

**A qualitative investigation into the relationship between self-
concept and the propensity for role uptake in a small group**

by

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CONCEPT DECLARATION

I, Melissa du Plessis, hereby declare that **“A qualitative investigation into the relationship between self-concept and the propensity for role uptake in a small group”** is my own work. All the resources used in this study are cited and referenced by means of a comprehensive referencing system.

I declare that the content of this thesis has never been used before for any qualification at any tertiary institution.

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ABSTRACT

When regarding the history of role theory, one becomes aware of the fact that, although much knowledge is available specifically pertaining to roles in small group settings (e.g. expectations about behaviour, types of roles, flexibility of locus, appropriateness of the role system, dynamic nature of role formation and development as well as typologies dividing roles into categories), not much literature is available specifically pertaining to what the impact of an individual's self-concept is on his/her propensity to either assume or avoid certain roles in such a setting. Accordingly, this study aimed to explore the above-mentioned aspect of role division in small groups.

Research was done by means of a case study research design, with a constructivist/interpretivist meta-theoretical paradigm as research approach. This paradigm holds that there are multiple subjective realities involved when studying human interactions and the consequences thereof.

The study was furthermore conducted from a psychodynamic and systems theory perspective. Data was collected from a sample of postgraduate students, who participated in a training group as part of their Industrial and Organisational Psychology master's degree programme at the University of Pretoria, by means of three different methods, namely video and voice recordings, a document study, as well as semi-structured interviews. Data was furthermore analysed by Atlas.ti, a qualitative data analysis programme, according to the principles of constructivist grounded theory.

When regarding current literature on the subject, it is implied by some that an individual will only allow roles to be imposed on him/her if he/she is predisposed to assuming such roles, and if he/she can accordingly integrate the responsibility somehow with his/her self-concept. Accordingly, the results obtained showed some connection between an individual's self-concept and the role(s) that was assumed by the individual in the small group setting. More specifically, the results showed that

an individual is more likely to change roles with ease should the alternate role requirements also be in line with elements of the individual's self-concept.

The results further indicated that it might be difficult for an individual to adapt and change to another role should the roles, which are required in the small group setting, be in conflict with the individual's self-concept. These findings thus imply that an individual's self-concept might have an impact on an individual's propensity to either assume or avoid certain roles (role valency) in a small group setting.

Keywords: Groups, roles, self-concept, self-schema, valence/valency, working models, working self-concept

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND AIM

1.1 INTRODUCTION

It is almost impossible to think about human existence and what it entails without thinking about group experiences simultaneously. From birth to adulthood, the individual finds himself/herself to be part of an assortment of group units, e.g. family unit, friendship circle(s), academic institutions, and places of employment. Johnson and Johnson (2006, p. 1) state in this regard that “membership in groups is inevitable and universal”. Accordingly, membership is usually granted to these group units on the premise that the individual has something to contribute to the group as a whole. Stated differently, membership is granted on the premise that the individual will fulfil some kind of a role in the group.

Johnson and Johnson (2006, p. 15) define *role* as “a set of expectations governing the appropriate behaviour of an occupant of a position toward occupants of other related positions”. When an individual is, for instance, offered employment, it is offered on the premise that the individual will attend to certain tasks and responsibilities related to the overall goals of the company, therefore taking up a specific role. Pines (1985, p. 117) argues that “role differentiations and social structure are produced in accordance with the capacities of individuals for interaction in the groups”. Johnson and Johnson (2006, p. 15) further state that “members who conform to their role requirements are rewarded, whereas those who deviate are punished”. Thus, gaining membership to a specific group or groups may be described as very closely linked to role differentiation in that specific group context.

However, questions such as the following come to mind when reading the above-mentioned paragraph: How does an individual decide which roles he/she would like to fulfil in different group settings? What is the relationship between an individual’s self-concept and the roles that he/she decides to assume in such group settings? Would an individual still desire to gain membership to certain groups if it is expected of the individual to fulfil roles that are in conflict with his/her self-concept? It is this

process of taking up roles in small group settings, and the influence of the self-concept on this process, which is of interest to the researcher, and which will consequently be explored further with this study.

Background information regarding the problem to be investigated will be provided first, followed by the problem statement, description of the purpose of the study, as well as research objectives. The delimitations and scope of the study will also be highlighted. Next, the significance of the proposed study will be discussed, followed by an outline of the rest of the report.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH

The two constructs that make up the main focus of this study, namely self-concept and group roles, will be discussed separately in this section, before elaborating on the research problem and purpose of the study in the section to follow (Section 1.3).

1.2.1 Background of theory of the self-concept

According to Burns (as cited in Hosking, 1993, p. 981), *self-concept* may be defined as “the set of attitudes a person holds towards himself”. Pasquali, Arnold and DeBasio (as cited in Hosking, 1993, p. 981) states in this regard that “self-concept is the person’s view of his or her own strengths and weaknesses, it is the person’s perception of self based on reflected appraisals from the environment”. Super (as cited in Bacanli, 2005, p. 609) defines the *self-concept* as “a person’s picture of himself/herself and the perceived self with accrued meanings”. Rogers (as cited in Bacanli, 2005, p. 609) further states that “self-concept is the most significant determinant of a person’s behaviours”.

Cooley (1902) was one of the first theorists to have written about people’s concepts of self. He argues (as cited in Hosking, 1993, p. 981) that “individuals come to know themselves through the reactions of others”. The term *the looking glass self* was coined by Cooley (as cited in Hosking, 1993, p. 981), which refers to “seeing ourselves in relation to how others see us”. Hosking (1993, p. 981) further states

that, although Mead built on Cooley's ideas, he emphasised "the importance of our ability to reflect on our responses to experience". Gross (as cited in Hosking, 1993, p. 982) argues that the "self-concept is a general term which refers to three major components, namely self-image, self-esteem and ideal self (ego ideal)". He further continues by defining the three concepts as follows: "Self-image – a description of the kind of person we think are the roles we hold in society, our personality traits (Cattell), and our body image; Self-esteem – this is evaluative in nature and includes the degree to which one values oneself (Rebar); Ideal self – the kind of person we would like to be".

Markus and Wurf (1987, p. 300) state in terms of the history of self-concept theory that "progress in research on the self-concept came as a result of three advances. The first was the realization that the self-concept can no longer be explored as if it were a unitary, monolithic entity. The second was the understanding that the functioning of the self-concept depends on both the self-motives being served (e.g. self-enhancement, consistency, maintenance, or self-actualization) and on the configuration of the immediate social situation. The third advance was a consequence of observing more fine-grained behaviour".

Marsh, Trautwein, Lüdtke, Köller and Baumert (2006, p. 406) argue in this regard that "although a multi-dimensional conception of self-concept was already evident in William James' pioneering studies on the self, for a long time self-concept research was dominated by a unidimensional perspective in which self-concept was typically represented by a single score (e.g. Coopersmith, 1967), variously referred to as general self-concept, global self-worth, or self-esteem". Marsh et al. (2006, p. 407) continue by highlighting the fact that Shavelson, Hubner and Stanton developed "a multidimensional, hierarchical model of the self-concept that fundamentally impacted on subsequent research", and state in this regard that "over the last two decades, influenced by the Shavelson model, many sub-disciplines of psychology have shifted from primary reliance on a global self-esteem measure to including domain-specific assessments of self-concept in addition to, or instead of, a global self-esteem measure". Van den Bergh and De Rycke (2003, p. 202) agree with this view and

state that, according to Marsh and Hatti, “there has been a major shift away from global or unidimensional models of self to multidimensional models”.

1.2.2 Background of role theory

Bormann and McGrath (as cited in Zigurs & Kozar, 1994, p. 279) define *roles* as “a dynamic set of recurring behaviours, both expected and enacted, within a particular group context”. Steiner (as cited in Zigurs & Kozar, 1994, p. 279) further states with regard to *roles* that “group productivity depends upon the appropriateness of the role system that is imposed upon the members of the group, and upon the adequacy with which members perform their assigned roles”. According to Bormann (1975) and Hackman (1990) (as cited in Zigurs & Kozar, 1994, p. 277), “one aspect of mutual perception that has a significant impact on both (group) processes and outcomes is that of the roles people fill and see others as filling”. Group members might fill the roles of, for instance, gatekeeper, tension releaser, clarifier, leader, proceduralist, scapegoat, or joker.

According to Zigurs and Kozar (1994, p. 279), the “history of role theory dates to the 1930s, when sociologists and anthropologists studied roles as a key to explaining the origins of social behaviour (Linton, 1936; Mead, 1934)”. Since then, “role theory has emerged as a recognized discipline according to Biddle and Thomas (as cited in Zigurs & Kozar, 1994, p. 279), and roles have been studied at many levels of analysis, including societal, organizational, and small groups”. Zigurs and Kozar (1994, p. 279) are of the opinion that “most studies of roles in small groups have been from a descriptive perspective”, and that “few studies of traditional groups have taken a holistic perspective on roles”. Scribner and Donaldson (2001, p. 609) state with reference to *role theory* that “two viewpoints have guided much research on roles within small groups. The first viewpoint conceives of roles as expectations about the behaviour of group members (Salazar, 1996). The second viewpoint focuses on the dynamic nature of role formation and development within the context in which the group is functioning”. Agazarian and Peters (1981, p. 104) are of the opinion that “a role has flexibility of locus, that is, different members or combinations

of members can perform it. It is this quality that makes it easy to understand a role as a function of the group rather than as idiosyncratic to an individual”.

In this regard, Benne and Sheats (as cited in Pianesi, Zancanaro, Lepri & Cappelletti, 2007, p. 412) developed a typology that is still cited today. “Their typology classifies group member roles into three categories: (1) group task roles, (2) socio-emotional group-building and maintenance roles, and (3) individual roles”. The first two categories, as may be deduced, are directed towards group needs, while the third category pertains more to the individual’s needs and goals. According to Pianesi et al. (2007, p. 412), “at each instant during group interaction, each person plays one role along each dimension. The role played may also change in time”. Pianesi et al. (2007, p. 412) further suggest a functional role coding scheme, based on Bales’ categories, while interpreting his functions as (functional) roles in terms of Benne and Sheats’ approach, consisting of five labels for task area and five labels for socio-emotional area. Task area functional roles are labelled as follows: “Orienteer, Giver, Seeker, Recorder and Follower”. Socio-emotional functional roles are labelled as follows: “Attacker, Gate-keeper, Protagonist, Supporter and Neutral”.

Pianesi et al. (2007, p. 413) continue by stating that “of course, participants may – and often do – play different roles during the meeting, but at a given time each of them plays exactly one role in the task area and one role in the socio-economical one”. Zigurs and Kozar (1994, p. 279) are, however, of the opinion that “most groups identify two kinds of role specialists: the idea person who is task-oriented, and the best-liked person who focuses on socio-emotional problems of the group. Role conflict can occur if one person is forced to fill both roles”.

1.3 IDENTIFICATION OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM, PURPOSE, QUESTIONS AND OBJECTIVES

1.3.1 Problem statement

When regarding the above-mentioned summaries of the histories of self-concept and role theory, one becomes aware of the fact that much knowledge or literature is

available specifically pertaining to these two separate concepts (self-concept and role theory). However, when attempting to obtain information on how the self-concept impacts on one's propensity to either accept or avoid certain roles in a small group setting, it becomes apparent that very little literature is available. The research problem may thus be described as follows: *There appears to be a gap in available literature pertaining specifically to the influence of the self-concept on the propensity for role uptake in a small group setting.*

1.3.2 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this research study was to explore the process of taking up roles in a small group setting. More specifically, this study aimed to explore how an individual's self-concept impacts on his or her propensity to either accept or avoid certain roles in the small group setting.

1.3.3 Research questions

When regarding the above-mentioned problem statement and stated purpose of the study, the research question thus becomes evident: What is the relationship between an individual's self-concept and the propensity for role uptake in a small group? Additional complementary research questions include:

- What is a self-concept?
- What is a role?
- What patterns emerged in the observed group with reference to self-concept of members and individual role uptake?

1.3.4 Research objectives

Thus, in pursuit of answers to the above-mentioned research question, the study aimed to achieve the following specific research objective:

- to explore how two group members' self-concepts impacted on the roles that were ultimately assigned to or taken up by the specific group members in a small training group setting.

1.4 DELINEATIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS

1.4.1 Delineations

Firstly, the study focused solely on the process of taking up roles in a small group setting. The study did not aim to make any claims regarding similar processes of role distribution and division that may or may not transpire in a larger group context or in the South-African society as a whole.

Secondly, the chosen sample frame was Industrial Psychology master's degree students at the University of Pretoria, and generalisation of the findings that were produced by the study is thus limited to the chosen sample frame. The study did not aim to make claims regarding the applicability of these findings to any other small or large group contexts.

Finally, the study was conducted mainly from a psychodynamic and systems theory perspective. This may be justified by regarding the aim of the study once more. The study aimed to explore what the impact of an individual's self-concept is on his or her propensity to either assume or avoid certain roles in a small group setting. Stated differently, the study aimed to explore how an individual member's self-concept impacts on the individual's actions and reactions in the group context, thereby impacting on the role that is assigned to or is taken up by the individual in that specific group.

Thus, in terms of the psychodynamic perspective, role distribution in groups may be regarded as an unconscious process, and the aim of the study from this point of view was thus to gain a deeper understanding in terms of what factors may contribute to a specific role either being allocated to or taken up by any given group member. Further, in terms of the systems theory, the aim of the study was to explore whether or not other systems (e.g. self-concept) have an impact on the manner in which roles are divided in a small group setting. Although other perspectives were considered, the psychodynamic and systems theory perspectives served as the primary informative frameworks.

As will be discussed in Chapter 2, this study is philosophically situated within the constructivist/interpretivist paradigm.

1.4.2 Assumptions

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005, p. 5), an *assumption* may be described as “A condition that is taken for granted, without which the research project would be pointless”. The assumptions of this study can be summarised as follows:

- it was assumed that all participants have a good understanding of the language in which the sessions were conducted, namely English;
- it was assumed that all participants were willing and able to contribute in an open and honest manner;
- it was assumed that all participants were able to fully understand and contribute to the training group experience as they were all on the same level in terms of tertiary qualification; and
- it was assumed that all participants fully understood, and were comfortable with, the knowledge that a degree of emotional discomfort might be experienced, as was conveyed to them beforehand.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

Even though much has been written with regard to different roles that individuals will assume during the course of their lives, either as a result of personal choice (personal dynamics) or imposition by another (group dynamics), little research seems to be available specifically pertaining to how the self-concept impacts on the inclination of the individual to either assume or avoid certain roles (an in-depth discussion of available literature will be provided in Chapter 3). This also rings true for the process of role differentiation in the context of small groups. Thus, the significance of the study might be described as threefold:

- academic – due to the fact that the study aimed to explore an aspect of role theory that had not previously been focused on;
- methodological – due to the fact that a unique coding system needed to be created to investigate the stated research problem; and

- practical – due to the fact that group leaders in a variety of contexts may benefit from the knowledge obtained. Group facilitators might, for instance, gain a greater understanding of how an individual's self-concept impacts on his or her actions and reactions in a group, thereby increasing the facilitator's ability to better manage how the individual engages with the group and its constituent members.

1.6 OUTLINE OF THE REPORT

In Chapter 2, the research design and approach will be described in some detail. The researcher will also discuss the units of analysis, the sample, how access was gained to the research setting, as well as the procedure followed in order to collect the relevant data. The data analysis and interpretation approach will be outlined as well, and the researcher will specify how quality of the data and ethical conduct were ensured.

In Chapter 3, key concepts will be defined and a review of relevant literature pertaining to the topic at hand will be discussed. The results will be presented and discussed shortly in Chapter 4, followed by an in-depth discussion regarding interpretations made and conclusions drawn in Chapter 5. Lastly, Chapter 6 will focus on limitations of the study as well as suggested recommendations in terms of future research.

1.7 CONCLUSION

With the study, the researcher thus aimed to explore the process of taking up roles in a small group setting. More specifically, the researcher aimed to explore what the impact of an individual's self-concept is on his or her propensity to either assume or avoid certain roles in a small group setting. The purpose of the research was not to uncover any definitive answers in terms of the stated research question, but rather to gain a deeper understanding of the process of role distribution in a small group setting. In the next chapter (Chapter 2), the research methodology will be discussed in detail to provide a greater understanding of the research approach and design used by the researcher.

CHAPTER 2

METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the method used to investigate the research problem (as outlined in Chapter 1) will be discussed. The research approach will be presented first, followed by an in-depth description of the research design. The researcher will also describe the research setting, units of analysis and sample. Next, the researcher will provide the reader with an in-depth account of how the data was obtained, analysed and interpreted. This chapter will then conclude with a discussion on how quality of the research was ensured as well as how ethical standards were upheld.

2.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

Babbie and Mouton (2001, p. 20-39) identify three main meta-theoretical frameworks, which were summarised by Elizabeth Archer (2010) as follows:

Table 2.1 Meta-theoretical frameworks

Paradigm	Ontology	Epistemology	Methodology
Positivist (Babbie & Mouton, 2001, p. 20-28)	One scientific reality. Pursuing certainty.	Events are explained through knowable facts, cause and effect, law-like underlying consistencies. Findings are 'true', 'objective', and 'absolute'.	Quantitative Experimental Testing Predicting Control Generalisation
Constructivist/ Interpretivist (Babbie & Mouton, 2001, p. 28-33)	Multiple subjective realities. Constructed through human interactions.	Events understood, interpreted and influenced by interactions with social context.	Qualitative Case studies Understanding and interpretation of particular contexts

Critical/Emancipatory (Babbie & Mouton, 2001, p. 33-39)	Reality shaped by history, society, politics, economy, values, power.	Events understood in social and economic context. Emphasis on ideological critique and praxis. Findings are value mediated and socially constructed	Argumentative and controversial Aims for social justice/ emancipation Discourse analysis Critical action research Feminism
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Source: Summarized by E. Archer (personal communication, June 26, 2010) and Babbie and Mouton (2001, p. 20-39)

Accordingly, when regarding the differences between the three meta-theoretical frameworks as discussed above, and keeping in mind the stated aim of the research study, the constructivist/interpretivist paradigm was deemed most appropriate as overarching meta-theoretical framework for the study. The reasons for this can be summarised as follows:

- the study was qualitative by design, due to the need for rich, in-depth information;
- the study aimed to explore how the interplay between personal and group dynamics impact on role uptake in a particular small group context; and
- the researcher did not aim to discover one true reality, but instead aimed to gain a deeper understanding of the events that unfolded in this specific small group context.

The rationale for choosing the above-mentioned qualitative research approach is simply that it was deemed the most effective way of gathering rich, in-depth data regarding the stated research problem (Babbie & Mouton, 2001, p. 270). Due to the very nature of the research study, in-depth information was essential in terms of an individual's self-concept as well as in terms of interaction between group members in the specific group context.

2.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

2.3.1 Description of design

A case study research design was used for the purposes of the study, and certain grounded theory principles were furthermore incorporated into the design. With this type of strategy, a limited number of units of analysis, for instance an individual or group, are studied intensively over a period of time, in order to identify and categorise different elements and consequently to explore their connections (Welman & Kruger, 2001, p. 182). Yin (as cited in Bruns, 1989, p. 158) defines *case study* as “an empirical study that (1) investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when (2) the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which (3) multiple sources of evidence are used”. A case study furthermore does not necessarily aim for findings that can be generalised to the rest of the population, but instead is concerned with formulating a specific answer to the research question based on the specific events that transpired in the case study context. Thus, case study research is aimed at “understanding the uniqueness and idiosyncrasy of a particular case in all its complexity” (Welman & Kruger, 2001, p. 183), while grounded theory, according to Strauss and Corbin (as cited in Babbie & Mouton, 2001, p. 498), is a theory that “is discovered, developed, and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis of data pertaining to that phenomenon”.

Consequently, when conducting case study research, the researcher might observe the unit(s) of analysis for a specified amount of time in order to gather rich, in-depth data pertaining to his or her specific research question(s), which can then be analysed according to grounded theory principles. This research design may furthermore be strengthened by means of different data collection methods in order to answer additional research questions, which may have surfaced as a result of events that transpired during observation of the unit(s) of analysis (Babbie & Mouton, 2001, p. 282). Accordingly, different data collection methods were used in this study, namely recordings, document studies and semi-structured interviews, for the purposes of strengthening the case study research design and providing the

researcher with the data needed to answer the research questions as stated in Chapter 1. Other studies conducted in a similar fashion include that of Griessel-Roux, Ebersohn, Smit and Eloff (2005), and Scribner and Donaldson (2001).

2.3.2 Reason for choice of design

According to De Vos (2002, p. 156), the case study was traditionally used as a means for either observation or intervention, and is regarded as a weak design when not supported by multiple data collection methods. However, when combined with other sources of information, as is the case with this particular study, the design becomes stronger. This may be attributed to the fact that there are supplementary sources of information that can be used in order to develop a clearer and more in-depth understanding of the events that transpired in the case study context.

The advantages of using this method are as follows: it can provide the researcher with rich, in-depth data regarding the topic at hand, and it provides a context for the exploration of new and uncharted territory in terms of available knowledge. The researcher may have to gain the confidence of the participants beforehand though, as a case study context has the ability to evoke feelings of anxiety, especially if the participants are unsure of what is expected of them (De Vos, 2002, p. 273 – 276).

Accordingly, the case study design was deemed the most appropriate choice for the purpose of investigating how the interplay between personal and group dynamics affects role uptake in a small group setting. However, due to the fact that interpretation of the events that transpired might have been subject to human error, biases or prejudice, multiple data collection methods were used, namely recordings, personal reflections and semi-structured interviews. Yin (as cited in Bruns, 1989, p. 161) suggests in this regard that there are three principles pertaining to data collection with a case study design, namely (1) using multiple sources of evidence; (2) creating a case study database; and (3) maintaining a chain of evidence. Thus, applying these principles should strengthen the case study research design and provide the researcher with sufficient information to answer the research question as posed above.

2.4 RESEARCH SETTING

The nine individuals that were selected for participation in this research study were all first-year master's degree students (2009) in the field of Human Resources Management/Industrial and Organisational Psychology at the time. Further, all students who enrol for this specific master's degree have to partake in a training group experience in order to develop a greater understanding of the dynamics that unfold in a group setting (experiential learning). However, although attendance of the group dynamics weekend was made compulsory in order for students to gain practical exposure to the inner workings of training groups, it was made clear to them that no academic marks were to be allocated for participation or willingness to provide their consent for the data to be used. Students were instead asked to complete, and hand in, an assignment that would demonstrate their practical and theoretical knowledge of group dynamics only at the end of the 2009 academic year. Students were thus in no way made to feel that they were being coerced into participating in the research study (also see Section 2.10 of this document).

The research was conducted by the author, in collaboration with the research supervisor, who was at the time a lecturer in the field of Group Dynamics at the University of Pretoria. Thus, he had access to this group of individuals as a direct result of his involvement in the Human Resource Management/Industrial and Organizational Psychology master's programme. The researcher and research supervisor were given permission by the participants to use the data that was obtained from the research study, and the study was furthermore approved by the Department of Human Resource Management as well as the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences. The venue for both the group sessions and interviews was a meeting room in the Economic and Management Sciences Faculty building at the University of Pretoria. For more information regarding the ethical considerations pertaining to the study, see Section 2.10 of this document.

2.5 UNITS OF ANALYSIS

According to Ruane (2005, p. 100), the term *unit of analysis* refers to the entity that will be studied by the researcher in order to collect data pertaining to that same entity. Units of analysis may, for example, be either an individual, a group or even an organisation.

Accordingly, when regarding the question that this research study aimed to answer, it becomes clear that the units of analysis for this study were identified as both the individual group members that participated in the case study as well as the group-as-a-whole. Agazarian and Peters (1981, p. 38) state that “the group can be thought of as having an environment, a goal, and driving and restraining forces relating to the goal. The concept of the group life space permits a therapist to think about group as separate from the individuals who make up the group membership”.

2.6 SAMPLE

A non-probability sampling strategy, in the form of purposive sampling, was used due to the nature of the study (De Vos, 2002, p. 207 & p. 334). The research was conducted mainly for exploratory and descriptive purposes, and thus not to be generalised necessarily to the rest of the population. No random selection of candidates took place. Charmaz (2006, p. 100) states that theoretical sampling (also referred to as purposive sampling) “pertains only to conceptual and theoretical development, it is not about representing a population or increasing the statistical generalisability of your results”.

The population from which the sampling frame was chosen consisted of individuals studying at the University of Pretoria. The population was narrowed down to a sampling frame consisting of all first-year MCom: Human Resource Management/Industrial and Organisational Psychology students. This sampling frame was divided randomly into three training groups, and from there, one of the three training groups was chosen for participation in the research study. The nine individuals included in the group that was chosen for the study were asked for

permission to use the data emanating from their participation in the planned training group sessions for research purposes. The specific group was chosen due to the fact that all its members gave permission for the data to be used and due to the fact that this group was more diverse in terms of age, gender and culture. The sample chosen was a multiracial group, consisting of individuals between 22 and 28 years of age. Eight of the nine participants were furthermore female.

After conclusion of the group sessions, interviews were conducted with all nine participants in order to obtain more in-depth information and a deeper understanding of the events that transpired during the scheduled group sessions. On conclusion of the nine interviews, two candidates were selected, based on the richness of the information provided by them during the course of the interview process as well as on the roles taken up by them or allocated to them during the course of the training group experience, for further analysis and discussion. This sampling size was deemed sufficient for descriptive and exploratory qualitative research purposes (Ruane, 2005).

Charmaz (2006, p. 103) states that purposive sampling is “strategic, specific, and systematic”. Hood (as cited in Charmaz, 2006, p. 104) is of the opinion that “conducting theoretical sampling advances your analysis. Simultaneously it keeps you from getting stuck in either unfocused data collection or foiled analyses”. The disadvantages, however, are drawbacks such as that one might not be able to make statistical inferences, and it might not be representative of the population (Charmaz, 2006).

2.7 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

Three different sources of information were used for the purpose of answering the research question under investigation:

- video recordings: 10 semi-structured training group sessions took place over the course of 20 to 22 August 2009. These sessions were recorded and transcribed;

- personal reflections from each group member regarding the events that transpired over the course of the training group weekend handed in two weeks after conclusion of the 10 sessions; and
- semi-structured individual interviews, conducted with each participant in order to clarify and add to the rich data obtained from the other two data sources (as listed above) regarding the events that transpired. These interviews were also recorded and transcribed.

2.7.1 Video material from the training group

The actual group sessions were conducted during the weekend of 20 to 22 August 2009. Neither the researcher nor research supervisor was directly involved with facilitating the actual group sessions during the course of the chosen weekend, as it was decided that their presence might have an undesirable impact on the group's development. This was especially true in terms of the research supervisor's involvement due to the fact that he was in the dual role of research supervisor and lecturer. For more information regarding the ethical considerations pertaining to the study, see Section 2.10 of this document. Consequently, two independent psychologists were asked to facilitate the group sessions. The lecturer/research supervisor observed the group from an adjacent video room, while the researcher only had the opportunity to view the recorded data after conclusion of the training group weekend.

During the course of the specified weekend, the group participated in 10 scheduled training group sessions, which were unstructured by nature. This was done specifically in order to observe how the individual group members would react to the lack of direction that they were provided with (especially in terms of expectations and purpose). It was thus the responsibility of the group to decide on how to approach the scheduled sessions, as well as to decide on how the time that they were to spend as a group should be best utilised. Harrow, Astrachan, Tucker, Klein and Miller (1971, p. 225) state in this regard that training groups “offer both a rich opportunity to study changes in people’s behaviour as a result of training

experiences, and a rich opportunity to increase one's theoretical understanding of small group behaviour". See Chapter 3 for an in-depth discussion on training groups.

The sampling frame was identified as the first-year Human Resource Management/Industrial and Organisational master's degree group of 2009, as mentioned in Section 2.6. of this document. One of the three groups, consisting of nine individuals, was then chosen from the above-mentioned sampling frame and asked for their participation in the research project. Accordingly, with the participants' consent, the case study weekend was video- and voice-recorded in order to ensure that the data was captured in as accurately a manner as possible.

2.7.2 Document study

Personal reflections may be described as in-depth descriptions of each individual participant's personal view on the events that transpired during the course of the case study period. Thus, premature assumptions and possibly erroneous interpretations made by the researchers during the course of the case study experience may be challenged and accordingly corrected as a result of the information included in the personal reflections.

The strengths of using this data gathering method can be summarised as follows, according to De Vos (2002, p. 325): it is a relatively low-cost method of investigation, participants tend to be more truthful in such documents than they might be in face-to-face conversations, and the content of these documents is not likely to be directly influenced by activities of the researcher.

There are, however, also drawbacks to using this specific data gathering method (De Vos, 2002, p. 325), namely personal documents may be incomplete and may contain biases, these documents may also lack linguistic skills and these documents may become illegible over time if not preserved carefully.

After conclusion of the training group weekend, every individual was asked to submit a reflection regarding his or her experience of the events that transpired over the

course of the weekend. These documents were all sent via e-mail directly from the participants themselves to the lecturer, and authenticity was consequently ensured. Personal reflections had to be handed in no later than two weeks after the conclusion of the case study group weekend in order to ensure accuracy of the participants' recollection. It should be noted here that the students were made well aware of the fact that their personal reflections as well as participation in the research study would not be evaluated for academic purposes (also see Sections 2.4 and 2.10 of this dissertation). Instead, the students were asked to demonstrate their practical and theoretical knowledge of group dynamics much later in the year by compiling an assignment based on a case study event of their own choice (mirroring their working environment experiences), which would be assessed to determine achievement of learning outcomes.

2.7.3 In-depth interviews

Kvale (2005, p. 5), defines an *interview* “as a meeting at which a reporter obtains information from a person, as a meeting in which a person is asked about his personal views, and more generally as a conversation with a purpose”. Kvale (2005, p. 5) further states that in an interview, it is the one part who seeks understanding and the other part serves as a means in the interviewer's search for knowledge.

The semi-structured, in-depth interview, according to Welman and Kruger (2001, p. 161), may be described as an interview that is conducted according to an interview guide. The questions compiled for the interview, thus, do not serve as a strict schedule according to which the interview should be structured, but instead serves as a guide to ensure that the interviewer does cover all of the planned discussion points pertaining to the specific case study as observed.

According to De Vos (2002, p. 292), one-on-one, semi-structured interviewing is a useful data gathering method when trying to obtain more in-depth information regarding the lives of the unit(s) of analysis involved in the study. At the root of the in-depth interview, according to De Vos (2002, p. 298), is “an interest in understanding the experience of other people and the meaning they make of that

experience”. Kvale (2003, p. 277) states that “key human aspects of psychoanalytical interviews are seen as pivotal for obtaining penetrating knowledge of the human situation”. There are, however, drawbacks as well, according to De Vos (2002, p. 305). Participants may at times be unco-operative, especially if they know that they are being tape-recorded. Furthermore, participants may even at times misconstrue information in order to portray themselves or others in a more favourable light. It is thus beneficial to combine this data gathering method with one or more alternative methods of investigation in order to ensure that sufficient data is available for accurate analysis after the fact.

Interviews were arranged with the individual group members shortly after submission of the personal reflections in order to pose specific questions to them regarding their experience of the group weekend, as well as questions pertaining to their individual lives. These semi-structured, in-depth interviews were aimed at clarifying any information that still appeared ambiguous or incomplete, and the purpose was thus to ensure that a complete picture of the case study experience could be formed after conclusion of the final step in the data gathering process, namely the semi-structured interviews.

The interviews were conducted by the researcher herself, and the preparation for the interviews was done in collaboration with the research supervisor. The first interview was scheduled for 29 September 2009, and the last interview was conducted on 11 November 2009. Interviews were scheduled to be convenient for the individual participants. The interviews were conducted and voice-recorded by the researcher herself, and were discussed with the research supervisor after the conclusion of each interview. All nine group members were interviewed.

The questions serving as a guide during the course of interviewing the individual participants are as follows:

- Please tell me about your personal history, from birth until currently?
- Please tell me more about your family and friends?
- Please tell me about your experience of the training group weekend?
- What were the high and low points of the weekend for you?

- According to you, what were the most significant moments?
- Please tell me about a time during the weekend when you felt like a group member, as well as a time during the weekend when you felt isolated from the group? Why do you think you felt this way on both occasions?
- What role do you think each individual played in the group during the course of the group's existence?
- Is there anything else that you would like to add that we have not already discussed during the course of this interview?

To conclude, the different data sources that were used can be summarised as follows:

- video and voice recordings of the training group sessions;
- individual reflections submitted; and
- voice recordings of the interviews with individual group members.

2.8 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Once the data collection process was finalised, the researchers were in the possession of the following:

- video and voice recordings of the entire case study experience;
- personal reflections provided by all participants regarding their individual experiences of the training group weekend; and
- voice recordings of the semi-structured interviews conducted with all nine participants.

The next step in the research process was to convert all the video-recorded data into DVD format so that the case study experience could be viewed and revisited by the researchers with ease whenever it was deemed necessary in order to ensure accuracy of recollection and description.

Once all the video-recorded data was converted into DVD format, the entire training group experience was viewed in order to make preliminary notes regarding the events that transpired in the small group context. This was done in order to

adequately prepare for the semi-structured interviews, which were scheduled to take place shortly after conclusion of the training group weekend. The personal reflections were also perused in an attempt to identify any areas that might be in need of further enquiry to be fully prepared for the semi-structured interviews. These preliminary notes on what had occurred in terms of events that transpired in the small group context served as the starting point of the data analysis process, and also served as a guide in terms of which additional questions had to be asked during the course of the planned semi-structured interviews. Once the semi-structured interviews were completed, the training group weekend video and voice recordings were transcribed together with the voice recordings of the semi-structured interviews.

The content of these transcriptions, as well as that of the personal reflections, was coded and analysed next in terms of grounded theory principles, by means of the method described by Kathy Charmaz in her book *Constructing grounded theory: a practical guide through qualitative analysis* (Charmaz, 2006). This coding method or approach may be summarised as follows (Charmaz, 2006):

- Initial coding (incident to incident) – “Initial codes are provisional, comparative, and grounded in the data. They are provisional because you aim to remain open to other analytic possibilities and create codes that best fit the data you have” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 48). Charmaz (2006, p. 55) further states that “incident coding aids you in discovering patterns and contrasts”.
- Focused coding – “Focused coding means using the most significant and/or frequent earlier codes to sift through large amounts of data” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 57). Charmaz (2006, p. 57) continues by stating that “focused coding requires decisions about which initial codes make the most analytic sense to categorize your data incisively and completely”.
- Axial coding – “Axial coding relates categories to subcategories, specifies the properties and dimensions of a category, and reassembles the data you have fractured during initial coding to give coherence to the emerging analysis” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 60). Creswell (as cited in Charmaz, 2006, p. 60) states that the purposes of axial coding are “to sort, synthesize, and organize large amounts of data and reassemble them in new ways after open coding”.

Charmaz (2006, p. 43) defines *coding* as “categorizing segments of data with a short name that simultaneously summarizes and accounts for each piece of data”. She further states that “your codes show how you select, separate, and sort data to begin an analytic accounting of them”. Charmaz (2006, p. 46) further describes the logic of grounded theory coding as follows: “Codes emerge as you scrutinize your data and define meanings within it. Through this active coding, you interact with your data again and again and ask many different questions of them. As a result, coding may take you into unforeseen areas and new research questions”. This is the reason why grounded theory coding was chosen as method for this study.

Atlas.ti, a qualitative data analysis software package, was used for coding of the data, as well as for accurate processing of the coded data. Processing of the data included the following: dividing the allocated codes into families so as to ensure ease and accuracy of interpretation, and drawing up tables and network views that would portray the findings in a clear and easy to understand fashion (see compact disc provided with the hardcopy of this document). For each of the two research subjects studied, the following outputs were generated:

- frequency analysis – the purpose of this analysis was to determine to what extent the research subject contributed to the conversation in each of the 10 sessions in terms of number and length of verbal interactions;
- here and now analysis – the purpose of this analysis was to give an indication of whether the research subject was mostly busy with things pertaining to the group’s task (here and now), or with things outside the group (there and then). See Chapter 3 for an in-depth discussion of this concept;
- concept of self analysis – the purpose of this analysis was to obtain an understanding of how the subject viewed himself or herself. See Chapter 3 for an in-depth discussion of this concept;
- behaviour analysis – the purpose of this analysis was to gain greater insight into how the research subject behaved during the course of the training group weekend; and
- content analysis – the purpose of this analysis was to gain a better understanding of which conversational topics the research subject mostly

contributed to or was most interested in during the course of the training group weekend.

The above-mentioned outputs provided a sufficiently detailed picture of the subjects' group experience which, in turn, aided the researcher in answering the research question that was under investigation, namely: What is the relationship between an individual's self-concept and the propensity for role uptake in a small group? Outputs obtained will be presented and discussed in Chapter 4, and in Chapter 5, the researcher will discuss interpretations made based on results obtained.

2.9 ENSURING THE QUALITY OF THE RESEARCH

2.9.1 Criteria

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 290), the following criteria should be kept in mind when trying to ensure the trustworthiness of any research project:

- truth value – How can confidence in the 'truth' of the findings be established?
- applicability/transferability – Can findings be applied to other contexts and subjects?
- consistency/replicability/dependability – Would another researcher be able to replicate the study and findings?
- neutrality/credibility – Were the findings of the study solely as a result of the subjects and conditions of the enquiry?

2.9.2 Application of criteria to research study

Credibility

According to De Vos (2002, p. 352), *credibility* refers to the fact that one can safely attribute the findings directly to what occurred in the research setting, and that there are thus no alternative explanations for the results obtained. The researchers aimed to establish credibility by means of the following techniques, as discussed in Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 301-316), triangulation, prolonged engagement, persistent

observation, peer debriefing, referential adequacy as well as member checks. Data was primarily accumulated by means of video and voice recordings of the group weekend, document studies as well as in-depth interviews pertaining to participants' personal lives and the significant events that unfolded during the course of the case study experience (triangulation of data). The research study furthermore also made use of more than one observer (triangulation of observers). The researchers continued to add new data to the already accumulated data pool until such time as data saturation had occurred (prolonged engagement). Also, elements that were most relevant to the stated research problem were identified and focused on (persistent observation).

Further, peers and experts in the field were included in the process in order to test working hypotheses, as well as to share their inputs on the unfolding process and the outcome thereof (peer debriefing). Referential adequacy was ensured by means of recording the case study sessions as well as in-depth interviews, and finally, member checks were conducted to provide the participants with the opportunity to react on the recorded information as well as to clear up any ambiguities or misunderstanding.

Transferability

De Vos (2002, p. 352) states that *transferability* refers to the fact that the results can be generalised to the rest of the population with relative confidence. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 316), transferability depends strongly on two elements, namely thick description of the research approach and design, as well as on sampling being done in a purposeful manner. The researcher thus aimed with the research study to describe the method of investigation in such a manner that another researcher will be able to understand, and accordingly apply, the approach and design to his or her own context with relative confidence. Furthermore, the specific group under investigation was chosen due to the very fact that training groups provide a rich source of information, especially when coupled with a lack of content, purpose and direction. The sampling strategy used may thus be described as purposeful by nature.

Dependability

Welman and Kruger (2001, p. 180) state that *replicability/dependability* refers to the fact that another researcher will be able to duplicate or repeat this study and accordingly come to the same or similar conclusions. In terms of dependability, Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 316) refer to the fact that there can be no credibility without dependability, and if credibility is thus ensured it inherently implies that the study may be regarded as dependable as well. One of the methods used to strengthen the credibility of this study, as discussed above, was triangulation.

Confirmability

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001, p. 278), *confirmability* refers to “the degree to which the findings are the product of the focus of the inquiry and not of the biases of the researchers”. Kvale (2003, p. 289) states that “the interpretations and knowledge claims put forward by the researcher need to be documented and argued, as in any scientific endeavour, with the ideal of making the line of reasoning transparent for the reader to follow and evaluate critically”. Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 318) further state that a residue of records stemming from the inquiry (audit trail) needs to be established and made available on publication of the research findings in order to ensure confirmability of the research results. Thus, in order to ensure confirmability of the research study, all data, documents, memos and notes were kept and will be made available to other researchers who would wish to confirm findings of the research project after publication of the results.

Finally, according to Yin (as cited in Bruns, 1989, p. 162), a case study can only be regarded as exemplary if it: “(1) is significant; (2) is complete; (3) considers alternative perspectives; (4) displays sufficient evidence; and (5) is composed in an engaging manner”.

2.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The following steps were taken in order to ensure that ethical guidelines were adhered to, as listed and discussed in Babbie and Mouton (2001, p. 529-531), Holloway and Jefferson (2000, p. 83-103), Willig and Stainton-Rogers (2008, p. 263-270), and as prescribed by the Health Professions Council of South-Africa:

Participants were informed of the research study, and exactly what it entails, at the outset of the 2009 academic year by means of a study guide provided to them. The lecturer/research supervisor also brought the research study to their attention during the course of the year, and finally they were asked to sign a consent form containing and disclosing all the relevant information pertaining to the study if they agreed to participate in the research endeavour. The consent form also indicated who would have access to the data that was to be collected during the course of the research process, and participants were made aware of the fact that they would have access to the results once released. The students thus received sufficient information from various sources regarding the research study, and were accordingly well informed before giving their consent. It was also made clear to the students that they had the right to withdraw their consent at any stage without justification, should they have a change of heart. Due to the fact that the chosen research sample consisted of master's degree students, it could furthermore also be assumed that participants were competent to give their full consent for participation in the research study. Copies of these documents have been included as appendices at the end of this document.

Participants were further informed well beforehand that they would not be penalised should they refuse participation. This was an important consideration due to the fact that the research supervisor was also assuming the position of the participants' lecturer for the year, and accordingly the chosen participants might have felt coerced into consenting due to fear of retaliation should they refuse. It was thus made very clear to the participants that they have the right to choose whether or not they would like to partake in the research study, and they were guaranteed that their choice would not have any bearing on their final academic results. Students would in effect

only be evaluated on an assignment to be handed in later in the year pertaining to their practical and theoretical knowledge of group dynamics. Thus, participating in the groups was a compulsory component of their training programme, but giving permission for the use of the data for research purposes was not.

Another important ethical consideration for the research study pertained to the video recording and voice recording of the entire process. Participants were informed of this fact well in advance. Again, should they have voiced any objections to this they would have been reminded of the fact that they had the right to refuse or withdraw from participation. Due to the sensitive nature of the data that was obtained, especially in terms of personal lives of the group members, the names of the participants that were chosen for this study were not divulged. Instead, pseudonyms were used in order to protect the participants' identities. The data collected was furthermore stored in a safe place, and will be made available for perusal by other researchers who may wish to do follow-up studies regarding the specific topic at hand, provided that participants give their expressed consent for other researchers to view and use this information in future.

In terms of risk involved, the researchers are of the opinion that there were none pertaining to this research study. However, should any risks have become evident as the research process progressed, participants would have been made aware of these risks immediately, and participants would once again have been reminded of their right to withdraw consent. The participants were, however, informed that they might experience a degree of emotional discomfort during the course of the data gathering process.

2.11 CONCLUSION

In order to explore the process of taking up roles in a small group setting, a constructivist/interpretivist meta-theoretical research approach was used. A case study research design with certain grounded theory principles was employed, and three alternate data collection methods were used, namely video and voice recordings, a document study as well as semi-structured interviews. A non-

probability sampling strategy, in the form of purposive sampling, was furthermore used due to the nature of this study. Data collected was coded, analysed and processed, in terms of grounded theory principles, with the help of Atlas.ti, a qualitative data analysis software package.

In the next chapter (Chapter 3), a review of available literature relevant to the stated purpose of the research will be provided, before presenting the results obtained in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 3

SELF-CONCEPT AND ROLE VALENCY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Have you ever wondered why you assume certain formal or informal roles in a group setting? Your colleagues may know you as the individual who always eases the tension in board meetings with your sense of humour, while your children regard you as a strict authoritative figure who should be obeyed or consequences would surely follow. Why do you choose to assume these roles, and simultaneously refuse to fulfil others? Is it by chance, or are there some deeper psychological currents at work here that you are not even aware of?

In order to explore questions such the above-mentioned, one needs to regard existing literature pertaining to the specific phenomenon. Thus, in the sections to follow, the process of role differentiation and distribution in small groups will be discussed in terms of existing literature on the subject.

3.2 CONCEPT DEFINITIONS

3.2.1 Groups

According to Johnson and Johnson (2006, p. 7), a *group* can be defined as “a collection of individuals whose interactions are structured by a set of roles and norms”. Sherif and Sherif (1956, p. 144) accordingly define a *group* as “a social unit which consists of a number of individuals who stand in (more or less) definite status and role relationships to one another and which possesses a set of values or norms of its own regulating the behaviour of individual members, at least in matters of consequence to the group”.

3.2.2 Roles

According to Johnson and Johnson (2006, p. 15), *roles* can be defined as “a set of expectations governing the appropriate behaviour of an occupant of the position toward occupants of other related positions”. Agazarian and Peters (1981, p. 104) define *roles* as “a set of interrelated functions that contribute to group movement. These functions can be located at the individual level, the sub-group level or group level”. Bormann (as cited in Scribner & Donaldson, 2001, p. 609) states that *roles* may be seen as “that set of perceptions and expectations shared by the (group) members about the behaviour of an individual in both the task (formal roles) and social dimensions (informal roles) of group interaction. When the focal person shares these expectations, the person is said to have a role in the group”. Pianesi et al. (2007, p. 412) also divide roles into two separate categories, namely task area functional roles and socio-emotional functional roles, according to the typology suggested by Benne and Sheats (as cited in Pianesi et al., 2007, p. 412).

3.2.3 Self-concept

Baron and Byrne (2003, p. 162) define *self-concept* as “One’s self-identity, a basic schema consisting of an organized collection of beliefs and attributes about oneself”. According to Sternberg (2001, p. 365), *self-concept* can be defined as follows: “An individual’s view of her- or himself, which may or may not be realistic or even perceived similarly by other persons”. Horowitz and Bordens (1995, p. 47) state that *self-concept* may be defined as “all the ideas, thoughts, and information we have about ourselves”. The term *self-concept* is often used interchangeably with the term *self-schema*, as these two terms both refer to knowledge held by an individual pertaining to the self, including past experiences, current knowledge about the self, and possible future selves.

3.2.4 Self-schema

Baron and Byrne (2003, p. 164) define *self-schema* as “the sum of everything a person remembers, knows, and can imagine about herself or himself”. According to

Horowitz and Bordens (1995, p. 53), *self-schema* may be defined as “an arrangement of information, thoughts, and feelings that we believe to be true about ourselves. Self-schemas organize our experiences, help us interpret situations, and guide our behaviour”.

3.2.5 Valence/Valency

Kurt Lewin (1938, p. 90) defined the concept *valence* as follows: “A positive valence corresponds to a force field where all forces are directed toward the same region. A negative valence corresponds to a force field where all forces have the direction away from the same region”. Thus, Lewin defines the term *valence* predominantly from a scientific point of view. Bion (1961, p. 116) explains the concept *valency* in the following way: “I mean to indicate, by its use, the individual’s readiness to enter into combination with the group in making and acting on the basic assumptions; if his capacity for combination is great, I shall speak of a high valency, if small, of a low valency; he can have, in my view, no valency only be ceasing to be, as far as mental function is concerned, human”. Bion (1961, p. 153) accordingly applied Lewin’s term *valence* to events that unfold in small group settings, stating that he borrowed the term from the physicists “to express a capacity for instantaneous involuntary combination of one individual with another for sharing and acting on a basic assumption”. He also changed the term slightly from *valence* to *valency*.

3.2.6 Working models

According to Horowitz and Bordens (1995, p. 451), a *working model* can be described as “a mental representation of what an individual expects to happen in a close relationship”.

3.2.7 Working self-concept

Markus and Nurius (as cited in Baron & Byrne, 2003, p. 169) define *working self-concept* as “something open to change in response to new experiences, new feedback, and new self-relevant information”.

3.3 LITERATURE REVIEW

As referred to at the outset of this document, this study aimed to explore the relationship between an individual's self-concept and the propensity for role uptake in a small group. This research study was undertaken predominantly from the psychodynamic and systems theory perspectives. Accordingly, a short description of the systems theory and psychodynamic theory will be provided in order to create a clear structure for the literature review that is to follow.

According to Nieman and Bennett (2002, p. 10), the systems approach assumes that all systems (including groups) are made up of certain interdependent parts, which can only fully be understood with reference to the whole. Any system may furthermore be divided into three interdependent parts, namely inputs, internal processes and outputs.

Sternberg (2001, p. 480) states that psychodynamic theories view each person as a complex system of diverse sources of psychic energy, each of which pushes the person in a somewhat different direction. Bergh and Theron (1999, p. 336) state in this regard that the unconscious plays an important role in psychodynamic thinking.

Furthermore, according to Agazarian and Peters (1981, p. 16), "group dynamics will describe the necessary roles and functions of a group, and the pressures relevant to understanding and predicting the phenomena associated with those functions, whilst psychoanalysis must provide the information we need if we are to understand who will perform the functions and why those who do not, will not or cannot". Thus, Agazarian and Peters (1981, p. 16) state that "psychoanalytic thinking provides to the group theorist precisely what group dynamics does not provide and what psychotherapy needs, an approach to the problem of why one given individual (or given part of this group) does what he does within the framework of the group's structure, norms and goals".

Accordingly, the literature review will be structured as indicated in Figure 3.1:

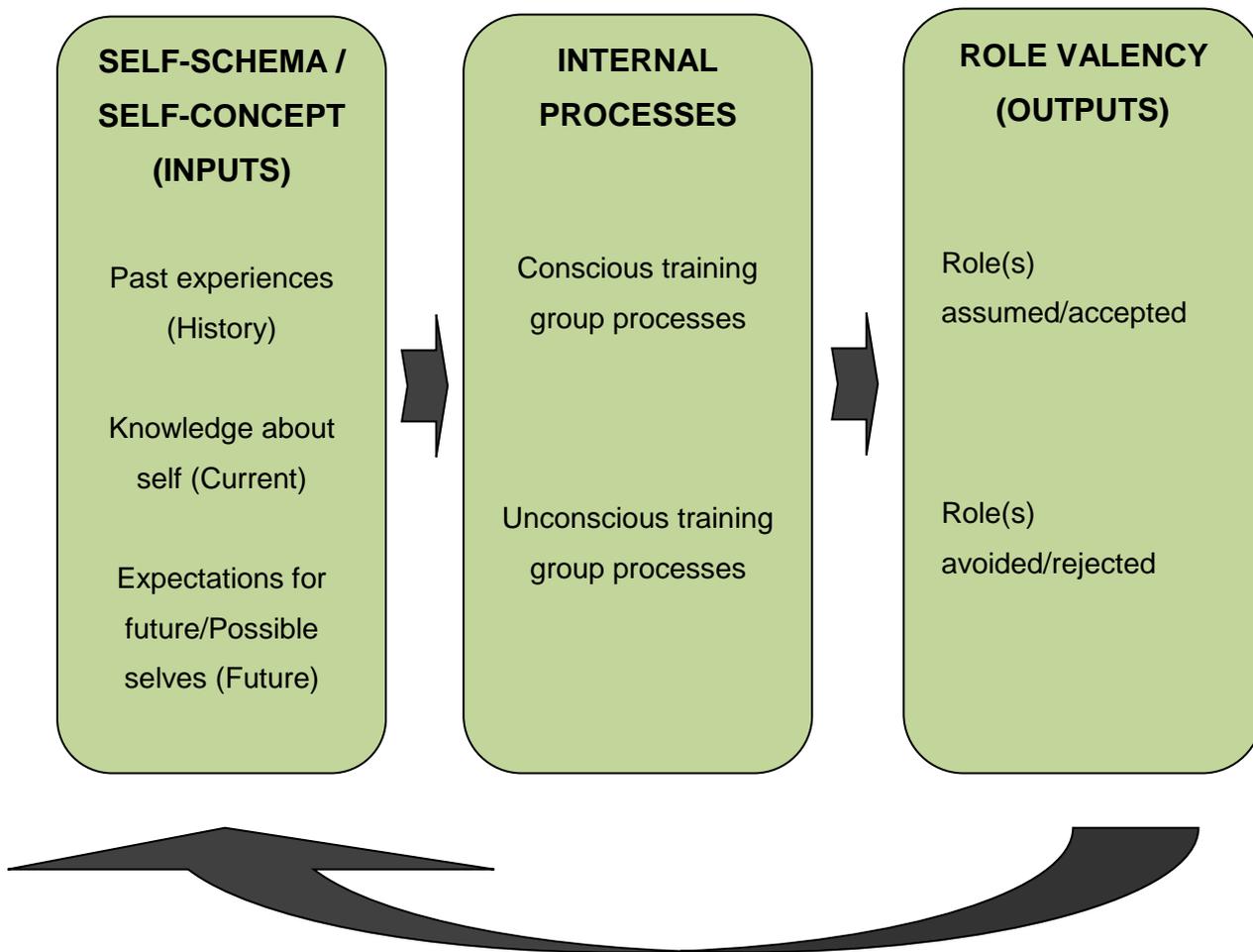


Figure 3.1 Structure of the literature review

In terms of Figure 3.1, inputs refer to the self-schemas/self-concepts of the individual group members before actual compilation of the group. Furthermore, Baron and Byrne (2003, p. 164) state that “a self-schema would include your past experiences (history), your detailed knowledge about what you are like now as opposed to in the past, and your expectancies about the changes you will undergo in the future”. Accordingly, the above-mentioned elements will be discussed and explained in detail to provide a clear understanding of the concepts that make out the focus of this study.

3.3.1 Self-schema/Self-concept

Past experiences (History)

According to Baron and Byrne (2003, p. 300), *familial history* may be described as the setting in which an individual learns how to deal with other people. Ainsworth (as cited in Horowitz & Bordens, 1995, p. 451) states that “infants form attachments with their parents or primary caregivers based on the kinds of interactions they have”. These patterns of attachment, or attachment styles, evolve into working models according to Shaver, Hazan and Bradshaw (as cited in Horowitz & Bordens, 1995, p. 451). Attachment theory thus suggests that the attachment styles developed in early childhood govern the way individuals form and maintain close relationships in adulthood.

Baron and Byrne (2003, p. 305) define *attachment style* as “the degree of security experienced in interpersonal relationships. Differential styles are initially developed in infancy, but attachment differences appear to affect interpersonal behaviour throughout life”. According to Sullivan (as cited in Yalom, 1995, p. 19), “the developing child, in the quest for security, tends to cultivate and to stress those traits and aspects of the self that meet with approval, and will squelch or deny those that meet with disapproval”. Bowlby (as cited in Yalom, 1995, p. 18), from his studies of the early mother-child relationship, concludes that not only is attachment behaviour “necessary for survival, but that it is core, intrinsic, genetically built in”.

Furthermore, according to Griffin and Bartholomew (as cited in Baron & Byrne, 2003, p. 308), who used Bowlby’s work on attachment styles in infancy as a basis for their theory on adult attachment styles, there are two underlying dimensions that govern an adult’s propensity for forming either a healthy or unhealthy attachment to other adults or groups. These two dimensions may accordingly be described as follows: “positive versus negative attitudes about self (self-esteem), and positive versus negative attitudes about other people (interpersonal trust)”, which again are influenced by previous social experiences with others. Baron and Byrne (2003, p. 308) accordingly describe *interpersonal trust* as “a dimension underlying styles of

attachment that involves the belief that other people are either trustworthy, dependable, and reliable, or untrustworthy, undependable and unreliable”.

Yalom (1995, p. 57) states that “self-esteem refers to an individual’s evaluation of what he or she is really worth, and is indissolubly linked to that person’s experiences in prior social relationships”. Sternberg (2001, p. 366) defines *self-esteem* as “the degree to which a person values him- or herself”. Maslow (as cited in Sternberg, 2001, p. 399) also refers to an individual’s need to feel worthwhile (esteem needs), and describes this need as a motivating factor for certain kinds of behaviours. Self-esteem is thus closely interlinked with the *concept of the self*, which Sternberg (2001, p. 365) defines as “an individual’s view of her- or himself, which may or may not be realistic or even perceived similarly by other persons”, and further states that “a more specific, culturally relevant definition of self-concept is one that includes our sense of independence, or autonomy and individuality, and our sense of interdependence, the feeling of belonging and collectivity”. Yalom (1995, p. 19) states in this regard that “the individual develops a concept of the self based on perceived appraisals of significant others”. Other researchers have highlighted an additional element of the self-concept, namely that of *self-understanding*, which is defined by Sternberg (2001, p. 366) as “the way individuals comprehend themselves, including the various roles and characteristics that form a part of the individual’s identities”. Baron and Byrne (2003, p. 167) further state that “each person’s overall self-concept is composed of many distinct components that provide schemas for specific aspects of one’s life”.

Thus, from the discussion above, it becomes apparent that an individual’s history impacts greatly on the self-concept that is ultimately developed. Accordingly, the self-concept appears to play an important role in terms of an individual’s interactions with other adults and groups. Consequently, in terms of group membership and role accumulation, Baron and Byrne (2003, p. 477) state that “different persons perform different tasks and are expected to accomplish different things for the group. Sometimes roles are assigned; in other cases, individuals gradually acquire certain roles without being formally assigned to them. Regardless of how roles are acquired, people often internalize them; they link their roles to key aspects of their

self-concept”. The self-concept of an individual thus becomes an important factor when investigating the propensity of an individual to either assume or avoid certain roles in a group setting.

Knowledge about self (Current)

According to Gerdes (1988, p. 91), the self-concept may be studied from the following perspectives:

- an organised structure or ‘Gestalt’ perspective (see Figure 3.2);
- a process perspective - the individual attempts to align his or her behaviour and concept of self (Rogers as cited in Gerdes, 1988, p. 91); or
- a systems perspective - an organised, dynamic entity consisting of multiple main and sub-systems. Bester (as cited in Gerdes, 1988, p. 91) states in this regard that “different parts of the self-concept cannot be seen as functioning independently from one another due to the fact that they are all part of one structure. Changes in one part of the structure will thus inevitably have an impact on the other parts of the same structure”.

For the purposes of this study, the researcher regards the self-concept from an organised structure or ‘Gestalt’ perspective. Gerdes (1988, p. 87-90) states that main elements comprising one’s self-concept may be listed as follows: ideal self, self-regard, gender, intellectual self, physical self, psychological self, social self and moral self. According to Sternberg (2001, p. 365-368), an accurate depiction of the self-concept should include elements such as culture, self-understanding, self-esteem and gender. Horowitz and Bordens (1995, p. 50) argue that the self-concept contains ‘a core of attributes, arranged in meaningful ways; memories of what we have been; and ideas about possible selves we may yet become’. According to Baron and Byrne (2003, p. 162-171), elements such as one’s sexual self-schema and social self-schema should be included in a discussion pertaining to the self-concept, and they also mention culture, social identity and personal attributes as relevant factors to consider. Bergh and Theron (1999, p. 399) argue in this regard that “the individual as a whole should be emphasized instead of only certain

dimensions”, and accordingly specifically refer to the following aspects connected to the self-concept: “mental, physical, religious, social and psychological”.

Thus, when regarding the above-mentioned descriptions of the self-concept and its constituent parts, one begins to form an understanding of the elements incorporated in the formulation of a self-schema. Accordingly, a visual representation of the combined views as discussed above may present itself as depicted in Figure 3.2:

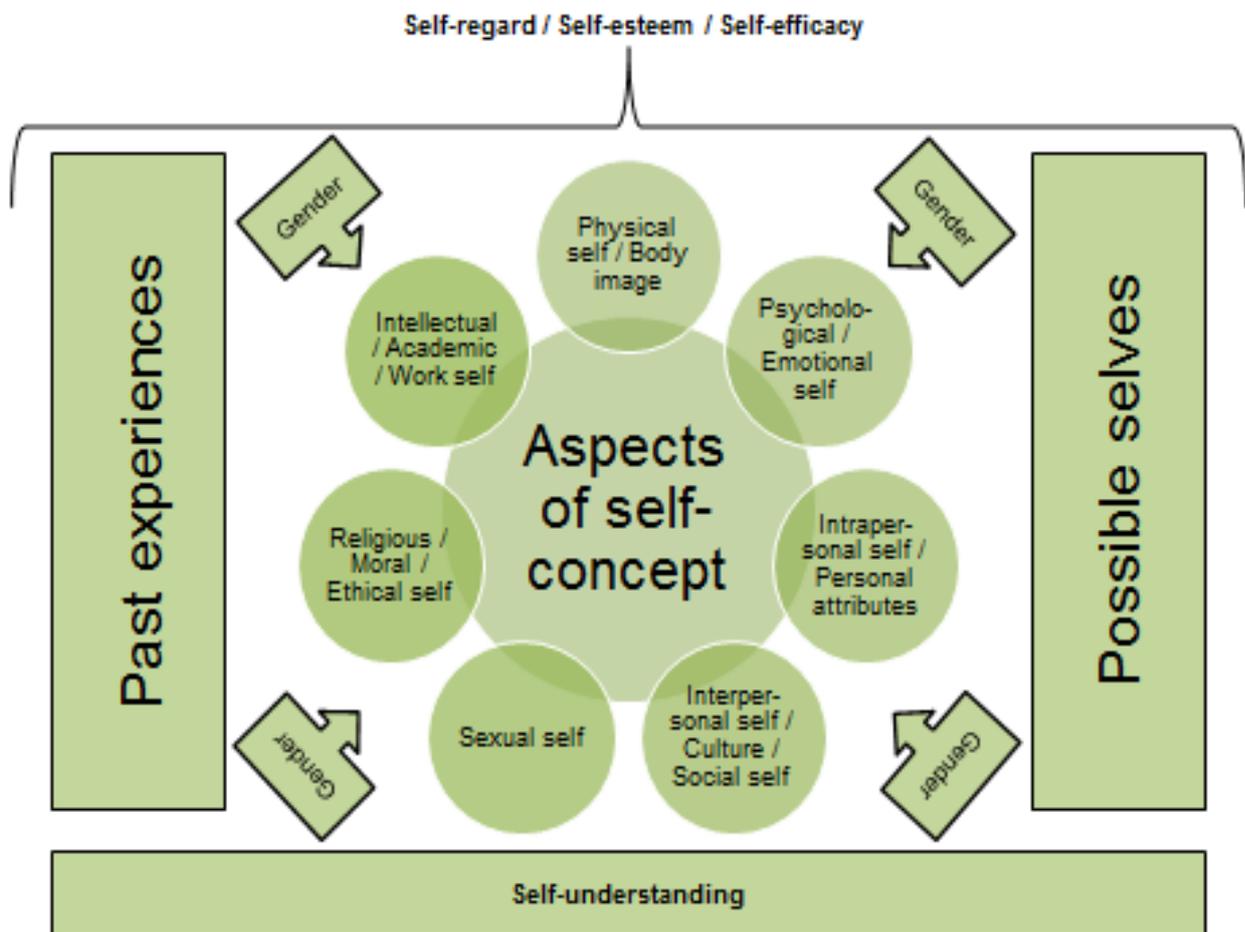


Figure 3.2 Depiction of a self-schema/self-concept

Source: Own research

Defining the elements of a self-schema/self-concept

Table 3.1 Elements of a self-schema/self-concept

Element	Definition/Explanation of concept
Past experiences	Explained in the section just preceding this discussion (see pages 36-38 of this document)
Gender	Male or female. <i>Gender identity</i> is defined by Horowitz and Bordens (1995, p. 211) as “a person’s awareness of belonging to one of the two sexes”. Horowitz and Bordens (1995, p. 211) continue by defining <i>gender role</i> as “observable behaviour that, according to society, marks a person as male or female”. According to Cole, Maxwell, Martin, Peeke, Seroczynski, Tram, Hoffman, Ruiz, Jacquez, and Maschman (as cited in Hay & Ashman, 2003, p. 79) “gender is considered to be a pervasive social and cognitive construct that permeates self-concept development across the life span”.
Intellectual/Academic/Work self-concept	“A person’s observations about his or her own intellectual abilities and talents” (Gerdes, 1988, p. 88).
Intrapersonal self-concept/Personal attributions	“A mental explanation that points to the cause of a person’s behaviour, including the behaviour of the person making the attribution” (Sternberg, 2001, p.433). Horowitz and Bordens (1995, p. 51) state in this regard that “people think of themselves in terms of those attributes or dimensions that make them different, that are distinctive, rather than in terms of attributes they have in common with others” (distinctiveness theory).
Religious/Moral/Ethical self-concept	According to Gerdes (1988, p. 89), the <i>moral self</i> refers to a person’s perception of the degree to which he or she complies with the codes of conduct as prescribed by society or religion.
Physical self-concept/Body image	“The individual’s psychological experience of his or her body with reference to internal organs and processes as

	well as to external appearance and the attitudes and feelings associated therewith” (Gerdes, 1988, p. 88).
Psychological/Emotional self-concept	According to Gerdes (1988, p. 89), the <i>psychological self-concept</i> relates to several psychological qualities, namely relatively constant personality traits (e.g. introversion or extraversion), distinguishable emotional states (e.g. anxiety) and temperamental qualities (e.g. calmness).
Self-esteem/Self-regard/Self-efficacy	Bergh and Theron (1999, p. 402) argue that <i>self-esteem</i> refers to “whether we regard ourselves as being good or bad or able to do things well”. Hamachek (as cited in Gerdes, 1988, p. 90) is of the opinion that <i>self-regard</i> may be defined as “the degree to which we admire ourselves and deem ourselves to be worthy”. Bandura (as cited in Bergh & Theron, 1999, p. 402) states that <i>self-efficacy</i> “denotes the conviction that one can successfully execute the behaviour to produce the (expected) outcomes”.
Self-understanding	Sternberg (2001, p. 366) defines <i>self-understanding</i> as “the way individuals comprehend themselves, including the various roles and characteristics that form a part of the individual’s identities”.
Sexual self-concept	Andersen and Cyranowski (as cited in Baron & Byrne, 2003, p. 165) define the <i>sexual self-concept</i> as “cognitive representations of the sexual aspects of oneself”.
Social self-concept	“A collective identity that includes interpersonal relationships plus those aspects of identity that are derived from membership in larger, less personal groups based on race, ethnicity, and culture” (Baron & Byrne, 2003, p. 166).
Possible selves	To be explained in the section just following this discussion (see pages 43-46 of this document).

Source: Own research

Qualities of the self-schema/self-concept

Gerdes (1988, p. 94) summarises the qualities of the self-concept as follows:

- the self-concept represents a person's definition of the self;
- the self-concept consists of many different aspects (as demonstrated in Figure 3.2);
- an individual may consider some aspects of his or her self-concept to be more important than others;
- the self-concept is an organised system with interdependent parts;
- the development of the self-concept commences in infancy and continues throughout one's life;
- multiple factors impact on the development of the self-concept;
- changing circumstances demand alterations to one's self-concept;
- the willingness of an individual to adapt his or her self-concept is influenced by several factors, for example, whether the change is important or of little consequence, and whether the individual's self-concept is adaptable, rigid or ill defined.

The stability of the self-schema/self-concept

Markus and Kunda (as cited in Horowitz & Bordens, 1995, p. 58) are of the opinion that "the basis of a person's self-concept, the core attributes, is probably quite stable". They continue by stating that the reason for this is due to the fact that "people actively search for information that confirms their self-concepts, and also organize self-relevant information into the structures called self-schemas. These organizations of self-knowledge make it easier to remember information related to the self and guide behaviour so that it is consistent with the self-concept". Markus and Kunda (as cited in Horowitz & Bordens, 1995, p. 58) are thus of the opinion that "these self-schemas will reinforce your basic self-concept and make it relatively resistant to change". Louw, Van Ede and Louw (1998, p. 627) also refer to the relative stability of the self-concept over time.

Bergh and Theron (1999, p. 401) state in this regard that “a person’s self-concept at a certain stage also regulates encounters with new experiences, and whether the person, in terms of the values of his or her existing self-concept, feels comfortable in accommodating such experiences”. Accordingly, Greenwald (as cited in Horowitz & Bordens, 1995, p. 54) suggests that “the self acts as a kind of unconscious monitor that enables people to avoid disquieting or distressing information. The self demands that we preserve what we have, especially that which makes us feel good about ourselves”.

Sedikides (as cited in Baron & Byrne, 2003, p. 165) is of the opinion that “self-conceptions can be relatively central or relatively peripheral. Central self-conceptions are more extreme (positive or negative) than peripheral self-conceptions”. Baron and Byrne (2003, p. 165) elaborate on this point by stating that “it is more difficult to bring about change in central self-conceptions than peripheral ones because central self-concepts are elaborated in greater detail, more strongly consolidated, and held with greater certainty”.

Possible selves (Ideas about what may be in the future)

Markus and Nurius (as cited in Horowitz & Bordens, 1995, p. 55) define *possible selves* as “selves we would like to attain and those we want to avoid or are afraid of becoming”. Horowitz and Bordens (1995, p. 55) accordingly state that *possible selves* may be described as “ideas about what we may be in the future”. It consequently makes sense that these ideas will have some impact on the way that one behaves in order to either attain a desirable outcome or to avoid an undesirable outcome. Horowitz and Bordens (1995, p. 55) are of the opinion that “possible selves are very real and quite social; that is, we form them by observing others, we maintain them by imagining how others will react to them, and we use them to guide our behaviour with others”.

Winnicott (as cited in Anderson & Winer, 2003, p. 79) writes about similar concepts of the self, namely the *true self* and the *false self*. He states in this regard that “when acting on the basis of the true self, people feel that their decisions, their thought,

even their basic way of presenting themselves is grounded in who they are in the deepest sense; they feel as if they are in tune with the well springs of their personhood”. That is why Winnicott (as cited in Anderson & Winer, 2003, p. 79) notes that “only the true self can be creative and only the true self can feel real”. He continues by stating the following regarding the *false self*: “When acting out of the false self, people feel they are going along with others, denying themselves, doing what is expected and required, and missing out on what is personally meaningful. The false self develops when people respond primarily to their caretakers rather than being responded to: a false self adaptation is one of compliance”. Winnicott (as cited in Wilkin, 2006, p. 14) further states in terms of the purpose of the false self that “as the patient’s story unfolds, so too will her false self, unconsciously manufactured and employed with one purpose only: to hide and protect her true self from annihilation”.

According to Baron and Byrne (2003, p. 169), “in thinking about the future, you can envision not only your present self-concept, but other possible selves that you may become”. Rogers (as cited in Sternberg, 2001, p. 491) states in this regard that “each person has an ideal self, the personal characteristics that the person would like to embody”. Louw, Van Ede and Louw (1998, p. 348) also differentiate between the concepts of a *true self* (who the individual is currently as a person) and an *ideal self* (who the individual would like to be in future).

Consequently, one may argue that the image of a possible improved future self can serve as motivation to behave in certain ways to move closer to the ideal self. Borkowski, Carr, Rellinger, Pressley, Hay, Ashman, Van Kraayenoord, Schunk and Valentine (as cited in Hay & Ashman, 2003, p. 78) are all of the opinion that “self-concept is thought to influence achievement through its effect on motivation”. Rogers (as cited in Sternberg, 2001, p. 491) continues by stating that “people have within them the power to make themselves whatever they want to be, if only they choose to use this power”.

In terms of motivation for behaviour, Maslow (as cited in Bergh & Theron, 1999, p. 170 and in Sternberg, 2001, p. 399) proposes a needs hierarchy, depicted in Figure 3.3.

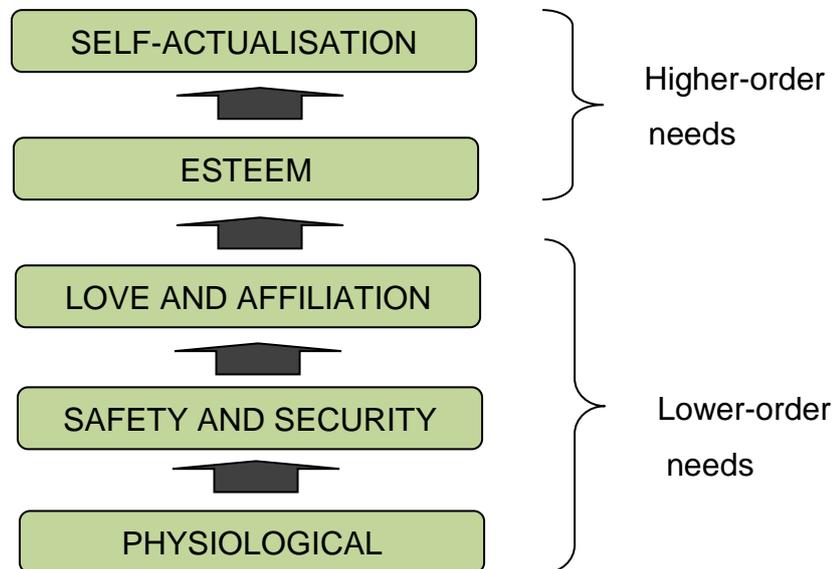


Figure 3.3 Maslow's needs hierarchy

Source: Bergh and Theron (1999, p. 170) and Sternberg (2001, p. 399)

Once again themes of security, affiliation and self-esteem needs come to the fore, and it accordingly becomes evident that the pursuit of higher-order needs serves as a strong motivating factor for certain kinds of behaviours. Although Maslow's theory is regarded as empirically weak by other theorists, when regarding alternative theories on motivation, similar themes seem to be identified. For instance, according to Vignoles (as cited in Riketta, 2008, p. 718), who based his findings on a large literature review, "the most important motives underlying the construction of social, as well as personal and relational, identities are the needs for self-esteem, distinctiveness, belongingness, meaning, continuity, and efficacy".

According to Rogers (as cited in Sternberg, 2001, p. 491), self-actualising persons have five characteristics, namely they constantly grow and evolve, they are open to experiences, they will trust themselves, they will have harmonious relations with others, and they will live fully in the present. Sternberg (2001, p. 491) continues by

highlighting the fact that Maslow's description of self-actualised people is similar to that of Rogers: "Self-actualised people are free of mental illness and have reached the top of the hierarchy of needs. They have experienced love and have a full sense of their self-worth and value". A major contribution of Rogers (as cited in Sternberg 2001, p. 491) was the recognition that the greater the similarity between the self-concept and the ideal self, the better adjusted the person is in his or her life.

3.3.2 Internal group processes

Internal group processes will be discussed in terms of two overarching themes, as has been demonstrated in Figure 3.1, namely conscious training group activities and unconscious processes, which take place while the group is busy with the business of the group. Firstly, however, the concept *training group* will be discussed in greater detail to provide a better understanding of the themes that are to be discussed in this section.

Training groups (T-groups)

Ringer (2002, p. 31) describes *training groups* as "experiential groups where the topic of study is the members' own behaviour". Watson and Johnson (as cited in Johnson & Johnson, 2006, p. 507) define the term *T-group* (sometimes known as laboratory-training or sensitivity-training group) as a "more conservative, more traditional growth group in which the primary emphasis is on studying the development of the group and the relationships among group members".

According to Johnson and Johnson (2006, p. 507), T-groups originated from an accident that occurred in the presence of Kurt Lewin in 1946, while he was busy conducting a workshop to explore the use of small groups to train community facilitators. Lewin (Johnson & Johnson, 2006, p. 508) concluded from this incident that "a group engaged in a problem-solving discussion can benefit enormously by taking time out to discuss its own dynamics or group process". Therefore, according to Ringer (2002, p. 31), the National Training Laboratory (NTL) was established in Maine, USA, for the purposes of researching new ways of enhancing personal

understanding and interpersonal effectiveness. Ringer (2002, p. 31) states that “it was here that ‘T-groups’ or ‘training groups’ were born” in 1947.

Bion (as cited in Lipgar, 2006, p. 84) also studied group life intently, and stressed “the study of groups and learning from experience about the obstacles and impediments to sophisticated work groups”. Bion’s book *Experiences in Groups* (1961) has furthermore been widely referenced, according to Lipgar (2006, p. 83), and Lipgar further states in this regard that “the book itself is still the one book that outsells all others of his. Bion’s concept and discussion of the basic assumptions is probably more readily associated with his name than any of his other ideas”. Lipgar (2006, p. 86) concludes by stating that “perhaps the most vigorous development and application of Bion’s work has been at the Tavistock Institute for Human Relations and the Tavistock Clinic where A.K. Rice, Pierre Turquet, Eric Miller and their associates developed the tradition of group relations conferences. ‘Working conferences’ in this tradition are now conducted worldwide”.

Bradford, Gibb and Benne (as cited in Ringer, 2002, p. 31) argue that, although the philosophical basis for the T-group was derived from a range of disciplines, there is but one overarching principle, namely “understanding and skills of participation can only be achieved by the learner taking an active part in a group experience”.

Burke and Day (as cited in Johnson & Johnson, 2006, p. 508) are of the opinion that “T-groups are a key component of many companies and organizations’ human resource departments” today, and Johnson and Johnson (2006, p. 508) provide possible reasons for the popularity of the use of T-groups, namely “they are an inductive method of teaching group dynamics, they involve learning through experience, and they generate personal learning and emotional experiences by examining the interaction among members”.

Conscious training group processes

According to Agazarian and Peters (1981, p. 13), group dynamics aim to describe the behaviour of individuals as “heavily influenced by the effects of the group”.

Furthermore, according to Agazarian and Peters (1981, p. 13), “this argument rests on the notion that when a group develops out of a collection of individuals, i.e. develops a recognizable and stable structure, the members are seen as parts of the group entity. As such they behave in matters relating to the group as interdependent members of the group, subject to the psychological laws governing the expenditure of energies within the group and to the groups’ aims and goals”. As mentioned earlier, Agazarian and Peters (1981, p. 16) state that “group dynamics will describe the necessary roles and functions of a group, and the pressures relevant to understanding and predicting the phenomena associated with those functions”.

According to Scribner and Donaldson (2001, p. 607), group dynamics variables may be described as, but are not limited to, the following: climate, group norms, roles, group interaction, communication and cohesion. Martin Ringer (2002, p. 29) states in this regard that sociological views on group dynamics focus on topics such as “group goals, stages of group development, decision making, power and influence, leadership as well as conflict”. Johnson and Johnson (2006, p. 5-7) imply that concepts such as the following are relevant when contemplating groups and group dynamics: goals, interdependence, interpersonal interaction, perception of membership, structured relationships and mutual influence.

Group roles

Bormann and McGrath (as cited in Zigurs & Kozar, 1994, p. 279) define *roles* as “a dynamic set of recurring behaviours, both expected and enacted, within a particular group context”. According to Baron and Byrne (2003, p. 478), “roles help to clarify the responsibilities and obligations of group members”.

Zigurs and Kozar (1994, p. 279) state in this regard that “most groups identify two kinds of role specialists: the idea person who is task-oriented, and the best-liked person who focuses on socio-emotional problems of the group”. Benne and Sheats’ typology (as cited in Zigurs & Kozar, 1994, p. 279) “classifies group member roles into three categories: (1) group task roles, (2) socio-emotional group-building and maintenance roles, and (3) individual roles”. Bormann (as cited in Zigurs & Kozar,

1994, p. 280) states in this regard that group roles can be classified as follows: “clarifier, initiator, information giver, tension releaser, and information tester”.

Zigurs and Kozar (1994, p. 285) accordingly summarize role categories as demonstrated in Table 3.2 below:

Table 3.2 Summary of role categories according to Zigurs and Kozar

Task-related roles:	
Proceduralist	Procedure person, Moderator, Agenda-keeper
Recorder	Record-keeper
Evaluator	Devil’s advocate, Critic
Explainer	Elaborator, Coordinator, Orienter, Summarizer, Amplifier
Information/Opinion seeker	Questioner
Information/Opinion giver	
Idea generator	
Group-building roles:	
Follower	Listener, Information receiver
Motivator	Energizer, Encourager
Gatekeeper	Participation monitor/expediter
Mediator	Harmonizer, Compromiser, Conflict handler
Tension-releaser	Jokester

Source: Zigurs and Kozar (1994, p. 285)

Pianesi et al. (2007, p. 412-413) suggest a functional role coding scheme, based on Bales’ categories, while interpreting his functions as (functional) roles in terms of Benne and Sheats’ approach, consisting of five labels for task area and five labels for socio-emotional area:

Table 3.3 Task and Socio-emotional area labels

Task area functional roles:	
Orienteer (o)	S/he orients the group by introducing the agenda, defining goals and procedures, keeping the group focused and on track and summarizing the most important arguments and the group decisions.
Giver (g)	S/he provides factual information and answers to questions. S/he states her beliefs and attitudes about an idea, expresses personal values and factual information.
Seeker (s)	S/he requests suggestions and information, as well as clarifications, to promote effective group decisions.
Recorder (r)	S/he uses the resources available to the group, managing them for the sake of the group.
Follower (f)	S/he only listens, without actively participating in the interaction.
Socio-emotional functional roles:	
Attacker (a)	S/he deflates the status of others, expresses disapproval, attacks the group or the problem.
Gate-keeper (gk)	S/he is the group moderator, who mediates the communicative relations; s/he encourages and facilitates the participation and regulates the flow of communication.
Protagonist (p)	S/he takes the floor, driving the conversation, assuming a personal perspective and asserting her authority.
Supporter (s)	S/he shows a cooperative attitude demonstrating understanding, attention and acceptance as well as providing technical and relational support.
Neutral (n)	S/he passively accepts the idea of others, serving as an audience in group discussion.

Source: Pianesi et al. (2007, p. 412-413)

According to Hoffman (as cited in Bergh & Theron, 2009, p. 196), roles may be divided into the following categories:

Table 3.4 Summary of role categories according to Hoffman

Task-oriented roles: Facilitate and co-ordinate decision-making	
Initiators	Usually have fresh or modified ideas for considering group goals and tasks, in order to solve possible problems in group functioning.
Information-seekers	Clarify issues and provide valid and relevant information and facts.
Evaluators	Assess the group's functioning, such as whether it is to the point, practical or logical.
Relations-oriented roles: Encourage group morale	
Encouragers	Facilitate acceptance and warmth towards group members by agreement and supportive behaviours.
Gatekeepers	Encourage participation by inviting all members to participate or by eliciting responses from quiet members.
Followers	Are usually just going along passively as friendly group members.
Self-oriented roles: Serve individual needs at the expense of the group and its functioning	
Blockers	Behave negatively and usually resist and oppose suggestions and decisions, or might bring back old or solved issues.
Dominators	Try, by using flattery, assertion or interruptions, to take control of the group or to influence particular members of the group.
Avoiders	Purposefully keep a distance from others, resisting issues passively by not taking part.

Source: Bergh and Theron (2009, p. 196)

Hornsey and Jetten (2004, p. 254) state in this regard that “role distinctions allow people to maintain a degree of distinctiveness within the broader group while still maintaining a sense of belonging with that group”. Hornsey and Jetten (2004, p. 254) further argue that “role identities revolve around one’s interdependence with other group members, and roles carry with them a specific behavioural repertoire that is ultimately directed at servicing the broader group”.

Unconscious training group processes

Psychodynamic theory

Psychodynamic theory, according to Sternberg (2001, p. 634), refers to “a theory of human motivations and behaviour, which emphasizes the importance of conflicting unconscious mental processes and the importance of early childhood experiences in affecting adult personality”. In terms of group interaction, Harwood (as cited in Ringer, 2002, p. 52) refers to Lewin’s idea that “each group member’s perception could at times be seen merely as re-experiencing of old relationships”, and continues by stating that “every member’s contribution (regardless of what it is) is accepted as important and valid because it brings out a particular subjective point of view which is organized around previous experience”.

As mentioned earlier, Agazarian and Peters (1981, p. 16) state that “psychoanalysis must provide the information we need if we are to understand who will perform the functions and why those who do not, will not or cannot”. Thus, in contrast to group dynamics, which are concerned mainly with behaviour as a direct result of current group interactions and exchanges, psychodynamics take into account individual histories (discussed in Section 3.3.1 – Past experiences), individual self-concepts (discussed in Section 3.3.1 – Knowledge of self) and motivations (discussed in Section 3.3.1 – Possible selves) as contributing factors to the events that unfold in any given group.

Realms of time and space

Another important unconscious training group process that this study takes into consideration is referred to as the realms of time and space, as depicted in Figure 3.4.

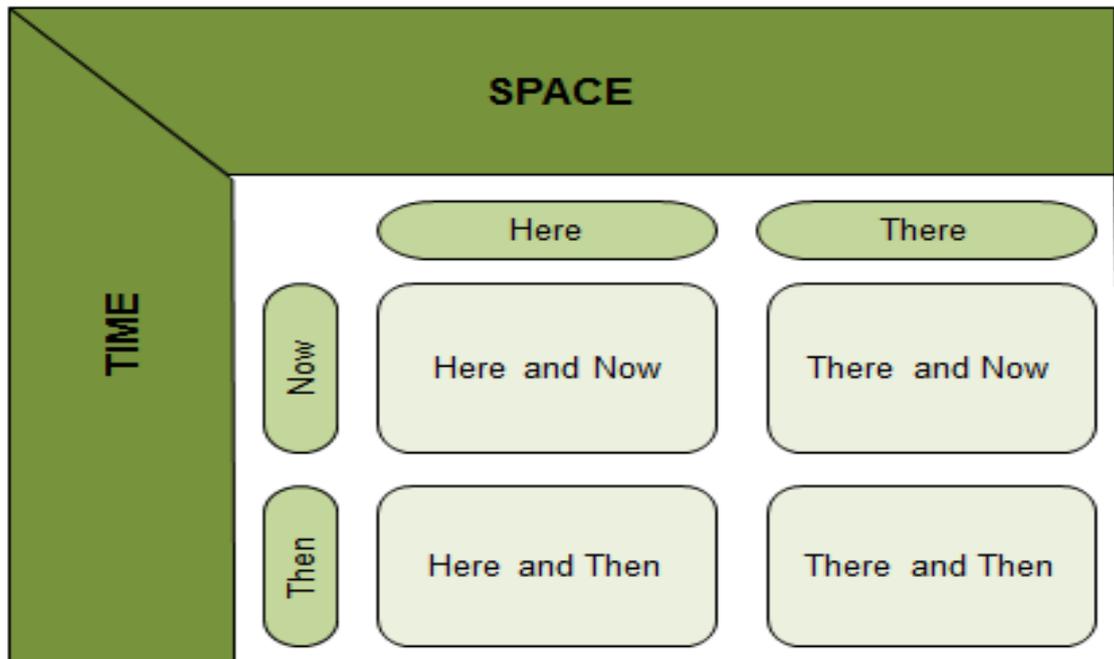


Figure 3.4 Realms of time and space of the training group

Source: Hopper (2003, p. 132)

The four realms as displayed in Figure 3.4 will be briefly explained below, before moving on to the next section, which will focus on the concept of role valency.

Table 3.5 Realms of time and space

Realm	Explanation of realm
here and now	According to Hopper (2003, p. 133), the <i>here and now</i> may be explained as follows: “Work within the transference is work within the ‘here and now’, and it is asserted that this should take precedence over all other elements of therapeutic work”. Joseph

	(as cited in Hopper, 2003, p. 133) states in this regard that “the ‘transference’ refers to the total relationship between analyst and patient, and not to an inappropriate repetition of past experience as a specific strand within this total relationship”.
there and now	Hopper (2003, p. 134) explains this realm as follows: “the ‘there and now’ refers to what is happening between the patient and his ‘significant others’, a wife or a partner, peers, or people who are at the social nodules in his interpersonal network”.
here and then	According to Hopper (2003, p. 134), the <i>here and then</i> includes “the work of reconstruction, in that traditionally we try to connect what is taking place in the ‘here and now’ with what has happened in the person’s early life”.
there and then	Hopper (2003, p. 134) explains this realm as follows: “The ‘there and then’ refers to the patient’s earlier experience of social facts within his broader social context, especially but not exclusively as mediated through his relationships with the ‘here and then’”.

Although the explanations provided in Table 3.5 refer to therapeutic relationships between psychologist and patient, these realms may easily be applied to training group processes as well. By considering these realms when analysing training group behaviour and processes, one may become aware of certain tendencies of the group, for example, whether the group keeps itself busy with things outside the group (there and then; here and then; there and now), or whether the group is actually busy with the work and purpose of the group (here and now).

3.3.3 Role valency

In terms of the model as depicted in Figure 3.1, *outputs* refer to an individual's inclination to either assume or avoid specific roles in the group structure (role valency) based on the interplay between the self-concept of the member and the dynamics unfolding in the group.

Bion (as cited in Pines, 1985, p. 140) describes the regression that takes place in group processes in terms of basic emotional assumptions, the 'fight-flight' assumption, the 'dependency' assumption, and the 'pairing' assumption. These assumptions constitute the basis for group reactions, which potentially always exist but are particularly activated when task structure breaks down. Nitsun (1996, p. 65) states in this regard that "Bion saw the basic assumptions, his most important theoretical contribution, as products of group mentality. In brief, the basic assumptions represent primitive stages of group functioning that constitute faulty, regressive attempts to reconcile the conflicting pulls of individuality and group membership".

Pines (1985, p. 59) further states that "basic assumptions originate within the individual as powerful emotions associated with a specific cluster of ideas which compel the individual to behave accordingly and also to be attracted to those imbued with the same feeling with an immediacy that struck Bion as more analogous to tropisms than to purposive behaviour. These bonds Bion termed 'valency' because of this chemical-like nature of attraction". According to Bion's notion of *valency*, at different times unconscious sub-groupings form through 'combination' in support of a particular emotionalised mode of group operation. The group ethos is the organising principle through which individual strivings are co-ordinated in common effort. Role differentiations and social structure are produced in accordance with the capacities of individuals for interaction in the groups (Pines, 1985, p. 117).

Scribner and Donaldson (2001, p. 609) state that, although role expectations can evolve during the course of the group's work and development, they may also be transferred from experience with the person outside the group or as a result of stereotyping, owing to a variety of traits of the focal person. Hare, Blumberg, Davies and Kent (as cited in Scribner & Donaldson, 2001, p. 609) further state in this regard that "prior beliefs and expectancies about a target individual are self-fulfilling – the focal person's behaviour tends to confirm other group members' original expectations".

According to Redl (as cited in Rosen, Stukenberg & Saeks, 2001, p. 477), basic assumption groups and other forces can create 'role suction' so that the individual begins to fulfil a necessary role for the group. The power of this force can be such that individuals may play roles directly opposed to the roles they would play in other settings. According to Agazarian (1997, p. 223), "when members take their group role personally, they are reminded of the function their role plays for the group – and of the fact that when the group no longer needs the role, it will not be reinforced". Thus, stated differently, "a group will reinforce, encourage, and reward only those changes that are adaptive to the group". Agazarian (1997, p. 223) further states that "group members cannot change their role unless the group supports the change". This is also known as 'role-locks', which Agazarian (1997, p. 223) defines as follows: "Role-locks are barrier experiences that occur when someone becomes trapped inside a role". Horwitz (as cited in Rosen et al., 2001, p. 477), however, points out that the group drafts candidates that are most likely, based on their predisposition (histories and motivations), to fill needed roles.

Agazarian (1997, p. 221) states that "group members helplessly, unwittingly, and persistently repeat the major role behaviours they learned in childhood", and argues that, as a consequence, "members 'volunteer' for roles, like identified patient or scapegoat". Foulkes and Anthony (1984, p. 155) state in this regard that "the tolerance of the group also allows the individual to play the roles to which he is accustomed in his daily life", and further argue that parts played "attempt to exploit the group situation for some personal advantage and are indicative of the emotional currents at work in the group". Agazarian (1997, p. 221) is, however, of the opinion that "it is only when the group requires certain roles that it will use its volunteers. Even when a member who is usually the scapegoat (or identified patient) volunteers for the role, he or she may still not get the part if there is another member (or subgroup) who is a better fit". Agazarian (1997, p. 222) concludes this point by stating that "which volunteer will be chosen by the group to occupy a given role is a function of the group's dynamics. Many volunteer, but few are chosen".

Yet another point of view, as raised by Scribner and Donaldson (2001, p. 610), focuses on the dynamic nature of role formation and development in the context in

which the group is functioning. From this perspective, role behaviour is enacted by individuals in response to (a) interactions in the group and (b) particular contextual factors (e.g. types of group tasks, timelines, established and developing norms, previous interactions among group members, available resources). According to Biddle (1979) and Salazar (1996) (as cited in Scribner & Donaldson, 2001, p. 610), this viewpoint also holds that the enactment of roles is based on modal characteristics and preferences of the person performing the role.

Thus, according to the alternate viewpoints as stated above, roles are either acquired as a result of a self-fulfilling prophesy, as a result of role suction, or as a result of group interaction and contextual factors. However, most of these viewpoints further assert that individuals will only allow these roles to be imposed on them if they are predisposed (based on the individual's history and motivations) to assuming such roles, and if they can accordingly integrate the responsibility somehow with their self-concept (characteristics and preferences). Lewin (as cited in Pines, 1985, p. 117) states in this regard that "behaviour arises out of the 'life space' of the individual. The life space contains perceptions of behavioural alternatives such as different activities in which the individual might engage. Some alternatives are definite and clear (structured), others vague and unstructured. The alternatives have different degrees of attractiveness and repulsion (valence) depending on their usefulness in meeting current needs".

Hornsey and Jetten (2004, p. 254) argue that *role differentiation* has to do with "authentic self-expression". Hornsey and Jetten (2004, p. 254) further acknowledge that "there is not always going to be a match between people's personal characteristics and the demands of their role. However, the principle that social roles can help protect distinctiveness as well as reinforce connections with the group seems sound". Thus, although it might at times be difficult to link roles directly to an individual's current self-concept, underlying needs (such as esteem needs and needs associated with the achievement of possible future selves, which in itself can directly be linked to the concept of the self) may also serve as motivating factors for assuming certain responsibilities/roles in a group.

3.4 CONCLUSION

From the discussion in this chapter, there thus appears to be a link between one's self-concept/self-schema and the role(s) that one would be prepared to assume in a small group situation. The researcher accordingly investigated this link by means of a qualitative research approach (as discussed in Chapter 2). In the next chapter (Chapter 4), the results that were found will be revealed and discussed briefly, followed by an in-depth interpretation of the data in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The results obtained from the research study as described in the preceding chapters will be discussed next. Results obtained for the first research subject (pseudonym: Erna) will be presented and discussed first, followed by results obtained for the second research subject (pseudonym: Maggie). These two participants were chosen for further analysis and discussion based on the richness of the information provided by them during the course of the interview process as well as on the roles taken up by them or allocated to them during the course of the training group experience. Results for each of the two research subjects will furthermore be discussed in terms of five broad categories, namely frequency analysis, here and now analysis, concept of self analysis, behaviour analysis and content analysis. These five categories should provide an overview of the group experience of each research subject.

4.2 SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR ERNA

4.2.1 Frequency analysis

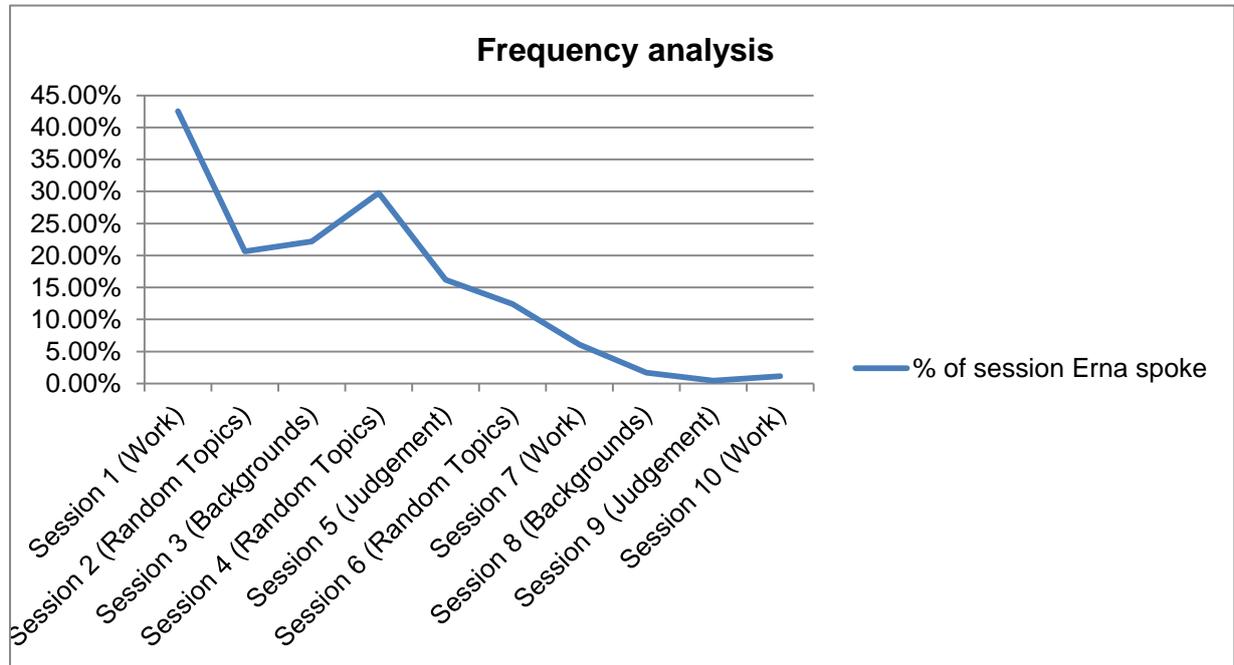


Figure 4.1 Erna’s frequency of speech analysis

Percentages included on the left side of the graph (Figure 4.1) indicate Erna’s level of participation per session (% of session Erna spoke). At the bottom of the graph, every session is specified, along with what the most prominent/most-talked about topic of conversation was per session. As can be seen in Figure 4.1, Erna’s participation in the group sessions declined steadily, with Erna participating enthusiastically at the outset (42,53%) to almost no participation in Session 10 (1,17%).

Table 4.1 Erna's frequency of speech analysis

ERNA	Ses- sion 1	Ses- sion 2	Ses- sion 3	Ses- sion 4	Ses- sion 5	Ses- sion 6	Ses- sion 7	Ses- sion 8	Ses- sion 9	Ses- sion10
Nr. of turns to speak	159	89	67	128	47	62	28	3	12	5
Nr. of words used	5263	1844	3116	4150	1921	1473	678	138	53	92
% of ses- sion	42,53 %	20,67 %	22,20 %	29,78 %	16,20 %	12,42 %	6,09 %	1,71 %	0,43 %	1,17 %

Table 4.1 depicts the number of turns Erna had to speak as well as the number of words used by Erna per session. In the bottom row of Table 4.1, an indication is given of Erna's actual verbal contribution (as a percentage of the total verbal contributions made by all the group members) to the discussion per session.

Table 4.2 Group's frequency of speech analysis

GROUP	Ses- sion 1	Ses- sion 2	Ses- sion 3	Ses- sion 4	Ses- sion 5	Ses- sion 6	Ses- sion 7	Ses- sion 8	Ses- sion 9	Ses- sion 10
Total turns to speak	682	525	509	748	646	764	423	267	716	382
Total words used	12376	8920	14035	13937	11855	11863	11128	8049	12381	7887

Table 4.2 depicts the total number of turns to speak, as well as the total number of words used by the group, per session. This information was used to calculate percentages as depicted in Table 4.1.

From Figure 4.1 and Tables 4.1 and 4.2, as depicted above, it can be seen that Erna was very talkative at the outset of the training group weekend. She spoke almost 45% of the time during Session 1, with the other eight members and two facilitators making up the other 55% of the conversation. In Session 2, there was a sharp decline in terms of Erna's participation, with a steady increase in participation again in Sessions 3 and 4. As from Session 5, there again was a steady decline in Erna's contribution to group discussions, until finally Erna's contribution in Session 10 of the training group weekend was almost non-existent.

From the preceding discussion pertaining to Figure 4.1, the following questions consequently arose:

- a. Why did Erna participate so enthusiastically in Sessions 1 and 4, but not in the rest of the sessions?
- b. Did anything specific happen in Sessions 2 and 5 that caused Erna to withdraw from group interaction?
- c. Did anything specific happen in Session 3 to encourage Erna to increase her participation in group interaction again?
- d. Why did Erna's level of participation gradually decline throughout the 10 sessions to an almost zero level of participation in Session 10?

Questions like the above-mentioned will be answered in the next chapter (Chapter 5), where interpretations made and conclusions drawn from the study will be discussed in detail.

4.2.2 Here and now analysis

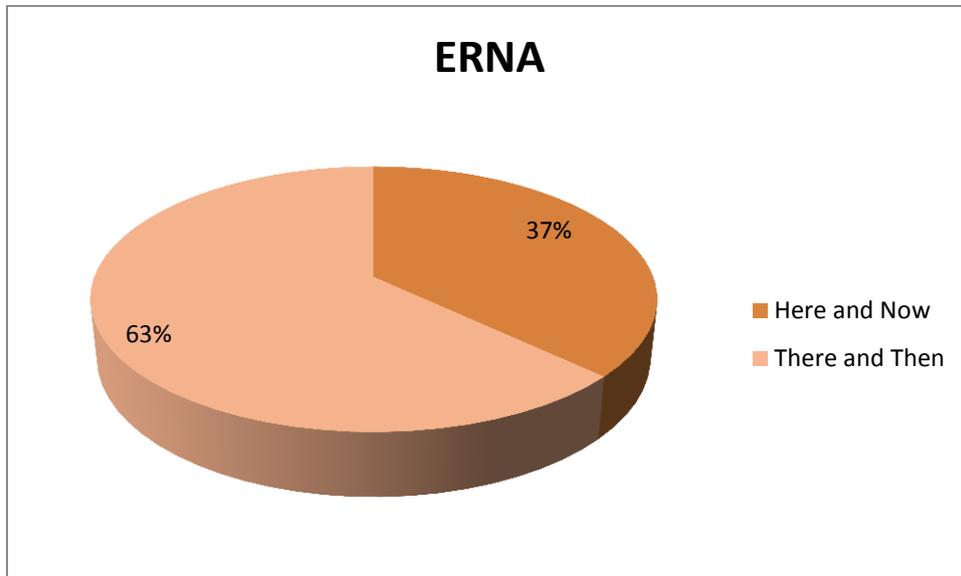


Figure 4.2 Erna's here and now analysis

From Figure 4.2 depicted above, it seems apparent that Erna focused more on things outside the group (there and then) than on things that were happening inside the group (here and now). More specifically, Figure 4.2 indicates that Erna focused on the here and now for 37% of the duration of the training group weekend, thereby indicating that she was busy with things outside the group for 63% of the time. Although Erna mainly focused on things that were happening in the present, these things were unrelated to the group's task (e.g. work, studies or random topics).

In Chapter 5, the researcher will take a closer look at specifically what Erna focused on predominantly, and make conjectures as to why she chose to focus on the there and then for the majority of the training group weekend.

4.2.3 Concept of self analysis

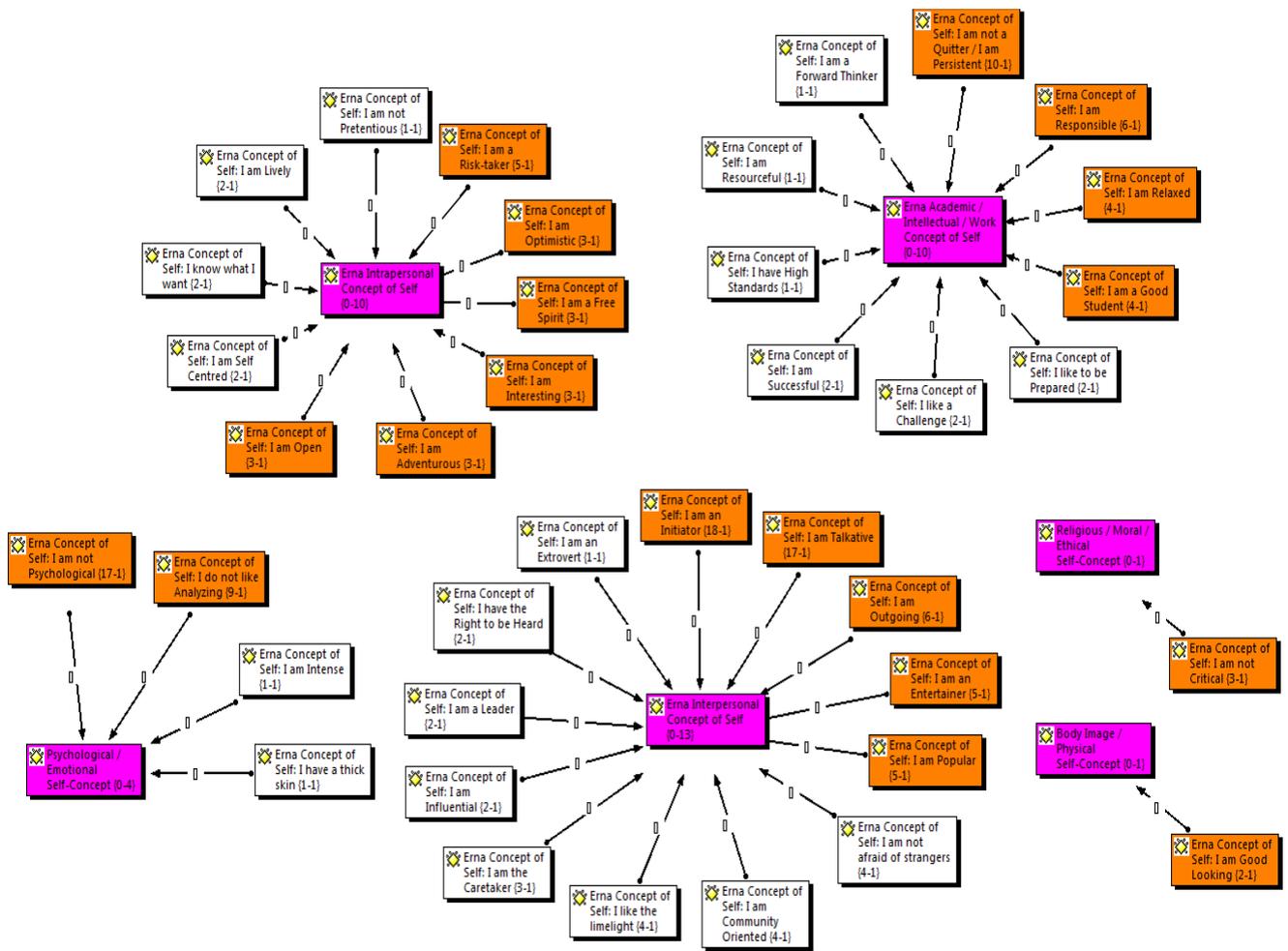


Figure 4.3 Erna’s self-concept analysis

Figure 4.3 is a summary of elements of Erna’s self-concept as disclosed by herself throughout the 10 training group sessions, in her personal reflection as well as during the semi-structured interview. The purple-coloured nodes illustrate aspects of the self-concept as discussed in Chapter 3 of this dissertation, and the nodes that are orange-coloured indicate elements that were mentioned most frequently.

When regarding the summary as depicted in Figure 4.3, one firstly becomes aware of the fact that Erna most frequently referred to aspects of her interpersonal self-concept, which in itself might render interesting findings if investigated further

(possible interpretations to be discussed in Chapter 5). She emphasised the following five elements in particular: being an initiator, being talkative, being outgoing, being an entertainer and being popular. She also spoke about her academic/intellectual/work and intrapersonal self-concepts quite frequently. In terms of her academic/intellectual/work self-concept, she emphasised the following elements: being persistent, being responsible, being relaxed and being a good student. In terms of her intrapersonal self-concept, the following aspects were mentioned most frequently: being a risk-taker, being optimistic, being a free spirit, being interesting, being adventurous and being open.

She stated in terms of her psychological/emotional self-concept, that she did not regard herself to 'be psychological', and also stated that she did not like analysing. Religious/moral/ethical aspects of her self-concept were rarely referred to by her; she stated in this regard only that she is not critical. In terms of her physical self-concept, she further stated only that she regarded herself to be good-looking. Erna did not refer to any aspects of her sexual self-concept.

Aspects of Erna's self-concept as highlighted above will be discussed further in Chapter 5 of this dissertation. The researcher will also attempt to gain a greater understanding of how these aspects influenced or guided Erna's interaction with the group.

4.2.4 Behaviour analysis

Table 4.3 Analysis of Erna’s behaviour

Behaviour Families	ERNA Wordcount					
1. Attempting to distance self from group	601					
2. Attempting to gain approval	225					
3. Keeping the conversation going / Talking	13306					
4. Leading group away from task	407					
5. Leading group towards task	326					
6. Protecting others	110					
7. Protecting self	462					
8. Pursuing group needs	140					
9. Pursuing individual needs	8384					
10. Supporting /Encouraging behaviour	1481					

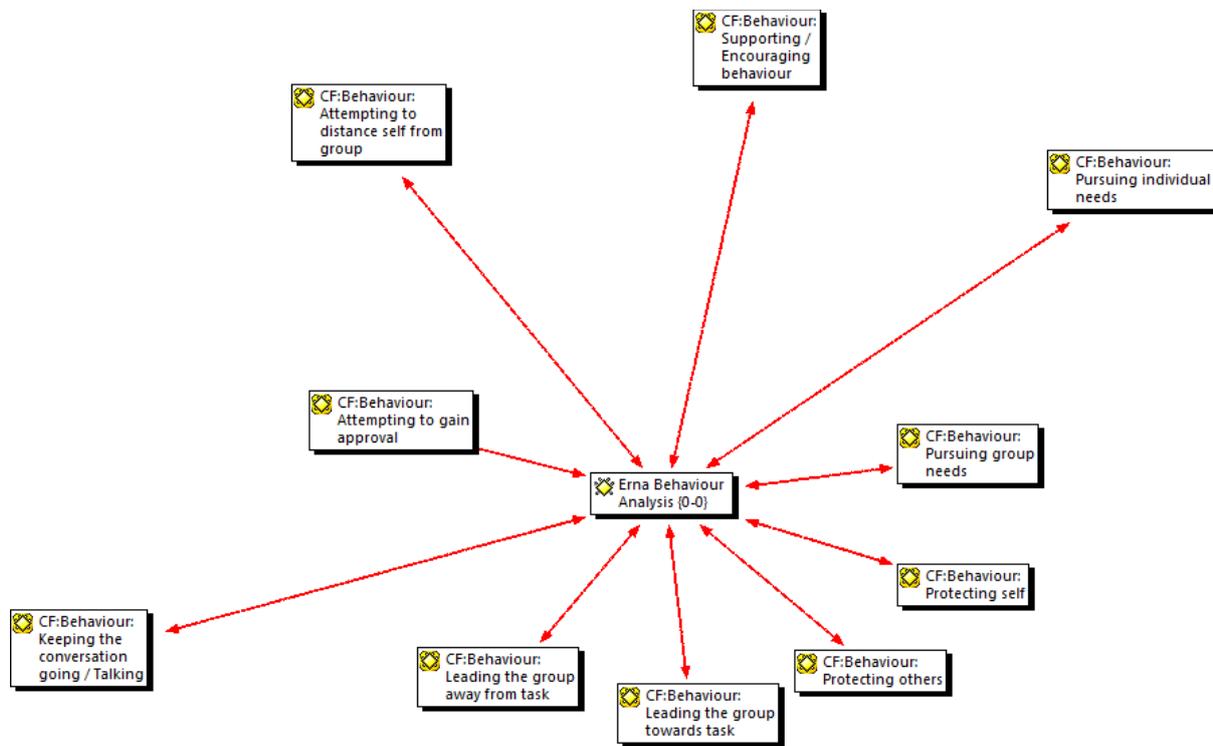


Figure 4.4 Analysis of Erna’s behaviour

The nodes as illustrated in Figure 4.4 all form part of Erna’s behaviour analysis. The longer lines indicate behaviour that Erna displayed most frequently during the course of the training group weekend.

When regarding Table 4.3 and Figure 4.4, it becomes apparent that Erna predominantly displayed the following behaviour during the course of the training group weekend: she attempted to keep the conversation going, she pursued her own individual/personal needs, she displayed supportive/encouraging behaviour, and she displayed distancing behaviour as the training group weekend progressed. The distancing behaviour displayed is also evident from Figure 4.1, which displays a gradual decline in terms of Erna’s contribution to and participation in group activities and discussions. Table 4.3 further shows that Erna, at times, diverted the group’s attention away from the task at hand, and that she attempted to protect herself during the course of the training group weekend. Interpretations made and conclusions drawn based on findings as displayed in Table 4.3 and Figure 4.4 will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

4.2.5 Content analysis

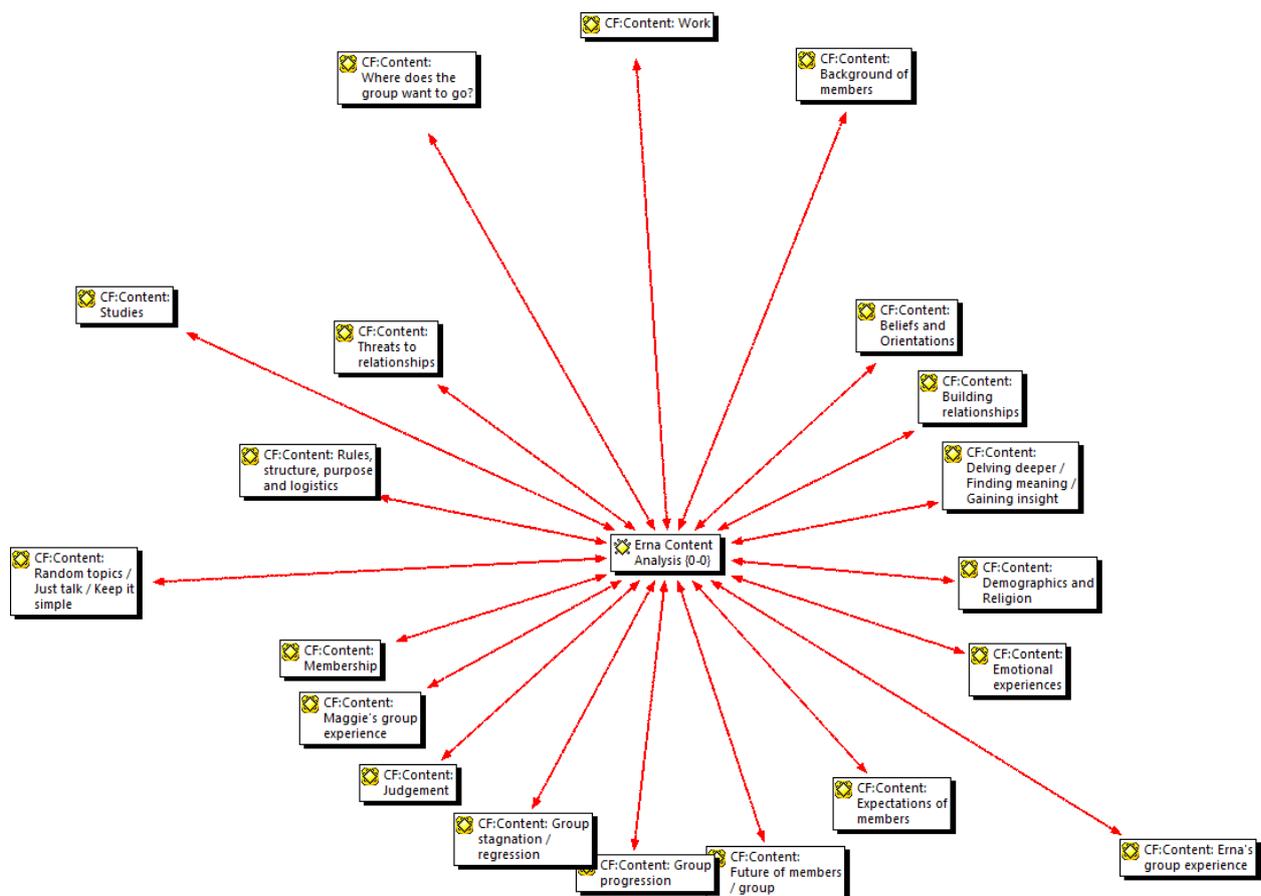


Figure 4.5 Analysis of content of Erna’s discussions

The nodes as illustrated in Figure 4.5 all form part of Erna’s content analysis. The longer lines indicate topics that Erna discussed most frequently during the course of the training group weekend.

Table 4.4 Analysis of content of Erna’s discussions

Content Families	ERNA Wordcount					
1. Background of Members	8943					
2. Beliefs and Orientations	1091					
3. Building Relationships	661					
4. Delving Deeper / Finding Meaning / Gaining Insight	1788					
5. Demographics and Religion	1337					
6. Emotional Experiences	5059					
7. Erna's Group Experience	5327					
8. Expectations of Members	339					
9. Future Plans of Members / Group	1221					
10. Group Progression	618					
11. Group Stagnation / Regression	0					
12. Judgement	3140					
13. Maggie's Group Experience	41					
14. Membership	2588					
15. Random Topics / Just Talk / Keep it Simple	15682					
16. Rules, Structure, Purpose and Logistics	2385					
17. Studies	7097					
18. Threats to Relationships	1288					
19. Where does the group want to go?	8707					
20. Work	5653					

When regarding Figure 4.5 and Table 4.4, it becomes apparent that Erna predominantly focused on the following conversational topics: random topics, studies, where the group wants to go, work, background of the group members, and her own group experience. An in-depth explanation of what each of these topics encompasses, as well as what these findings might imply, will be provided in Chapter 5.

Table 4.5 further lists all content families pertaining to this study, and also indicates to what extent Erna focused on each of these families per session. The orange block indicates the topic that was discussed most frequently by Erna during a particular session, while the blue and pink blocks indicate alternate topics that Erna also appeared to have been very interested in per session.

Table 4.6 lists all content families pertaining to the study, and also indicates to what extent the group focused on each of these families per session. The orange block indicates the topic that was discussed most frequently by the group during a particular session, while the blue and pink blocks indicate alternate topics that the group also appeared to have been very interested in per session.

4.3 SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR MAGGIE

4.3.1 Frequency analysis

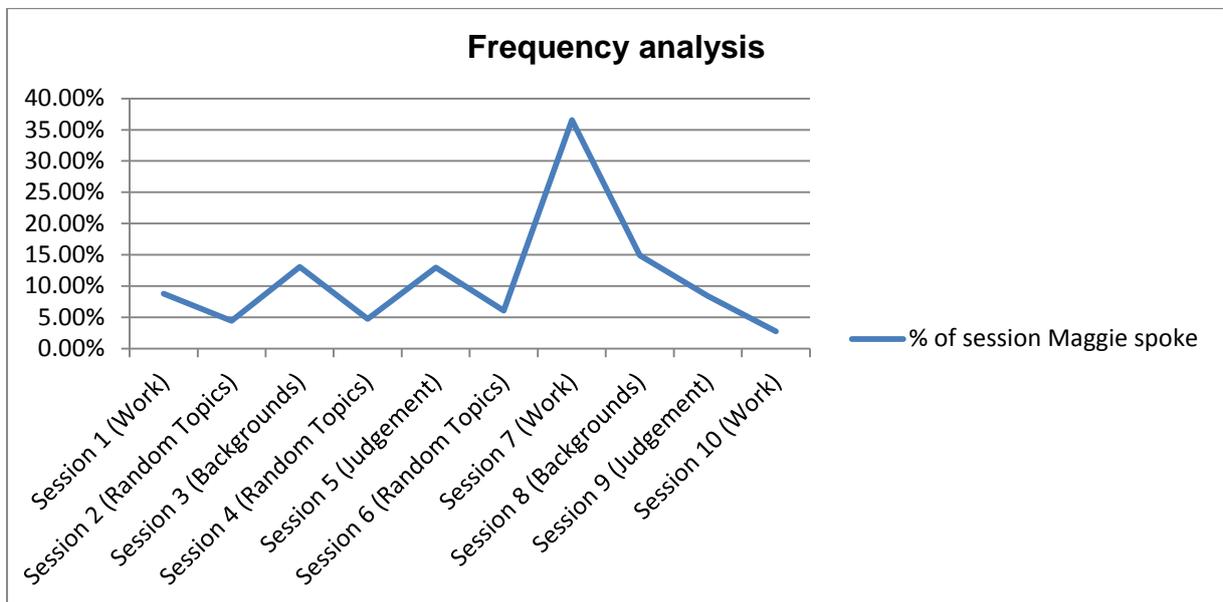


Figure 4.6 Maggie’s frequency of speech analysis

Percentages included on the left side of the graph (Figure 4.6) indicate Maggie’s level of participation per session (% of session Maggie spoke). At the bottom of the graph, every session is specified, along with what the most prominent/most-talked about topic of conversation was per session. As can be seen in Figure 4.6, Maggie’s participation fluctuated, with a sharp increase in participation during Session 7.

Table 4.7 Maggie’s frequency of speech analysis

MAG-GIE	Ses- sion 1	Ses- sion 2	Ses- sion 3	Ses- sion 4	Ses- sion 5	Ses- sion 6	Ses- sion 7	Ses- sion 8	Ses- sion 9	Ses- sion 10
Nr. of turns to speak	49	12	43	22	40	20	95	34	45	15
Nr. of words used	1085	395	1834	662	1539	720	4070	1199	1045	219
% of ses- sion	8,77%	4,43%	13,07%	4,75%	12,98%	6,07%	36,57%	14,90%	8,44%	2,78%

Table 4.7 depicts the number of turns Maggie had to speak as well as the number of words used by Maggie per session. In the bottom row of Table 4.7, an indication is given of Maggie’s actual verbal contribution (as a percentage of the total verbal contributions by all the group members) to the discussion per session.

Table 4.8 Group’s frequency of speech analysis

GROUP	Ses- sion 1	Ses- sion 2	Ses- sion 3	Ses- sion 4	Ses- sion 5	Ses- sion 6	Ses- sion 7	Ses- sion 8	Ses- sion 9	Ses- sion 10
Total turns to speak	682	525	509	748	646	764	423	267	716	382
Total words used	12376	8920	14035	13937	11855	11863	11128	8049	12381	7887

Table 4.8 depicts the total number of turns to speak, as well as the total number of words used by the group per session. This information was used to calculate percentages as depicted in Table 4.7.

When regarding Figure 4.6 and Tables 4.7 and 4.8, as depicted above, it can be seen that Maggie's participation fluctuated between approximately 5% and 15% throughout the first few sessions of the training group weekend. Then, suddenly, Maggie's participation increased sharply to almost 40% in Session 7, before declining again in Sessions 8 to 10. From the preceding discussion pertaining to Figure 4.6, the following questions consequently arose:

- a. Why did Maggie's participation fluctuate during the first few sessions of the training group weekend?
- b. Did anything specific happen in Session 7 that caused Maggie to increase her participation so substantially?
- c. Why did Maggie's level of participation decline again after Session 7 to approximately only 2% in Session 10?

Questions like the above-mentioned will be answered in the next chapter (Chapter 5), where interpretations made and conclusions drawn from the study will be discussed in detail.

4.3.2 Here and now analysis

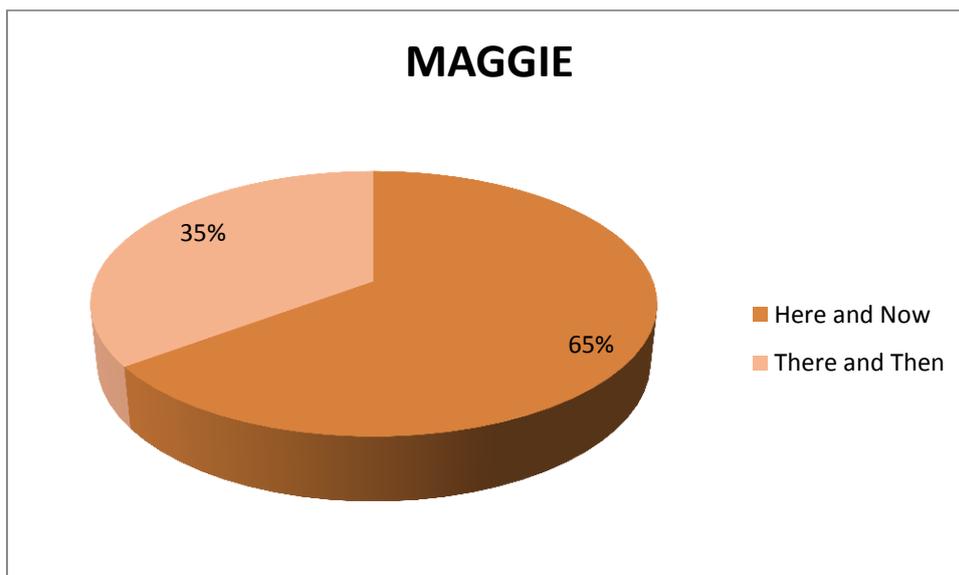


Figure 4.7 Maggie's here and now analysis

From Figure 4.7 as depicted above, it seems apparent that Maggie focused more on things that were happening inside the group (here and now) than on things that were happening outside the group (there and then). More specifically, Figure 4.7 indicates that Maggie focused on the there and then for 35% of the duration of the training group weekend, thereby indicating that she was busy with things pertaining to the group’s task for 65% of the time. Maggie mainly focused on things that were happening in the present, and that these things were related to the group’s task. In Chapter 5, the researcher will take a closer look at specifically what Maggie focused on predominantly, and make conjectures as to why she chose to focus on the here and now for the majority of the training group weekend.

4.3.3 Concept of self analysis

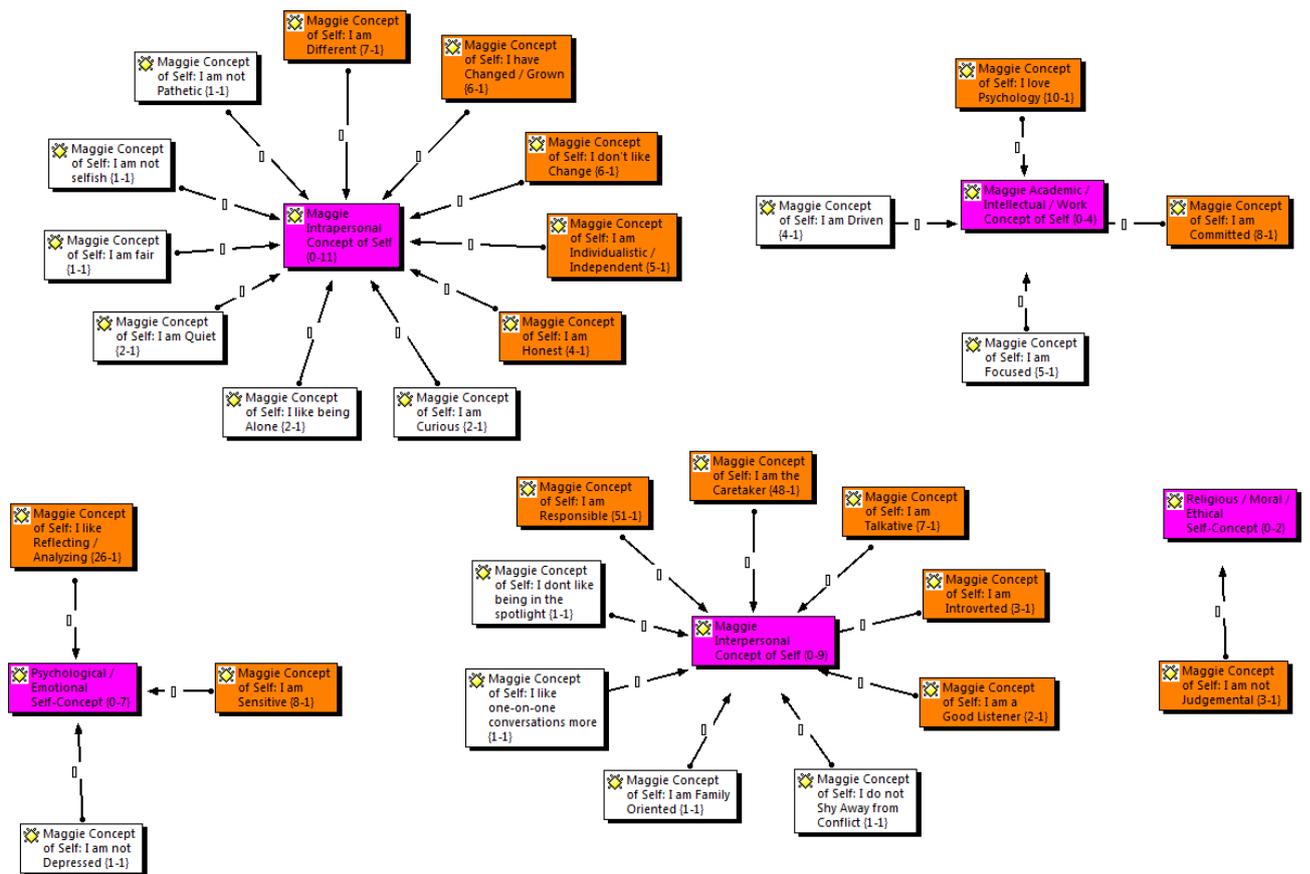


Figure 4.8 Maggie’s self-concept analysis

Figure 4.8 is a summary of elements of Maggie's self-concept as disclosed by herself throughout the 10 training group sessions, in her personal reflection as well as during the semi-structured interview. The purple-coloured nodes illustrate aspects of the self-concept as discussed in Chapter 3 of this dissertation, and the nodes that are orange-coloured indicate elements that were mentioned most frequently.

When regarding the summary as depicted in Figure 4.8, one firstly becomes aware of the fact that Maggie most frequently referred to aspects of her intrapersonal self-concept, which in itself might render interesting findings if investigated further (possible interpretations to be discussed in Chapter 5). She emphasised the following five elements in particular: being different, being individualistic/independent, being honest, having changed/grown, and disliking change. She also spoke about her interpersonal self-concept quite frequently, emphasising the following elements: being responsible, being the caretaker, being talkative, being introverted, as well as being a good listener. In terms of her academic/intellectual/work self-concept, the following aspects were mentioned most frequently: being committed and loving all things related to Psychology.

She further stated in terms of her psychological/emotional self-concept that she is sensitive and that she likes reflecting/analysing. Religious/moral/ethical aspects of her self-concept were rarely referred to by her; she stated in this regard only that she is not judgemental. Maggie did not refer to any aspects of her sexual or physical self-concept.

Aspects of Maggie's self-concept as highlighted above will be discussed further in Chapter 5 of this dissertation. The researcher will also attempt to gain a greater understanding of how these aspects influenced or guided Maggie's interaction with the group.

4.3.4 Behaviour analysis

Table 4.9 Analysis of Maggie’s behaviour

Behaviour Families	MAGGIE Wordcount								
1. Attempting to distance self from group	454								
2. Attempting to gain approval	690								Distancing self vs. Gaining approval
3. Keeping the conversation going / Talking	10920								Away from task vs. Towards task
4. Leading group away from task	304								Protecting self vs. Protecting others
5. Leading group towards task	657								Behaviour most frequently displayed
6. Protecting others	4022								
7. Protecting self	1096								
8. Pursuing group needs	662								
9. Pursuing individual needs	7846								
10. Supporting /Encouraging behaviour	4498								

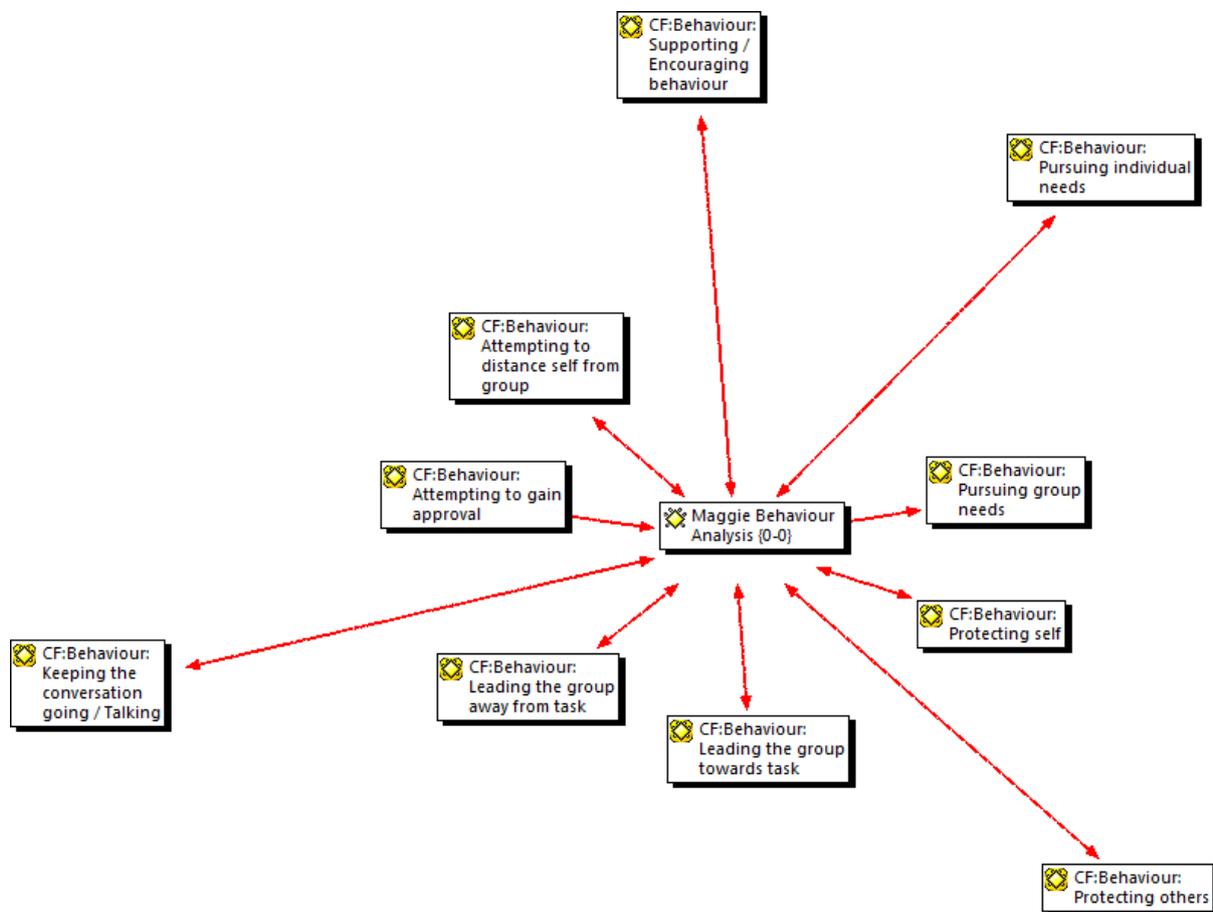


Figure 4.9 Analysis of Maggie’s behaviour

The nodes as illustrated in Figure 4.9 all form part of Maggie’s behaviour analysis. The longer lines indicate behaviour that Maggie displayed most frequently during the course of the training group weekend.

When regarding Table 4.9 and Figure 4.9, it becomes apparent that Maggie predominantly displayed the following behaviour during the course of the training group weekend: she attempted to keep the conversation going, she pursued her own individual/personal needs, she displayed supportive/encouraging behaviour, and she attempted to protect other group members from emotional discomfort. Table 4.9 further shows that Maggie, at times, refocused the group’s attention on the task at hand, and that she attempted to gain the approval of and build relationships with the other group members during the course of the training group weekend. Interpretations made and conclusions drawn based on findings as displayed in Table 4.9 and Figure 4.9 will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

4.3.5 Content analysis

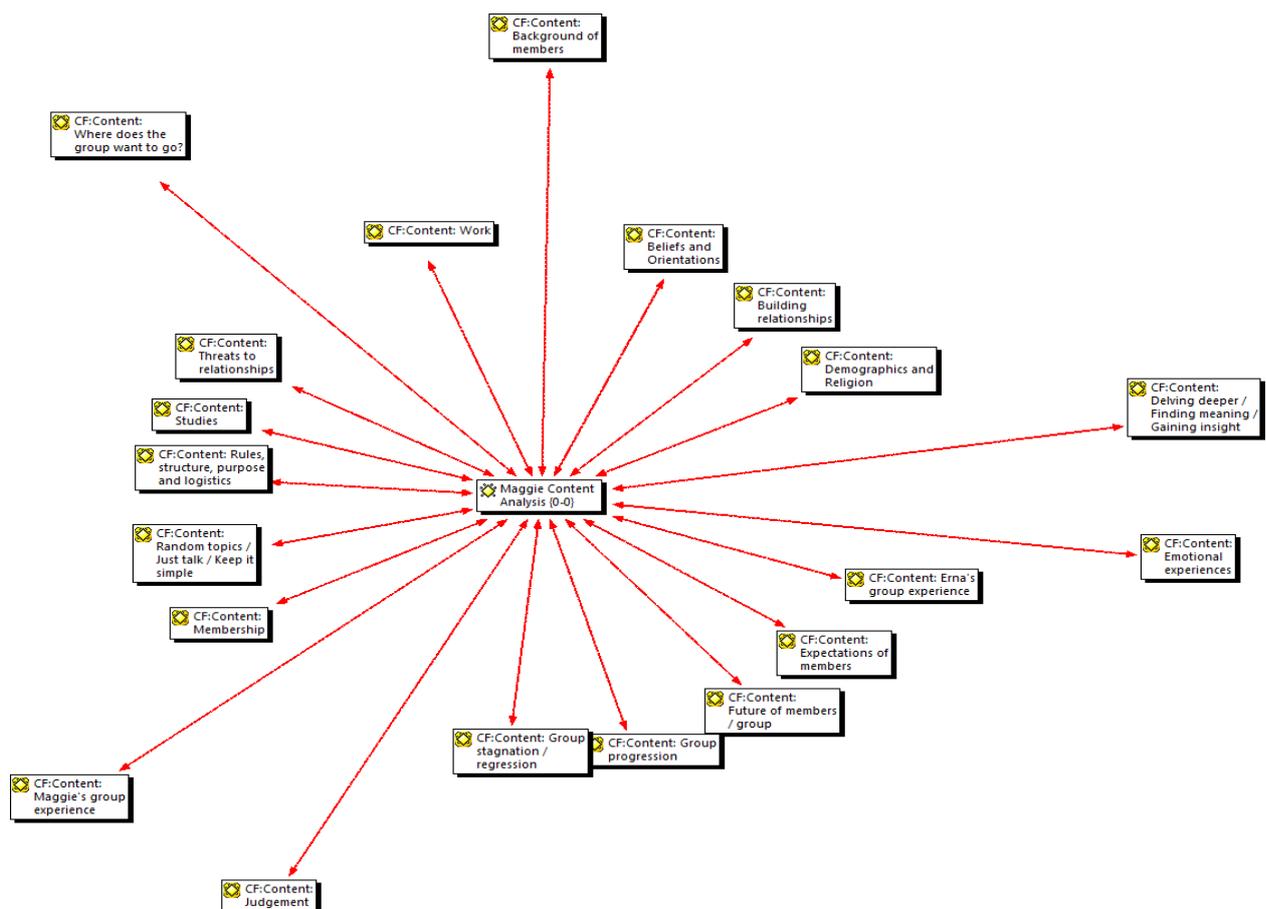


Figure 4.10 Analysis of content of Maggie’s discussions

The nodes as illustrated in Figure 4.10 all form part of Maggie’s content analysis. The longer lines indicate topics that Maggie discussed most frequently during the course of the training group weekend.

Table 4.10 Analysis of content of Maggie’s discussions

Content Families	MAGGIE Wordcount						
1. Background of Members	9090						
2. Beliefs and Orientations	1691						
3. Building Relationships	5113						
4. Delving Deeper / Finding Meaning / Gaining Insight	6878						
5. Demographics and Religion	2011						
6. Emotional Experiences	10342						
7. Erna's Group Experience	734						
8. Expectations of Members	172						
9. Future Plans of Members / Group	354						
10. Group Progression	2353						
11. Group Stagnation / Regression	98						
12. Judgement	7770						
13. Maggie's Group Experience	9422						
14. Membership	5524						
15. Random Topics / Just Talk / Keep it Simple	5493						
16. Rules, Structure, Purpose and Logistics	3142						
17. Studies	3637						
18. Threats to Relationships	3786						
19. Where does the group want to go?	9016						
20. Work	3244						

When regarding Figure 4.10 and Table 4.10, it becomes apparent that Maggie predominantly focused on the following conversational topics: delving deeper/finding meaning, judgement, where the group wants to go, emotional experiences, background of the group members, and her own group experience. An in-depth explanation pertaining to this choice of topics will be provided in Chapter 5.

Further, Table 4.11 lists all content families pertaining to this study, and also indicates to what extent Maggie focused on each of these families per session. The orange block indicates the topic that was discussed most frequently by Maggie during a particular session, while the blue and pink blocks indicate alternate topics that Maggie also appeared to have been very interested in per session.

Table 4.12 lists all content families pertaining to the study, and also indicates to what extent the group focused on each of these families per session. The orange block indicates the topic that was discussed most frequently by the group during a particular session, while the blue and pink blocks indicate alternate topics that the group also appeared to have been very interested in per session.

4.4 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the results obtained for the two research subjects were presented and discussed shortly in terms of the following five categories: frequency analysis, here and now analysis, self-concept analysis, behaviour analysis and content analysis. This was done to provide an overview of the group experience of Erna and Maggie, the two research subjects. In the next chapter (Chapter 5), an in-depth discussion of interpretations/conjectures made will be provided, before discussing limitations of the study and suggestions for future research in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 5

INTERPRETATION OF THE RESULTS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter (Chapter 4), results obtained for the two research subjects were presented and discussed shortly in order to provide a better understanding of the training group experience of both individuals. The aim of this chapter (Chapter 5) is to interpret the results as presented in Chapter 4 and to consequently draw certain conclusions, which will assist with answering the research question as stated in Chapter 1.

A summary of the results for the first research subject, Erna, will be provided first, followed by an in-depth discussion of the interpretations made and conclusions drawn from the results obtained. A summary of Maggie's results will be discussed next, followed by a discussion of interpretations made and conclusions drawn pertaining to her results. This chapter will be concluded with a discussion of the answer to the research question(s) as stated in Chapter 1 of this dissertation.

5.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FOR ERNA

Results obtained for Erna (as presented in Chapter 4) may be summarised as follows:

5.2.1 Frequency analysis

From the graph as depicted in Figure 4.1, it was deduced that Erna's participation during the 10 group sessions declined steadily, with Erna participating enthusiastically at the outset (42,53%) to almost no participation in the final session (1,17%). It was further noted that Erna's participation spiked in Sessions 1 (42,53%) and 4 (29,78%), with a steady decline in all other sessions. Consequently, these results raise certain questions, which will be dealt with/answered when discussing

interpretations made and consequences drawn pertaining to Erna's results in the next section. The questions are:

- a. Why did Erna participate so enthusiastically in Sessions 1 and 4, but not in the rest of the sessions?
- b. Did anything specific happen in Sessions 2 and 5 that caused Erna to withdraw from group interaction?
- c. Did anything specific happen in Session 3 to encourage Erna to increase her participation in group interaction again?
- d. Why did Erna's level of participation gradually decline throughout the 10 sessions to an almost zero level of participation in Session 10?

5.2.2 Here and now analysis

Figures 4.2 in the results chapter (Chapter 4) indicates that Erna focused on the here and now no more than 37% of the duration of her interactions during the training group weekend, thereby indicating that she was busy with things outside the group for an estimated 63% of the time. Erna furthermore mainly focused on things that were happening in the present. These things were, however, mostly unrelated to the group's task (e.g. work, studies, random topics). In the next section (interpretation of Erna's findings), the researcher will discuss what Erna focused on predominantly, as well as why she may have chosen to focus on the there and then for the majority of the time.

5.2.3 Concept of self analysis

Results in terms of Erna's self-concept were obtained by means of data gathered from the training group sessions, the semi-structured interview as well as from the personal reflection as written by Erna herself. Elements that were emphasised in terms of the different aspects of Erna's self-concept may be summarised as follows (see Figure 4.3):

- a. interpersonal self-concept (most frequently mentioned aspect of her self-concept): being an initiator, being talkative, being outgoing, being an entertainer, and being popular;

- b. academic/intellectual/work self-concept: being persistent, being responsible, being relaxed, and being a good student;
- c. intrapersonal self-concept: being a risk-taker, being optimistic, being a free spirit, being interesting, being adventurous, and being open;
- d. psychological/emotional self-concept: not regarding herself to 'be psychological', and not liking analysing;
- e. religious/ethical/moral self-concept: being non-critical;
- f. physical self-concept/body image: being good-looking;
- g. sexual self-concept: no elements mentioned.

Elements of Erna's self-concept as listed above will be discussed in detail in the next section in order to draw conclusions pertaining to Erna's concept of self.

5.2.4 Behaviour analysis

According to Figure 4.4, as well as Table 4.3, Erna displayed predominantly the following behaviour during the course of the training group weekend:

- a. keeping the conversation going/talking;
- b. pursuing individual/personal needs;
- c. supporting/encouraging behaviour;
- d. attempting to distance herself from the group;
- e. leading the group away from its task; and
- f. protecting herself.

Erna's behaviour as summarised above will be interpreted and discussed in detail in the following section (interpretation of findings for Erna).

5.2.5 Content analysis

According to Figure 4.5 and Table 4.4, Erna focused predominantly on the following conversational topics during the course of the training group weekend, the semi-structured interview, as well as in her personal reflection (listed in order of Erna's focus):

- a. random topics;
- b. background of members;
- c. where the group wants to go;
- d. studies;
- e. work; and
- f. her own group experience.

Content in which Erna displayed the greatest interest (as listed above) will be interpreted and discussed in detail in the following section (interpretation of findings for Erna).

5.3 INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS FOR ERNA

5.3.1 Erna's self-concept

Evidence of original transcriptions

Interview (with Erna) Line 97

ERNA “Uhm ... it was quite interesting. I'm very adventurous I must say. I'm very outgoing.”

Interview (with Erna) Line 713

ERNA “As much as I would want to know where is this thing going, I was also ready to just say hey, whatever happens; I'm just going to be there and be myself and try to entertain myself all over the show ...”

Interview (with Erna) Lines 737 – 745

ERNA “So, I intend to want to talk a lot about myself.”

MELISSA “Ja.”

ERNA “So, I’m free to do that.”

MELISSA “Uhm.”

ERNA “And I sell myself actually even thriving in that, in the sense of you know I was ready to do that and, you know ...”

Interview (with Erna) Lines 757 – 760

ERNA “... you know, I guess everybody now calls me the idea initiator, because even ...”

MELISSA “Yes.”

Interview (with Erna) Lines 781 - 782

ERNA “Ja, that was the part where, you know, it happened, and you know I’m like ... I don’t know ... maybe I’m not too critical or too psychological, if I should put it that way in terms of I didn’t feel after that, that, shoo, what just happened.”

Discussion

The quotations as cited above demonstrate some of the elements of Erna’s self-concept, which strongly came to the fore during the course of the training group experience. Erna described herself as outgoing and entertaining, as well as talkative and an initiator. She furthermore also described herself in terms of what she is not, namely analytical, critical and ‘psychological’. Noteworthy in this regard is the fact that it is specifically elements of Erna’s interpersonal and emotional self-concepts that came to the fore strongly during the course of the training group weekend (as will be demonstrated in Section 5.3.2 of this chapter). This might imply that these two aspects of her self -concept play an integral role in terms of how she behaves towards and interacts with others. As stated in Chapter 3 of this dissertation, self-

schemas/self-concepts “organise our experiences, help us interpret situations, and guide our behaviour” (Horowitz & Bordens, 1995, p. 53).

5.3.2 Erna’s group experience

Evidence of original transcriptions

Erna’s personal reflection Line 31

“I must also give some credit to my extroverted personality. I guess, it was easier to notice this and unlike other members who will take a back seat, I was already out there and very much excited in getting people talking. One significant example was just before the first session started, where I came up with a so-called “ice breaker” where I mimicked a certain concept and the group members had to guess what I was trying to do. This worked out well, and the members were all laughing.”

Session 3 Line 381

DEBBIE “I think with the mention of telling your whole life story, I think it’s for me, it’s easier to come and get the attention somewhere else or to a different topic, even on you, cause you talk a lot, so it’s convenient. I’m thinking you are talking and I don’t have to say anything until I’m comfortable with whichever topic we’re talking about.”

Session 4 Lines 288 – 292

STEPHAN “But there’s already a difference in how some people feel.”

ERNA “Uhm.”

STEPHAN “Because you think the more we can talk the better; some others felt you know, what ... what’s the use of this just small talk and there’s some kind of ‘where is this going’ discussion.”

Session 4 Lines 402 – 411

ERNA “Guys, we just have to make this work. Let’s just talk.”

DEBBIE “Who says we have to?”

ERNA “That’s the thing - maybe we can sing - surely we can dance. Surely we can do anything that we can do?”

ALL (laugh)

DEBBIE “Are you uncomfortable with silence?”

Session 8 Lines 514 – 517 and Line 526

DEBBIE “*Wat gaan met jou aan hier langs my?*”

STEPHAN “Are you tired Erna?”

DEBBIE “She’s completely withdrawn. Absolutely complete withdrawn.”

Interview (with Erna) Lines 949 – 957

ERNA “... So, and ... and ... and I think even in that time of silence, I mean, there was also an issue of ... uhm, withdrawal.”

MELISSA “Uhm.”

ERNA “Because of now, the direction of the group from Friday night towards the Saturday morning. I just felt like now they are talking about things that I have no interest in.”

MELISSA “Uhm.”

ERNA “And therefore I’m not going to ... I even felt oh, thank God, there is a sickness that came in the way.”

Erna’s personal reflection Line 43

“... I noticed one thing, my conversations might have been interesting and personal, but they were however outside of the group, and there was some interest for some members to stay in the group. ...”

Erna’s personal reflection Line 43

“...although I tried to steer some energies, by the so-called ‘light topics’, this never lasted long, and more time was spent on psychological conversations. I was highly bored everything I hear ‘so what do you make of this’ or ‘Did you hear what she says, did she answer your question?’ ...”

Erna’s personal reflection Line 35

“... I truly agree that I saw myself withdrawing slowly from the group ... which led to the difficult joining of the group or rather earlier withdrawal and final disengagement of the group.”

Discussion

When regarding the selected quotations above, it becomes evident that Erna was very talkative at the outset of the training group weekend. Upon commencement of the weekend, Erna tried to break the ice by entertaining the group with a dance, provoking some mixed feelings as a result. Group members further commented on the frequency and duration of her verbal contributions during and directly following the first session. It appears that the group, at this stage, identified Erna as the ideal candidate to ‘hide behind’ whenever the group experienced a measure of discomfort. Accordingly, it appears Erna was ‘sucked’ into the role of topic initiator/entertainer as a result of her own behaviour (which was informed by elements of her self-concept

as described in Section 5.3.1). Redl (as cited in Rosen, Stukenberg & Saeks, 2001, p. 477) states in this regard that “basic assumption groups and other forces can create ‘role suction’ so that the individual begins to fulfil a necessary role for the group”. The group admitted in this regard that it was convenient for them that Erna did all the talking, because they could then sit back and relax until they felt comfortable with participating in the discussion. During Sessions 3 and 4, the group continued to encourage and affirm Erna by asking her to initiate topics as well as to keep the conversation going.

From the above-cited quotations, it further became clear that Erna wanted to keep things light and fun from the outset of the weekend up to the end. As a result, Erna devoted quite a substantial amount of time to random topics, as well as to try and convince the group to “just talk” and not to “get too serious” (see Table 4.5 in Chapter 4 for a breakdown of the topics that she predominantly focused on per session). She thus did not want the conversation and mood of the group to turn serious, and accordingly invested quite a bit of energy in trying to pursue her own individual needs in this regard. When regarding Section 5.3.1, it becomes evident that this behaviour was to a degree also fuelled by elements of her self-concept (not being ‘psychologically’ or analytically inclined), and one can thus understand why she opted to shy away from more difficult/emotionally challenging topics. As a result of these attempts to keep the conversation light-hearted, Erna often redirected the focus of the group away from the group’s task to things that were happening outside the group. Erna also admitted to this in the personal reflection that she wrote directly following the training group weekend.

On closer inspection of Tables 4.5 and 4.6 in Chapter 4, it becomes evident that Erna mostly focused on the same/similar topics to what the group focused on from Sessions 1 to 8. Noteworthy, however, is the fact that Erna opted to avoid topics such as ‘judgement’ and ‘finding meaning/delving deeper’. In Sessions 8 to 10, Erna further appeared to focus more on her own group experience, which makes sense as the group was trying to convince Erna to re-engage in group activities at this stage. In Sessions 9 and 10 specifically, Erna appears to have lost all interest in the discussions that were taking place, as the topics that she spoke about were not

parallel to those of the group. It also becomes evident when regarding the number of words spoken by Erna during the last few sessions that Erna disengaged from the group, and that the group was not successful in their attempt to re-engage Erna in group activities.

Towards the end of the weekend, the group appeared to start focusing more on personally meaningful and stimulating topics of conversation, and as a consequence Erna began to withdraw due to the fact that the group needs and her individual needs were no longer aligned. The group took notice of this, and as a result group members started enquiring as to the reason for Erna's silence. Erna attempted to justify her silence by stating that she was feeling unwell, but in the interview with her she admitted that a disinterest in the conversational topics were partly to blame. Another significant reason for Erna's withdrawal from participation will be discussed in the next section (Section 5.3.3), where the group's reaction to Erna's behaviour is discussed in more detail.

5.3.3 Group's feedback to Erna in terms of her participation

Evidence of original transcriptions

Session 2 Lines 53 – 55

ERNA "OK, so I'm supposed to sit up and keep quiet, right?"

CHRISTA "It's too late already."

Session 3 Lines 369 – 371

JOEL "I think what you're saying you lost her?"

MAGGY "A little bit ja."

Session 4 Lines 486 – 502

ERNA “I feel denied of you know saying something/expressing oneself if ... if ... you know, if we’re just quiet when we’re supposed to be talking.”

DEBBIE “But who says we’re supposed to be talking ... again?”

ERNA “We ... we ... we all psychologically agreed that we will talk.”

JOSHUA “Who agreed?”

SHELLY “When did that happen?”

JOSHUA “When?”

ERNA “In our perceived mind we did ... like I said, we didn’t talk about it. If we talk about it (inbetween).”

PAM “You like to hear your own voice.”

ALL (laugh)

Session 4 Lines 578 – 583

JOSHUA “I personally think you feel pressured and you just don’t know it, cause ...”

ERNA “You think so?”

JOSHUA “... because the moment there’s ... you ... you pick it up a lot quicker in the sense that ‘okay, they’re quiet now’. Okay, somebody needs to break it now. Where in a sense that we would ... it’s quiet and you go on with your own thoughts.”

Session 6 Lines 1435 – 1444

JOEL “Can I interrupt you for a second?”

ERNA “Uhm.”

JOEL “You know what I would like to explore with you is I think often you have something very valuable to say, but I lose you.”

ERNA “Uhm, because I explain too much and (in between) ...”

JOEL “Let me finish.”

Session 7 Lines 201 – 203

ERNA “Okay. I’ll say something - good point.”

JOEL “Maybe Erna can you try not to start? Because I think you always start?”

Interview (with Erna) Line 837 and Line 845

ERNA “Perhaps one also tries to, like you know, I would talk too much and tell you and tell you, and try to explain to you ...”

ERNA “Uhm ... so that is something that, you know, was like uh-huh-uh, if you have to take a step back a little bit, that’s something that one can take note of.”

Personal reflection Line 55

“I remember one instance where Christa said ‘You like talking, nê?’, and also during the ‘Silent moment’ Joshua instituted a test to see if I will ever keep quiet for more than five minutes. This indicated some level of acceptance and truly being part of the team. I felt that I belong here and at least now they know who Erna is and hopefully I will be treated as such - don’t keep quite please.”

Erna’s personal reflection Line 49

“One significant moment that truly made me to want to withdraw, was at the end of the last session on Friday afternoon, where the clinical psychologist said ‘er, sorry, I seem to lose you every time you speak, can you repeat, or perhaps tell me how you can make it easier for me to understand’, I was ready to bite a bullet at this point. I asked if I could be asked questions that require ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ so that anyone can understand, but I think the conversation was ended.”

Discussion

As can be seen from the quotations presented above, the group already provided Erna with feedback pertaining to her own behaviour in the group setting at the start of Session 2. This feedback was, however, conflicting, due to the fact that some of the group members wanted to talk about personally meaningful topics, while other members preferred talking about trivial issues (probably because it was a safer choice in their opinion). Thus, some members encouraged Erna to continue initiating random topics for discussion, while others indicated that they would prefer it if she stays silent. In some ways, the group was thus already in disagreement in terms of where they should be heading during the two and a half day training experience. This is also indicated in Table 4.6 (Chapter 4), where it is evident that the two most-talked about topics by the group were that of ‘judgement’ (indicating a covert fear of the members to be judged when talking about issues that are personally meaningful) and ‘where does the group want to go’ (delving deeper versus random topics). Due

to the conflicting feedback received, however, Erna interpreted the group's request as a playful gesture (as can be deduced from the quote included above from her personal reflection), and as a consequence, she dealt with it in a similar fashion.

Possible reasons for Erna's choice to ignore the initial requests of some of the group members (to keep quiet) furthermore become clear when regarding her self-concept. Erna described herself during the course of the interview as being popular and being well-liked by others. She assumed that this was also the reason why the group decided to choose her for the role of topic initiator/entertainer. The feedback that she was thus getting from some of the group members (that she was not popular and well liked in this group) conflicted with what she thought to be true of herself, and she consequently chose to ignore this threatening feedback to her self-concept. The request to keep quiet also clashed with her normal interaction pattern (she described herself as being talkative), and this consequently presented a challenge in terms of adapting to suit the group's demands. Greenwald (as cited in Horowitz & Bordens, 1995, p. 54) states in this regard that "the self acts as a kind of unconscious monitor that enables people to avoid disquieting or distressing information. The self demands that we preserve what we have, especially that which makes us feel good about ourselves".

In Session 4, the group turned its focus to possible reasons for the need that Erna feels to talk all the time, and attempted to explore this with her. The group enquired why Erna felt uncomfortable with silence, and hinted at the fact that she might feel pressure to keep the conversation going as a result of her own preconceived ideas of what was supposed to be happening during the course of the weekend as well as of what her responsibilities entailed as the topic initiator/entertainer. Erna, however, did not view this as constructive criticism, but instead stated that she feels denied the opportunity to contribute to the discussions freely (she thus felt attacked by the group, which once again clashed with her belief that she is popular and well liked).

The facilitators furthermore also provided Erna with feedback pertaining to her interaction patterns during the course of Sessions 2, 3 and 6. They highlighted the fact that they could not make sense of Erna's contributions due to the fact that she

added too much detail to her stories/comments. The group affirmed this feedback by stating that they “lose” Erna during the course of her comments, and as a consequence did not understand what she was trying to say. Erna stated this as one of the primary reasons for her withdrawal from the group (as may be deduced from quotes included in the section below pertaining to Erna’s role).

When the facilitators once again asked Erna to keep quiet/not to start with a conversation later on during the training group weekend (Session 7), it however became clear to Erna that she would not be able to ignore the requests of the group indefinitely. Agazarian (1997, p. 223) states in this regard that “when members take their group role personally, they are reminded of the function their role plays for the group – and of the fact that when the group no longer needs the role, it will not be reinforced”. As a consequence, it appears she chose to ‘reject the group before being rejected by the group’ in an attempt to keep her self-concept intact. Erna thus disengaged from the group in an attempt to protect herself due to the fact that she could not adapt or integrate required responsibilities/interaction patterns with her self-concept.

5.3.4 Erna’s description of her role

Evidence of original transcriptions

Erna’s personal reflection Line 57

“... I quickly found my purpose in the group (the initiator), and this gave me some thrill. ... I truly felt like I was there to break the silence and get the group talking and this was also quickly expected of me by all members. This role gave me some sense of responsibility towards the group as well as the reason for being in the group.”

Erna's personal reflection Line 40

“As much as I enjoyed being the initiator, I reached a point where I was disinterested in the role. I dislike the silence, and yes, I will break it, but for a moment there I wished there was someone who could also do the same thing, initiate interesting topics. I also think that the role of initiating also deteriorated a little when the group moved into some deep psychologically thought-provoking conversations ...”

Discussion

As may consequently be deduced from the quotations cited above, Erna enjoyed the role of topic initiator/entertainer at the outset of the training group weekend. This may be due to the fact that role requirements were closely aligned with elements of Erna's self-concept (being talkative, outgoing, popular, the initiator and an entertainer). As discussed in Section 3.3.2 of Chapter 3, the role of initiator/idea-generator within groups has also previously been discussed by authors such as Bormann (as cited in Zigurs & Kozar, 1994), and Zigurs and Kozar (1994).

Horwitz (as cited in Rosen et al., 2001, p. 477 – 478) states in this regard that “the group drafts candidates that are most likely, based on their predisposition (histories and motivations), to fill needed roles”. According to Biddle (1979) and Salazar (1996) (as cited in Scribner & Donaldson, 2001, p. 610), “the enactment of roles is based on modal characteristics and preferences of the person performing the role”. However, feedback received from the group regarding her behaviour and their perception of her, as well as pressure to change to a different role as the group progressed to a deeper level of interaction resulted in Erna withdrawing and ultimately disengaging from the group. Reasons for failure to successfully assume a different role might include the fact that Erna could not reconcile elements of her self-concept with the responsibilities associated with alternate roles that were available/acceptable to the group. Hornsey and Jetten (2004, p. 254) argue that role differentiation has to do with “authentic self-expression”. The only remaining option for Erna was thus to withdraw and disengage from group interaction in order to protect her self-concept.

5.3.5 Summary of conclusions drawn in terms of research questions

Erna stated during the interview, as well as in her personal reflection, that she enjoyed the role of topic initiator/entertainer at the outset of the training group weekend. When furthermore reviewing the elements of her self-concept, as described by herself, it is not hard to understand why. The responsibilities associated with the role of topic initiator/entertainer closely matched elements of her self-concept, and consequently the role demanded of her only to act in a way that is similar to how she would normally act. Stated differently, Erna could integrate the responsibilities associated with her role with the elements of her self-concept, and therefore she was comfortable with accepting such a position in the group.

However, as the group progressed to a deeper level of interaction, the role of initiator/entertainer became superfluous due to the fact that the group no longer needed someone to 'hide behind' when feeling uncomfortable, and as a result, the group began to demand of Erna to assume a different role. Erna, however, seemed unable to cede to the group's demands, and as a result, withdrew and disengaged from the group. This might be due to the fact that an alternate role would have included responsibilities such as analysing, critically evaluating the events that were unfolding in the group, speaking less and listening more, as well as regarding this whole experience more from a psychological point of view. These were all responsibilities that conflicted with elements of Erna's self-concept (Erna described herself as being talkative and not being 'psychologically', critically or analytically inclined), and as a result this may have contributed to the observed difficulty she encountered in assuming such an alternate role. Also, Erna described herself as well-liked and popular during the interview, and upon receiving feedback from the group that was in contrast with this view (she stated several times that she felt attacked by the group), she opted to withdraw in order to keep her self-concept intact.

Thus, the research question (repeated below) may be answered as follows, based on the summary of findings presented above:

What is the relationship between an individual's self-concept and his or her propensity for role uptake in a small group?

There appeared to be some connection between Erna's self-concept and the role(s) that she was inclined to assume in this small group setting. She seemingly attempted to avoid roles that were in conflict with elements of her self-concept. The decision to assume the role of topic initiator/entertainer in this small group setting furthermore appeared to be based on the interplay between the group's dynamics and Erna's personal dynamics. In other words, role assumption appeared to depend to a large degree on what the group needed and what Erna was able to offer. The group thus selected the 'best candidate' for the role of topic initiator/entertainer, based partly on Erna's individual characteristics and behaviour (influenced by her self-concept).

Lastly, role change appeared to have been required by the group as the needs of the group changed. Lewin (as cited in Pines, 1985, p. 117) states in this regard that "behaviour arises out of the 'life space' of the individual. The life space contains perceptions of behavioural alternatives such as different activities in which the individual might engage. Some alternatives are definite and clear (structured), others vague and unstructured. The alternatives have different degrees of attractiveness and repulsion (valence) depending on their usefulness in meeting current needs".

5.4 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FOR MAGGIE

Results obtained for Maggie (as presented in Chapter 4) can be summarised as follows:

5.4.1 Frequency analysis

When regarding Figure 4.6 and Tables 4.7 and 4.8, one becomes aware of the fact that Maggie's participation fluctuated between approximately 5% and 15% throughout the first few sessions of the training group weekend. Then, suddenly, Maggie's participation increased sharply to almost 40% in Session 7, before declining again in Sessions 8 to 10. Consequently, these results raise certain questions, which will be dealt with/answered when discussing interpretations made and consequences drawn pertaining to Maggie's results in the next section. The questions are:

- a. Why did Maggie's participation fluctuate during the first few sessions of the training group weekend?
- b. Did anything specific happen in Session 7 that caused Maggie to increase her participation so substantially?
- c. Why did Maggie's level of participation decline again after Session 7 to approximately only 2% in Session 10?

5.4.2 Here and now analysis

Figure 4.7 indicates that Maggie focused on the there and then no more than 35% of the duration of her contributions during the training group weekend, thereby indicating that she was busy with things pertaining to the group's task for an estimated 65% or more of the time. Maggie, furthermore, mainly focused on things that were happening in the present, and these things were related to the group's task. In the next section (interpretation of Maggie's findings) the researcher will discuss what Maggie focused on predominantly, as well as why she may have chosen to focus on the here and now for the majority of the time.

5.4.3 Concept of self analysis

Results in terms of Maggie's self-concept were obtained by means of data gathered from the training group sessions, the semi-structured interview as well as from the personal reflection as written by Maggie herself. Elements that were emphasised in terms of the different aspects of Maggie's self-concept may be summarised as follows (see Figure 4.8):

- a. intrapersonal self-concept (most frequently mentioned aspect of her self-concept): being different, being individualistic/independent, being honest, having changed/grown, and disliking change;
- b. interpersonal self-concept: being responsible, being the caretaker, being talkative, being introverted and being a good listener;
- c. academic/intellectual/work self-concept: being committed and loving Psychology;
- d. psychological/emotional self-concept: being sensitive, and liking reflecting/analysing;
- e. religious/ethical/moral self-concept: being non-judgemental;
- f. physical self-concept/body image: no elements mentioned;
- g. sexual self-concept: no elements mentioned.

Elements of Maggie's self-concept as listed above will be discussed in detail in the next section in order to draw conclusions pertaining to Maggie's concept of self.

5.4.4 Behaviour analysis

According to Figure 4.9, as well as Table 4.9, Maggie displayed predominantly the following behaviour during the course of the training group weekend:

- a. keeping the conversation going/talking;
- b. pursuing individual/personal needs;
- c. supporting/encouraging behaviour;
- d. attempting to gain the group's approval;
- e. leading the group towards its task; and
- f. protecting others.

Maggie's behaviour as summarised above will be interpreted and discussed in detail in the following section (interpretation of findings for Maggie).

5.4.5 Content analysis

According to Figure 4.10 and Table 4.10, Maggie focused predominantly on the following conversational topics during the course of the training group weekend, the semi-structured interview, as well as in her personal reflection:

- a. emotional experiences (Maggie were most interested in talking about emotional experiences);
- b. her own group experience;
- c. background of group members;
- d. where the group wants to go;
- e. judgement; and
- f. delving deeper/finding meaning.

Content in which Maggie displayed the greatest interest (as listed above) will be interpreted and discussed in detail in the following section (interpretation of findings for Maggie).

5.5 INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS FOR MAGGIE

5.5.1 Maggie's self-concept

Evidence of original transcriptions

Session 2 Lines 984 – 988

MAGGIE “...on this particular subject I just think don't judge.”

GROUP (laughing)

CHRISTA “I don't think anybody wants to judge now.”

Session 7 Lines 555 – 562

SHELLY “So, listening to what you said and you said that in this group you have ... well, thus far, there was a time you felt that you have a certain level of responsibility towards the group.”

MAGGIE “Yes.”

SHELLY “In your life in general, are there other situations where you take responsibility for other people or feel the need to take responsibility, whether it be friends or family?”

MAGGIE “I do.”

Interview (with Maggie) Line 629

MAGGIE “So, uhm ... I think my big problem why I couldn’t leave him was because I obviously felt responsible for him, and he would make me feel responsible for him.”

Interview (with Maggie) Line 809 and Line 817

MAGGIE “You know, you just mentioned the word that this is what I’m studying, and some people, or it is my experience, that people sort of off-load on you.”

MAGGIE “I now feel, you know, I feel sort of responsible like I need to help them or I need to, you know, do something for them.”

Interview (with Maggie) Lines 113 – 118

MAGGIE “Having time to think and ... uhm, I like reflecting.”

MELISSA “Uhm.”

MAGGIE “I like being alone with my thoughts.”

Interview (with Maggie) Lines 161 – 169

MAGGIE “And I’m really honest. I don’t know if attracted would be the right word; I think drawn to all things related to psychology.”

MELISSA “Uhm.”

MAGGIE “I just love it - movies, books, conversation, anything - you name ...”

MELISSA “Uhm.”

MAGGIE “... and you have my focus.”

Discussion

The quotations as cited above demonstrate some of the elements of Maggie’s self-concept, which strongly came to the fore during the course of the training group experience. Maggie described herself as being introverted, a caretaker, and feeling responsible for others. This feeling of responsibility for others (and having to take care of others) appears to date back to at least her high school years, when she was in a romantic relationship with a drug dependent individual. She clearly states in this regard that he made her feel responsible for him, and this may have resulted in her fusing this element with her self-concept. In later years, she appears to have chosen similar roles with her loved ones, as is evident from her statement that she allowed others to “off-load” on her. She further stated that she loves analysing/reflecting as well as everything related to Psychology. She furthermore also described herself in terms of what she is not, namely judgemental. Judgement, and the fear thereof, was one of the central topics of discussion throughout the training group weekend. When regarding the following section pertaining to Maggie’s interaction with the group (Section 5.5.2), it becomes evident that these elements manifested strongly in terms of her behaviour in the group. As stated in Chapter 3 of this dissertation, self-schemas/self-concepts “organise our experiences, help us interpret situations, and guide our behaviour” (Horowitz & Bordens, 1995, p. 53).

5.5.2 Maggie’s group experience

Evidence of original transcriptions

Maggie’s personal reflection Line 22

“... My first ‘memory’ of the first session, if I may use those words, was Erna’s ice-breaker. Erna had gotten into the middle of the circle, did a little dance and announced that this would be our ice-breaker. I did not share her sentiments. Personally, I do not dance and the thought of being forced to dance in that type of a

situation made me immediately anxious. However, after a few giggles from groups members, we quickly moved on. Nobody else seemed very interested in breaking the ice in that way either, or perhaps breaking the ice at all ...”

Session 5 Lines 1133 – 1138

ERNA “Or that maybe it’s a bit too ... we are talking a bit too in depth - too personal.”

MAGGIE “I don’t mind talking in depth. I actually ... I really enjoy I think (**indistinct 1.12.45**) conversation. I just think that we ... I really feel like we are headed to a place right now where we are about to start talking without a certain amount of ...”

DEBBIE “Discretion.”

Session 6 Line 1084

MAGGIE “I agree with Debbie as well. I don’t know. I feel like even though that the previous session was somewhat difficult and that everyone made the decision to keep things light out of the sense of ... in respect of friendship, and that’s appreciated, we are here for the purpose to, you now, have an experience or learning opportunity and if we sit and talk about things that aren’t meaningful then we can’t go back and, you know, really learn something about group interaction and about how to act right. It would be a missed opportunity.”

Session 6 Line 1126

MAGGIE “But can’t we talk about topics that are stimulating and challenging, but that aren’t personally difficult? Surely we can find ... uhm.”

Session 7 Lines 402 – 408

JOEL “For who do you feel responsible in this group?”

MAGGIE “I felt responsible for myself, I felt responsible for Debbie and then ultimately I started feeling responsible for everyone.”

STEPHAN “And what does it do to you - that feeling of responsibility?”

MAGGIE “It’s like an extremely heavy thing to carry, you know.”

Session 8 Lines 23 – 36

JOEL “Is there something you want to do quickly with what
(**indistinct 03.08**).”

MAGGIE “Ja, a sense of urgency. I just wanted like everyone to know if it was going to be our last session, say, if there is anyone that wanted to say anything did that they get a chance to say it, you know, and not be ... not having an opportunity to have said what they wanted to say.”

JOEL “Oh, okay.”

MAGGIE “That’s a lot of words.”

STEPHAN “Doing through what?”

CHRISTA “Learning?”

CHRISTA “No, she’s taking her responsibility again to make sure that they’ll have their voice heard.”

Interview (with Maggie) Line 1061

MAGGIE “So, at that point I was feeling ... I was feeling very bad. I think I was taking a lot of responsibility for what happens with everyone else on myself.”

Discussion

From the quotations as cited above, it seems apparent that Maggie was disinterested in ‘idle chit-chat’ from the start, and also stated in this regard that she was not interested in either entertaining others or being entertained. It is furthermore evident when regarding Figure 4.6 that Maggie’s participation plummeted every time the group’s focus turned to a discussion of random topics (Sessions 2, 4 and 6), and increased again when discussing more in-depth topics such as judgement and backgrounds of members. This increase in interest when discussing topics such as the above-mentioned may also be tied to her self-concept, as she stated in this regard that she is not judgemental and that she loves analysing/psychological topics. These topics were thus personally meaningful to her. Also noteworthy in this regard is the fact that Maggie mostly focused on the same/similar topics to what the group focused on throughout the training group experience (refer to Tables 4.11 and 4.12), thus implying that Maggie stayed focused on the group needs and as a result sometimes brushed her personal interests and needs to the side for the benefit of the group as a whole. She did, however, try to keep conversational topics centred around the here and now, to keep the group focused on the task at hand.

In terms of her interaction pattern with the group, Maggie appeared to have assumed responsibility for other’s feelings (by attempting to protect them) and learning experiences (by repeatedly leading the group back to the here and now/task at hand) almost from the outset of the training group weekend. Often, as can be seen from the examples illustrated above, she would redirect a discussion that was focused on things outside the group to things that were happening in the group at that stage, thereby drawing the members’ attention back to the group’s task. This corresponded with Maggie’s expressed need to focus on more personally meaningful and

stimulating exchanges. Maggie experienced some difficulty in keeping the group in the here and now at times though, due to the expressed need of some of the other group members to concentrate on 'lighter' topics, and thus not talk about emotionally challenging topics.

It may be that Maggie realised early on though that the group was shying away from personally meaningful topics due to the fact that some harsh judgements were made at the start of the group dynamics weekend (e.g. certain group members indicated that they believe homosexuality is wrong, and that homosexual couples should not be allowed to raise children). Consequently, the group was fearful of being judged by its constituent members in a similarly harsh fashion should they reveal private information pertaining to themselves. Maggie identified the group's need at this stage, which was for someone to assume the role of caretaker, and she accordingly accepted the responsibility as this was a familiar role to her (due to past experiences with loved ones). Agazarian (1997, p. 221) states in this regard that even when a member volunteers for a role that he or she is used to playing in daily life, "he or she may still not get the part if there is another member (or subgroup) who is a better fit". Agazarian (1997, p. 222) concludes this point by stating that "which volunteer will be chosen by the group to occupy a given role is a function of the group's dynamics". The group in this case seemed to have welcomed Maggie to the role of caretaker at the outset of the training group weekend, as there seemed to have been a need for protection due to feelings of discomfort/judgement. As a result, Maggie took the responsibility upon her own shoulders to create a climate of acceptance by clearly stating in Session 2 that people should not judge one another (which ties in with the religious/ethical/moral aspect of her self-concept). She tried to further encourage members to embrace personally meaningful topics by emphasising that it would not be expected of anyone to share more than they are comfortable with (Session 6).

Maggie thus displayed a constant interest in, and concern for, the other group members, and the group eventually picked up on her feeling of responsibility during Session 7 of the training group weekend. The group then addressed this issue with Maggie, and accordingly discussed it at length in Session 7 (hence the spike in Maggie's participation in Session 7 as demonstrated in Figure 4.6. of this

dissertation). Maggie confirmed in this regard that taking responsibility for others is sometimes a heavy burden to carry (which links her past experiences of feeling responsible for, and having to take care of, loved ones). The group's response and feedback to Maggie in terms of the role that she chose to assume (caretaker/the responsible one) will be discussed in Section 5.5.3).

5.5.3 Group's feedback to Maggie in terms of her participation

Evidence of original transcriptions

Session 8 Line 466 and Line 484

JOEL "I'm just wondering a little bit how ... how helpful is it for some people just to not make them too uncomfortable, if that is always helpful?"

MAGGIE "I suppose no. No, it's not helpful to do that. Maybe you need to have that experience for yourself; to go out to have that moment where you know where you take the risk and then you decide what you're going to make out of it, but I'm genuinely realising this now as I'm talking."

Session 9 Lines 259 – 264

PAM "So, I almost want to say you shouldn't take that burden to take responsibility of making sure that all of us should take something with us. If ... I'm assuming that you've taken much more than what I have. I've only got a little bit, but that's my own responsibility. I don't want you to have that burden to make sure that I know everything."

DEBBIE "Uhm."

PAM "Because I think you've opened much more than what I have. I just want to say don't take so much responsibility. Just let us take our own ..."

Discussion

Following on the discussion of Maggie's tendency to take responsibility for the group (Session 7), the members proceeded to provide Maggie with feedback regarding their experience of her interaction patterns in Sessions 8 and 9. More specifically, the facilitators firstly highlighted the fact that her behaviour might not always be in the best interest of the individuals that she is trying to protect from discomfort or harm. They continued by stating that sometimes the learning experience is more valuable if the person experiences these emotions as opposed to being protected from them. Secondly, the group also stated that they would prefer it if Maggie did not assume responsibility for them for the remainder of the training group weekend, as they would like to assume responsibility for their own learning experience and the benefits that they reap from it. Agazarian (1997, p. 223) states in this regard that "when members take their group role personally, they are reminded of the function their role plays for the group – and of the fact that when the group no longer needs the role, it will not be reinforced".

Maggie might have been taken aback by this feedback while receiving it, due to the fact that it had always been expected of her in her past relationships with others to take care of them or to take responsibility for them. And, as stated previously, she had experienced this role and its accompanying responsibilities as a heavy burden to carry. Thus, Maggie probably experienced this request from the group as liberating to a degree. She stated in this regard that she felt free to explore other roles as a result of the group's feedback (see Section 5.5.4), and at the same time comforted by the knowledge that others would assume the role of caretaker should it become apparent that the group is in need of someone performing those duties once more. Bergh and Theron (1999, p. 401) state in this regard that "a person's self-concept at a certain stage also regulates encounters with new experiences, and whether the person, in terms of the values of his or her existing self-concept, feels comfortable in accommodating such experiences". Maggie clearly felt comfortable with accommodating this experience and utilising the feedback of the group constructively.

5.5.4 Maggie's description of her role

Evidence of original transcriptions

Interview (with Maggie) Lines 1471 – 1478

MELISSA “Okay. And then your own role?”

MAGGIE “My own role? We had actually within the group defined that as being a sort of caretaker.”

MELISSA “Uhm.”

MAGGIE “That I take responsibility for people's emotions and their feelings, and I know that I do that generally.”

Maggie's personal reflection Line 56

“Something that made it a little easier for me to feel a part of the group was having my role established. I do feel that I have a natural interest in people's feelings and having this recognised made it easier for me to explore this interest. The setting and type of group experience that was used allowed for a great deal of exposure of the group members' emotions.”

Maggie's personal reflection Line 58

“As we established in the group I do sometimes feel worrying about people's feeling burdensome, and so I wanted to see what would happen if I did not assume the role of caretaker. ... When I decided not to accept my role, the requirement of the group (which at that point was Erna's notable quietness) forced other group members to take on this task.”

Maggie's personal reflection Line 60

“Establishing this knowledge that the emotional well-being of the group was not my sole responsibility gave way for me to explore other roles. I felt more comfortable sharing my observations with Joshua when he had asked the group to tell him how we perceive him. The knowledge that someone else in the group would make the effort to reaffirm his self-esteem allowed me a greater honesty in expressing my observations.”

Discussion

As may be deduced from the quotations cited above, Maggie enjoyed the role of caretaker during the course of the training group weekend. This may be due to the fact that role requirements were closely aligned with elements of Maggie's self-concept (she specifically stated in this regard that she has a natural interest in people's feelings/emotions). It is also possible that she felt obligated to a degree to assume the responsibilities of this role when she observed the group's fear of judgement. As discussed in Section 3.3.2 of Chapter 3, the role of caretaker within groups has also previously been discussed by authors such as Zigurs and Kozar (1994), Pianesi et al. (2007), and Hoffman (as cited in Bergh & Theron, 2009). These authors have, however, attached different labels to this role. Zigurs and Kozar refer to this role as that of mediator. Pianesi et al. label this role as that of supporter, whilst Hoffman terms this role the encourager.

Horwitz (as cited in Rosen et al., 2001, p. 477) states in this regard that “the group drafts candidates that are most likely, based on their predisposition (histories and motivations), to fill needed roles”. According to Biddle (1979) and Salazar (1996) (as cited in Scribner & Donaldson, 2001, p. 610), “the enactment of roles is based on modal characteristics and preferences of the person performing the role”. However, feedback received from the group regarding her interaction patterns and the fact that her behaviour might not be in the best interest of the group members resulted in Maggie deciding to refuse this role during the final stages of the group weekend, and to consequently experiment with new roles. As noted previously, Maggie appeared

to feel relieved by the fact that the emotional well-being of the group would no longer be dependent on her, and that she could consequently experiment with new ways in which to interact with the group (and to thus make the best use of this learning opportunity). What is also noteworthy in this regard is that Maggie did not explore a new role that was in conflict with her self-concept, but rather one that remained closely aligned to elements of her self-concept as highlighted in Section 5.5.1 of this chapter (having an affinity for psychology and analysing/interpreting situations in order to come to value-adding conclusions). She also stated in this regard that she was proud of herself for the way in which she acted/could help Joshua to come to new insights about himself while experimenting with this new role. Hornsey and Jetten (2004, p. 254) argue that role differentiation has to do with “authentic self-expression”.

5.5.5 Summary of conclusions drawn in terms of research questions

Maggie stated during the interview, as well as in her personal reflection, that she enjoyed the role of caretaker during the course of the training group weekend. When furthermore regarding the elements of her self-concept, as described by herself, it is not hard to understand why. The responsibilities associated with the role of caretaker closely matched elements of her self-concept, and consequently the role demanded of her only to act in a way that is similar to how she would normally act (Maggie stated in this regard that she had, in fact, assumed responsibility for a number of her loved ones in the past, and is still doing so currently). Stated differently, Maggie could integrate the responsibilities associated with her role with the elements of her self-concept, and therefore she was comfortable with accepting such a position in the group. That may explain why she noticed the need for this role to be filled by a member of the group much quicker than any of the other individuals constituting the group.

However, as the group progressed to a deeper level of interaction, the group increasingly felt, and expressed, the need to take responsibility for themselves. This may be due to the fact that they no longer felt the need to be protected against feelings of hurt/discomfort/disappointment, and consequently the role of caretaker

became redundant in the group's eyes. The group accordingly requested that Maggie no longer assume responsibility for their emotions and learning experiences, and as a consequence, Maggie decided not to continue playing the role of caretaker during the final stages of the training group weekend. Instead, she explored alternate roles, and stated that she found comfort in the knowledge that other members would take care of the emotional needs of the group should it be deemed necessary to do so. She also appeared to feel liberated by the thought that she would no longer be held responsible for taking care of the group. Immediately after receiving this feedback from the group, Maggie proceeded to experiment with a new role. The responsibilities associated with the role that she explored were, however, still aligned with elements that appear to be central to her self-concept.

Thus, the research question (repeated below) may be answered as follows, based on the summary of findings presented above:

What is the relationship between an individual's self-concept and his or her propensity for role uptake in a small group?

There appeared to be some connection between Maggie's self-concept and the role(s) that she was inclined to assume in this small group setting. She furthermore seemingly attempted to avoid roles that were in conflict with elements of her self-concept. The decision to assume the role of caretaker in this small group setting appeared to be based on the interplay between the group's dynamics and Maggie's personal dynamics. In other words, role assumption appeared to depend to a large degree on what the group needed and what Maggie was able to offer. The group thus selected the 'best candidate' for the role of caretaker, based partly on Maggie's individual characteristics and behaviour (influenced by her self-concept).

Lastly, role change appeared to have been required by the group as the needs of the group changed. Lewin (as cited in Pines, 1985, p. 117) states in this regard that "behaviour arises out of the 'life space' of the individual. The life space contains perceptions of behavioural alternatives such as different activities in which the individual might engage. Some alternatives are definite and clear (structured),

others vague and unstructured. The alternatives have different degrees of attractiveness and repulsion (valence) depending on their usefulness in meeting current needs”.

5.6 CONCLUSIONS

The results obtained, as summarised, interpreted and discussed above, thus show some connection between the two research candidates’ self-concepts and the roles that were assumed by them respectively in the small group setting. More specifically, the results show that Maggie changed roles with greater ease due to the fact that alternate role requirements were in line with elements of her self-concept. The results further indicate that it was difficult for Erna to adapt and change to another role due to the fact that the responsibilities connected to the role(s) required in the small group setting were in conflict with Erna’s self-concept. In Chapter 6 a concluding summary of the insights derived from the discussion of the results will be provided, along with a discussion of the limitations of the study, implications of the findings and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 5, results obtained for the two research subjects were summarised, discussed and interpreted in terms of the stated research question. The inference was made that there was some connection between the self-concepts of the two research participants and the roles that they chose to assume in a small group setting. The process of role assumption was also discussed in Chapter 5, as well as how role change occurred over time. A summary of the findings will be provided in Section 6.2. The limitations and implications of the research findings will also be discussed, before concluding this chapter with recommendations for future research purposes.

6.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Based on the discussion of results as presented in Chapter 5, the following conjectures were made with regard to the relationship between the self-concept and the propensity for role uptake in small group contexts:

- The self-concept appears to inform behaviour to a degree in a small group setting.
- The self-concept appears to be rather stable, and it consequently appears likely that an individual will attempt to ignore or block out information that is threatening to the self-concept (as Erna's group experience indicated).
- An individual might, however, accept information that is threatening to the self-concept should the information be in line with the individual's visualisation of possible future selves (as Maggie's group experience indicated).
- The process of role assumption in a small group setting appears to be based on an interplay between group dynamics and personal dynamics.
- It appears possible that the group may, at times, assign roles to individuals, but in such instances, the group still appears to select the individual that is

best suited for the role based on his or her predisposition and individual characteristics.

- The process of role assumption appears to occur with greater ease when elements of the individual's self-concept are aligned with requirements of the role.
- The process of role assumption appears to occur with greater difficulty or appears not to occur at all when elements of the individual's self-concept are in conflict with requirements of the role.
- Role change may be required whenever either the needs of the individual or the needs of the group change.
- When role change is required, and requirements of alternate roles are in line with elements of the individual's self-concept, the transition from one role to another appears easier.
- When role change is required, and requirements of alternate roles are in conflict with elements of the individual's self-concept, the transition from one role to another appears more difficult or impossible.

Thus, when regarding the preceding list of conjectures, which were based on the discussion of results in Chapter 5, the research question may be answered. The research question will accordingly be repeated below, before providing answers to the stated question in the next paragraph. The research question is as follows:

What is the relationship between an individual's self-concept and his or her propensity for role uptake in a small group?

There appears to be some connection between an individual's self-concept and the role(s) that he or she would be inclined to assume in a small group setting. It also appears plausible that an individual will attempt to avoid roles that are in conflict with elements of his or her self-concept. The decision to assume a certain role in a small group setting furthermore appears to be based on the interplay between group dynamics and personal dynamics. In other words, role assumption appears to depend to a large degree on what the group needs and what the individual can offer. The group thus selects the 'best candidate' for the role, based partly on individual

characteristics and behaviour of the members (influenced by the self-concept). Agazarian (1997, p. 221) states in this regard that even when a member volunteers for a role that he or she is used to playing in everyday life, “he or she may still not get the part if there is another member (or subgroup) who is a better fit”. Agazarian (1997, p. 222) concludes this point by stating the following: “Which volunteer will be chosen by the group to occupy a given role is a function of the group’s dynamics”.

Lastly, role change appears to be required as the needs of either the group or the individual change. Lewin (as cited in Pines, 1985, p. 117) states in this regard that “behaviour arises out of the ‘life space’ of the individual. The life space contains perceptions of behavioural alternatives such as different activities in which the individual might engage. Some alternatives are definite and clear (structured), others vague and unstructured. The alternatives have different degrees of attractiveness and repulsion (valence) depending on their usefulness in meeting current needs”. These current needs refer to the needs of both the group and the individual member.

6.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Firstly, this study focused solely on the process of taking up roles in a small group setting, and the researcher thus did not aim to make any claims pertaining to larger group contexts. Also, in terms of the chosen sample frame, Industrial Psychology master’s degree students at the University of Pretoria were used as research subjects for this study, and accordingly, results obtained and conclusions drawn pertain only to this stated research sample.

Secondly, this study was conducted mainly from a psychodynamic and systems theory perspective, and accordingly, the results obtained should be viewed with these perspectives in mind. The researcher makes no claims regarding applicability of these results in terms of other research perspectives, and thus cautions other researchers to use these results with reserve when working from other theoretical perspectives.

Lastly, the way in which the training group weekend was structured (as described in Section 2.7.1 of Chapter 2) may have had an impact on the natural reactions and interaction patterns of the group members. The research participants were asked to convene in a venue and to sit on chairs arranged in a circle in the middle of the room. They were then left to interact as they deemed fit for the duration of the training group weekend. There was also a distinct awareness of the fact that they were being video-recorded and observed.

The limitations as discussed above were, however, mitigated by the fact that an in-depth study was conducted, a thick description of the research approach and design was provided, and by the fact that an audit trail was established. The possible impact of the method of investigation/data collection method as described above was furthermore mitigated by using two additional data gathering methods, namely semi-structured interviews after the fact, and personal reflections documenting the participants' experiences of the training group weekend. Thus, due to the above-mentioned reasons (as well as the additional reasons provided in Section 2.9 of Chapter 2), the results may be transferred to other settings with a degree of caution/reserve. Although findings obtained in other contexts may differ somewhat from the results as discussed in this study, the researcher should be able to observe similar patterns as the ones described in Section 6.2 of this chapter.

6.4 IMPLICATION OF THE FINDINGS

The findings contribute value to the academic milieu, due to the fact that this study explored an aspect of role theory that has not previously been focused on. Although the theories of *self-concept* and *roles* have been covered extensively in available literature, there is not much research available specifically pertaining to the self-concept's impact on the propensity for role uptake in group settings. Therein lays the academic contribution that this study aimed to make.

The findings also contribute value to the methodological milieu as a result of a unique coding system that was created in order to investigate the stated research question. This may be attributed to the fact that very little research has been done

specifically pertaining to the research question investigated, and as a result, the data analysis process/coding process was not guided by previously used coding systems.

In terms of practical implications, the findings of this study may assist group facilitators and leaders with the management of small group activities. Findings as summarised in this study might, for instance, provide group facilitators and leaders with a greater understanding of how an individual's self-concept impacts on his or her actions and reactions in a group, thereby increasing the ability of the facilitators and leaders to better manage how the individual engages with the group, and its constituent members. These findings may also contribute to greater self-insight, as an individual might understand his or her own behaviour in a small group setting better when taking into consideration the impact of the self-concept on the propensity for role uptake.

6.5 SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The following suggestions are made for future research purposes in terms of the stated research topic:

- a. Repeat this study in different contexts

It is suggested that the study described in this dissertation be repeated in future, albeit in different contexts. Researchers may also decide to use, for example, an ethnographic research design rather than a case study research design. Results obtained in this way may add interesting dimensions to the findings obtained by means of the study as described in this dissertation.

- b. Repeat this study with a larger group

It is recommended that follow-up research be conducted in a similar way, but with a larger group, in order to ascertain whether results obtained by means of this study also apply to larger group contexts.

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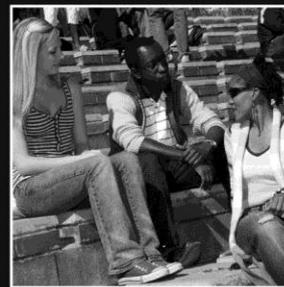
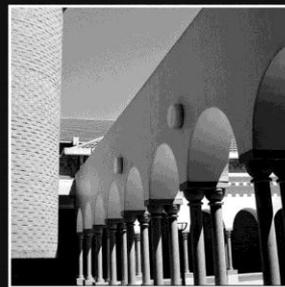
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APPENDIX A
- STUDY GUIDE -

**MHB 801: I/O Psychology Practice
(Working with groups)**

*MCom Human Resource Management /
Industrial & Organizational Psychology*

Department of Human Resource Management



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Faculty of Economic and Management
Sciences

1. Introduction and welcome

Dear student, welcome to this module. This module (I/O Psychology Practice: Working with groups) focuses on how to identify, understand and work with group phenomena in organizational contexts. It is different to what you have experienced before and the group phenomena you will work with is also on a different level to what you have been exposed to thus far in your academic career.

Please read this study guide carefully. In addition to the study guide, you will also receive three study letters to which I want to draw your attention.

1. **Study letter 1** is attached to this study guide and provides important information on the main input for this module, the group experience;
2. **Study letter 2** will be given to you after your group experience and will contain the information you will need to complete your first assignment, the personal reflection;
3. **Study letter 3** will be given to you after the theory-and-application workshop on 19 September 2009 and will contain the information needed to complete the second and final assignment.

2. Significance of this module

This module takes a specific focus on the practical application of the Industrial and Organizational Psychology field. The module's main aim flows from the fact that an understanding of complex group dynamics is imperative for effective consultation and intervention in practice. Such an understanding, however, cannot be taught without a strong focus on first-hand experience, reflection and application. This module thus follows a unique "inside-out" approach that combines the experience of being part of a group with theory on groups as well as application-possibilities.

3. Educational approach

The approach followed for this module is in line with what is expected from students at Masters level. We will only provide broad guidelines and parameters within which it will be the students' responsibility to construct value. This module comprises an experiential, theoretical and application component. It will require of students to take part in a group, reflect on the group, integrate your experience with theory and apply it to organisational practice.

4. Contact information

	Name	Room no.	Contact information
Master's Programme manager	Prof JS Basson	E&B 3-77	Tel : 420 3431 johan.basson@up.ac.za
Lecturer	Mr JH Cooper	E&B 3-81	Tel : 420 3846 jean.cooper@up.ac.za
Secretary	Mrs C Smith	E&B 3-77	Tel: 420 3108 christa.smith@up.ac.za



5. Module map

2 ½ -day training group experience	<u>Group dates</u> Group 1: 13-15 Aug Group 2: 20-22 Aug Group 3: 27-29 Aug
Assignment 1: Individual reflection on group experience	<u>Hand-in dates</u> Group 1: 27 Aug Group 2: 3 Sept Group 3: 10 Sept
Workshop: Integrating the group experience with theory on groups and application in practice	<u>Workshop date</u> The whole Masters group: 19 Sept
Assignment 2: Individual final assignment	<u>Hand-in date</u> The whole Masters group: 9 Oct

6. Study Units

1

***I/O PSYCHOLOGY PRACTICE:
STUDY UNIT 1: WORKING WITH GROUPS***

6.1. Overall aim

To provide the student with the opportunity to explore and understand the dynamics in groups and organizations in order to be able to make interpretations and intervene as part of organizational consulting practice.

6.2. Learning outcomes

1. Demonstrate the ability to critically reflect on the processes and behavioural dynamics in a training group;
2. Demonstrate the ability to critically reflect on own behaviour and experiences in a training group;
3. Demonstrate the ability to integrate the first-hand experiences of group processes and the experiences of self-in-group with relevant theory;
4. Demonstrate the ability to transfer this integration of group experience with group theory to contemporary organizational contexts.

6.3. Overall description

The focus of this module is to give you a deeper understanding of groups and of yourself in the context of being a group member. It consists of an experiential component which is followed by a theoretical component. It concludes with exploring various application-scenarios and integrating the experience and theory with application possibilities.

6.4. The 2 ½ -day training group experience

This will provide an experience of being a participant in a group. The main focus will be training with an added possibility for learning about your own interactions in a group. This should be a unique training experience that makes this course different from most other courses that you have experienced so far. The group will be facilitated by Mr. Greyling Viljoen (Clin Psych, private practice) and Prof. Drikus Kriek (Clin Psych, UNISA School for Business Leadership). The facilitators will be assisted by the course leader, Mr. Jean Cooper (Ind Psych) with regards to the observation of and reflection on the group. More information regarding the group experience and logistical arrangements is given in your first study letter (attached to this study guide).

6.5. Assignment 1: Individual reflection on group experience

You will be required to reflect on your group experience. This reflection needs to be handed in two weeks after your group session, as indicated in the module map (number 5) above. More detail regarding what is required will be given in your second study letter at the end of your group experience. This reflection will be done individually but will not count towards your module mark. However, failure to do the reflection will lead to you being penalized on your final mark.

6.6 Concluding workshop: Integrating the group experience with theory and practice

This workshop will take place on 19 September 2009 in EB 2-78, from 08:30 - 16:00. The purpose of this workshop is to, as a group, discuss and explore various theoretical conceptualizations of groups, to link this with your first-hand group experience and to understand how this applies to organizations

6.7. Assignment 2: Individual final assignment

You will be required to analyze and integrate your group experience with group theory within the context of an organization. This assignment needs to be handed in on 9 October 2009. More detail regarding what is required will be given in your third study letter to be handed to you after the concluding workshop on 19 September. This assignment will be done individually and will count 100% of the total module mark.

6.8. Prescribed reference work

Ringer, T.M. 2002, *Group action: the dynamics of groups in therapeutic, educational, and corporate settings*, Jessica Kingsley, London: Philadelphia.

I encourage you to use this book as primary guideline and to incorporate other relevant works.



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APPENDIX B
- STUDY LETTERS -

Study letter 1: The group experience

17 July 2009

Dear Masters' student

These 2 ½ days will provide an experience of being a participant in a group. The purpose of the group is to learn about how groups function by studying your own functioning as a group. The main focus will be training (learning about groups) with an added possibility for learning about your own interactions in a group. This will and should be a unique experience that makes this course different from most other courses that you have experienced so far.

When the group starts, the facilitators will not introduce a topic or content but instead will allow the group to take its own course. After the group has progressed for a while (i.e. a day) we will take a break from the group and reflect on what has happened in the group. We will also do this at the end of the 2 ½ days. The purpose of these reflection times is that we will capture and make sense of the experience and of what is happening in the group. These 2 ½ days usually take a fair amount of energy so expect to be tired at the end of each day.

The group will run over a Thursday evening and a whole Friday and Saturday in room EMS 2-84. Please refer to the group and date allocation below. On the Thursday evening we will arrive and settle in between 17:30 and 17:50 and start at 18:00. On the Friday and Saturday we will arrive and settle in between 08:00 and 08:20 and start at 08:30. As traffic into Pretoria can be very busy, please make sure that you allow yourself enough time so that we can start on time. Depending on how the group progresses, we will finish between 21:00 and 22:00 on Thursday and between 17:00 and 18:00 on Friday and Saturday, so keep your own diaries and travel arrangements flexible.

This 2 ½ day group experience will form the main input into this module. You will, however, only form part of the training group for 2 ½ days, after which it will disband. Although you will still participate in the remaining concluding (theory and practice)

workshop as part of this module, this will be in the capacity of the entire Master's class, and not as a continuation of the training groups.

Should any personal or inter-personal discomfort exist after the 2 ½ days, both the facilitators and myself will be available to assist and advise you. You don't need to prepare anything for the group experience, but bring a pen and paper with for personal notes. This way of experiencing and learning about groups is very exciting. We hope that you are looking forward towards it as much as we do.

Best wishes

Jean Cooper

THE FACILITATION AND REFLECTION TEAM

Course leader

Jean Cooper, MCom (Ind Psych), MPhil

Industrial Psychologist, Registered with HPCSA, Member: ISPSO (International Society for the Psychoanalytic Study of Organizations), Member: (SIOPSA) Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology of South Africa, Team and Organization Development Consultant.

Group facilitators

Greyling Viljoen, MA (Clin. Psych)

Psychologist in private clinical and sport psychology practice, Contracted to the High Performance Centre (hpc) at UP in performance psychology; group facilitator; part-time lecturer in group and team dynamics.

Drikus Kriek, DD, MA (Clin Psych), MBA

Clinical Psychologist, Registered with HPCSA, Teambuilding Consultant, Adventure Therapy and Organization Development Specialist, Member of Board of International Adventure Therapy Conference.



GROUP ALLOCATION

Group 1 13 - 15 Aug 2009	Group 2 20 - 22 Aug 2009	Group 3: 27 - 29 Aug 2009
X X	Y y	Z Z
X X	Y y	Z Z
X X	Y y	Z Z
X X	Y y	Z Z
X X	Y y	Z Z
X X	Y y	Z Z
X X	Y y	Z Z
X X	Y y	Z Z
X X	Y y	Z Z
X X	Y y	Z Z

PROGRAMME

Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Start: 17:30 for 18:00	Start: 8:00 for 8:30	Start: 8:00 for 8:30
End: Between 21:00 & 22:00	End: Between 17:00 & 18:00	End: Between 17:00 & 18:00

Study letter 2: Guidelines for assignment 1

Assignment 1: Personal reflection

This assignment asks of you to write a critical reflection on the group experience. Specifically reflect on the following:

- 1 Your own experience of becoming/being a member of the group (especially on a psychological level)
 - 1.1 What made it easier for you to join the group? (reflect on specific incidents or situations);
 - 1.2 What made it difficult for you to join the group? (reflect on specific incidents or situations);
 - 1.3 How did you experience being a member of this group? (reflect on specific incidents or situations).
- 2 Significant moments in the group for the group-as-a-whole
 - 2.1 Reflect on one or two specific moments in the group that, according to you, were especially significant for the group as it moved through the 2 ½ days.

What standard of work is required?

It is important to be able to critically reflect on one's experiences in groups. This assignment is there to help you develop this skill before you move on to the final assignment. The better the quality and depth of this reflection, the more you will be able to compose a good quality final assignment for assessment purposes. I will therefore provide feedback on this assignment in order to help you develop your reflexive ability. If your reflection is not up to standard, you will be asked to re-submit before being allowed to move on to the final assignment. A critical reflection of good quality is one that explores the questions for reflection in depth and on various levels; uses evidence, examples and anecdotes from the group to substantiate claims and enrich your descriptions (thus being specific instead of making general statements) and takes a critical and self-critical stance.

Structure, format and due date

Between 10 and 15 pages in length. Submit an electronic copy (to jean.cooper@up.ac.za) before or on 10 September 2009. Referencing is not required as this is only a personal reflection and you are not required to consult literature at this stage.

I trust that you will make this a meaningful exercise.

Best regards

Jean Cooper

19 September 2009

Study letter 3: Guidelines for assignment 2

Assignment 2: Individual final assignment

Learning outcomes (as per the study guide)

This assignment requires you to:

- 1 Demonstrate the ability to integrate the first-hand experiences of group processes and the experiences of self-in-group with relevant theory;
- 2 Demonstrate the ability to transfer this integration of group experience with group theory to contemporary organizational contexts.

Assignment

- 3 Do an in-depth study of the theoretical material in order to further understand the theoretical concepts discussed in class. Make use of the following material:
 - 3.1 Class notes: Overview of the conceptual structure of small groups by Greyling Viljoen;
 - 3.2 Class notes: Group phenomena in work teams by Jean Cooper;
 - 3.3 Book: Group Action (Ringer 2002);
 - 3.4 Any other material you deem appropriate to the assignment (i.e. furthering your understanding of the concepts discussed in class on 19 September 2009).
- 4 Use your understanding of the theoretical concepts discussed in class to describe and interpret any organisational scenario / case / dilemma where you are (or have been) involved. This interpretation should display your ability to use your theoretical knowledge to make sense of (interpret) group processes in an organisational context.
- 5 In your description and analysis of the real-life organisational scenario, you are encouraged to illuminate the theoretical concepts not only from the literature, but also from your training group experience. And then, after illuminating the concepts, apply the concepts to the organisational context.

Structure

Between 15 and 20 pages in length. Appropriate referencing is required.

Hand-in date

9 October 2009 in electronic format (MS Word attachment via email to Mrs Christa Smit) as well as hard copy. The hard copy must also be handed in at Mrs Smit.

All the best, and please contact me should there be any questions

Jean Cooper



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APPENDIX C
- INTERVIEW GUIDE -

Questions included in the interview guide:

1. Please tell me about your personal history, from birth until currently?
2. Please tell me more about your family and friends?
3. Please tell me about your experience of the training group weekend?
4. What were the high and low points of the weekend for you?
5. According to you, what were the most significant moments?
6. Please tell me about a time during the weekend when you felt like a group member, as well as a time during the weekend when you felt isolated from the group? Why do you think you felt this way on both occasions?
7. What role do you think each individual played within the group during the course of the groups' existence?
8. Is there anything else that you would like to add that we have not already discussed during the course of this interview?



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APPENDIX D
- CONSENT FORM -



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DEPARTEMENT MENSLIKEHULPBRONBESTUUR
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Tel.: 012-420-3074

Fax: 012-420-3574

17 July 2009

**INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN AN ACADEMIC RESEARCH PROJECT
IN THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

Dear group participant

You are invited to participate in an academic research project conducted by Jean Cooper and Melissa du Plessis from the Department of Human Resource Management, supervised by Prof. Johan Basson. The purpose of the project is to explore the dynamics and experiences in a training group and will mainly be based on the training group experience which forms part of the module MHB 801 (I/O Psychology Practice) of your Masters programme in Industrial and Organisational Psychology / Human Resources Management.

For the purposes of the research, a video recording of your MHB 801 (I/O Psychology Practice) training-group experience will be made. You will also be asked to give written feedback on your experience in the group. Further, depending on how the study unfolds, you might be approached by the research team to take part in an interview.

Should you thus give your consent for taking part in the research, this means that:

- 1 The 2 ½ day training group experience that forms part of your MHB 801 module will be video recorded and transcribed by the research team;
- 2 You will be asked to give written feedback on your training group experience;
- 3 You also might be asked to take part in an interview, which will be recorded and transcribed;
- 4 All the data from the training group, the written feedback and the interview will be interpreted and analysed by the research team.

All written, transcribed and video material will be treated as confidential and will only be available to the research team. Also, your identity will not be associated with any research reports or publications that use the results from this study. Your participation (or not) in the research will not have any effect on your marks for the Module MHB 801 which the training groups form part of. You can also withdraw your consent at any time during the research process.

Taking part in the research could be a positive experience with regards to further learning about groups as we co-explore the group experience as researcher and research participant. Also, once completed, the results from the research will be shared with you.

With regards to risks: there are no significant risks involved in taking part in the research. Although there might be periods of discomfort experienced in the training-groups, taking part in the research process (i.e. giving consent for the data recording and analysis) should have no adverse consequences. Should any risks arise during the study, they will be disclosed to you.

Should the data from this research be used for future research projects, your informed consent will once again be obtained.

Any further questions or comments can be directed to the research team.



Consent

I, (Full name and surname) ----- hereby give my full and informed consent to participate in this study. I declare that I have read and that I understand the consent form.

Signature of participant

Date

Research team

Researcher 1

Jean Cooper

Doctoral student (PhD I/O Psychology)

Student number: 9614781

jean.cooper@up.ac.za

Researcher 2

Melissa du Plessis

Masters student (MCom I/O Psychology)

Student number: 21076074

melissabrak@vodamail.co.za

Research supervisor

Prof Johan Basson

012 420 3431

johan.basson@up.ac.za



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APPENDIX E
- RESEARCH PLANNING -



Nr	What? Action	Who	How? Method
1	Email participants prior to group weekend: Remind them to read the study guide as well as to bring a note book and pen.	Jean	In a tone that is friendly but firm on the requirements and the boundaries.
2	Briefing before the group starts: - Jean: Welcome & make most of this opportunity. - Introduce Greyling and Drikus (Psychologists). - Greyling: Introduction to the method and what students can expect. - Drikus: Invitation to group members to explore and take risks.	Jean, Greyling, Drikus	Different than the Group Relations approach in certain respects (warmer and friendlier); Similar to GR conferences in certain respects (no mingling with students during the two and a half days).
3	The group (20 August 2009 – 22 August 2009)	Greyling as Psychologist Drikus as Psychologist Jean as course leader, observer and co-reflector	Two and a half days facilitated by Greyling and Drikus. Group will be unstructured, but the facilitators will be active in the group. Focus on reflection in the here and now.
4	End of the group Personal reflection: Participants will be asked to write a short essay on their group experience in which they specifically focus on an	Jean	Participants will be asked to write a short essay / draw a picture in their own time directly following the weekend that conveys something about their



	<p>aspect(s) of the group which they found meaningful / discomfoting.</p> <p>Personal reflection to be handed in two weeks after conclusion of the training group weekend.</p>		<p>current feelings towards the group.</p>
5	<p>Contact the group members and set up interviews as soon as possible after conclusion of the group weekend.</p>	<p>Jean, Melissa</p>	<p>Jean will inform participants that Melissa will contact them in order to arrange for the interviews that need to be conducted. Melissa to make telephonic / email arrangements. All group members will be interviewed.</p>
6	<p>Interview setting: Break away rooms next to room group sessions were facilitated in.</p>	<p>Jean and Melissa to get the room ready</p>	<p>The room will be heated, with two comfortable chairs and a small coffee table</p>
7	<p>Interviews to take place at the University of Pretoria's Economic and Management Sciences Faculty from the 29th of September 2009 to the 11th of November 2009.</p>	<p>Melissa</p>	<p>Melissa to conduct all 9 interviews. Second interviews will be arranged by Melissa should she deem it necessary on account of additional information that is required after conclusion of first interviews.</p>
8	<p>Group to be interviewed</p>	<p>Group 2</p>	<p>All 9 members of group 2, provided they are all willing to partake in the research</p>



			project.
9	When: Whenever participants are available for the interview.	Melissa to arrange this with Group 2	Group 2 takes place on the 20 th to the 22 nd of August 2009. On 19 September 2009 they have a theory and application workshop with one of the facilitators as well as with Jean. The researchers would like to start conducting the interviews after the workshop has taken place in order to obtain the participants' viewpoints on the entire process from start until finish.
10	The interviewer	Melissa	Questions to be asked during course of the interview: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Please tell me more about yourself?2. Please tell me more about your family and friendship circles?3. How did you experience the training group weekend?4. What were the high and low points for you?5. Please describe the significant events of the weekend?6. Please describe a



			<p>moment where you felt part of the group, as well as a moment where you felt ostracised from the group?</p> <p>7. What would you say was each person's role description?</p> <p>8. Is there anything else that you would like to add?</p>
--	--	--	---