 Modernism: Organizational Science and OB

OB as an *interdependent* field of study and scientific endeavour has unfortunately become bound by convention in respect of the units of analysis that constitute the

structure and content of definition and description of human behaviour at work. These units are conventionally indicated as the *individual*, the *team/group*, and the *organization*. This convention has its roots in the development of rigorous scientific thought and the development of scientific method based on quantitative methods, which ultimately resulted in a fragmentation and silo-typology of reality. This tendency can be traced back in time to the evolvement of scientific and systematic thought as applied to management and organizational theory, specifically through experimental and other controlled and controllable methods; in short – quantitative methods.

Chalofsky and Griffin (2005, p. 1) comment that as early as the 17th century an intimate relationship existed between work and (the) community. Whatever your occupation or trade, you would socialise with every other member of society. At about 1860 approximately half of the population was self-employed and followed some sort occupational stream, mostly based on inheritance. This situation gradually changed. By the 1900's "two thirds were wage earners and the clock, uniform standards, and supervisors came to govern the workplace" and "workers subordinated their own experiences to the logic of efficiency and productivity". The advent of enlightenment modernism (advent about 1890) with its emphasis on rationality made a significant contribution towards this subordination of the individual worker to the logic of efficiency and productivity under the imperative of performance. The era of enlightenment is often closely linked with the Scientific Revolution, for both movements emphasized reason as the source for the truth about reality. The age of enlightenment, although a commencement date of roughly the 16th century is set, had a sustainable effect and influence throughout the scientific era and the formulations of modernistic thought.

Although organizations are an integrated part of society, people (since then to date) work in demarcated areas and are effectively detached from and separated from the larger community or society. It was the advent of the Industrial Era (late 18th century and early 19th century) that separated work from community and created an environment or an experiential state in which people do not "own" their work (Chalofsky and Griffin, 2005). Hierarchies separate management from workers whilst internal competition to progress, position employees against each other as

adversaries. The impact of the separation of work from life and society or community resulted in a loss of meaning (Sievers, in Chalofsky et al., 2005), thus the flash point pertaining to interest in motivation, with specific reference to work motivation, was ignited. "Meaning" according to Chalofsky and Griffin (2005, p. 2) "always played an integral part of work when work was an integral part in the community". This type of scenario could well explain the current interest, research, theorising and discussion regarding "meaningful work and **Meaningful workplaces**" by authors such as (Chalofsky 2003, a, b), Levering (Co-founder of the Great Place to Work Institute, date unknown), May, Gilson and Harter (2004), Mostert (2004), Terez (2000), Weisbord (1987), Wiese and Freund (2005), amongst others. Man's search for meaning (Frankl 2004) still holds true in the twenty first century as in the twentieth century.

The statement has been made that the study of OB is bound by convention that has its formal roots (although its primal origins date back many millennia) in the Industrial Era and the attempts at organizing and systemising work behaviour into patterns of coherence. This gave rise to a view of the individual as a "unit of analysis" patterned according to fixed rules of investigation (influenced by positivism and empiricism as practised in the natural or physical sciences). A perusal of any standard Handbook on OB reveals, not only the pattern of investigation, but also certain labels according to which this "unit of analysis" should be managed to elicit productive behaviour in the service of organizational efficiency. Table 1.1 provides an overview of not only the subject matter that is discussed using the individual as a unit of analysis, but also the flow of content.

The Table below provides an indication of the way in which Organizational Behaviour is treated in literature.

**Table 1.1: Overview of the framework within which the individual is framed
in organizational settings**

THE INDIVIDUAL AS UNIT OF ANALYSIS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF OB LITERATURE	
Content headings	Author and date of publication
Foundations of OB Perception and individual decision making Values, attitudes and job satisfaction Basic motivational concepts Motivation: From concepts to application	Robbins (1989)
Personality Perception Attitudes and job satisfaction Job stress	Luthans 1989
Individual behaviour and differences Motivation – discussion of content theories Motivation – discussion of process theories Evaluating, rewarding and punishing behaviour Stress and the individual	Gibson et al (1991)
Personality, perception and attribution Attitudes, values and ethics Learning and reinforcement Stress and wellbeing at work	Nelson et al. Quick (2000)
Personality and attitudes Perception and attribution Learning and reinforcement Motivation in the work setting Motivating performance: Goal setting and reward systems	Hellregel et al (2001)
Individual processes Individual differences and personality Perception Motivation, learning and rewards	Weiss (2001)
Individual differences: Personality, Attitudes, Abilities, and Emotions Social Perceptions and Attributions Motivation through Needs, Job Design, and Satisfaction Motivation through Equity, Expectancy, and Goal Setting Improving Job Performance with Feedback and Rewards	Kreitner et al. Kinicki (2001)

THE INDIVIDUAL AS UNIT OF ANALYSIS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF OB LITERATURE	
Content headings	Author and date of publication
Behaviour modification and Self Management	

Table 1.1 represents a typical and conventional approach towards a description of the individual as a unit of analysis within an organizational setting, based on conventional theory. The "labels" according to which the work behaviour of the individual is analysed, regulated and described (as a unit of analysis) does not reveal a paradigmatic progression line in respect of the changing philosophical, socio political, socio cultural and socio economic settings with time. This is a typical fixated pattern with its origins in the era of Scientific Management. The individual as a *unit of analysis* typically framed in this fashion gives rise to management practices regulated by linear and causal mental models. Deviations from the expected behaviour patterns are treated as pathological and result in further labelling of the individual as incompatible (or even incapacitated) in the organisation.

A conventional approach dissolves the individual in a suspension of the two "bigger" units of analysis, i.e. the team/group and the organization as a whole. The paradigmatic context remains that of *Scientific Management* with its antecedents in the world- and life-view that can be traced to the turn of the 20th century and even earlier.

It could be argued that the foregoing statement is an unfair representation of the *content* that is represented in the different publications, and furthermore that it does not do justice to effort and energy of the scientific community in the field of OB. But, a progression line in respect of the labels and content such as these represented in Table 1.1, from a typical *scientific approach to management* towards a *dynamic and individually based expose*, within the framework of a changing or a new and ever-developing paradigm has yet to be discovered. There are however traces of such approaches in the School of Scientific Management, more notably, in the work and thought of Mary Parker Follet, who is well known for the pioneering role she fulfilled in the management science. She approached the organizations as group networks rather than as hierarchical structures, and attended to the influence of human

relations within the group. Such an approach fell outside of the mainstream of her times and could be labelled as radical and a softer orientation. However a better label would be to place her within the field of a psychodynamic approach, although there is no acknowledgement for such terminology applied to her. The problem is that Mary Parker Follet was forgotten and the perspective she advocated is rarely acknowledged in contemporary literature. Had this been the case, the topography of the body of knowledge of OB might have looked totally different.

McFillen (1985) embarked on the same exercise and after evaluating 10 standard Organizational Behaviour textbooks used in American universities, concludes that:

These textbooks share some unfortunate characteristics with those books that have preceded them. Somewhere along the road to respectability, OB lost management...Another observation about organizational behavior texts past and present is how poorly they cover the more macro-oriented issues. Other than textbooks devoted principally to organizational theory, an OB textbook that provides any semblance of significant coverage of OT is hard to find. (McFillen, 1985, p. 364).

It therefore is deemed a necessary exercise to follow the trail, however briefly, of the development of Management Theory and Organization Theory in order to create ecology for the understanding of what is to follow later in the current text.

1.3.1.7 Ontological diversity

It is insightful to establish the distinctive ontological perspectives between the conventional approach and the psychodynamic approach towards the behaviour of the individual in the organisation. A superficial comparison of the different approaches towards the study and eventual understanding of OB, comparing a typical conventional approach as indicated in Table 1.1 with a more psychodynamic approach as represented by Cilliers and Koortzen raises a fundamental question in

respect of the ontological assumptions and presuppositions with which the two approaches operationalised the description of the same subject matter.

The ontological dimension in research refers to the study of or approach to reality (Mouton and Marais, 1992). Fundamentally the question of ontology is to discover, describe and define the nature of reality. As the study of reality it inevitably touches upon the conceptions of reality it thus also refers to the study of being or the study of existence. Philosophically speaking ontology deals with the precise utilization of words as descriptors for the state of being or reality.

In the social sciences, at least so it seems, certain main-stream ontological approaches can be identified, (which account for the differences in outcome or description of reality when approached from different perspectives) each with its own metaphysical bias. Realism as an approach assumes that facts (reality) are objectively and independently available and waiting to be discovered; Empiricism in its turn, approaches the study of reality from the perspective that it can be known through observation and as a result it can be related to facts; Positivism focuses on the observations themselves and is referentially more attentive to factual claims than to the facts themselves; Postmodernism approaches reality from the premise that facts and reality are elusive and fluid as a result of which the focus must shift to claims about observation.

Seen from this perspective it is at once understandable why the conventional approach to the individual (as a unit of analysis) and a more dynamic approach differ in respect of their terms of reference as well as the dimensions that are selected as the labels in which the research and discussion are packaged.

Scholars seemingly confront the same reality whilst in actual fact the differences serve as examples of the ontological diversity within the field of study. Both the conventional and dynamic (psychodynamic approach) research domains represent the individual within an organizational setting. Both research human behaviour within the work setting, as the fundamental content matter or reality. Yet there are differences. The difference however is subtle in as much as the conventional theorists position the individual in an economic and rational frame, where the function of the organization dictates the research, whilst the dynamic or

psychodynamic theorists frame the intrapersonal and psychological functioning of the individual, and view him/her as a living entity in an encompassing (bigger) open or Living system (organism), i.e. the organization.

These approaches each have a distinct "life of their own", yet both of these approaches towards a specific reality have their own merit. The individual does function within an organization that has its own purpose, which must be achieved. However there are distinguishable dimensions that are assumed from an ontological basis. Thus the insight dawns that the different approaches are actually complementary and together they represent a more holistic body of knowledge that can contribute to an understanding of the dynamics of organisational life, with specific reference to the individual's work behaviour.

The problem does not revolve around the approach as such but centres on the fact that the individual has become a fragmented and alienated "piece of organizational equipment" without due regard for the meaning that is derived from work.

Following the development of Organizational Theory and its derivatives, including OB, organizational analysis and the resultant intervention strategies have become trapped in a managerialist-structural-functionalism based on instrumental-rationalism. This trend has continued throughout the different epochs of the reflection on, and theorizing about organizations that has eventually also enabled the "micro-psychologism of the Organizational Behaviourists to be systematically accommodated" (Casey 2002:83). An added and valid addition to this statement is that a linear thought process has captivated managers and top-level executive leaders into a cause-and-effect thought process and mental model for the motivation and management of employees.

The critique against the view on people (and management practice) by managers in organizations (specifically from a conventional standpoint) is that it amounts to an isolationist and de-contextualised approach towards human behaviour in the workplace. Should de-contextualization become the norm the resultant contribution towards understanding human behaviour at work, will bear the marks of an a-historical thought process, guided by linear functionalism - the exact same trap that the field of Organizational Theory and OB has fallen into since the advent of the

Newtonian epoch (Casey 2002).

De-contextualisation does not only refer to the observable or definable boundaries within which an individual functions but also the emotional and the psychological context or ecosystem of his/her existence. The de-contextualisation of the individual in the work setting thus also results in a process of alienation from the self, whilst the force of coercion transplants the individual into a setting of forced coalition and regulation within which there is nothing else left but to comply for the sake of survival - physically, emotionally and psychologically.

This illuminates one question pertaining to the work life and experience of humans in organizations - i.e. the concept: "Meaning". Does the individual experience meaning within such boundaries as being managed within organizations and furthermore: Do humans experience meaning in such an environment that is regulated by linear and causal measures to regulate their work place, their behaviours and their experiences? Therefore *are* our organizations **Meaningful workplaces**?

1.4 ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOUR AS FOUNDATION FOR THE RESEARCH PROGRAM

In the proposed study, OB as subject field represents a broad framework for reflection and research pertaining to the factors that contribute towards the underlying motives that form and guide a persons' work related behaviour en route to experienced meaningfulness at work. This framework can however not be divorced from the historical setting within which any study of this nature is undertaken. Should de-contextualisation become the norm, the resultant contribution towards understanding human behaviour at work, will bear the mark of an a-historical thought process guided by linear functionalism - the exact same trap that the field of Organizational Theory and OB has fallen into since the advent of the Newtonian epoch (Casey 2002).

McFillen (1985) has sufficiently indicated that the problem pertaining to Organizational Behaviour as a subject field with its own body of knowledge has been divorced from Management Theory and more specifically Organizational Theory. The ecology for the study of Organizational behaviour has thus become contracted. In the same instance the field of Organizational Theory and Management Theory has also become contracted and thus the three fields of study have seemingly lost each other along the way, giving rise to an observable separation.

1.5 THE EVOLUTION OF MANAGEMENT THEORY AND ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOUR

It is deemed necessary to embark on a short journey into the field of Management Theory in order to establish the evolution in thought and paradigm from earlier times to the present. This journey is not exhaustive of the field, but sufficient to add to the previous discussion in the sense that a trend towards a more dynamic approach seems to have evolved with the advent of post-modernism. The discussion therefore is very eclectic in nature.

1.5.1 Management: The ancient symbols

Tracing the origins and development of OB as a field of study with its own subject matter, methodologies, approaches and objectives, unavoidably leads to the impression that it cannot be separated from some form of organization (the practice of management) and dates back to ancient civilizations.

The symbols of management and goal orientated behaviour stand out in history as beacons along the way of the development of management thought and practice, and for that matter, as contributions to the field of OB. These include the pyramids, the Great Wall of China, the Mesopotamian walled cities, the road network of the

Roman Empire, wars that have been fought, etc. History is littered with these symbols from which modern scholars can learn on our journey of discovery of the field of OB.

1.5.1.1 Management: Documented earlier contributions the division of labour (Plato 427-347 BCE; Mencius 372-289 BCE)

Two random examples illustrate that certain techniques were known and applied since the earliest times. These will suffice to prove the point that the notion of OB, although a modern concept, was certainly prevalent in the application in the minds of "*managers*" since the earliest times.

Plato (427-347 BC) dealt with the division of labour in his *Republic*, as did the Chinese Philosopher Mencius (372 – 289 BC). In more specific terms Mencius dealt with the advantages of the division of labour, indicating this as being *production management techniques*.

From the ancient Greeks we learn of the instruction to Greek soldiers to lay out their weapons and equipment for easy access in preparation for possible surprise attacks. This already indicates the adoption of uniform work methods.

1.5.2 Management: Contributions during the 14th and 15th centuries: Work-study

Contributions from the 14th and 15th centuries set the scene for further developments in the field of management and the study of OB.

Two inventions, (the mechanical clock, invented by Heinrich von Wych in Paris in 1370, and Guttenberg's printing press) provided impetus to future developments in management "science". The former permitted accurate work measurement and time and motion studies and the latter the ability to communicate through the medium of

the printed word.

A Spanish visitor to the Arsenal of Venice observed a functional logistical supply line (production line) and gave an account of what he saw in 1436, 500 years prior to Henri Ford's assembly line.

[A]s one enters the gate there is a great street on either hand with the sea in the middle,... on one side are windows opening out of the house of the arsenal, and the same on the other side, ... out came a galley towed by a boat, and from the windows they handed out to them, cordage,... the ballistics and mortars, and so from all sides everything which was required, ...when the galley had reached the end of the street all the men required were on board, together with the complement of oars, and she was equipped from end to end. In this manner there came out ten galleys, fully armed, between the hours of three and nine.

The Arsenal of Venice apparently also applied the principle of using standardized parts.

The bows of the warships had to accommodate all types of arrows; stern parts were standardized to accommodate all types of rudders and rigging. The deck parts had to be interchangeable. Wrecked vessels could be cannibalized to repair less damaged vessels or at least to keep them afloat. (See Davis, 2008 as well as: Kaon Consulting. "The Venetian Arsenal: The World's First Assembly Line." <http://www.kaon.com.au/index.php?page=venetian-arsenal>)

Even the monasteries contributed towards management knowledge and science. Fifteenth century monks recorded the overall times for the construction of monastery stonework. Such records suggest an attempt, even in those early times, to establish standards of quality, time and output.

Work was however viewed as demeaning and something to be avoided. It was the endeavour of slaves and tended to get in the way of other pursuits such as the arts,

military adventure and philosophy. The same attitude in respect of work was prevalent in Pre-Reformation Christian Europe, where work was seen as punishment for the sins of Adam and Eve. It is only with the Church Reformation that the so-called Protestant Work Ethic emerged, based on Luther's glorification of work and Calvin's consolidation of this perspective. In summary it could be said that up to the 15th century AD certain trends manifest themselves (although modern terminology is applied to describe these):

- Tendencies towards the *Division of Labour*;
- The establishment of *Uniform Work Methods*;
- The design of the first documented *Production Line Principle*;
- *Time and Motion Studies*.

1.5.3 Contributions from the Industrial Revolution

Technological advances in the textile industry's manufacturing processes; increase in agricultural production, which had grown to the extent that surpluses were generated, which in turn were used for trading purposes; advances in living standards, improved hygiene and the lowering of the mortality rate; expanding trade and markets; and growing populations created opportunities for merchants and entrepreneurs to invest in factories characterised the Industrial Revolution.

Adam Smith advocated work efficiency by means of specialization during the eighteenth century and proposed a breakdown of work into simple tasks based on three advantages of the division of labour:

- Saving of time;
- Using specialized tools;
- Development of skills

In the United States, after the War of Independence a shortage of musket parts led Eli Whitney to propose the manufacturing of muskets by means of using interchangeable parts. The process was successful in producing large quantities of

interchangeable parts and thus was born the process of tooling up for production (Wilson 1954).

In 1832, Charles Babbage, an engineer, philosopher and researcher, examined the division of labour in his book "On the Economy of Machinery and Manufacturers", and raised important questions about production, organizations and economics. (Babbage, 1835). The first attempt at formally timing work was probably in 1760 when a Frenchman, Jean-Rodolphe Perronet, studied the manufacture of pins and attempted to establish standard times for various operations. Babbage expanded on his efforts by breaking down the manufacture of a pin into seven elements. Based on this, Babbage proposed, as an advantage of the division of labour, that the amount of skill needed to undertake a specialized task was only the skill necessary to complete that specific task. The important implication for employers was that they only had to pay for the amount of skill necessary to complete each individual task (Lee 1994). Babbage advocated breaking down jobs into elements and costing each element. In this way, potential savings from investments in training, process and methods could be quantified. (Lee, September 1994. <http://ei.cs.vt.edu/~history/Babbage.html>).

At the turn of the century Robert Owen studied the problems of layout and method. Owens's work at the New Lanark Mills was revolutionary at the time. Through experimentation, he succeeded in raising the living conditions of his workers whilst reorganizing his mills on commercial principles. Robert Owen is credited with being the first to recognize fatigue and the work environment as factors affecting the performance of factory workers. Owen focused on the changing of attitudes, (because an *idea* cannot be killed) and became convinced that the advancement of humankind could be furthered by the improvement of every individual's personal environment. He reasoned that since character was moulded by circumstances, improved circumstances would lead to goodness. The environment at New Lanark, where he applied his ideas, reflected this philosophy.

While at New Lanark, Robert Owen demonstrated management policies that are now widely recognised as precursors of modern theories relating to human resource management, as well as skilful and ethical business practice. His work inspired

infant education; humane working practices, Co-operation, trade unionism, and garden cities (See New Lanark Trust: <http://www.robert-owen.com/>)

Advances in the fields of agriculture, travel, and the textile industry (to name but three) gave rise to the following elements that can be traced as contributing factors towards the study of management and OB:

- Specialization
- Division of Labour
- Tooling for Production
- Work breakdown to work elements

1.5.4 Scientific Management

From an operational and academic perspective, Frederick Taylor, Henri Fayol, Henri Ford and others, as organizational specialists in their own right, stand in the frontline as the main exponents of Scientific Management and as exemplary organizers. Their legacy actually provides us with insights in respect of the way that people acted (and most probably still act) in the work place. Their main motive was simply as Luthans (1989, p. 27) states: the "...overall managerial organization of their companies to survive". A short overview, for the sake of continuity and a broad perspective is presented below.

1.5.4.1 Frederick Winslow Taylor

Frederick Taylor, accredited as the father of Scientific Management and acknowledged for the basic and fundamental correctness of his views in respect of the principles that he propagated, was not necessarily the originator of ideas, but a pragmatist with the ability to synthesize the work of others and to promote them effectively to a ready and eager audience of industrial managers who were striving to find new or improved ways to increase performance. By 1881 Taylor had

published a paper that turned the cutting of metal into a science. Later he turned his attention to shovelling coal and through experimentation was able to design shovels that permitted workers to shovel for the whole day. Thus he reduced the number of people shovelling at the Bethlehem Steel Works from 500 to 140. In 1895, he presented papers on incentive schemes, whilst in 1909 he published the book for which he is best known: “**Principles of Scientific Management.**”

He devised a system he called **scientific management**, a form of industrial engineering that established the organization of work as in Ford's assembly line. This discipline, along with the industrial psychology established by others at the Hawthorne Works in the 1920s, moved management theory from early time-and-motion studies to the latest total quality control idea... He introduced time-motion studies in 1881...Taylor's ideas, clearly enunciated in his writings, were widely misinterpreted. Employers used time and motion studies simply to extract more work from employees at less pay. Unions condemned speedups and the lack of voice in their work that "Taylorism" gave them. Quality and productivity declined when his principles were simplistically instituted. (Anonymous)

According to the *Toronto Globe and Mail*, (1995) January 26:B26, one of the popular current "re-engineering" gurus, G. Hamel, has this to say about Taylor's ideas today:

If you read Frederick Winslow Taylor from the beginning of the century, there are three fundamental things he taught:

- Find the best practice wherever it exists. Today we call it benchmarking;
- Decompose the task into its constituent elements. We call it business process re-design;
- Get rid of things that don't add value. Work out, we call it now;

- So we're doing these things one more time and we need to do them;
- But my argument is that simply getting better is usually not enough;
- Whether it involves cycle time, quality or whatever, most of re-engineering has been about catching up.

This continuous quality improvement process was originated by Taylor. It is fair to say, and we are still trying to catch up. (Author unknown, See: <http://www.ibiblio.org/eldritch/fwt/taylor.html>. Publisher: Eldritch Press). A feature of Taylor's work was stopwatch timing. This served as the basis of observations. However, unlike the early activities of Perronet and others, he started to break time and work related activities down into elements and it was he who coined the term 'time study'. It is purported that he wrote the following words:

The old fashioned dictator does not exist under Scientific Management. The man at the head of the business under Scientific Management is governed by rules and laws which have been developed through hundreds of experiments, just as much as the workman is, and the standards developed are equitable (Anonymous)

1.5.4.2 Frank and Lillian Gilbreth

The Gilbreths were associates of Frederick Winslow Taylor. They, unlike Taylor, had experience in unionized industry, which presumably limited their enthusiasm for timing jobs. Frank Gilbreth (in his early career) was interested in standardization and method study. At construction sites where he worked, he noticed that no two bricklayers used exactly the same method or even the same set of motions when working and set about trying to find a standardized and improved method, which resulted in raising output from 1000 to 2700 bricks per day.

From their studies the Gilbreths developed the laws of human motion from which

evolved the principles of motion economy. They coined the term “motion study” to cover their field of research and to distinguish it from "time study".

The use of cameras in motion study stems from this time and the Gilbreths used micro-motion study in order to record and examine detailed short-cycled movements as well as inventing cyclographs and chronocycle-graphs to observe rhythm and movement.

1.5.4.3 The production assembly line

Towards the end of the nineteenth century the internal combustion engine was invented, leading to the development of the motorcar, which in turn led towards streamlining production. (The first assembly line method of manufacturing from this time can probably be attributed to the mail order factory of Sears and Roebuck of America.)

However, it is Henry Ford's production assembly line in the Ford automobile factory that is by far the best-known example of the change to modern assembly line techniques. Before the 'line' was set up one man spent about twelve and a half hours to assemble a single car chassis; eight months later as a result of standardization and division of labour the total labour time was reduced to just ninety-three minutes per car.

1.5.4.4 Charles Bedaux

Another pioneering contributor to the field of scientific management was Charles Bedaux. Bedaux introduced the concept of rating assessment. He adhered to Gilbreths' introduction of a rest allowance to allow recovery from fatigue, and although crude and poorly received at first, his system has been of great consequence to the subsequent development of work-study.

1.5.4.5 Henri Fayol

Fayol was a key figure in the turn-of-the-century Classical School of Management Theory and saw a manager's job as:

- Planning;
- Organizing;
- Commanding;
- Coordinating activities;
- Controlling performance (Narayanan & Nath Raghu, 1993),

It was Fayol's 14 principles of management that became the cornerstone in the development of management science. Of the 14 elements, the most important are specialization, unity of command, scalar chain, and, coordination by managers.

- **Specialization of labour.** Specialization encourages continuous improvement in skills and the development of improvements in methods;
- **Authority.** The right to give orders and the power to exact obedience;
- **Discipline.** No slacking, bending of rules;
- **Unity of command.** Each employee has one and only one boss;
- **Unity of direction.** A single mind generates a single plan and all play their part in that plan;
- **Subordination of individual Interests.** When at work, only work things should be pursued or thought about;
- **Remuneration.** Employees receive fair payment for services, not what the company can get away with;
- **Centralization.** Consolidation of management functions. Decisions are made from the top;
- **Scalar chain (line of authority).** Formal chain of command running from top to bottom of the organization, like the military;
- **Order.** All materials and personnel have a prescribed place, and they must remain there;

- **Equity.** Equality of treatment (but not necessarily identical treatment);
- **Personnel tenure.** Limited turnover of personnel. Lifetime employment for good workers;
- **Initiative.** Thinking out a plan and do what it takes to make it happen;
- **Esprit de corps.** Harmony, cohesion among personnel.

1.5.4.6 In summary: A backward glance

Based on the discussion it is possible to deduce and summarise the drive or agenda of scientific management in the following four objectives:

- The *development of a science* for each element of a man's work to replace the old rule-of-thumb methods;
- *The scientific selection, training and development of workers* instead of allowing them to choose their own tasks and train themselves as best they could;
- *The development of a spirit of cooperation between workers and management* to ensure that work would be carried out in accordance with scientifically devised procedures;
- *The division of work between workers and management* in almost equal shares, each group taking over the work for which it is best fitted.

Self-evident in this philosophy is the assumption that organizations are arranged in a hierarchy and a system of abstract rules and impersonal relationships between staff. Of course this required a theory for organizing. Taylor created a framework for the movement which can be presented as following:

- A clear delineation of authority;
- Responsibility;
- Separation of planning from operations;
- Incentive schemes for workers;
- Management by exception;
- Task specialization;

In short: It is just not possible to explore the detail of the Scientific Management movement. However it is fair to state that certain traits emerge which can be summarised as follows:

- Time studies;
- Standardization;
- Study in work-method;
- Human motion and motion study;
- Streamlining of production (Production assembly line);
- Division of labour - workers and management rating assessments;
- Management principles;
- Structuring of organizations;

It is further interesting to note that these traits are not unique. A superficial observation of production, management and behavioural patterns are shared with earlier times – before the advent of Scientific Management. It is thus fair to state that little has been discovered – as a new discovery – for which the seeds had not already existed in society.

1.5.5 The practice of management: The Human Relations movement and the Hawthorne studies

Although the exponents of Scientific Management acknowledged the behavioural side of management, it was the Human Relations Movement (Luthans, 1989, p. 27) that focused directly on the importance of human beings in action. This does not mean that the classical theories did not contribute favourably.

The lingering impact and contribution of classical thought on modern organizational societies include:

- Formal organizational chart;

- Job design and selection;
- Job element demarcation and formalized training;
- Incentives;

The criticism against the classical theorists, on the other hand, include the following:

- It was a science of things tangible and not of people, although it intended more productive work behaviour;
- Low morale resulted in organizations;
- Linear cause and effect, ignoring the complexity of context as space;

Scientific management could however not survive the forces that intruded into the organizational context, which are listed below (based on Perrow, 1973):

- Labour became a critical factor. Technological sophistication lengthened the training time of employees and eventually required more “specialised” skills. Turnover increased; recruitment became more costly and management began to tread the path of cooperation, a shift during which the machine model began to lose its relevancy (Perrow, 1973, p. 4) ;
- Market complexity, product and producer viability, technological advances and other rapid changes required an adaptive organization, something that scientific management was ill equipped for;
- Political, cultural and social changes created new expectations on how to treat people, especially employees in the workplace;
- The growth and life cycle dynamics of the firm no longer tolerated the image of the founder as the shadow of one single individual. The search for leadership in combination with management principles began.

1.5.5.1 Mary Follett

Mary Parker Follett emphasized the reciprocating reality of giving and taking orders between managers and subordinates, and argued for a form of participation that would ensure acceptance and the use of power that – in her words – was not coercive power but coactive power.

What is the central problem of social relations? It is the question of power... But our task is not to learn where to place power; it is how to develop power. We frequently hear nowadays of 'transferring power as the panacea for all our ills' Genuine power can only be grown, it will slip from every arbitrary hand that grasps it; for genuine power is not coercive control, but coactive control. Coercive power is the curse of the universe; coactive power, the enrichment and advancement of every human soul (Follett, 1924, p. xii-xiii, in Smith, 2002).

(The rest of this paragraph on Mary Parker Follett is based on Smith 2002.)

From the publication of *Creative Experience* to her death in 1933 Mary Parker Follett was best known for her work around the administration and management of organizations. In 1925, she presented an influential paper, 'The Psychological Foundations of Business Administration' to executives at the annual conference of the Bureau of Personnel Administration in New York, wherein which she applied the concept social capital in the life of organizations. Organizations, like communities, could be approached as local social systems involving networks of groups. In this way Mary Parker Follett was able to advocate the fostering of a 'self-governing principle' that would facilitate 'the growth of individuals and of the groups to which they belonged'. By directly interacting with one another to achieve their common goals, the members of a group 'fulfilled themselves through the process of the group's development'.

Boje and Rosile (2001) in Smith (2002), suggest that Follett was seeking to temper scientific management with her own science of the situation; "one in which management and workers together cooperated to define not only productivity but

situations of social justice”. Exploring 'the science of the situation' involved both management and workers studying the situation at hand together. Boje and Rosile as quoted by Smith, argue that she was “the first advocate of situation-search models of leadership and cooperation”. This was not some surface activity: “the willingness to search for the real values involved on both sides and the ability to bring about an interpenetration of these values” (Follett, 1941, p. 181) in Smith (2002).

One of the key aspects of Mary Parker Follett's approach was the 'circular' theory of power she initially developed in *Creative Experience* (1924). Power begins... with the organization of reflex arcs. Then these are organized into a system - more power. Then the organization of these systems comprises the organism - more power. On the level of personality I gain more and more control over myself as I unite various tendencies. In social relations power is a centripetal self-developing. Power is the legitimate, the inevitable outcome of the life-process. We can always test the validity of power by asking whether it is integral to the process of outside the process (Follett 1924, p. 193). In terms of organizations this view of power involved managers, workers, and other stakeholders influencing each other. She distinguishes between power-over and power-with (or co-active power rather than coercive power). Follett suggests that 'power-over' is resorted to because 'people will not wait for the slower process of education' (1924, p. 190). 'Power-with', she argues, 'is what democracy should mean in politics or industry' (1924, p. 187) in Smith (2002).

1.5.5.2 Chester Barnard

Chester Barnard's importance relates to describing the organization as a social system and arguing that the effective executive must attend to both formal and

informal relationships within the corporation. This not only set the stage for a different basis for the dynamic of worker-manager authority, which was not too far removed from Mary Follett's perspective, but established the ground rules for a novel theory on organizations, referred to as cooperative systems (Perrow, 1973). More important however was his response to the question why organizations do not seem to be sustainable over a long period of time.

According to Barnard, this happens because organizations do not meet the two criteria necessary for survival: effectiveness and efficiency. Effectiveness is defined the usual way: as being able to accomplish the explicit goals. In contrast, his notion of organizational efficiency is substantially different from the conventional use of the word. He defines efficiency of an organization as the degree to which that organization is able to satisfy the motives of the individuals. If an organization satisfies the motives of its participants, and attains its explicit goals, cooperation among them will last (Barnard, 1938).

Two of Barnard's theories are particularly interesting: the theory of authority and the theory of incentives, both of which are positioned within the organizational communication system, for which there exist essential rules. Thus, what makes a communication authoritative rests on the subordinate rather than in the super ordinate because of the essential rules which include that everyone should know of the channels of communication, everyone should have access to the formal channels of communication and lines of communication should be as short and as direct as possible

His perspective was not only unusual at that time (close to that of Mary Parker Follett) but one that is not that usual even today. One might say that managers should treat workers respectfully and competently to obtain authority and establish accessible communication processes and patterns and not suffice with a one-way-top-down corporate communication channel.

In the theory of incentives, he sees two ways of convincing subordinates to cooperate: tangible incentives and persuasion. He gives great importance to

persuasion, much more than to economic incentives. In his “The Functions of the Executive” (first published in 1938) Barnard discusses the functions of the executive. He does not do this from a purely intuitive point of view, but deriving them from a conception of cooperative systems based on previous concepts. Barnard ends by summarizing the functions of the executive as being:

- The establishment and maintenance of the system of communication ;
- The securing of the essential services from individuals ;
- The formulation of the organizational purpose and objectives;

It might be possible to view Abraham Maslow's "satisfaction" theory of personal motivation and Douglas McGregor's premise about workers in organizations as extensions of Barnard's work. Similarly, "systems" writing of the 1960's and "effective schools" literature of the 1980's could arguably, also be traced to the Barnard premises.

1.5.5.3 The Hawthorne Studies

The Hawthorne Studies can be viewed as a benchmark in the development of organization and management insight and organizational behaviour and deserves more attention than can be attributed in this study.

The Western Electric studies (ca 1924 - 1933) discovered the Hawthorne or "halo" effect of motivating workers, a result which it certainly did not intend from the outset. Elton Mayo intended to study the changes in the physical environment that would improve worker production of piecework in the bank wiring room. The unexpected results: Increased production - irrespective of physical intervention linked to perceptions of involvement and feelings of being special by workers, in spite of the physical features of where work took place fluctuating between optimal and poor.

These studies not only added to our knowledge of human behaviour in organizations, but also created pressure for management to change the traditional

ways of managing people.

The studies indicated the importance of mutual support within work groups as well as effective resistance to management induced schemes to increase output. The studies further indicated that workers did not respond to classical approaches and motivational theories as proposed by the classical school of thought, most notably Taylorism. Workers were also motivated by the rewards and punishment of their own work groups (Anonymous, http://www.accel-team.com/motivation/hawthorne_02.htm).

1.5.5.4 Douglas McGregor

Douglas McGregor endeavoured to come to terms with the concept of motivation and the relationship between the corporation and individual (Crainer, 1999) and stressed the function of “belief” (Crainer, 1999, p. 884) in management because everything stems from the beliefs and mental models held by managers, and subsequently pioneered two ways of management perspectives related to workers, i.e. Theory X and Theory Y.

To a certain extent McGregor (with his theory X and Theory Y premises) can probably be viewed as the biggest exponent of the Human Relations Movement. Table 1.2 represents the different assumptions in respect of Theory X and Theory Y assumptions. In his research he found that although many managers sprouted the right ideas, their actual management behaviour indicated a series of assumptions that McGregor called Theory X. However, research seemed to clearly suggest that these assumptions were not effective. A rather different series of notions about human behaviour seemed more valid. He called this Theory Y and urged managers to manage based on these more valid Theory Y notions.

Table 1.2 Theory X and Theory Y management assumptions

Theory X assumptions	Theory Y assumptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work is inherently distasteful to most people ▪ Most people are not ambitious, have little desire for responsibility, and prefer to be directed ▪ Most people have little capacity for creativity in solving organizational problems ▪ Motivation occurs only at the physiological and security levels ▪ Most people must be closely controlled and often coerced to achieve organizational objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work is as natural as play if the conditions are favourable Self-control is often indispensable in achieving organizational goals ▪ The capacity for creativity is spread throughout organizations ▪ Motivation occurs at affiliation, esteem, and self-actualization levels, not just security, physiological levels ▪ People can be self-directed and creative at work if properly motivated

Although the Scientific Management movement brought economic progress, the criticism against this paradigm of management and specifically the management of employees became evident in labour unrest and labour-management conflict, worker apathy, boredom, etc. These factors led researchers to delve into the motivational factors that predicate work behaviour. The legacy of the Human Relations Movement is the result of research that indicated the discrepancy between how an organization is supposed to work vis-à-vis how workers actually behave.

**Table 1.3 Scientific Management and Human Relations movement assumptions:
Results of the Hawthorne studies (a summary of the foregoing discussion)**

Traditional assumptions (I.e. Scientific Management)	Assumptions based on the Human Relations movement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ People endeavour to satisfy only one type of need at work - economic needs ▪ There is no conflict between individual and organizational needs ▪ People act rationally to maximize rewards ▪ People satisfy individual needs ▪ Managers manage according to Theory X assumptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ People are motivated by more than one need ▪ The psychological needs of employees play a significant role in the satisfaction of needs ▪ There is not necessarily a correlation between individual and organizational needs ▪ People do not always act rationally ▪ The informal workgroup acts as catalyst in determining attitudes and performance ▪ Teamwork is essential for cooperation and sound decision making ▪ Job satisfaction will lead to higher productivity ▪ Job descriptions are more complex than written descriptions because people act in more ways in the work environment as suggested by their job description ▪ Management and management style is an important variable (but not the only one) that affects work behaviour ▪ Management requires effective social skills ▪ Cooperation and collaboration between management and employees is a function of effective execution of power ▪ Behaviour is shaped by the social context ▪ Organizations are living social systems and not merely technical – economic systems ▪ Motivation stems from different needs and social interaction and therefore workers should be managed according Theory Y assumptions

1.6 CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE FIELD OF OB: A SUMMARY OF CONTRIBUTIONS

In addition to the above, a short summary based on Wertheim is produced below in respect of the different contributions to management theory, also regarding further contributions to the field of OB (see also Perrow, 1973; also refer Clarke, 2004).

1.6.1 Classical school (ca 1910):

Listed the duties of a manager as planning, organizing, commanding employees, coordinating activities and controlling performance; basic principles called for specialization of work, unity of command, scalar chain of command, and coordination of activities;

1.6.2 The Group Dynamics movement of the 1940's:

Encouraged individual participation in decision-making and furthermore noted the impact of work group on performance;

1.6.3 Bureaucracy 1940:

Emphasized order, system, rationality, uniformity, and consistency in management that would lead to equitable treatment for all employees by management;

1.6.4 The leadership drive of the 1950's:

Stressed the importance of groups having both social task leaders as well task orientated leaders within the framework of differentiation between Theory X and Y management;

1.6.5 The Socio-technical school during the '60's:

Called for the consideration of technology and work groups when trying to understand understanding a work system. A further trend was the description of the existence of mechanistic and organic structures and stated their effectiveness within specific types of environmental conditions and technology types;

1.6.6 Systems theory, (1970's):

This paradigm represented organizations as open and living systems with inputs, throughputs, outputs and feedback and postulated that systems strive for equilibrium and equifinality;

1.6.7 The Contingency theory of the 1980's:

Emphasized the fit between organization processes and characteristics of the situation and called for fitting the organization's structure to various contingencies.

The common denominator in all of these contributions, although over-simplified, was the trend towards higher productivity and to stimulate work related behaviour that would not only lead to increased outputs, but that would sustain this drive.

1.7 MODERNISM AND POST-MODERNISM IN ORGANIZATION SCIENCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOUR

An appreciation of the potential of post-modernism in respect of Organizational Science and more specifically OB, can only be appreciated once the assumptions of modernism is understood. (As this is not a treatise on modernism vs. post-modernism, such a discussion can only claim to be superficial.)

Modernism is that moment when man invented himself; when he no longer saw himself as a reflection of God or Nature. Its historical source lies in the eighteenth-century philosophy of the Enlightenment which chose Reason as the highest of human attributes...Also at this time the expediencies of Reason were appropriated by social thinkers such as Saint-Simon and Comte whose concern was their application to the increasingly weighty problems of government, administration and planning brought about by the industrialization of society (Cooper & Burrell, 1988, p. 94).

Modernism has its roots in what is described and identified as the age of enlightenment. This time frame refers to 18th century philosophy which underpins a life and world view. It is however not only characterised by a philosophical insights but also by an intellectual drive that advocates and underscores rationality (rationalism) as a means to discover truth and reality. Rational and objective logic dictated the mental patterns which would eventually lead the world out of the bondage of doubtful traditions, irrationality, superstition and tyranny as practised by the state as well as the church. Prominent thinkers of this age include Descartes (1596 – 1650), Leibniz (1646 – 1716), Spinoza (1632 – 1677), and Locke (1632 – 1704). As pietism was juxtaposed with orthodoxy, so the “contrast-effect”... (The confluence of Locke and Wolffian philosophy)...showed itself in the great interest taken in empirical psychology. Instead of speculative metaphysics, psychology, grounded in experience, came more and more to be regarded as the fundamental science (Höfding, 1955, p. 5).

Enlightenment influenced modernism with the legacy of its emphasis on observation, reason, and logic. This placed the behavioural and social sciences on an equal footing with the natural sciences. To expand knowledge in a credible way, it had to be quantifiable and measurable. Quantifiable, observable, and statistical measures enjoy elevated status as a result of this legacy. The individual in this scheme of knowledge creation is reduced to an isolated subject of research and unit of investigation as is still the case in *modern OB*.

Modernism has, since the Enlightenment, provided scientific theories and methods. These theories and scientific insights permeated organizations and the literature in respect of management of organizations, which in turn led managers to believe that they could trust the results of scientific method as this provided *universal truths*.

Since the beginning of the Enlightenment, managers of industrial organisations have enjoyed a relatively healthy relationship with the social sciences, benefiting from a variety of modernist assumptions that gave them methods to find the 'truths' of how to better manage their workforce and become successful (Engholm, 2001).

Theories of motivation, needs, authority, control, (and the labels that have been identified in Table 1.1) were formulated on the results of empirical research following quantitative methods. The underlying motive was progress. The fundamental belief that provided the impetus for a modernist paradigm is the belief in the capacity of humanity to “perfect itself through the power of rational thought” and its main purpose was twofold: to develop a reasonably ‘true’ picture of the real world and to gain some measure of control over the course of events in that world” (Engholm 2001). The “modern” industrial society demanded better and more efficient ways of managing people and new technology, and all that was really required was the application of rational thought to an empirically accessible reality (Björkegren, 1993; Boje, Gephart and Thatchenkery, 1996; Carter and Jackson, 1993) in Engholm (2001).

Weber's bureaucracy as an organizational form is fundamental to the modernist structure of the industrial organisation; a structure and form that has endured tremendous critique yet lives to tell the tale of survival – and the easy way out. It is characterised by a hierarchy of authority, specialisation and delimitation of work

activities, rules and regulations, rational calculability of decision-making, concentration of the means of administration and separation of the individual agent or member from the institution (Gephart, 1996, Engholm 2001) all of which have their roots in the Scientific Management School and therefore represents an accumulation of the characteristics that have been identified. The application of scientific method would ensure the attainment of the modernist principle of 'progress' and benefit both the individual and society in the end.

The assumption that *universal truth* and *reality* can be achieved and discovered through the application of scientific method is the most robust critique of post-modernism against modernism. Post-modernism with its critique against empiricism, can and will eventually have far reaching consequences in respect of the development of management theories, which currently purport to be able to predict human behaviour in organizational settings (Youkins 2004).

However such an easy and one-sided description does not do justice to the schism that occurred within the context of the choice of reason

Showing that it too is subject to the displacements intrinsic to self reference: Reason is appropriated by an early form of systems thinking which subverts its critical edge to the demands of large systems based on which the followers of Saint-Simon developed a blueprint for the "*systeme de la Mediterranee*"; The Suez Canal, begun in 1854 and completed in 1869, represented part-realisation of this dream (Cooper & Burrell, 1988, p. 95).

Fundamentally Cooper and Burrell (1988, p. 95) state that Modernism (as a result of the internal schism) actually has two versions which they call *critical modernism* and *systemic modernism* of which "...systemic modernism is currently seen to be the dominant form of reason, now more usually expressed as instrumental rationality"

Casey (2003, p. 83), following the development of Organizational Theory and its derivatives, including OB, argues convincingly that Organizational Analysis and theory development has been trapped in a managerialist-structural-functionalism

based on instrumental-rationalism. This trend has developed throughout the different stages of theory and knowledge development and reflection and as a result enabled a "...micro-psychologism of the organization behaviourists to be systematic accommodated".

Post-modernism, on the other hand, developed out of a belief that the world is not accurately described and interpreted by the modernist paradigm. It specifically criticises the modernist's rather naïve view that there is a universal truth, and that this truth can be discovered by scientific methods and applied in all situations. It criticises modern assumptions about reason and rationality, about normality and deviance and about the best ways of dealing with practical issues of life and society (Hollinger, 1994; Boje, Gephart and Thatchenkery, 1996, p. 1), in Engholm (2001).

The observation that existing conceptions of social life and organizational life seem deficient and inappropriate, if not simply wrong, could be identified as the trigger mechanism for post-modernist thought and method, with a heavier emphasis on qualitative research methodology. Modernist ideas might have worked for the early and mid twentieth century social and industrial society, but we now see a change of attitudes, of culture, and of people's attitudes toward work and social life that necessitates another understanding - a new understanding - of the world we now live in, and not the world we know from history; a world dominated by information, commoditisation, commodity culture, consumerism, globalism, the portability of the individual in relation to work (on the one hand) and the portability of work to the individual (on the other hand), depending on the type of work that is referred to.

In a post-modernist paradigm an additional emphasis is introduced in addition to empirical observation and quantifiable techniques, to social construction and research. Language (as opposed to the perspective of a modernist paradigm) is the product of social interaction processes and does therefore not serve as an objective instrument to portray the *truth* of observed reality. What is the implication of said statement regarding the individual in an organizational setting?

Individual rationality is replaced by communal negotiating processes; the importance of social processes in the observed enterprise; the socio-practical function of language and the significance of pluralistic

cultural investments in the conceptions of true and good (Thatchenkery 2004, p. 239).

From a methodological perspective, post-modernism calls into question the assumption on which modernism bases its recounting of the “truth”. Post-modernism promotes alternative ways to understand the phenomena it is faced with and therefore favours a constructionist type perspective of research and to understand reality. Post-modernism, in an over simplified statement, recognises potentialities; a statement that is concomitant with the underlying epistemological approach of so-called Positive Organizational Scholarship (a branch of Positive Psychology).

Ours is a world of a social language game, where concepts represent neither things nor words reality. Language is merely the map upon which we rely to navigate through our world and the map changes.

The uniqueness of being human lies exclusively in a social structural coupling that occurs through languaging, generating (a) regularities proper to the human social dynamics, for example, individual identity and self-consciousness, an (b) the recursive social human dynamics that entails a reflection enabling us to see that as human beings we have only the world which we create with others – whether we like them or not (Maturana and Varela, 1998, p. 246).

Our world moves along an evolutionary track created by the interaction of people within the settings where they live and work. How else do we know the world, other than through the languaging process and the forms that our discourses create as we continue along our evolutionary path? We know our world through the forms that are created within the domain of linguistics and our mastery of language as the creative force of that domain. But as language is always in flux and can never be fully understood, we are faced with the challenge to grasp the elusiveness of language and to realize that the map (language) we use is not the landscape. This is especially true in organizations. Concepts and linguistic structure is loaded with denotative power. We can therefore not create a universal set of unchangeable

concepts or constructs to be used in an organizational setting, that will (a) represent universal truth and (b) remain constant over long periods of time.

Another way of describing this 'reality' is to see organisations as clustered *political* coalitions. Post-modernists argue that each organisation may develop its own commitments, interests, linguistic codes, and values and culture (Gephart, 1996). Individuals in these organisations therefore become part of communities (or sub-cultures) that are distinct from the world, learning the 'language' and codes specifically developed for these communities. Each organisation can consist of many of these communities of social interaction, where one can identify specific and different loci of knowledge and power, allowing each community to decide what is important and how to interpret reality as perceived by the members of that particular community. For post-modernists, power is also a kind of social production process through which collective meaning is created and maintained. It is created and maintained in knowledge, and knowledge, then, becomes an instrument of power that people use in making sense of the world without fully grasping its implications.

Post-modern organisations (and societies) are thus different from the traditional modernistic, bureaucratic tendencies where people were subject to rationally set rules of regulation and hierarchical control. The 'new' post-modern organisation is one in which highly qualified employees find themselves within culturally complex, but flexible, production structures which are held together by information technology networks, hence, the idea of a superior, objective standpoint is rejected with the emphasis being placed on the inherent instability of organisation. As argued by Hassard (1996, p. 55), "the discourses of organisation are no more than changing moves within a game that is never completed".

What the discussion has conveyed thus far is that organisations in post-modern societies are not static entities that follow universal modernist rules and notions of 'reality'. 'Reality' is constructed by each individual in the organisation in the interplay between the individual and the individual's local community (work-team) or culture (of the organization), between the (social) community and the organisation, and between the organisation and the rest of the world (i.e. the influence of globalism, similar industries, etc.). Thus, post-modernism is closely related to *relationalist*

theory, which uses a methodological strategy that aims at understanding conditions of possibility, rather than describing cause/effect relationships in organisations (Gephart, 1996).

Individuals in the post-modern society may have some common traits that can be identified by scientific research, but it is the continuous interaction with other individuals sharing a common understanding of the experienced reality, through their language that shapes desires, beliefs and actions within a particular organisational setting and the society to which they belong as individuals. Thus, relational theory has implications for managers as it suggests that managers do not control the fate of their decrees, but instead, power is a matter of social interdependence and decrees are controlled by adherence thereto by individuals or the rejection thereof.

What implication does this have for managers and management science? One conclusion that can be drawn from the post-modern perspective is that modernist assumptions about finding general, universal theories (or 'truths') of workforce management have failed to live up to their expectations: they have simply not understood that each individual is formed by a combination of interacting factors that continually changes, as it moves along an evolutionary continuum, the individual's perceptions and views of reality (and self). If this is true of the post-modern person, rationality and calculative reasoning cannot provide feasible and effective solutions for control of the workforce, nor accurately predict the trends, tendencies, behaviours, motivation impetus, etc. through the application of modernist methods for the management of work related behaviour.

We would see a shift from objective reality to subjective reality in which chaos is inevitable as indicated in Table 1.1 and must be understood from a local rather from a universal perspective. Hassard (1993) argues that the essence of theory is not its database but its intelligibility: we should feel free to draw from the entire repository of human potentials, and not only be concerned with, or limit ourselves to, the social relationships championed or discredited by particular theories, but also with the potential for theories to offer new possibilities for contemporary culture.

In spite however of what has been said regarding post-modernism and its approach towards Organizational Science and Behaviour, the individual is still subjected to the epistemology, ontology and methodology of modernism. The individual is atomized into a culture of managerialism which is solely influenced by a paradigm of achievement and performance imperatives. Everyday life is filled with responsibility for “securing our sense of self through performance rather than critical reflection. The *invested self* becomes a marker of distinction” (Hancock and Tyler in Rhodes, 2003). In everyday life the individual is forced into a process, where the sense of self is construed and acknowledged through performance and where such an individual eventually becomes a marker of distinction and apparently self-actualised. People who search for meaning in their daily life and organizational settings, become achievers by choice, based on the meaningfulness of their actions and behaviour, by becoming “who you are or supposed to be” (Kierkegaard loosely quoted from memory). In a managerialist paradigm dictated by modernistic evaluative markers, a life of unmanaged and spontaneous experience is not recognized as part of living and definitely not worth the investigative efforts within a work setting. Managerialism has become something of a social trend, imbedded in the fabric of society and social relationships – it might even have the status of a socio-cultural ideology. The individual has thus become the object of formal management theory in organizational life as well as in everyday life, with no or very little room for the intra- and interpersonal construction of his/her reality as a human being at work, at home, on the sports field or in the social contact with others. Have the work environment and the environment outside of work become more meaningful as a result of managerialist control?

1.7.1 Addressing the Problem of Modernism in OB

Other approaches, from a more post-modernist paradigm, in an attempt to address the rigorist and linear legacy of modernism have been presented as contributions to OB. These contributions will be briefly touched upon below.

1.7.1.1 Hersey and Blanchard

The work of Hersey and Blanchard (1988) represents a different approach towards the field of OB. Their focus is narrowed down to

[B]ehaviour within organizations and not between organizations...An organization is a unique living organism whose basic component is the individual and this individual is (our) fundamental unit of study. Thus, (our) concentration is on the interaction of people, *motivation and leadership*.

This deviation (from the conventions indicated in Table 1.3) represents an attempt to acknowledge the fact that organizations are made up of individuals, and therefore it represents an attempt to place the emphasis on the individual as the most important building block of organizational life and structure. Their approach also differs in another important aspect i.e. the *dynamics* (my emphasis) of the individual's functioning. Whereas in the conventional approach towards the individual the focus is on the so-called hard organizational issues (job descriptions, systems and structures, ergonomics, motivation, etc.) as mechanisms to increase productivity and work related effectiveness, Hersey and Blanchard take cognisance of the dynamic nature of organizational and work related behaviour from dynamic systems perspective.

1.7.1.2 A Psychodynamic approach to OB

Yet another approach towards an understanding of OB, which deviates from conventional labelling when analysing the work behaviour of the individual within organizational contexts, is represented by Obholzer and Roberts (2002), Hirschhorn (2000), Thomson (2000), Cilliers and Koortzen (2000).

Cilliers and Koortzen (2000) describe the differences in approach between the

conventional and the psychodynamic metaphor in the following manner:

In the traditional training of IO (Industrial Organizational) psychologists it has been the experience that students learn a lot about the mechanical aspects of psychology in the workplace. Maybe this is because IO psychology traditionally functions from a rational and economical view towards work, with its assumption that a person works to earn money and to satisfy the need for material possessions.

IO psychology has developed many organizational and behavioural theories based on behaviourist thinking (applied to the training of employees), as well as the humanistic paradigm, in order to understand concepts such as motivation, leadership, organizational structures, and development (Robbins, 1989). This creates the impression that OB is only conscious, mechanistic, predictable, uncomplicated, and easy to understand. The psychodynamic view rejects the rational and economic views on work and believes that statistical analysis tells nothing useful about OB or the people working in the system. It also rejects the notion of a grand theory of organization. Instead, it views work as both a painful burden (e.g., in the task that needs to be performed) and a pleasurable activity (e.g., in the outcome) (De Vries, 1991, in Cilliers and Koortzen 2000). The basic question in understanding work is, why is it experienced as painful and to be avoided on the one hand, and why is pleasure obtained from it on the other hand," and continue to assert that

The organization as a system has its own life which is conscious and unconscious, with subsystems relating to and mirroring one another. It is the belief that the study of this unconscious behaviour and dynamics leads to a deeper (than, for example, the humanistic approach) understanding of OB (Cilliers and Koortzen 2000).

To merely state that the pleasure of working is encapsulated in remuneration on a regular basis, whilst the pain of work is to be found in the effort exerted, is probably true in a limited sense but it does not consider the meaning of work and the match between values of the individual and the type of work that he/she chooses to do.

1.7.1.3 Positive Organization Scholarship

Positive Organizational Scholarship (POS) is an attempt at establishing a different approach towards Organizational Analysis and research. As a theoretical framework it moves away from the tendency in Psychology to identify problems and to develop interventions for the perceived problems of the organization. When perusing organizational literature and all the interventions that abound in the field of OB, it is immediately clear that the majority function from a *deficit* assumption.

One of the most influential fields that have a bearing on the creation of knowledge regarding the behaviour of employees is psychology. Since World War 2 (and prior to that event) pathology has been the focus of psychology. This has led to investigation regarding the deficit in human behaviour and attempts at resolving these deficits. The fundamental assumption in this regard is that humans are "flawed and fragile". (Notice the Theory X assumption and bias.) With the establishment of positive psychology as a diametrically opposed view to the deficit assumption, the focus falls on three specific domains, i.e. positive experiences, positive individual traits and positive institutions (Cameron, Dutton and Quinn, 2003, p. 2).

This change of course inevitably also questions the current bias in the study of OB and Organizational/Management science. In (what seems to be) ground breaking work, Cameron, Dutton and Quinn (Eds.) (2003) collated and edited numerous inputs on the topic of Positive Organizational Scholarship.

Positive Organizational Scholarship is more an approach towards organization studies than a coherent theory or system of knowledge. Cameron, Dutton and Quinn (2003, p. 1) describe Positive Organizational Scholarship (POS) as an approach that is primarily concerned with "positive outcomes, processes, and attributes of organizations and their members". It represents a focus on dynamics that is described with positive language markers such as excellence (although it

does not fall within the category of the quality movement), thriving, etc. "It encompasses attention to *the enablers, the motivations, and the outcomes or effects* associated with positive phenomena" (Cameron et al., 2003, p. 4). *Enablers* encompass processes, capabilities, structures and methods, whilst *motivations* encompass unselfishness, altruism and contribution without regard to self, and *outcomes or effect embodies* vitality, meaningfulness, exhilaration, high-quality relationships".

As an approach it is overtly based on certain biases which include: the understanding of positive states, (e.g. resilience and meaningfulness) and the dynamics associated with such states (e.g. gratitude, positive connection). The primary interest is in non-linear positive dynamics, or what can also be called *positive spirals*. The approach is also biased towards "positive processes and states that occur in association with organizational contexts" (Cameron et al., 2003, p. 5). It thus studies (and as a consequence builds appropriate theory about) positive phenomena within organizational space as well as positive organizational contexts. This does not imply that POS will not, or does not note the problematic focus of traditional organizational science, or, it does not serve itself with the language markers that act as common denominators, but it does however demonstrate a bias towards the 'positives' and the consequences thereof. POS further demonstrates a bias towards theory formation beyond the boundaries of the DIY organizational theorists. To be credible, it must develop theory and must also be able to validate its theory. This last bias is however still 'music in the mind of the composer'. (The book that has an apt subtitle: "*Foundations of a new discipline*")

The correlates of Positive Organizational Scholarship include such fields as *positive psychology, community psychology, organizational development and appreciative inquiry, pro-social and citizenship behaviour, and corporate social responsibility* (Cameron et al., 2003, p. 5-9).

1.7.1.4 Organizational dynamics

The individual enters organizational life with a complex of established experiences and perceptions that have been formed as a result of his/her development from childhood; influenced by factors such as upbringing, education (or the lack thereof), interpersonal experiences, the psychological uniqueness of this individual, etc. Not only were these experiences formed as a result of the abovementioned exposure, but also as a result of the societal factors that have an influence on the formation of and the social positioning of the individual within the framework of shared societal conscience and awareness.

Upon entering the organisation, the individual is confronted with another set of complex factors that specifically pertain to the world of work. Organisational life is co-determined by the processes and structures that are purported to contribute to a productive and effective work environment for the individual (but not necessarily a **Meaningful workplace**). The individual is integrated into a work group such as a team, or division, which is not only foreign but in many instances threatening, and in all cases constituted by a number of separate individuals who have their own complex of experiences and biases. Not only is the individual positioned within a division or section; he/she may also be required to function in cross-divisional/cross-functional project teams or work teams. These and other factors (processes and structures) including the psychological contract, job descriptions, reward and recognition processes, management style -of which power and control seem to form the basis, regulate the work behaviour of the individual. The organisation is in its turn dictated to by the legal requirements within which it functions, as well as the expectations of a multitude of stakeholders in the immediate societal environment, not forgetting the industry. These requirements to a large extent dictate structure, internal processes, the composition of the work force, etc. The organization aligns itself with the analysts who predict share price and project productivity and revenue increases (or stagnation) based on the financial factors and ratios.

In addition, the organisational world is also influenced by global factors that have an influence on the positioning, competitiveness, and survival strategies of the organisation. The movement of organisational boundaries across international boundaries and the establishment of (literally) all forms and types of economic endeavour see to it that local industries are "*threatened*" by new technologies and entrants to local markets. This exacerbates the drive for survival by local entities that eventually drive targets of competitiveness that result in the adoption of various interventions such as "*downsizing, rightsizing, re-engineering, enhanced efficiencies*", and many more.

The impact on the individual can be understood from the perspective of insecurity, uncertainty and instability resulting from these changes as well as from a differentiated view pertaining to the different (but often ignored) dimensions of organizational life.

1.7.1.5 The rational, the irrational, and the spiritual side of organization

Allcorn (2003, p. 2-7) describes three sides to organisational life, viz. the "rational side of organisational life", the "irrational side", and the "spiritual side". Interestingly, all three these "sides" can be traced back to one or more of the exponents of the "scientific management" movement, which immediately poses the question: "Why has academic research, theory formation and management practice been eclectic enough so as to ignore the last two dimensions?"

The "rational side of organisational life" can be traced to the work of Frederick Taylor. This "stream of thought is in pursuit of a well-oiled organisational machine that runs like clockwork and is described as the holy grail of executives, managers and management thinkers... for millennia" (Allcorn, 2003, p. 3).

Elton Mayo introduced the "irrational side of organisational life". Mayo postulated the "confounding variable of human nature" (Allcorn, 2003, p. 4). The consequence of Mayo's work is that the "comforting aspects of the rather more concrete aspects

of the rational workplace must yield to the uncomfortable and even distressing nature of individual, interpersonal, group and organizational dynamics that introduce extraordinary difficult to grasp nuances and complexity" (Allcorn, 2003, p. 5). This state of affairs can be traced back to the work of Hammer and Champy (1993; In Allcorn, 2003, p. 5), who, along the lines of reasoning that Taylor advocated in respect of the re-engineering of work, argued that organisations can be re-engineered in the same way, leading to the eventual diminishment of organisational life reflected in a diminishment and alienation of the individual "from oneself, one's work and the workplace" (Allcorn, 2003, p. 5). The trend that emanated from the "re-engineering" line of thought ripped the social fabric of organisational life apart. "Organizations that ignore this deeper side of the organisation and their members do so at great peril. An organization with a downtrodden spirit is not unlike an individual in the same situation...listless, depressed, alienated from self and others and de-energised" (Allcorn 2003, p. 7). It can be deduced that Mary Follett, although not in specific terms, laid the groundwork for the development of the theory of spirituality in organizations. Her occupation with the dynamics of leaders and subordinates will inevitably also touch upon values of which spirituality from an integral part. Current literature on organizational spirituality seems to be fragmented and is characterized by diverse approaches towards the concept and a selective choice of organizational dimensions.

A study of the different dimensions seems to present at least three important dimensions of organizational spirituality: "value alignment, personal spirituality, and relationship-based organizing" (James 2005, p.1). Organizational spirituality seems to be facilitated by the uncertainty that permeates organizations. Restructuring, re-engineering, downsizing and similar exercises which relate to the survival of organizations, all affect individual employees on an affective level. New policies and rules, governance structures and processes, seem to be the catalysts for employees' search for a "deeper meaning" i.e. "spirituality in organizational life" (Gialcalone and Jurkiewicz, 2005). Spirituality in organizations is a domain *where angels would fear to tread*, and therefore caution must prevail. When spirituality becomes another tool in the toolbox of managers, the sense of self and the consciousness of higher values than the material world will fall into the categories of

just another intervention in the already existing one of manipulating employees to the whim of managers.

Nevertheless, the result of the confluence of the mentioned factors impact on the level of satisfaction of the individual in his/her work setting, resulting in frustration, anger, disenchantment, or purely just dissatisfaction, with the Quality of Work Life. It is most probably the loss of individual dignity and individualism that acts as a catalyst for the dissatisfaction and the loss of meaning that individuals experience in their work life.

It could be argued that that the negative assessment that has been presented can be dissipated by the culture of the organization. "Strong culture refers to a situation in which meaning is shared among organization members to the extent that nearly everyone agrees and even takes for granted the way things are" (Karathanos, Pettypool and Trout, 1994, p. 15). "Among the many possible shared meanings, beliefs or values which are an organization's culture, some are surely more important than others...When hopes are dashed or trust broken concerning shared meaning with regard to the performance/reward issue or the issue of perceived justice, one might expect a spill over with regard to shared meanings" (Karathanos et al 1994, p. 17). How does this come about and how is it related to the complexity of organizational life?

Change is most probably the one variable that contributes significantly to the loss of meaning resulting from a loss of hope and trust by an individual employee. Yet the individual is more often than not a "captive" of the circumstances and the organizational benefits from this captivity. What remains is disillusionment with the organization and a loss of motivation - and for that matter: The loss of meaning.

1.7.1.6 The implosion of the job

A further factor that exacerbates the dynamics of organizational life is what Hirschhorn terms "the implosion of the job". Jobs, according to Hirschhorn (2000, p.

6, 7) have become particularly stressful in the post industrial milieu, "because it progressively integrates a once fragmented division of labour, forcing workers to take account of many more facts, people, and claims. It becomes harder to ritualise work and reduce it to a set of regular formulas and procedures". This milieu according to Hirschhorn, poses two complementary challenges: "Work becomes more situational and less routine, and people must integrate an increasingly diverse sets of facts, interests, and claims". The conclusion is drawn that the world of work is imploding and therefore "the post industrial milieu *challenges the social defences*" (italics added) of workers. This in itself is already an indication that there seem to be discrepancies between an evolving perspective regarding the world of work and the way in which Organizations are managed, based on Organizational Theory and OB paradigms that seem to be diverging from the life and world view of society in the 21st century.

1.7.1.7 The Meaningful workplace

Chalofsky (2010, p. xiii) states that although there are many publications that relate to meaningful work and **Meaningful workplaces**,

...none of them offer a substantive account of what constitutes meaningful work and a meaningful workplace, so that individuals can be educated as to what goes into finding or creating fulfilling work, and managers and consultants can understand what it takes to create and sustain a meaningful workplace.

In discussing the way in which to build the **Meaningful workplace**, which at the same time can possibly also serve as a summarised version of a definition of the **Meaningful workplace**, Chalofsky (2010, p. 158), identifies the critical dimensions of the meaning workplace as:

- It's not about the perks; it's about the culture;

- The organization supports the whole person and the whole person is engaged in the organization;
- The organization is truly a community;

Chalofsky (2010) integrates the concepts meaning in work and meaning at work to such an extent that the two “sides”, i.e. the individual and his/her frame of mind, and the organization and its characteristics integrate to form the construct: **Meaningful workplace**.

Terez (2000), in his book “22 Keys to creating a **Meaningful workplace**” Terez (2000), embarks on a quest to describe the results of a Project (“The meaning of work project”) to discover ultimate purpose of workplace management: to create the **Meaningful workplace**, and defines a **Meaningful workplace** as one where the following categories of “meaning keys” prevail. These keys include:

- Mission keys; related to the creation of a future along the lines of purpose, direction, relevance and validation.
- People keys; related to valuing who does the future within a framework of respect, equality, informality, flexibility, and ownership.
- Development keys; related to the growth the business and of the people who make it happen. The development keys are constituted by challenge, invention, support, and personal development.
- Community keys; affirm the importance of togetherness and collective effort, within a framework of dialogue, relationship building, service, acknowledgement, and oneness.
- ‘Me keys’; are the keys that value the individual and enable the individual to be “himself”. This category is made up of self-identity, fit, balance and worth.

1.8 SUMMARY

The reasoning thus far points in the direction of the loss of meaning at work. Various concepts are used to describe the loss of or a lack of meaning or meaninglessness at work.

Meaning in work is considered an intra-psychological phenomenon that emerges in the individual's interaction with his or her working environment. Meaning in work concerns the reasons an individual has for working, what he or she seeks to accomplish by working and the continuity that he or she experiences in work. These reasons and purposes may be explicit or embedded in actions at the workplace, and they can both be prospective and retrospective. Sometimes the purposes are explicit and give a clear path to follow. Other times, the individual has only a vague physical sense of what feels good or bad and of how to act in any given situation. Meaning can also come after a series of events and is then retrospectively constructed to be congruent with what the subject is doing (Isaksen, 2000, p. 89).

This definition is in line with Frankl (1985), Yalom (1980), Bruner, (1990), and Csikszentmihalyi (1989), (in Isaksen, 2000) who, although they might focus on different aspects of *meaning*, at least agree that meaning and purposefulness makes life in general more comprehensible.

Yalom (1980, p. 400 and following pages) distinguishes between two different aspects of meaning.

He defines "cosmic meaning" as the answer to "what is the meaning of life?" and "terrestrial meaning" (or life-meaning) as the answer to "what is the meaning of my life?" A similar distinction must be made between three aspects of meaning in work. One aspect concerns the general evaluation of the meaningfulness of working (e.g., "What is the meaning of working?"). This level is the abstract meaning in work... A second aspect of meaning in work is the evaluation of the meaningfulness of a specific type of work, regardless of one's own specific experiences (e.g., "What is the meaning of being a physician?"). This aspect is referred to as the general meaning in work. A third aspect is the evaluation of one's own specific job, including all the many different obligations and experiences that it

involves (e.g. “Do you as a physician find your own job meaningful?”). This level is referred to as personal meaning in work.

A possible fourth level of work can be added which relates to the experience or lack thereof within the specific context where the work is performed, thus meaning at work (Chalofsky, 2010). This dimension addresses the aggregate of the total work experience which includes the abstract, the meaning of the individual’s specific vocation or specialty, and the experience of doing the job. All of these dimensions include the meaning in working as well as the meaning at working. According to Csikszentmihalyi (1989) the integrated and consistent purpose, whatever the content and wherever it comes from, provides life including the work life of the individual employee, with meaning. An overarching sense and experience of meaning is construed through the integrated and interactive meaning that is derived from or through the attachment of the employee to the workplace and its procedures; through the engagement in social relations; and through regarding work as a necessary part of a larger meaningful context.

1.9 THE PROBLEM DEFINED: LOSS OF MEANING AT WORK

Based on the reasoning thus far one dimension that presents itself for the purpose of the study is the loss of meaning as a result of various factors. At this juncture it seems valid to state that the observed problem does not appear to be a singular problem which can be discussed in isolation, but rather tends towards a problem-complex. In summarised format the problem complex that seems to present itself can be segmented along the following dimensions:

- Firstly the problem seems to be related to negative work-life-experiences, emanating from a managerialist structural-functionalism based on instrumental rationalism and linear organizational processes, which includes the alienation of the individual from the self, the work, the organization as well as the other. Employees have lost their sense of meaning in the modern workplace, which is still being governed and managed through modernistic rules and theories,

whilst the society and even the organization's operating environment has become post-modern in its fibre: The workplace has lost its sense of meaning

- A second dimension of the problem pertains to the alienation of the individual as discussed, and is closely related to meaningless experiences at work and in working as a result of various factors
- The problem most probably emanates from a linear thinking pattern in terms of which it is perceived that through the implementation of certain interventions the work behaviour and the behaviour of the individual in the work environment can be manipulated

The reasoning up to this juncture has been presented from various angles. The deployment of the rest of this study will provide sufficient information to further substantiate the problem of a meaningless workplace. The concepts alienation and meaninglessness have been presented and discussed from various perspectives, as has the indication that humans experience meaning, or better still, construe meaning based on certain experiences and contextual stimuli. It has also been noted that at least two publications in book format (Chalofsky, 2010; Terez, 2000) address the issue of a loss of meaning at work though the positive statements and in search of the **Meaningful workplace**.

The current study will attach itself to the construct: **Meaningful workplace**, as introduced by Chalofsky and Terez. It is pre-empted that a construct such as this one and the underlying theoretical and conceptual build, could become a valuable contributor to Management/Organization Theory, leadership practice, and OB, thereby creating workspaces where employees not only find and construe meaning, but where the collective efforts could lead to the fourth dimension of organizational and shareholder value, over and above the dimensions that are normally analysed such as the financials, governance and structural alignment. Sustainability of productive effort, revenue generation, and shareholder value, cannot, in the current time frame, be separated from employee value and social responsibility in terms of people management and workforce sustainability.

1.10 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study bearing in mind the title: A meaningful workplace: from theory development to applicability is:

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. This purpose will be pursued based on the emergence of the construct in literature and organizational practice, thereby expanding on the emerging theoretical discussion in this regard (thus theory development). This purpose will be fulfilled through the interrogation of literature as well as the presentation of evidence gleaned from an organization (based on exit interview information) as well as insights from participating respondents, gathered by means of Repertory Grid Technique, and the research data from the CRF institute on the “Best Employer to Work for”.

The broad framework as presented by Terez and Chalofsky in the discussion of the **Meaningful workplace** will be followed as it is the opinion of the current researcher that the heart of organizational life must be rediscovered in order to reinstitute humaneness of the employee in practice; not only as a statement on paper to which lip service is given without the tangible but through the way in which people are led and managed. It is the considered opinion of the writer that the dimensions of profitability, governance, social responsibility and added value can only be gained in a sustainable manner if the practices that guide the leadership behaviour and management practices in organizations are based on the tenets that enhance and facilitate meaning and fulfilment in working and at work. Thus: whilst performing the work in the work environment.

1.11 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

Although the possibility exists to present an extended list of specific objectives, such a practice would only result in the majority of these not being achieved. The specific objectives as listed below pertain specifically to the purpose of the study and serve as markers along the way to achieve the purpose.

- **Objective 1:** To conceptualise the constitutive elements of the construct: **A Meaningful workplace;**
- **Objective 2:** To expand the theoretical base of the construct **Meaningful workplace**, as presented in literature thereby contributing to the field of Organizational Behaviour;
- **Objective 3:** To present a practical implementable **Meaningful workplace** model based on the research process and as a result of the previous two objectives.

1.12 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Emanating from these objectives, certain questions seem to present themselves as pertinent in the approach towards meeting the purpose and objectives of the study programme. Although logic in their formulation and content, research questions in a qualitative programme (as discussed in Chapter 2) guide the mental processes of the researcher towards goal attainment.

The following research questions emanate from this overview:

- Is the construct an emerging construct in the literature on Organizational theory, and Management theory and Organizational Behaviour?
- If so, what is meant by the construct?

- Having determined whether the construct is an emerging construct, and having investigated the content and intent of the construct, would it be possible to expand on the theoretical base (as initially presented by Terez (2000) and Chalofsky (2010)) thus contributing to establishing a knowledge repository for the construct?
- If these questions were to be answered, would such a conceptual description and the accompanying model and implementation guidelines constitute “new knowledge” in the field of Organizational Behaviour?
- If it were possible, on a theoretical and conceptual level, to construe a **Meaningful workplace** theory, would it also be possible, by means of direct transference, to identify and define the constitutive elements and relate these to organizational practice and managerial and supervisory practice?

1.13 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

How significant is a study of this nature? The answer to this question can be approached from different perspectives depending on the bias that dictates a persons’ approach to reality.

In more specific terms the significance of the study programme can be described in the following few paragraphs.

- From a theoretical and philosophical perspective the significance can be derived from an understanding that job satisfaction and other expressions such as for instance involvement, loyalty, and commitment and motivation are not the same as the experience of meaning at work and the workplace. The differentiation lies in the sphere of the subjective experiences that employees have within the work setting, or stated differently, job satisfaction, depending on the orientation an individual has towards work, is not necessarily the same as the experience of the *workplace* as meaningful space. (Terez 2002 - <http://www.betterworkplacenow.com/summarv.html>).

- Seen from an academic perspective the significance is to be found in the integrated approach that will be followed as both the rational economic (so-called hard interventions) related to the management of behaviour at work and a psychodynamic approach (the subjective experiences), that do not emanate from the "hard approaches" but form the basis of purpose and meaning, complement each other. There is therefore something to be said about the fact that a one-sided approach in respect of the experience of meaning at work is not sufficient to comprehend the **Meaningful workplace** in its totality.
- A further point of significance can be derived from the perspective that subjective experiences in the workplace contribute significantly to effective work behaviour, the intent to stay on in the organization, etc. Terez (2002) states results emanating from focus group interviews in as much as that "the sense that what I'm doing as an individual, and what the organization is doing collectively, truly makes a difference" tops the list of meaningful experiences in the workplace, followed by "Ownership, Fit, Oneness, and Relationship Building. In the second tier: Service, Equality, Validation, Invention, and Personal Development". Organizations might have all the formal policies, procedures, job descriptions, structure, training and development programmes, in place, but that does not yet mean that employees experience the workplace as meaningful.
- In the final consequence it would have to be ascertained whether the construct **Meaningful workplace**, is meaningful in itself as a framework for further research an study albeit initially only in a conceptual sense of the word.

The **Meaningful workplace** is not a one-way street. It entails roles to be fulfilled by the organization as well as the individual, not only in objective terms, but in subjective terms as well, specifically referring to the psychological contract, and even more significantly, in the way that managers manage their staff.

It is however more than merely an understanding of the psychological contract as such. The construct **Meaningful workplace** encompasses various other dimensions that fall within the sphere of current initiatives to enhance work related behaviour, such as initiatives pertaining to employee engagement, initiatives that emanate from the purpose of being rated as the best company to work for, most

loved brand, etc.

Does this then imply that the organizational objectives of being productive and profitable; of sustaining the business and revenue growth; of being a responsible corporate citizen; of serving the shareholders and establishing productive relationships with stakeholders; of improving product quality and harnessing customer satisfaction as a means to a better and improved bottom line harvest; are meaningless? Is it then only the subjective experience of the individual within the work environment that is important? The answer to these and other similar questions are an emphatic **no**. Organizations exist to serve a purpose in society. They address needs and satisfy these; they solve problems; create services and other value in and for society, whether they produce goods, function in the retail environment, and education; whether as profit sharing or non-profit organizations. To serve their purpose, product and service quality, employee commitment, productive behaviour, good governance, etc are all important. On the other hand, organizations function within society and therefore organizations 'belong' to the society within which they function. This has implications for the way in which the organization indirectly influences society through the way in which the workplace is perceived as meaningful workspace. Brief and Weis (2002:280) are correct in stating that the "... organizations in which people work affect their thoughts, feelings and actions in the workplace and away from it. Likewise, people's thoughts, feelings and actions affect the organizations in which they work", thereby also implying that organizations are not isolated islands with impenetrable boundaries. From a systems perspective; whether organizations are defined as open systems with permeable boundaries, or social systems, which integrate into society, the reciprocal affect between organization and society is undeniable.

1.14 STRUCTURE

- In the following chapter (Chapter 2) the methodological approach and research methodology will be provided. Broadly speaking, a qualitative approach will be followed. The discussion will be detailed enough in terms of

the underlying assumptions that guide qualitative studies. The approach in terms of which an understanding of meaning at work is to be reached will be discussed as will the methods in the gathering of relevant data. The broad strategy will be discussed and eventually also the methodology to develop the theoretical build and conceptual understanding of the **Meaningful workplace**. One of the primary assumptions is that organizations are open, living or social systems. The underlying bias is towards a phenomenological understanding and subsequent description of the construct, based on a constructivist approach. To a certain extent this chapter represents a theoretical exercise in methodology, which could if successful in the eventual execution; enrich the methodological literature in the field of OB. (If not successful, it would still provide a valuable lesson and insight in research practice.)

- Chapter 3 embarks on the quest to discover the current thinking regarding the construct utilising the publications of Terez and Chalofsky as a basic framework and points of departure. The understanding of what is meant and the broad outline will be discussed and presented and will be expanded upon through the integration of what can be termed as “the footprint of a **Meaningful workplace**” in literature and research.
- Chapter 4 represents the results of three data sets. The first data set is based on the research upon which the certification of “best employer to work for” by the CRF institute is based. Secondly, “exit interview” information that was collected electronically from employees who voluntarily left a company when provided the opportunity to do so is presented and interpreted. The third data set consists of information that was gathered by means of Repertory Grid (RG) interviews with selected employees in various organisations and on various levels within different organizations in an endeavour to capture the mindset of individuals regarding the **Meaningful workplace**.
- Chapter 5 presents the conclusions that can be drawn from the study as well as recommendations for future research.

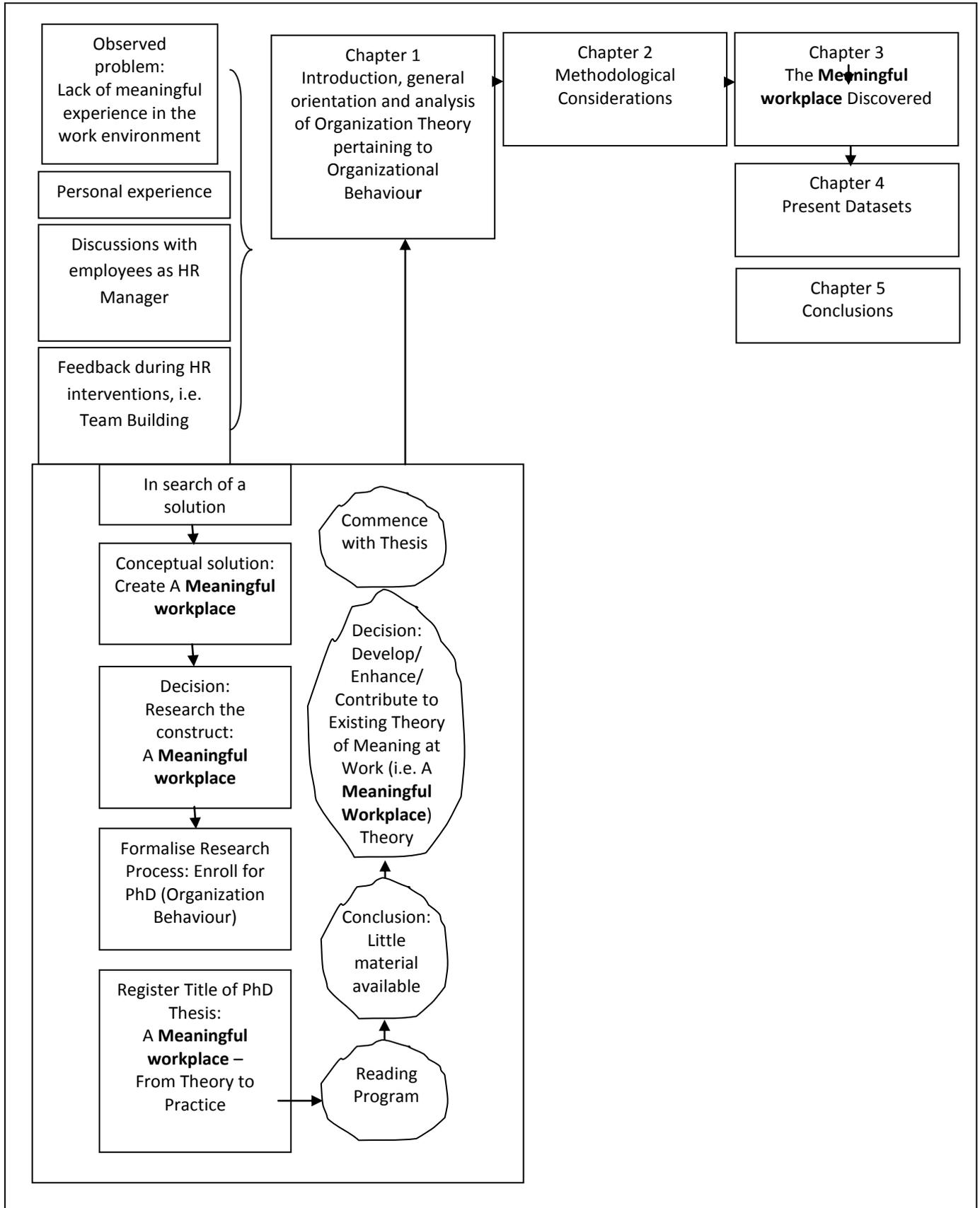


Figure 1.3: Structure of the Thesis.

2 CHAPTER 2

A MEANINGFUL WORKPLACE: METHODOLOGY

*The purpose of this chapter is to discuss and present the research methodology consisting of a broad goal or ultimate purpose (to develop in the sense of expanding on the current theoretical footprint of the construct a **meaningful workplace**), the research framework (following a qualitative approach), the specific method that will be employed to create such a theory (constructivist), the research genre which serves this project (phenomenological), and an indication of the data sources that will be utilised for this purpose (published research texts, exit interview verbatim responses and Repertory Grid interview information) and closing with a discussion on language as the medium of representation..*

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the research approach that was chosen is discussed and presented. A qualitative approach is contemplated and discussed in a sequence commencing with the broadest possible framework (i.e. a general orientation towards research) and closes with a discussion of the strategy which comprises three converging streams of information culminating in a discussion on theory formation or in this instance the expansion of an existing theoretical construct.

2.1.1 Structural fit within the context of the research program

The structural positioning within the broader context of the research process is presented in Figure 2.1. Figure 2.1 illustrates the progression from inception of the idea up to the choice of research methodology. The reasoning begins with a broad discussion on research and then progresses towards the reasoning regarding the choice and character of qualitative research.

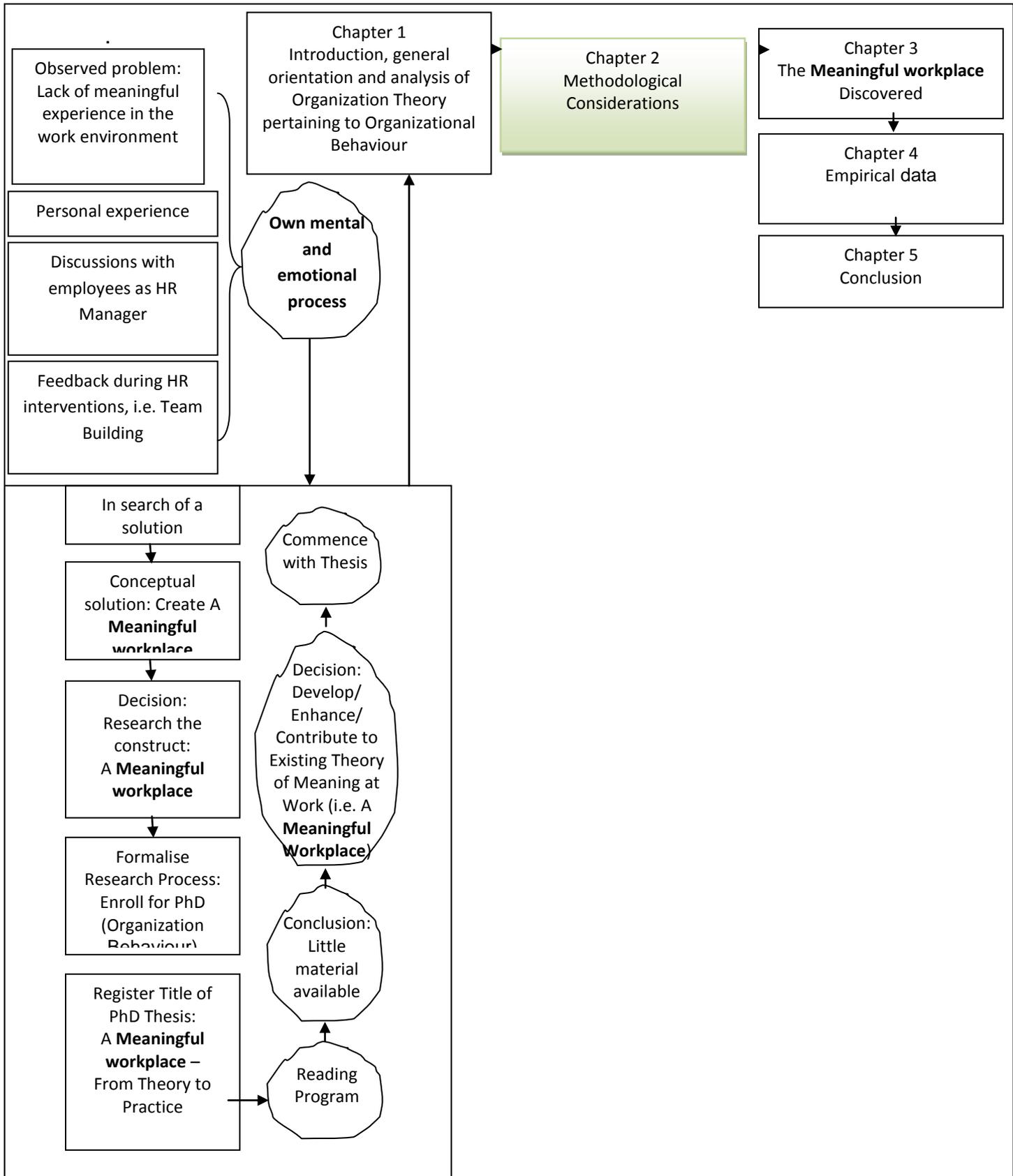


Figure 2.1: Chapter 2 in Context

2.1.2 Structure of the chapter

Firstly, a discussion regarding research as a process and phenomenon for the discovery and acquisition of knowledge as the broadest framework within which this study program, plays itself out is presented. This is followed by the case for a qualitative research framework or paradigm. Data gathering techniques that are utilised in this program are presented as part of the discussion on qualitative research. A discussion regarding phenomenology as the framework of reference for “Verstehen” (understanding the data) as lived experience at work will be noted. This is followed by a discussion of an interpretivist-constructivist paradigm, thus paving the way for the expansion of theory regarding the construct under discussion. Within this structure certain issues that force themselves on the foreground will be discussed as they present themselves. Examples of such issues are questions relating to the differences between quantitative and qualitative research and validity in qualitative research, which will be discussed in the appropriate paragraphs.

Figure 2.2 presents a graphic indication of the previous paragraph. This structure is deemed to be a holistic approach towards the research methodology for the purpose of this study program.

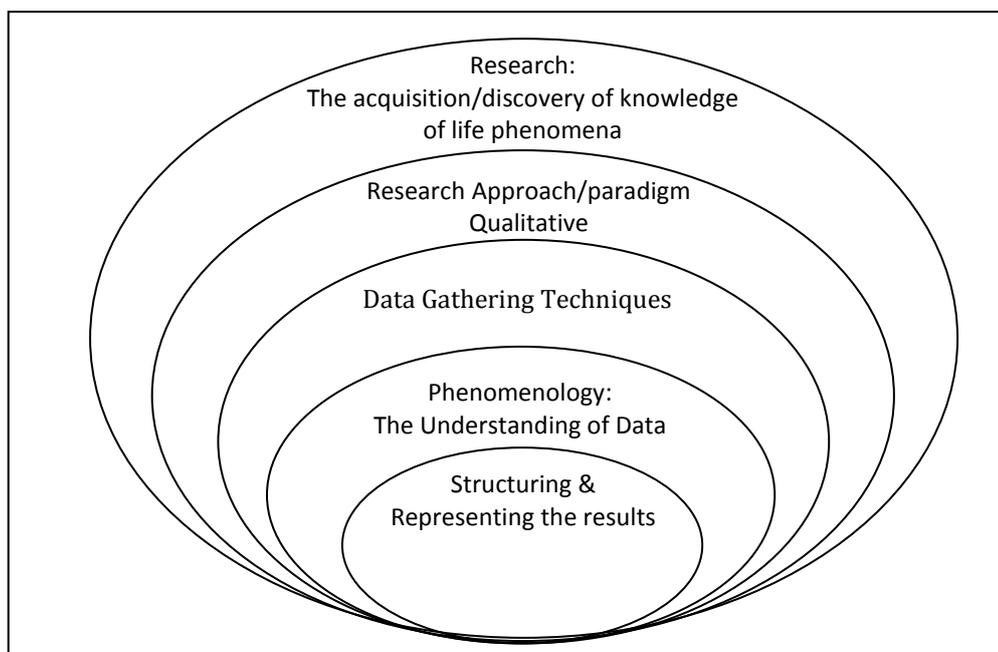


Figure 2.2: A Holistic Perspective

2.2 RESEARCH AS THE PROCESS OF KNOWLEDGE ACQUISITION

The following paragraphs shed light on the considerations leading up the choice of a qualitative approach. The reason for inclusion of this paragraph is self evident. A “cold canvassing approach” and methodological discussion will not serve the flow of the reasoning towards a coherent discussion regarding the methodology to be followed in this study (which incidentally is also related to the possibility of attaining validity). It is therefore deemed prudent to summarise the research problem, questions and purpose prior to embarking on a discourse in qualitative paradigms.

The acquisition of knowledge or the solution to a problem is most probably the deepest level of achievement of and by any research program. The current research program attempts the acquisition of knowledge of a specific phenomenon and an understanding of the dynamics that are involved in the phenomenon.

The primary problem revolves around the phenomenon that employees suffer a loss of meaning at work. From a positive perspective, it thus focuses on those elements/factors in the workplace that determine or contribute to the experience of meaningfulness at work. This focus predisposes the current study towards an understanding (*Verstehen*) of lived experience in the work place and positions the research program in the broad domain of a qualitative approach.

Janesick (1994, p. 210) uses dance as a metaphor to describe qualitative research designs.

All dances make a statement and begin with the question: What do I want to say with this dance? In very much the same way, the qualitative researcher begins with a similar question. What do I want know, or what did I want to explain in this study? This is a critical beginning point. As a result of the individual researchers’ own lived experience a question is constructed and framed for enquiry. After this question is clear, we select the most appropriate methodology to proceed with the research project.

In metaphoric terms research can be described as a choreographed endeavour, an art form like a dance. As an “art form” research design adapts, changes and moulds the very phenomena they are intended to examine. Following the dance metaphor which follows a pattern of warming up, executing the dance-floor exercises, and eventually ends with a cooling down phase, qualitative research design typically commences with design decisions followed by a phase of execution and eventually winds down. Design decisions revolve around a question or set of questions that guides the study towards execution. “Once the researcher has a question, a site, a participant or a number of participants and a reasonable time period..., he or she needs to decide the most appropriate data collection strategies suited to the study” (Janesick 1994, p. 211). The specific research questions as formulated in the previous chapter serve as boundary markers, without which a qualitative program will expand to the extent that it becomes meaningless without achieving the set objectives. The research questions emanating from the observed problem domain represent a problem complex and can therefore not be limited to a single question or even hypotheses.

The answers to the stated questions will lead to the achievement of the purpose and the objectives of the study program as described in Chapter 1. The research continuum as presented in Figure 2.3 (below), is indicative of the fact that the current study spans the whole spectrum of this continuum, as it commences with a theoretical ideal (to establish a theoretical framework to understand the meaning of human behaviour and experience at work) and moves toward a practical ideal (to implement a model for analysis and intervention so as to sustain the ideal of a **meaningful workplace**).

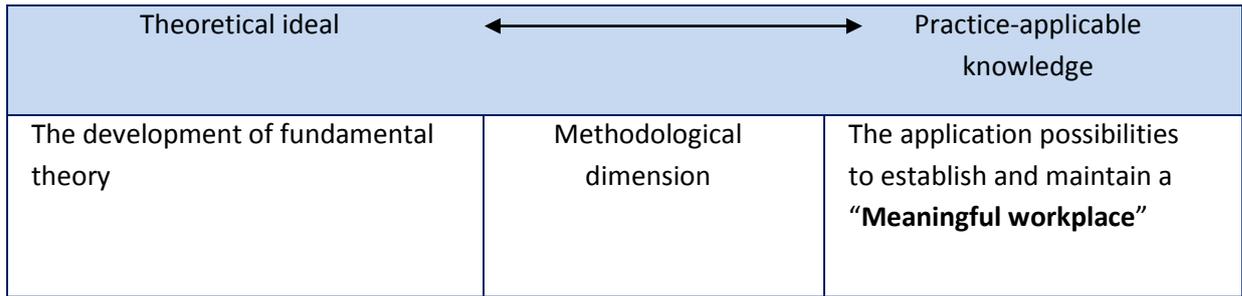


Figure 2.3: The Research Continuum

(Mouton and Marais, 1992)

Such an approach will inevitably lead to a shuttling process between theory and practice. A Research Framework refers to a broad framework within which the program will unfold. In this particular case a qualitative framework. (Although the concept paradigm is also used to refer to qualitative research, the choice for the concept Framework was chosen to refer to qualitative research as opposed to quantitative research modes.) Kotzé (1995, p. 181) referring to Guba and Lincoln, states that qualitative research represents a better “fit for the investigation of socio-behavioural phenomena because the interaction between researcher and participant, of necessity, leads to changes as a result of the interaction itself.” The implication is obvious: human behaviour is seldom, if ever, de-contextualised, referring to social and historical background, as well as to time and situational factors, including experiences and stimuli which evolve within the framework of human living, of which work life most probably occupies a substantial share of life activities and energy expended to achieve certain goals. Human experience can never be divorced from the context in which it is “lived experience”. Context thus also refers to the influence of their life and world view within which they grow up (bearing in mind the great diversity that exists in this respect), the economic system within which people have to survive, the theoretical organizational framework which dominates when they start with a career and within which they conduct and experience work-life and the changes that take place over time.

The nature of research and reflection however, specifically a qualitative research design, may result in different terminology and a somewhat different closure, depending on the flow of the process in terms of internal logic and abiding by the

rules of the specific paradigm and strategy. This study will end with certain hypotheses, instead of using hypotheses as a starting point and units of measure.

Every research program is characterised by a unique methodology which includes the approach or research paradigm, strategy, research genre and specific data gathering methods. These considerations are not only determined by the domain phenomena but as well as the envisaged purpose of the program. Such a framework (including the approach – qualitative or quantitative research approach, the paradigm (e.g. constructivist) and the strategy (e.g. phenomenology) - serve as the enablers that revolve around the research problem as initially observed as a phenomenon and the questions that guide the research program. It is therefore essential to state the underlying assumptions and approaches that guide the research process as well as to indicate the unfolding of the research process as indicators of the extent of congruence with the envisaged purpose of the study. In order to pre-empt any misconceptions, it is deemed prudent to provide a holistic overview against which this chapter must be understood. Graphically this view can be presented as in Figure 2.3.

2.3 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH: A FRAMEWORK/PARADIGM FOR INVESTIGATING AND UNDERSTANDING LIFE-WORLD PHENOMENA

2.3.1 The dividing line: Qualitative and quantitative research

At the outset of the discussion it seems necessary to distinguish between qualitative and quantitative research approaches or paradigms. The discussion is broad based as this is not an attempt to differentiate on the basis of detail. The necessity does however present itself as an imperative in order for researcher and reader alike. The researcher is under an obligation to present his /her mental process and pattern and for the reader to follow and develop insight into the mindset and mental process of the researcher.

Table 2.1: Differentiators between Quantitative and Qualitative Research: The Philosophy of Science

Quantitative Research	Qualitative Research
<p>Emanates from a positivistic tradition; major constituents are physical objects and processes;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The systematic scientific investigation of quantitative properties and phenomena and their relationships. The process of measurement is central to quantitative research because it provides the fundamental connection between empirical observation and mathematical expression of quantitative relationships • Widely used in both the natural and social sciences, from physics and biology to sociology and journalism • The term quantitative research is most often used in the social sciences in contrast to qualitative research 	<p>Emanates from phenomenological perspective; emphasises internal, mental events as the basic unit of existence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The approach does not involve mathematical models • An approach to inquiry that cuts across disciplines and subject matter
<p>Assumes knowledge comes from observation of the physical world</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Knowledge exists in the outside world and must be discovered by sound and controlled methodological approaches based on an specific ontological assumption (reality can be discovered) 	<p>Knowledge is actively constructed and comes from examining the internal constructs of people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Researchers endeavour to gather an in-depth understanding of human behaviour and the reasons that govern such behaviour. The discipline investigates the spectrum and context of behaviour decision making and not just the quantifiable variables • Smaller but focused samples/research participants are more often needed rather than large random samples

Investigator makes inferences based on direct observations or derivatives of the direct observation	Investigator relies on outside observational schemes and tries to keep intact the participants perspective
<p>Goal is to describe cause and effect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The objective is to develop and employ mathematical models, theories and/or hypotheses pertaining to natural phenomena to prove causal relationships 	<p>Attempts to describe the ways that people assign meaning to behaviour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Entails the examination, analysis and interpretation of observations for the purpose of discovering underlying meanings and patterns of relationships

(Based on Kerlinger and Lee 2000, p. 590)

Table 2.1 indicates the differences between a quantitative and qualitative research approach based upon different and distinguishable philosophies. The different philosophical approaches imply certain ontological and methodological differences.

The elements as tabulated, (which are by no means a comprehensive or an exhaustive list of differences) speak for themselves as differentiating factors in the different approaches between quantitative and qualitative research.

Qualitative research as opposed to quantitative research is followed as an approach and broad framework for this study. The field of study is lived experience of employees as documented in current research with the purpose of understanding the phenomenon the Meaning of Work. The assumption in this study is that the flip-side of the meaning of work can be described as a **meaningful workplace**. Three streams of information (see below) converge to eventually establish the building blocks for the formation of a theory on a **meaningful workplace**. The result will inevitably lead to the creation of theory, based on the observation and study of experiential structures and consciousness. The work-life of any given individual or collective of individuals is lived-experience, a phenomenon in and of society. It is littered with experiences and meanings. Thus this study will inevitably follow the experience of the work-life of individuals from a *subjective* or first person point of view. This lays the foundation of the choice for phenomenology as research genre. Phenomenology can be distinguished from, although related to, other fields of

philosophy and methodology in respect of ontology (the study of being or what is), epistemology (the study of knowledge), logic (the study of valid reasoning), ethics (the study of right and wrong action), etc. within a qualitative framework.

Does this imply a pure first-person subjective construction of a proposed theory regarding a **meaningful workplace**? The answer is in the negative. There are certain rules that guide the total process from the inception of the idea and the concerns that arise from the observation up to and including the writing and proposal of a theory. These will be turned to later.

2.3.2 The evolution of Qualitative Research

Denzin and Lincoln (2000, p. 13-17) refer to the history of qualitative research that can be demarcated within the following framework:

- **Traditional period**, covering the beginning of the 1900's to World War II. Qualitative researchers such as missionaries, discoverers, administrators, and others, created mass volumes describing the so-called "primitive cultures" in an *objective* way. These accounts were mostly based on field experiences and observations from a distance (if that were possible while interacting with objects of enquiry).
- The second phase is described as the **modernist phase**, attempted the application of a rigorous methodology to qualitative research such as the work of Becker et al 1961, in Denzin and Lincoln (2000, p. 14). Qualitative research in this phase clothed itself in the language and guise of positivist (and later) post-positivist approach. Quite the opposite end of this phase, in the history of qualitative research, was the discovery of Grounded Theory by Glaser and Strauss (1967). New interpretive theories were also discovered including ethno-methodology, phenomenology, critical theory and feminism all of which dotted the qualitative landscape with markers of methodology, ontology and epistemology.
- The third moment or phase in the history of qualitative research is referred to as the phase of **blurred genres**. Theories included Symbolic Interaction,

Constructivism, Naturalistic Enquiry, Positivism and Post-positivism, Phenomenology, etc. Reporting formats were as diverse and ranged from Grounded Theory Case Studies, Clinical Research, and methods of Historical and Biographical action.

- The fourth phase or moment is known as the ***crisis of representation***. During this phase concepts such as validity, reliability and dependability became critical. Stoller in Denzin and Lincoln (2000) became critical of the traditional ethnographical and anthropological text accounts and eventually created a memoir, in which he became the first person of the story that he told. This represents a *first-person* representation, akin to phenomenology, which also presents a first-person account based on the interaction between knower and known.
- The ***fifth moment*** or the post modern period of ethnographic writing abandoned the aloof observer position and experimented with new ways of exposing ethnographical accounts. The search for the *Grand Theories* was abandoned and replaced with local and small scale theories that fitted the research context. In essence two theories can be isolated during the phase i.e. Postmodernist Critical Theory and Constructivism.
- The sixth moment or phase in qualitative research is known as the ***post experimental period***. Writings are connected to a free and democratic society.
- The seventh moment or phase can be described as ***the border*** towards "...multivocality, contested meanings, paradigmatic controversies and new textual forms" (Denzin and Lincoln (2000, p. 185) we are moving.

A long and coloured history indeed! However the possibilities regarding the demarcation of timelines and approach do not imply clearly demarcated and isolated theories. The legacy of the past lives in the present and will live in the future of qualitative researchers, overstepping boundary lines and fusing theory, methodology, epistemology and ontology.

How does the qualitative researcher cope with six very fundamental issues which include the critique of positivism and post-positivism; the crisis of representation and legitimisation; the various voices, speaking from the background of various agendas

(race, gender, class, ethnic, Third World perspectives, political and ideological agendas, etc); the overlap between the boundaries of systems of meaning?

These are but some of the challenges that face the qualitative researcher in his/her endeavour to uncover meaning, and to construe new knowledge and insight in the field of human behaviour and endeavours, challenges that will have to be faced in this study as well.

Another set of problematic issues with which qualitative research is faced, include confrontations that question the validity, generalizability, and reliability of the research. The implications are self-evident:

Is it in any way possible to generalise the construed theory which places the individual in the centre of the Organisational Behaviour debate, without prejudicing the rational economic perspective on work behaviour, nor diluting the psychodynamic nature of the individual's work related behaviour, and integrating these two perspectives into a single and coherent theory that will not only enrich the theory on Organizational Behaviour, but also contribute towards establishing a framework or approach that will acknowledge the negative work behaviour that is created by only applying a rational economic view in respect of work force in an organisational setting?

When attempting a definition of Qualitative Research cognisance must be taken of the various aspects that come into play. Qualitative Research as such does not necessarily belong to any specific paradigm, perspective, theoretical or methodical practice or framework and therefore there is no unified methodical or methodological unique framework. However it does encompass theories, paradigms, methodology according to paradigms, ontological approaches and has its own uniqueness situated in the ***analyses of the data with which it works.***

Marais and Mouton (1992) postulate that the endeavour to understand the extent and depth of a phenomenon almost inevitably leads to a qualitative research strategy (approach). And postulate a three dimensional model to explain and differentiate between quantitative and qualitative research approaches or frameworks.

In the first instance, this study focuses on the understanding of the construct “**meaningful workplace**” and will therefore necessitate a qualitative design. Figure 2.4 (Marais and Mouton 1992, p. 175) provides a further background to this reasoning and at once indicates the differences as well as well as the purpose and requirements of the different research designs and strategies.

Marais and Mouton refer to specific examples of qualitative research methods or paradigms which includes Phenomenology. The purpose is to create an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon and self evidently requires involvement, contextualization maximation of comparatives and sensitized concepts. Thus, the act of qualitative research cannot be viewed from a neutral or objective positivist point of view (the last being the difference between Husserl and Heidegger).

However difficult it seems to define qualitative research, it is nevertheless attempted. The problem with such an attempt is that qualitative research cannot be defined according to a specific paradigm or single ideological perspective. Nor is it possible to use a specific methodological standpoint as the “starting block” for such a definition. Following Denzin and Lincoln (1994:30) who are probably close to an inclusive description when stating that qualitative research is *an “inter-disciplinary, trans disciplinary, and even a contra-disciplinary field”* with a *“multi paradigmatic focus”* bound to a *“naturalistic perspective and an interpretive understanding of human behaviour”* and which is continuously caught up in an internal tension of which *“the one pole tends to towards a broad post-modern logic, whilst the other pole tends towards a narrower positivistic conception of human behaviour and the understanding thereof”*. This definition (if it may be called that) confirms the correctness of the concept when viewing qualitative research as *framework-concept* within which a rich variety of methods and genres can be imbedded.

As has been indicated, qualitative research serves her from a diverse plate of content and strategies. Some concepts that function on a different level (or within a different domain) are briefly indicated below.

2.3.3 Qualitative vs. Quantitative research

There are distinct differences between qualitative and quantitative research designs. These will be discussed below without pretending that the discussion is either final or comprehensive. It will however indicate the differences for the purpose of this study.

2.3.3.1 Concepts

Concepts are the constituents of thought on a pre-theoretical level. Seen as such concepts form the building blocks of understanding phenomena which are under scrutiny. Concepts function on a different level when compared to quantitative research designs. In a qualitative research design concepts acquire “surplus meaning”, indicating that **concepts** are “connotatively richer in meaning” (Marais and Mouton, 1992, p. 164). In this regard, it would be appropriate to conclude that concepts somehow express abstractions that are formed through a process of generalization based on observed specifics, which implies that phenomena (in qualitative designs, such as in this case) represent a variegated hue of interactions. In quantitative designs researchers endeavour to define concepts in such a way that they demonstrate a denotative character and therefore a single *meaning*.

“Qualitative methods (as opposed to quantitative methods) typically produce a wealth of information about a much smaller number of cases and people” (Patton in Kotzé, 1995, p. 179), thus increasing understanding, but at the same time reducing generalizability.

2.3.3.2 Hypotheses

In quantitative research designs the researcher tests his/her hypotheses and eventually accepts or rejects these through a rigorous process of testing and quantification, hypotheses unfold during the research process, hence, often feature as the end-results of qualitative research designs. Kerlinger (1986, p. 11) describes this unfolding process as follows: *“After actualising the problem, after turning back on experience for possible solutions, after observing relevant phenomena, the scientist may formulate a hypotheses”*.

2.3.3.3 Observation

The third area of difference between qualitative and quantitative research designs pertains to observation. Observation according to Mouton and Marais (1992, p. 166-167) refers to *“...the process according to which the researcher links reality with his/her theoretical assumptions”*. In this regard it is important to note that the difference between qualitative and quantitative researchers can be reduced to two fundamental propositions.

Quantitative researchers demonstrate an approach that forces a pre-designed system onto a phenomenon, thereby transposing a structure onto the phenomenon. Qualitative researchers' point of departure is that the phenomenon which is subjected to the research process must manifest itself as “it is” and the researcher will register what he/she observes.

Secondly, qualitative researchers are more involved in and with the phenomenon that is researched, whilst quantitative researchers tend to maintain distance between themselves and phenomena. (“Qualitative Framework”) is used here as the broadest possible approach towards this study program and is indicative in its differentiation to other frameworks – such as a quantitative framework and approach. The concept “paradigm” is used to indicate a cluster approaches within the paradigm. The concept: “strategy” is employed to denote the specific

methodological operationalisation for the study. Graphically this can be presented as in Figure 2.4.

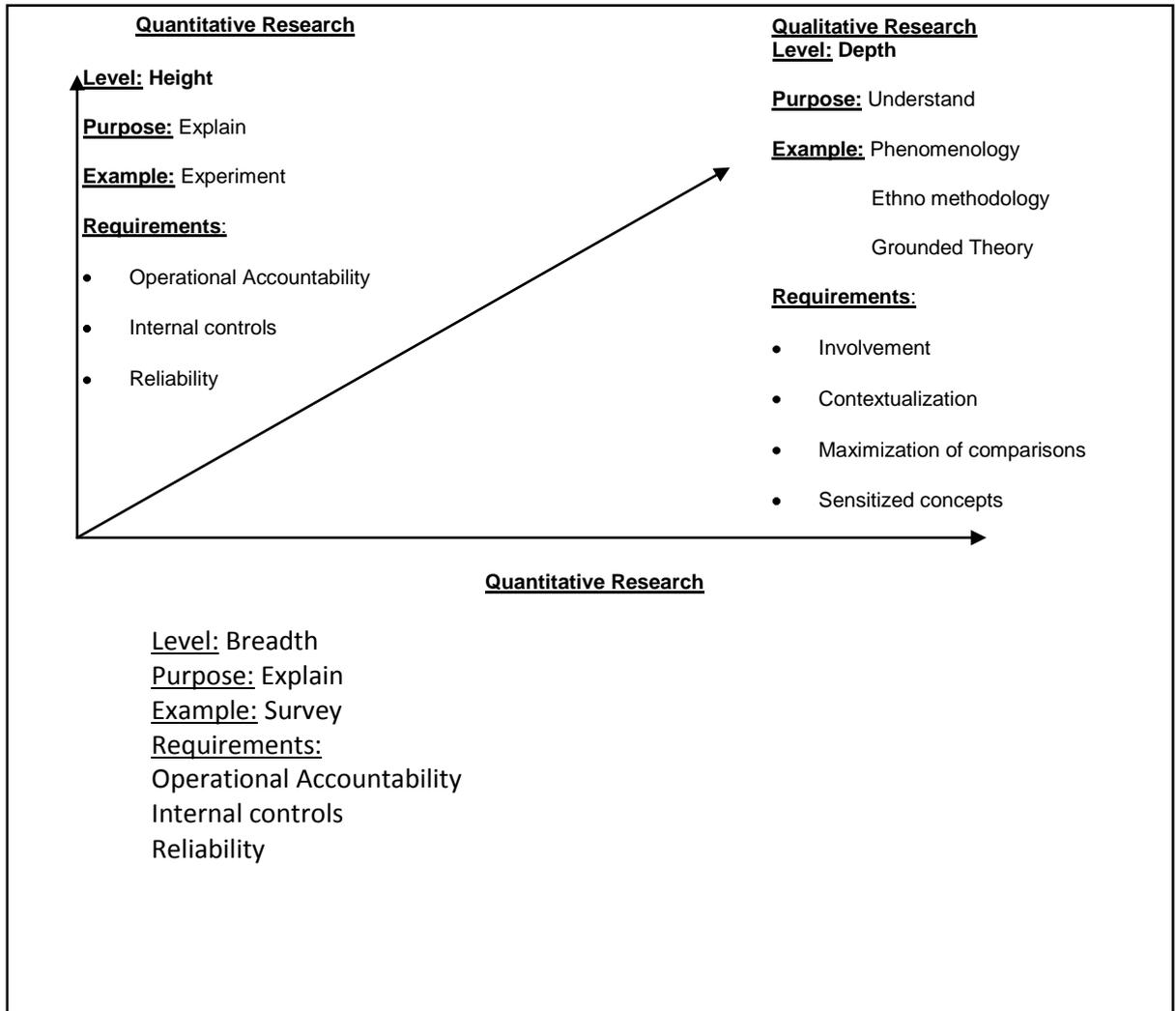


Figure 2.4: Research dimensions

(Mouton and Marais 1992)

2.3.4 Notes on reliability and validity in Qualitative research

Qualitative research, in its essence, as has been implied, is exploratory and inductive in nature. Therefore, although reliability and validity are important concepts in research designs it is not possible to transfer the content and the extent of meaning of these concepts from a quantitative perspective to a qualitative

research design. This does not however mean that reliability and validity are not important in qualitative designs. As this study eventually envisages a theory and model for management practice and the management of Organizational Behaviour, the process to achieve the goal must also comply with basic criteria of which reliability and validity seem to be core. It is therefore necessary to define and apply these concepts in the context of a qualitative research approach and philosophy. This brings us to the quantitative-qualitative debate. This is not the place nor is there any inclination to enter into a what-is-better argument.

At the heart of the quantitative-qualitative debate lies a philosophical, not methodological argument. Qualitative researchers operate under different **epistemological assumptions** than quantitative researchers. In a qualitative approach for instance, lies the belief that the best way to understand any phenomenon is to view it in its context. Quantification is viewed as limiting in nature because it tends to look only at a small portion of a reality that cannot be split or unitized without losing the importance of the whole phenomenon. In the majority of cases qualitative researchers become immersed in researched phenomenon. Move into the culture or organization you are studying and experience what it is like to be a part of it (Trochim 2006).

Qualitative researchers also operate under different **ontological assumptions** about the world and reality. There is no single unitary reality apart from our perceptions. Each individual experiences the world from his/her point of view and therefore every individual a different reality. Research that does not take this into account is viewed as fundamentally violating the fundamental view of the individual. The researcher herself is a unique individual and research is based in the individual perception of the researcher. There is thus no point in trying to establish "validity" in any external or objective sense. All that we can hope to do is interpret our view of the world as researchers.

2.3.4.1 The soundness of Qualitative research

Reliability refers to the consistency of a measure or the degree to which an instrument measures the same way each time it is applied under the same conditions with different subjects. Reliability is concerned with the stability of research results. Reliability therefore is a reference to "repeatability" or "consistency". A measure is considered reliable if it would give us the same result over and over again assuming of course that what we are measuring has not changed over time. This is the exact problem faced by social researchers. There are many variables that change over time and in quantitative research designs these are factored into the design. In qualitative designs, reliability becomes problematic because of the differences in the approaches and philosophy of researchers.

Guba and Lincoln propose at least four criteria for judging the soundness of qualitative research and explicitly offer these as an alternative to more traditional quantitatively-oriented criteria. The four criteria better reflect the underlying assumptions involved in qualitative research. Their proposed criteria and the "analogous" quantitative criteria are listed in Table 2.2, based on (Trochim 2006).

Table 2.2: Traditional and Alternative Criteria for judging Qualitative Research

Traditional Criteria for Judging Quantitative Research	Alternative Criteria for Judging Qualitative Research
internal validity	credibility
external validity	transferability
Reliability	dependability
Objectivity	confirmability

2.3.4.2 Credibility

Credibility criteria involve establishing that the results of qualitative research are credible or believable from the perspective of the participant in the research. Since

from this perspective, the purpose of qualitative research is to describe or understand the phenomena of interest from the participant's eyes, the participants are the only ones who can legitimately judge the credibility of the results.

2.3.4.3 Transferability

Transferability refers to the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be generalized or transferred to other contexts or settings. From a qualitative perspective transferability is primarily the responsibility of the one doing the generalizing. The qualitative researcher enhances transferability through a more detailed description of the research context and the assumptions that are central to the research.

2.3.4.4 Dependability

The traditional quantitative view in respect of reliability is based on the assumption of reliability or repeatability. Essentially it is concerned with whether we would obtain the same results if we could observe the same thing twice. By definition however, it is not possible to measure the same thing twice simply because we would be measuring two phenomena.

The idea of dependability, on the other hand, emphasizes the need for the researcher to account for the ever-changing context within which research occurs. The research is responsible for describing the changes that occur in the setting and how these changes affected the way the research approached the study.

2.3.4.5 Confirmability

Qualitative research tends to assume that each researcher brings a unique perspective to the study. Confirmability refers to the degree to which the results could be confirmed or corroborated by others. There are a number of strategies for enhancing confirmability. The researcher can document the procedures for checking and rechecking the data throughout the study. Another researcher can take a "devil's advocate" role with respect to the results, and this process can be documented. The researcher can actively search for and describe instances that contradict prior observations. And, upon completion of the study, an audit of the data as such, the collection of data and analysis procedures can be conducted to ascertain whether the potential for bias and distortion is greater or smaller.

Qualitative studies cannot, seen against the foregoing discussion be judged according to quantitative evaluation criteria to determine the reliability or validity of the research.

This is now an opportune moment to venture to the discussion of the research paradigm which will be followed in this programme.

2.3.5 Data-gathering techniques in Qualitative research

Qualitative researchers can utilise various data gathering techniques. Polkinghorne (2005, p. 137) refers to qualitative research as an "...umbrella term under which a variety of research methods that use languaged data are clustered". Creswell (1989) in Polkinghorne (2005), submits a categorization process according to which multiple approaches could be organized under five traditions, i.e. biography, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case studies. Although this categorization can be useful, it will not be followed in this study.

Denzin and Lincoln (1994) mention interviewing, observing, artefacts, documents and records, visual methods, personal experience methods, data management

methods, computer assisted analysis, textual analysis, amongst others. In this study program three of these methods will be employed to gather relevant data. The three methods that will be employed are: textual analysis, interviewing, and the analysis of documents. These methods were chosen for their respective characteristics which differ in terms of the way that the results were achieved in the first place, as well as the way in which this knowledge is coded and documented. Each of the mentioned sources will be discussed in more detail at the relevant place in this document. They are being mentioned here to provide the necessary background and information relating to the means which will be utilised to gather data which will be transformed into information.

2.3.5.1 Textual analysis

Formal texts such as research results present the results of controlled research and representation and take centre stage in the world of formally published results. Texts represent stable content that became fossilised in time based on a process to gain insight and acquire knowledge and that can be interpreted in a new or even possibly alternative context to gain understanding of phenomena. The result of the analysis of formal texts (or literature review as it is commonly referred to) is to gain an understanding of the construct under discussion.

2.3.5.2 Organizational documents

Documents, in this case the documented summary of exit interview feedback information, are not necessarily always formally structured for publication purposes, but nevertheless contain information that is relevant to the organization. The coding and structure is normally organization specific and is determined by the needs at a certain juncture in the development or life cycle of the particular organization. A second tier of documents reflect the research that is done annually in organizations by the CRF Institute in order to determine the “Best employer to work for”

2.3.5.3 Interviews

Interviews represent a very specific focus, and contribute towards the construction of information that is gleaned from raw data or unformatted contributions by participants.

The information acquired from the three data gathering methods, will be interpreted and purposefully converged to eventually; based on interpretation, from a phenomenological frame of mind, and a constructivist representation, form a coherent part theory towards the enhancement of the emerging construct A **meaningful workplace**. The convergence strategy will be discussed below as part of the paragraph of constructivism.

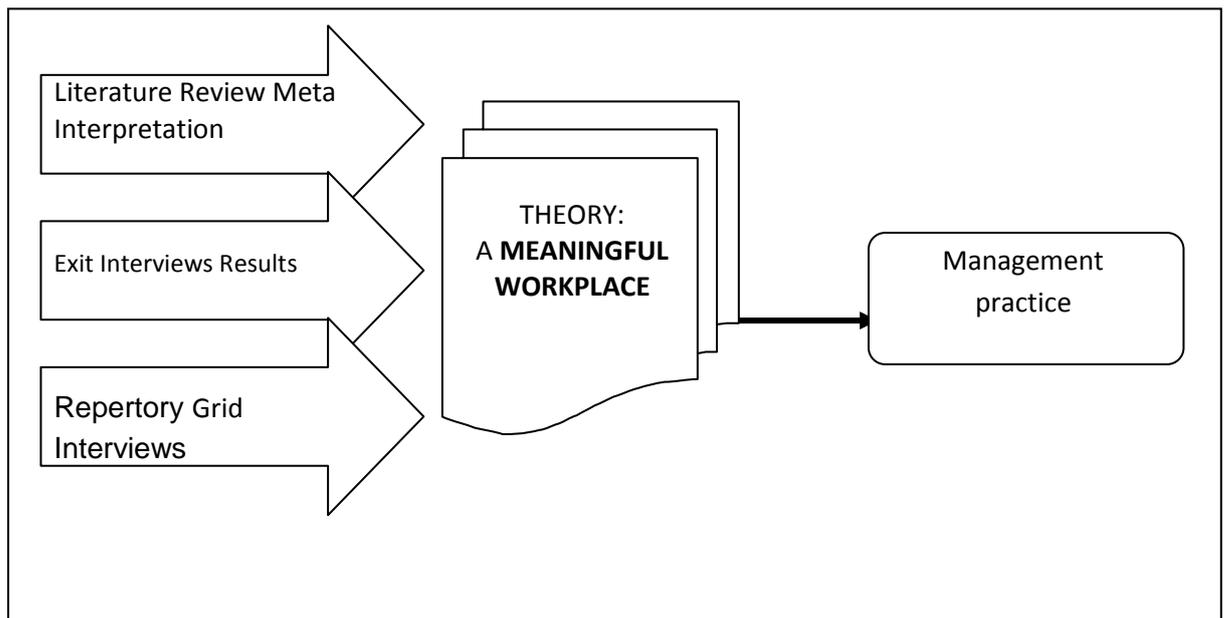


Figure 2.5: Towards theory formation -information convergence

The three data gathering methods will be referred to as “streams” and will forthwith be discussed.

2.3.5.4 Stream 1: Existing research results: Textual analysis

The first stream of information that will contribute towards the formation of theory is herewith referred to as a meta-interpretation of research on the Meaning of Work, Meaningful Work, Meaning at Work, **Meaningful workplace**, and associated concepts and constructs. The specific reason why this particular topic was chosen for such an interpretation refers back to an earlier viewpoint that an abductive reasoning process will be followed in this study.

Why specifically these concepts? The following reasoning is presented as motivation for this specific topic. Research indicates that employees attach meaning to work (Meaning of Work Project Team, 1987). The meaning of work can be linked to values in the general sense of the word as well as to individual values, emanating from, social conditioning, societal values, religious values, work ethics and the like. To a large degree values pertaining to work can be categorised and presented as socially shared systems that provide meaning to work as a life activity, thus a behavioural phenomenon in society. (This discussion will be embarked on in detail). Work is performed within a time-space environment, the boundaries of which are not only geographical, but also imbedded in the flow of time. This environment can be described and defined as any space or any time event within which the activity *work* is performed. Irrespective of the specific characteristics of the time-space environment or event, certain characteristics will always prevail, although these characteristics may vary and radically differ from environment to environment or workplace. Characteristics can be either determined by certain management practices or organizational preferences, or can be the direct result of individuals or groups of individuals that share the same context, or even by an individual that works in an *isolated* environment such as from a home office and without any colleagues or co-workers present. The meaning of work is viewed not only as a direct result of the values of different kinds that are aligned with work, but also as a direct or indirect result of prevailing conditions in the time-space environment where employees perform work behaviour, which will be discussed in Chapter 4. The meaning of work therefore can be interpreted as meaningful or otherwise based on the prevailing stimuli in the work place. The way to reach such a conclusion and to

formulate certain hypotheses related to the meaningfulness of the workplace can be achieved by an abductive reasoning process.

Thus following a (selected) trail of published research regarding the meaning of work and interpreting the results from the perspective of the workplace, certain inferences can be drawn in respect of the **meaningful workplace**.

2.3.5.5 Stream 2: Exit Interview feedback (Organizational Document)

The second stream of information to converge in enhancing the emerging theoretical and conceptual construct (a **meaningful workplace**) is extracted from 1,823 verbatim comments from employees that chose to leave the Company¹. To retain confidentiality, suffice to say that the results emanate from a Communications Company in South Africa. Electronic (web based) questionnaires were distributed to 4,500 employees, of which 1823 responded to an invitation to additional comments at the end of the questionnaire. These responses were categorised based on a content based interpretation of the verbatim comments, by the compilers of an executive report for top management. The categories as utilised in the report will be applied and used in this study. (The verbatim comments are available upon request.) The questionnaire was completed on an anonymous basis therefore no biographical information is available. It is also not viewed as necessary in a qualitative study of this nature to present results or interpretations based on quantifiable statistics or information as no measurement to determine statistical measures will be undertaken.

As the verbatim comments have already been interpreted in the report and the fact that this interpretation is retained in this study implies that a measure of refined *information* is already available. Although the report is viewed as information, it will nevertheless be *reinterpreted* from the perspective of the insight gleaned from the literature study. The possibilities that might arise from this interpretation and

¹ The research was conducted in an ICT Company in South Africa. The name of the Company is withheld but the report can be made available upon request.

comparison of two streams of information, will contribute to the creation of credibility and to a certain extent validity of the study.

A qualitative analysis was conducted by the Company and the verbatim responses were categorised according to three broad themes that were identified, i.e. “My work experience”, “My opinions around the company”, and “My future plans”. The themes and categories will be explained in a following chapter.

2.3.5.6 Stream 3: Repertory Grid interviews

The third stream comprises content from repertory Grid interviews which were conducted with selected interviewees. The interview as a descriptor of life world experiences provides a valuable link between these experiences – prior to categorization - and the categorization as such. This epistemological position falls within the field of descriptive phenomenology. It is important to note the expression *selected interviewees*. In qualitative designs the researcher is prying for information that can contribute to the study. Against such a background it is a valid practice to select interviewees who are deemed to be able to make a contribution. The interviewees were selected from the current writer’s work environment (1 senior manager, 1 middle manager/supervisor/ and 1 operational employee); a minister of religion, a teacher, a project manager, a corporate HR practitioner and an administrative staff member. The raw responses were categorised based on the bipolar comparisons that were used as elements and based on which constructs were elicited during the interview process. A more detailed discussion on Repertory Grid will be presented in a following chapter.

Repertory Grid technique

Repertory Grid Technique has its roots in the research by George Kelly, a clinical psychologist during the 1950’s and 1960’s.

Market research. Apparently Market research was one of the first applications of RG in industry (Stewart and Stewart 1990). The usefulness of RG in MR lies in its potential to descriptions of products in the words of the consumer. The second values lies in the ability of the technique to provide *hard data* indicating the differences in products in consumer's terms. The extent to which RG can be used in MR is either for (a) construct elicitation only (b) individual grids or group grids.

Quality control. The principles of Repertory Grid are (according to Stewart and Stewart 1990) used by organizations to improve various aspects of quality control. The appeal in this context is to develop the relevant vocabulary for the purpose of quality control. As a field of endeavour, many operators for example, know what to do but the vocabulary does not exist at the outset of a new product range for training purposes to ensure quality control throughout the production cycle.

Questionnaire design. The area of questionnaire design is vast in its application and therefore the following paragraph will only mention examples without going into the detail thereof.

The purpose might be to ascertain why certain people choose certain careers. For this purpose RG provides an ample framework to determine why the choice of an individual is what it is and therefore provides a framework to construct aptitude and interest questionnaires.

A second objective might be to determine why certain individuals leave the career path and embark on a new one whilst others remain on the original career path. RG can be utilizes to determine the difference in attitude within this context.

Motivation at work. RG can be used to elicit constructs in a pre-pilot phase to determine whether employees achieve a sufficient level of job satisfaction or motivational levels in an organizational setting prior to a companywide survey. The problem in this regard, although the theme lends itself exceptionally to the use of RG, is that the purpose must be determined prior to embarking with such a study, whether the results will be of academic or practical value. RG provides the methodology to study motivation at work in sufficient depth within the context of the organization to provide ample answers in respect of the *management* thereof. Two techniques surface in this regard.

- (i) Individual RG interviews with a random sample of employees;
- (ii) Group administration of RG;

Organizational climate and managerial effectiveness. RG has been used to study the mentioned phenomena with great effect. In this sense it could focus on what managers think about the organization and how this influences their thoughts and behaviour in respect of management practices.

Stewart and Stewart (1990) report the use of RG to determine organizational climate in relation to effective management techniques that will indicate effective management practices in the specific organization.

Of importance in this regard is a case study in a banking environment using RG technique to elicit constructs without the use of any questionnaires. Elements that were investigated include (a) Market knowledge and performance, (b) Client management, (c) Personal impact and appearance, (d) Persistence, (e) Adjustment to the bank, (f) Openness and honesty, (g) Coping with complex demands, (g) Relationships, (h) Communication skills, (i) Intelligence and creativity, (j) Self management, etc.

The Evaluation of training. Fonda (in Stewart and Stewart 1990) describes the application of RG technique in the evaluation of training.

Repertory Grid in counselling. In this regard Stewart and Stewart (1990) describe the different contexts within which RG can be used as a counselling technique and include the areas of (a) Relationships, (b) Client problems, (c) The content analysis of constructs, (d) Laddering of constructs, (e) Statistical analysis of full grids.

2.3.5.7 Summary

It is clear that RG technique can be used in a variety of contexts, emanating from a multitude of purposes and resulting in information that can be used in either an academic or operational context.

2.3.5.8 Repertory Grid in the current study

Interviews

Repertory Grid technique can be categorised as a structured or semi-structured interview technique depending on the process that the interviewer chooses to unfold during the interview.

Context

The technique lends itself towards a contextualised elicitation of constructs based on the experience of interviewees. In actual fact there are two definable and identifiable contexts for Repertory Grid technique. The broadest context is that of the organization within which the technique is applied. The organization provides the boundary for the application of the technique. It is however not an *open* boundary simply because a certain *area* within the organization is explored. Therefore the second boundary is very much drawn from the specific interest of the researcher, i.e. culture, management practice, work experience, etc.

Elements

Elements define the content of the interview and can be defined as those expressions or formulae that determine the boundary of the discussion. An example of the case in discussion is when a surveyor maps a piece of land. The first activity would be to identify salient features such as hilltops, high buildings, spires, ponds, etc. The second step would be to fill in the spaces between the salient features by

means of measurements between them until he has sufficient information to map the area. Elements serve as the salient features of the *landscape*, i.e. the identifying points for the topic that are of interest. Utilising the elements, the interviewer elicits constructs from interviewees that fill the gaps and eventually provide sufficient data to *map the area of interest*.

Selecting or choosing elements.

The choice of elements can either be done by means of a preliminary interview or the interviewer can choose elements based on previous research that has already been completed. Whichever route is chosen, certain criteria guide the choice of elements. These include the following;

- (i) Elements must be discreet;
- (ii) Elements must be homogeneous;
- (iii) Elements should not be subsets of other elements;
- (iv) Elements should not be evaluative, although in this particular study the core concept is evaluative in nature and therefore it is inevitable that elements will discriminate based on evaluative concepts.

Construct elicitation

Constructs consist of bipolar distinctions that describe the perspective of the interviewee in respect of a certain element-set. In its most basic form the following procedure results in a grid of bi-polar constructs representing the perspective of the interviewee for a particular element-set. An example of the result of the technique is produced below for an interview during which the element-set meaningful work experience was elicited.

During the introductory discussion the interviewee was requested to participate in an interview during which a special technique were to be applied in an attempt to determine the differences between a **meaningful workplace** comprising of meaningful work experiences as opposed to work experiences that were not meaningful. The technique was explained and three index cards were provided with the request that the interviewee identify three work-settings where the following experiences were very prominent:

- (i) “A work setting within which there was a predominant experience of meaningfulness;
- (ii) A work setting where the pre-dominant experience was that of frustration and which was demotivational in nature;
- (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.”

The interviewee was requested to number the cards from 1-3. The first exercise was then conducted with the interviewer providing the following guideline:

“Place cards numbers 1 and 3 next to each other on your left hand side and card number 2 on your right and think of the following – *In what way do work environments numbers 1 and 3 correspond with each other in respect of the way in which you experienced meaningfulness and how does this differ from the environment on card number 2?*” This process is repeated following a card sort process in which cards (i.e. work environments) were compared according to the numbered cards. Work environments 1 & 2 were compared with environment 3 and followed by a comparison of cards 2 & 3 with 1.

The interviewer documented the responses in the flowing manner:

The comments that were related to meaningful experiences were written in the left hand column on a sheet of paper that was divided in two columns, whilst the comments that did not carry positive connotation were written in the right hand

column. In cases where the interviewer was uncertain whether a characteristic was construed as positive or negative, the interviewee was requested to clarify.

This procedure was repeated by using cards numbers 1 and 2 in comparison with card number 2; cards number 2 and 3 in comparison to card number 1.

An extract of the result is reported below.

Table 2.3: Repertory Grid report sheet

Card numbers (Sort)	Positive comments	Negative comments
<u>1 & 3</u> : 2	work adds value to myself	does not add value
	supervisor respects people	does not care about people
	supervisor trusts people	does not trust people
<u>1 & 2</u> : 3	work is structured	work is not structured
	importance of work stressed	no reference to importance of tasks
<u>2 & 3</u> : 1	my work pattern is respected	my supervisor constantly looks over my shoulder
	I have freedom to structure my work as I see fit	I am being micro managed

Although table 2.3 is used as an example it is based on real interviews conducted for the purpose of this study. It merely provides an example of a grid on an individual level with respect to the element-set: **A Meaningful workplace**. The above is by no means exhaustive of the possibilities but it does provide sufficient information to deduce that (a) it does contribute towards the concept meaningfulness; (b) the interviewee was able to discriminate between work environments and to provide information based on which certain elements that contribute towards the experience of meaningfulness can be described. This enables the interviewer to draw certain conclusions in respect of the salient features of the work environments that relate to the meaningfulness thereof. It will be noted that opposites are not necessarily lexical opposites but construed opposites. An

example of what is meant is the following: Card sort 2&3:1 revealed the following positive comment regarding meaningfulness in a work environment – “my work pattern is respected”. The logical assumption for an environment that was not experienced as meaningful could be *my work pattern is not respected*. Instead of the logical assumption, the interviewee indicated that the opposite of a meaningful environment where the work pattern was respected is: “my supervisor constantly looks over my shoulder.”

(The same technique, of course adapted for group use, can be applied to ascertain the mental model of any level of employee or group of employees in respect of the **meaningful workplace**. The *theme or context* can be changed or adapted to any specific area of interest and the way in which the technique is administered can eventually result in the cross-pollination of paradigms thus contributing towards a learning experience and eventually contributing to the establishment of a shared mental model for a specific organization regarding a specific theme or area of concern).

The comparative information will be integrated into ‘n coherent and systematic theoretical framework by means of an abductive reasoning process.

2.4 UNDERSTANDING DATA: PHENOMENOLOGY AS RESEARCH GENRE

Why a phenomenological approach was chosen for this study will be become evident in the following paragraphs. Suffice to say that in the phenomenological mode of looking at or observing reality commences from the vantage point of the self. Such reality is always construed. Harper (2000) makes this case for the interpretation of visual images such as photographs. But is sensorial observation not visual image in itself as seen through the lens of the first person observer? Not only does one observe but certain images also provoke meaning to the extent that the observer can “live with it”. A phenomenological strategy was chosen on the face value of it being suitable for the investigation of existential phenomena such as work behaviour and the quest for a **meaningful workplace**, a moment (not in terms of time) which exists in the life span of humans. During post modernism the “Aloof

observer position was abandoned”...and the search for *grand narratives* replaced by local, small scale theories, fitted to a particular situation (Denzin and Lincoln 2000:17). If the vantage point of phenomenology is the “self”, then it is not merely a question of “Who am I? What am I doing?” But also of “What am I experiencing?” A clinical distance does not communicate the experience of the moment or the continuous experiences of and within the context for that matter. The post experimental and the future is as Denzin and Lincoln (2000) state, “upon us”. In the moments after the experimental stages of research and positivism, “fictional ethnographies, ethnographic poetry, and multimedia texts are taken for granted” (2000, p. 17). Post experimentalists endeavour to connect their texts to the needs of “a free democratic society”. According to Bateson (1972) qualitative researchers are philosophers in the “universal sense in which all human beings are guided by highly abstract principles” (in Guba and Lincoln 2000, p. 19). These principles combine beliefs about ontology (What kind of being is the human? What is the nature of reality?); epistemology (What is the relationship between the enquirer and the known?); methodology (How do we know the world or gain knowledge of it?). The answers to these and similar questions, in the mind of the current writer is that the human being and *reality*, the relationship with reality and knowledge of the world, *can be acquired and known* thus, knowable through a *first person interaction based on constructivism, which emphasises the point of choosing phenomenology as a strategy of understanding and knowing*.

One of the most catalytic influences on the qualitative domain within the past 10 years has been the lively dialogue on the nature of language, and particularly the relationship of language to the world it purports to describe. Developments in post structural semiotics, literary theory, and rhetorical theory all challenge the pivotal assumption that scientific accounts can accurately and objectively represent the world as it is (Gergen and Gergen, 2000; p. 1026).

Human beings are immersed in certain cultural traditions (inherited and newly created), which uniquely match the life experience in a lived-world. It is this immersion that provides credence to our documented accounts of the world and the different realities within the world. Needless to say, this view of language gave rise

to scepticism regarding the epistemological and methodological foundations of scientific practices.

Language as representative of the world it is supposed to describe plays a major role in the process of understanding and getting to know the world.

2.4.1 Phenomenology: Definitions, description and background

The Oxford English Dictionary presents the following definition:

“Phenomenology. (a). The science of phenomena as distinct from being (ontology). (b). That division of any science which describes and classifies its phenomena. From the Greek *phainomenon*, appearance.”
In philosophy, the term is used in the first sense, amid debates of theory and methodology. In physics and philosophy of science, the term is used in the second sense, albeit only occasionally.

Phenomenology as we know it was launched by Edmund Husserl in his *Logical Investigations* (1900-01). Two importantly different lines of theory came together in that monumental work: psychological theory, on the heels of Franz Brentano (and also William James, whose *Principles of Psychology* appeared in 1891 and greatly impressed Husserl); and logical or semantic theory, on the heels of Bernard Bolzano and Husserl's contemporaries who founded modern logic, including Gottlob Frege. (Interestingly, both lines of research trace back to Aristotle, and both reached significant results in Husserl's day.) (Smith 2008).

Phenomenology is commonly understood in either of two ways: as a disciplinary field in philosophy, or as a movement in the history of philosophy, and can, following Smith (2008), crudely be defined as “the study of the structure of experience or consciousness.”

In concrete and literal terms it is the study of “phenomena”: i.e. the appearances of things, or things as they appear in our experience, or the ways in which we experience things, thus the meaning of things in our experience. It is therefore

inevitable that phenomenology studies conscious experience as experienced from the subjective or first person point of view (therefore also the experience of meaningfulness at work, as in the current study). The central structure (according to Woodruff 2008) of experience is the intentionality thereof, being directed toward something, as it is an experience of or about some object. An experience is directed toward an object by virtue of its content or meaning (which represents the object) together with appropriate enabling conditions.) Phenomenology studies conscious experience as experienced from the subjective or first person point of view, and must be distinguished from, (although related to) other fields of philosophy. The ontological, epistemological, logical and ethical dimensions acquire a somewhat changed scheme in a phenomenological study. (Ontology - the study of being or what is), epistemology (the study of knowledge), logic (the study of valid reasoning), ethics (the study of right and wrong action), etc. still retain their value as indicators of valid research but are now being regulated by the attempt to use the first person discourse to describe the observed phenomena. (First person in this sense must not be seen as a discourse that commences with *I* but which bears the resemblance of an *I* observation, experience and understanding. The problem in this regard is that the first person observation and understanding can and will be tainted with a subjective hue. It seems, within the context of this study, that the subjective hue will have to be rectified. This *rectification process* (if we may call it that) is initiated when the current literature on the subject is exposed in terms of the value that can be withdrawn for the purpose of this study with a view to understanding the phenomenon under scrutiny.)

Phenomenology, having being practiced as a discipline in a variety of guises for centuries, was forced onto the agenda of discussion during the early 20th century by Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Jean-Paul Sartre, and others. Phenomenological issues of intentionality, consciousness, qualia, and first-person perspectives became prominent in scientific discussion and the *philosophy* of mind. Phenomenology was prized as the proper foundation of all philosophy — as opposed, say, to ethics or metaphysics or epistemology. The methods and characterization of the discipline were widely debated by Husserl and his successors, and these debates continue to the present day.

In philosophy of mind, the term “phenomenology” is cramped into and restricted by the rules of the characterizations of sensory qualities of seeing, hearing, etc: what it is like to have sensations of various kinds – mostly limited to feelings and emotions that accompany sensory experiences. Experience is much richer in content than mere sensation. It also encompasses thought, mind, being, and spirit. In essence the sensory images evoke certain feelings, it is true, but in reality it evokes all the experiences that can somehow be linked to that perception and feeling, based on the observation of a specific phenomenon. Feeling is not and cannot be the primary objective of phenomenology; it points to and elicits meaning through experience. Accordingly, in the phenomenological tradition, phenomenology is given a much wider range, addressing the meaning things have in our experience.

Although it might seem necessary to trace the different themes in the development of phenomenology as a system of understanding world-life phenomena, it will not be pursued here. The themes that are relevant will be introduced below without delving into the deeper reasoning acquainted with these. As the current study is not a philosophical exposition on phenomenology, the subject matter will not be discussed here. Suffice to say that the concept intentionality as proposed by Franz Brentano is applied in its subjective, introspective application. The experience of meaningfulness is nothing else than an introspective and subjective experience. Intentionality seems to be a central concept in this regard. For a comprehensive discussion the following sources can be consulted: The Stanford encyclopaedia of Philosophy, specifically the article of Huemer on intentionality as argued by Franz Brentano (updated 2006).

The concept bracketing as argued by Edmund Husserl is also an important concept as it is equated to context as a central concept in this study. The study focuses on the experience of meaningfulness within the context of the workplace. For a discussion on the concept “bracketing” the work of Beyer (1960) can be consulted.

Intentionality as in Brentano, is equivalent to a directedness of experience toward things in the world; consciousness that it is a consciousness of or about something. Experience intends to convey things *through* particular concepts, thoughts, ideas, images, etc. These make up the meaning or content of a given experience, and are distinct from the things they present or mean. It is thus inevitable for

phenomenology to develop a complex account of temporal awareness (within the stream of consciousness), spatial awareness (notably in perception), attention (distinguishing focal and marginal or “horizontal” awareness), awareness of one's own experience (self-consciousness, in one sense), self-awareness (awareness-of-oneself), the self in different roles (as thinking, acting, etc.), embodied action (including kinaesthetic awareness of one's movement), purpose or intention in action - more or less explicit), awareness of other persons (in empathy, intersubjectivity, collectivity), linguistic activity (involving meaning, communication, understanding others), social interaction (including collective action), and everyday activity in our surrounding life-world (in a particular culture), entails bracketing or contextualises the directness of experience (as in Husserl) . Conscious experience is a fundamental characteristic of phenomenological endeavour and has a unique feature: we *experience* them; we live through them or perform them. Other things in the world we may observe and engage. But we do not experience them, in the sense of living through or performing them. This experiential or first-person feature — that of being experienced — is an essential part of the nature or structure of conscious experience: as we say, “I see / think / desire / do ...” This feature is both a phenomenological and an ontological feature of each experience: it is part of what it is for the experience to be experienced (phenomenological) and part of what it is for the experience to be (ontological) (Smith 2008).

2.4.1.1 Being in the world: Hermeneutics (Martin Heidegger)

It is deemed necessary to present a more detailed discussion on the perspectives of Martin Heidegger, with specific reference to the so-called hermeneutical circle as a means of interpreting and understanding the world of phenomena and the human's experience of phenomena.

The human being is being-in-the-world. Humans do not study activities by bracketing the world, but through the interpretation of activities and the meaning phenomena portray. To enable this process we look at the contextual relations with phenomena in our world. According to this train of thought, Heidegger refers to

phenomenology as “fundamental ontology”. Heidegger posited that our basic ways of relating to things are in practical activities, where phenomenology reveals our situation in a context of being-with-others. Heidegger differed from Husserl in an important way, which he describes in the following way:

For Husserl, the phenomenological reduction is the method of leading phenomenological vision from the natural attitude of the human being whose life is involved in the world of things and persons back to the transcendental life of consciousness and its noetic-noematic experiences, in which objects are constituted as correlates of consciousness. For us, phenomenological reduction means leading phenomenological vision back from the apprehension of a being, whatever may be the character of that apprehension, to the understanding of the Being of this being (projecting upon the way it is unconcealed) (Safranski, 1998).

The starting point of phenomenology is conscious experience. However experience *disappears* into less overtly conscious phenomena. As Husserl and others stressed, we are only vaguely aware of things in the margin or periphery of attention, and we are only implicitly aware of the wider horizon of things in the world around us or, as Heidegger stressed, in practical activities we are not explicitly conscious of our habitual patterns of action.

Phenomenology, for Heidegger, held the potential to re-interpret an issue of which Husserl had been so critical, i.e. ontology. Ontology as the study of “being qua being” (as opposed to beings or things) and Heidegger’s reactivation of the question of being has become a watershed event in twentieth-century philosophy (New World Encyclopaedia).

Understanding for Heidegger always involves an element of interpretation. This stance is in opposition to Husserl who attempted to explicate the essential characteristics of each kind of experience. Husserl endeavoured to implement a rigor akin to the natural or physical sciences in his phenomenological thought while Heidegger went the route of hermeneutics in his rendering of phenomenology.

George Gadamer pursued the idea of the universality of hermeneutics inherent in Heidegger's phenomenology (New World Encyclopaedia).

Philosophical hermeneutics, inspired by Heidegger, challenges the classic epistemological posture of the interpreter and his/her task in respect of *understanding that is produced*. Traditionally the phenomenological observers as well as the linguistic analyst claim the posture of the uninvolved observer. This stance is challenged in several ways. (The following summary is based on Schwandt, 1994)

- Understanding according to philosophical hermeneutics is not a procedure. Nor is it an undertaking that is governed by rules. Understanding is a condition of being human. Understanding and interpretation is one and the same thing
- In philosophical hermeneutics tradition and history are not external, objective and past. The observer cannot free him/herself from the influence of the past as it is a force which is imbedded in the lived world which enters into the act of understanding. The past conditions our understanding of the present. It (the past) is not really *past tense* as it is part of the present and becomes part of the future
- Understanding as an act of consciousness is produced through a process of dialogue and engagement with a phenomenon. It is not reproduced, according to Schwandt. This point of view can be challenged because of the fact that the act of reproducing follows the act of producing understanding. It is the same argument that is used in the relationship between understanding and explanation (*verstehen* and *erklären*). Reproducing the understanding of human action and the meaning inherent in behaviour, is a constructivist endeavour, although Schwandt (1994;195) states that: "This different conception of meaning signifies a radical departure from the interpretivist idea that human action has meaning and that that meaning is in principle determinable or decidable by the interpreter". Philosophical hermeneutics endorses the conclusion that there is never a finally correct interpretation and reproduction of phenomena, including human action. This is known as the so called hermeneutical circle. This study subscribes to this view of understanding, interpretation and reproduction of the product of the process of

understanding

- In the act of understanding there aren't two separate and distinguishable steps, i.e. first a process of understanding and secondly applying the understanding. Understanding is in a certain sense practical experience in and of the phenomenon under scrutiny. Understanding is lived experience. Gadamer (in Schwandt 2000:196) emphasizes the viewpoint that hermeneutics is not inclined towards developing "...a procedure of understanding but to clarify the conditions in which understanding takes place. But these conditions are not of the nature of a procedure, or a method which the interpreter must of himself bring to bear on the text".

Laverty (2003) asserts that phenomenology, like hermeneutic phenomenology is concerned with the life world or human experience as it is lived. The way in which exploration of lived experience proceeds is where Husserl and Heidegger departed ways.

Heidegger focused on 'Dasein' that is translated as 'the mode of being human' or 'the situated meaning of a human in the world. Husserl was interested in acts of attending, perceiving, recalling, and thinking about the world and human beings were understood primarily as knower's. Heidegger, in contrast, viewed humans as being primarily concerned creatures with an emphasis on their fate in an alien world' (Annells, 1996; Jones, 1975 in Laverty, 2003). Pre-understanding is a structure for being in the world, according to Heidegger (1927/1962) as interpreted by Laverty (2003). This pre-understanding is the meanings or organization of a culture that are present before we understand and become part of our historicity of background.

Pre-understanding is not something a person can step outside of or put aside, as it is understood as already being with us in the world. Heidegger went as far as to claim that nothing can be encountered without reference to a person's background understanding. Koch (1995) described this as an indissoluble unity between a person and the world. Meaning is found as we are constructed by the world while at the same time we are constructing this world from our own

background and experiences. There is a transaction between the individual and the world as they constitute and are constituted by each other (Lavery, 2003).

Interpretation is critical to this process of understanding. Claiming that to be human was to interpret, Heidegger stressed that every encounter involves an interpretation influenced by an individual's background or historicity (Lavery 2003). The process of interpretation implies a focus on the historical meanings of experience. Hermeneutics is the interpretive process that attempts an understanding and disclosure of phenomena by means of a representational act (or process) through the use of language. It is the "study of human cultural activity as texts with a view towards interpretation to find intended or expressed meanings" (Kvale, 1996 in Lavery 2003). Texts are understood to include things such as written or verbal communication, visual arts and music.

The hermeneutic circle is an interpretive process and is achieved through an alternation from the parts of experience to the whole (of experience) and back and forth again and again to increase the depth of engagement with and the understanding of texts (Annells, 1996; Polkinghorne, 1983; and Kvale, 1996) in Lavery (2003) viewed the end of this spiralling through a hermeneutic circle as occurring when one has reached a place of sensible meaning, free of inner contradictions, for the moment. Gadamer (See Lavery 2003) saw the work of hermeneutics not as developing a procedure of understanding, but to clarify further the conditions in which understanding itself takes place.

Language (as a source for understanding and a medium of representation) and understanding are inseparable structural aspects of the condition of being human. Horizons fuse during the process of interpretation in a dialectical interaction between the expectation of the interpreter and the meaning of (for example) a text.

A 'horizon' is a range of vision that includes everything seen from a particular vantage point. A person with no horizon, in Gadamer's view, does not see far enough and overvalues what is nearest at hand, whereas to have a horizon means being able to see beyond what is close at hand. Questioning, he wrote, is an essential aspect of the

interpretive process as it helps make new horizons and understandings possible. Understanding is... more than merely re-creating someone else's meaning. Questioning opens up possibilities of meaning, and thus what is meaningful passes into one's own thinking on the subject...To reach an understanding in a dialogue is not merely a matter of putting oneself forward and successfully asserting one's own point of view, but being transformed into a communion in which we do not remain what we were (Laverly 2003).

A hermeneutical approach asks the researcher to engage in a process of self-reflection to quite a different end than that of (classic) phenomenology as in Husserl. Specifically, the biases and assumptions of the researcher are not bracketed or set aside, but are embedded and essential to the interpretive process. The researcher is called, on an ongoing basis, to give considerable thought to their own experience and to explicitly claim the ways in which their position or experience relates to the issues being researched. The final result (if there is such a state as finality) may include the personal assumptions of the researcher and the philosophical bases from which interpretation has occurred (Allen, 1996; Cotterill & Letherby, 1993, in Laverly, 2003). Hermeneutic phenomenology follows a process of the co-construction of the data (either of the participant or a text) as the hermeneutic circle of understanding unfolds. Hermeneutics invites participants to participate in an ongoing conversation, without a set or predetermined methodology. A fusion of horizons or dialectic between the pre-understandings on which the research process is based, and the interpretive framework and the sources of information, creates understanding.

Core to the production of meaning in hermeneutic strategy are reading and writing. An imperative to understand the context under which the text or dialogue was being produced is called for to produce units of meaning. A pre-condition for this result (units of meaning) is a synthesis between text (or phenomenon) and context. For a hermeneutic phenomenological project, the multiple stages of interpretation that allow patterns to emerge, the discussion of how interpretations arise from the data and the interpretive process itself are seen as critical (Laverly, 2003).

2.5 REPRESENTATION: INTERPRETIVIST-CONSTRUCTIVISM AS RESEARCH STRATEGY FOR REPRESENTATION

Table (2.3) adapted from Guba & Lincoln (2000, p. 165-173) provides an explanation of the positioning of phenomenology within the framework of a constructivist paradigm. It provides ample information in respect of certain issues that present themselves in qualitative research (column 1) whilst the response to these problems are listed under the headings of *positivism, post positivism, critical theory, constructivism and participatory research*. Thus a comparison of the responses towards certain issues is reflected side by side for the purpose of distinguishing and drawing certain lines between the different qualitative paradigms. It must however be repeated, the phenomenon of blurred genres in qualitative research is not a scarcity or rarity. It often happens that the qualitative researcher serves her with various answers to certain problems. It is for this purpose that column 5 Constructivism is highlighted. It not only indicates the unique characteristics of Constructivism as paradigm, but also underlines the fact that borders are blurred as are genres as described by Guba et al. (2000).

It is now also a logical juncture in the reasoning to turn to the specific research “genre” or paradigm that seems to be aligned with the purpose of the research program. The intent is to identify theoretical markers for the construct A **meaningful workplace** that can be used in a process of enhancing current thinking on this construct. In maintaining the internal logic between the purpose of the research and the methodological choices, the most logical research genre or paradigm, imbedded in a qualitative research design seems to be a constructivist-interpretivist research paradigm.

An obvious way of deciding on a genre or paradigm is to consider different paradigms as the assumption-base for the program. A paradigm is defined as “*basic belief systems based on ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions*” (Guba et al., 994:107). Within this definition a paradigm is viewed

as a set of basic beliefs (or metaphysics) that deals with ultimate of first principles. It represents a worldview that defines, for its holder, the

nature of the world, the individuals place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts...

A constructivist paradigm can be described along the lines of specific ontological, epistemological and methodological beliefs and assumptions, as indicated below.

The **ontological assumption** of a constructivist-interpretivist research paradigm is relativist in nature, because it is **assumed** and believed that realities are apprehendable in different forms; *“intangible mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific in nature, and dependent for their form and content on the individual persons or groups holding the constructions”* (Guba et al., 1994, p. 111).

The **epistemology** is transactional and subjectivist in nature based on the belief that the *“investigator and the object of investigation are assumed to be interactively linked so that the findings are literally created as the investigation proceeds”* (Guba et al., 1994, p. 111).

The **methodology** is hermeneutical and dialectical in nature. *“The variables of, and personal nature, of social constructions suggests that individual constructions can be elicited and refined through interaction between an investigator and respondents”* (Guba et al., 1994, p. 111).

It is inevitable to interpret the data in an attempt to come to certain conclusions regarding the world of meaning associated with the purpose of the study. Work-life has its own meaning and meaningfulness is not necessarily an observable precept on the surface of experiences. Interpretation will reveal the elements or moments of a meaningful work life and subsequently a **meaningful workplace**. For this reason this study can be positioned in the persuasion that has as its goal the understanding of the complexity of the world in which people live their work life, from their experience, which has to be construed and interpreted along the lines of experiences (Schwandt, 1994, p. 118).

This study can broadly be positioned in a *constructivist* and *interpretivist* persuasion, thereby implying that the goal of inquiry and interpretation is

verstehen, as opposed to *erklären*. *Verstehen* (*understanding*) in the sense that it is used here

is not a matter of setting aside, escaping, managing or tracking one's own standpoint, prejudgements, biases or prejudices. On the contrary, understanding requires engagement of one's biases (Schwandt 2000, p. 195).

Logically speaking understanding precedes explanation. Perhaps it would be more accurate to state that understanding and explanation stand in a reciprocal relationship where understanding facilitates explanation. *Explanation* primarily becomes a problem in the *representation* of *understanding* which implies a hermeneutical circle.

Understanding and interpretation are the product(s) of our anticipated prejudgements and prejudices, which in the course of time change as a result of new additions to our own construct system.

The problem in such a persuasion resides in drawing the line between investigation and investigator (Schwandt, 1994, p. 119). Fundamentally this boils down to the opposition between objectivity and subjectivity. Proponents of the constructivist-interpretivist persuasion have seemingly overcome this polarity by fully accepting the hermeneutical character of human existence. This statement has three implications.

- On the one hand we are thereby asserting that to understand is not to “get inside an actor's head” but to grasp the inter-subjective meaning of symbolisms that constitute social life
- On the other hand the constructivist accepts that verification of the interpreted and reported “reality” is not possible, thereby falling back on explanation upon explanation and thus finding ourselves in an interpretive circle
- In the third instance a constructivist persuasion demonstrates a commitment to the assertion that knowledge and truth are created and not discovered. Reality is pluralistic and flexible and not set in plaster as though it is “something out there that must still be discovered”

The “real world” of meaning does not pre-exist independently from human endeavour and activity, but it is continuously construed by means of symbolic language and human activity. In line with this mode of reasoning, a **meaningful workplace** is not a pre-existent entity that can be discovered by means of objective measures, but something that is construed through the endeavours of humans in organizations, wherever they are on a hierarchical level of management as worker-employees. A **meaningful workplace** and the elements that construe such a construct is the product of discursive practices emanating from knowledge of and insight in the theory of organizations and the behaviour of people within an organization. Fuss (1989) in Schwandt (1994, p. 125) states the following in this regard:

what is at stake for the constructionist are systems of representations, social and material practices, laws of discourses and ideological effects. In short, constructionists are concerned above all with the production and organization of differences, and they therefore reject the idea that any essential or natural givens precede the process of social determination.

**Table 2.4: The basic belief (Metaphysics) of alternative enquiry paradigms
(Phenomenology is viewed as an alternative paradigm)**

Item	Positivism	Post positivism	Critical theory	Constructivism	Participatory
<p>Ontology</p> <p>The study of being, endeavouring to understand the structure thereof</p> <p>The study of the nature of being, existence or reality in general;</p> <p>Discerning basic categories of being or grouped</p> <p>According to similarities and differences</p>	<p>“Real” – reality;</p> <p>The “truth” of observed reality (naïve reality)</p> <p>Reality is apprehendable</p>	<p>Critical “realism”</p> <p>Reality is “real” but only imperfectly</p> <p>Probabilistic apprehendable</p>	<p>Historical “realism”</p> <p>Reality shaped by social, political, economic cultural and other factors</p> <p>Crystallised over time</p>	<p>Relativism;</p> <p>Constructed “realities”</p> <p>Local and specific realities</p>	<p>“Participative reality, subjective-objective reality</p> <p>Co-created by mind and given cosmos”</p>

Item	Positivism	Post positivism	Critical theory	Constructivism	Participatory
<p>Epistemology</p> <p>The theory of knowledge</p> <p>concerned with the nature and scope or limitations of knowledge</p> <p>Focus on analyzing the nature of knowledge - how it relates to similar notions such as truth, belief, and justification.</p>	<p>Objectivist/dualist</p> <p>Findings are true</p>	<p>“Modified dualist/objectivist”</p> <p>Findings probably true</p>	<p>“Transactional/subjectivist”</p> <p>Value mediated findings</p>	<p>“Transactional/subjectivist</p> <p>Created findings</p>	<p>“Critical subjectivity in participatory transaction with cosmos</p> <p>extended epistemology of experiential, propositional, and practical knowing, co-created findings”</p>
<p>Methodology</p> <p>Refers to more than a simple set of methods; but the rationale and the philosophical assumptions that underlie a particular study; It is more than an outline of</p>	<p>“Experimental/manipulative; verification of hypotheses, chiefly quantitative methods”</p>	<p>“Modified experimental /manipulative critical multiplism, Falsification of hypotheses”</p>	<p>“Dialogical/dialectical”</p>	<p>“Hermeneutical, dialectical”</p>	<p>“Political participation in collaborative actions, inquiry</p> <p>primacy of the practical, use of language grounded in shared experiential</p>

Item	Positivism	Post positivism	Critical theory	Constructivism	Participatory
<p>methods</p> <p>Explains what the researchers' ontological or epistemological views are</p>					context'
<p>Axiology</p> <p>Branch of philosophy dealing with the nature of values, ethics, aesthetics and religion</p>	<p>"Propositional knowing about the world is an end in itself and intrinsically valuable"</p>	<p>"Propositional, transactional knowing is instrumentally valuable as a means to social emancipation, which is an end in itself and is intrinsically valuable"</p>	<p>Practical knowing about how to flourish with a balance of autonomy, cooperation, and hierarchy in a culture is an end in itself</p>		

Item	Positivism	Post positivism	Critical theory	Constructivism	Participatory
Accountability and Commensurability	“Commensurate for all positivist forms’	“Incommensurable with positivist forms; some commensurability with constructivist, criticalist, and participatory approaches”			
Action	Not responsibility of researcher; action will be viewed as advocacy or subjectivity, thus a threat to validity and objectivity	Found in empowerment, emancipation hoped for, transformation to greater equity is the end goal	“intertwined with validity; inquiry often incomplete without action on the part of participants; constructivist formulation mandates training”		
Control	“Resides solely with researcher	“Often resides in ‘transformative intellectual’	“Shared between inquirer and participants”	‘Shared to varying degrees”	
Relationship to foundations of truth and knowledge	“Foundational”	“Foundational”	“Foundational within social critique”	“Anti foundational”	“Non foundational”

Item	Positivism	Post positivism	Critical theory	Constructivism	Participatory
Extended considerations of validity	“Traditional, positivist constructions of validity; rigor, internal validity, external validity, reliability, objectivity”	“Action stimulus”	“Extended constructions of validity: <i>crystalline validity – Richardson-; authenticity criteria – Guba and Lincoln-; catalytic, rhizomatic. Voluptuous validities – Lather -; rational and ethics centred criteria – Lincoln -; community centred determinations of validity</i> ”	(See “action’ above	
Voice, reflexivity, post-modern textual representations	“Voice of the researcher, principally; reflexivity a possible problem in objectivity; textual representation unproblematic and somewhat formulaic”	“Voices mixed between observer and participant”	“Voices mixed with participants’ voices sometimes dominant; reflexivity serious and problematic, textual representation an extended issue	“Voices mixed; textual representation rarely discussed but problematic, reflexivity relies on critical subjectivity and self-awareness”	
		Textual representation practices may be problematic -i.e. “fiction formulas”, or unexamined ‘regimes of truth”			

Two distinguishable streams of constructivist positions can be identified. On the one hand one can refer to *radical constructivism*, whilst on the other hand reference is made to *social constructivism*.

- In the case of **radical constructivism**, Schwandt (1994, p. 126) reports the viewpoint of Ernst von Glasersfeld who, in his answer to sceptics, asserts “*we cannot know such a thing as independent, objective world that stands apart from our experience of it. Hence we cannot speak of knowledge as somehow corresponding to, mirroring or representing that world*”. Knowledge is thus not a particular product of the mind that exists independently of the knower. Knowledge and reality stand in an instrumental relationship and not a verificative relationship.
- **Social constructivism** focuses on the outward world of inter-subjectivity – a shared, socially construed world of meaning and knowledge. Gergen and Gergen (1985), in Schwandt 1994, p. 127) provide the following explanation: “*Accounts of the world...take place within shared systems of intelligibility-usually spoken or written language. These accounts are not viewed as the external expression of the speaker’s internal processes (such as cognition, intention), but as an expression of relationships among persons*”.

In a constructivist paradigm

The act of inquiry begins with issues and or concerns...and unfolds through a dialectic of iteration, analysis, critique, reiteration, analysis, and so on that leads eventually to a joint (among inquirer and participants) construction of case (i.e. findings or outcomes). The joint constructions that issue from the activity of inquiry can be evaluated for their fit with the data and information they encompass; the extent to which they work, that is, provide a credible level of understanding; and the extent to which they have relevance and are modifiable (Schwandt 1994, p. 129).

Constructions carry certain properties, which include the following (Schwandt 1994, p. 129):

- They are attempts at making sense of experience or to interpret experience;
- Most constructions are self-renewing or self-sustaining;
- The range of information that is available to the researcher and the extent of sophistication in dealing with information determine a construction's quality;
- "Constructions are extensively shared";
- Construction can be labelled as *misconstruction*, although they might be meaningful, based on incompleteness, uninformed, internally inconsistent, or derived by means of inadequate methodology; (A judgement in respect of misconstruction can be made based on a framework specific evaluation from within the specific paradigm);
- Constructions are challenged when awareness is created that new information conflicts with the held construction.

2.6 TOWARDS THEORY ENHANCEMENT:

Short from embarking on a *Grounded Theory* pathway (Strauss and Corbin, 1994), it is however necessary to establish guidelines pertaining to the enhancement of theory. Phenomenology, following Heidegger and Gadamer has an interest in creating knowledge of the lived world, by means of a hermeneutical process. Understanding and interpretation as interdependent dimensions of the hermeneutical process produce insight and comprehension of the phenomenon under scrutiny. At the outset of this text it was indicated that the purpose was to establish the parameters for understanding and to create a theoretical framework for the **meaningful workplace**. This purpose cannot be achieved without the creation of theory in a more formalised and structured manner.

The general guideline that will be followed in this text to enhance existing theory pertaining to the meaningful **workplace** construct is to identify current valid research texts upon which to build and expand. Although this is in line with Strauss

and Corbin's (1994, p. 273) definition of Grounded Theory their original program will not be followed religiously. They describe Grounded Theory methodology as

a general methodology for developing theory that is grounded in data systematically gathered and analysed...In this methodology, theory may be generated, initially from data, or, if existing (grounded) theories seem appropriate to the area of investigation, then these may be elaborated and modified as incoming data...researchers can also usefully carry into current studies any theory based on their previous research provided it seems relevant to these – but again the matching of theory against data must be rigorously carried out.

In breaking with methodological orthodoxy, grounded theory has been criticised as a return to "Baconian inductivism" (Haig 1995, p. 2). On the other hand it could be argued that it embodies a problem oriented endeavour in which theories are abductively generated from robust data patterns, elaborated through the construction of plausible models, and justified in terms of their explanatory coherence. Grounded Theory is positioned as a post positivistic method which is data driven with varying views of data from objectivist (or socially constructivist).

It has been noted that a Grounded Theory methodology will not be followed in this particular instance. It is however necessary to take cognisance of the background to the forming of theory from existing texts based on research results.

Schutz (1954) provides a perspective on the formation of theory, (which in the mind of the current researcher implies enhancing existing theory) stating that the primary goal of the social sciences is to obtain organized knowledge of social reality. "Social reality" is then understood as the sum total of phenomena in the world as experienced by human beings living their daily lives among their fellow-men. This is the world of cultural artefacts, historicity, and social institutions into which humans are born. This is the world within which humans survive by various acts and behaviour patterns that elicit meaning from lived experiences and the phenomena with which they are confronted. It is an intersubjective world, common to humans. Although basically the same phenomena confront all humans, their *making* of events can differ radically from the one to the other. Humans construe reality and

therefore, although the same phenomenon might be experienced the real experiences will differ between humans. It is logical to surmise that common ground will be found based on the use of common language to describe events and experiences related to events.

This knowledge is commonly called understanding (A position akin to the phenomenology of Heidegger and Sartre). The explanation of how common understanding (a social reality) amongst humans can occur is the endeavour of the social scientist. To identify experience with sensory observation only, excludes several dimensions of social reality from all possible inquiry. Social reality (as shared reality) is constituted by beliefs, values, historicity and convictions which are *real* because this is how they are defined and presented by humans based on lived experience in a lived world. In an endeavour to construct theory, sensory observation of overt human behaviour isolates a relatively small dimension as a metaphor of reality and expands that dimension into reality. There are many other dimensions of the social world worthy of investigation and theory formation without the constraints of the observation of overt behaviour, based on sensory observation.

As has been mentioned previously, the interpretation or the lived experience of humans will differ from person to person and from group to group (based on differing frames of reference for the different construction). In spite of these differences however *common-sense* of everyday life is sufficient for coming to terms with fellow-men, cultural objects, social institutions-in brief, with social reality.

The fact that in common-sense thinking we take for granted our actual or potential knowledge of the meaning of human actions and their products, is, so I submit, precisely what social scientists want to express if they speak of understanding or *Verstehen* as a technique of dealing with human affairs. *Verstehen* is, thus, primarily not a method used by the social scientist, but the particular experiential form in which common-sense thinking takes cognizance of the social cultural world (Schutz, 1954, p. 265).

Theory formation from the perspective of a qualitative framework and with phenomenology as a research genre commences from a "problem at hand". This

problem at hand originates in certain identifiable and definable circumstances within which “I” find myself. This is referred to as a biographically determined situation. It can with a fair amount of certainty be postulated that shared reality or a common biographically situatedness involves reciprocity between humans in a common or shared environment. Thus when one situation of one person is described it can be assumed that the same understanding of phenomena and conclusions –at least in broad terms – will also be applicable to person two in the same environment – if he/she shares the same constructed experience. Experiences in a commonly shared environment are socialised amongst members and therefore a common thread or umbilical cord ought to be discernible throughout the environment.

The social scientist observes certain phenomena within social reality which refer to human action and then construes behaviour or course-of-action patterns, or experiences, from what he has observed. These observations are understood from a specific vantage point which can be typified as subjective. However the corroboration of this understanding with accepted research results will provide sufficient grounds for rejection or acceptance of the following behaviour protocol(s) that the social scientist develops. These protocols are eventually presented as theory, albeit an expansion to existing theory or the creation of new theory.

2.6.1 Grand theory or part theory?

The question that naturally presents itself when the discussion turns to theory is whether it is possible to construct a *grand theory*? A grand theory can be described as an overarching unified theoretical perspective that encompasses the whole knowledge base of a particular subject or field of study. In modernism and positivism the question would be answered with a definite *yes*, indicating that the construction of a so-called grand theory is possible and should be pursued, whilst in a post modernistic thought culture, the answer to the question is unequivocal *no* (See Hawking 1989). The current study takes the latter position and asserts that no grand theory is possible but that only part-theories are possible. It is not possible to construe a grand unified theory of the field of study based on the reasoning that the

field is too complex, behaviour too unpredictable, and the construct much too complicated for a study of this nature. In addition: from the perspective of the philosophy of science it is accepted that the possibility of knowing “all” is not possible. The third reason why this study will not culminate a grand unified theory is simply because the grand theories belong to the era of a different approach in terms of the acquisition of knowledge. The linear causality of the positivistic and rationalistic approach of modernism has attempted grand theories in many spheres only to be torn apart by the acquisition of new knowledge through different methodologies and epistemological approaches.

This study can do no more than produce a part-theory or a partial theory for the field of study, which can be enhanced and expanded by subsequent research based on either the same approach that is followed here or by means of a different approach. The current study should thus not create the illusion that it will present a grand unified theory covering all the possible aspects from all the possible angles. Such is not possible.

2.6.2 What is theory? (Theory and theoretical modelling)

Theory consists of “plausible relationships among concepts and sets of concepts” (Strauss and Corbin 1994, p. 278). Theory is produced with a specific purpose in mind, i.e. to understand phenomena that are deemed worthy of a researcher’s attention. Without concepts and/or sets or strings of concepts, no propositions can be inferred and thus no cumulative knowledge can be produced.

Theory is always temporal. It is neither complete nor can it be viewed as fixed for all times in all contexts. Theory evolves and is always provisional until it is replaced with a more plausible theory. The very nature of theory allows for endless elaboration and amendment. It is the immersion of researchers in time, society, ideology and emotional space, including an understanding of the self in the world and the phenomena that are construed as lived experiences in time-space, that limit the time-span relevance of theories.

In this project theory will be derived from existing texts as representations of research results, but interpreted through the lenses of Organizational Behaviour and Organizational Theory.

The process of creating or constructing theory, although it depends on certain formal criteria, also includes a dynamic dimension. It requires a dynamic process of going beyond data and trying to establish a new image of reality (an alternative or additional *image of reality*). This process steers towards embracing the data, whether these are sourced from empirical means or from existing literature. Without this type of dynamic (which can also be described as an act of creativity) the understanding of the amended (constructed) or *new reality* will be obscured. To conceive alternatives to established reality (realities) requires a dynamic and/or imaginative approach which boils down to creativity. From this perspective there is thus no limit except the self imposed limit of the author.

Although stated before, a repeat cannot be harmful: No theory is ever devoid of hidden assumptions and postulates which for a great part stem from the ontological perspectives and metaphysical approach of the creator. In addition, theories are always limited by the ability to construe mental projections, based on the lack of breadth and depth of insight as well the limitations imposed upon us by the limits of language as the carrier of meaning. To a certain extent these shortcomings might be countered when fed with new information – information that makes a difference to what we already know, thus: enhanced theory.

2.6.2.1 Theory: Structure

Theories consist of a set(s) of concepts; supplemented by definitions and general propositions that are subject to and imply generalization and particularization, based on a particular observation whilst at the same time reciprocally referring to these observations, organized as a system (or ecology) and most probably in a hierarchical structure that is not only self explanatory but also explains and defines the object of the theory (Sion 1996). Theories therefore consist of an unspecified

number of qualitative (conceptual) and/or (quantitative) mathematical propositions, of which some could be indicated as primary propositions because they are not derived from other propositions, whilst others, being of a derivative nature may be called secondary. Primary propositions are distinctive to that theory and referred to as the postulates of the theory. In the case where a primary proposition is not distinctive or unique to the specific theory, but also observable in other theories of the subject under investigation it is not essentially part of that specific theory. They stand outside it and may be transcendent axioms, or borrowed from some adjacent or wider field of investigation, taken for granted so long as that other theory holds. Secondary propositions are called predictions. Some predictions are testable, open to empirical observation, perhaps through experiment; some predictions are intrinsically difficult to test.

2.6.2.2 Theory: Criteria.

Theories explain known data as well as to foresee the yet unknown, and thus guide us in further research, and in action. A theory can also explain and define a new field of study or a sub-field of study such as is the case in this research programme. There are however certain criteria to uphold theories which are briefly presented below:

Criteria of relevance

A theory may be upheld as possibly true, so long as it is meaningful, internally consistent, applicable to (i.e. indeed implying) the phenomena under investigation, and consistent with all other observations to date. (Truth in this sense implies nothing more than that the theory is conceivable, and that it has some degree of probability, or relevance.)

Criteria of competitiveness

The process of induction is not complete until the theory has been compared to others, which may be equally thinkable and defensible in the given context. Induction depends on critically pitting theories against each other. Two or more theories may each fulfil the conditions of relevance, and yet be incompatible with each other. They might converge in some respects, having some postulates and/or predictions in common, but found divergent in other respects. It might be possible to reconcile them, finding postulates which succeed in encompassing the ones in conflict, while retaining the same uniform predictions. Or we may have to find exclusive predictions for each, which can be tested empirically to help us make a choice between postulates. This is where abductive reasoning finds a valid place in the bigger scheme of this research. Abduction is the process used to infer to the best explanation for an event or phenomenon.

It makes its start from the facts, without at the outset having any particular theory in view, though it is motivated by the feeling that a theory is needed to explain the surprising facts...from a hypotheses which seems to recommend itself, without at the outset having any particular facts in view, though it feels the need of facts to support the theory...it seeks a theory. Induction seeks for facts. In abduction the consideration of the facts suggests the hypotheses. In induction the study of the hypotheses suggests the experiments which bring to light the very facts to which the hypotheses had pointed (Sebeok and Umiker-Sebeok, 1983 as quoted by Balnaves and Caputi, 2001, p. 37).

The term abduction, broadly speaking is used to indicate the method by which hypotheses are generated. This is especially true in this study.

Utilitarian criteria

Although utility is a relatively 'subjective' standard for evaluating theories, it nevertheless plays a considerable role. Knowledge is not a purely theoretical

enterprise, but a practical necessity for survival. We use it to support and improve our lives, and therefore judge it according to its accessibility, its simplicity, or the elegance of its ordering of information. (However, simplicity should not be confused with superficiality). People and very specifically organizational decision makers, more often than not opt for overly simplistic viewpoints; the most obvious data is taken into consideration, and complex issues ignored. Simplicity should never be pursued at the expense of accuracy; it must be credible and far removed from naivety (http://www.thelogician.net/2_future_logic/2_chapter_47.htm.)

In addition to these characteristics which are viewed as core dimensions of theory, the following discussion adds to the understanding of what constructed theory is about. (The following discussion is based on Klein and Zedeck 2004).

Theories provide meaning.

Ideally a theory should allow the reader to understand and interpreted data, irrespective whether the data is of a qualitative or quantitative character. Theories pretend to indicate which variables and constructs are important, and the specific reasons for such considerations, as well as the context(s) within which the importance rule applies. Theories should furthermore “describe and explain the relationships that link the variables, and identify the boundary conditions under which variables should or should not be related” (Campbell, 1990 in Klein and Zedeck, 2004).

Theory stemming from qualitative research provides an understanding of the reasons why certain events take place (or why certain phenomena present themselves) and do not only indicate that they take place. Theory-building/enhancing research (as in the present research programme) generates understanding and insight.

Theory offers novel insights

Theory teaches readers and researchers something new, something they could not have learned elsewhere (Klein and Zedeck, 2004). Theory in this sense of the word should ideally facilitate or moderate a sense of discovery; a sense of illumination, and intrigues as well as captures the imagination of the reader. This implies that theory development should also establish a baseline for further investigation that could either result in rejection or the enhancement thereof.

Good theory is focused and cohesive

Good theory illuminates and clarifies, often by organizing, and thus simplifying, a set of previously unorganized and scattered observations (Klein and Zedeck, 2004). Phenomena in the world of observation, specifically human behaviour, are never one-sided nor are they linearly or deterministic in nature. Qualitative theory should provide observed phenomena in a clear, coherent and cohesive way through a process of simplification (where possible) and constructing of structure.

Theory is grounded in the relevant literature

Although grounded in literature, theory cannot be a mere replication of the literature. Insights reflected in literature must be interpreted and repackaged in such a manner as to provide some novel insight of the research topic. This contributes to the enhancement of existing knowledge through a program of expansion or, in ideal circumstances the creation of new knowledge. The challenge of course is to seek new, enhanced or focussed insight from existing literature.

Theory presents clearly defined constructs and offers clear, thorough, and thoughtful explanations of how and why the constructs in the model are linked. Clearly defined constructs are the building blocks of good theory. The process of

defining one's constructs sounds easy but is not. Reviewers of the theory submissions to the Journal of Applied Psychology often described authors' constructs as "loosely defined, vague, and confusing" and urged greater precision and specificity. Recent discussions in the literature regarding the precise meaning and dimensions of organizational commitment, organizational citizenship, leadership, and other prominent constructs in applied psychology attest to the difficulty of defining, delineating, and differentiating constructs. A construct that seems clear and meaningful to the author who has been thinking about it for months or years may seem vague and confusing to the reader first exposed to it. The author's duty is to be as clear as possible. The review process can be a great aid in this process, prompting authors to revise and refine their construct definitions. Theory is testable when constructs are clearly defined and specified, and links among the constructs are explained and justified thoroughly, researchers seeking to test the theory are likely to have a very good idea of how to do so. Conversely, when a theory's constructs and propositions are vague and imprecise, two researchers may set out to test the theory but ultimately test very different interpretations of the theory. One person's operationalisation of a construct may bear little or no conceptual relation to another person's operationalisation of the same construct simply because the construct itself is unclear. A number of the manuscript reviews indicated that an author's ideas were un-testable.

Good theory for the Journal of Applied Psychology is theory that can be used to address problems in organizations. Moreover, consistent with the journal's general policy for empirical manuscripts, the concern is with effect sizes. Thus, manuscripts to which the most receptiveness was demonstrated were those that held the potential to address important organizational and societal problems.

The most crucial moment in the current research, is the formation of theory to support and enhance the emerging construct (as noted above) and the development of a model through the convergence of information. It (the formation of theory in this study) is dependent on the convergence of three separate streams of information. Graphically this process can be depicted as in Figure 2.6.

Three streams of information converge to lay the foundation for the formation of a theory applicable to a **meaningful workplace** and eventual guidelines for management practice. All three streams consist of information. Information can be described as knowledge, facts or data. However there is an element or activity that must be added i.e. the interpretation. The first stream of data, in this study, is contained in a meta-interpretation of information that is already refined and presented in research literature. This stream represents and is presented as already interpreted existing knowledge, existing research, facts and research data. In following this route the methodology remains consistent with a phenomenology as research genre and foundation for the current strategy. The second stream consists of interpreted verbatim comments made by employees who voluntarily chose to exit the organization for which they worked. The verbatims were collected, categorised by the company and presented in a report. The third stream in the strategic posture of the study represents information that was collected by means of Repertory Grid interviews with selected participants from diverse work backgrounds and organisations. The three streams as indicated will be discussed separately in the following paragraphs. The most crucial dimension of the convergence strategy as presented is the matching of the information from the three different streams to construe a theoretical framework for the **meaningful workplace**.

2.7 ABDUCTION AS AN INTERPRETIVE AND THEORY FORMATION TECHNIQUE

Abduction is the process used to infer to the best explanation for an event or phenomenon.

It makes its start from the facts, without at the outset having any particular theory in view, though it is motivated by the feeling that a theory is needed to explain the surprising facts...from a hypotheses which seems to recommend itself, without at the outset having any particular facts in view, though it feels the need of facts to support the theory...it seeks a theory. Induction seeks for facts. In abduction the

consideration of the facts suggests the hypotheses. In induction, the study of the hypotheses suggests experiments which bring to light the very facts to which the hypotheses had pointed". (Sebeok and Umiker-Sebeok, 1983, in Balnaves and Caputi, 2001, p. 37).

The term abduction, broadly speaking is used to indicate the method by which hypotheses are generated. This is especially true in this study.

Abduction is a kind of logical inference described by Peirce (collected papers 1931) as the process of arriving at an explanatory hypothesis. That is to say that to **abduce** a hypothetical explanation "**a**" from an observed surprising circumstance "**b**" is to surmise that "**a**" may be true because then "**b**" would be a matter of course. Thus, to abduce "**a**" from "**b**" involves determining that "**a**" is sufficiently infers "**b**".

Peirce argues that good abductive reasoning from P to Q involves not simply a determination that, e.g., Q is sufficient for P , but also that Q is among the most economical explanations for P . Simplification and economy are what call for the 'leap' of abduction (Peirce MS L75.329-330, from Draft D of Memoir 27).

2.8 CONCLUSION

Figure 2.6 provides a graphic overview of the foregoing discussion. The discussion represents a dynamic process according to which the purpose of the research program will be pursued.

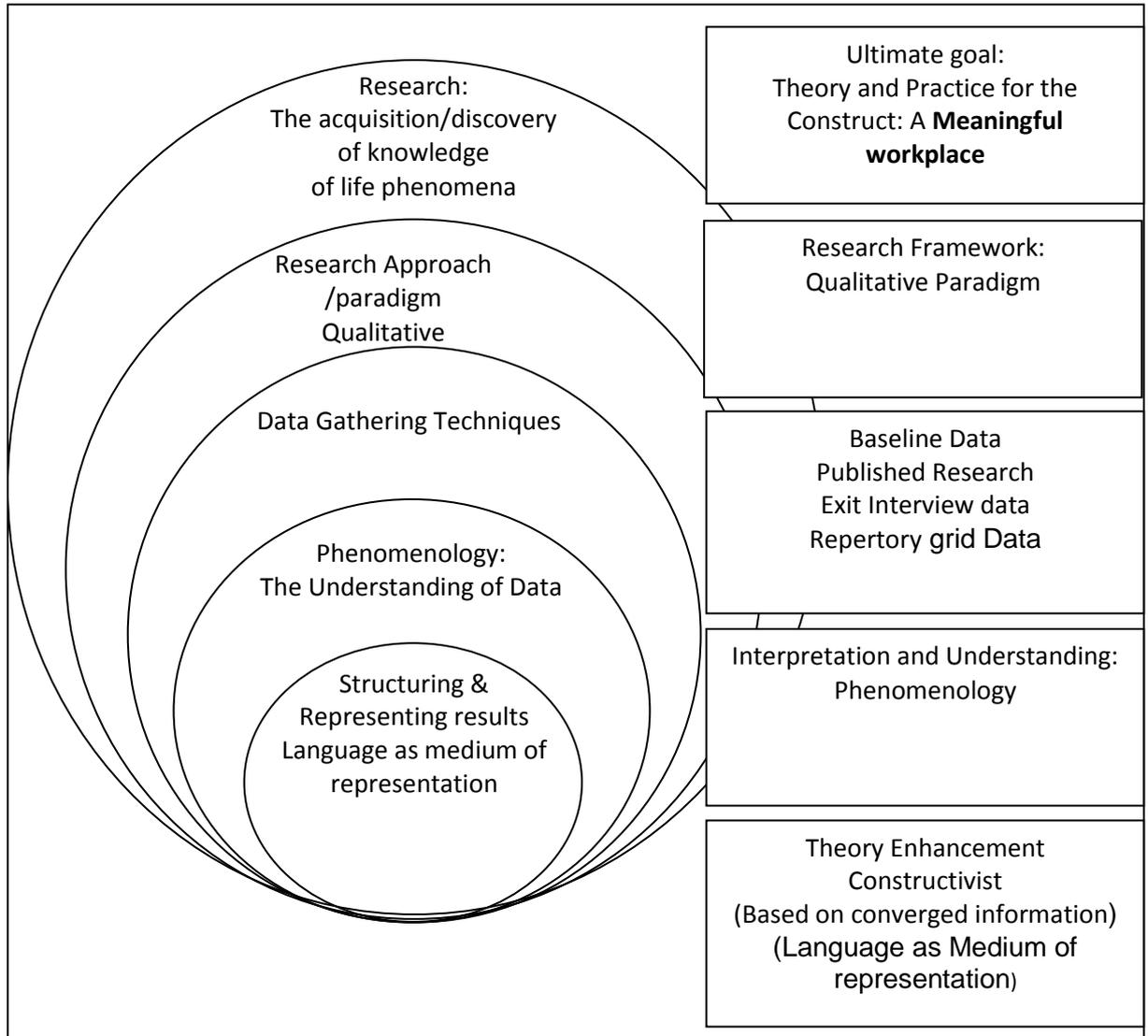


Figure 2.6: A Holistic Perspective

The purpose of this chapter (as stated at the beginning) was to discuss and present the research methodology consisting of a broad goal or ultimate purpose (to enhance theory for the **meaningful workplace**), the research framework (following a qualitative approach), the specific method that will be employed to create such a theory (constructivist), the research genre which serves this project (phenomenological), and an indication of the data sources that will be utilised for this purpose (published research texts, exit interview verbatim responses and Repertory Grid interview information) and closing with a discussion on language as the medium of representation.

It can, with a high measure of confidence be stated that the purpose of this chapter has been achieved. The research methodology was presented, taking into account the different aspects that will inform the study in achieving the ultimate goal of establishing a theory of and guidelines pertaining to the practical implementation of establishing a **meaningful workplace**.

3 CHAPTER 3

A MEANINGFUL WORKPLACE:

AN EMERGING THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT (?)

A perspective from literature

*Is the construct: A **meaningful workplace** an emerging construct in the literature on Management Theory, Organization Theory, Behavioural Theory and related texts or narratives? The purpose of this chapter is to determine whether the construct A **meaningful workplace** has surfaced in recent literature, thereby indicating that the construct seems to be an emerging construct thus providing a basic framework against which the purpose and objectives of the study can be benchmarked.*

3.1 INTRODUCTION AND INTENT

The purpose of Chapter 3 is to determine the extent to which the construct **meaningful workplace** has rooted in the current discussion on Organizational Theory, Management Theory or Organizational Behaviour. The rationale behind this is to determine whether it would be possible to discover and then possibly adopt a basic framework for the construct against which the intended purpose of the study i.e. to conceptually expand the theoretical notion of a **meaningful workplace**, if such a notion exists, or to conceptually develop such a model if the notion thereof has not yet rooted in literature. To achieve the intent of this chapter it was necessary to search for the topic **meaningful workplace** in literature. The most obvious search takes as a point of departure two recent publications which include the construct **meaningful workplace** in their title. The first of these is a publication by Tom Terez (22 Steps to a meaningful workplace) 2000, and a publication by Neal Chalofsky (“Meaningful workplaces: Reframing How and Where we Work”) 2010.

Using these publications as a broad framework, a further search of journal articles, pertaining or related to the construct under discussion is conducted and the discoveries documented. The basic question is whether such a construct as a **meaningful workplace** is under discussion or emerging in current literature. The primary search will be conducted via the Academic Information Service of the University of Pretoria (South Africa) and will predominantly focus on the following search strings: **Meaningful workplace, Meaning at work, Meaningful Work; The Meaning of Work**. This does however not imply that themes related to the primary search strings will be ignored.

3.2 PROCESS-FLOW AND ENVISAGED CONCEPTUAL MODEL TOWARDS THE CONSTRUCT: A MEANINGFUL WORKPLACE

The following graphic indicates the process flow that will be followed in this chapter.

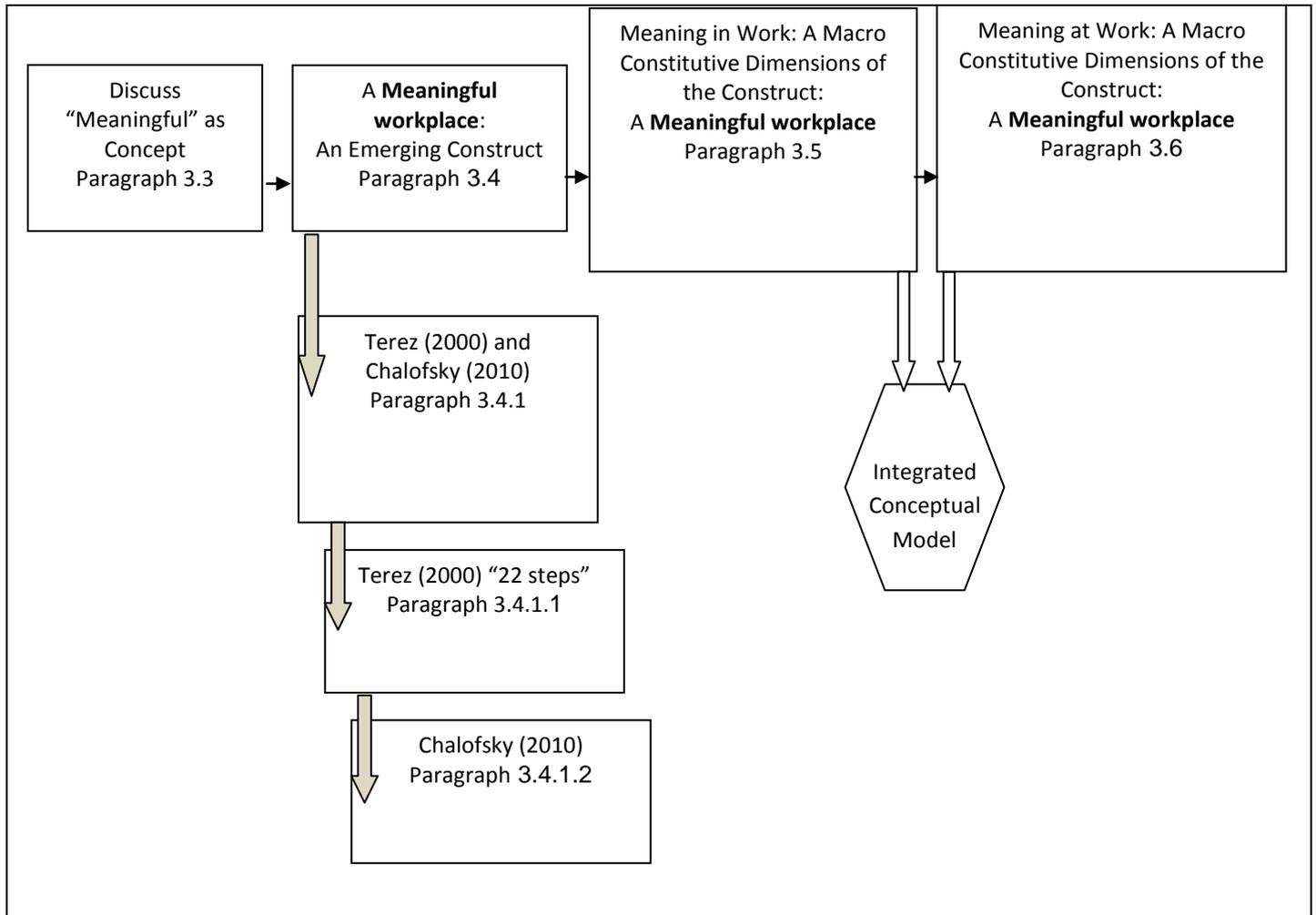


Figure 3.1 Process flow of Chapter 3

3.3 MEANINGFUL AS CONCEPT

It is a necessity to turn to the concept **meaning** as the qualifier in the construct **meaningful workplace**. The discussion will however not be detailed and exhaustive. It is positioned here as a value laden adjective that qualifies the concept: Workplace.

According to the Roffey Park Report (2003, p. 3) there is

...a business case for taking questions of meaning seriously, because it indicates a clear link between employees experiencing meaning and an organizations ability to manage change successfully, the ability to retain key people and greater employee engagement and high performance.

Conversely the findings suggest that employee who experience a lack of meaning in the workplace (whilst performing work) tend be more cynical towards the workplace (=organization) and are more resistant to change, more inclined to exit the organization, are less engaged and tend to work less hard. In all it indicates less satisfaction in the working environment and thus a lesser degree of commitment and involvement.

There are, according to Holbecke and Springnett (2003) various possible explanations for the tendency to search for meaning in the workplace. These include:

- People spend more time at work than away from the work place or at other dimensions of their life
- People feel less connected because of a breakdown in trust relationships in the workplace. People tend to revert to the dog-eat-dog temperament to get ahead as quickly as possible
- There seems to be a increasing level of cynicism because of so-called “hollow ethics”, the gravy train mentality relating to pay issues and other malpractices, the lack of accountability and the increasing number of “organizational scandals” relating to mismanagement and misappropriation of funds and a perceived lack of integrity as demonstrated by top leadership - resulting in the severance of the trust relationship between employees and leadership in organizations
- Society seems to be undergoing a moral transformation based on the search for spirituality and the experience of community
- Organizations often lack a coherent social responsibility strategy and plan – society perceives the purpose of organisations to be to the benefit of society instead of bleeding society to achieve gluttonous profits

The search for meaning in life as a universal human endeavour overflows or continues into and in the workplace and as a topic it has attracted the attention of seminal thinkers such as Freud, Marx, Weber, Menninger, Frankl and others.

The twentieth century was characterized by the growth and expansion of work organizations, a tendency that will accelerate within the framework of globalisation. The proliferation will add to the effect of political, social and economic power. However, “despite the impressive structural apparatus that these phenomena represent, they appear to have been responsible for the demise of human purpose through the experience of work” (Bowles 1989, p. 405).

The concept *meaningful* not only contextualises the current construct in terms of experienced value and as a phenomenon that evokes positive feelings, but also indicates an underlying value issue. As an adjective the concept meaningful refers to something of significance or something that adds value or purpose to life in general and specifically, in this study, to work life.

The concept meaning has been ignored in empirical work because of the difficulty in conceptualising and defining it as concept. However, it does occupy a central place in the existential movement. This is especially true of existentialist psychiatry. Zika and Chamberlain (1992) indicate that the concept has however been imbedded in general psychology, but unfortunately ignored in Management literature and specifically Organizational Behaviour because of the difficulty in conceptualization and definition. Meaning or the experience of meaning is according to Frankl (2004) relative yet objective. It is relative in the sense that it differs from person to person and even from context to context for the same person or extremely: from hour to hour for the same person in a constant context. The expression “objective” here must not be confused with a modernistic view in terms of which realities are *out there* and they exist to be discovered as realities in a real world. Objective in the sense that Frankl uses the term rather refers to the trans-subjective nature of meaning which is discovered on a conscious level through the conscious experience of an event, a relationship; an experience, that adds value to our lives. This viewpoint implies a transcending beyond consciousness towards something that is more than the self in the act of discovery of meaning whilst interacting with

his/her environment. In this sense meaningfulness is construed by the individual based on the collective of all the dimensions that collude to influence the choices that people make.

Van Jaarsveld (2004:15) refers to Battista and Almond (1980), who indicate that theories on meaning agree on four essential issues in cases where individuals indicate that some event or interaction or their life is meaningful. These are:

“(a) they are positively committed to some concept of purpose, (b) this concept provides them with some framework or goal from which to view their lives, (c) they perceive their lives as related to or fulfilling this concept, and (d) they experience this fulfilment as a feeling of significance”.

The adjective *meaningful* thus refers to a process; an act of discovery and construction, and defined experience. Strung together the *process* and individual steps that constitute such a process, if such can be discerned, refer to the way in which an individual can transcend his own self and the everyday experiences to *discover* and construe a value laden event and *experience* this event as something that provides satisfaction and adds value to his/her life. Transcendence in this context refers to what Bateman and Porath (2003, p. 125) describe as surpassing limiting factors in an organisational setting, and is evidenced when “...people effect extraordinary change by *exceeding* demands, *eliminating or overcoming* constraints and *creating or seizing* opportunities”. This implies a mental and cognitive structuring process as well as an emotive or affective experience in the pursuit of meaning and the experience thereof in the work environment.

Homo sapiens is the creature who makes sense. She literally produces sense through her experience, contemplation, and imagination and she cannot live in the world without it. The importance of this sense-making in human life is reflected in a crowded conceptual field: ideas, meaning, information, wisdom... (Hannerz, 1992, p. 3).

The linking of meaning to the workplace is described by Holbecke and Springnett (2003, p. 4) in the following manner:

In the workplace meaning appears to link to a sense of community, to having a higher sense of purpose, especially a customer-focussed purpose. It also links to consistency of behaviour and congruence between personal and organizational values. People want to work for ethical organizations and to see their leaders 'walking the talk' on values. People want to feel involved and treated like adults, and to balance work with other aspects of their lives. They want to have the opportunity to discuss spirituality in the workplace with colleagues. They want challenging jobs through which they can experience personal growth.

It furthermore also emerged that when employees experience meaning that they are "in flow" or alternatively, congruent with their work, the workplace, colleagues and themselves, thus performing at their optimum level. The concept of "flow" was "originally developed by Mihaly Csizsentmihalyi" (Ashton, Calitz, and Solms 2009:59). It can be likened to behaviour that demonstrates a single-minded immersion in and the optimal harnessing of emotions in the service of performing a particular task. A person's emotions when "in flow" are contained and channelled as well positive, energized, and aligned with the task at hand. To be caught in the boredom of inactivity or the agitation of anxiety (because of the inactivity) bars a person from flow.

May, Gilson and Harter (2004) built on the work of Kahn (1990), (whose work will be discussed in a different context in a further paragraph) and expanded on the structure of engagement that Kahn developed. In a study conducted by May et al, it was shown that three psychological conditions (psychological meaningfulness, psychological safety and psychological availability) related positively to engagement of employees. (The workplace as engagement space is discussed later in this chapter.) For the purpose of this study the psychological condition of meaningfulness is highlighted. Which factors induce psychological meaningfulness at work? According to May et al three factors induce psychological meaningfulness,

i.e. job enrichment, work role fit, and co-worker relations. Psychological meaningfulness is also the strongest mediator for engagement. The research results seem to corroborate the Job Characteristics Model of Hackman & Oldham (1980) ,which presents a framework to determine how job characteristics (skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback) impact on three psychological states i.e. experienced meaningfulness, experienced responsibility for outcomes, and knowledge of the actual results. This does not exhaust the theory on meaning in any way, but it does provide sufficient information to provide a brief summary or description of the concept meaningful.

3.4 MEANINGFUL WORKPLACE: AN EMERGING CONSTRUCT

The intent is to discover a framework based on Terez (2000) and Chalofsky (2010) within which the intended literature search results can be imbedded and then to expand such a framework both in terms of the depth and extent of the construct: **Meaningful workplace**. Utilising the work of Chalofsky and Terez as a framework will enable the discovery of both the implicit and explicit references in literature. In the first instance the measure or extent of overlap between the publications of Terez and Chalofsky will be determined. This endeavour will provide sufficient information to create a framework for the further analysis of the construct in literature.

3.4.1 Terez (2000) and Chalofsky (2010)

3.4.1.1 22 Keys to a Meaningful workplace (Terez, 2000)

Terez embarked on a "Meaning At Work Project" to discover what workers meant by seeking meaning in their places of work. For this study, he conducted extensive interviews through 15 focus groups made up of people from all walks of life whose collective work experience spanned more than 3,000 years. What he encountered was "an almost desperate eagerness to talk about meaning in the workplace." (Terez, 1999 in Page, 2000) In addition Terez discovered that meaningful work had 22 different meanings attached to different degrees of importance by different people, translated as the 22 keys to creating a **meaningful workplace**. The purpose of the research project was to discover the ultimate purpose of workplace management: to create the **meaningful workplace**, and defines a **meaningful workplace** as one where the following categories of "meaning keys" prevail:

- Mission keys; related to the creation of a future along the lines of purpose, direction, relevance and validation;
- People keys; related to valuing who does the future within a framework of respect, equality, informality, flexibility, and ownership;
- *Development keys*; related to the growth the business and of the people who make it happen. The development keys are constituted by *challenge, invention, support, and personal development*;
- *Community keys*; affirm the importance of togetherness and collective effort, within a framework of dialogue, relationship building, service, acknowledgement, and oneness;
- *Me keys*; are the keys that value the individual and enable the individual to be "himself". This category is made up of *self-identity, fit, balance and worth*.

The immediate context within which an individual functions is his immediate work environment where work roles and concomitant responsibilities are performed. The

individual is employed for the sake of his/her competence and the potential contribution towards the “bottom line” of the organization. The team within which he/she functions represents the supporting infrastructure that enables the individual to perform work. Terez treats the subject according to an organized structure in terms of which (a) certain key clusters are identified, followed by (b) .the keys that “unlock” the cluster thus creating a **meaningful workplace**. The following Table (3.1) provides an overview of the structure as presented by Tom Terez (2000). In the left hand column the 22 keys are listed in the order of “the most cited”, while the right hand column lists the relevant Key cluster concept with which the keys are associated. The first five are the ones most often cited followed by a second tier of five and then another 12 in alphabetic order of important meaning keys that were less often cited. (Incidentally the work of Terez coincides with the qualities of “servant leadership” as discussed and indicated by Page, 2000).

Table 3.1: 22 Keys towards A Meaningful workplace

Meaning Keys	Key Cluster
1) Purpose - The mission of the organization must have a larger purpose--something beyond producing goods or services or even being the best. Employees want to feel instinctively that their work is making a positive difference	“Mission”
2) Ownership - Employees want to view themselves as having a part in shaping how their work is to be done	“People”
3) Fit - Once employees know how they and their work fit into the larger mission of the organization they are more willing to put forth their best efforts	“Me”
4) Oneness - When there is a prevailing sense that "we're all in this together," working relationships become more collaborative	“Community”
5) Relationship building - The workplace should offer ways to build healthy interpersonal relationships that foster loyalty to the institution and its team members in promoting their collective efforts	“Community”
6) Service - Employees enjoy learning from and helping one another. This can be fostered through formal mentoring or training programs or more informal on-the-spot coaching or assisting with a project	“Service”
7) Equality - All people in the organization are considered to be equally important regardless of their position and treated as such	“People”
8) Validation - Employees can see for themselves the impact of their work and be affirmed for it	“Mission”
9) Invention - Risk-taking in the name of innovation is encouraged and failures are the price of learning rather than the reason for dismissal	“Development”
10) Personal development - People are able to reach their full potential through learning	“Development”

Meaning Keys	Key Cluster
and expanded job opportunities	
11) Acknowledgement - Employees are recognized for their efforts and successes through genuine appreciation	“Community”
12) Balance - Employers respect the fact that there's life beyond work when making assignments	“Me”
13) Challenge - The workplace is seen as an opportunity to take on challenges for those who want them	“Development”
14) Dialogue - There is an ongoing, honest, and constructive dialogue involving people at all levels of the organization as well as significant suppliers and customers	“Community”
15) Direction - There is a compelling vision that draws people into a common direction.	“Mission”
16) Flexibility - Good judgement is used in applying rules	“People”
17) Informality - An open-door policy is practised by everyone and protocol is not seen as a stumbling block	“People”
18) Relevance - Red tape does not take people away from engaging in relevant activities.	“Mission”
19) Respect - Employees show respect for one another regardless of their rank or title	“People”
20) Self-identity - Individuality is encouraged and the organization respects the need of people to have their own space in which to work	“Me”
21) Support - Employees are given the resources (information, time, funding, experience, learning opportunities, tools, etc.) they need to succeed in their work	“Development”
22) Worth - Employees are genuinely valued and their interests are taken into account when decisions are made	“Me”

(Source: Terez, 2000)

Table 3.2, although it does provide insight to the modelling of Terez, does not do justice to the content of his reasoning. Content substance in respect of the structure will be discussed when the comparison or interrogation of content is presented between Terez and Chalofsky. To add content at this point in time will eventually result in a repetition.

3.4.1.2 Meaningful workplaces (Chalofsky, 2010)

Chalofsky's approach will now be discussed in summarised form.

The interpretation of Chalofsky's work in this study is as follows:

- Chalofsky presents two distinguishable macro perspectives on the construct: **Meaningful workplace**. The first macro dimension is specifically related to the

meaning **of** work and describes meaningful work from the perspective of integrated wholeness. The second macro dimension relates to the experience of meaningfulness **at** work. This specifically articulates the possible interventions in the workplace on a group and organizational level that could facilitate meaningfulness at work.

The following discussion presents an introduction to the concept meaningful work, which will be expanded on in paragraph 3.5 and sub paragraphs. .This viewed as one macro constitutive dimension of the construct: **Meaningful workplace**. Paragraph 3.4.1.3 presents an introduction to the concept meaning **at** work, which is viewed as the second macro constitutive dimension of the **meaningful workplace** construct. This dimension will be expanded on in paragraph 3.6 and sub paragraphs.

Meaningful work

- Chalofsky balances the **meaningful workplace** with the construct meaningful work, thereby indicating that the employee has as much of a responsibility to “reframe” the workplace as has the organization, through a possible variety of interventions, on both structural and dynamic dimensions, to create a **meaningful workplace**. Chalofsky’s book is divided into two sections. The first section addresses and discusses the construct meaningful work while the second section addresses the **meaningful workplaces**.
- The focus is on integrated wholeness of the individual, and is presented by means of the “meaningful work model” (Chalofsky, 2010, p. 20). Chalofsky focuses on the whole individual that enters the workplace to perform work related roles.

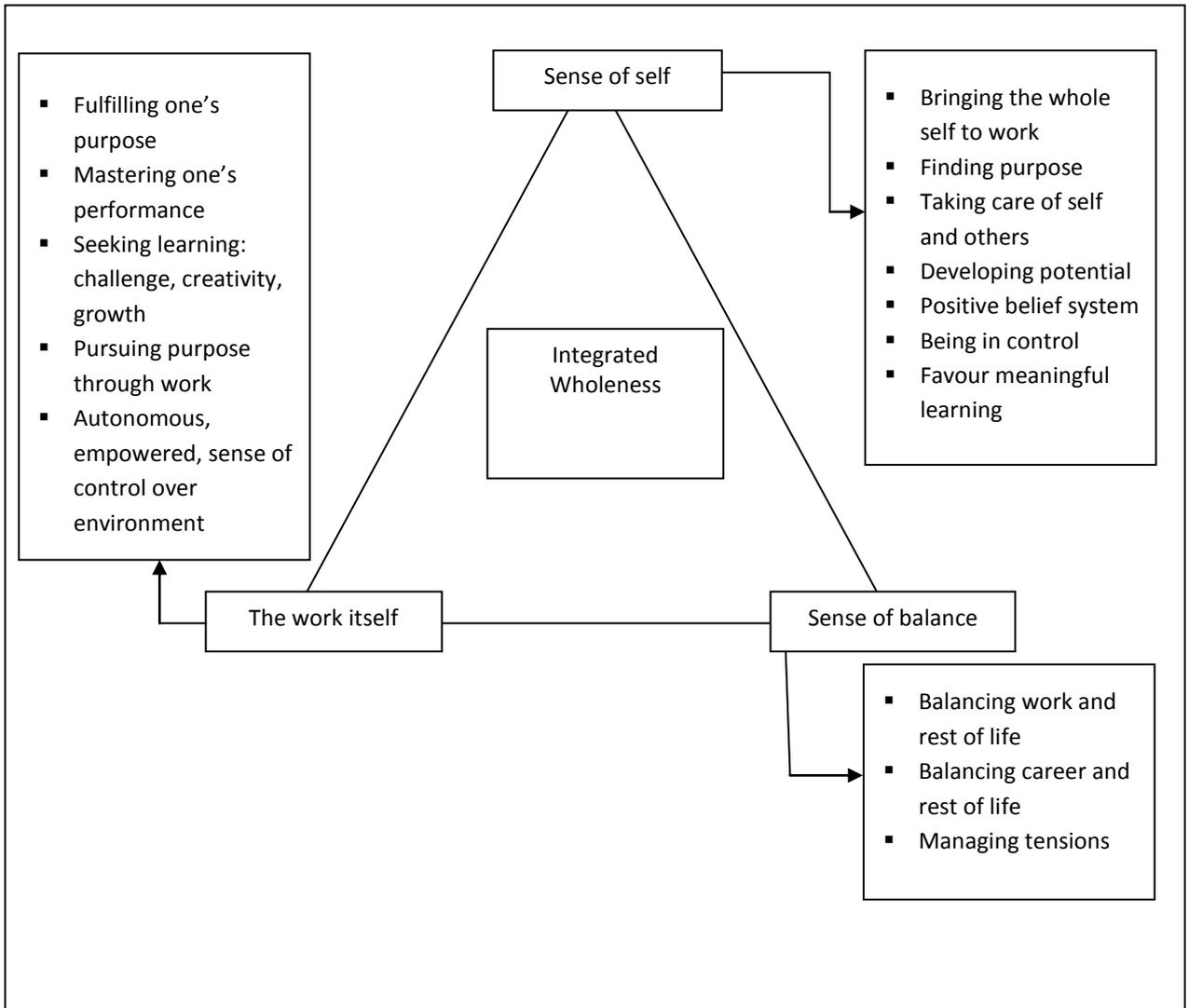


Figure 3.2: A meaningful work model

(Chalofsky 2010, p. 20)

Meaningful workplace

Chalofsky's findings (201, p. 83) based on his own research provides the following elements that constitute meaning at work or a **meaningful workplace**:

- A values based culture is the one common denominator between organizations that are typified as excellent or the best company to work for. A values based culture implies:-

- A strong alignment between “the organization’s mission and its commitment to the employees, customers, suppliers, and community” (2010, p. 87);
 - The development of employees was one of the values “embedded in the culture, not just an add-on” (2010, p. 87);
 - The commitment to diversity was found to be an integral part of the culture as was the commitment to learning;
 - Values based culture further implies “caring for employees”;
 - Caring about the organization’s mission;
 - “Work, play and community involvement”.
- In follow-up chapters Chalofsky discusses elements that constitute a values based culture and identifies the following dimensions:-
 - Values based leadership;
 - Work-life policies and programs;
 - Social responsibility;
 - Employee engagement and commitment.
 - When discussing the reframing of the workplace, Chalofsky (2010, p. 143) envisages organizational culture as the “primary vehicle for creating an environment of meaningfulness, engagement and commitment”. Workplace community is a principle and practice towards transforming the machine paradigm of organizations, (where meaning is lost) towards a climate and values based culture where people work together towards achieving goals, thus creating meaning at the workplace.

3.4.2 Dimensions of overlap between Terez and Chalofsky

As will be noticed in the following (Table 3.2) Chalofsky’s model is extremely dynamic in the approach based on a humanistic philosophical base. The reasoning is abductive in nature which is indicative of the process of logical inference.

The term abductive refers to the process of arriving at an explanatory hypothesis. The term refers to the process of arriving at an

explanatory hypothesis. (<http://www.answers.com/topic/abductive-reasoning#ixzz1K3TZQr9I>), in the vein of abductive validation. It is the process of validating a given hypothesis through abductive reasoning. This can also be called reasoning through successive approximation. Under this principle, an explanation is valid if it is the best possible explanation of a set of known data. The best possible explanation is often defined in terms of simplicity and elegance (see Occam's razor). Abductive validation is common practice in hypothesis formation in science; moreover, Peirce argues it is a ubiquitous aspect of thought. (<http://www.answers.com/topic/abductive-reasoning#ixzz1K3VnDiyF>).

Essentially, the principle of parsimony which states that if one is provided with a variety of explanations (e.g. a variety of statistical models) one should prefer the simplest. William of Ockham (c. 1285–1349) was an English philosopher who held that a complicated explanation should not be accepted without good reason, and wrote '*Frustra fit per plura, quod fieri potest per pauciora*'. ('It is vain to do with more what can be done with less.') (<http://www.answers.com/topic/occam-s-razor#ixzz1K3Urw22q>. Oxford dictionary).

The process that will be followed here is to interrogate the content to determine the measure of overlap and consent. The 22 “keys” as presented by Terez will be used as the basic framework to which the content as presented by Chalofsky will be matched.

Table 3.2 presents this discussion in the following manner:

- The left hand column contains the keys as presented by Terez, but now referred to as themes, which can also be viewed as constitutive elements towards the establishment or the creation of a **meaningful workplace**.
- The second column contains the contents as abstracted from the model of Terez.

- The third column represents the content for the theme as presented by Chalofsky, or at the very least indicators that refer to the particular theme.

Because of the integrated nature of Chalofsky's treatment of the construct: **Meaningful workplace**, it is not possible to match every individual element of overlap in the Table 3.2. It should therefore be viewed as a high level conceptual comparison. The fact that the right hand column (Chalofsky's rendering of the topic) does not match the left hand column on a topical level does not imply that Chalofsky ignores the particular topic. The difference in treatment of the topic by the selected authors makes it virtually impossible to make a word-for-word match as per the different topics. Chalofsky's treatment covers the different topics but not in the same manner as Terez.

Table 3.2: The extent of overlap between Terez (2000) and Chalofsky (2010)

Theme	Terez	Chalofsky
Mission-dimension-	<p>Purpose. The primary purpose of any organization is to produce goods, or services; to solve problems or address the needs of society (whichever way one chooses to define purpose). In short: the purpose of an organization is defined as its basic function to fulfil a need</p> <p>Direction. The direction of an organization is driven by a compelling vision. The goal structure of the organization must establish a framework of day-to-day operations that support the vision in an understandable manner. "Having a vision" represents the flight of imagination into the future state of the organization – a perspective with enough power to draw every employee into the vortex towards the future. This encompasses an imaginative flight on how to achieve the purpose of the organization. Formulating the vision into realistic and tangible terms represents a challenge that is not easily met. It requires the buy-in of</p>	<p>Pride. A values based culture cultivates alignment with the mission or purpose of the organization. In the organizations that were interviewed, integrity, pride and empowerment went hand-in-hand as did intrinsic motivation and trust in people that they would do a good job. "Finally, the organizations all describe a culture where everyone works hard and plays hard. Employees find their work to be meaningful, and they believe in the mission of the organization" (Chalofsky, 2010, p. 89)</p> <p>Direction is implied by the fact that the individual aligns with the [pr]ose and mission of the organization in an endeavour to achieve a state of meaningfulness at work</p>

Theme	Terez	Chalofsky
	<p>employees on both levels – on the level of the imaginative as well as on the level of realistic formulation. It is therefore not possible or even realistic attainable to <i>post a vision on the billboard</i> of the company and expect employees to buy in and support it through positive and productive work related behaviour</p> <p>Relevance. Employees tend to spend their time on activities that are relevant to the achievement or attainment of purpose. People, it seems stop indulging in activities; even work related activities, when these do not contribute to some form of reward. Based on the mental model of the Human Relations School of Management, it was David McClelland who believed that the need to achieve is a distinct human motive that can be distinguished from other needs. (http://www.accel-team.com/human_relations/hrels_06_mcclelland.html/). People do what is relevant to the structure of their own purpose in life and ignore those activities that do not contribute towards “making sense” of their existence. Seen from this perspective “a Meaningful workplace” relates to the fundamental existential questions that people ask and strive towards</p> <p>Validation. Validation directly relates to the impact that work has. It is a direct emanation of the question of relevance. Organizations validate their outputs in terms of customer satisfaction and thus create a process for monitoring the value of the work-structure and outputs of a section, the organization and even of the industry as a whole. What does not make sense and that which does not contribute to the overall purpose, does in the final</p>	

Theme	Terez	Chalofsky
	analysis, not deserve to be done	
People dimension	<p>Respect. One of the conditions for meaning and belonging is an environment where people show respect for each other irrespective of hierarchical position or formal rank and title designations. Respect does not imply familiarity but civility and open honesty</p> <p>Equality. This construct relates to the principle that all individuals are viewed as equally important. Once again, where this perspective prevails, it does not imply a “toning down” of rank and status, but rather an acknowledgement of rank, title, formal hierarchical position and job designation. Equality does not imply a breaking down of protocol, but actually strengthens it, because are people are equal within the context of their work responsibilities and all responsibilities contribute towards goal achievement. Seen as dynamic structure or activities and processes, work activities support each other, and it is in this sense that all people are equal. If one individual fails in his or her work role then the organization fails. All people are equal, yes but all are not on the same level or in the same protocol level. When formality and fixed procedures become the obstacles to work performance and work related interaction, the basic principle of trust is sacrificed on the altar of formal hierarchy and a demand for formal acknowledgement of rank, title and position</p> <p>Informality. A Meaningful workplace does not subscribe to deification of a set of heavily starched traditions that reduce the individual to a formally registered form of address. Informality becomes evident in the way that people “customise” their work</p>	<p>Upon the question: What goes into a values-based culture? (Chalofsky, 2010 p. 93) ,the dimensions are identified:</p> <p>Values based leadership (or servant leadership) which is characterized by the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listening; Empathy; Healing; Awareness; Persuasion; Conceptualization; Foresight; Stewardship; Commitment to the growth of people; Building community. <p>These characteristics encompass or at the very least imply concepts such as equality, respect, and flexibility.</p>

Theme	Terez	Chalofsky
	<p>place. The family photos and other “artefacts” represent a way in which people present themselves to their colleagues in the immediate working environment. The dialogues that people conduct further strengthen informality, or alternatively, entrench the formal institutions. A first name address format does not imply disrespect, nor does it imply an undermining of the formal position of the addressee. Informality creates an opportunity to muster confidence in addressing work related problems and solutions with superiors</p> <p>Flexibility. Flexibility implies and demands good judgement in the application of rules, policies, and work instructions. Flexibility is a condition for innovation and the application of values and principles in lieu of customer service. If policies bind innovation and prohibit the best possible customer service based on innovation – within a principle framework - then the meaning of the construct “customer service” is at jeopardy and the individual will question the meaningfulness of his/her actions</p> <p>Ownership. Individuals are the owners of their work and of their work environment. The work-role of person A is not owned by the supervisor or manager, but by the incumbent. If this were not the case, the supervisor would have been appointed for that particular position. If “my” job is high jacked” then it is of no relevance to “me” and therefore it becomes a meaningless expenditure of energy and activity</p>	
Development	Challenge. Getting more done through	Chalofsky treats the development of

Theme	Terez	Chalofsky
dimension	<p>innovation represents a challenge whilst getting more done with less creates despair and represents a caricature of the concept development. Development implies change; it implies the unfolding of the creative possibilities in the organization system. Constant change forms the cultivating soil for creativity and innovation in work process structuring so as to enhance the job, the outputs and eventually the added value. (Refer to George & Jones, 2000).</p> <p>Invention. Closely associated with the perspective on challenge and creative as a condition for a Meaningful workplace, invention could be viewed as the result of creativity. It is fraught with risk, but without invention and risk taking improvement remains a distant illusion in an organizational environment</p> <p>Support. Support in this sense requires that people must have complete access to all the resources they require for successful job and work related performance. Restricting access to information, time, equipment, funding, learning opportunities, etc. restricts the evolvment of a Meaningful workplace and work motivation, commitment and productive behaviour</p> <p>Personal development. Learning opportunities is the essential key to production, irrespective of the sense in which the word is used. Any restriction in respect of learning or personal development is a restriction in productivity and increased quality. Such restriction of necessity leads to a restriction in meaning for employees as it deprives them of a sense of achievement. In a Meaningful</p>	<p>employees in terms of the following dimensions:</p> <p>Learning: Challenge, creativity and continuous growth; Personal Mastery; Control and self-directed learning; Autonomy and empowerment, where autonomy represents the freedom to exercise personal choice, and empowerment the ability to exercise that choice. Although the organization creates an environment that is conducive to empowerment, the individual alone chooses to empower him/herself. eh conditions</p> <p>According to Chalofsky (2010) self directed learning leads to a sense of control, autonomy and empowerment</p>

Theme	Terez	Chalofsky
	<p>workplace, people accept responsibility for their own learning and development, to the extent that it leads to meaning and added value</p>	
Community dimension	<p>Dialogue. The so-called “talk-free zone” in organizations where employees do not engage in meaningful work related dialogue, reduces the possibility for work success and work “self-confidence”. Not only is verbal encouragement an important driver towards work related dialogue, but also the structuring of office space and organizational structure should support it. In addition, self managed teams will act as conductor towards real work related dialogue during which problems are analysed in search of the most innovative solutions possible</p> <p>Relationship building. Relationship building represents afar cry from the likes of Fayol, Taylor, and others of the scientific management era, who in search of increased productivity searched for better and shortened production processes. To a certain extent, the research (possibly even in modern day research) contains a strain towards depersonalisation of the workplace. There is no longer a concern about time and motion studies, but some people still view workplace relationship as an inefficient distraction from real work (Terez, 2000, p. 169). Relationships result in an intimate knowledge of the work-role of the neighbour in the cubicle next door. It creates the mental structure of the interrelatedness of our different work-roles and the interdependencies as well. The discouragement of relationship building will result in a sterile work environment where individuals work in silos and where integrated process are dismantled towards</p>	<p>Creating community in the workplace calls for a profound philosophical shift. “If work is part of the human condition the workplace should mirror a more natural, human way of working” A workplace community will inevitably foster “creativity, innovativeness, divergent thinking excitement, sharing, social responsibility, challenge, learning, and meaning (Chalofsky, 2010, p. 151)</p>

Theme	Terez	Chalofsky
	<p>individualistic goals thus resulting in a loss of quality and an increase in production costs as repetitive practices increase exponentially</p> <p>Service. People attach meaning to “helping others” or to providing a service. Service is to a large extent the core product of all organizations irrespective of whether they are defined as service providers or production entities. Service is the underlying bond that links people together whether they are colleagues, customers or the community at large. Opportunities are purposefully created to provide “service”. In the absence of these opportunities, work is reduced to the most superficial “technical” level and results in meaningless activities</p> <p>Acknowledgement. In the centre of acknowledgement lies a genuine appreciation for the individual as individual, in the first place, and for the individual as a worker as producer of outputs, in the second place. The best designed solutions or processes cannot produce and deliver of themselves. The intervention of an individual worker, on whichever level is required to interface with technology and the means of production. It seems a spontaneous trait of humans to acknowledge, not only the presence of another individuals, but also the contribution of the other. The one single characteristic of humans is that they value individuality and the “other” as an individual. The absence of this appreciation is possibly indicative of ineffective maturity and possibly even pathology. (Hattingh, 1990)</p>	<p>Service. Taking care of the self by taking care of others represents a dimension of the integrated self. However it can also be seen to function in the social responsibility dimension of the values based culture organization. In the latter sense, the social responsibility of an organization is an active attempt at creating an environment that is conducive to business as well as to the development of the community. This creates the opportunity for alignment with societal needs and norms</p> <p>Community and oneness. The dimension of oneness rest upon the creation of community in the workplace. Community is then defined as “a body of individuals organized into a group with awareness of some unifying values and purpose” (Chalofsky, 2010, p. 144)</p>

Theme	Terez	Chalofsky
	<p>Oneness. “Were all in this together”. The prevailing thought in organizational life is the experience of being in the situation together – as a unit as a collective entity. This sense of oneness is a graphic result of collaborative relationships. Where destructive competition is in the foreground of relationships, the prevailing climate can be described as “everybody for himself”. The creation of oneness presents a very unique challenge to Organization Design and development practitioners because it appears at the innermost circle of people that work together</p>	
<p>Me dimension– The individual as individual</p>	<p>Self-identity. The work environment contributes towards the uniqueness of the individual in the sense that it naturally poses problems that extract the submerged characteristics and traits of the individual. This process accentuates the uniqueness of the individual in relation to other individuals in the workplace. The most effective individual is one that learns from individual diversity instead of coping or dealing with the diversity of others. (Hattingh, 1996, deals with the concept “effective maturity” as the result of effectivity in nine different identifiable areas of personality.) The effective mature person has a strong sense of self-identity and knows who he is and what he wants from life, as opposed to the ineffective or immature person. The work environment stimulates growth. To stifle this process through whatever means boils down to stopping a natural process</p> <p>Fit. The effective mature person is contextually effective and has the ability to position him/herself in the different contexts. This represents the ability to position him/herself in the bigger picture of</p>	<p>Integrated self. The whole integrated self, mind, body, emotions and spirit come to work. However before this can happen, the individual must first be aware of his/her own values, beliefs and purpose in life, whilst at the same time cultivating the ability. The sense of self also includes having control over personal “work space”</p> <p>(The concept work space will be discussed in a following chapter).</p> <p>The sense of self is associated with questions such as Who am I? Where do I belong? Can I fulfil my purpose in this organization?</p> <p>The sense of self further implies:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bringing the whole person to the work environment; Finding purpose in life – how does work fit into this purpose; Taking care of the self by taking care of others; Developing own potential; Positive belief system;

Theme	Terez	Chalofsky
	<p>the group and in the even bigger picture of the organization as an identifiable entity within an industry. This fit encompasses productive behaviour, values and the ethical code of business conduct, career needs and objectives on a cognitive as well as on a psychological level. (Hattingh, 1996)</p> <p>Balance. This is the ability to distinguish contexts and the responsibilities within different contexts. It entails for example to distinguish between the responsibilities of the work context and the family context, and would therefore not have feelings of guilt when one context requires a that another takes a “backseat” for the duration of complying with responsibilities</p> <p>Worth. People believe that they and the things that they do are important. This is not a value judgment but a factual observation about every human being. The worth that other people attach to an individual contributes to the self-concept of the individual in that particular context. However, it does not deter the individual from experiencing worth based on the things that he/she does. When an activity does not contribute towards the expression of worth that activity will be terminated and replaced with another. The same reasoning applies in the context of work</p>	<p>Being in control; Favouring meaningful learning.</p> <p>Fit, according to Chalofsky (2010, p. 154) is about “who we are, what we want to do and who we want to do it with”. Fit is about the whole person, mentally and spiritually</p> <p>The sense of balance is imbedded in the meaningful work model as presented by Chalofsky and includes:-</p> <p>Balancing work and the rest of life Balancing career and the rest of life Managing the tensions</p> <p>In addition a different perspective on balance is promoted by Chalofsky, i.e. the balance of time and the balance of energy</p> <p>The work itself is a dimension of the meaningful work model includes the following elements that relate to the experience of worth by the employee: Fulfilling personal purpose; Mastering performance; Seeking learning: - challenge, creativity and continuous growth; Pursuing the opportunity to carry out your purpose through work; Autonomy, empowerment, and a sense of self control over the environment.</p>

On a conceptual level the two authors address and discuss the same themes although in different ways. This is indicative of an emerging construct that has not yet fossilised in terms of topics and presentation structures.

3.4.3 A Meaningful workplace: The meeting between man and enterprise

The fact that two publications in book format have been published during the first decade of this century must surely be indicative of a need that has been identified by these authors. That both address the title **Meaningful workplace** is significant in itself. The content, although not entirely new or novel does seem to be a further indication of a mounting concern in organizations in a post modern setting. Alienation and its constituent dimensions have been addressed earlier (Chapter 1) and will therefore not be repeated here.

Suffice to say that the shift in the perception and management of “the organization” since the early scholars to date (also see Chapter 1) can be described as a shift of magnitude. Yet there does seem to be an inadequate appreciation and application of philosophical and conceptual thinking regarding the modern organization (Weymes, 2005), specifically with reference to the meeting between man and enterprise.

Since the era of rigid organizational structures, systems and processes, new thinking and more specifically philosophical considerations, changed the face of Management theory from a strict bureaucratic approach to a more human approach. Together with the shift in the geographical production site, a movement that can only be described as mass urbanization also took place. Humans as the “means of production” in terms of their strength and hands became important for the production process and to eventually deliver goods.

During the sixties Douglas McGregor challenged the scientific approach to management with its imbedded wisdom of bureaucracy.

McGregor proposed that workers could be intrinsically motivated by interesting work and entrusted to manage and direct their own behavior. This approach was seen as the “soft” side of management with “real” firms seeking financial returns and efficiencies through specified systems and procedures. Since this was a period of significant economic expansion in the west these “new” and humane approaches to organization design were dismissed. It was not until the early 1980’s, when the western economies were facing severe competition from Asia, did the management literature refocus on the “soft” skills (Weymes, 2005).

The Management theories or rather the conceptual models of Organizational Management that foreshadowed the demise of bureaucracy, include such concepts as Theory X & Y to total quality management, the Baldrige Quality Awards, learning organizations and high performance organizations have all foreshadowed the demise of bureaucracy, the dismantling of interdepartmental boundaries, leadership throughout the organization, a cooperative and harmonious working environment based on a management style vested in shared values and mutual trust. The implication of these approaches is that employees are not to be controlled by rigid performance criteria but their skills and knowledge should be harnessed to allow an organization to achieve its goals (Weymes, 2005).

Yet, in spite of all the changes, the tenets of alienation remain. The organization in a global economy has become an unstable place for workers; powerlessness remains and the loss of meaning continues even under the “new philosophies” of organization and organization theory and management.

The organizational dilemma or challenge be simply stated as the challenge to create an environment where trust, creativity and innovation flourish yet meeting the performance criteria specified by the stakeholders. The challenge is to find a philosophy that unites the two extremities of the dilemma. Marx favoured the

replacement of the capitalist society by a regime vested in humaneness, while the process of bureaucracy favoured rigid rules and regulations (Weymes 2005).

A changing world view has created an uncertain world where uncertain organizations survive, creating uncertain people that have lost their sense of direction and have become strangers to their own worlds.

In such instances it is inevitable that a search for meaning will attract attention, and furthermore that publications such as these will inevitably address the construct of meaning and meaningfulness in life and work. In a study presented to the European Corporate Sustainability Framework (ECSF) and discussed in a paper entitled “The Social Dimension of Organizations: Recent experiences with Great Place to Work Assessment Practices” by Marcel van Marrewijk (2004) the following comments are made:

The general trends...are increasing inclusiveness and connectedness...The mere act of transcending inadequate approaches demonstrates the trend towards inclusiveness, since innovative ways are build on existing foundations and thus include them. Inclusiveness is also manifested in the sequence of concepts of Corporate Sustainability and Corporate Responsibility (van Marrewijk, 2003). These concepts reflect the transition between organizations that where first oriented towards a single scale of reference – most often profits – and then to a multiple scale, including the organizations’ impact on social and environmental aspects (triple bottom line).

In essence the boundaries of the organization and those of the individual within the organization should overlap in accordance with those dimensions both from the individual’s as well as from the organization’s perspective, that collude to conceptually define the **meaningful workplace**, Van Marrewijk (2004) expresses this train of thought by means of a graphic which is reproduced below as Figure 3.3. It is however necessary to also balance an idealistic type of view with the reality of human existence. If a social accord and the overlap of boundaries with an between individuals and employers were possible we would have lived in a perfect world.

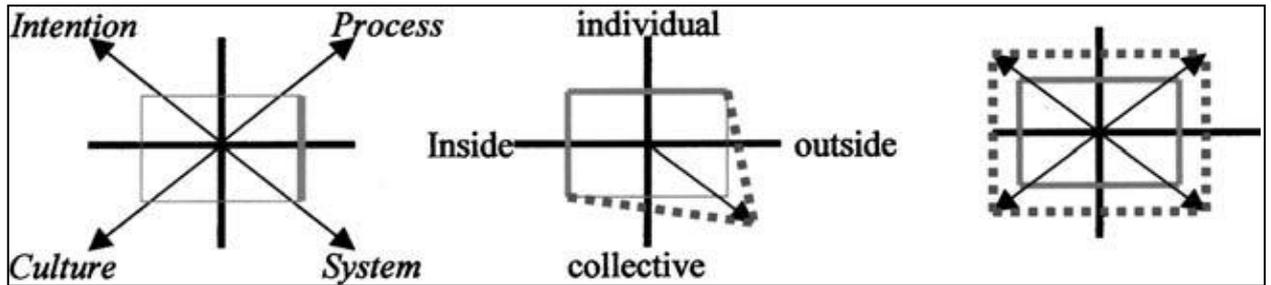


Figure 3.3: The technical and the human worlds meet

(Van Marrewijk 2004)

This approach will in my view become more applicable, visible and more important in the world of organizations, be it in the fields of Organization Theory, Management Science and Organization Behaviour. It is compatible according to van Marrewijk with “Clare W. Graves’ Emerging, Cyclical Levels of Existence Theory (1976), or Spiral Dynamics (1996) as his successors, Cowan and Beck, have labelled it” (Van Marrewijk, 2004).

According to the theory of Cyclical Levels of Existence individuals as well as institutions and societies evolve through natural sequences of developments. Each phase type development transcends and includes the previous phase. Each level contains or encompasses a consistent arrangement of sub systems such as “a worldview, a value system, a belief structure and organizing principles, reflecting the four corners of reality”. These subsystems enable the individual and societies’ institutions to cope with life conditions and being human in a certain time-space capsule. The human condition and the challenges pertaining to this consist of “historical Times, geographical Place, existential Problems and societal Circumstances” (Van Marrewijk, 2004.).

The quest for meaning at work is an existential problem that is an integral part of the human condition and thus needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency lest the whole societal system implodes as a result of a lack of substructures such as meaning, values, moral, ethics and the likes. The construct: **Meaningful workplace** is new and thus emerging in terms of the word string as such; the dimensions that constitute the construct are however not entirely new or novice. What is “new” in terms of the construct: **Meaningful workplace** is the reciprocal dynamism, the

imbedded values and the psychological dynamics. The current researcher is of the opinion that the search for meaning has and will remain part of the dynamic of the human condition. What seems to be different is the way in which this search has now begun to permeate the workplace.

Referring to his own work, Chalofsky (2010, p. xiii) makes the following statement that can be seen as justification for the emergence and possible sustainability of the particular construct:

There are books on the market that relate to meaningful work and workplaces in such subject area as personal change, career development, motivation, trust, work-life balance, best organizations to work for, and so on. But none of them offer a substantive account of what constitutes a **meaningful workplace**, so that individuals can be educated as to what goes into finding or creating fulfilling work and managers and consultants can understand what it takes to create and sustain a **meaningful workplace**.

Following this queue, attention will now be turned towards the emergence of the construct in broader literature. However prior to embarking on the quest to discover the direct or indirect references or allusions to the construct: **Meaningful workplace**, an important guideline for the management of information must be provided. The following graphic presents plausible structure within which the information can be positioned towards a conceptual and integrated model for the **meaningful workplace**.

In this study singular and linear cause-and-effect is not an option. The active and operational premise is that the meeting between the individual's world (the *me*-world) and the world of the organizational world (the *it*-world) creates the conditions for the experience of meaningfulness in a complex of stimuli interactions. The experience of meaningfulness as far as the workplace is concerned is created through the interaction between individual and organization. The structure as presented below fulfils the requirement of providing a systemic and interactive

approach towards managing information that complies with the premise as articulated in the first part of this paragraph.

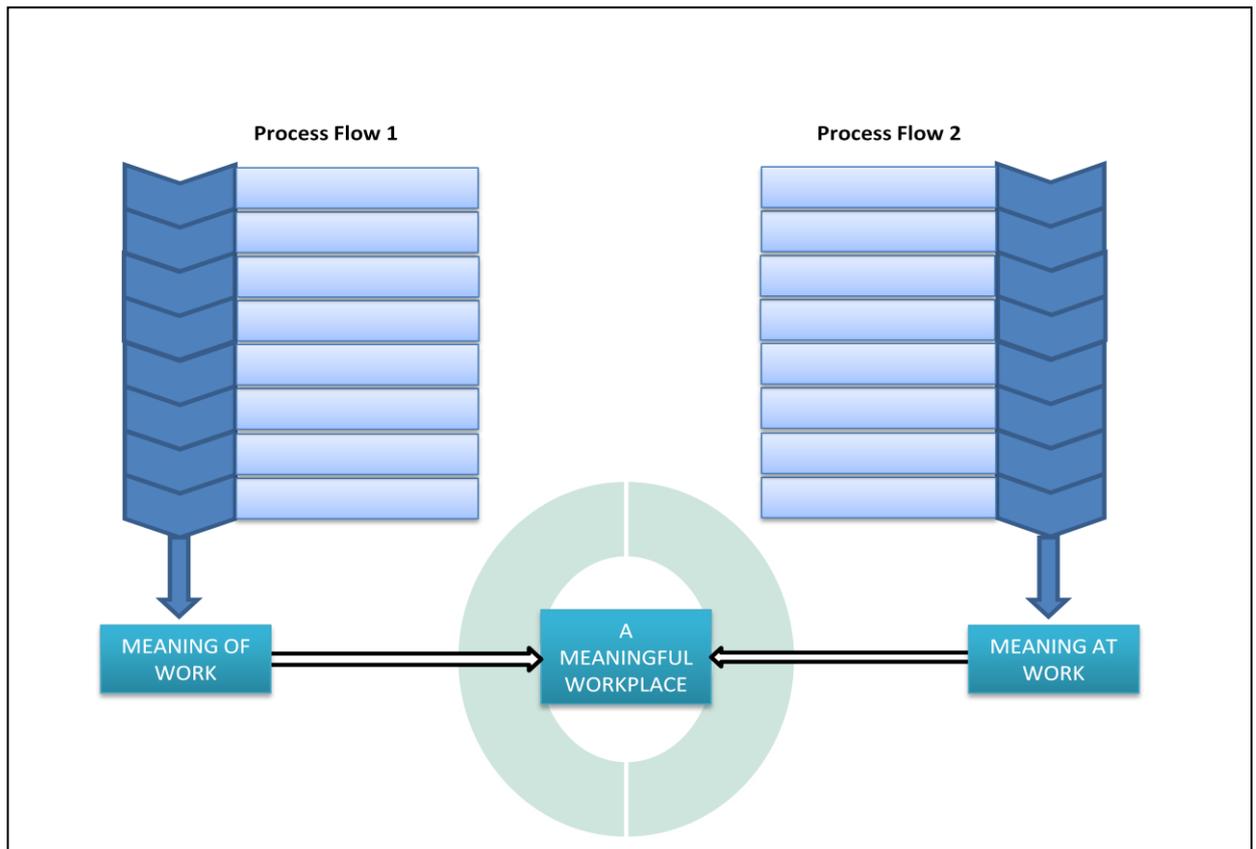


Figure 3.4: Proposed structure towards an integrated conceptual model for a Meaningful workplace

3.5 PROCESS FLOW 1:- MEANINGFUL WORK AS A MACRO CONSTITUTIVE DIMENSION OF THE CONSTRUCT: A MEANINGFUL WORKPLACE

The discussion regarding the meaning of work will commence with a short overview of the moral philosophy of Immanuel Kant for the sake of providing some evidence that the issue which is of concern herein has a history and that this history is not limited to the management sciences or psychology only. This is followed by an overview of the work that the MOW Project Team (1987) had done to establish a framework for the discussion of the meaning of work, which in turn is followed by an overview of research that was conducted on the specific topic of the MOW in

psychological literature. In the bigger scheme of the field of study tremendous energy has been invested to determine the *meaning of work*.

At the outset it must be stated (in complete concurrence with Nelson and Quick 2000, p. 466) that the “meaning of work differs from person to person, and from culture to culture. In an increasing global workplace it is important to understand and appreciate differences among individuals and between cultures with regard to the meaning of work.”

Does this admittance imply that there are no common trends or threads of shared meaning across work environments and across cultures?

The following paragraphs will explore this question (by implication) and present an answer which, in terms of the chosen approach will provide a framework for an applicable work model that could be described as a **meaningful workplace**.

Prior to embarking on the discussion regarding the meaning of work, it is however necessary to pass a few remarks regarding the concept work. Work is a purposeful activity. The world, in which different generations live, was and is created through the purposeful activity that is called work, based on collaborative efforts to enhance our world. Once the purposeful and collaborative efforts were or are initiated, the momentum carries on after the passing of that generation. A next generation continues with the work to enhance the world in which humans live. Our world is ever evolving through the interaction of a myriad of working activities that are continuously being strung together. Humans transform the world according to their requirements. Yet, the affluence has exerted its cost in terms of “...distant impersonal and detached social relations that characterize many contemporary organizations” (Collinson 1992, p. 2).

“The meaning of work” as such seems to be a construct to which variable constitutive elements can be ascribed and the following paragraphs and sub paragraphs identify the constituent elements. Only after this confluence has taken place, can the construct “meaningful work” be imbedded into a context which can be described as a **meaningful workplace**. This would seem a round-about way to

achieve the main objective of the study, which it is, but is preferred as it is chosen for the systematic basis and body of knowledge upon which can be drawn.

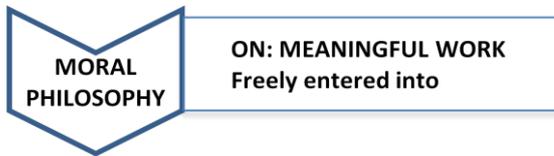
3.5.1 Moral philosophy and meaningful work



The MOW is not a new or modern phenomenon which presented itself to management researchers and scholars only in recent years. As early as the 18th century Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) presented what Bowie (1998) refers to as a “...Theory of Meaningful Work” (1998, p. 1.). This “theory” must be viewed with the context of Kant’s moral philosophy. (Refer also Pratt and Ashworth 2003)

Against the background of the working conditions in Western Europe during the 17th and 18th centuries, Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) presented a moral philosophy regarding the humanity of man, based on reason and nature, resulting in a definition of the concept *meaningful work*. Bowie (1998) bases the definition of meaningful work on Kant’s “...explicit writings...the focal point are the second formulation of the categorical imperative which says that one should always treat the humanity in a person as an end and never as a means merely” (p. 1083). According to Bowie, a reading of Kant’s ethical works would enable one to formulate the following characteristics of meaningful work. A summary of Kant’s six postulates are given below and briefly discussed against the background of working and living conditions during the 17th and 18th centuries AD. Let us first however turn to the working conditions against which Kant formulated his moral philosophy on the meaning of work. .

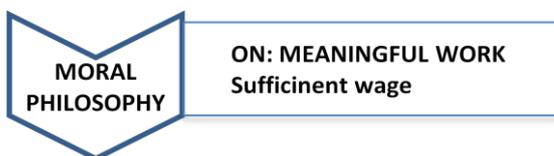
3.5.1.1 Meaningful work is work that is freely entered into.



This characteristic is derived from Kant's discussion and characterisation of freedom. Freedom can be defined from two different perspectives *negative freedom and positive freedom*. Negative freedom is the freedom that we have to act in an independent manner and not to be coerced or forced or our choices determined by external or alien forces. This freedom is what distinguishes us from animals. The meaningfulness of all actions is dependent thereon that they be negatively free. The choice of work falls into this category. It must be freely entered into and thus be negatively free.

Negative freedom is however not the only dimension of Kant's notion of freedom. Negative freedom is complemented by positive freedom which can best be described as the freedom or the autonomy of a person has to be a law unto her. Hill (1992 in Bowie 1998:1085.), states that "A person is a law to himself...if he adopts principles for himself and regards himself bound by them and if he was not caused or even motivated to adopt them by any contingent circumstances".

3.5.1.2 Meaningful work provides a wage sufficient for physical welfare and the exercise of autonomy and independence.



According to Bowie (1998, pp. 1083-1092) Kant firstly argues that work is necessary for the "self-hood"-development of the individual. Self-hood in this sense is understood as the (1998, p. 1084). "*Without occupation man cannot live happily*" (Kant: *Lectures on ethics, 1775; in Bowie 1998, p. 1084.*) Kant endorses wealth as the mechanism that brings pleasure to man because in that pleasure it contributes to self-respect because it provides independence. Work thus has value (i.e. meaning) in as far as it provides one with an opportunity to make money to provide for one's needs and pleasure and thus

independence.

The contribution of capitalism could be construed as being to provide work that would enhance the self-respect of the individual worker. A system (or remuneration practices) that does not provide for the enhanced self respect for the individual is therefore morally flawed. Kant endorses thrift – “Therefore become thrifty so you do not become destitute”. (*Kant: Metaphysical principles of virtue, Ethical Philosophy, 1797*, as quoted by Bowie (1998, p. 1084).

Work must furthermore support the dignity of human beings as moral agents.

And since for Kant autonomy and rationality are necessary for moral agency the work relationship must support the autonomy and rationality of human beings. Work that deadens autonomy or that undermines rationality is immoral (Bowie, 1998, p. 1085).

Thus the foundation of the two basic conditions for meaningful work is laid down. (a) It must comply with the requirement to enhance the independence of the individual and (b) it must support the autonomy and rationality of employees.

To the extent that an organization provides (jobs) work that presents sufficient wealth, they contribute to the independence and thus the self respect of a person (Bowie 1998, p. 1084). Furthermore, to the extent that the humanity of employees is treated as an end not as a *means*, *the organization can be considered to be moral*. Should an organization choose to treat the humanity of employees as an end and not as a means, then the self respect of employees should be honoured as well. To honour employees’ self respect, the employee should have a measure of independence and autonomy as well as the ability to satisfy some of her desires. In an economic system people satisfy their desires and achieve and demonstrate their independence to satisfy these desires by using their wages as buying power. Employees should thus be paid a living wage – a wage that is sufficient to provide a measure of independence and to satisfy a measure of their desires. This characteristic also has implications for management practice.

3.5.1.3 Meaningful work enable(s) the worker to develop her rational capacities.



Meaningful work requires the development of the rational capabilities of the human being. Rational capacity is equated with humanity as Bowie states (1998, p. 1086): “Kant equates humanity with our capacity for rational thought.” Rationality however is by no means the only dimension that constitutes humanity. Hill (1992, in Bowie, 1998, p. 1086) argues “...that humanity includes the following capacities:

The capacity and disposition to act on the basis of reason;

The capacity to act on the principles of prudence and efficiency (hypothetical imperatives) so long as these hypothetical imperatives are not constrained by categorical imperatives;

The power to set any end whatsoever which includes the ability to see future consequences, adopt long range goals, resist immediate temptation, and even to commit oneself to ends for which one has no sensuous desire;

The capacity to accept categorical imperatives;

Some ability to understand the world and to reason abstractly.

It is a moral requirement therefore to treat people in ways that respect their humanity and the rational capabilities – this is what is meant by treating humanity as an end in itself. The respect for humanity provides the background and impetus for this condition of meaningful work – meaningful work should facilitate the development of the individuals’ rationality.

This is however not the end of the line for the reasoning regarding humanity. Bowie (1998, p. 1086) refers to other contemporary commentators of Kant’s work who eventually base further reasoning of treating humanity as an end on the *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*. A person is obliged to develop your own

talents and give what is possible to the needy. Being indifferent to a person does not per se imply that you are respecting their humanity. Indifference does not treat the humanity of another person as an end in itself. A person has both the obligation of perfection towards yourself as well as the duty to promote the happiness of others. The promotion of the happiness of others implies a concern for the physical welfare and moral wellbeing of others. Herein lies “additional evidence for the claim that meaningful work requires a living wage that provides independence and happiness...” and thus the “...development of moral powers” (Bowie, 1998, p. 1086).

If one were to accept this type of reasoning regarding the welfare and wellbeing of others and the vindication of that for a sufficient wage so that the individual can comply with his duty of perfection to himself and the duty towards others, then the question regarding the practice of Corporate Social Investment is immediately forced into the field of vision. To what extent should organizations as organizations be involved and how is this vindicated and in which manner should employees be involved in such acts?

3.5.1.4 Meaningful work supports the moral development of employees.



The issue regarding moral development has been addressed in various contexts above and therefore a separate discussion will not be presented. It is sufficient to follow the trend of reasoning and to assert or reject this characteristic of meaningful work. In this study this postulate is accepted as one of the key characteristics of meaningful work.

3.5.1.5 Meaningful work is not paternalistic: It does not interfere with the worker's conception of how she wishes to obtain happiness.



Paternalism stands in direct opposition to and interferes on a direct plane with the freedom of the individual (negative as well as positive freedom). The individual must have the freedom to choose and to act voluntary even in a work setting. This does not imply anarchy and chaos, but it does imply the measure of freedom to co-create and collaboratively establish an efficient work setting.

The avoidance of paternalism in management practice, for instance, is easier said than done. From a Kantian perspective it involves a tension between love and respect. We should be concerned, for instance, with the activities another person follows in order to be happy. This is the love dimension. However one's own views regarding activities that are supposed to make one happy cannot be imposed on another individual. This is the respect dimension.

The mentioned characteristics or postulates regarding meaningful work are valuable and applicable, not only within their own framework and the time of their origin, but also in a more contemporary time frame and modern organizational context. It is furthermore interesting to note that certain principles emanating from the quality movement in the United States (Pfeiffer 1994 in Bowie, 1998, p. 1088) provided certain principles that pertain to the construct meaningful work. "...an obligation to provide meaningful work is not utopian...Pfeiffer...has argued that firms can gain a competitive advantage if they focus on their employees". Pfeiffer identifies sixteen management practices, which are presented in Table 3.3 below. Column one notes the management practices by Pfeiffer (as presented by Bowie) while column 2 refers to the management implications of the moral principles that Kant has laid down. Column 3 indicates the link with the 16 management principles as laid down by Pfeiffer (in Bowie, 1999) In some cases more than one of the Kantian postulates can be matched with the management practices presented by Pfeiffer, whilst in certain cases only one match seems possible, whilst in other instances no match

seems obvious and therefore the management practices do not seem to be aligned with any of the Kantian postulates. Column 4 lists the labels that Chalofsky and/or Terez use thereby indicating the link between the different inputs in respect of meaningful work, which is seen as a macro dimension of the **meaningful workplace**.

In summary it could be said that a philosophical perspective, although based on a chosen perspective, is informative regarding the construct meaningful work. A philosophical perspective however is not the only input that must be noted in the expansion of theory. What is however interesting and well worth noting is the fact that Immanuel Kant, as early as the 18th century addressed the matter of meaningful work as a method and impetus towards the practical in loco acknowledgement and sustained perspective of the humanity, dignity and the development of the rationality and moral development of workers.

The 5 Kantian postulates, as stand-alone moral philosophical issues, bear sufficient weight as good practice and correspond to the duty of employers towards their employees. The fact that it seems possible to match these postulates with principles that emanate from the quality movement of the 80's and 90's also bear testimony to the fact that philosophy is not merely philosophy (specifically in this case), but that the moral philosophy from which the meaningful work postulates are derived have a practical grounding based in life itself.

Table 3.3: Alignment: - Kantian principles on meaningful work 16 management practices for a meaningful workplace

Kant's 5 postulates for meaningful work	Management implications based on Kant's Moral Philosophy	Pfeiffer: 16 management practices (as quoted by Bowie 1998) relevant to creating meaningful work	Corresponding labels for Meaningful Work as used by Chalofsky and Terez
1. Meaningful Work Is work that is freely entered into	Employers must respect the freedom (liberty) of the employee to freely choose her work and have freedom on the job as well. This must however be balanced in the sense that freedom in work or on the job does not imply the	Principle 1: Employment security Principle 2: Selectivity in recruiting Principle 5: Employee ownership	▪ Autonomy and empowerment (Chalofsky)

Kant's 5 postulates for meaningful work	Management implications based on Kant's Moral Philosophy	Pfeiffer: 16 management practices (as quoted by Bowie 1998) relevant to creating meaningful work	Corresponding labels for Meaningful Work as used by Chalofsky and Terez
	freedom to negate but the freedom to design the mental process and implement such a process to achieve the desired outcome	Principle 14: A long term perspective	
2. Meaningful Work provides a wage sufficient for physical welfare and the exercise of autonomy and independence	Management practice must provide employees with a living wage and with security to the extent that employees can pursue happiness based on their desires and to exercise their autonomy thus preserving their dignity	Principle 3: High wages Principle 4: Incentive pay Principle 12: Wage compression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Autonomy (Chalofsky) ▪ Worth (Terez)
3. Meaningful work enable(s) the worker to develop her rational capacities	Management practice must strengthen the rational capacities of employees through the recognition of their individual humanity as an end in it self and not as a means towards another, covert end, and not by creating indifference through management processes, policies and procedures	Principle 9: Training and skill development Principle 10: Cross utilization and cross training Principle 13: Promotion from within Principle 15: The measurement of practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fulfilling personal purpose (Chalofsky) ▪ Mastering performance (Chalofsky) ▪ Self control (Chalofsky and Terez)
4. Meaningful work supports the moral development of employees	Management practice must demonstrate a concern for the physical and emotional welfare of employees and not implement any practice that will impede their moral development. This further implies the practice of ethical and moral behaviour should permeate the organization/work place from the top down as an indication of a collective moral	Principle 8: Teams and job redesign Principle 11: Symbolic egalitarianism Principle 16: An overarching philosophy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stewardship (Chalofsky) ▪ Commitment to the growth of people (Chalofsky) ▪ Building community (Chalofsky) ▪ Values (Chalofsky and Terez)

Kant's 5 postulates for meaningful work	Management implications based on Kant's Moral Philosophy	Pfeiffer: 16 management practices (as quoted by Bowie 1998) relevant to creating meaningful work	Corresponding labels for Meaningful Work as used by Chalofsky and Terez
	development drive		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Integrated self(Chalofsky)
5. Meaningful work is not paternalistic in the sense of interfering with the worker's conception of how she wishes to obtain happiness	Management practice must provide sufficient opportunity for employees to pursue their individual conceptions of happiness based on their own desires	Principle 6: Information sharing Principle 7: Participation and empowerment Principle 11: Symbolic egalitarianism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ownership (Terez) ▪ Dialogue (Terez) ▪ Creating community and oneness (Terez)and Chalofsky) ▪ (Relationship building (Terez)

The so-called management principles as listed by Pfeiffer (in Bowie 1998) as well as the labels that Chalofsky and Terez use to refer to the **meaningful workplace** can, as indicated in Table 3.3, be brought into a certain relationship with the moral philosophy on meaningful work as articulated by Kant. By way of an abductive reasoning process it can be stated that the Kantian postulates conceptually enhance the theory underlying the construct. Differently stated, moral philosophy resonates with the Meaningful Work Model as proposed by Chalofsky and with the discussion by Terez to the extent that the latter two authors overlap in terms of their perspectives on a **meaningful workplace**. It has been stated previously that the construct is constituted by two macro dimensions. These are distinguished as *Meaning of Work* or *Meaningful Work* and *Meaning at Work*. Together they constitute the **meaningful workplace**. The first macro dimension (*Meaningful Work*) is currently under discussion and the first theme in this discussion is the moral philosophy of Immanuel Kant. Moral philosophy is herewith absorbed as an extension and enrichment of the Meaningful Work Model as proposed by Chalofsky, thereby contributing to **meaningful workplace** as an emerging construct.

Figure 3.4 (following page) provides substance to the discussion and should be interpreted as follows (this serves for all similar graphics that follow the same pattern in the rest of this chapter):

The top part of Figure 3.4 (positioned on the top left hand side of the page) summarises the Moral Philosophy of Immanuel Kant on meaningful work, in terms of the dimensions that have been distinguished. The arrows to the right of the identified dimensions indicate the different elements that constitute the particular dimension.

The portion of Figure 3.5 that is positioned on the lower half of the page and to the right presents a summary of the Meaningful Work Model (Chalofsky, 2010) with its constitutive dimensions and the arrows pointing to the elements that constitute the dimensions, in as far as they are relevant to the towards moral philosophy. The double pointed arrow indicates the observation that the two models resonate with each other. This can also be stated differently: The Meaningful Work Model as proposed by Chalofsky uses labels that are related to the moral philosophical postulates, and can thus be viewed as indirectly also representing the word labels and the content that are articulated by the philosophical language that is used. Bringing the two models together actually adds to the understanding of the **meaningful workplace** as construct.

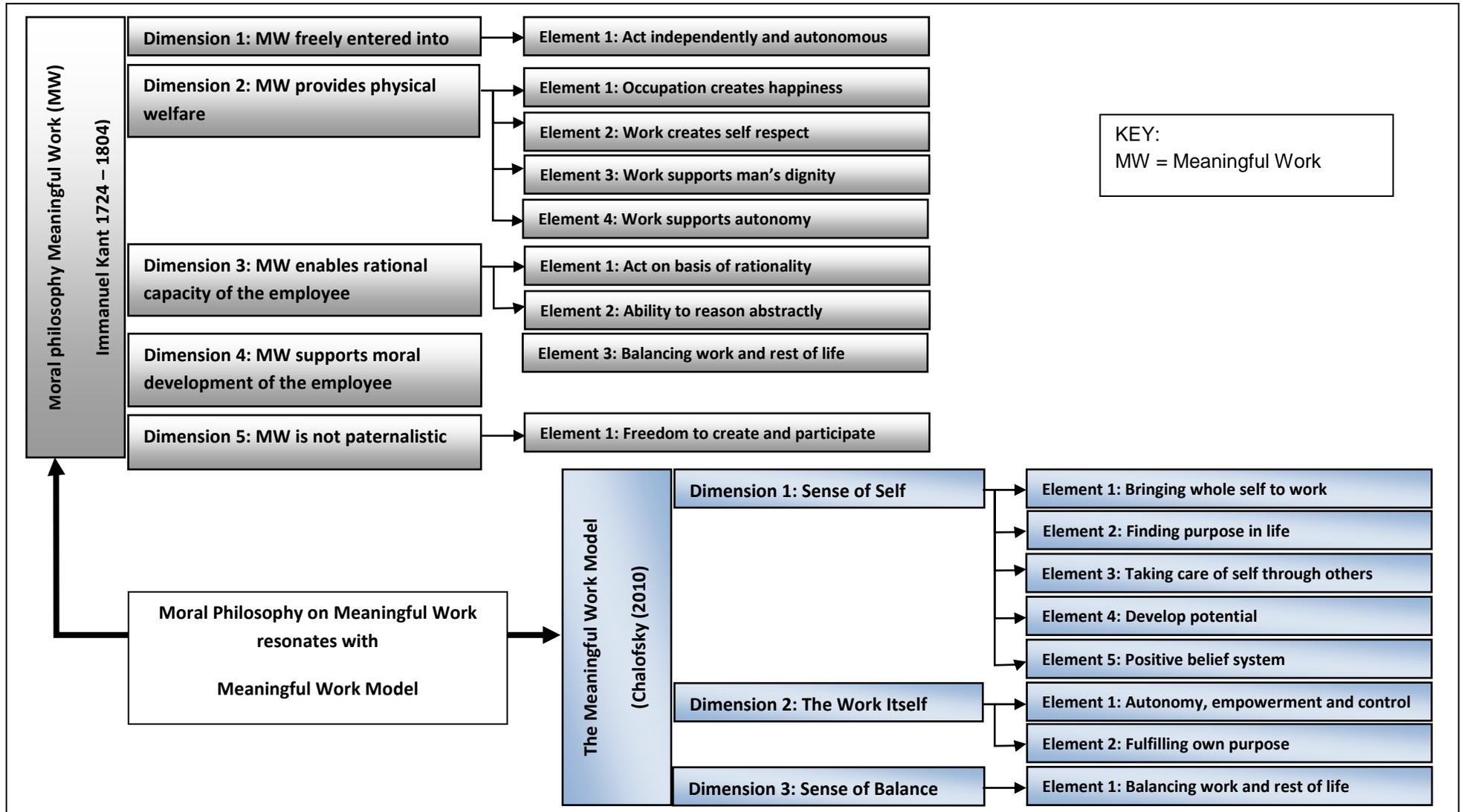
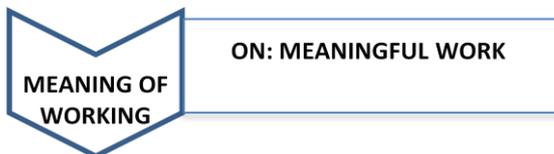


Figure 3.4: Moral philosophy on meaningful work (Kant, 1724-1804) resonating with the meaningful work model of Chalofsky (2010):

Conceptually speaking all of the management principles put forward by Pfeiffer support the broad notion of the Kantian postulates on meaningful work (and vice-versa) in as much as they: provide the mechanism for independence and autonomy; vindicate the case for a good wage; promote the impetus for the development of the rational capabilities of employees; remove (or do not allow for) the factors that would interfere with the moral development of employees; represent a framework for the acknowledgement and respect of the humanity and dignity of the employee. These notions are also read into or out of the proposed model by Chalofsky.

3.5.2 The meaning of working



Work occupies a central role in the life of individuals and society. Working and the outcomes that are achieved is considered to be a central aspect of life. It is at the same time an important catalyst for the formation of self-esteem, identification and self-image whilst at the same time being a necessity for fulfilling basic needs. (MOW—International Research Team 1987, in Sharabi and Harpaz 2007). This fact as Sharabi and Harpaz correctly assert, has drawn attention to the relationship between individuals and their work. In general terms research has focussed on the meanings that work has for the individual (MOW—International Research Team 1987; Harpaz 1990).

The MOW International Project team gathered data in 8 countries through professional interviewers and collected this data from a varied field of subjects, which include “(a) professionals (teachers, engineers, all professional, technical and other related workers); (b) administrative and management; (c) clerical and related workers; (d) services (sales workers, wholesale/retail trade, catering and lodging services, and other services); (e) production (construction, equipment operators, tool-makers, machine-tool operators, blacksmiths, spinners, weavers, etc., agriculture, and other production-related workers) (Harpaz 1990).

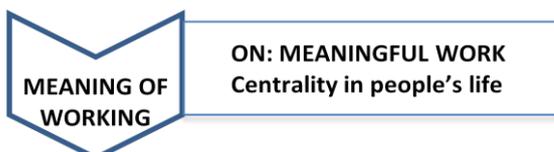
The MOW team in 1987 and others (Sverko, 1999; Ross, Schwartz and Surkiss 1999; Magdof 1982; Morse and Weiss 1955) all contributed to an understanding of the construct. The MOW International research team states that a “Well articulated theory of the meaning of working is not available” (MOW 1987), thus creating a heuristic model “containing variable sets (of variables) and relationships between variables which were considered of primary importance”. (See also Basini and Buckley 1997)

The MOW (1987) project team conceptualized the meaning of work on multiple dimensions i.e.: – Work centrality in people’s lives; Work role identification; Valued working outcomes; Work goals; and Societal norms about working (Basini & Buckley 1997).

Various findings show that people who have higher work centrality become more involved in their work. This manifests itself in greater willingness to work longer hours (MOW—International Research Team 1987; Hirschfeld and Field 2000; Snir and Harpaz 2002), a higher level of performance (Mannheim et al. 1997), job involvement and commitment to the organization (Diefendorff et al. 2002; Hirschfeld and Field 2000), all quoted by Sharabi and Harpaz (2007, p. 96).

Stability or instability regarding an individuals’ investment in work based on work centrality may, on a collective level even have a negative or positive impact on a society’s economic growth (Child, 1981 and Weber, 1958) in Sharabi and Harpaz (2007).

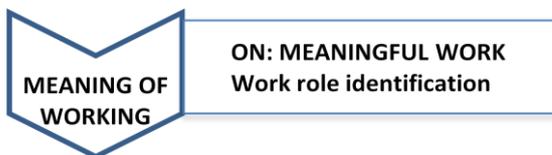
3.5.2.1 Centrality in people’s lives



This concept represents the measure based on cognitions and affects the degree of general importance that work has in the life of an individual at any given time. Two separate theoretical components of the work centrality concept have been identified. These are referred to as i) the belief/value

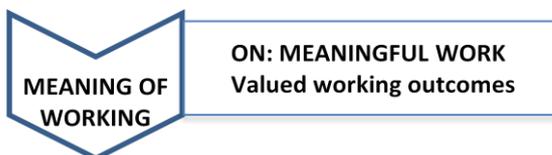
component and ii) the decision orientation component (Basini and Buckley, 1997). The belief/value component of work centrality has to do with the level of identification one has with the work role, and the affective commitment towards work. The decision orientation determines life choice and behaviour decisions associated with these choices in terms of their relative ranking in life.

3.5.2.2 Work role identification



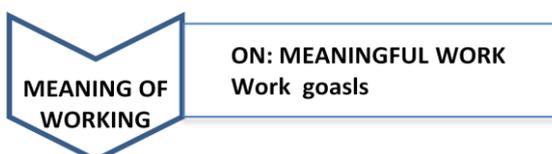
This variable refers to the “extent to which an individual defines and identifies working in terms of various roles such as task role, product or service role, and occupational /professional role” (MOW 1987:57).

3.5.2.3 Valued working outcomes



This variable refers to the “importance evaluations which are defined to include what the person knows about each of the outcomes and the preference relationship among outcomes” (MOW 1987 in Basini and Buckley, 1997)

3.5.2.4 Work goals.



In tandem with working outcomes, another domain which gives insight into what is important to individuals in their working lives, is the absolute and relative importance of work related goals. The relevant

literature on the operationalisation of work goals covers such issues as job satisfaction, work values, and incentive preference (Basini and Buckley, 1997).

3.5.2.5 Societal norms about working



In a certain sense working complies with the societal norm of wherein which working is viewed as individual or collective obligation. “A second normative orientation might be considered the compliment of the obligation norm in that it reflects social standards regarding the rights and entitlements of the working individual” (Basini and Buckley, 1997).

The MOW Research Team’s work can be, following Basini and Buckley (1997) represented as in the following graphic. (Figure 3.5)

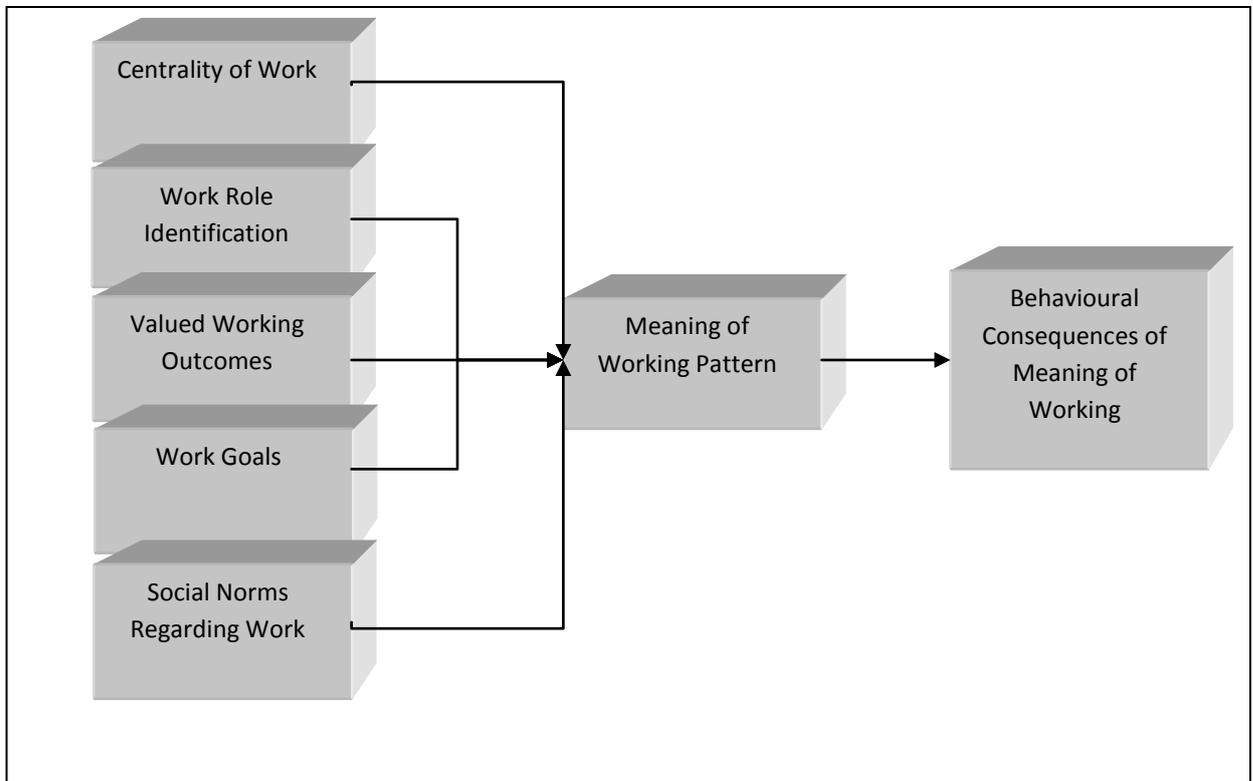


Figure 3.5: Meaning of working: heuristic model (Basini and Buckley 1997)

Seen in the context of the above reflection on the MOW project team, it seems as if work in itself can be construed as a value, (or it at least constitutes a central interest) while the different variables each in their own right, also constitute certain values.

The above categories echo social, extrinsic and intrinsic value types, but are silent when it comes to self-transcendence as a value type. Ross et al (1999, p. 64-69) validated the theoretical position that they proposed, i.e. that a fourth value type, referred to as self-transcendence (as a value type), should be added to the structure and typology of the meaning of work. They conclude that the two groups they had worked with rated self-transcendence values most important whilst openness to changes values were rated second, self enhancement values were rated third important and conservation type values were rated lowest. Work as such was rated as a very important value. Whichever way the research results go, it is abundantly clear that work as an activity is central to the life activities and events that an individual experiences. Work, as a matter of fact, stands out as “value” in its own right because of the different values that are supported by contributing in work activities.

The research by the Meaning of Work Project Team resonates with the Meaningful Work Model by Chalofsky. There are however also dimensions from the MOW Project Team that also resonate with the Meaning at Work discussion by Chalofsky such as for instance the dimension that is labelled “Societal norms”. Societal norms can be aligned with the discussion by Chalofsky on “Social Responsibility as Part of a Values-Based Culture” (2010, Chapter 7, p. 121). The fact that the concepts in broader literature are not as concise as the discussions by Chalofsky and Terez, indicates that the construct: A **meaningful workplace** is inherently present although not articulated in earlier literature and research

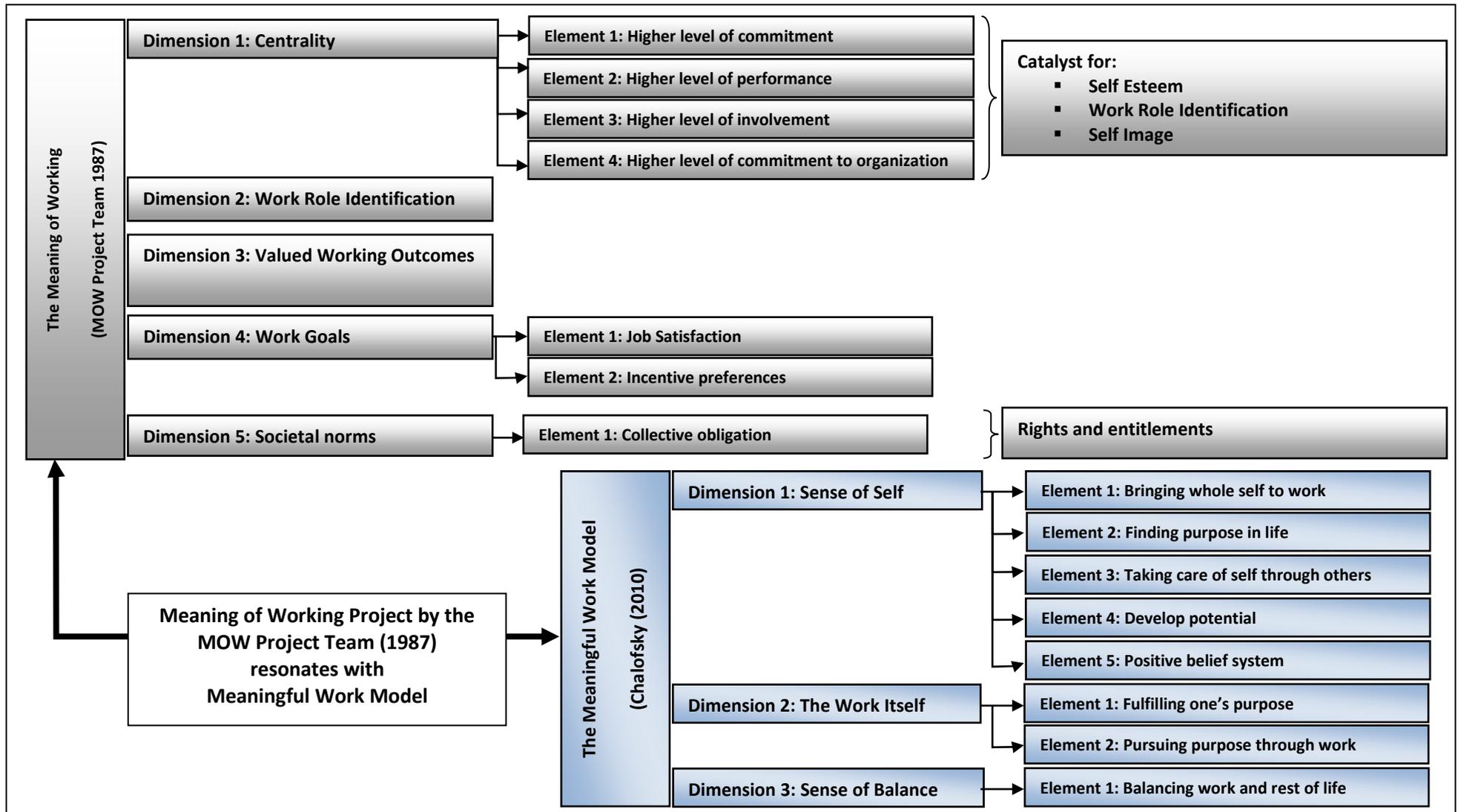
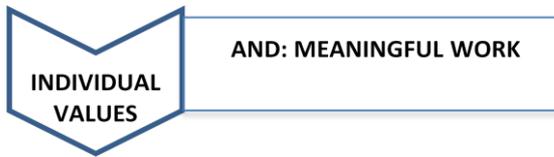


Figure 3.6: Meaning of working (Work as a value)

(Based on the MOW Project Team 1987)

3.5.3 Individual values, and the meaning of work (Ross et. Al. 1999)



Basini and Buckley (1996) conducted research in the so called “third sector” (=voluntary sector) compared with the public sector regarding the strength of certain dimensions of work. These dimensions correspond to the dimensions that the MOW project team identified as important dimensions in the discovery of the meaning of work. Compared to responses of individuals in the private sector there are significant differences. The differences are tabulated below and based on Basini and Buckley’s discussion of results.

Table 3.4: Comparison of MOW dimensions between the public and third sectors in Ireland

MOW dimensions	The third sector	The public sector
Centrality of work	Much more central	Less so than in the third sector
Work role identification	Much higher personal identification with work role	Less inclined to a high level of work role identification
Valued working outcomes and work goals	Possess a much higher personal identification with the goals of their organizations Salary is important but not at a high level of importance Higher importance on seeing the outcomes of work as useful and serving society	Less inclined to possess a personal and/or high level of identification with the goal of the organization Salary is significantly more important This dimension is much lower in the private sector

(Basini and Buckley 1997)

Values have been recognized as one of the most important determinants of individual behaviour, which explains the studies that have been conducted in this regard such as for instance; Morris, 2011; Blood, 1969; Furnham, 1990; Hui, 1992.

Ross and others (1999) endeavoured to determine in which ways individual value priorities relate to attitudes, behaviour and roles and on the other hand how work values and other aspects of work relate to basic individual values. It is an attempt to determine the interconnectedness of work value and personal values.

A basic theory of individual values according to Schwartz ,1994 as quoted in Ross and others (1999, p. 51) can be construed according to the structure as presented in Table 3.5 below. A theory of basic human values...

”specifies 10 motivationally distinct types of values that are postulated to be recognised by members of most societies and to encompass the different values that guide them” (Ross et al, 1999, p. 51).

The ten values represent, or are imbedded in a typology and eventually boil down to responses on three universal requirements with which individuals and societies must cope (Ross et al, 1999). The ten values can be defined in terms of a central goal. Table 3.5 contains (based on Ross et al, 1999, p. 51 -52) the ten basic human/individual values with core definitions (columns 1 and 2) and the conceptually corresponding labels as used by Terez and Chalofsky (column 3)

Table 3.5: Basic human values: Core definitions from Ross et al. (1999).

(With corresponding alignment of labels as used by Chalofsky and Terez)

Basic values	Core definitions	Alignment with Chalofsky and Terez
Power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Social status and prestige, control or dominance over people and resources (social power, authority and wealth) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sense of self:- being in control (Chalofsky) ▪ The work itself: Autonomous, empowered, sense of control over environment (Chalofsky) ▪ People keys: Ownership (Terez)
Achievement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Personal success through demonstrating competence according to social standards (successful, capable, ambitious, influential) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The work itself: Mastering one’s performance (Chalofsky) ▪ Development keys: Challenge (Terez)

Basic values	Core definitions	Alignment with Chalofsky and Terez
Hedonism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pleasure and sensual gratification for oneself (pleasure, enjoying life) 	
Stimulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Excitement, novelty, and challenge in life (daring, a varied life an exciting life) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The work itself: seeking learning, challenge, creativity, growth (Chalofsky) ▪ Development keys Challenge (Terez)
Self-direction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Independent thought and action-choosing, creating exploring(creativity, freedom, independent curios, ▪ choosing own goals) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The work itself: Autonomous, empowered, sense of control (Chalofsky) ▪ Mission keys; Direction (Terez)
Universalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Understanding, appreciation, tolerance and protection for the welfare of all people and for nature (broadminded, ▪ wisdom, social justice, equality, a world at peace a world of beauty, unity with nature, protecting the environment) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sense of self: taking care of self and others (Chalofsky) ▪ Mission keys: Flexibility (Terez) ▪ Community keys: Oneness (Terez) ▪ People keys: Respect (Terez)
Benevolence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Preservation and enhancement of the welfare of people with whom one is in frequent personal contact (helpful, honest forgiving, loyal, responsible) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sense of self: taking care of self and others (Chalofsky) ▪ Mission keys: Flexibility (Terez) ▪ Community keys: Oneness (Terez) ▪ People keys: Respect (Terez) ▪ Community keys: Dialogue (Terez) ▪ Community keys: relationship building (Terez)
Tradition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Respect, commitment and acceptance of the customs and ideas that traditional culture or religion provides (humble, accepting my portion in life, devout, respect for tradition, moderate) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sense of self: Positive belief system (Chalofsky)
Conformity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Restraint of actions, inclinations and impulses likely to upset or harm others and violate social expectations or ▪ Norms (politeness, obedient, self-discipline, honouring parents and elders) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sense of balance: Balancing work and rest of life (Chalofsky) ▪ Me keys: Balance (Terez)

Basic values	Core definitions	Alignment with Chalofsky and Terez
Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Safety, harmony, stability of society, of relationships, and of self (family security, national security, social order, clean, reciprocation of favours) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sense of self: Taking care of self and others (Chalofsky) ▪ Sense of balance: Balancing work and rest of life (Chalofsky) ▪ Me keys: balance (Terez) ▪ Community keys: Oneness (Terez)

It could be argued that the corresponding labels from Chalofsky (2010) and Terez (2000) that are aligned with the basic human values as per Ross et al (1999), is arbitrary. However the achievement in this regard is more value adding than the arbitrariness of alignment. The alignment as presented is indicative of a conceptual footprint in respect of a **meaningful workplace**, although relatively young and emerging, in research literature. In this instance the relationship between value and the meaning of work has been pointed out. To recap what has been indicated is the following: There are two macro feeder streams for the construct **meaningful workplace** of which the Meaning of Work or Meaningful Work is being discussed at present. The second feeder stream Meaning at Work and the workplace as space will be discussed further on in the chapter.

Ross et al (1999) state certain values are mutually exclusive while others are mutually inclusive and supportive. The structure exposes the fact that some of these values are mutually inclusive and supportive whilst others seem to be mutually exclusive and contain potential conflict areas. For the sake of not misrepresenting Ross et al, their reasoning will be provided. (“That is, it specifies which values are compatible and mutually supportive, and which are opposed and likely to conflict with one another” Ross et al (1999, p. 51)). Key towards understanding the different value types and the dynamic interaction, is the assumption that there are psychological, practical, and social consequences, and that the pursuance of a certain value type may be in conflict with or supportive of another value type. This suggests, according to Ross et al (1999) that the dynamic relationship between different types of values may represent a universal set of relations between values.

The structure of personal human values in relation to higher order values, according to the research by Ross et al (1999), can be represented as in Figure 3.9. The graphic demonstrates the total value structure in two sets of higher order values on two bipolar dimensions. The higher order values encompass the basic human values in the four quadrants that are formed by the two axes.

On face value it would seem and Ross et al (1999) state categorically that certain values seem to support each other whilst other values seem to oppose and exclude certain other values. Although this might seem to be true on face value, an alternative possibility also presents itself, at least on a conceptual level, depending on the contextualisation of the individual values.

In isolation the counterforce of opposing values seems to be a reality, however, a different context might indicate otherwise. When contextualised differently the different values can be perceived as complementary. Although not necessary inclusive, the basic values at least provide a repertoire of values within a comprehensive value system as construed by the individual. An example of such a possibility in the work environment is the following:

The basic value of self direction within the quadrant of openness to change might seem to exclude and contradict the basic value conformity that is positioned in the quadrant that is labelled as conservation, thus creating the impression that these two values are opposing to each other. However, positioned in the context of and under the label of, for example “continuity” (of business and organization effectiveness), self direction as a value that is defined as (independent thought and action-choosing, creating exploring creativity, freedom, independent curios, choosing own goals) might complement the basic value of conformity as (restraint of actions, inclinations and impulses likely to upset or harm others and violate social expectations or conformation to norms such politeness, obedient, self-discipline, honouring parents and elders following organizational values such as honesty, achievement, quality, etc.) .

In this example the two values (seen by Ross et al as mutually exclusive and thus containing the potential for a possible conflict) can be seen to function complementary. The context in this case is the determining factor. The full

consequence of the perspective of Ross et al (1999) is therefore not accepted for the purpose of this study.

The choice here is to discard the typology of inclusive (supporting) and exclusive (rejecting) values as indicated. The value of the research of Ross et al (1999) as far as this study is concerned, is the identification of the basic human values to the extent that they further contribute to an understanding of the meaning of work or meaningful work as a contributory towards the conceptual enhancement of a the theoretical foundation of the construct: **Meaningful workplace**.

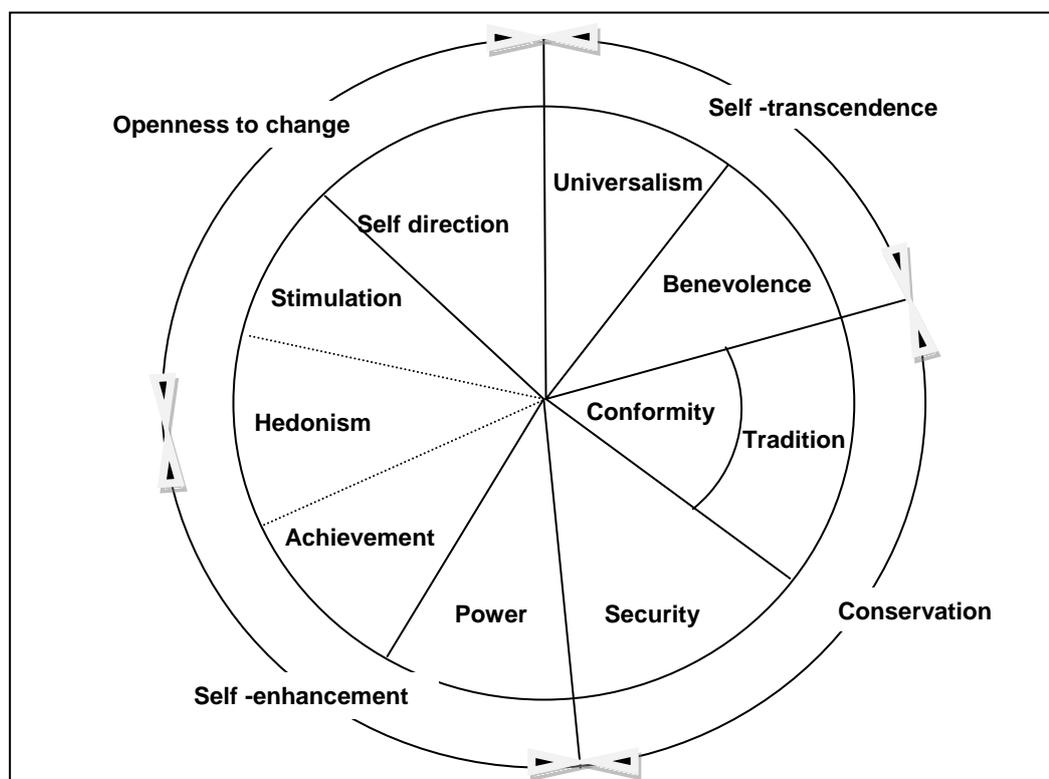


Figure 3.7: Basic values and work values

(Ross et al, 1999, p. 55)

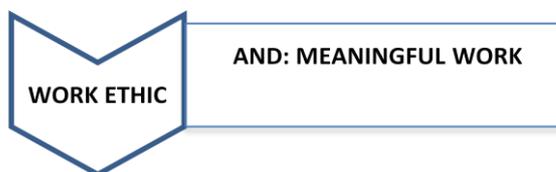
“Like basic values, work values are beliefs pertaining to desirable end-states (e.g. high pay) or behaviour (e.g. working with people)” (Ross et al., 1999, p. 54). Work goals would naturally be ordered according to their impact on outcomes or end-states. Work values are more specific because of the fact that they are defined within context. “Despite a plethora of different labels researchers appear to identify the same two

or three types of work values (1) intrinsic or self actualisation values (2) extrinsic or security or material values (3) social or relational values” and (4) “prestige work values, (Ross et al., 1999, p. 55).

What has this paragraph (and the previous two paragraphs) achieved in relation to the **Meaningful workplace?**

Considering the Meaning of Work Model by Chalofsky, the discussion in the three preceding paragraphs and the reasoning that was presented provides sufficient evidence of a broader interest in meaningful work, although the reference might not be direct. The content as discussed bears testimony to the perception that the “Meaningful Work Model” (Chalofsky, 2010) can be enhanced by adding additional dimensions that resonate with or are alluded to by the Meaningful Work Model.

3.5.4 Max Weber and Protestant (Work) Ethic (PWE)



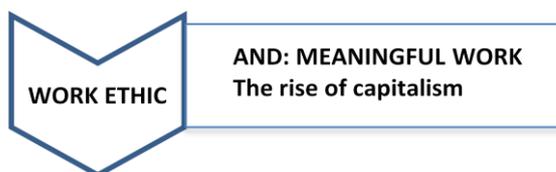
The reason for adding this paragraph is based on the conviction that Protestant (Work) Ethic represents a certain mental model or approach towards work, which in its own right adds value to the Meaning of Work Model. However, this does not imply that other religious-spiritual systems do not add value in terms of the experience of meaningful work. The discussion here is an analogy to the value that religious-spiritual systems can contribute to the experience of meaning while working. It is thus acknowledged that systems such as Judaism, Islam, and Buddhism (and others) could argue that adherents to these also experience meaning while working, based on the particular underlying values. This study does not intend, nor is it the scope hereof to compare the contribution towards the experience of meaning while working, of the different religious-spiritual systems. The concept of spirituality will be discussed as separate and neutral dimension in the course of this study as a contributing factor towards the experience of meaning while performing work. The following discussion focuses more on ethics

in respect of work against the background of the chosen religio-spiritual system. This discussion will merely focus on the values underpinning the PWE in as far as these contribute to the meaning of work.

According to Furnham (1984) the validity and accuracy of Weber's specifications of behaviour patterns, goals, and values, emanating from and dictated by PWE i.e. hard work, ascetism, postponement of gratification, frugality, thrift, etc. have stayed intact, in spite of the conflict and sharp debates regarding the validity and accuracy of the historical, sociological and theological hypotheses, which still remain in doubt.

Despite the criticism of Weber's thesis (concerning the direct linkage) between Protestant Work Ethic (PWE) and the rise of Capitalism, few have challenged the specification of the behaviour pattern, goals and values of those adhering to this ethic. Whereas psychologists have not been very interested in the nature of the historical, political and social arguments concerning the PWE, they have devoted a great deal of research to its measurement and correlates (Furnham, 1984, p. 87).

3.5.4.1 The Work Ethic and the rise of Capitalism



The Protestant ethic, which gave "moral sanction to profit making through hard work, organization, and rational calculation" (Yankelovich, 1981, p. 247), spread throughout Europe and to America through the Protestant sects. In particular, the English Puritans, the French Huguenots, and the Swiss and Dutch Reformed Groupings subscribed to Calvinist theology that was especially conducive to productivity and capital growth (Lipset, 1990). As time passed, attitudes and beliefs which supported hard work became secularized, and were woven into the norms of Western culture (Lipset, 1990; Rodgers, 1978; Rose, 1985; Super, 1982).

The majority of research has been conducted with a focus on the PWE and paid employment. There is however a different angle which Furnham (1984) refers to, i.e. the relationship between PWE and unemployment. In a study conducted by Furnham, asking respondents to rate the importance of various social support programmes, it was found that “PWE believers were exponents of social responsibility” (Furnham, 1984, p. 96) and projected negative perspectives on unemployment and social benefit programmes.

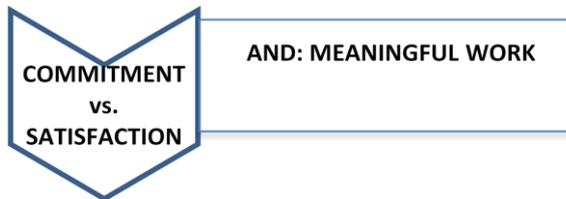
One of the most notable psychological effects of Protestantism is the abolishment of symbolism and ritual from religion, and the substitution of reason and understanding, and also assuming a positive stance or attitude towards life, thereby rejecting the introversion of Catholicism. Secularism, which was fleetingly referred to in passing, had advanced more within Protestantism than in Catholicism. Protestantism has been described as the dress rehearsal of the decline of religion in the modern era (Berger, 1969, p. 159, in Giorgi and Marsh, 1990, p. 515). One should however be careful not to generalise in this respect and strip the PWE from its religious origins. Research (quoted studies see Furnham 1984) indicates that people are generally speaking, not bound to a materialistic nexus when it pertains to work. They still seek more from work than purely economic gains. Therefore it would be gross generalisation to redefine PWE as a purely secular ethic.

Kelvin (1980), in Furnham (1984, p. 99), does not foresee a total collapse or disappearance of PWE. A transformation however seems inevitable. This transformation seems to be introduced by the mass do-it-yourself literature of the late 20th and early 21st centuries. The do-it-yourself followers, value economy, work and independence, especially those who market themselves on a smaller scale, as DIY (practitioners) if one were to use such a terminology. These represent values associated with the PWE.

However what must be taken into consideration is the fact that the future of PWE is closely linked and associated as well as wholly integrated in general conservative beliefs and values. PWE will only decline if these general beliefs and values disappear. Closely associated with the PWE is a “wealth ethic”. Wealth is perceived as the basis for independence. Sufficient wealth would enable one to be

independent of others' support. Work (in whichever format) that produces capital growth is the only way to achieve this objective. There are still untapped dimensions pertaining to the PWE, but these will be sidelined for the present.

3.5.4.2 Commitment versus satisfaction



Williams and Sandler (1995) studied the differences between a group of American managers (subscribing to the PWE) in comparison with a selected group of Singaporean managers (subscribing to Confucian Ethic) and state that the managers that adhere to a PWE are more committed to commitment while managers subscribing to a Confucian Ethic were more committed to satisfaction with work.

Satisfaction can be defined as the measure of pleasure that an individual experiences whilst performing a job. This measure of joy or pleasure is not limited to isolated cultures, but encompasses global worker satisfaction with specific satisfaction dimensions, e.g. satisfaction with pay, with working environment and circumstances, supervision (and management practice), advancement and promotional opportunities, co-workers (social dimension of interaction in the workplace). Locke, (1976) and Griffin and Bateman (1986), as quoted by Williams and Sandler (1995) have defined job satisfaction as a “pleasurable and positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or experiences”... Job satisfaction

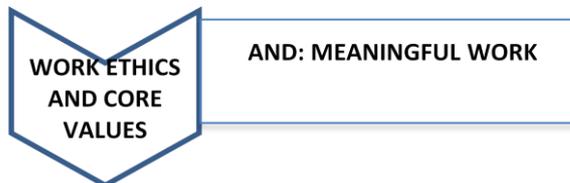
...is a global construct encompassing such facets of satisfaction as satisfaction with work, pay, supervision, benefits and promotion opportunities, working conditions, co-workers and organizational practices.

(The question arises why Asian countries have experienced capital growth as they have: Is it because of the so called Confucian Ethic that values intra- and

interpersonal harmony, hierarchy, family integrity, and kinship affiliation as well as individual responsibility (Hui 1992) is dominant in these countries, or could there be other reasons for this growth?)

Commitment measured by “...a scale developed by Porter and others” (Williams and Sandler 1995), measures an attitudinal posture.” It captures and reflects the “...relative strength of an individual’s identification with and involvement in an organization” (Mowday, Porter, and Steers, 1982, p. 27). The commitment, identification with and involvement in an organizational setting may be the result of the tendency of Protestant Ethics to accentuate individualism. The individual thus bases his/her choice on certain considerations, under girded by a certain set of values, and therefore cannot abandon his/her choice without substantive reasons. They thus feel morally obliged to their personal choice, committed to and responsible for their personal behaviour or actions.

3.5.4.3 Core values related to PWE

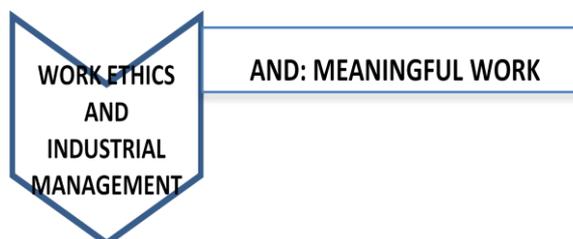


Now turning to a listing or perhaps a structure of PWE indicates the following core values:

- The Protestant Work Ethic believers differentiate between extrinsic and intrinsic needs and values;
- The assessment of the PWE among respondents in different studies furthermore identify the following core values:
 - Hard work as such is viewed as a moral value. This is closely linked with what Weber referred to as the Doctrine of Calling and the Doctrine of Predestination. The external signs of being one of the elect is in the measure of success achieved in work;
 - Work represents the fulfilment of earthly duties and is viewed as a calling;
 - The PWE accentuates individualism as a value that is imbedded in the Protestant theology, although this might be balanced with the collective

- calling of the Church in the world (this seems to be one of the dialectical moments in Protestant theology);
- Protestantism underlines personal responsibility in the intra-personal as well as the interpersonal (social) domains and work provides the framework for individual choice and work execution (i.e. work behaviour as an individual);
 - Rational and practical ascetism without falling into the trap of Catholicism's separation from worldly events. In the sense that is used by Weber, it refers to a practical devotional lifestyle that is open to the world and its realities;
 - It is tradition bound without ignoring the dynamics of change and adaptation in changing circumstances;
- PWE is not determined by nationality, but by cultural factors such as where the traditional and dominant religion is regarded as Protestant.

3.5.4.4 Work Ethic and industrial management



The management of industries became more systematic and structured as increased competition forced factory owners to hold costs down. The model of management which developed, the *traditional model* (scientific management) was characterized by an authoritarian style which did not acknowledge work ethic. To the contrary, Daft and Steers (1986:93) described this model as holding "that the average worker was basically lazy and was motivated almost entirely by money". Workers were assumed to neither desire, nor to be capable of autonomous or self-directed work. As a result, the *scientific management* concept was developed, predicated on specialization and division of jobs into simple tasks. Scientific management claimed to increase worker production which resulted in increased remuneration. It was therefore seen as beneficial to workers, as well as

to the company, since monetary gain was viewed as the primary motivating factor for both.

As use of scientific management became more widespread in the early 1900's, it became apparent that factors other than pay were significant to worker motivation. Some workers were self-starters and didn't respond well to close supervision and others became distrustful of management when pay increases failed to keep pace with improved productivity (Daft and Steers, 1986). Although unacknowledged in management practice, these were indicators of continued viability of the work ethic in employees. By the end of World War II scientific management was considered inadequate and outdated to deal with the needs of industry (Jaggi, 1988). At this point the behaviourist school of thought emerged to provide alternative theories for guiding the management of workers. Contrary to the principles of scientific management, the behaviourists argued that workers were not intrinsically lazy. They were adaptive. If the environment failed to provide a challenge, workers became lazy, but if appropriate opportunities were provided, workers would become creative and motivated.

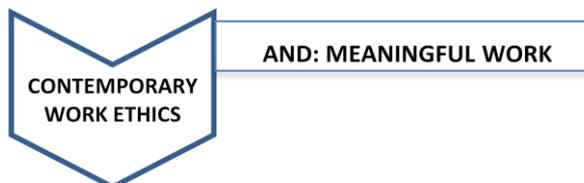
In response to the new theories, managers turned their attention to finding various ways to make jobs more fulfilling for workers. *Human relations* became an important issue and efforts were made to make people feel useful and important at work. Company newspapers, employee awards, and company social events were among the tools used by management to enhance the job environment (Daft and Steers, 1986), but the basic nature of the workplace remained unchanged. The adversarial relationship between employee and employer persisted.

In the late 1950's *job enrichment* theories began to provide the basis for fundamental changes in employer-employee relationships. Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman (1959) identified factors such as achievement, recognition, responsibility, advancement, and personal growth which, when provided as an intrinsic component of a job, tended to motivate workers to perform better. Factors such as salary, company policies, supervisory style, working conditions, and relations with fellow workers tended to impair worker performance if inadequately provided for, but did not particularly improve worker motivation when present.

In 1960, when the concepts of theory "X" and theory "Y" were introduced by McGregor, the basis for a management style conducive to achieving job enrichment for workers was provided (Jaggi, 1988).

Jaggi (1988, p. 446) defines participatory management as "a cooperative process in which management and workers work together to accomplish a common goal". Unlike authoritarian styles of management, which provided top-down, directive control over workers who were assumed to be unmotivated and in need of guidance, participatory management asserted that worker involvement in decision making provided valuable input and enhanced employee satisfaction and morale. Yankelovich and Immerwahr (1984) describe participatory management as a system which would open the way for the work ethic to be a powerful resource in the workplace. They state, however, that the persistence of the traditional model in American management discouraged workers, even though many wanted to work hard and do good work for its own sake.

3.5.4.5 Influences shaping the contemporary work ethic



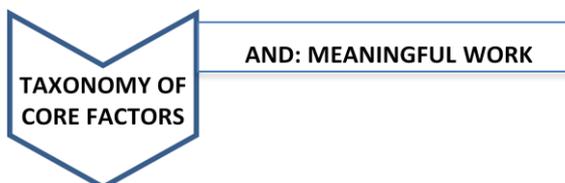
The Protestant Work Ethic is a cultural norm that places a positive moral value on doing a good job and is based on a belief that work has intrinsic value for its own sake (Cherrington, 1980; Quinn, 1983; Yankelovich & Immerwahr, 1984). Like other cultural norms, a person's adherence to or belief in the work ethic is principally influenced by socialization experiences during childhood and adolescence. Through interaction with family, peers, and significant adults, a person "learns to place a value on work behaviour as others approach him in situations demanding increasing responsibility for productivity" (Braude, 1975:, p. 34). Based on praise or blame and affection or anger, a child appraises his or her performance in household chores, or later in part-time jobs, but this appraisal is based on the perspective of others. As a child matures, these

attitudes toward work become internalized, and work performance is less dependent on the reactions of others.

Children are also influenced by the attitudes of others toward work (Braude, 1975). If a parent demonstrates a dislike for a job or a fear of unemployment, children will tend to assimilate these attitudes. Parents who demonstrate a strong work ethic tend to impart a strong work ethic to their children.

Another significant factor shaping the work attitudes of people is the socialization which occurs in the workplace. As a person enters the workplace, the perceptions and reactions of others tend to confirm or contradict the work attitudes shaped in childhood (Braude, 1975). The occupational culture, especially the influence of an "inner fraternity" of colleagues, has a significant impact on the attitudes toward work and the work ethic which form part of each person's belief system.

3.5.4.6 Meaning of work: a taxonomy of core factors in comparison with PWE (adding the perspectives from Chalofsky and Terez)



The following table presents taxonomy of perceived core factors pertaining to the Meaning of Work. Such taxonomy is developed by the combination of the core elements that have been identified in respect of the Meaning of Work.

Table 3.6: Taxonomy of different value systems in relation to Chalofsky and Terez

Work Value Type	Core individual value clusters		Core PWE Values	Management principles	Philosophical(Kantian) principles for meaningful work	Chalofsky and Terez
	Basic values	Core definitions				
Self enhancement	Power	Social status and prestige, control or dominance over people and resources (social power, authority and wealth)	Accumulating wealth	<p>Principle 8: Teams and job redesign</p> <p>Principle 9: Training and skill development</p> <p>Principle 10: Cross utilization and cross training</p>	<p>Meaningful work contributes to the <i>development of the rational capacity of employees</i></p>	<p>Sense of self (Chalofsky)</p> <p>Developing potential (Chalofsky)</p> <p>Personal development (Terez)</p> <p>Autonomy (Chalofsky)</p>

	Achievement	Personal success through demonstrating competence according to social standards (successful, capable, ambitious, influential)	Hard work Individualism	Principle 3: High wages Principle 4: Incentive pay Principle 5: Employee ownership	Meaningful work provides <i>adequate remuneration</i> Meaningful work provides <i>for autonomy and independence</i>	Fulfilling one's purpose (Chalofsky) Master one's performance (Chalofsky) Validation (Terez)
	Hedonism	Pleasure and sensual gratification for oneself (pleasure, enjoying life)	Fulfilment of earthly duties Vocation			Positive belief (Chalofsky) Balancing career/work and rest of life (Chalofsky and Terez) Service (Terez)



<p>Self transcendence</p>	<p>Universalism</p>	<p>Understanding, appreciation, tolerance and protection for the welfare of all people and for nature (broadminded, wisdom, social justice, equality, a world at peace a world of beauty, unity with nature, protecting the environment)</p>	<p>Individual and social responsibility Responsibility for the environment Social equality Peace</p>	<p>Principle 16: An overarching philosophy Principle 14: A long term perspective</p>		<p>Finding purpose (Chalofsky)</p>
	<p>Benevolence</p>	<p>Preservation and enhancement of the welfare of people with whom one is in frequent personal contact (helpful, honest forgiving, loyal, responsible)</p>	<p>Social responsibility Intra- and interpersonal harmony in the work place</p>	<p>Principle 11: Symbolic egalitarianism Principle 13: Promotion from within</p>		<p>Equality (Terez) Relationship building (Terez) Dialogue (Terez) Service (Terez) Respect (Terez)</p>

						Take care of self and others (Chalofsky)
Conservation	Tradition	Respect, commitment and acceptance of the customs and ideas that traditional culture or religion provides (humble, accepting my portion in life, devout, respect for tradition, moderate)	Tradition bound without ignoring the dynamics of change	Principle 2: Selectivity in recruiting		Flexibility (Terez)
	Conformity	Restraint of actions, inclinations and impulses likely to upset or harm others and violate social expectations	Postponement of satisfaction Thrift Frugality	Principle 12: Wage compression		Oneness (Terez)



		or norms (politeness, obedient, self-discipline, honouring parents and elders)				
	Security	Safety, harmony, stability of society, of relationships, and of self (family security, national security, social order, clean, reciprocation of favours)	Social responsibility	Principle 1: Employment security		
Openness to change	Stimulation	Excitement, novelty, and challenge in life (daring, a varied life an exciting life)	Tradition bound but doesn't reject life as such and is open to life's challenges Rational and practical	Principle 15: The measurement of practices		Seeking learning, challenge creativity and growth (Chalofsky and Terez)



			ascetism			
	Self-direction	Independent thought and action-choosing, creating exploring(creativity, freedom, independent curios, choosing own goals)	Individualism Rational and practical ascetism	Principle 7: Participation and empowerment Principle 6: Information sharing		Fit (Terez) Bringing whole self to work (Chalofsky)

The following interpretation of Table 3.7 is proposed: Reading across the rows it is possible to associate the work value type with the individual core values and their description. As will be noted the Protestant core values are then associated with the individual values and in turn with the proposed management principles, with Kant's moral - philosophical perspective on meaningful work and lastly with the contributions by Chalofsky and Terez. The problem that presents itself is that there is a great measure of overlap between the different systems, which makes it extremely difficult to categorize the different concepts in water tight compartments and to present these compartments as the only possible measure of overlap or representativeness. Protestant Work Ethic, individual core work values, management principles, philosophical perspective, and the perspectives by Terez and Chalofsky on the **meaningful workplace** overlaps and intersect on many dimensions. For example one PWE identifier can be matched with different core values. The same applies to the management Principles when compared with the PWE values. Very much the same is applicable when the philosophical perspective is added to the picture; and when the contributions by Chalofsky and Terez are added to the equation. This study does not differentiate on statistical grounds between the different concepts and constructs. It is thus very debatable which belongs where and what the priority listing should be. What is however observable is that the work values that contribute to the understanding of meaningful work experiences are not only present in different systems and thought structures, but that these overlap to the extent that the concept meaning of work is redundantly supported from different perspectives.

Certain conclusions can be drawn:

- One obvious conclusion that can be drawn, is that the structure of values pertaining to meaningful work, are open-ended and therefore dependent on the particular paradigm that is applied to determine these. Work values that contribute to meaningful work are subject to influences from the social and economic environment as well as spiritual and religious system perspective. The pervading value of work values is that they are tolerant of differences; the primary focus being to discover what contributes to meaningful work and thus to

a construction of the **meaningful workplace**, firstly on a conceptual level and secondly with the respect to the practice of implementing and sustaining the **meaningful workplace**.

- It is a valid conclusion to state that the PWE, as an ethical system, is an identifiable and valid construct to which individuals subscribe, pending the cultural influence of Protestantism. It is not linked to nationality or ethnicity, neither is it linked to denominational orientation or, in general, to religious fervour. Atheists also subscribe to this value system (Furnham, 1984). This raises the question whether it is still valid to refer to Protestant Work Ethic; should the reference not be to a Work Ethic as such? This question will be left unanswered.
- It could be stated that the PWE is an ethical system that overlaps with other disciplines such as psychology, management and economic sciences, theology, anthropology, and sociology, which each in its own right presents principles and a value system of sorts. This indicates not only an overlap of principles between these different fields of study, and has as a value system, roughly been indicated to correspond with work value types, individual (human) core values, and management principles. All of these values are seated in individuals thus indicating a congruence of values within the individual. This serves as a measure of “wholeness”, thus prompting an argument towards the human as whole and holistically integrated. Fragmentation of the individual in terms of what is expected at work and what is expected outside of work, is nothing else than an attempt to alienate the individual employee from his/her own personal values, with the consequences that such an expectation has.
- PWE has its place in the world of work and as such acts a facilitating force for the individual employee to perform to the best of his/her ability, thereby fulfilling a spiritual based approach towards work.
- Individuals, who subscribe to the PWE, are more committed to the organization, provided management principles that create room for the *application of these values* are adhered to. It can be hypothesised that a conflict of values between the organization and the individual, who subscribes to the PWE, might result in emotional and psychological as well as productivity related alienated from the

- organisation and his/her work, which will lead to a loss of productivity by the individual, and if this widespread among employees, by the organization.
- Education can instil this work ethic thereby contributing to a higher productivity levels. This implies that the education system must provide for the transfer of this type of work ethic, and cultural and social orientation towards work as a meaningful life activity can be transferred in a structured and purposeful manner. The implications related to an educational approach could then lead to the sustaining of capitalism as an economic system as opposed to other economic systems.
 - By means of abductive reasoning it can further be inferred that the maintenance of a PWE by the individual can be identified with meaningful experiences within a work setting and, provided this ethic is sustained, to a **meaningful workplace**.

The Protestant Work Ethic is a cultural norm that places a positive moral value on doing a good job and is based on a belief that work has intrinsic value for its own sake (Cherrington, 1980; Quinn, 1983; Yankelovich & Immerwahr, 1984). Like other cultural norms, a person's adherence to or belief in the work ethic is principally influenced by socialization experiences during childhood and adolescence. Through interaction with family, peers, and significant adults, a person "learns to place a value on (positive) work behaviour as others approach him in situations demanding increasing responsibility for productivity" (Braude, 1975, p. 134). Vocational education, for example, has as a stated goal that it will promote the work ethic (Miller, 1985; Gregson, 1991). Reubens (1974) listed "inculcation of good work attitudes" as one of the highest priorities for high school education. In the absence of early socialization which supports good work attitudes, schools should not be expected to completely transform a young person's work ethic orientation, but enlightening students about what work ethic is, and why it is important to success in the contemporary workplace, should be a component of secondary education

Another significant factor shaping the work attitudes of people is the socialization which occurs in the workplace. As a person enters the workplace, the perceptions and reactions of others tend to confirm or contradict the work attitudes shaped in

childhood (Braude, 1975). The occupational culture, especially the influence of an *inner fraternity* of colleagues, has a significant impact on the attitudes toward work and the work ethic which form part of each person's belief system.

Furnham (1984) concludes that research (during his writing) of more than a decade confirmed the importance of PWE as an individual difference variable related to human motivation and, it should be added, based on the above, an important contributor to the concept of meaningful work. From this vantage point, ethical behaviour that originates from a religio-spiritual inclination or adherence contributes to the extension of the Meaningful Work Model by Chalofsky, as a religio-spiritual work ethic contributes to the integrated wholeness of the individual and informs a positive attitude towards work.

Figure 3.8 graphically indicates the comparison between the previous paragraphs (individual values and the meaning of work and PWE and the meaning of work) and the Meaning of Work Model as proposed by Chalofsky (2010). This comparison is a further indication of the possibilities that exist in literature to enhance the current thinking on the **meaningful workplace**. Only the different dimensions of individual work values and PWE will be listed in Figure 3.8 as Table 3.6 contains a detailed description of the different elements.

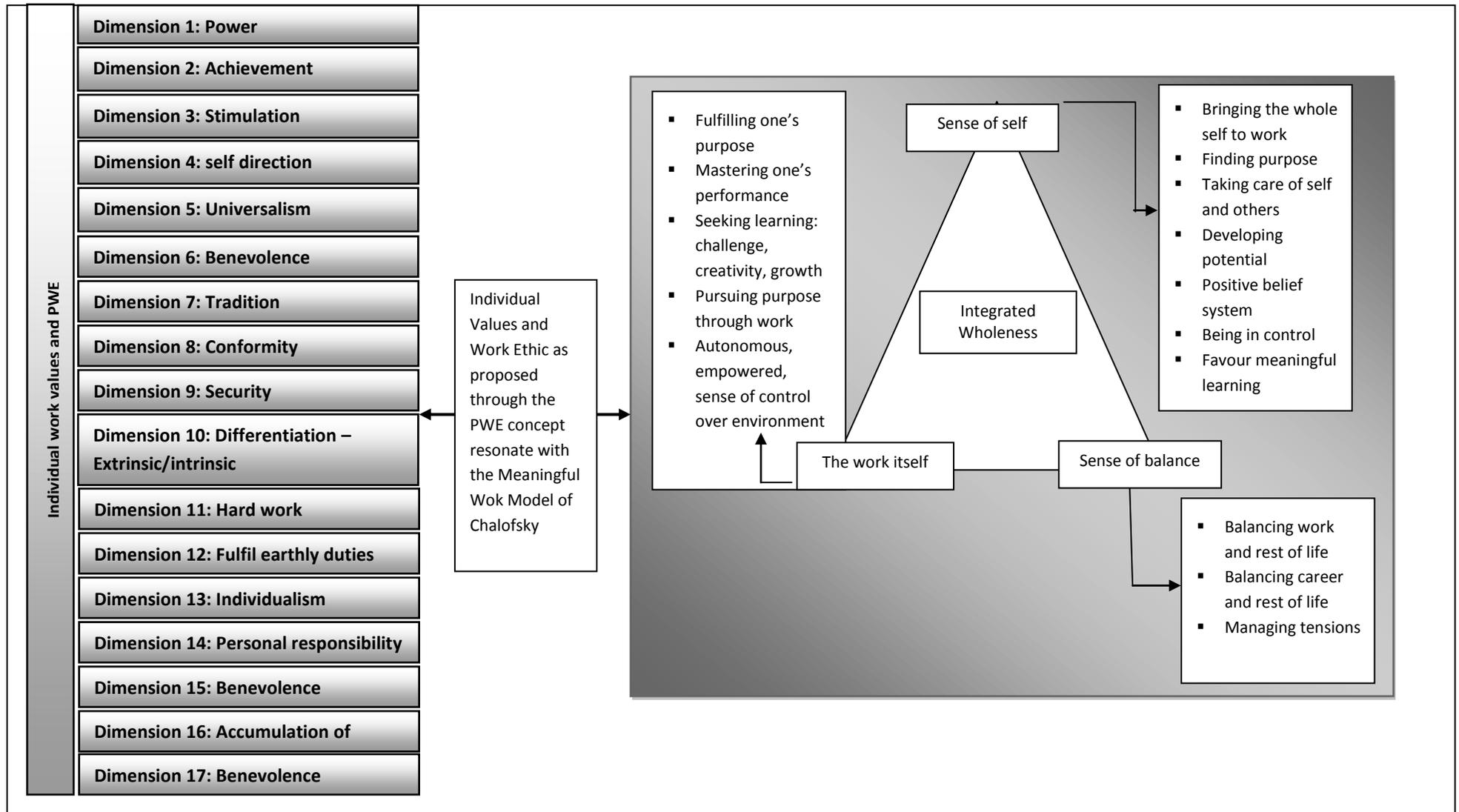
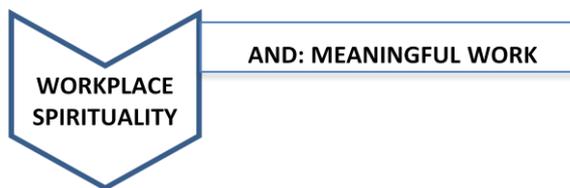


Figure 3.8: Individual values, work ethic (PWE) aligned with the meaningful work model of Chalofsky

It has previously been indicated that the works of Chalofsky and Terez are aligned in terms of content and the general mental model that underpin the two publications. It can safely be stated that there is a general symbiotic relationship between the works of the two authors. For this reason the further discussion will utilise the model of Chalofsky for comparative reasons. Figure 3.8 provides a graphic indication of the resonance between the Meaning of Work Model by Chalofsky (which at this juncture is viewed as inclusive of the 22 keys as proposed by Terez) and the discussion on values and the concept of PWE.

3.5.5 Workplace spirituality/spirituality at work



Spiritual beliefs and attitudes are there whether we acknowledge them or not. Even the most secular individual has views on the nature of humanity, on whether the world is essentially safe or hostile, on whether systems are naturally chaotic or ordered, and about how much our own agency or our circumstances determine our future (Chalofsky, 2010, p. 27).

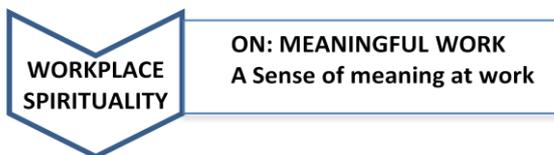
These remarks are made within the framework of the “bringing the whole self to work”. The whole self, in the mind of Chalofsky, is inter alia constituted by what is referred to as spirituality. This stance is supported by Milliman, Czaplewski and Ferguson (2003, p. 426) with the viewpoint that

...while workplace spirituality is considered a highly personal and philosophical construct, nearly all of the academic definitions acknowledge that spirituality involves a sense of wholeness, connectedness at work, and deeper values, (and can be defined as) the recognition that employees have an inner life that nourishes and is nourished by meaningful work that takes place in the context of community

Spirituality is discussed by Chalofsky (2010, p. 26) as an element of “bringing the whole self to work” which contributes to what he refers to as “integrated wholeness” which in turn constitutes the Meaning of Work model.

The dimensions of workplace spirituality according to Milliman et al (2003) include the following:

3.5.5.1 A sense of meaning at work



According to researchers a fundamental aspect of spirituality at work involves having a sense of meaning and purpose in one’s work, which represents the way that employees interact with their day-to-day work at the individual level. It also involves certain assumptions such as that every individual has his/her own motivational drive and ultimate truth based on the desire to be included in an activity space that makes sense. This assumption implies the desire to be involved in activities that give greater meaning to his/her life and the lives of others (Ashmos and Duchon, 2000; Hawley, 1993) in Milliman et al. (2003). Work is meant to be multidimensional in that it should contribute to transcendence of the mundane in search of a deeper and more explicit purpose of life and of self actualization.

3.5.5.2 Community

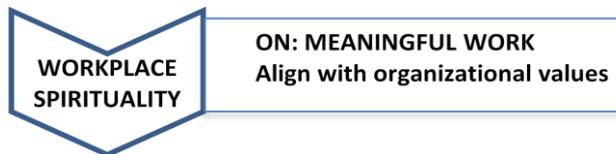


People seem to express a need or desire for connectedness in order to counter the effects of workplace alienation. A sense of community will inevitably arise out of the perception between employees that they share a common destiny in the workplace. The individual, in spite of the conservation of his/her uniqueness as individual, will seek shared destiny in his/her

connectedness with other individuals in the bigger unit. The interaction on a deeper level than the performance-of-work-related activities, articulates this need. Somehow the connectedness of the inner life of individuals with one another satisfies the need for community within the perceived shared reality of alienation of work life in the organization. Neal and Bennett (2000), note

That this level of spirituality involves the mental, emotional, and spiritual (e.g. “esprit de corps”) connections among employees in teams or groups in organizations. The essence of community is that it involves a deeper sense of connection among people, including support, freedom of expression, and genuine caring (In Milliman et al., 2003).

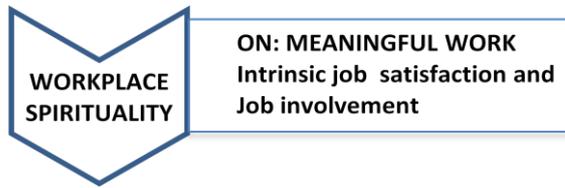
3.5.5.3 Alignment with organizational values



A third aspect of spirituality in the workplace is when individuals experience a strong sense of alignment between their personal values and their organization’s mission and purpose. This component of workplace spirituality encompasses the interaction of employees with the larger organizational purpose (Mitroff and Denton, 1999).

Alignment with the organization’s values is related to the premise that an individual’s purpose is larger than one’s self and should make a contribution to others or society. (A position that both Chalofsky and Terez stress) Alignment also means that individuals believe that managers and employees in their organization have appropriate values, have a strong conscience, and are concerned about the welfare of its employees and community (Ashmos and Duchon, 2000). Similarly, Hawley (1993) observed that “part of living by one’s inner truth involves working in an organization with integrity and a purpose that is beneficial to others beyond simply making a profit.” (Milliman et al., 2003, p. 429)

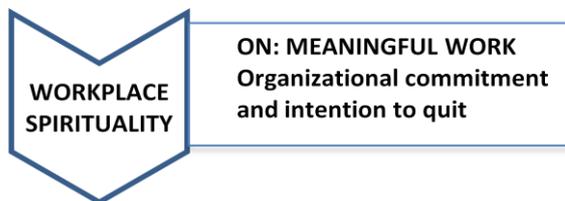
3.5.5.4 Intrinsic job satisfaction and job involvement



As a fourth dimension of workplace spirituality, intrinsic job satisfaction refers to the individual's attitude towards elements related to work, for example achievement, responsibility, advancement and growth. (See Herzberg, Mausner, Snyderman, 1959).

Involvement refers to the extent to which an individual identifies with his/her work role and the intensity of active participation in his/her work role. In this sense it translates into the perceived self-esteem of the individual's. Milliman et al. (2003) conclude their literature search into the dimensions of workplace spirituality with a number of hypotheses in respect of workplace spirituality.

3.5.5.5 Organization commitment and intention to quit



(The following is based on Milliman et al., 2003, Italics mine.) Commitment implies a sense of bonding with the organization whilst the intention to quit is indicative of a lack of such a bond and resolution of the individual to actively seek other employment.

Personal purpose and commitment

- Hypotheses 1a. The greater the *experience of personal purpose* and meaning in one's work, the greater the *organization commitment* of the individual;
- Hypotheses 1b. "The greater *sense of community* at work, the greater the *organization commitment* of the individual;

- Hypotheses 1c. The greater *the alignment* of one's personal values with organizational values, the greater the *organization commitment* of the individual;

Personal purpose and intention to quit

- Hypotheses 2a. The greater the *experience of personal purpose and meaning* in one's work, the *lesser the intention of the individual to quit* the organization;
- Hypotheses 2b. The greater *sense of community at work*, the *lesser the intention of the individual to quit* the organization;
- Hypotheses 2c. The greater the alignment of one's personal values with organizational values, the *lesser the intention of the individual to quit* the organization;

Personal purpose, community and value alignment and intrinsic job satisfaction

- Hypotheses 3a. The greater the *experience of personal purpose and meaning* in one's work, the *greater the intrinsic work satisfaction* of the individual;
- Hypotheses 3b. The greater *sense of community at work*, the *greater the intrinsic work satisfaction* of the individual;
- Hypotheses 3c. The greater the *alignment of one's personal values* with organizational values, the *greater the intrinsic work satisfaction* of the individual;

Personal purpose, community and value alignment and job involvement

- Hypotheses 4a. The greater the *experience of personal purpose and meaning* in one's work, the *greater the job involvement* of the individual;
- Hypotheses 4b. The greater sense of community at work, the *greater the job involvement* of the individual;

- Hypotheses 4c. The greater the *alignment of one's personal values* with organizational values, the *greater the job involvement* of the individual;

3.5.5.6 Organization-Based Self-Esteem (OBSE)



Milliman et al (2003:432) assert that “OBSE concerns the degree to which individuals believe they satisfy their needs and have a sense of personal adequacy in their organizations. Employees with high OBSE are satisfied with their organizational role and see themselves as important, meaningful, respected, and worthwhile within their organization. OBSE has been found to be positively related to job performance, organizational satisfaction, citizenship behaviour, and organizational commitment.”

- Hypotheses 5a. “The greater the *experience of personal purpose and meaning* in one’s work, the greater the *organization- based self- esteem* of the individual.”
- Hypotheses 5b. “The greater *sense of community at work*, the greater the OBSE of the individual.”
- Hypotheses 5c. “The greater the *alignment of one’s personal values* with organizational values, the greater the OBSE of the individual.” (Italics added)

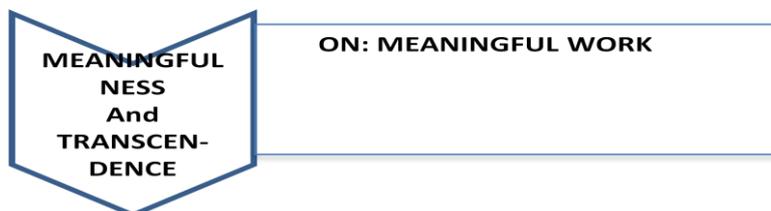
In conclusion Milliman et al. (2003, p. 440) make the following statement:

“This study has sought to address some of the limitations in past research on spirituality at work by using a more precise way to measure certain workplace spirituality dimensions, developing formal hypotheses on the relationships of these dimensions to key organizational behaviour goals, and employing a more rigorous empirical method to test the proposed relationships. The analysis

results are supportive of the hypothesized relationships between the spirituality dimensions examined and organization commitment; an individual's intention to quit; intrinsic work satisfaction; job involvement; and OBSE."

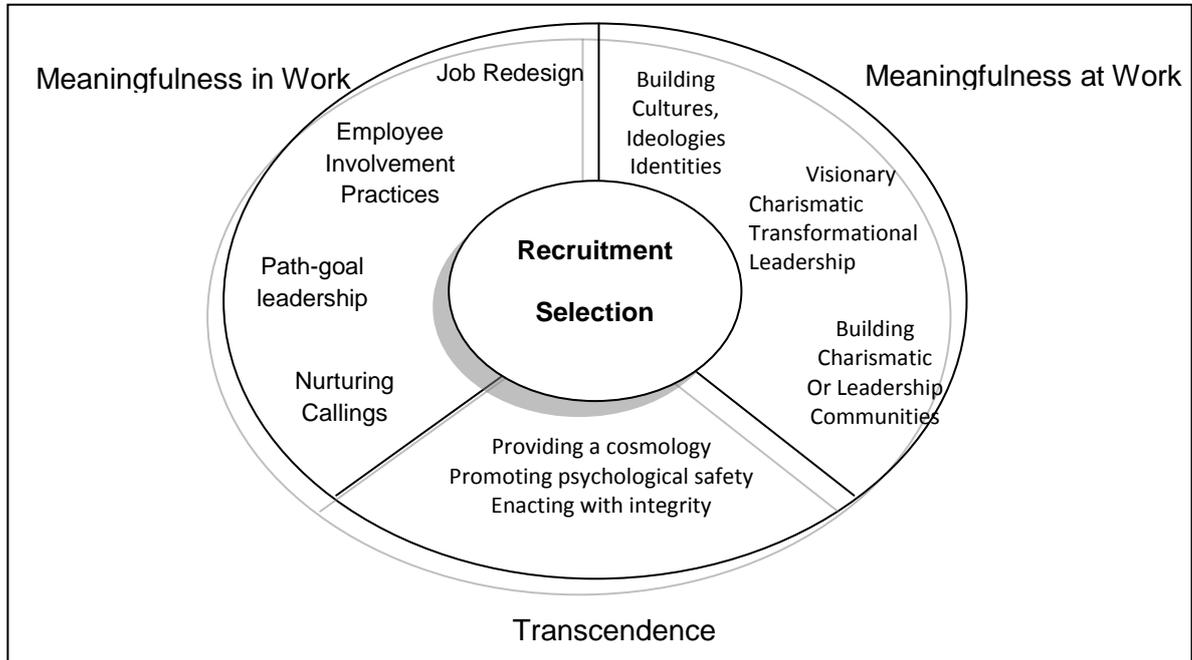
As has been mentioned (Chalofsky, 2010) views spirituality as a dimension of bringing the whole self to work together with the other factors that constitute the sense of self, which in conjunction with the dimension of "the work itself" and a "sense of balance" constitutes the meaningful work model. The previous paragraphs provide sufficient information from existing literature to indicate that the **meaningful workplace** is an emerging construct, specifically in this case regarding the concept Meaningful Work or Meaning of Work that has been identified as a feeder stream toward the construct.

3.5.6 Meaningfulness in working and transcendence



In addition to the literature addressing the *meaning of work* concept, there seems to be an emerging literature that actually pursues the concept of fostering meaning in working. Pratt and Ashforth (2003) (a worthy example of such theoretical grounding) for instance, distinguish between factors that foster meaningfulness *in* work and distinguish these from organizational practices that foster meaningfulness *at* work, and, in the third instance, identifies those factors that foster transcendence. An overview of the factors that foster meaningfulness in work and the factors that foster transcendence overlap with the foregoing discussion. Figure 3.9 is a conceptual representation of the framework within which Pratt and Ashforth, discuss meaningfulness or, the fostering of meaningfulness. Their theoretical position is meritorious and worthy of attention in the current context, as it not only creates a certain theoretical grounding that corroborates that which has been said, but also provides a framework for a positive approach in the creation or establishment of a

meaningful workplace. It is furthermore also aligned with the thinking of both Chalofsky and Terez in respect of the construct: A **Meaningful workplace.**

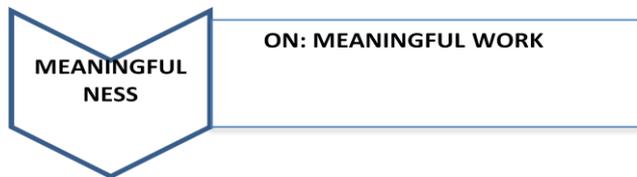


**Figure 3.9: Fostering Meaningfulness
(Pratt and Ashforth, 2003)**

A brief overview of two of the dimensions (fostering meaningfulness in working and fostering transcendence) will demonstrate the relevance of the model and the theoretical underpinning thereof. Such an overview will self evidently also reveal the close relationship with the mental model of Chalofsky's Meaningful Work Model. The merit of the Pratt and Ashforth model is to be found in the fact that it addresses a psychological dimension which at this juncture in current study fulfils an important function as it not only further enhances the Meaningful work Model of Chalofsky but also creates resonating platform for the discussion that follows later on in respect of the concept meaning at work, that forms the counterpart of the concept meaning in work. These two concepts (meaning of work and meaning at work) will eventually be moulded together into a compatible and consistent extended theory of the **meaningful workplace.** In a sense the Pratt and Ashforth model (2003) also fulfils the role of providing the transition between meaning in work/meaningful work and meaning at work.

3.5.7 Fostering meaningfulness in working

“Work is about a daily search for meaning as well as daily bread; for recognition as well as cash; for astonishment rather than torpor; in short for a sort of life, rather than a Monday-to-Friday sort of dying” (Terkel, 1984).



It seems, according to Pratt and Ashforth (2003:320) that “practices that best typify meaningfulness in working are those that nurture callings”. Factors such as job redesign, and employee involvement practices, if they allow for opportunities and provide resources will of necessity foster meaningfulness at work.

Job redesign and employee involvement practices “may foster ‘flow experiences’ that dissolve the barriers between self and work thereby allowing employees to come to the full expression of what is best for them” (Pratt and Ashforth, 2003, p. 321).

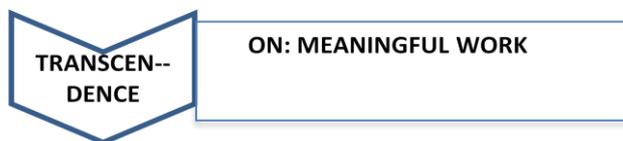
Such practices require a particular mode or type of management/leadership style which is referred to as path-goal-leadership. (Management and leadership style are both included in the same sentence although a distinction is drawn in literature. The reason for this in this study being that the primary focus is not on the differentiation between management and leadership, but to convey the message that style is important and furthermore, that in many instances management and leadership are seen as two sides of the same coin.)

Path-goal-leadership has as its primary focus the dissolution/suspension of performance obstacles, and is thus viewed as a typology of the way in which the links between performance and effort or energy expenditure should/could/must be established.

These practices form the basis for the establishment of a sense of calling and thus meaningfulness in working. An example of the establishment of a sense of calling is when the employee perceives high task significance as a result of job redesign

(Pratt and Ashforth 2003). Work that is viewed as a calling is viewed as socially valuable – an end in itself – involving activities that may be, “but need not be pleasurable” (Pratt and Ashforth, 2003, p. 320). The articulation of the link between work and a valued purpose fosters a sense of calling, according to Pratt and Ashforth (2003). This perspective resembles Hackman and Oldham’s (1980) perspective on task significance. If the value and purpose that work adds can be articulated, a sense of calling can be fostered and nurtured.

3.5.8 Fostering transcendence



Transcendence is closely associated with the workplace as spiritual space and will not be discussed further in this chapter. Suffice to say that Pratt and Ashforth discuss transcendence under category headings such as “providing a cosmology”, “promoting psychological safety” and, “enacting with integrity”.

it is safe to state that this short overview as introduction to Pratt and Ashforth’s model (2003) on fostering meaningfulness is not far removed from the emerging literature regarding meaningfulness at work, and more specifically the alignment between Chalofsky and Terez on the **meaningful workplace**.

3.5.9 Summary: Extended Meaningful Work Model

This paragraph aims at expanding the Meaning of Work Model as proposed by Chalofsky. The Meaningful Work model as presented, consisting of the three dimensions, i.e. “sense of self, sense of balance” and “the work itself”, represents integrated wholeness which is viewed as the one crucial dimension of a **meaningful workplace**, the other dimension being those dimensions that resort in the workplace itself.

Based on the foregoing discussion regarding spirituality in the workplace, moral philosophy, individual values and the PWE, the research of the Meaning of Work

project team, and fostering meaningfulness in working and transcendence, the Meaning of Work model as proposed by Chalofsky (2010) can be enhanced and extended by adding the dimensions as listed and discussed in the previous paragraphs.

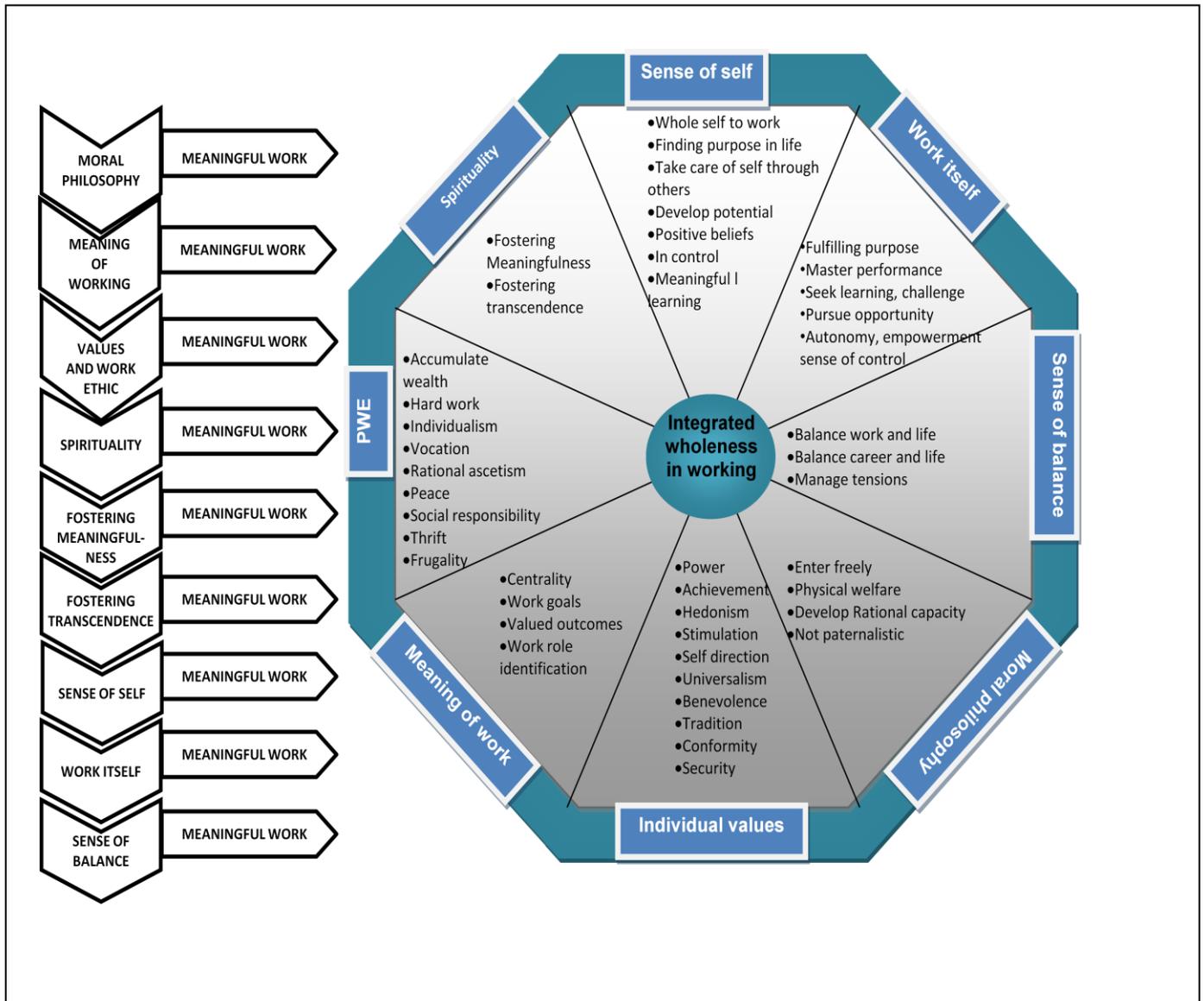


Figure 3.10: An Extended Meaning of Work Model

Figure 3.10 concludes paragraph 3.5 in which the different dimensions of meaningful work/meaning in working/meaning of work was discussed as indication that the **meaningful workplace** is an emerging construct in literature, although it is not necessarily referred to as such. The different dimensions that were discussed resonate with the mental model and work of Chalofsky (2010) according to which meaningful work/meaning in working/meaning of work is a macro constitutive dimension of this particular construct.

A workable distinction in the meaning derived *from* or *at* work is drawn by Haughey (2000) and Thompson (2000) as quoted by Van Jaarsveld (2004, pp. 23, 24). According to Van Jaarsveld, Haughey (2000) distinguishes between the immanent meaning and the transcendent meaning of work. Immanent refers to "...those motivators that are part of immediate experience, personal concerns, and ordinary reality of our world". Immanent meaning is grounded in the secular – and observable – aspects of human existence ranging from the monetary dimensions to a sense of competence, including status, family security, achievements etc. For Thompson on the other hand, transcendent refers to the holy – "the things of God as well as any time that we find our horizons broadening to include interest beyond our own, principles beyond self interest, and powers beyond those of the visible world..." Be this as it may, we now turn to the discussion on the Meaning at Work.

In addition to the Meaningful Work Model that has been presented above, a Meaningfulness at Work Model will be construed in the following paragraphs. The two models (Meaningful Work Model and Meaningfulness at Work Model) will eventually be integrated to construe an integrated model that will eventually be referred to as: The **meaningful workplace** Model.

3.6 PROCESS FLOW 2: MEANING AT WORK: A MACRO CONSTITUTIVE DIMENSION OF THE CONSTRUCT: A MEANINGFUL WORKPLACE

The concept workplace is not only a geographical description but a concept underpinned by a wealth of insight pertaining to the dynamic nature thereof. The

workplace is here presented as dynamic space wherein which individual and organization meets and interact thereby enabling the theoretical construction of the concept under discussion. Once again an eclectic approach will be followed because it is simply not possible to exhaust the discussion in respect of its dynamics. It is imperative to bear in mind that this study cannot and does not intend to create a so-called unified and/or grand theory of the construct as it is deemed impossible. It merely adds to what has emerged as an emerging construct and conceptual framework. The approach in this paragraph is to describe those elements or dimensions that will contribute towards an understanding of the concept *workplace* and in doing so, to contribute to baseline theory that can be expanded on in future.

The construct: **Meaningful workplace** is a value laden expression which on its own evokes differences of interpretation and value-constructs in the minds of readers. Once again the model as proposed by Chalofsky (2010) in “Section Two, **meaningful workplaces**” is followed in broad terms and used as a baseline model, but enhanced or expanded by means of relevant insights from literature. The following paragraphs are a further extension of the question whether the construct: **meaningful workplace** is an emerging construct.

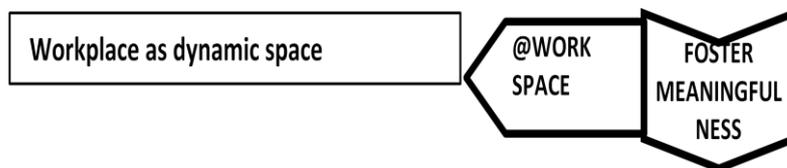
The following discussion should not be viewed or thought of in isolation from the specific context i.e. the environment; that is the time-space continuum within which certain activities are performed, which are normally referred to as work.

The following paragraphs explore the workplace or the organizational space as the context within which employee are lead to experienced meaningfulness through the organizationally induced dimensions or interventions.

Previously the Pratt and Ashforth model was presented and one of the dimensions discussed. The two remaining dimensions “Meaningfulness at Work”, and “Fostering Transcendence” is here utilised for the discussion of the concept meaning at work as the second macro constitutive dimension of the **meaningful workplace**. (The same figure as was presented as Figure 3.9 is again used, but renumbered as Figure 3.11 to indicate both continuity as well as distinction between the two macro dimensions that constitute a **meaningful workplace**.)

The discussion at this point angles towards what can be done within organizations to foster **Meaningfulness @ Work** thereby, not only populating this particular macro constitutive dimension with content, but also noting the possible actions that can be initiated within organizations to establish a **meaningful workplace**.

3.6.1 The workplace as dynamic space



On face value the concept *workplace* can be interpreted as an enclosed geographically identifiable venue, but it does not primarily or necessarily refer to a cartographic situatedness, although this can also be true. The intent here is to refer to the cognitive mapping process of the individual in relation to his/her workplace. The life of any individual comprises a myriad of spatial behaviours (Kitchin and Blades 2002) including the way in which we negotiated our way through our world from infancy to adulthood. Travelling to school; to an institution for tertiary study; travelling to our workplace and negotiating our way (i.e. directing our attention and energy towards goal achievement); long distance travelling for business purposes, etc. does not imply geographical space only. To make decisions we rely not on further external directions but on our spatial understanding of the world. We thus occupy space and this happens in relation to the expenditure of energy to fully occupy our spatial situatedness. The underlying process can be referred to as the cognitive mapping process of the individual. The cognitive mapping process and ability, is deemed to be in the domain of public knowledge of spatial and environmental relationships including the cognitive processes which are associated with the encoding and retrieving of information from which it is comprised (Kitchin and Blades, 2002) and that underpins the process. All workplaces can be geographically determined. However not all workplaces are enclosed spaces where people enter into and remain in the venue for the duration of what they have to complete during the time they have to or choose to spend there.

According to Arefi (1999, p. 179) “A narrative of loss characterizes the literature of place today: specifically, the loss of proper connection between places and the loss of meaning”.

Although this statement is made within the context of urban design it nevertheless underlines an important issue in modern society. Arefi (1999, p. 189) continues by stating that

The contemporary discourse on place has been substantially transformed in the last few decades. This transformation has encompassed both the production and the meaning of place, which have been largely influenced by modernity and globalization. While the impact of modernity on place has led to its ‘commodification’ and ‘devaluation’, globalization (Sack, 1992) has further called its credibility into question (Agnew, 1984, 1987). The debate over the credibility and importance of place had divided scholars into two groups: some have proposed its demise (Toffler, 1970), whereas others hold that place still matters (Massey & Allen, 1984; Shuman, 1998).

“Place” signifies different things to different people and societies. Scale variations encompass places as big as *country* or as small as a specific neighbourhood or private environment such as home or land. The meaning and purpose also signify different things to different people. It can denote emotional or cultural values and manifests in identity with or of a group, nation etc. It can also signify a place of economic endeavour. The notion of *space* has changed its character from ‘coherent, bounded and settled’ and has shifted to one of a diluted, diffused ‘space of flows’ that is unbounded and stretched out, thus a psychologically linked perspective. Castells, in Arefi (1999, p. 80). In this study the interest and focus is in and on the *sense* of place or people’s attachment to or their conception of space, specifically the workspace. It is assumed that space implies some activity that somehow contributes to the creation of meaning or the loss thereof, thus the sense that space creates in the mind of the occupier. The loss of meaning in the modern work space is the result of loss of connectedness between the perceived sense of

space and the experience of sterile and clinical non space cluttered by high tech infrastructure that creates a sterile environment. What are the factors that can reinstate the sense of meaning in the work place of today and engender a sense of meaning and the experience of meaningfulness whilst performing work related tasks in workspace?

The *workplace* as a concept includes many different and very obvious dimensions that have been identified over many decades and which are deemed to be in the domain of public knowledge. These dimensions are briefly discussed below prior to attempting a “working definition”.

A *cognitive map* is simply a very handy expression to refer to the information which a person uses in filling space whether the space being life space, family space, social space, work space, mental space, or personal space, relationship space of different kinds (e.g. as parent, marriage partner, student, religious person, work person, etc.), or work space. Although this study does not primarily focus on the process of cognitive mapping by individuals in the workspace, it does lean toward the cognitive maps that do exist. It does intend to identify theoretical traits that can, when applied, contribute to a positive cognitive map and mapping process based on a certain type of awareness, i.e. to experience the workspace as meaningful. For this reason it is deemed necessary to understand the dynamics of the workspace and to identify the underlying factors that will, if given the opportunities to surface, contribute towards the experience of meaning and thus facilitate productive work-role behaviour. A **meaningful workplace** can, from this perspective be viewed as the cradle for productivity and organisational success. The relationship between environment and behaviour based on the bases of the cognitive mapping process and the resultant cognitive map, resulting from the spatial reasoning process of the individual, cannot be severed. The spatial reasoning process includes not only a cognitive reasoning process but also a psychological awareness process and includes such factors as perception, motivation (intrinsic and extrinsic), impression formation, mental image construction, and a value system construction of and within the workplace. It is thus a necessary requirement to understand the workplace as dynamic space, within which the individual or group can form meaningful

impressions and experience meaning in the workplace whilst performing work role functions and activities.

The world of work is changing and so is the elementary approach of breaking work down into small parts, which are then clustered in such a manner as to constitute a job. In the same breath, it must also be said that people don't work for the same reasons that people worked for 20, 10, 15, or even 5 or so years ago.

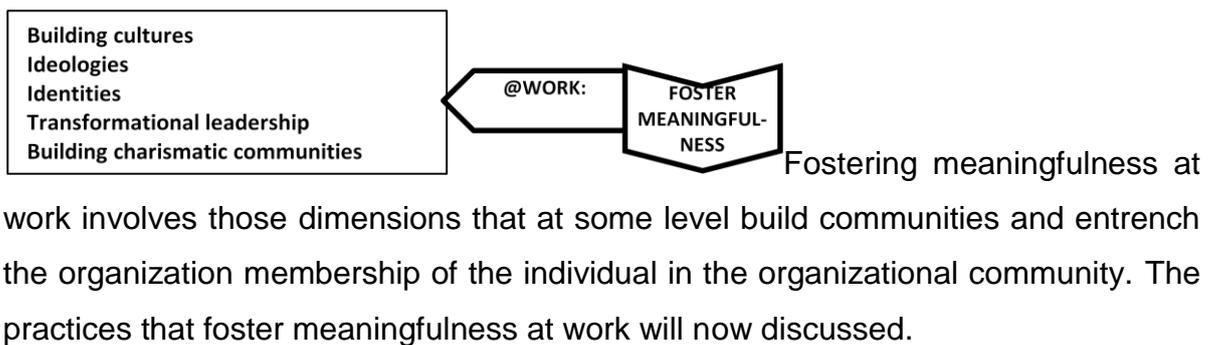
The definition of a **meaningful workplace** requires an understanding of the changing face of the workplace in the year 2000 AD and beyond. It is an environment characterised by certain phenomena that have an influence from management decision making, right down to the individual choices that people make regarding their attitude toward work.

Local networks and the intranet influence managerial decision making; the way in which communication flows from top to bottom and back up again; influence organization structure and serve as the nodal points for the coordination and control activities thereby reducing the needs for "support" divisions such as Human Resource and Finance sections but rather requires a partnership relationship within a community forming environment. Decision making is centralised and operational execution decentralised; structure layers are taken out resulting in flatter organizations with a wider span of control; the balance of power in organizations is changing; access to information is more readily available except in circumstances where employees are purposefully blinded and deafened by information black-out procedures; the virtual team is a reality and employees can in effect work from home, monitored by the same technology that is used to enable virtual reality, etc.

In this process new organizational forms and forums emerge that are more and more reliant on the individual and self discipline that he or she can muster to remain committed and motivated to work in. This does not imply the end of the team or the end of the bigger group, but it does most definitely imply an employee that is more self-reliant and one that can shuttle between individualism and complete integration in a team or bigger group to achieve work related outputs of high quality in time and on budget.

What, in this paradoxical organization constitutes meaningfulness? Two presumed outcomes of the experience of meaningfulness in the workplace can be described as productive and effective work role behaviour. In addition it would also be possible to use concepts such as engagement, involvement, and commitment etc. to describe the effects of a **meaningful workplace** in the work life of an individual. How is this achieved? The following discussion approaches the workplace as a time-space-event continuum filled with diverse dimensions that somehow influence the individual employee. It is noteworthy to remember that this discussion is merely exploratory in nature so as to create an initial working definition of the construct: A **meaningful workplace**.

3.6.2 Fostering meaningfulness at work



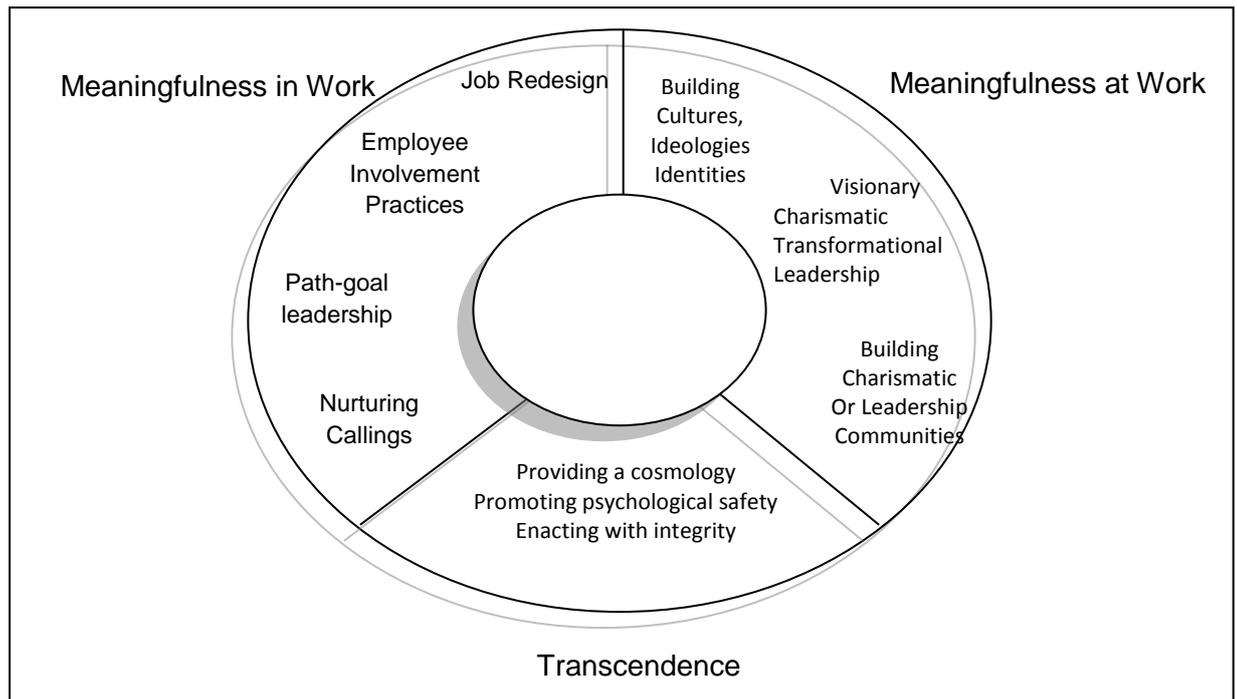
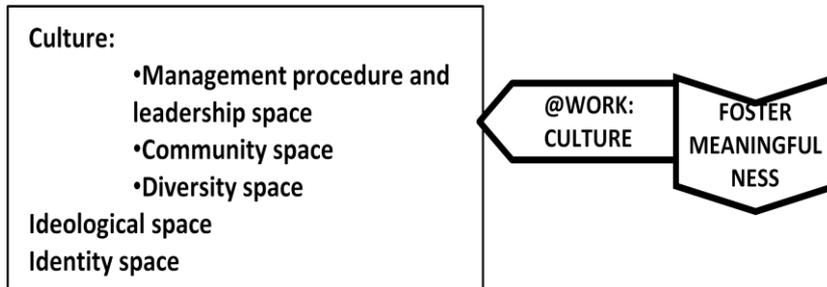


Figure 3.11: Fostering meaningfulness
(Pratt and Ashforth, 2003)

Fostering meaningfulness at work and a so called corporate identity are what (Alvesson, 1990) refers to as the ideational dimensions of organizational life. Building cultures, creating visions and corporate ideologies can create a sense of meaning through resonating with member's identities (Shamir, House and Arthur 1993) and transform the way in which members of the organization view their membership within the bigger whole. This to a certain extent is akin to what is being said about "culture and management space", (where it is stated that culture has to do with conformity as defined by those in power). Whether the practices focus on promoting the goals of the organization or whether focuses on changing the relationship among members, both eventually accomplish "...indoctrinating members into a particular set of beliefs..." which "...often changes how members relate to each other and to non-members" (Pratt and Ashforth, 2003, p. 317). Although such a statement might carry truth based on observation, this not the intent here. Culture here is seen as the all encompassing dynamic within an organization that can be described as an environment conducive to experiencing meaningfulness.

The different categories will be discussed below and the content of Chalofsky will be added as additional content and enrichment of the meaning at work.

3.6.2.1 Culture building, the creation of ideologies and identities



Culture

The expression “organisational culture” refers to the shared assumptions based on values and ethical systems relating to behaviour, which are taken for granted, and which influence the perceptions and reactions of employees to different environments within an organisation (Kreitner and Kinicki, 2001). This statement is overly simplistic in its approach and its assumptions. The *culture process or the activity of culturing* is much more complex than indicated here and deserves a expansive treatment on its own. Mcilwee and Robinson (1992) refer to culture as a phenomenon which is concerned with conformity. Values and norms vary from one workplace to another and from one occupation to another. Culture complexity originates, or culture space is created, in the first line of social contact and work behaviour where different specialist or occupational groups share the same workplace.

Underlying them all, however, is the demand for conformity to the culture as defined by those in power. Conformity is deployed through interaction and impression management. That is, it is more important to appear to conform to a culture than to actually do so. “That appearance of course, must be in culturally accepted forms” (Mcilwee and Robinson, 1992, p. 38).

Culture, ideology and corporate identity, are what (Alvesson, 1990) refers to as the ideational dimensions of organizational life. Building cultures, creating visions and corporate ideologies (can) create a sense of meaning through resonating with member's identities (Shamir, House and Arthur, 1993) and transform the way in which members of the organization view their membership within the bigger whole.

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The ideational events in corporate life (such as creating visions and building ideologies) are structured phenomena that have the purpose of producing effects on the impressions and perceptions of employees (and society). Such events are referred to as pseudo-events, -structures and -actions by Alvesson (1990). These actions or activities define a certain required type of reality which either changes the nature of relationships in the work place, or that promote the goals, vision, values and beliefs of employees in the organizational setting. Vision and collective identities make membership of the organization meaningful.

This is held to be true in general terms, but according to Chalofsky a specifically defined type of culture is a necessity for a **meaningful workplace**. The type of culture that supports a **meaningful workplace** is specified as a "values based culture" (Chalofsky, 2010, p. 93). In broad terms this type of culture results in the following: "corporations that put people before profits outperform businesses whose primary goal is to make money". A balanced perspective between people and revenues/profits is what builds a reputation in society; thereby attracting more talented people.

The Families and Work Institute (in Chalofsky, 2010, p. 101) found that quality of workers' jobs and the supportiveness as characteristics of the workplace were more significant as predictors of "job satisfaction, commitment to their employer and retention", thereby indicating that job and workplace are in actual fact far more important than pay and benefits.

It is however prudent to also apply caution and qualification when discussing workplace culture. When culture is subjected to normative norms and management colonizes organizational culture then culture itself is transformed into a mechanism for manipulation.

Culture has turned from being ... a process embedded in context to an objectified tool of management control (Wright, 1994, p. 4). According to Strangleman and Roberts (1999, p. 49), recent managerial literature describes the role of the manager as no longer simply to co-ordinate the work tasks of employees; managers are also required to set the stage and write the script for the value system and culture that is to be acted out by their workforce (Ezzy 2001, p. 633).

Thus culture could become design for the manipulation of subjectivity. Chalofsky follows a different route when referring to culture. Organizations should endeavour to create a values based culture, which is sustained by concomitant dimensions that support such a culture. The dimensions that are deemed to be of importance are discussed below.

The workplace as management procedures and leadership space (visionary, charismatic and transformational leadership)

Reflecting on the impact of leadership on organizational life, Lagace, in conversation with Podolny, Khurana, and Hill, Popper (2005), notes that the link between leadership and meaning-making has been lost in modern organizational science. Contemporary scholars, organizations, and writers alike relate the value of leadership to economic/financial bottom-line results. The tendency originated after WW II based on two possible reasons. The first reason relates to the tendency that values and purpose are no longer important concepts, especially if there is little evidence that they impact performance. A second reason is that social processes involving meaning-making are complicated phenomena and difficult to quantify using the standard techniques of social science research. Beginning in the 1960s,

organizational scholarship - like social science more broadly - turned rather resolutely away from theory toward statistical research and developed an intense preoccupation with narrowly circumscribed empirical studies. When compared to the more easily quantified indicators of economic performance, difficult-to-quantify constructs like meaning-making seem less useful as an analytical construct. Put more crudely, return on investment makes for a more traceable dependent variable than meaning.”

Does this however mean that there is no connection between leadership and meaning-making in the corporate environment? Leaders are required to creating meaning. It is the leader in and of the organization who acts as catalyst and example of behaviour which is followed by employees.

The need for meaning and a sense for order, Podolny et al. (2005) indicate is a universal need. It is a need that is deeply linked to the definition of what it means to be human. Pretending that this need does not exist or trying to suppress it - as scientific management tried to do in the early part of the century - will only make it come back with a vengeance. Sometimes it does so in relatively benign forms, such as small acts of nonconformity. But it can also emerge more brutally and with quite dysfunctional consequences. Without meaning, individuals tend to become rigid and hollow. Society itself seems shallow and lifeless. People go through the motions, and do so amid distrust, cynicism, indifference, and a sense of alienation.

Building charismatic or leadership communities

Individuals have a need to belong. The belonging of society members, which once was based on the social environment such as the family, religious bodies, schools, clubs, etc., has been replaced by the organization and the corporate body. The advent of the corporation and the massive production units have alienated the individual and created a loss of meaning. The social domain of work – where the individual spends the majority of his/her waking hours – has now become the context for relationships, albeit of a different kind. It seems that where organizations

purposefully employ community building practices, meaning is simultaneously created. This creates space for individuals to express more of who they are in the work environment. (This aspect was addressed in Chapter 3 under the heading “The workplace as spiritual-space.”)

The workplace is cluttered with so called hard measures that direct the activities of the individual according to the organisations’ strategies, goals, and objectives. This is achieved through job design and structure, the structuring of job families, remuneration and reward schemes, other benefits as directed by policies and procedures, organizational rules and procedures, etc. In Chapter 1 these measures or procedures were referred to as the so-called *hard-measures* which have their origins in the scientific approach to management and a modernistic approach and which have become the norm in the discussion of Organization Behaviour.

The fundamental question regarding the managerial activities and their impact on employees pertains to the measure of power by managers and the concomitant retention or loss of dignity by workers. Hodson (1996) investigated this particular problem and concluded that “High management power, based on rule by fiat, creates an absence of mutually agreed upon norms that have currency with workers. This type of workplace is associated with low pride and reduced dignity for workers. Such workplaces can be based on direct supervision, assembly-line technology, or bureaucracy. All three of these organizations of work undermine positive task-related and co-worker-related aspects of work. In contrast, craft and participative organizations of work include a negotiated normative basis for work procedures that holds some currency with workers. Solidarity among workers appears to increase in some participative workplaces. This solidarity may not be a reaction to abuse and indignity as it is in anomic workplaces, but may be the early stages of a more proactive worker strategy reminiscent of the solidarity found under craft organizations of production.” (This matter will be discussed further later on in this chapter.)

The workplace and the place of the individual is determined and fixed by the implementation of policies, procedures, work instructions, job descriptions or work role descriptions and definitions, remuneration, rewards, benefits, formal structures

and reporting lines and the associated protocols, etc. This represents the domain of the formal management interventions and mostly reflects the transactional dimensions of the workplace experience. The underlying perspectives were discussed in Chapter 1 and will not be repeated here.

As a value driven culture it is asserted that values based leadership serves as a conduit towards a **meaningful workplace**. Chalofsky (2010) refers to and discusses “servant leadership” as the idealised profile to facilitate the conditions that could lead to the **meaningful workplace**. Without going into a detailed discussion of servant leadership it is sufficient to list the characteristics that serve the idealised profile of servant leaders. These include:

- Listening
- Empathy
- Healing
- Awareness
- Persuasion
- Conceptualisation
- Foresight
- Stewardship
- Commitment to the growth of people
- Building community

Chalofsky states two important matters regarding leadership. On the one hand it is stated that “strong leadership does not have within itself the capability to create the fundamental changes our organizations require” (2010, p. 99). This is as a result of the way in which Organizational- Management Theory has framed the role of leaders. On the other hand it is also stated that “leadership can and should be seen as a crucial but equal role to the other technical, administrative, and professional roles in the organization”.

The workplace as community space

The discussion here focuses on the possibility of creating the conditions for community. Why is the dimension of “community” in the workplace an important dimension that supports the construct: **Meaningful workplace**? Manion and Bartholomew (2004) refer to the need by humans for community in strong terms referring to this need as a “yearning”. Referring to the American context, they assert that the average American has added at least one additional month to their working year. (Whether this is true and whether this assertion can serve as a broad generalization needs to be seen. Here it is not accepted without due cognizance of the different contexts within which such observations is embedded.) What does seem to be a general observation across the globe is that people generally have less discretionary time and have thus become alienated from those institutions that provide community formation in society (note previous discussions in this regard). “Social scientists explain the yearning for community as a reaction to decades of individualism” (Manion et al., 2004, p. 47).

Community is a form of human association that binds people. It is far more than simply a group of people living or working together who share common interests and projects. It is a psychological reality, an act of will that constructs a tie that really binds (Manion and Bartholomew, 2004, p. 47). According to Rousseau in Manion et al (2004, p. 47) “community is a social reality and our motives determine whether it happens or not.”. “Workplace community”, according to Naylor, Willimon and Osterberg (date unknown, p. 42), “is a partnership of free people committed to the care of each other’s minds, body, heart and soul through participatory means”. Community, according to these authors is about cooperation, sharing, commitment, communication, trust, justice, empowerment, adaptability, and tension reduction.

This perspective does not mean that community as a dimension of values based culture is without stumbling blocks. Naylor et al. (date unknown) assert that there are many stumbling blocks in the process of creating workplace community which include factors such as unabashed individuals, narcissism, authoritarianism, excessive inequality, distrust, alienation, competing interests, dependency, and size.

The elements of community

Workplace community is a multifaceted phenomenon in organizations.

- Community is characterized by an attitude of inclusiveness as opposed to exclusivity. It is an attempt to continuously expand itself and to include new members. This is however not an absolute, simply because there might be reasons to exclude certain individuals.
- “Commitment is a second key aspect of community” (Manion et al., 2004, p. 48). The commitment of individuals binds them to the group and which in itself contains an element of sacrifice in the sense of giving something up. The sacrifice will most probably be related to the dimension of independence as commitment in essence entails participation in the community (Manion et al., 2004).
- Consensus as a way of reaching decisions about actions to be taken is another characteristic or element of community. Consensus is a process that works only in an open and trusting environment, according to Manion et al. (2004).
- Realism is a further element or characteristic of workplace communities. This dimension emanates from the perspective that a community includes members with many different points of view and the freedom to express these. The community therefore is confronted with varying perspectives and thus comes to an appreciation of the whole instead of fragments of a situation or task, or whatever the case may be.
- Contemplation or self-evaluation is another element or characteristic of workplace communities. “Communities continually examine themselves based on their self-awareness and the recognition of their strengths and weaknesses” (Manion et al., 2004, p. 49).
- Safety is an important element of workplace communities. Psychologically, members must feel safe in expressing themselves and to be themselves “without apology or explanation” (Manion et al., 2004, p. 49).
- Naylor et al., (date unknown) refer to the following dimensions of workplace communities:

- Shared vision
- Boundaries
- Common values
- Empowerment
- Responsibility sharing
- Growth and development
- Tension reduction
- Education
- Feedback
- Friendship

These dimensions or characteristics not only overlap with the perspectives of Manion et al (2004) but also resonate with the perspective on the “whole integrated self” of Chalofsky (2010).

Community is viewed as one of the essential dimensions towards reframing the workplace into a meaningful place to work in. (See Chalofsky, 2010, p. 143 and following pages).

The workplace as diversity space

In a certain sense of the word all the foregoing and following workplace dimensions could be discussed under the heading of diversity. It is here separated and isolated simply because it is deemed necessary to at least adorn the menu with the heading “diversity”.

Diversity, loosely defined, refers to human qualities that are different from our own and those of groups to which we belong; but that are manifested in other individuals and groups. Dimensions of diversity include but are not limited to: age, ethnicity, gender, physical abilities/qualities, race, sexual orientation, educational background, geographic location, income, marital status, military experience, parental status, religious beliefs, work experience, job classification, psychological structure (if such

an expression may be used) including personality structure, traits, competencies, skill sets, qualification, and many more dimensions of being human.

One of the key phrases in management language is Managing Diversity. In the South African context this expression has been radically reinterpreted to refer to race and gender issues and as such closely linked to rectifying the “wrongs of the past” and rebalancing the workforce based on Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) targets. This viewpoint ignores the fact that diversity can be defined in terms of 3 dimensions of which the primary dimension refers to “...immutable human differences that are inborn and/or exert ...an ongoing influence on our life”. (Rasmussen, 1964) in De Beer and Radley (2000, p. 5). These differences include age, ethnicity, gender, physical abilities/qualities, race and sexual orientation, to name but a few.

The secondary dimensions include immutable characteristics which include but are not limited to “...educational background, geographical location, income, marital statuses, parental role, religious orientation, work experiences...” etc (De Beer and Radley, 2000, p. 6).

The third dimension of diversity refers to and includes sub-conscious and unconscious factors that affect the behaviour of employees in the workplace. This dimension refers to so called workplace within (Hirschhorn, 2000), emotional capital (Thomson, 1998), the psychodynamics of Organizational Behaviour Cilliers and Koortzen (2000).

Ideology

Alvesson (1990) refers to one strain of organizational ideology as the “ideology of managerialism” that tends to strengthen the opportunities by managers for extending their impact and effect on employees. According to Alvesson (1990, p. 218) “The commendability of an effective and a far-reaching managerial influence is a core part of the ideology of managerialism but the articulation of the consequences of this influence is very weak” It seems to be

grounded in a world view, a set of beliefs and values, which indicate that the top managers of corporations and other organizations are a highly important group, whose actions are normally supposed to support the social good (whatever that might be).

Trice and Beyer (1985) in Alvesson (1991, p. 219) appear to assume that top management is the legitimate interpreter of the appropriate ideologies and values in an organization and various tricks for manipulating these are suggested.” The problem in this regard is that the ultimate purpose of this type of ideology remains hidden, whether it is might be profits, economic growth, job satisfaction, strengthening of management power *etc.*

A managerialist ideology seems to contradict Habermas' ideal speech and hence emancipation (Alvesson, 1991, p. 219). In such an ideological scheme managerial behaviour is established as ideological control in organizational settings, targeting the emotions, attitudes, the definition and understanding of social reality, people's world views and organizational perspectives.

This however is not what Pratt and Ashforth (2003) intend when discussing or ideologies, culture and identity. Their perspective can possibly be perceived as an ideology of community, which is a total different type of ideology in the workplace (see discussion above). In this regard they concur with Ashforth and Vaidyanath (2002) who relate identity, membership, values, and as the moments that come together to create a “reality” or “truth” that can also be referred to as ideology. This ideology refers to the accepted reality of organization life in a specific organizational context and can therefore differ from organization to organization.

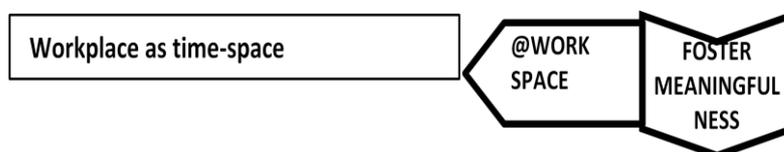
Identity

Identity could be defined from various perspectives such as for instance the role that a person fulfils whether at work, in a religious community, or within another social context (Ashforth, 1989; Pratt and Ashforth, 2003). It is also possible to determine identity according to the networks within which an individual is known.

This perspective takes as a departure point the questions that determine where a person belongs, and how a person relates to others including the contribution that a person makes and inevitably use group dynamics and positioning as the context to define identity. In the scheme of Pratt and Ashforth (2003, p. 312) “three fundamental assumptions underlie ‘meaningfulness’ from an identity perspective”. In this scheme meaningfulness at work arises from through the integration of identity with roles and membership. In their scheme of reasoning (Pratt and Ashforth, 2003) the following fundamental questions and their interrelationship guide the fostering of meaningfulness at work: “Roles (What am I doing?), membership (Where do I belong?), identity (Who am I?), and meaningfulness (Why am I here?)” (2003, p. 312). The relationship between the different questions and their context are dynamic, interactive, and very much reciprocal in nature. The conclusion drawn from this perspective is that meaningfulness is an ongoing and always unfolding phenomenon and can thus never be an end state of achievement. The integration of and between the different propositions indicated by the questions above, does not imply “an all or nothing proposition”.

It might seem as if individuals are passive respondents and receivers of organizational practices that are created in the context of work. It should however always be remembered that individuals “help create the meanings that express and confirm their desired sense of self” (Pratt and Ashforth, 2003, p. 314)

3.6.2.2 The workplace as time space



The workplace as mental space is at the same time also a time space continuum. To a certain extent time dictates the flow of work related activities. People complete certain activities within a time frame that are either contractually predetermined or self determined without durational boundaries.

The complexities of time in the workplace is aptly described by Trompenaars (1999, p. 679 Quoting Augustine.) “The present has, therefore, three dimensions...the present of past things, the present of present things and present of future things”. The workplace as time space is closely related to the dimensions of diversity and cultural multiplicity. Different cultures perceive time in different ways. Time space management increases in complexity when viewed in relation to cultural diversity in the workplace. This is valid when considering the diverse cultural perspectives on time as a life phenomenon. Employees must have some shared perspectives and even perceptions regarding time in the work place. Time can be viewed as sequential, thus connecting time to “...a series of passing events, or whether it is synchronic, with past present and future interrelated, so that ideas about the future and memories of the past both shape present action” (Trompenaars, 1999, p. 679.) Employees are constantly confronted with the future requirements of organizational life. Top management naturally tend to project the life of the organization into the future and require work roles that will satisfy the future requirements of the organization. There is however an anomaly in this respect. Although employees are guided towards the future the work role still requires functions that will serve the objectives of the organization in the present. The future orientation is often driven by visions, mission statements and change management processes. A synchronous time perspective and activities that fit into “dead time” can enhance the experience of meaning when executed to achieve some goal or objective. This could be termed – synchronous multitasking – an approach that fills dead time between tasks with meaningful activity.

O’Conaill and Frohlich (1995) set out to investigate the use of time space in the workplace by measuring duration and content of interruptions.

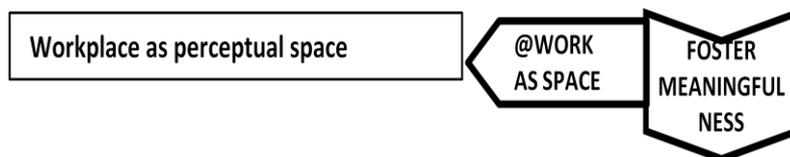
Very little is known about what might be called time space in the workplace; defined as the intervals of time into which people organise their work. Despite the proliferation of both paper and electronic time management systems there are very few scientific studies of *time management behaviour* at work. One reason for this is the very short time window of most workplace and human factors studies. A second reason is that many studies rely on reports of time

allocation which are demonstrably inaccurate compared to actual measures. Interruptions raise questions of both practical and theoretical significance. How many interruptions occur at work? What proportion of time do they consume? How many are resisted rather than taken? Who benefits from the ensuing interactions? How disruptive are interruptions to the prior task being carried out prior to the interruption?

Interruptions are always unplanned and unscheduled and reduce the time employees spend on their primary task in a continuous way. This leads to disruptive behaviour which, especially when working under pressure, creates irritated behaviour. The reason for this in most cases is that the initiator of the interruption gains more than the recipient thereof. Some measure of filtering of interruptions would be desirable and beneficial to determine whether the interruption is warranted and desirable as it disrupts the primary task of the performer. Whichever way the reasoning goes, interruptions are exactly what the word means and can frustrate the attempts of performers to complete tasks within set time frames, thus resulting in having to cope with measures that possibly rate them as underperforming.

The workplace as time-space requires that employees clearly understand their respective work roles; to be motivated and to apply insight to identify the most important tasks and to complete these first; to not waste time and do not prolong “dead time”; to work efficient and effective; all of which can be instilled as values relating to current task role behaviour.

3.6.2.3 The workplace as perceptual space



The workplace can be described as a perceptual and social response place. Human perception can loosely be defined or described as the process of awareness and/or understanding of sensory information that is processed cognitively and has a psychological effect

on the human which stimulates action or a reaction. Perception is and the resultant action is the result of the interplay of sensory, cognitive and psychological processes, informed by experience, cultural determinants, education, personality traits etc. upon which we react. Our cognitive processes enable us to interpret and understand our environment. These processes are based on the recognition of objects, which in this case resembles information. Objects and information must be recognised so as to enable the individual or groups of individuals to meaningfully interact with their environment. Perception is however not limited to objects and events but includes the social interaction between individuals and groups in the work environment. Social perception however is a more complex process as it entails the way in which people perceive each other. According to Kreitner and Kinicki (2001, p. 173) social perception advances through a four stage process, which commences with “selective attention/comprehension” (the process of conscious awareness/becoming consciously aware of things or people, focusing on salient stimuli), continuous through stage 2 i.e. “encoding and simplification” (stimuli and/or observed phenomena are understood in terms of existing schemata, which represent the mental images of a particular event, phenomenon, or type of stimulus) and enters stage 3 “storage and retention” (the storage of information in the memory –long and short term – and which can be labelled as event memory, semantic memory and person memory) and eventually closes with “retrieval and response” (the basis for judgments and decision making). Although this model is valuable in terms of understanding perception as stimulus response process, it does however not address the real issue as far as the dynamic of the workplace as perception space is concerned. It is therefore necessary to delve a bit deeper into the dynamics of perception as a stimulus and response process.

Chalofsky refers to the socialising processes that take place either as spontaneous or formally arranged events within the context of work communities and where the focus is on the inclusion of diversity that is brought into the organization by its employees (2010, pp. 89;127). This implies a focus on social behaviour in the workplace.

It is therefore at least necessary; to not only, in general terms, indicate the relationship between perception and behaviour, but more specifically the

relationship between perception and social behaviour in the workplace. As far as the perception-behaviour linkage is concerned Dijksterhuis and Bargh (2001) distinguish two historical positions in this regard.

The behaviourist thesis is that the S-R bonds lead to responses that flow directly from perceived stimuli. Stated differently, perception leads directly to action. The responses that flow directly from stimuli, are however not related to imitations of the perceived event as Dijksterhuis et al (2001, p. 2) propose, but are “stamped in responses to stimuli based on one's past reinforcement history”.

A second perspective that also differs from Dijksterhuis and Bargh is the so-called notion of affordances as propagated by Gibson (1979) and McArthur and Baron (1983), in Dijksterhuis and Bargh (2001, p. 2). Environmental responses in this scheme “directly suggest the appropriate behavioural response to them: the grilled lobster says ‘eat me’ and the cold glass of beer says ‘drink me’”.

The perception-behavior link argued for within the context of the workplace as perceptual and social response space is based on the perspective of Dijksterhuis and Bargh. They state (2001) that, the human (and basic animal) tendency is to act in the same way as we see others act and contend that:

This phenomenon flows directly from a fact of mental representation and organization--that perceptual and behavioral representations for the same action overlap. Thus the effect is a natural consequence of the automatic activation of the behavioral response by the perception of someone else doing the same thing. (2001, p. 2)

The following discussion is based on Dijksterhuis and Bargh (2001).

Socially we perceive what may be referred to as “*observables*, such as gestures, facial expressions, and movements and we hear their voices and the words that they utter, as well as other indicators such as accents or tone of voice. Humans spontaneously generate “trait inferences”, based on observed behaviour within a particular context or environment, such as for instance, honesty, intelligence, well versed, etc. However social perception goes beyond presented information in

speech and behaviour in the immediate context, through the activation or triggering of stereotypes, which can be described as “integrated collections of trait concepts purportedly descriptive of the social group in question”. The mental activation of stereotypes does not have a one-to-one “correspondence with current events being perceived”.

Humans tend to imitate these behaviours that they perceive as Dijksterhuis and Bargh (2001) indicate. After viewing a myriad of experiments they conclude:

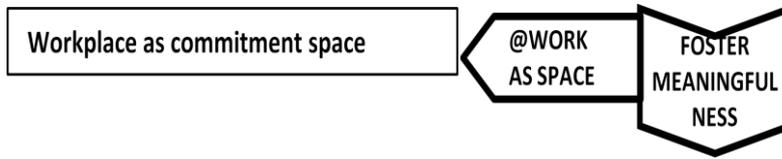
In sum, there is considerable evidence showing that people automatically imitate observed behavior--ranging from facial expression and postures to speech patterns. There is no evidence for the strategic nature of the imitation effects, whereas the support for the automatic and unintentional nature of imitation is evident.

People do not necessarily imitate because they want to imitate. This perspective is indicative of the phenomenon that social perception entails much more than the encoding of observable behaviour. The tendency within humans is to automatically imitate “social behavior in terms of the trait concepts relevant to it (e.g., Bargh, 1994; Gilbert, 1989; Higgins, 1989; Winter & Uleman, 1984; Uleman, Newman, & Moskowitz, 1996), in Dijksterhuis and Bargh (2001).

The human tendency according to these researchers is to imitate or match the behavior we perceive and observe in the social environment and this seems to impact on overt social behaviour. In this sense “imitation is safe as a basic, default behavioral tendency”, and is most probably linked to the human need to belong and to be accepted by others (most probably implying the tendency towards community). Imitation creates a measure of cohesion in social relationships especially in organizational settings where the diverse set of cultures, patterns, traits etc, must be cemented into a cohesive unit for the sake of not only the psychological survival of the individual, but for the continuous growth of the organization as well.

To conclude: Automatic imitation is safe and it leads to social acceptance and belonging.

The workplace as commitment space



Commitment can be described as an attitude of “non compromise” in respect of the achievement of certain goals and objectives; a value that drives individual behaviour towards goal achievement, implying a non-wavering approach in the movement towards a purpose. It is an intra-personal pledge to do what is necessary to achieve what is important. In this way commitment borders on and possibly overlaps with motivation, a concept that is defined as “a process of arousing, directing, and sustaining goal directed behaviour” (Weiss, 2001, p. 93).

Commitment as an attitude of non compromise can be applied to different workplace dimensions. Commitment towards the personal work role represents one dimension, whilst commitment to the organization, supervisor, manager, peers, group members, etc. represents other commitment dimensions or organizational entities. The question is whether employees, who are committed, are better of than those that aren't in the sense that they might be happier, mentally healthier in the work place, and more satisfied with their work place and career? From an organisational or managerial perspective, commitment matters especially in view of the many rapid changes that organisations have to successfully negotiate for survival. Can I trust my employees in such torrid times? Commitment arguably ensures the trust that is required to survive (Meyer and Allen, 1997). Ideally employees should demonstrate behaviour that suggests cognitive as well emotional or affective commitment. Such commitment is deemed to be symptomatic of the experience of meaning in the particular workplace as it entails a match of values and positive behaviour markers and at the same time reflects voluntarism as opposed to forceful work attendance. Meyer and Allen (1997) refer to a further dimension in the commitment discussion i.e. continuance commitment. Continuance commitment ensures a longer sojourn within the organizational environment and relates to citizenship behaviour.

It would however be an incomplete discussion, if the management dimension emanating from Pfeiffer's research were not added in this respect. Employee ownership (Pfeiffer in Bowie, 1998) is referred to as one of the 16 (later reduced to seven) fundamental management principles that Pfeiffer advocates as non negotiable for organizational success. The reasoning behind this imperative is that the people dimension eventually makes the critical difference as far as organizational sustainability, effectiveness and success is concerned. Pierce, Kostova, and Dirks (2001) refer to the phenomenon of psychological ownership as one of the more fundamental psychological experiences of the human condition and state that the feeling of ownership is an integral part of the human condition, based on feelings of ownership toward various objects, both material and immaterial in nature; which have important behavioural, emotional, and psychological consequences. Possessions according to Dittmar (1992, p. 65) "shape our consciousness, our self-awareness, and our perception of the world" (Dittmar, 1992, p. 65). Control over space per se and personalization of space as an assertion of identity are two satisfactions derived from ownership. Possessions also provide the individual with "a place," symbolically captured by the concept of "home" (Dreyfus, 1991; Heidegger, 1967; Steiner, 1978; Weil, 1952, in Pierce et. al., 2001). Drawing on the research and writings by these authors, Pierce et al (2001) suggest that the roots of psychological ownership are to be found in three basic or main motives, "... (1) efficacy and effectance, (2) self-identity, and (3) "having a place".

The question in this regards is whether this theoretical perspective is valid in the context of an organization; and whether the conditions do (or can) exist that mediate psychological ownership?

A key characteristic of the phenomenon of ownership of an object appears to be the control over that object. Organization members are provided with ample opportunity to exercise ownership (in varying degrees) and thus control over job related factors such as for instance job design, job workflow design, etc. as potential targets of psychological ownership (See Hackman & Oldham, 1980). A greater measure of

autonomy will increase the likelihood of emerging feelings of ownership toward the job and in an extended manner also towards the organization.

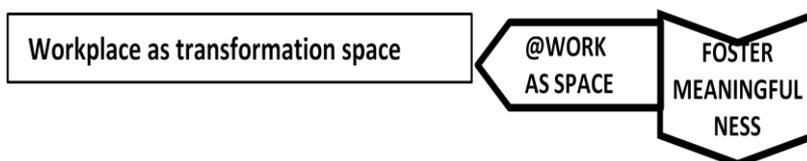
The question that must be answered is whether ownership somehow facilitates commitment? O'driscoll et al (2006) indicate through their research that less structured work environments seem to be more conducive to the development of feelings of psychological ownership for the job and organization than are more highly structured work environments that allow less personal control.

Results from this investigation suggest that psychological ownership (especially feelings of ownership for the organization) mediates the relationship of work environment structure with employee citizenship behaviors and organizational commitment” (2006, p. 388).

The authors conclude:

Total work environment structure exhibited a positive and significant relationship ($p < .05$) with organizational commitment. Thus, with one exception, ...four of the five relationships are statistically significant, suggesting that low levels of work environment structure were positively associated with employee affective commitment and citizenship behavior. Each of the work environment structuring variables (technology, autonomy, and participative decision making) had a significant and positive relationship with employees’ affective commitment to their organization.

3.6.2.4 The workplace as transformation space



The purpose of this paragraph is not primarily aimed at identifying the events that take place in the workplace, but to eclectically refer to the implications of events that do take place. A list of events could become a never ending exercise without any meaning. It is

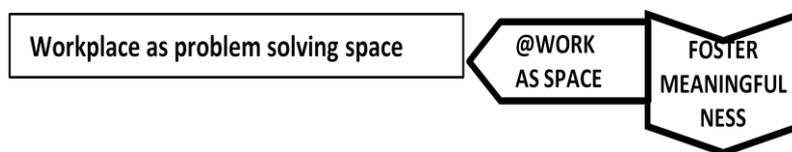
perhaps more fruitful to conceptualise the main events that take place and are rife in Organizational life.

Work role behaviour is not the only event that takes place in the work place. The workplace is a space filled with a multitude of stimuli and events which range from activities to relationships in the formal as well as the informal sense of the word, which all impact on either a transactional or transformational level. Events range from hard factors connected to work or related to work include not only the tasks that are directly associated with work, but also include events such as structural positioning within a smaller context, the remuneration to and benefit events, the performance management event promotional events or the lack thereof, etc., thus the transactional events which seem to be rather stable over time. The opposing spectrum of events includes the psychological and emotional events based on interactions, and includes interaction with superiors and subordinates as well as, peers, which together with change interventions, be referred to as transformational events. The workplace is thus a geographically identifiable time-space event loaded with experiences and events which can be positive or negative. Another dimension must however be added to this understanding. A workplace is also filled with diverse activities which immediately imply that there are sub – workplaces in the workplace. The activities are normally structured in such a way as to contribute towards a single value chain which produces a product or a service irrespective of whether this is for profit or not or whether it is in a corporate environment or in a home-office or study/studio.

The most important event in the workplace at present seems to be the numerous and compounded change events that take place on a regular basis. The events of change and transformation are based on business requirements and driven by the theory and practice of Organizational Development. The workplace and broader context of industry and environment are in constant flux, requiring realignment and transformation interventions. These can impact the individual employee or the group in either negative or positive terms. This however is not the place to divulge in the different perspectives or reasons why some change interventions are successful while others are not. Suffice to state that change impacts the employee and that the impact can either establish a positive or negative perception of the workplace

thereby creating negative or positive experience. One of the effects of this impact, namely stress, must be noted as a potentially disrupting implication of change in the work place. Stress in the workplace is caused by the fundamentals of change (Cartwright and Cooper, 1997, p. 3). Stress in itself represents an event of potentially devastating magnitude in organizational life as a result of employees not being in control and a high work load

3.6.2.5 The workplace as problem solving space



The workplace and associated activities exist because of the perceived needs or problems that must be or have to be solved in society. The workplace is called into existence because of this need or imperative. The workplace is therefore characterized by geographical boundaries, time-space, events, and problem solving perspectives. Middleton (2002) refers to the work of Newell and Simon (1972) that conceptualised the process. In Newell and Simon's theory, problems are conceptualized as occurring in a problem space. The problem space contains three elements: a problem state, which is the information the problem-solver, knows about the problem; a goal state, which constitutes the solution to the problem; and a search space, which consists of all the strategies that may be employed to solve the problem”.

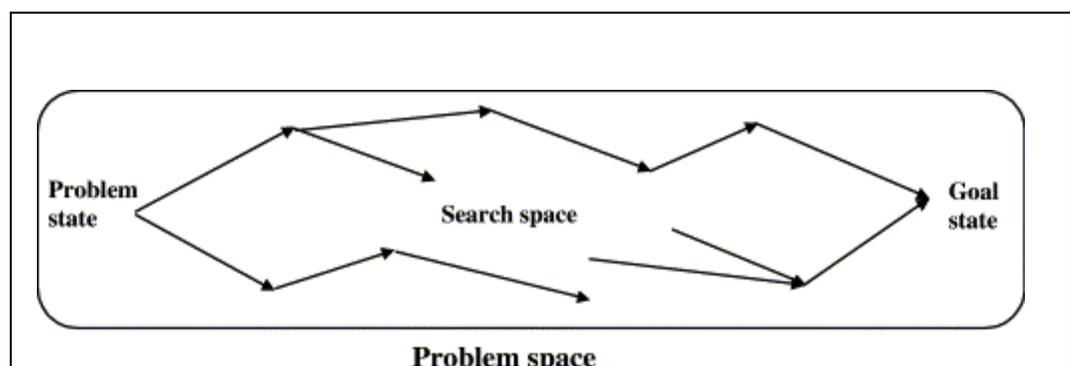


Figure 3.12: Depiction of Newell And Simon's (1972) concept of a problem.

(Middleton 2002)

Middleton modified the basic problem solving model of Newell and Simon to accentuate the complexity of the problem solving process in a contemporary work environment.

The modified model is able to represent the features of complex, ill-defined problems and problems where a new solution may be required. The model provides a structure for analyzing problems and the strategies people use to solve them. A problem space is the description of a problem and the possible strategies that are known to be available to solve it. Whether a particular problem-solver utilizes the available strategies depends on their level of knowledge. Thus, problems exist both as external task environments and as representations of the task in the working memory of problem solvers (Middleton, 2002, p. 70).

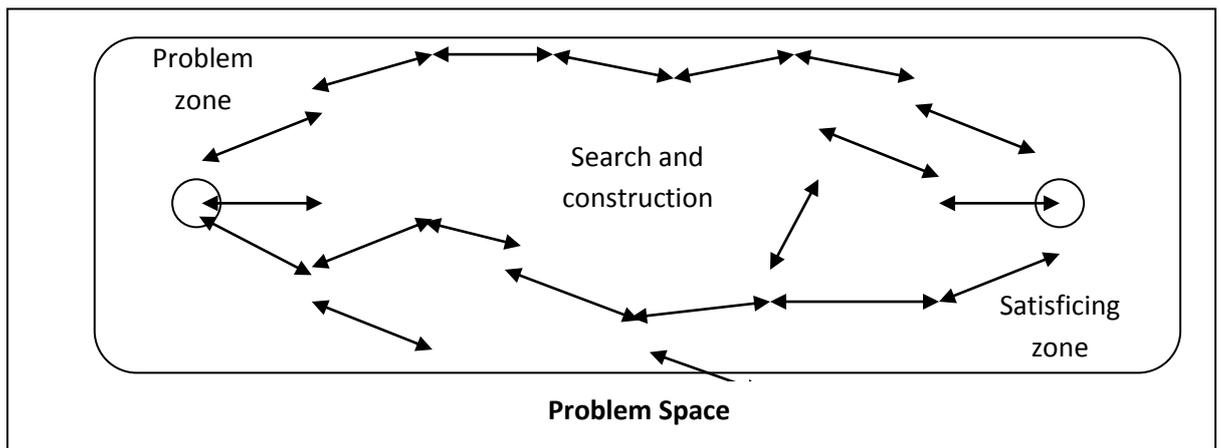
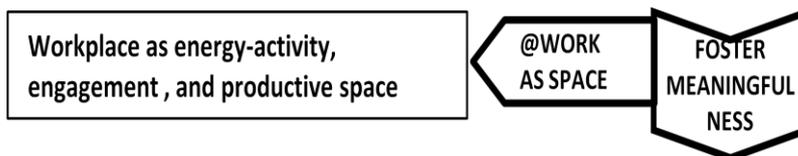


Figure 3.13: Newell and Simon's (1972) as presented by Middleton, 2002, p. 69)

3.6.2.6 The workplace as energy-activity, engagement, and productive space



In addition to the workplace being described as geographical space, time space, transformation-event space, and problem solving space, it can also be described as energy-activity space. This refers to the energy that is spent during the performance of work role

tasks by the individual employee. Work could be viewed as an energy expending activity in an attempt to transform the life context.

The workplace is the space where activity takes place. An individual or group of individuals perform an activity or a string of activities which, when stringed together produce a pre-defined output in the form of a product or a service. These activities are normally referred to as work or as a job. Whichever way these activities are perceived and however long it takes to complete them or to string them together as an end-to-end process is irrelevant. Energy spent on performing the activities in the activity-energy-space produces an output. The output is aligned with a predefined strategy which is based on the reason for existence of the particular work space.

The underlying dynamic involved in this process is the varying degree to which people use of their selves physically, cognitively, psychologically/emotionally in work role performance. This dynamic has implications for both their work and their own experience and perception of the workplace (Kahn 1990).

The fundamental question regarding the psychological engagement/disengagement of employees refers to the degree in which they are really present in their work role. An illustrative Table will most effectively convey the meanings of the concepts personal engagement and disengagement (The following Table 3.7 is based on Kahn 1990).

Column 1 contains the concepts that are viewed to be of importance in the context of the current paragraph. The expenditure of energy and the activities that are performed during work role performance can either be associated with personal engagement which, by means of reduction, implies higher levels of energy or disengagement which implies lower levels of energy and self employment. The second column defines the concepts and provides the necessary background to the previous statement.

Table 3.7: Energy and engagement (Based On Kahn, 1990)

Concept	Definition
Personal Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Refers to the “harnessing of organization members’ selves to their work roles; in engagement people simultaneously employ and express themselves physically, emotionally and cognitively during work role performances ▪ Self employment underlies what such concepts as effort, involvement, mindfulness, intrinsic motivation ▪ Self expression refers to creativity, use of personal voice, emotional expression, authenticity, non defensive communication, playfulness, ethical behaviour
Personal Disengagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This refers to the uncoupling of selves from work roles; in disengagement people withdraw and defend themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally during role performance ▪ Withdrawal of personal dimensions in role performance underlies what has been referred to as automatic or robotic behaviour, burn out, apathetic or detached , effortless behaviour ▪ Defensive behaviour in work role performance has been referred to as defensive, impersonal or emotionally inexpressive, bureaucratic, self estranged (alienated), closed

Three underlying psychological factors were identified that act as catalysts for either engagement or disengagement in the work place and during work role performance. Psychological meaningfulness, safety and availability each interplay in the field of personal engagement an disengagement and are briefly noted in Table 3.8 below.

Table 3.8 Psychological conditions pertaining to engagement/disengagement

Underlying Psychological Conditions pertaining to Engagement/Disengagement			
	Psychological Meaningfulness	Psychological safety	Psychological Availability
Definition	The sense of a return on investment of the self in work role behaviour	The sense of being able to show and employ the self without fear of negative consequences to self-image, status, or career	The sense of possessing the physical, emotional and psychological resources necessary for investing the self in role performance
Experiential components	Feeling worthwhile, valued, valuable, feeling able to give to and receive from work and others in role performance	Feeling that the situation is trustworthy, emotionally secure and safe, predictable and clear iro behavioural consequences	Feeling capable of driving physical, intellectual, and emotional energies into role performances
Influenced by	<p>Task characteristics</p> <p>Psychologically meaningful when tasks are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Challenging Clearly delineated Varied Creative Simultaneously demanding and routine (benefit from existing competence whilst experiencing growth and learning) <p>Role characteristics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roles that identify members as implicitly required role (identity) Roles that carry status or influence (aligned with preferred self image and status) <p>Work interactions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpersonal relationships that promote dignity, self 	<p>Interpersonal relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offering support, trust, openness, flexibility and lack of threat Group and intergroup dynamics Informal, room to safely express aspects of the self Management style and process Leadership behaviour that demonstrates support, resilience, integrity, consistency, evokes trust and demonstrates competence Organizational norms Shared expectations in respect of behaviours and emotions that leave room for the investment (employment) of the self role performance 	<p>Physical and emotional energy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sufficient levels of energy (physical, mental and emotional) available for investment in role performance Insecurity Sufficient levels of confidence in own abilities and status Level of self consciousness and ambivalence about fit in social system Sufficient emotional and psychological space for self investment in role performance Non-work life The absence of external matters that leave people free to invest in

Underlying Psychological Conditions pertaining to Engagement/Disengagement			
	Psychological Meaningfulness	Psychological safety	Psychological Availability
	appreciation, sense of value, inclusion of personal and professional elements		their own self in role performance

The structure as briefly discussed addresses the dimensions of people's emotional reaction to conscious and unconscious phenomena in the workplace and at the same time the

...objective properties of jobs, roles, and work contexts; the primacy of people's experiences of themselves and their contexts as the mediator of the depths to which they employ and express or withdraw and defend themselves during role performances; and the self -in-role as unit of analysis, a focus on how both person and role are enlivened or deadened during role performances (Kahn, 1990, p. 717).

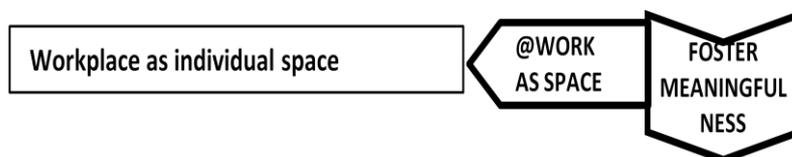
In essence, it is the value of commitment and the power of motivation (read: meaning or the lack thereof) that drives work related behaviour in either a positive or a negative direction. Positively speaking, behaviour that is driven by a value system that sustains goal directed behaviour produces outcomes that comply with the purpose and desired results within the task structure for which the individual is responsible. The opposite of this is behaviour that, driven in the opposite direction of the task at hand, cannot produce outcomes, which relate to the structure and purpose of the task at hand, and that consequently facilitate meaninglessness.

In addition research by Fallon et al. (2000) indicated that conscientiousness as an overall measure was significantly and positively correlated to productive work behaviour. The subscales of conscientiousness include hard work/dependability, orderliness, self control, impulsiveness, loyalty and consideration. Further analyses indicate a significant and positive correlation with certain criteria that was used as comparative measures. In addition to conscientiousness as a predictor for productive work behaviour, it was also significantly and positively correlated to whether supervisors would rehire a certain employee; the orderliness as well as

hard work/dependability measure were significantly and positively correlated to composite/overall performance and attendance, while the measure of consideration was positively and significantly correlated to the intent of supervisors to rehire an individual.

It is fair to state that productive behaviour is not merely based on observable behaviour but is undergirded by certain psychological conditions. Productive work-role behaviour is behaviour that creates and maintains a flow of outcomes that relate to the purpose of the individual's responsibility in a working environment, which in turn relates to the purpose of the organization within which the individual functions. Seen from this perspective "productive work-role behaviour" can be defined as "...a certain manner of existing..." which draws the individual into a mode of coexistence with the working environment. The individual is not the only constituent in this environment, but his or her consciousness is focussed on the concrete structure of required achievements (together with others), which represents a concrete structure of predefined work related outcomes, that eventually become the milieu of the individual's conscious working life. (This definition was adapted from Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1942), "The Structure of Behaviour").

3.6.2.7 The workplace as individual space



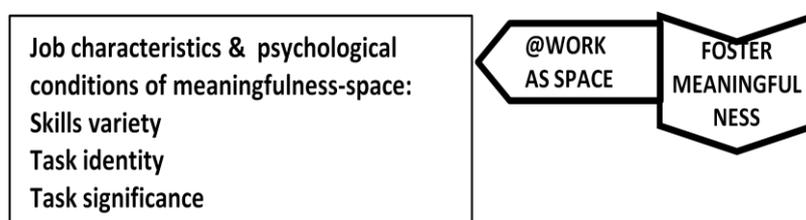
The paragraphs above identify some but not by any means all the factors that clutter the workplace. These nevertheless provide a sufficient perspective of the magnitude and extent as well as the complexity of organizational dimensions that have an influence on the experiences of employees, and of the demands that are made on workers in terms of physical, cognitive and psychological dimensions. The workplace is by no means a simplistic environment guided by linear processes and uncomplicated events.

The individual fits into a group, made up of many individuals, and can eventually define his or her position in the group. At the same time, however the group is dependent on the individual to perform certain tasks that contribute towards the flow of events that will eventually lead to an organizational output. Thus, seen from the perspective of the work breakdown structure of the organization, the individual constitutes the organization, and, to a certain extent, is the organization, albeit a minute part thereof.

On the other hand, the organization represents the body of tasks and activities, arranged in a logical manner so as to eventually provide an output, which is referred to as the purpose of the organization. In the sequence of events the “organization” recruits, selects, retains, manages – remunerates and rewards, trains, promotes, motivates, - the individual to perform at the highest possible level of quality within specific time frames. To this should also be added, the events and purposeful measures that foster meaningfulness at work.

The demands on the individual seen from a psychodynamic point of view are extreme to say the least. The individual not only requires the necessary competencies to cope with work role tasks as such, but also interpersonal adeptness and intrapersonal resilience to create a mental map and manage him/her through the spaces in the work place.

3.6.2.8 The workplace: job characteristics and psychological meaningfulness space (the Hackman – Oldham job characteristics model)



The Job Characteristics

Model of Hackman and Oldham (1980) argues that

(E)ssentially, enriched or complex jobs are associated with increased job satisfaction, motivation, and work performance. More specifically, they assumed that five core job characteristics (i.e., skill variety, task

identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback from job) influence three critical psychological states (i.e., experienced meaningfulness of the work, experienced responsibility for outcomes of the work, and knowledge of the actual results of the work activities), which in turn affect work outcomes (i.e., internal work motivation, growth satisfaction, overall job satisfaction, work effectiveness, and absenteeism) (Fried and Ferris, 1987, p. 40)

Skills variety is an inventory of the abilities, capacities, qualifications, and career goals of the employees, or their total competency set – i.e. that which they bring to a work role which enables them to perform a variety of task within the total work role. “Skill variety” represents the perceived variety and complexity of skills and talents required to perform the job.

Task Identity refers to the extent to which a work role involves an end-to-end identifiable piece of work with a visible outcome, as opposed to performing a only a portion of the job. Task identity is an important component of job satisfaction. .

Task significance is the extent to which an identifiable piece of work (job) affects, or is important to, others within or outside the organization and the organization as whole. A person’s knowledge of and insight into other people's dependence on the work he or she is doing is an important factor in his or her work (job) satisfaction. “Task Identity” is the extent the job is seen as involving a whole, identifiable task. “Task significance” represents the extent that the job affects the well being of others The job characteristics, according to Fried and Ferris (1987, p. 308) “...can serve as indicators or proxies for the psychological states” (experienced meaningfulness, responsibility for work outcomes and knowledge of work outcomes)

“Autonomy” refers to the extent the job is seen as allowing for personal initiative in performing the work, and “feedback from the job” is the extent that the job, itself, provides information about job performance (Hackman and Oldham, 1980, p. 90). (Note the way in which the Hackman-Oldham Model reverberates with Chalofsky and Terez.)

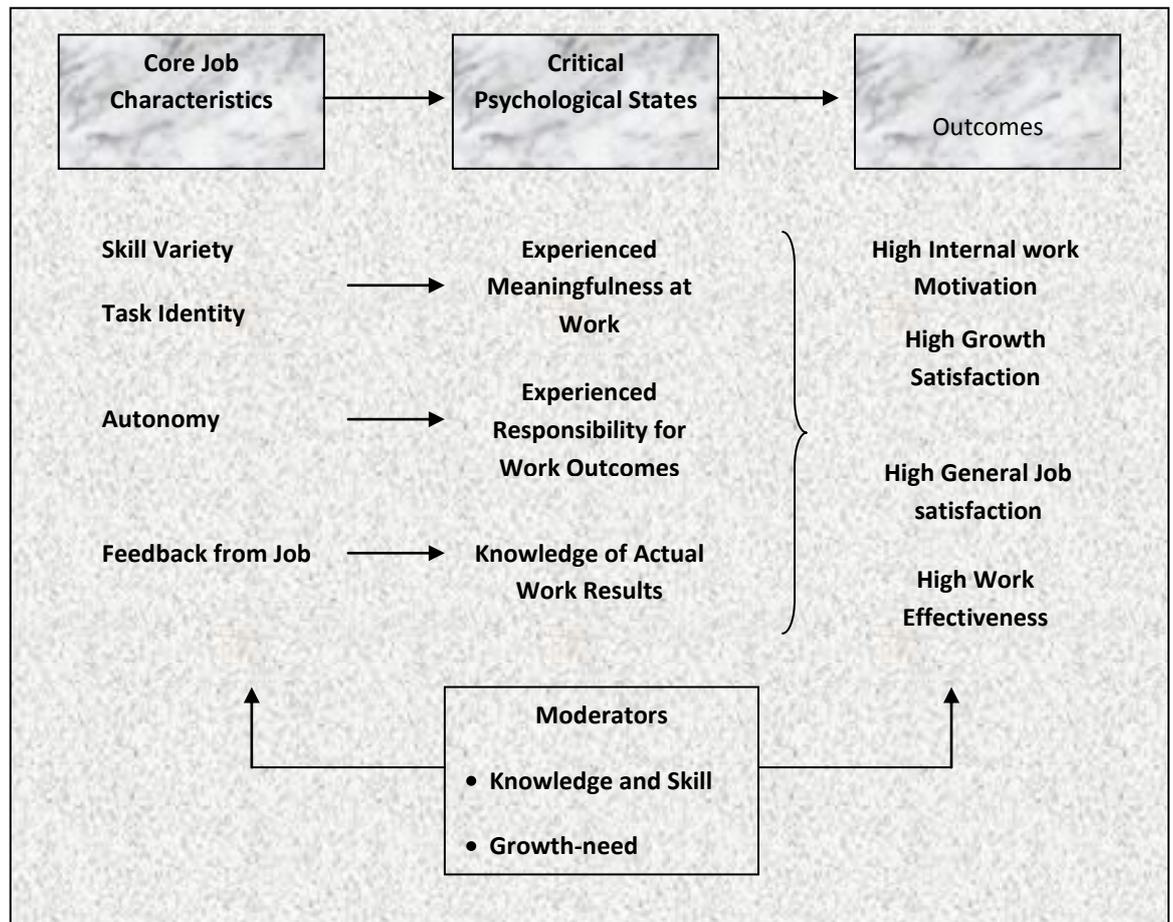


Figure 3.14: The Job Characteristics Model (Hackman and Oldham, 1980)

Fried and Ferris (1987, p. 287) contend that the relationship between job characteristics and psychological outcomes generally seem to be stronger and more consistent than the relationships between job characteristics and behavioural outcomes, “although the latter do exist”. Psychological outcomes, with specific reference to experienced meaningfulness can be improved by focusing primarily on skill variety, task significance, autonomy, and job feedback.

To summarise: Of the five job dimensions skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback, the first three affect the emergence of experienced *meaningfulness* of the work. The fourth dimension, autonomy, contributes to the feelings of personal responsibility for the work outcomes, while the fifth, feedback, determines individuals' knowledge of their effectiveness, or knowledge of results. The three psychological states collude to determine

performance quality, job satisfaction, absenteeism and turnover, but above all else the experience of meaning at work.

3.6.2.9 Summary of paragraph 3.6: Meaning at work: A macro constitutive dimension of the construct: A Meaningful workplace

The following is a summarised version of the dimensions that have been addressed above. The concept Meaning **at** Work (in the same fashion that the previous macro constitutive dimension –“integrated wholeness in working” and its sub-dimensions) refers to experienced meaningfulness, and thus a **meaningful workplace**, from the perspective of a time space continuum. This particular dimension as described is filled with a complex set of sub-dimensions affect the experience of meaning at work by the individual, to the extent that he/she perceives the workplace and the activities performed therein, based on the deeper experience of integrated wholeness, as value adding and sense making thus contributing to a life that is worth living and working for. The experiences of value add and meaning elevates work and the workplace above the self and creates a spiral of virtue where the employee transcends the slog of futility.

A meaningless workplace where activities do not have positive emotive value is nothing more than a prison of activities and imprisonment in a lifelong spiral of endless effort without any positive reward. (This can be referred to as a Sisyphean syndrome after the myth of Sisyphus)

Thus on a conceptual level it could be stated that the experience of Meaningfulness at Work, thus the workplace as such, is an emotionally laden dynamic space that not only denotes the geographical space or a predetermined timeframe where a certain activity (or string of activities), i.e. work, is performed, but also an emotional space where certain experiences are lived and re-lived by an individual or group of individuals whilst performing tasks.

Graphically paragraphs (3.6 and sub paragraphs) can be presented as in the following graphic.

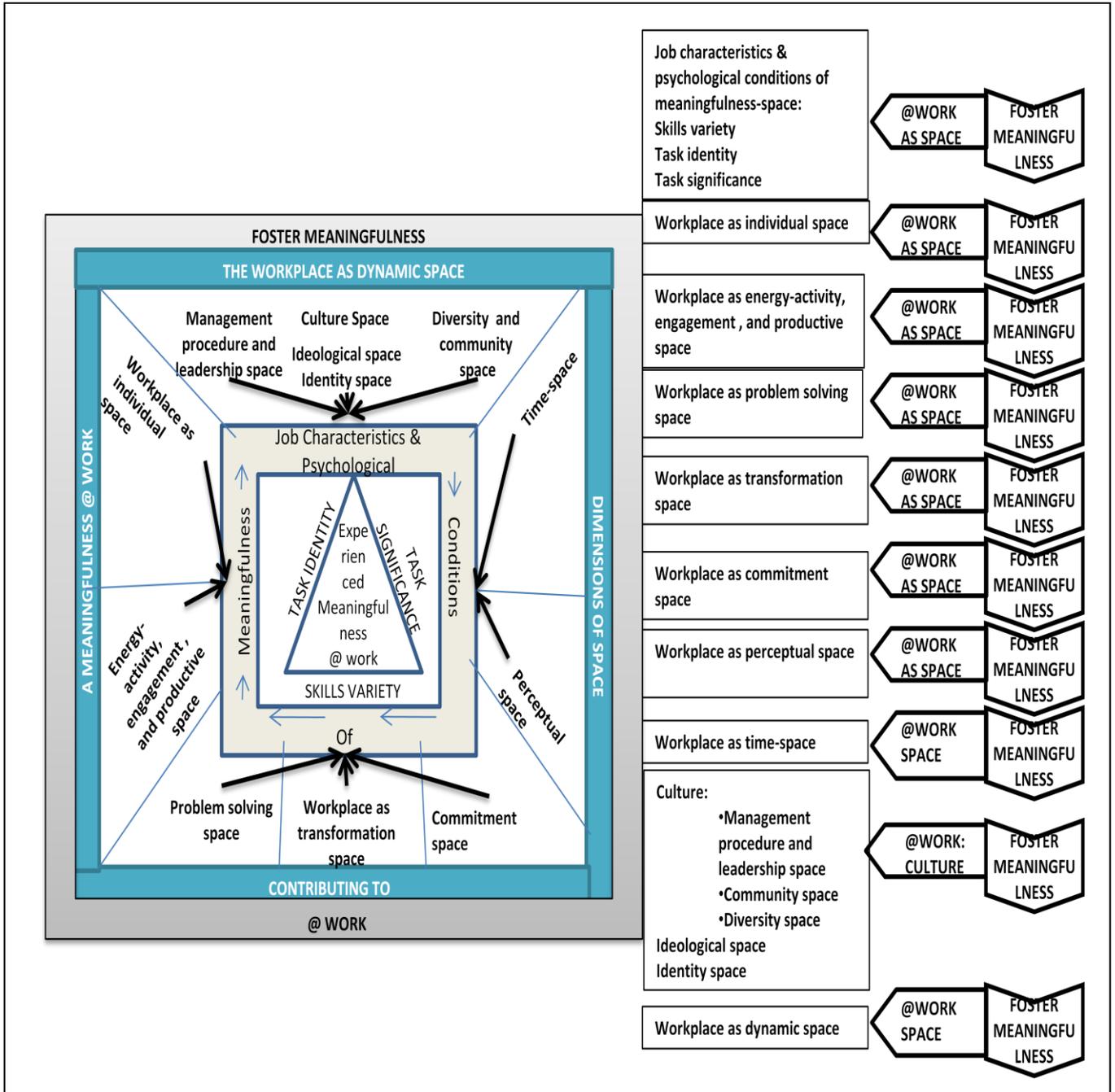


Figure 3 15: Conceptual presentation of paragraph 3.6 and sub-paragraphs: Fostering meaningfulness at work: “Meaningfulness @ work model”

Figure 3.15 should be interpreted as follows:

- The value chain presented in a descending manner on the right hand side of the graphic merely represents the graphics that were used at the beginning of the different sub-dimensions in paragraphs 3.6.1 and following.
- The graphic representation on the left is an attempt at visualisation of the conceptual and theoretical discussion in the mentioned paragraphs and is compiled according to the following reasoning:
 - The different dimensions are encapsulated by the attempt to foster meaningfulness at work. The assumption that is worked out in a theoretical fashion and based on imports from research literature is indicated in the inner block which is titled “The workplace as dynamic space: Dimensions of space contributing to “meaningfulness @work”;
 - The different space-dimensions are noted in the open space surrounding the centre rectangle and triangle. The arrows indicate that the different dimensions contribute toward the psychological conditions of meaningfulness, which are supported by task identity, task significance and skills variety, which foster meaningfulness at work.
 - The culture space seems to be the most encompassing space dimension to foster meaningfulness at work.
- As was mentioned earlier in this Chapter the two models (Meaningful Work and Meaningfulness at Work) collude to construe a model that will be referred to as the **meaningful workplace** Model. It is however first necessary to construct an integrated perspective of all the dimensions that, according to the literature research in this study, contribute towards meaningfulness at work.

3.7 ALIGNMENT OF MEANINGFUL WORK MODEL (INTEGRATED WHOLENESS) AND MEANINGFULNESS AT WORK MODEL

This paragraph poses two challenges: The first is to create a measure of alignment between the concept Meaningful Work (or the extended Meaningful Work Model) as presented in the first half of this chapter and the conceptual model on fostering meaningfulness at work (Meaningfulness at Work Model) as discussed in the latter part of this chapter, and secondly, to integrated the two models on a conceptual level so as to present an integrated whole that could be viewed as an extension of the current footprint of a **meaningful workplace**.

3.7.1 Alignment between the meaningful work model and meaning at work model

“Alignment” in the sense that it is used here means that the two models seem to indicate dimensions of overlap. The establishment of the measure of alignment is an imperative if the purpose of this study is to be achieved. The obvious reason for this imperative is situated in the requirement to indicate the level of resonance between meaning of work and meaning at work. On the one hand the individual’s needs are addressed (Meaningful Work Model), in the sense that the focus leans towards the inner life of the employee, while on the other hand the possible interventions as seen from the perspective of the organization, that could facilitate the experience of meaningfulness and therefore also the inner life of employees, are addressed. An obvious example of this reasoning is the following:

It has been indicated above that individuals seeks community in the workplace as an attempt to diminish the immanent alienation of organizational life in a post-modern society, and furthermore that this process actually evolves within the organization. The question that is forced upon organizational leaders and managers is the following: “What can be done to foster community building as a means to treat the humanity of employees as an end in itself?” The reasons why this is an important question is, simply put, that community contributes to meaningful

experiences in the workplace. The experience of meaningfulness benefits the individual, the organization, and in the long run, the society within which the organizations is situated and from which it is dependent for sustained existence.

The background to the reasoning behind this example has been provided in the foregoing discussions as has the fact that this study will eventually also serve itself from an abductive reasoning process. The example draws on certain inferences drawn from the foregoing discussion. This example therefore provides an extensively broad framework for the alignment process that will follow.

The alignment process can be approached from different perspectives and methods of which present themselves as logical options. On the one hand it would be possible to present the alignment between the two models in table format. The other option is to present the alignment in form of “cycles”. Both have advantages as well as disadvantages. The main advantage of a table format is that the alignment perspectives become immediately obvious. The biggest disadvantage as has been argued in this study, is that a perceived linear causality can be construed, which is purposefully being avoided.

The disadvantage of the “cycle-alignment” method is to be found in the possible differences in interpretation of *what belongs where* in the relationships that are being construed. Although this might pose a problem when commencing from a causal perspective, it does not pose a problem when approaching the relationships from the perspective of “multiple options” Approaching the alignment process as “cycles of alignment” between different dimensions ensuing from the two models, is aligned with a phenomenological research strategy with a post modern mental model. The advantage of a “cycle alignment” process is that it accentuates the dynamic nature of a **meaningful workplace**. The latter approach will be followed.

3.7.1.1 Alignment cycle 1: Meaningful work and meaning at work: the culture cycle

The first and most obvious alignment that stems from the foregoing discussion in this chapter is the alignment in terms of culture. In the context of this study the culture dimension for a **meaningful workplace**, implies a fit and the alignment of interventions in the workplace that facilitate the culture within which the individual can experience meaningfulness in relation to various dimensions of work life.

The alignments of the dimensions from the two models that overlap are clustered together in what is herein as a culture alignment cycle. It is hypothesised that the implementation and maintenance of such a cycle will enhance the experience of meaningfulness in and at work, thus contributing to a **meaningful workplace**.

Figure 3.16 is designed to indicate the relationship between the different dimensions from the two models and furthermore the cycle sequence for the maintenance of the “culture cycle” in an organizational setting. It is (or at least should be) obvious that the culture cycle as presented within the context of this study is aimed at the constitutive dimensions of a **meaningful workplace**, and should thus be read and scrutinised from that particular perspective. This is concomitant with a constructivist approach which deviates from the linearity of cause and effect as provided for in commercial culture interventions.

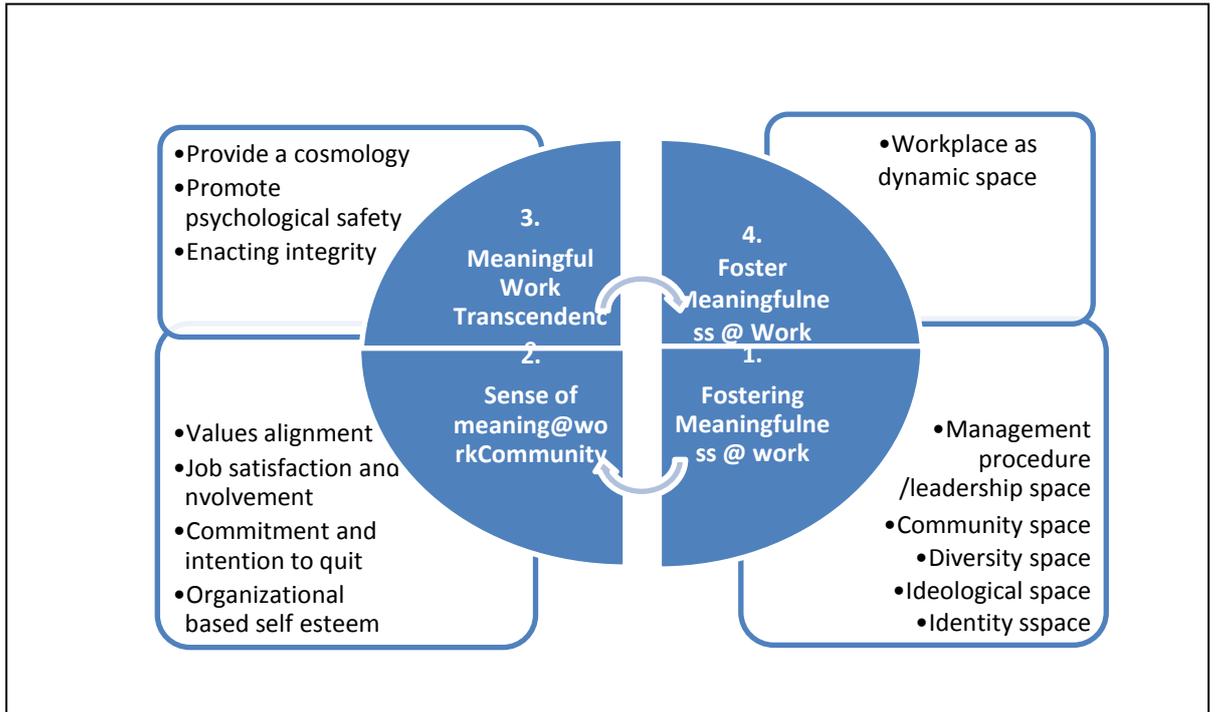


Figure 3.16: Alignment: Meaningful work and meaningfulness a work: The culture cycle

The “culture cycle” references certain dimensions from both the Meaning of Work Model as well as the Meaningfulness at Work Model. The workplace as dynamic space should, seen from a positive organizational approach, provide for a cosmology of dynamic interaction between employees mutually, and between employees and management on the other hand. The requirements for such a dynamic space requires the accommodation of diversity (in all respects) an ethical organizational ideology and sufficient opportunity for the individual to explore his/her own identity as an organizational citizen. This requires the alignment of values between the organization and the individual, the motivation to belong and to commit. This implies the experience of psychological safety, probably facilitated management/leadership behaviour which establishes trust and projects integrity in terms of inward and outward behaviour. Such behaviour is partially responsible for the level of happiness and satisfaction related to job performance and the experience of meaningfulness in the workplace.

3.7.1.2 Alignment cycle 2: Meaningful work and meaning at work: The commitment cycle

A **meaningful workplace** can, in addition to the culture cycle, also be described in terms of a commitment cycle. Such a cycle is mediated by means of processes that ensure commitment and that allow for the maintenance of the individual's adherence to and self alignment with the value system of the organization. Bearing in mind that the individual enters the workplace based on choice and the autonomy of his/her decision(s). This autonomy must be maintained through the commitment cycle with specific reference to the wage dimension (remuneration must be sufficient for the positive self esteem of the individual), the developmental dimension and the freedom to express and collaborate in respect of the work and his/her position in the organization. Maintaining the respect for individual space acknowledging the diversity of personal values that stem from a religio-ethical system and imbedded in the individual as personal values (and respecting these); the need of the individual to also have private space enhances the commitment cycle. It is further hypothesized that the commitment cycle will, through the maintenance of individual/personal space and freedom to develop morally as well as rationally, exercise and align personal values and ethical considerations with the purpose of the organization, be enhanced and maintained.

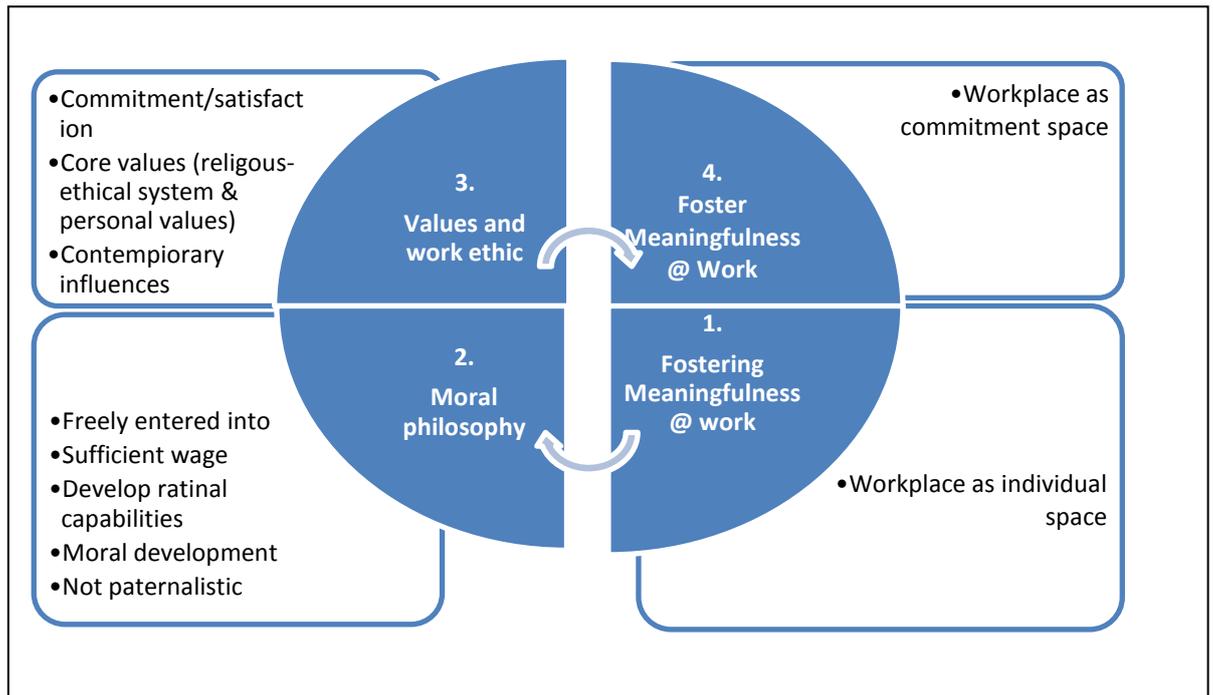


Figure 3.17: Alignment: Meaningful work and meaningfulness at work: The commitment cycle

A dimension that also surfaces in this cycle as a perspective from moral philosophy is the expression that meaningful work is not “paternalistic”. This implies, if interpreted in terms of modern terminology, that employees should not be micro managed. This reflects upon the management/leadership behaviour that was indicated in the “culture cycle”. Why is it not the included in the culture cycle in the first place? Because of two reasons: (a) The Moral Philosophy from which this perspective emanates is respected within the context from which it is forthcoming and (b) it is a purposeful choice to retain the Moral Philosophy as a separate contribution towards the enhancement of the Meaning of Work Model. Retaining Moral Philosophy as a separate contributory input towards the Meaning of Work Model, and retaining the reference to meaningful work not being “paternalistic” further justifies the cycle alignment approach that is being followed here, because these type of cross references or dimensional links accentuate the dynamic nature of a **meaningful workplace**. The workplace as “individual space”, implying that the uniqueness of the individual may not be sacrificed on the altar of organizational subservience; or to word it differently: to be absolved in the organizational “we-ness” suspension.

3.7.1.3 Alignment cycle 3: Meaningful work and meaning at work: The psychological meaningfulness cycle

The psychological meaningfulness cycle hinges on the workplace as individual space, and it is hypothesized that the measures to facilitate balance and the sense of self will create a sense of psychological meaningfulness and ensures the experience of the workplace as meaningful. As the different dimensions have been discussed previously in this chapter such a discussion will not be repeated here. Suffice to say that the sense of self (specifically meaningful learning) strongly relates to the previous cycle (work commitment cycle) and specifically the dimensions of moral and rational development. The “Sense of Self” not only refers to the characteristics that are mention in the relevant block in the cycle, but is relatively heavily dependent on the significance of task and the outcomes of job performance, aspects that hinge on the developmental opportunities in respect of skills for successful job performance and ensuring the required outcomes. The development however is not only limited to the rational job related training and development interventions but also on the development of the moral capacity of the individual. The double sided developmental interventions will not only empower the individual towards balance, but balance in respect of work, career and life is also dependent on the acknowledgement of the uniqueness of the individual and the “space” for the individual to retain his/her unique individuality in spite of working within and organizational group or division.

The Hackman-Oldham Job Characteristics Model (1980) which describes three critical psychological conditions and the conditions that lead to these states as well as the outcomes confirms the reasoning that the maintenance of the psychological meaningfulness cycle results in a **meaningful workplace**, or at least, the experience of the workplace as meaningful.

- Psychological state: Experienced meaningfulness at work-
 - Critical Conditions: Skills variety and task identity
- Psychological state: Experienced responsibility for work outcomes

- Critical condition: Autonomy
- Psychological state: Knowledge of work outcomes
 - Critical condition: Feedback from job

The psychological states are then moderated through skills and knowledge, which resonates with (a) moral philosophy which describes meaningful work as dependent on autonomy, moral development and rational development, and (b) sense of self which seeks meaningful learning. This indicates the integrated nature of the constitutive dimensions of the **meaningful workplace**. It provides further evidence of the extent of overlap between the two macro constitutive dimensions (meaningful work and meaning at work).

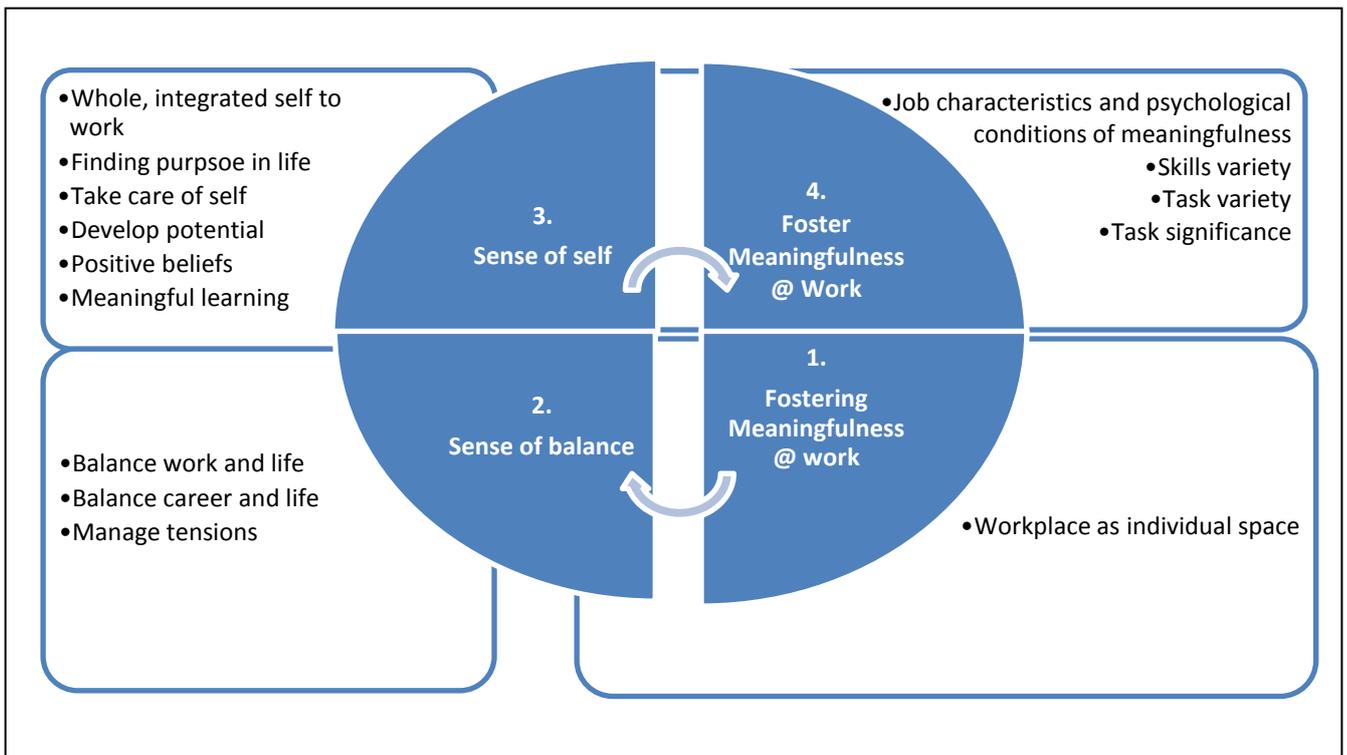


Figure 3.18: Alignment: Meaningful work and meaningfulness at work: The psychological meaningfulness cycle

3.7.1.4 Alignment cycle 4: Meaningful work and meaning at work: The work achievement cycle

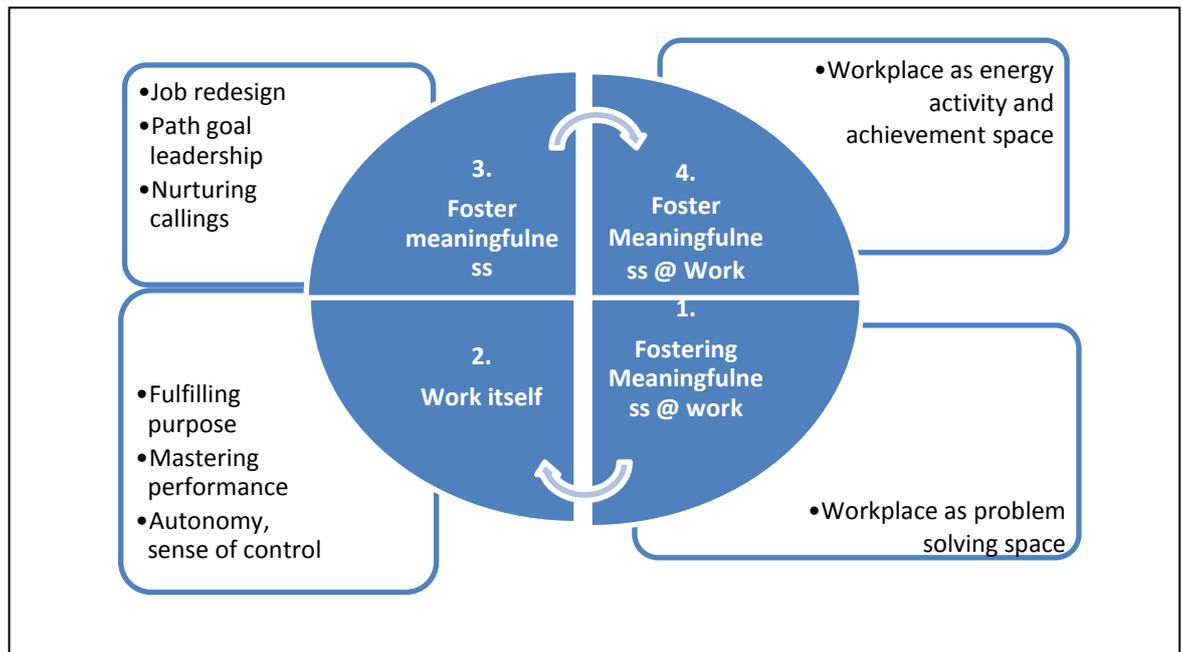
The achievement of work outputs is the result of two factors: (a) the psychological meaningfulness cycle, which is supported by the critical psychological outcomes as indicated, specifically the psychological state of experienced responsibility for work outcomes, and, (b) the challenge of problem solving in the workplace. It can be argued that problem solving is dependent on knowledge and skills (the moderating factors – according to Hackman and Oldham (1980)). Such a statement should however be supported by the factors emanating from the meaning of work model (e.g. developmental requirements/needs), which once again provides evidence for the integrated nature of the **meaningful workplace** as discussed here.

The work achievement cycle further requires an intrinsic need for the mastering of performance and fulfilling one's purpose in working, which is achieved through a continuous evaluation of job design and re-design as conditions in the workplace change as a result of internal inertia or external requirements (thus further enhancing the self or Organizational Based Self Esteem). Kreitner and Kinicki (2001, p. 212) refer to the need for achievement and describe this need as a desire to accomplish something difficult. This summarised description is well aligned with the factors in the meaning of work model that have been included in this cycle regarding the work itself. Meaningfulness is derived when the employee fulfils his/her purpose, masters performance, has a sense of autonomy and control over his/het performance in solving work related challenges or problems in order to achieve work related outcomes.

Fulfilling a purpose relates to the meaningfulness drive of the individual which is more than a superficial motivational drive. It was stated previously that motivation as a theory of performance was introduced when the interest in meaning dwindled into the forgotten realm of thought. Sievers Argued this case in an article titled: "Motivation as a Surrogate for Meaning" (1994), and in an article titled "Beyond the Surrogate of Motivation" (1986) the following is offered in the abstract:

The image of man as presented in the predominant organizational theories of motivation does not accord with the author's experience of working with people in organizations. This dissonance has led to a critique of the concept of motivation and its inherent theoretical shortcomings as to the reality of people in organizations. The main argument of this essay, however, stems from a meta-critical perspective according to which the notion of motivation and its referent theories can be regarded as scientific inventions. The hypothesis is offered and elaborated that motivation is a surrogate for meaning, i.e. for the meaning of work and life which is increasingly lost through the high frequency of fragmentation and splitting in our contemporary work enterprises. Any attempt towards discovering existential dimensions of meaning can be accomplished only if social scientists, managers and workers alike, both individually as well as collectively, again become aware of death as a fact of life; it is only through acknowledging mortality that humanization can occur.

The fulfilment of purpose seems to be closely related to mastering of performance and autonomy as well as a sense of control. The “space” and the conditions in this “space” to achieve and to be able to solve problems must however exist to fulfil the cycle.



**Figure 3.19: Alignment: Meaningful work and meaningfulness at work:
The work achievement cycle**

3.7.1.5 Alignment Cycle 5: Meaningful work and meaning at work: The transformational cycle

The individual employee enters the workplace with clouded perceptions about (a) the work and, (b) the work place. Perceptions according to Kreitner and Kinicki (2001, p. 173) is “a cognitive process that enables us to interpret and understand our surroundings”. In contrast to our perception of objects, our perception of others (as individuals or as groups of people) is referred to as social cognition and information processing event. This event will of necessity be clouded by previous events. The work space therefore requires the establishment and continuous enhancement of a transformation cycle.

The transformation cycle hinges on the perceptual space which in turn is highly dependent on the meaning of working, thus the perceptions and underlying values, (centrality of work, identification with the work role, valued outcomes – or achievement – and work goals) for the individual employee. Instilling these values,

is achieved through a continuous process of leading with integrity and thus living the ideal work life perception by leaders and managers, a continuous process of job redesign (as indicated in the previous paragraph), and nurturing callings as a basic approach towards work (emanating from the spirituality dimension), in order to achieve an ongoing transformational cycle as a renewal process of and on behalf of both the individual as well as the organization.

Each new transformational cycle should in essence be a renaissance experience for the individual as well as for the organization. Not only will such an experience enhance the experience of meaningfulness but it will also ensure the continuous rebirth of the organization, or possibly even retaining the youthfulness and innovativeness of the organization (if such a metaphor is permitted).

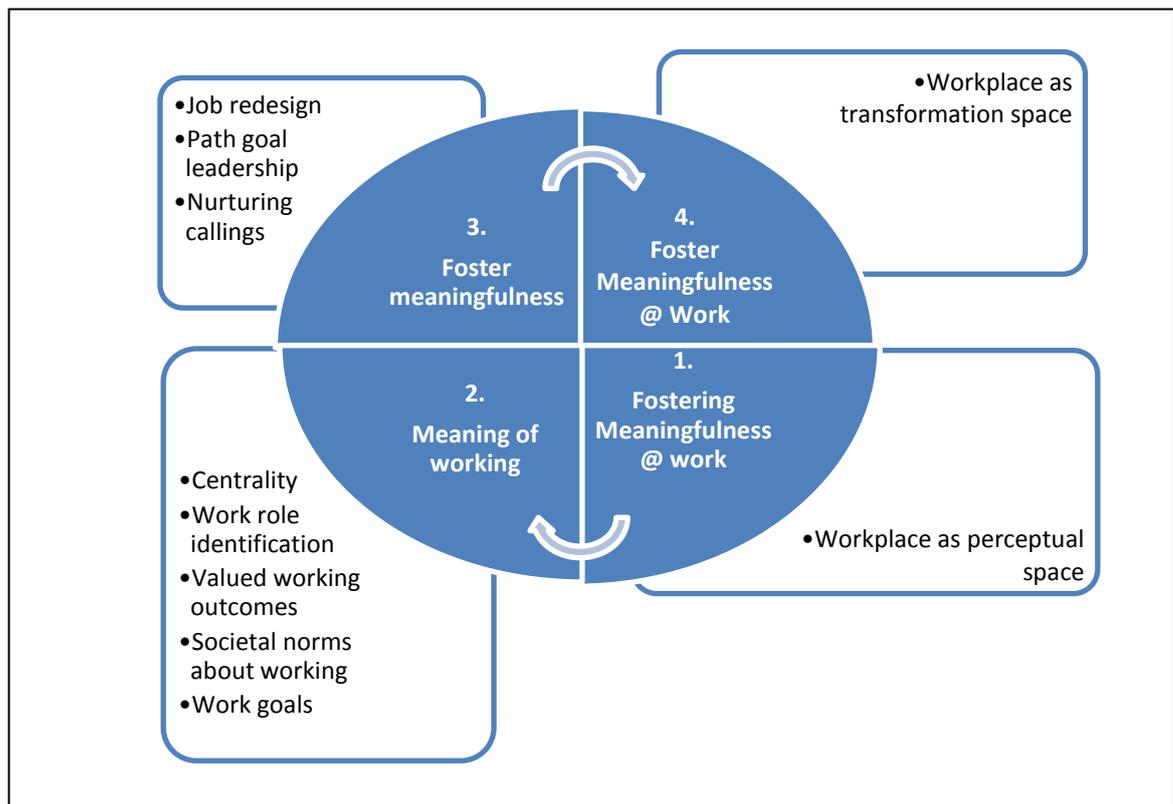


Figure 3.20: Alignment: Meaningful work and meaningfulness at work: The transformation cycle

The transformation cycle refers to an extremely dynamic process that lays claim to the emotions as well as the rational capabilities of the employee. Change brings with it uncertainty and fear and very often, if not consistently so, resistance. The organization as change territory is in fundamental conflict with the aspiration towards psychological safety. Therefore transformation must be anchored in two dimensions or interventions. On the one hand and self evident, when the response or human reaction to change is considered, the following imperative presents itself: The Meaning of Work Model, and more specifically the dimension pertaining to the meaning of work, where elements such as work centrality, work role identification, work goals, social norms about working, should be emphasised to re-impose the worth of the individual. In the same vein the individual employee or groups of employees should be involved and co-opted to collaborate in the redesign of jobs and drawn into a perceptive world where the “calling” to contribute is nurtured in order to counter the harshness of transformation. This is assuming that the purpose of the transformation is to enhance effectiveness and not to retrench employees. In the second instance a different strategy could be considered and without going into the details thereof, the focus would be to accentuate the meaning of life and the individual worth of the human being in society. (This perspective does however not belong in the current discussion.)

3.8 INTEGRATION OF MODELS (Meaning at Work/Meaningful Work Model and Meaningfulness at Work Model)

It has been mentioned more than once in the foregoing discussion that the different cycles are somehow linked by means of overlapping expressions and implicit meaning references. The following graphic illustrates not only the cyclical nature of the linkage, but also emphasise the integrated nature of the reasoning and the linkage of the two models (Meaningful Work Model and Meaningfulness at Work Model) in moving towards the proposal of an integrated model for a **meaningful workplace**.

Perhaps it is overstating the obvious, but the reasoning should at this juncture be clear in as much as this study is purposefully steering away from linear causality. The moment one de-contextualises the different cycles in the sense of isolating the one from the other, linear thought comes into play thereby rendering the whole argument of potentialities and options for choice obsolete.

This study is characterised by a constructivist approach which immediately implies a sense of relativism in which one phenomenon cannot be presented or proposed as *the* truth par excellence. There are other phenomena which also knock on the door of recognition to be labelled truth or reality. In the postmodern thought process these phenomena collectively represent potentialities. This approach will be frowned upon by positivists and modernists and discarded as pure “literature”. However the phenomenon under discussion is not a matter for pure literature or speculation. Were it not acknowledged there would not have been sufficient thoughts invested in the phenomenon to justify the literature which is available.

The question now arises: How do we integrate the two models that were discussed earlier on into a single and integrated dynamic model? Figure 3.20 is the first step towards such integration.

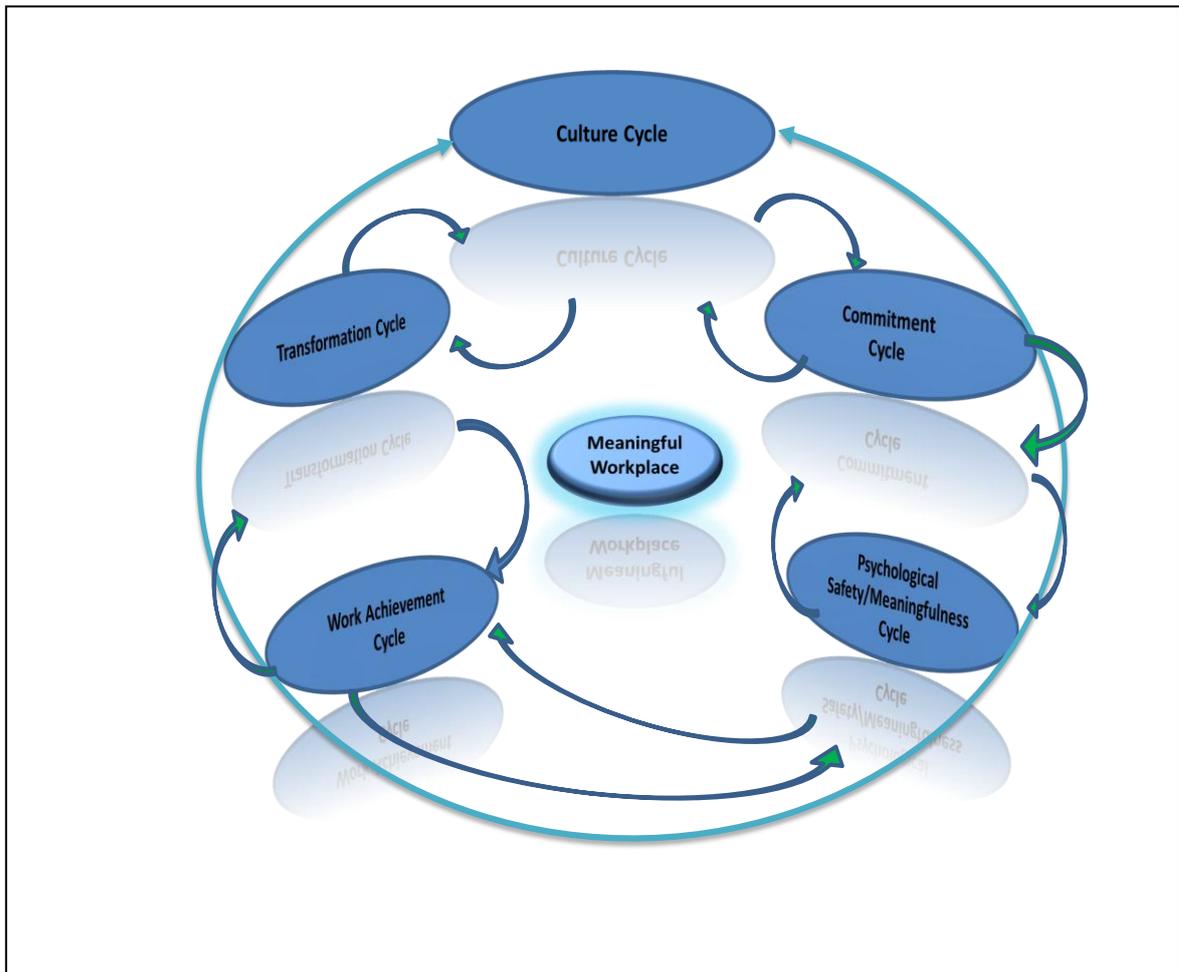


Figure 3.21: Cyclical Integration of the Different Cycles

Figure 3.21 is an attempted graphic presentation wherein which, on a conceptual level, the different cycles are indicated to not only surround a meaningful; workplace, but that these cycles are interdependent and subject to cross influence from each other.

The next step in the process towards integration of the Meaningful Work Model and the Meaningfulness at Work Model is to present the different dimensions in a single graphic. This will obviously accentuate the oneness and integration as opposed to the circular and reciprocal influence between the different cycles

The graphic in Figure 3.22 is proposed below and will be discussed. Following this process, involved as it may be, is necessary to provide a baseline for the enhancement and expansion of the footprint in literature pertaining to the **meaningful workplace**.

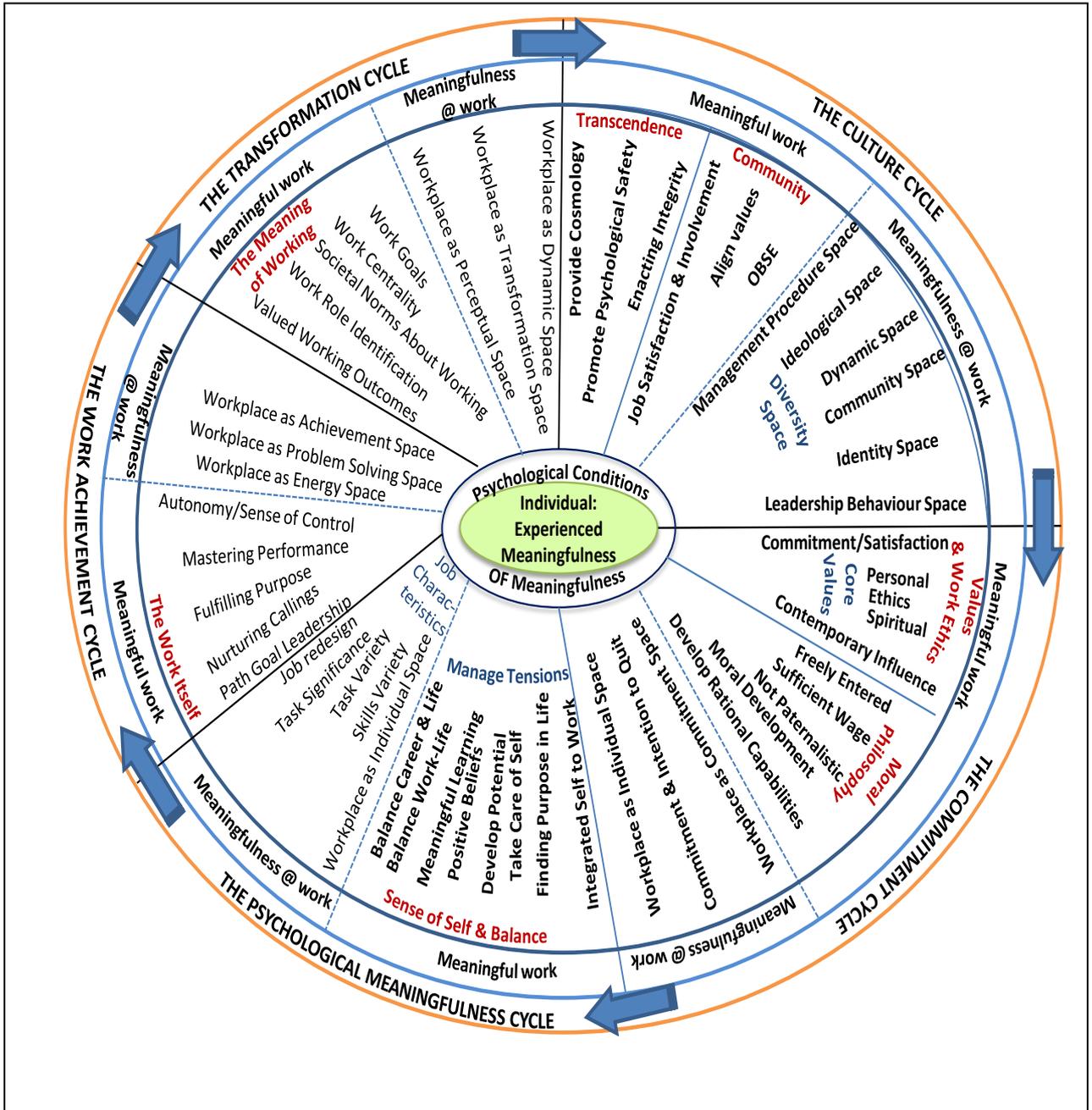


Figure 3.22: Alignment: Meaningful Work and Meaningfulness @Work

The graphic is divided into five main segments each representing one of the cycles that were previously identified. The different cycles are linked by means of arrows that indicate the interdependence, but not a specific direction of flow, nor a definite starting point. The commencement towards a **meaningful workplace** can be initiated at any segment and continue in any direction as was implied in Figure 3.20. It is not the intent to regulate or designate a starting point and to prescribe a direction of flow.

Each Macro segment is divided into two sub segments, i.e. Meaningful Work Model and Meaningfulness at Work Model. The sub segments are divided by means of a dotted line which indicates that the boundary is not fixed, but that the two sub segments are interdependent as was clearly stated or discussed during the proposal and presentation of the five “cycles” This means that the themes or constructs that constitute the two sub segments within the bigger “cycle segments” are interrelated and interdependent and mutually supportive. This study did not employ a statistical pathway to measure whether the hypothesis of interdependence and mutually supportiveness of the constructs in each sub segments, or to correlate these constructs in any way. This study rests in the theoretical propositional hypothesis which is in the nature of qualitative research, that the constructs in the sub segments are interrelated and mutually supportive.

It is further hypothesized that the confluence of all the constructs contributes towards the psychological conditions of meaningfulness as a result of which the employee experiences meaningfulness at work while performing work or job related functions, tasks, or roles. The complex dynamic of all the constructs as indicated in the different “cycle segments” and sub-segments therefore contribute towards a workplace that can be described as a **meaningful workplace**.

3.8.1 A preliminary definition

The following discussion or definition of a **meaningful workplace** is at this stage referred to as “preliminary”. The reason for this statement being that some dimensions, that should be incorporated, could emerge from the discussion in

Chapter 4, which investigates the construct or at least the allusion to the construct **meaningful workplace** from three empirical perspectives. After concluding the discussion in Chapter 4, and integration exercise we will of necessity have to be embark on a possible revision.

The individual is imbedded in the work space in which work role performance is required within predetermined timeframes, based on commitment within an environment of constant change which requires problem solving processes to be performed through the expenditure of energy to attain the highest possible level of productivity against the background of a diverse workforce where different cultures collude, guided by personal perceptions, managed within a structure and yet has to maintain his/her individuality as a human being and person and still experience the organizational ecology as a meaningful place to be and of being.

A **meaningful workplace** is a contextually definable environment filled with human dynamic (interactivity and emotionality) and many other stimuli (tangible as well as intangible) wherein people do formal work and that contribute towards a meaningful life condition of which work forms a major part, and where the organization forms an integral meaningful and emotionally laden environment within the total life space of the individual. A **meaningful workplace** refers to a certain reality that is experienced. This reality is not an objective reality waiting to be discovered but a subjective reality that is waiting to be construed in a fashion that will engender meaningfulness that both employees and organizations can subscribe to.

A **meaningful workplace** is an environment where compliance with conditions of a common understanding in respect of the purpose and future of the organization is reached between organization members; where organization members are valued for the contribution they make towards achieving common goals; where there is no limit to the growth and development of people or organizational goals; where people reach the experience of a common social reality and belonging; where the individual is entrusted as the single most important contributor towards organizational goals; where the performer is an integral part of work structure planning; and where all of these factors are orchestrated to create and to sustain commitment and productive work-role behaviour

A **meaningful workplace** is furthermore an environment that enables the employee to apply his/her capabilities to transcend the self and achieve self actualisation through a sense of belonging and achievement. This implies being able to commit, transform expend energy, create a personal space in which to solve problems, perform productively as an accepted member of a diverse set of individuals where the culture allows self expression without punitive measures in the pursuit of a spiritual experience, whilst at the same time the conditions for psychological meaningfulness are present and the experience of meaningfulness is mediated by skills variety, task significance, and task identity.

3.9 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This Chapter set out to determine whether the construct: **Meaningful workplace** is emergent in research literature. Commencing from publications (Terez, 2000 and Chalofsky, 2010), a broad mental framework was established against and within which the literature search would be conducted. Two macro constitutive dimensions were identified Meaningful Work/Meaning of Work/Meaning in Working, on the one hand and Meaningfulness at Work on the other hand. It was proposed (following Chalofsky) that the two macro dimensions converge to constitute the **meaningful workplace**. Based on this proposition research literature was investigated and each of the two macro dimensions was “fleshed out” resulting in an expanded Meaning of Work Model, based on the work of Chalofsky (2010) and a Meaningfulness at Work Model, harnessing the framework of Chalofsky and harvesting from the existing literature. The literature search was eclectic in nature as it was also realised that it is impossible to trace every single detailed dimension of the two macro dimensions. The two macro dimensions were aligned and in the process two aspects were confirmed: (a) the construct: **Meaningful workplace**, does seem to be an emerging construct in the literature from which Organizational Behaviour draws its subject matter, and (b) the initial proposition was confirmed that the two macro dimensions each have their own unique perspectives that have to be recognized to eventually construe a conceptual model for a **meaningful workplace**. As far as (a) is concerned it is noteworthy that the factors or sub dimensions that constitute the

different macro dimensions are not necessarily observable in journal titles, but in many cases “hidden” in the content of journal articles. As far as (b) is concerned it should be noted that the different angles of approach deliver different perspectives which are aligned but that are not the same. The formulation is important as is the angle of approach. In the case of the Meaningful Work Model the approach is from the assumption that an integrated self approaches the workplace and that many of the sub-dimensions seem to be intrinsic and very often, a sub conscious search toward meaning, bearing in mind that the human lives in the world and that he/she is in a continuous search to escape the inevitable condition of being human, but that there is a striving towards meaningfulness. In the case of Meaningfulness at Work the approach is from the perspective of the organization investigating those measures that eventually facilitate the experience of meaning at work, thus meaningfulness in the workplace, and hence in relation to the organization as such. The two models are mutually symbiotic or stand in a mutually beneficial relationship in terms of addressing the search for a **meaningful workplace**.

4 CHAPTER 4

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*

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.

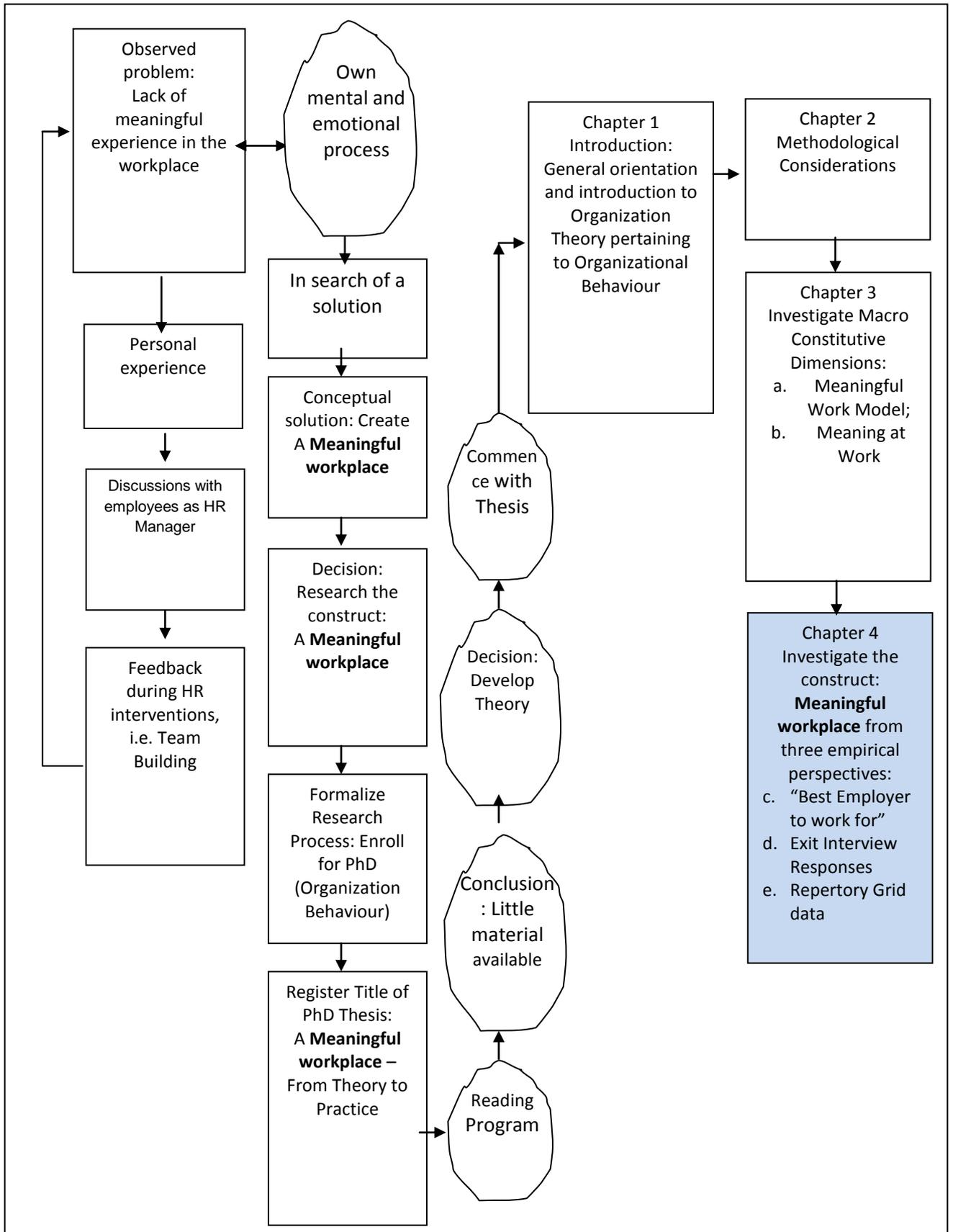


Figure 4.1: Structural position of chapter 4

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

Research Focus Area	Research Dimensions
Organisational Strategy	What are the organisation's Talent Management priorities? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintain a positive workplace
The HR Function	The functioning of the HR department and its alignment with the overall business strategy
The Leadership of the Company	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"> ▪ Employee input (collaboration)
Company culture	What are the lines of communication between employees and the company, and what is the impact of this? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Social networking opportunities How is the company responding to the diversity imperative (Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment)? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Diversity initiatives ▪ Develop appreciation for differences such as:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Race ○ Gender ○ Background ○ Sexual orientation ○ Spirituality Corporate Social Responsibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How is the company responding to SA's social development imperatives and how are employees engaged in order to achieve this?
Knowledge Management	How is this aspect of the business managed, and how does this translate into organisational success as knowledge is gained and shared?
Talent Management and Employee Engagement	Assesses 'vital' statistics on employee entry and exit, and how this is managed The following dimensions are assessed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Long term career path development ▪ Talent Management processes ▪ Succession planning
Employee Training and Development	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"> ▪ Availability of functionally related training programs ▪ Organisational support in terms of growth and personal development
Performance Management	Performance agreements and competency framework assessment Acceptable and fair Performance Management policy, process and system
Rewards and Recognition	How are employees recognised and rewarded for their achievements and successes? Research includes dimensions such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pay ▪ Pension ▪ Share Benefits Non monetary benefits such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Leave allowance ▪ Flexible working conditions ▪ Availability of wellbeing policies ▪ Communication Channels ▪ Innovation ▪ Recognition programs
Trust	Treatment of employees with respect and dignity Open an accessible communication Honest answers to questions
Leadership/Management	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)

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).

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).

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) 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).

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).

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).

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
1 & 3 : 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 ²	People fight for their own interest
		Back-biting ³
	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 & 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

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

³ 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 ⁴
	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 & 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'

⁴ 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&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&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&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&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&2</u> ; 3	Predictable, - know what to expect ⁵	"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&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

⁵ 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 mangers/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 ⁶	Occurs in Best Employer to work for Research
Bal	Sense of Balance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too much stress and pressure • Not fully utilized⁷ • Managers setting unreasonable work targets and undermining work-life balance • Demanding employees to work more than the legally accepted maximum overtime hours • Company must assist employees to achieve work-life balance • No understanding of or concern for family issues, travelling time and health risks 	
Co	Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discrimination on the basis of race and gender⁸ • Employees want to experience that the Company cares for them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess social networking opportunities
CDev	Career Growth and Development Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of job security • There is no perceivable career path • Failure of the company to provide internal career movement and role diversification • No career progression • No retention efforts • Wrong job fit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talent management and employee engagement • Long term career development • Talent management process • Succession planning
Di	Discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not managing weak 	

⁶ 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.

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

⁸ 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 ⁶	Occurs in Best Employer to work for Research
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> performance • Managers and supervisors turn a blind eye to non performance • Unfair promotional practices 	
Em	Empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No openness • No collaboration • Dissatisfaction with company policies and procedures (disempowering) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the organization a learning organization • Is new knowledge shared
Fj	Feedback from Job ⁹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Frustration with management¹⁰ ▪ Personal contribution is not recognized¹¹ ▪ Dissatisfaction with company policies and procedures¹² 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Performance agreements and competency framework assessment ▪ Acceptable and fair performance management policy, process and system
Fl	Flexible Work Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inability to create and maintain professional work environment ▪ Create a relaxed work environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintain a positive workplace ▪ Flexible working conditions
Is & Le	Inspirational and Leadership Qualities ¹³	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Frustration with management ▪ Appointed managers must have the necessary competencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Level of involvement by executives in the management

⁹ 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

¹⁰ 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.

¹¹ This expression can also imply a lack of feedback

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

¹³ Two dimensions have been combined

Repertory Grid Codes	Description	Occurs in Exit Interview Report ⁶	Occurs in Best Employer to work for Research
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ of talent ▪ Embody integrity in day-to-day behaviour ▪ Trust relationships ▪
InDw	Involvement in Work related Decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ My personal contribution is not recognized¹⁴ 	Recognition programs
TD	Training and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of training and development opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of functionally related training programs • Organizational support in terms of growth and development
Ps	Problem Solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No obvious references to this dimension 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Employee input and collaboration ▪
ReAV	Respected, Appreciated and Respected ¹⁵	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discriminatory practices ▪ Not recognized ▪ Uncaring an incompetent ▪ Company must take care of employees ▪ Treat employees as human beings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The way in which employees are nurtured ▪ Treat employees with respect and dignity ▪ Treat people in a dignified manner
R	Reputation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The company's reputation as an employer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No obvious references to this dimension
Rem	Remuneration and Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pay ▪ Pension ▪ Share benefits

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

¹⁵ 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 ⁶	Occurs in Best Employer to work for Research
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Leave allowance ▪ Communication channels ▪ Innovation
SH	Safety and Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No specific reference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Availability of wellbeing policies
Sr	Social Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No reference or mention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Corporate social Responsibility as a response to South Africa's development imperatives ▪ The engagement of employees in Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives
Tr	Transformation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No obvious references to this dimension 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Functioning of the HR department and alignment with the overall business strategy
Trs	Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Trust is viewed as the "defining principle of great workplaces" ▪ Open and accessible communication
Va	Values Dimension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Uncaring, incompetent, unprofessional managers ▪ The company should create a culture of openness and provide compelling reasons why employees want to be part of the company 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Treatment of employees with respect and dignity ▪ Open and accessible communication

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

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**

¹⁶ 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

¹⁷ 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>Transcendence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide Cosmology ▪ Promote Psychological Safety ▪ Enacting Integrity ▪ Community: ▪ Job Satisfaction & Involvement ▪ Align Values ▪ OBSE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Management Procedure Space ▪ Leadership Behaviour Space ▪ Diversity Space: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ideological Space ○ Dynamic Space ○ Community Space ○ Identity Space 	Va	Values Dimension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Uncaring, incompetent, unprofessional managers ▪ The company should create a culture of openness and provide compelling reasons why employees want to be part of the company 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Treatment of employees with respect and dignity ▪ Open and accessible communication ▪ Honest answers to questions
		Di	Discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not managing weak performance • Managers and supervisors turn a blind eye to non performance • Unfair promotional practices 	
		Div	Diversity Management (No specific reference in Repertory Grid constructs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No reference except in the negative: ▪ Discrimination based on race and gender 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Diversity initiatives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Race ▪ Gender ▪ Background ▪ Sexual orientation ▪ Spirituality
		Co	Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discrimination on the basis of race and gender • Employees want to experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess social networking opportunities

		Is & Le	Inspirational and Leadership Qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> that the Company cares for them Frustration with management Appointed managers must have the necessary competencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of involvement by executives in the management of talent Embody integrity in day-to-day behaviour Trust relationships
		ReAV	Respected, Appreciated and Respected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discriminatory practices Not recognized Uncaring an incompetent Company must take care of employees Treat employees as human beings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The way in which employees are nurtured Treat employees with respect and dignity Treat people in a dignified manner
		Trs	Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trust is viewed as the “defining principle of great workplaces” Open and accessible communication
COMMITMENT 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
Work Values and Ethics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commitment/Satisf action Core Values: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal Ethics Spirituality Moral Philosophy:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commitment Space Individual Space 	Sr	Social Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No reference or mention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate social Responsibility as a response to South Africa’s development imperatives The engagement of employees in Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Freely entered ▪ Sufficient Wage ▪ Not Paternalistic ▪ Moral Development ▪ Rational Capabilities 					
		Va	Values Dimension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Uncaring, incompetent, unprofessional managers ▪ The company should create a culture of openness and provide compelling reasons why employees want to be part of the company 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Treatment of employees with respect and dignity ▪ Open and accessible communication ▪ Honest answers to questions
		Rem	Remuneration and Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pay ▪ Pension ▪ Share benefits ▪ Leave allowance ▪ Communication channels ▪ Innovation
		TD	Training and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of training and development opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of functionally related training programs • Organizational support in terms of growth and development
		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"> • Talent management and employee engagement • Long term career development • Talent management process • Succession planning

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

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

		Em	Empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No openness No collaboration Dissatisfaction with company policies and procedures (disempowering) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the organization a learning organization Is new knowledge shared
TRANSFORMATION 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
Meaning of Working: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work Goals Work Centrality Societal Norms About Working Valued Working Outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dynamic Space Transformation Space Perceptual Space 	Tr	Transformation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No obvious references to this dimension 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Functioning of the HR department and alignment with the overall business strategy
		R	Reputation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The company's reputation as an employer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No obvious references to this dimension
		Di	Discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not managing weak performance Managers and supervisors turn a blind eye to non performance Unfair promotional practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">

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.



5 CHAPTER 5

A MEANINGFUL WORKPLACE:

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this Chapter is to offer a closing and concluding perspective based on the research results as provided in the previous two Chapters.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter sets out to chronicle the conclusions of the study and recommendations for further research. This is done by (a) assessing whether the purpose of the study has been achieved, (b) whether the objectives have been achieved and (c) whether the research questions have been adequately answered. This represents the first level of assessment. The second level of assessment is to determine whether the research methodology as described in chapter 2 was adequate for the purpose of this research and to indicate the lessons learnt. A third requirement is to indicate the shortcomings of the study, and to formulate recommendations for further research. Lastly the requirement to describe the researcher's experience and learning during the process also requires some attention.

The process unfolds logically from the one to the following perspective as indicated in the process flow (Figure 5.1).

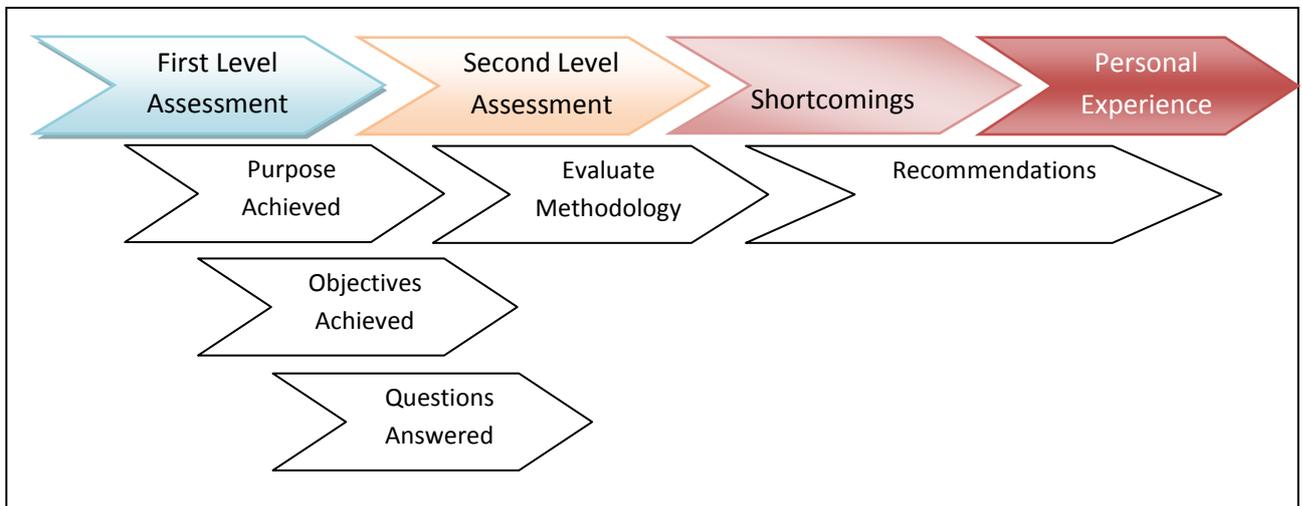


Figure 5.1: Chapter 5: Process flow

5.2 ASSESSMENT ON THE FIRST LEVEL

The following paragraphs embark on the first level assessment.

5.2.1 First level assessment

In the first instance it is necessary to determine whether the purpose of the study has been achieved.

5.2.1.1 Purpose achieved?

*To (a) define a **meaningful workplace** Model through the (b) identification and description of the constitutive elements or dimensions in terms that can be(c) related to Organizational Behaviour and (d) applied as Management and Leadership practice in organizational settings, based on the (e) emergence of the construct: A **meaningful workplace** in literature and organizational practice, thereby (f) expanding on the emerging theoretical discussion in this regard.*

The original purpose as indicated contains at least six dimensions that had to be satisfied.

To progress further than the descriptions provided in Chapters 3 and 4 the following definition is proposed:

- A **meaningful workplace** is a dynamic space where employees experience psychological meaningfulness, psychological availability and psychological safety while performing work related activities; or work roles, as a result of the simultaneous presence of those constitutive dimensions as described and characterised by means of the *Meaningfulness at Work Model* and *Meaning of Work Model* as facilitating or enabling characteristics for the experience of

meaning by employees as individuals or in work groups, whilst performing work in work-space.

This definition is inclusive of the major dimensions that have been discussed and can be described as a high level conceptual definition, thus satisfying the first dimension of the purpose.

- The second and third dimensions of the purpose as described in chapter 1, go hand in hand and serve as the theoretical foundation structure for the definition and the underlying descriptions (from a practice orientated perspective) as presented in chapters 3 and 4. Thus without complying with or satisfying the second and third dimensions neither the descriptions given nor the definition of a **meaningful workplace** would have been possible.
- The fourth dimension of the purpose refers to the practice of management and leadership in organizations. The requirement is thus to satisfy a practical need. Although the different constituent dimensions of a **meaningful workplace** have initially been researched from academic research and description, it has been indicated via the alignment of and with the empirical dimensions (Chapter 4), that these dimensions also belong in the domain of practical management practice and leadership behaviour. This clearly indicates the domain of organization management and leadership practice. Whether these dimensions are operationalised in organizational life is quite another matter. This much is clear from the exit interviews and Repertory Grid data sets: Employees expect the practice and management to integrate the dimensions that constitute a **meaningful workplace** in the day to day steering of organizations.
- Without indicating the “footprint” of the construct: **Meaningful workplace**, none of the above would have been possible. It can thus safely be stated that the fifth dimension of the initial purpose was achieved.
- This study has without doubt expanded on the construct, which is the sixth dimension of the initial purpose. The inputs in respect of expanding the Meaning of Work Model as proposed by Chalofsky (2010) represent an expansion as does the establishment of the Meaningfulness at Work model (if it can be called such). The indication of additional dimensions that could,

according to the current researcher, be integrated in the theory on a **meaningful workplace** expands on the current thinking. It was stated that the current study is in search of a footprint so as to expand and build on the current thinking. It should thus be viewed as an evolutionary step in the process of development.

5.2.1.2 Objectives achieved

The specific objectives of the study were indicated as:

- **Objective 1:** *To conceptualise the constitutive elements of the construct: A **meaningful workplace***
- **Objective 2:** *To expand the theoretical base of the construct **meaningful workplace**, as presented in literature thereby contributing to the field of *Organizational Behaviour*,*
- **Objective 3:** *To present a practical implementable **meaningful workplace Model** based on the research process and as a result of the previous two objectives.*

Objectives 1 and 2 have been discussed by implication and do therefore not need any additional discussion.

- Objective three does however need explanation. It was stated on numerous occasions that there is no specific chronological order for the implementation of any of the different “cycles”. Nor is there a ranked order of importance as all of the cycles stand in a reciprocal relationship to one another and that they are so integrated that it is difficult to draw fixed boundaries between them. The only possible criterion at this point in time to determine a chronological intervention design and resulting implementation is most probably to select the most voluminous cycle as a starting point, in which case the “Culture Cycle” would be selected. This however was never the intent. The intention was to present a “*Model*” that could be implemented by choice and based on need and priority by

and in an organization. This has been done and therefore the third objective can also be seen to be achieved.

5.2.1.3 Questions Answered?

The research questions that were posed at the commencement of the study will be responded to one-by-one.

- *Is the construct A **meaningful workplace** an emerging construct in the literature on Organizational Theory, and – Management, and Organizational Behaviour?*

The construct: **A meaningful workplace** is an emerging construct in the literature on Organizational theory, Management theory and Organizational Behaviour. As a matter of fact the construct seems to be emerging in the literature on sociology, psychology, and in Journals aiming at the health professions such as nursing, as well as education and the field of learning. It is thus not limited to thoughts or thinkers within the traditional management sciences. This cross-border interest is important as it contributes to the depth of an understanding of the concept meaning and meaningfulness. .

- *If so, what is meant by the construct: A **meaningful workplace**?*

The description in the two primary chapters of the study (3 & 4) provides an extended answer on this question as do the descriptions at the end of the mentioned chapters and the definition above.

- *Having determined whether the construct is an emerging construct, and having investigated the content and intent of the construct, would it be possible to expand on the theoretical base (as initially presented by Terez (2000) and Chalofsky (2010)) thus contributing to establishing a knowledge repository for the construct?*

The answer to this particular question is a qualified “yes”. It is “qualified”, because it is not possible to accommodate the wealth of possible or probable information into a

single study of this nature. However this study has gathered a mass of complex and even complicated matter that deserve to be analysed further.

- *If the above questions were to be answered, would such a conceptual description and the accompanying model and implementation guidelines constitute “new knowledge” in the field of Organizational Behaviour?*

This question was posed and deserves to be answered. In retrospect it seems a very ambitious question because it touches on the development of knowledge. Can this study lay claim to such an expansive ideal? Once again it must be qualified. When data is transformed and some insight emanates from such a transformation process, is it new or is it simply a repackaging of “old” information? Thus what makes knowledge “new”? This question falls squarely into the epistemological discussion which will not be entered into at this stage as it had been addressed in Chapter 2. Perhaps two additional questions could clarify the intent of the research question. The first question pertains to constructivism. Do a constructivist approach, assumptions and methodology create or expose reality? Constructivism construes realities (potentialities in post modernism). The approach is different from positivism that “discovers reality”. The realities that are construed through a constructivist approach pose as realities in their own right and can be accepted or rejected. In this case the construed reality of a **meaningful workplace** that also exists in the consciousness of employees is accepted as “reality” without elevating this reality to the status of the “only reality”. The second question pertains to the question of causality or response. Causality is rejected and in the place thereof the complexity of context, creates the opportunities for the behaviour of choice by individual employees is accepted. Will the implementation of a **meaningful workplace** model cause behaviour that is concomitant with meaningfulness. The answer is “no, not directly” because such an answer would imply a direct cause and effect relationship. A **meaningful workplace** creates conditions wherein which employees can consider the potentialities and perhaps choose cognitive, affective and behaviour patterns that reflect meaningfulness in all its complex dimensions. Does the study present “new” knowledge in the field of Organizational Behaviour? A qualified yes is once again presented. New in the sense that it posits new relationships and opens the field to new potentialities or theoretical and management options as well as

behavioural options. The element of coercion thus falls by the wayside as a method of force and is replaced by a context of preferred choice. Are the elements that constitute the **meaningfulness workplace** model new? No the elements are an integral part of the knowledge repertoire of OB specialists. The “neuron pathways” that link these elements are “new”.

*. If it were possible, on a theoretical and conceptual level, to construe A **meaningful workplace** theory, would it also be possible, by means of direct transference, to identify and define the constitutive elements and relate these to organizational practice and managerial and supervisory practice?*

This question has undoubtedly been answered in the positive throughout the document

5.3 SECOND LEVEL ASSESSMENT: METHODOLOGY

To achieve the fulfilment of research as human endeavour in search of knowledge and the construction of reality, a research framework, following a qualitative paradigm, and utilising selected data gathering methods was established. The paradigm or the broadest possible framework for this research program was described as a qualitative paradigm. This was done because it was judged that the research theme had a strong phenomenological focus, thus the research focus is human experience, equated with being in the world of work. Thus the human phenomenon which was targeted for research was the organization and human experience of a specific type within the framework of this phenomenon. The data gathering techniques were chosen to support the purpose of the study and to provide a measure of cross corroboration between existing literature, which might be judged to be of a conceptual and theoretical nature, and empirical data which are more practically aligned and emanate from the lived experience of people. The framework and strategy for the understanding of data (which includes the act of interpretation) was phenomenology. Phenomenology as a system forces the researcher to maintain a focus on lived experience and the understanding and interpretation thereof. The method for representing data and interpreted information

was of a constructivist nature. As this study was not interested in creating theory from a nil hypothesis, it did not follow a grounded theory approach. The assumption was that the dimensions of the construct: A **meaningful workplace** already exists in lived experience of employees, but that this construct is either not acknowledged for what is or simply ignored to the advantage of the continuous quantification and measurement constructs. The current researcher does not reject quantitative research but had a strong inkling towards the current theme from a descriptive perspective to enhance the current thinking in respect of a **meaningful workplace** and to create neuron bindings between existing dimensions, but in different contexts. The chosen methodology served this purpose well, although it must also be stated that the particular methodological framework might not suit all qualitative researchers, nor would it necessarily be suitable for all qualitative research by the same researcher.

5.4 SHORTCOMINGS

The research program without any shortcomings is yet to be presented. This program suffers from certain shortcomings which are briefly discussed below.

5.4.1 Incomplete discussions

Self regulation for a study program such as this is viewed as positive because it limits the breadth of discussion and in some instances the depth as well. Aware of the fact that such self regulation was absolutely necessary, it did create a limit on the extent to which certain themes could be pursued. It does not claim to be, a once-and-for all research on the particular topic.

5.4.2 Measurement

Quantitatively inclined researchers would have expected some form measurement for certain statements that have been made. However it was stated in Chapter 2 that measurement and statistical data does not form part of a qualitative study. The current study is interpretive and focuses on understanding and not on descriptive measures as such. Explanation is preferred above description, the last which has a place in statistical-descriptive endeavours.

5.4.3 Uncertainty

Because qualitative studies rely on interpretation and subsequently language as representational medium, uncertainty whether the research can stand its ground when compared to quantitative studies will always be in the back of the readers mind. The purposeful nature of the current study was to comply with postmodern thinking and thus leave the result in the sphere of potentiality. Models of thinking and choice are (or have) shifted from certainty to uncertainty. If the current study does nothing else but to stimulate thinking and discussion, then it would already have achieved a covert type of agenda.

5.4.4 Implementation process of the model

It was never part of the initial purpose to design an implementation process after the development of a **Meaningful workplace** model. This does not imply that such a process is unnecessary or not required. If the design is to become practice in organizational life through the internalisation of the Model, then an implementation process is an absolute requirement. However for now such a process will have to be reserved for the recommendations and next steps as a result of this study.

5.5 RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

Relevance in my mind relates to the measure of overlap between the perceptions of belief and truth. The greater the measure of overlap, the greater the measure of relevance. Relevance thus lies in the thinking and belief system of the reader/observer and manifests itself in the acceptance of this overlap as an indication of “reality” to be achieved.

On a more sober level it could be stated that many of the dimensions that have been judged to form part of an integrated **meaningful workplace** model, have been researched in respect of their impact on the revenue margins, stakeholder perceptions and market analysts whose interpretation influence the market value and capitalisation of enterprises. As the relevance of the study was provided in Chapter 1, this theme will not be further explored here.

5.6 EXPERIENCE OF THE RESEARCHER

In Chapter 1 the initial interest in this topic was declared. At that stage it was acknowledged that personal experience played a role in the choice of the topic and the research program. Throughout the following thoughts occurred:

- The construct and the different dimensions that constitute the construct are achievable in organizational life to establish a better work-life experience and thus more meaningful life experience life for employees
- If these dimensions were actively sought and applied, many employees in whom companies heavily invest would not leave, thereby creating massive staffing accounts to replace those skills
- The experience was both an “aha” as well as an “I thought so” type of experience, alternating with “i did not know this”
- In addition to the above, it was a constructive and steep learning curve. Structured study and research is never a waste of time, but it does absorb time.

- The satisfaction of completing such an endeavour as this is like reaching the summit of a word-mountain. You struggled through the valleys, climbed 90 degree cliffs, hung on to narrow ledges, and eventually reached the summit. Does this imply that “you know everything?” On the contrary: “I wish I knew more than I currently do!”
- Grateful and satisfied but not in an arrogant manner. Humble because I was afforded the opportunity to embark and complete this ideal.

5.7 CLOSING COMMENT

May this work be received for what it is: A process and methodology, translated as a “Model”, contributing to some understanding of employee behaviour in an organizational context and a means to enhance the experience of meaningfulness of employees in the workplace; also as a parallel insight into Organizational behaviour as a Subject Field and field of practice in Organizations. .

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