

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## AN EVALUATION OF UBUNTU AS AN AFROCENTRIC MANAGEMENT (AND) COMMUNICATION APPROACH

by

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## SUMMARY

This study endeavours to formulate a basis for theory development by comparing Western, Japanese and African management theories and philosophies, enabling the researcher to juxtapose these with the core value system, Ubuntu. These theories and philosophies are neither exhaustive nor mutually exclusive, but rather interrelated. In general, the comparative analysis was roughly grouped into dimensions based on macro-, socio-structural processes and those based on interpersonal processes. Although this dichotomy is a simplification of a range of views, it provided a parsimonious way to begin discussing issues of management communication. Throughout the study, cultural comparisons between identity groups presented a mixture of similarities and differences. A description of a measurement instrument to monitor the existence and applicability of a uniquely South African management communication style was not described, and the broad aim of the study was to take the first steps in constructing a model that will, with further research, eventually result in such a measurement instrument. The initial and perhaps most important contribution of the framework was to create an awareness among management of the differences (and similarities), that may exist in organisations found in a multicultural society.

This study, which starts from the premise that communication is a basis for human organising and thus a management function, has maintained throughout that the organisation has elements interacting to form constantly changing meanings constructed through communication.

The core elements of Ubuntu are respect, dignity, acceptance and care - need elements that proved to be universal, and therefore not exclusive to Ubuntu. It is indicative of the need toward a softer approach to management, incorporating greater understanding of communalism and individualism in the South African organisation. It is recommended that exclusive concepts (Africanisation and Afrocentricity) should not be used but that inclusive (South Africanisation), be employed. Both traditionally Western and African mechanisms of communication have to be integrated in a new management framework. This will prove empowerment is a global phenomenon, but that the way it is dealt with amongst cultures differs. Secondary research questions show that Africa's business environment is not homogeneous; that the problems experienced in South African organisations differ from the rest of Africa; values that are characteristically African are transcending African boundaries; and that these values are relevant to economic development, business management and to management communication in particular. Finally, the areas requiring further research are identified, and brief comments are made on the implication for communication in organisations.

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## 2. BACKGROUND

Studying literature on the business environment in South Africa, the term "crisis lens" seems to underlie all messages. Turbulence reports from the literature on intensity of causal interconnections between different facets of the phenomenon, as well as from the actions of interlinked organisations. Turbulent environment

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1. GENERAL

Africa has been going through the stages of transformation at such a rapid pace, that, at times, aspects of modernity have been adopted without being fully internalised. Underlying these transformational processes, has been the realisation that African countries must start looking to each other regarding economic, political and even social matters, instead of making the West their point of reference. Unfortunately, African countries have inherited systems and structures from their colonial past that perpetuated the transfer of Western business traditions. One of the major *challenges* facing not only South Africa, but also the African continent, is the existence of islands of wealth in a sea of poverty and underdevelopment.

The realisation that African countries must look towards each other for future development has gained ground in contemporary management literature, which refers to an Afrocentric approach. But *how* this approach is to be achieved is still mired in much confusion. A basis for theory development is needed next to serve as a point of departure which will (depending on the outcome), enable the expansion and verification of this argument. A review of the literature supporting the argument for Afrocentricity is provided, followed by a discussion of the research problem.

### 2. BACKGROUND

Studying literature on the business environment in South Africa, the term “turbulent field” seems to underlie all messages. Turbulence results from the increased intensity of causal interconnections between different facets of the environment, as well as from the actions of interlinked organisations. Turbulent environments

are characterised by complexity, rapid change and high levels of uncertainty. The causal interconnections between political, economic, cultural and social factors in South Africa are deepening. In the early nineties, economics were influenced by politically inspired actions such as consumer boycotts, union-organised stayaways, a low productivity/high wages workforce and conflicting financial ideologies. Although the latter two were still relevant in the second half of the nineties, the effect of affirmative action and the large emigration figure have also left their marks. Community life is affected by record-breaking crime figures, unrealised political ideals and promises, as well as a demand culture which have their roots in the struggle and the apartheid era.

Business in South Africa is caught between the ideologies and structures of the past and the ideals of the future. The have's and the have-nots, the educated and the uneducated, the first world and third world societies, the capitalists and the social-democracy of the black underclasses. All three "waves of change" (Toffler 1980:24) are currently present in South Africa: The rural population still employ the most primitive farming methods ( first wave); the industrial sector - mining, manufacturing, construction - is still soundly based in the "second wave", whereas knowledge-based work (third wave) is entrenched in the information age. This unique divergence pushes South Africa into a class of its own, with problems related to a first world and third world environment.

Some 40 articles and books on the subject of African management all indicated that South Africa, from an economic point of view, has only recently been considered part of the 'African continent'. Arguments stating that South Africa has an existing infrastructure that is, by African standards, superb, are found throughout the literature, *inter alia* Rotberg (1999) and McGowan & Ahwireng-Obeng (1998). South Africa is a member of the Southern African Development Commu-

nity\* but is significantly stronger in terms of infrastructure than any of the other member states.

According to McGowan & Ahwireng-Obeng (1998), the plight of managers in the rest of Africa is such that they have to supplement their income by doing private work (a job taking them out of the office, more often than not, resulting in low productivity, conflicting interests and the most common of all, bribery) as the economies of most of the African countries cannot sustain the public sector infrastructure. The African governments turn a blind eye to this additional income as it relieves them of their responsibilities.

Mills (1999:21) argues that Africa suffers from “personalisation” of sovereignty – where leaders take personal rivalries as challenges to national interests and far too often fail to distinguish between state assets and personal bank accounts. South Africa is in the process of transforming itself into a “new” society. This transformation goes far beyond the mere deracialisation, decolonisation and democratisation of society. What is happening in South Africa is also a manifestation of a global trend - a revolution sweeping mankind as a whole - the way we think, act, communicate and live. Globalisation and the forms of tension, change and the unfolding of events may correspond with those experienced in Eastern Europe, the Pacific Rim, China and the rest of Africa, but, uniquely, even though the cultures in South Africa have inhabited the region for more than three centuries, the majority find themselves in the uncomfortable position of not knowing much about each other.

Vaill (1989:36) describes the new world as “permanent white water”. Most managers are taught a normative theory; to paddle their canoes on calm, still lakes where they can steer the craft in the direction they choose. Sometimes they have to shoot the rapids only to find themselves back in the calm, still lake.

*\*Southern African Development Community is a 12-country grouping that also includes Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.*

The modern manager, especially in South Africa, finds himself permanently in white water. He never gets out of the rapids. No sooner does he digest one change, than another comes along; in fact, there are usually many changes occurring at once; the feeling is one of permanent chaos (Human 1991).

For the first time in its history, South Africa is developing interdependently from within, rather than its constituent parts battling independently, each in a state of apartheid. At the same time, work spirit rather than physical labour, human as opposed to financial capital, intangible information rather than tangible resources, culture rather than economy, have become primary resources (Lessem 1994:20). Beck and Linscott (1994:99) argue that the global revolution is sweeping managerial and organisational thinking, from ivory tower theory-building and research, to practical, coal face applications. These major fluctuations are not the only ones influencing South African organisations. A significant number of local pressures, problems and complexities are also impacting on South African organisations. There are shifts from:

- A production to a marketing focus;
- government structures to privatised schemes;
- White/European to a cultural pluralism;
- bureaucracies to meritocracies;
- formal to informal sector mobilisation;
- a South African focus to global strategies;
- isolated to integrated functions;
- privileged to partnership relationships; and
- linear to multidimensional thinking.

In the past, the funneling of black activism through the trade union movement has politicised the work environment to the extent that national issues have become more important than local, job-related concerns. Literacy and numeracy deficiencies and gaps are alarming. Skills in scientific problem resolution are

scarce and do not appear to be improving. According to Drake (1997:9) only one black matriculant in 10 000 had sufficient qualifications, on leaving school, to pursue a career in the fields of engineering and science.

People in South Africa are primarily concerned with violence, higher levels of crime, a struggling economy and high levels of unemployment (Van Aardt 1994:134).

Human (1994) attempted a first serious definition of a South African theory of an organisation and emphasised the fact that it was exploratory by nature and may lead to empirical research. His arguments were formulated in terms of the population ecology approach, which was broadly based on evolutionary theory:

Human (1994) argued that any observer of the population of South African business firms would be struck by the paradox of a relatively homogeneous business sector within a context of great diversity (an argument supported by Binedell, 1993). At the time of writing, there was far less diversity in business organisations than in society as a whole. South Africa was a society in which a small and homogeneous elite had created an organisational and institutional fabric to serve their own and particular needs. The environment in which business organisations operated was therefore tailored specifically to the needs of the elite. The majority of the population, who were viewed as *visitors*, had little impact on the nature of the specific and relevant environments served by the business organisation. The business environment could be seen as protected and isolated enclaves in the broader South African environment. Apartheid structures and racist attitudes created a small white island, only vaguely conscious of the African sea surrounding its shores.

The South African business which evolves successfully from this context would mirror the characteristics of the broader, relevant environment, whether management likes it or not.

- The evolved South African organisation would be characterised by divisions

and tensions similar to those found in the broader environment. The business organisation is thus paradoxically both similar to, and different from (refer previous argument) the environment. To resolve this paradox a redefinition of the very concept of the South African organisation is needed. Organisations are, theoretically, relatively coherent social systems with boundaries which differentiate them fairly clearly from other organisations. It can be expected, for example, that the employees of an organisation would be relatively more loyal to the management of that organisation than to the employees of another firm. It could also be expected that management be more loyal to their workers than to the management of another organisation. This, argues Human (1994), is clearly not the case. Management and workers see each other and act towards each other as enemies. Horizontal loyalties are far stronger than vertical loyalties.

- The South African business sector was, until recently, one of the most concentrated in the world. Most industries were, before efforts towards unbundling started, dominated by a few large and general corporations, the surplus of organisations being small and specialised niche players. The economy as a whole was dominated by a few large diversified conglomerates like Anglo American, Sanlam, Old Mutual, Rembrandt and Barlow Rand which operated in a wide variety of industries and markets.
- Competition among organisations in the South African economy has historically been feeble, given the concentration of economic activity. The little competition that has taken place, has been local and isolated from the global economy. The closed nature of the economy, especially to external investment opportunities, has also stimulated generalist strategies. The lack of intensive local competition possibly resulted in relatively unsophisticated organisations.
- Organisations in South Africa evolved locally in the absence of international

competition. This resulted in little exposure to international competition and diversity of environmental demands.

- The South African organisation historically evolved in an era of relative equilibrium. The environment is now experiencing punctuated changes. The internal environments are in the process of rearrangement and the society is opening up to the international community, the consequences of this punctuation being more diverse while different environmental demands are also being made on the firm. The ability of the organisation to transform is inhibited by a number of factors. The inertia of the organisation and the cost and irreplaceable nature of historically evolved competencies, both serve as inhibitors to change.
- Management staff may be selected for their uncritical attitude and acceptance of the implicit deep structures of the organisation. The type of manager favoured by the organisation would therefore be an appearance engineer. Focus on the appearance levels of the organisation, such as image, marketing, human resources, management and other support functions as peripheral appendages of the organisation to make it appear more effective, large or humane, may be overemphasised at the expense of core or line activities.
- The process of change in the business organisation under conditions of punctuated change is characterised by the replacement of whole deep structures rather than slowly evolving new deep structures.
- Many organisations attempt to create the image of radical change without changing the core itself. Business press, annual reports and business leaders engage passionately in change talk. The talk, however, far outstrips the actual changes in the workplace. In the short term, the organisation engages intensely in image management and protects past deep structures.

## 2.1 New management paradigms

Mbigi (1994,1997) argues that the rapid change in South African organisations makes the conventional management (Western) approach inadequate and calls for other management paradigms. African traditional practices and wisdom need to become the basis for management and institutional innovation. It is a mark of African achievement to be able to balance and reconcile opposites. Mbigi (1994,1997) finds visionary management (the inspirational, metaphysical domain of management) to be most appropriate for meeting African management challenges. He also argues that visionary management is capable of synthesising all the polarities. It could integrate ancient wisdom of the past with the modern science of the present, as well as with reality and vision. The metaphysical manager is an inspirational preacher who lives in the grip of a vision and shares his experience with the organisation he leads and seeks to transform.

The traditional African community is characterised by an organic structure in which primary and informal relationships are of great significance, as are formal relationships. In traditional African community ceremonies, rituals and symbols are important. Mbigi (1994,1997) states that these features have to be expressed in the organisational forms that are evolving in Africa. He argues that the new organisation in Southern Africa needs to gravitate towards organic structural designs, rather than mechanistic bureaucratic designs. The organisation has to be more than a mere economic unit. It must become a thriving, enterprising community as is the case in the traditional African community. Leadership must recognise, study and articulate emergent organisational forms and patterns as important, rather than superimposing Western organisational designs and forms on African feudal realities.

Lessem (1994) argues that Ubuntu is uniquely African, contextualised as it is by Khoza (1994) as central to an Afrocentric approach to management. Ubuntu has the potential to span the great divide between our Northernness and Southernness, and between individualism and communalism. As such, the practical application of Ubuntu provides for managerial relationships and practices that would promote harmony and higher productivity in African organisations.

Khoza (1994) admits to the fact that there is no real African management track record to blow one's trumpet about. He argues, however, that economic development is a function of how people relate (and thus communicate), how they organise themselves into productive forces. There are tendencies within a group of people which, if appropriately kindled, make for better organisational behaviour with attendant higher productivity, than an imposed organisational system.

At the Black Consumer Marketing Conference (1997) a number of speakers argued that Ubuntu be used as the anchor and the point of departure in communicating with blacks, while idiomatic expressions and proverbs, music, poetry, paintings, drama, sculpture and literature should be explored (by researchers and creative people) to find values that will strike a responsive chord with black target markets and publics.

Khoza (1994) further argues that Afrocentricity is neither racist nor anti-anybody. It is about Africans and their rightful place in the universe. It is about taking pride in the African identity without denigrating others. It acknowledges diversity as much as it abhors any notions of racial superiority. It is not an attempt to impose an African worldview upon others, nor is it an attempt to develop black supremacy. It proposes that people

of African descent or cultural orientation anchor their view and evaluation of the world within their own historical and ontological framework. It is about bold African self-assertion with Africa as a launch pad. Marais, Conradie, Malan & Schuring (1993:15) went as far as to suggest that “somehow the concept of Ubuntu, ... ..should receive more attention.” In an editorial in the *Economist* (March 1995), Ubuntu is referred to as South Africa’s quest for dignifying black culture in business. It refers to Ubuntu as the latest buzz-word dreamt up by management theorists to describe what they say is a uniquely South African fusion of tribal tradition and modern management techniques. The article continues to state that the hierarchical and paternalistic organisations have started to experiment with new management methods such as performance-related pay and decentralisation. Political pressure to increase the proportion of black managers from the current two per cent or so has coincided with a realisation in management circles that blacks might know a thing or two about motivating their fellow blacks.

The trouble, the *Economist* reports, is that Ubuntu seems to mean almost anything one chooses and to Binedell, director of GIBS (Garber Institute of Business Surveys) in Johannesburg, it implies both a “customer-focused” organisation and the view of a company as an “integrated system”: South Africans, he argues, “have an almost intuitive understanding of the essentiality circular shape of holism”. Other advocates suggest that it means “the importance of perception as opposed to reality” in managing change; or affirmative action, or simply working together in teams.

The article concludes, negatively, that a cynic might say that it just means treating blacks less badly.

In an article titled “The Transfer of Western management to China”, Fan (1998:216) states that developing countries in economic transition cannot depend on western management alone but need to develop their own management systems which combine the best of what it has locally, with that of the West. Coleman (1999:43) expands on this argument when he says that it is not debatable whether South Africa should develop its own model, but *how* to construct such a successful model. He continues that the Western model is increasingly blamed for growing numbers of working poor, rising levels of inequality, the dismantling of social welfare, and the cost this is imposing on African society. Davison & Rees-Mogg (1997:50) argue that major transitions always involve a cultural revolution, and usually entail clashes between adherents of old and the new values.

McFarlin, Coster and Mogale-Pretorius (1999:69) state that a conceptual model of a uniquely South African management philosophy need to be developed and tested, based on indigenous philosophies and values, that will help guide management development efforts in South Africa.

Khoza (1994) poses the following critical questions, which will be addressed as **secondary research questions in this study**:

- Is the continent’s business environment sufficiently homogeneous?
- Can we look at the South African situation and superimpose its values on the rest of Africa?
- Are values that are characteristically African, transcending African boundaries?
- Are these values relevant to economic development, business management and communication management in particular?

He concludes by arguing that these and related questions have to be

addressed with scholarly rigour and discipline before anyone can confidently and proudly talk about an Afrocentric management approach.

In summary it can be concluded that organisations in South Africa, like organisations worldwide, are experiencing rapid change and high levels of uncertainty. Such changes require greater management effort than merely maintaining the *status quo*. But in addition to these demands made upon management globally, the South African manager is also faced with local pressures, problems and complexities.

Because South Africa is undergoing major and fundamental changes, the question had been asked whether the conventional (Western) management approach is adequate in addressing management problems inherent to this country.

The purpose of this study is to conceptualise a framework for an alternative management approach, the ultimate aim being to develop a model for such an approach.

### **3. THE RESEARCH PROBLEM**

In the introduction, reference was made to the importance of an effective business or organisation that should mirror or reflect its larger environment. An original overview was given on the South African organisation and the call for Africanisation with Ubuntu as its core value, as the solution. The concept of Africanisation has been gaining in stature in contemporary management literature. Partly because of its relative novelty, and largely because of the absence of a significant body of research on the topic, this construct is still mired in much confusion.

A unique management style, addressing both Western and African values, is arguably one of the solutions to the Southern African transformation process. While speed is needed in political, financial and moral terms, too much haste can provide more confusion than results. Successful organisations take time to evolve. It is difficult to judge an organisation on one year's results. It is even more complex when there are no benchmarks, or if conflict of interest exists.

This study is based on the premise that communication forms a foundation for human organising and provides a rationale for understanding how people organise.

Corporate communication is a management function. The organisation has elements which act on one another in a constantly changing set of meanings constructed through communication.

Communication is a form of human behaviour derived from a need to connect and interact with other human beings. It unites otherwise isolated individuals. It is complex, multidimensional and occurs whenever meaning is attributed to behaviour or the residue of behaviour (Samovar & Porter 1995 and 1997).

An Afrocentric approach to management for the purpose of this study, referred to as the core value Ubuntu, has been hailed by a number of South African managers and opinion leaders as having the potential to span the great divide between the cultural diversity. Ubuntu as a core value for an Afrocentric management approach is in a pre-theoretical phase.

The overall problem identified in this study can therefore be described as follows: This study ultimately endeavours to formulate a basis for theoretical development by comparing Western, Japanese and African management theories and

philosophies, enabling the researcher to juxtapose these with the core value system, Ubuntu.

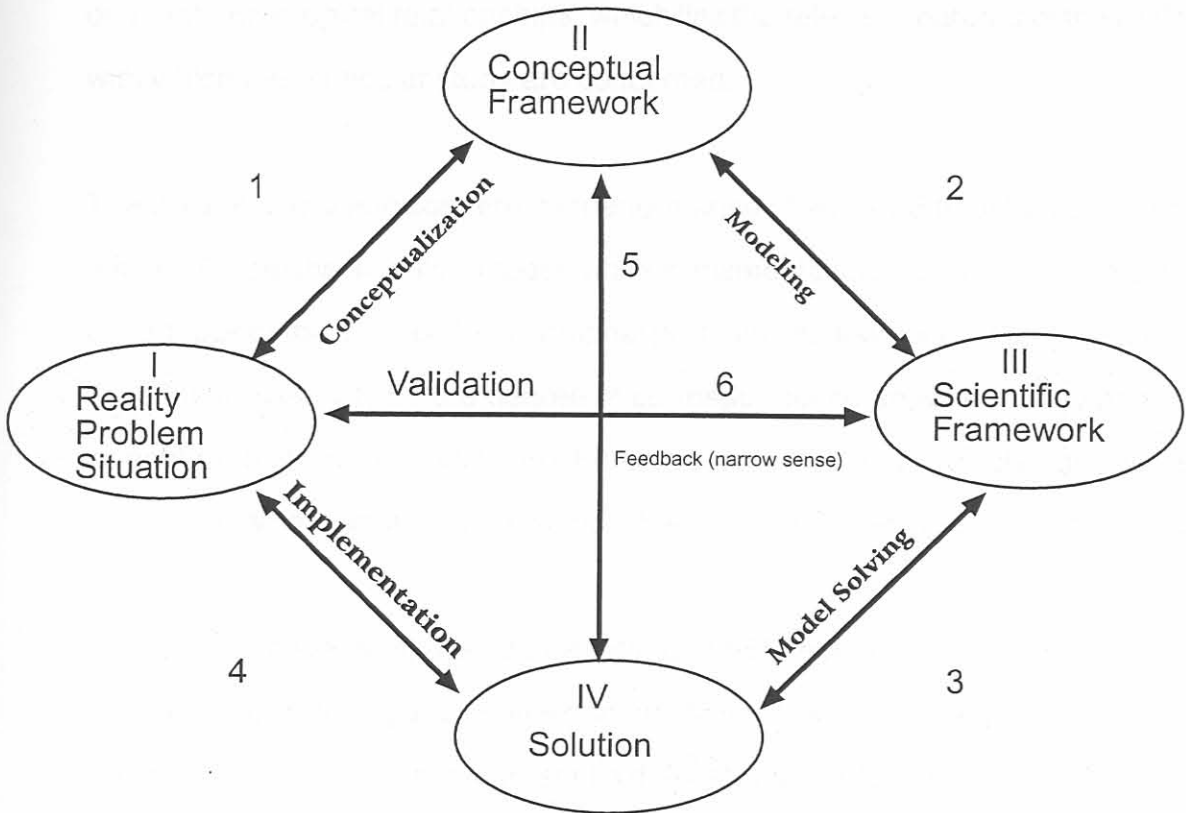
From literature on business management it would seem that the value of such a unique 'South Africanised' approach can contribute to the complexities experienced. The literature does however not explain or apply this approach to the extent that a working model can be developed and utilised. To date, attempts in this regard focussed on one or the other *aspect* of the complexities described in the background to this chapter. An example of such an article is one which appeared in the Journal of Management (1999:63-78), discussing the challenges of management development in post-apartheid South Africa, focussing on an *aggressive* affirmative action program.

#### 4. SCOPE AND STRUCTURE OF RESEARCH

In this section the scope of the research is addressed. The ultimate aim of this thesis is to construct a model of South African management communication by conceptualising a framework for the identification of the variables typical of Western, Japanese and African management, structured alongside Ubuntu as value system.

The scope of the thesis may be explained in terms of the systems model of science, as explained by Mitroff & Kilmann (1978:116) and diagrammatically represented in Figure 1.1

FIGURE 1.1 A Systems View of Problem Solving



Source: Mitroff & Kilmann (1978:117)

The model takes a holistic or systems view of the different varieties of scientific activities. Because of the cyclical nature of this view, the diagram actually has no predefined start or finish points. A research project could therefore start at any of the circles I, II, III or IV. For example, it can start at circle I, with an existing problem situation. The first phase of problem-solving would then entail the performance of activity 1 so as to develop a conceptual model in circle II. The conceptual framework sets out the definition of the problem situation or research question(s). It then specifies the variables that will be used to define the nature of the problem and the level at which the variables will be treated, defining the problem/question in the most basic and broadest terms: that is, from a macro-perspective, not from an exact, detailed, micro perspective.

The next phase would entail the performance of activity 2, namely the formula-

tion of a scientific model in circle III. A scientific model is a set of qualitative and/or quantitative logical relationships, which link the relevant features of the reality with which the particular study are concerned.

The third phase would concern the performance of activity 3 to obtain a solution (circle IV) from the scientific model, while implementation (activity 4) would entail a feedback of the solution to the original problem situation or research question.

In validation (activity 6), the degree of correspondence between reality and the scientific model may be evaluated. Finally, in activity 5, problem solving activities (circles I to IV) are applied, with the goal being to obtain better scientific solutions.

The authors have computed that a total of 3 555 research subsystems can be formed by considering all possible combinations of two, three and four elements. Each of these subsystems represent a different type or form of scientific activity. This implies that legitimate research need not address all of the activities and elements in the model.

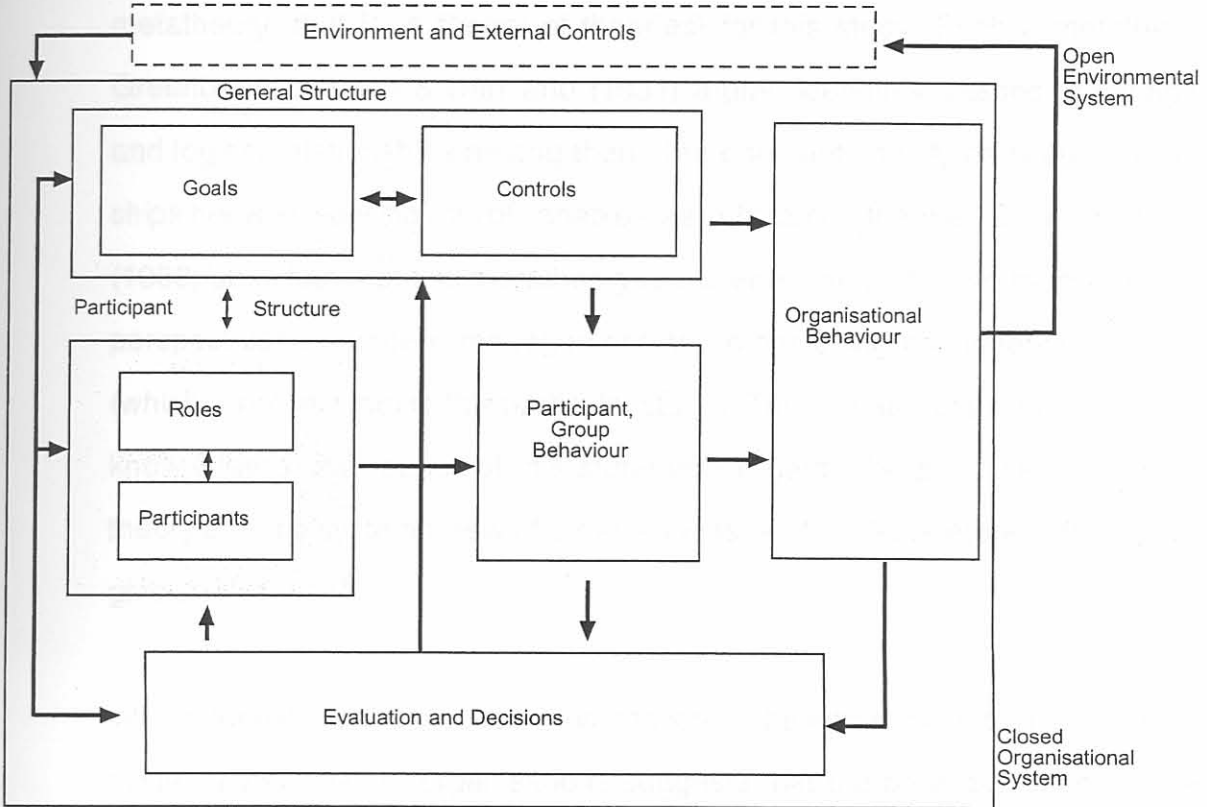
From the point of view of systems thinking, there are therefore no simple starting or finish points in the process of inquiry. A researcher may begin and end the process at any point in the model.

For the purpose of this study, the scope of the research is confined to circles I (Chapter 1), II (Chapters 2 to 5), III (Chapter 6) and IV (Chapters 7 and 8), and activities 1 (Chapter 1), 2 (Chapter 2 to 5), and 3 (Chapter 7). Activities 4, 5 and 6 will not be undertaken. This micro-model of the epistemic structure of science does not refer to the influences of the environment in which it exists, in the case of this study, where the publication and review process enters in.

Figure 1.2 is a macro-model derived from the field of organisational behaviour (Kilman & Mitroff 1978) and can, the authors argue, be equally applied to the

institution of science. The Analytical Model of Institutions is drawn from the field of organisational behaviour because science does not function in a political and social vacuum: The broader aspects of science are both institutional and political.

**FIGURE 1.2 A Macro-model Of Science – The Analytical Model Of Institutions**



Source: Mitroff & Kilmann (1978:122)

For the purpose of this study, the concept of the organisation will be considered in broad terms. Any socio-cultural collectivity that has identifiable coherence and cohesion, so that it might be called a system, will be considered an organisation. Furthermore, a systemic point of view will be taken that concerns itself with socio-cultural systems in general, regardless of the extent or level of operation of such an entity as a system. By taking such a systems viewpoint, any size organisation, be it a small to medium enterprise (SME's), a multi-national or a unit within such an organisation, will apply. The term socio-cultural system signi-

fies social systems composed of humans in interaction. Human interaction in such systems is always implied. The emphasis, though, remains on the organisation as a form of socio-cultural system.

Systems theory therefore provides a general conceptual framework (or metatheory, that is, a theory of theories) for this study. Such a metatheory, Greenbaum, Kaplan & Damiano (1991) argue, identifies classes of variables and logical relationships among them, but does not specify particular relationships between specific sets of variables, as substantive theories. Brown & Moberg (1980) postulate that this metatheory represents one of the two most dominant perspectives in modern management, the other being contingency approach (which is not relevant to this particular study). The researcher assumes the prior knowledge of the reader of this study with regards the principles of systems theory and the systems view of organisations, and it will therefore suffice to only give an overview.

With reference to the discussion in section 1, the introduction to this chapter, a systems viewpoint of organisations suggests that the organisation is an open system, which is maintained through a continual two-way process of exchange between itself and its environments, and management involves regulating and adjusting the system to effect better organisational performance and emphasises the extent to which an organisation is part of a much larger environment. Managers can no longer ignore or wish away their environmental suprasystem. In today's fast paced world, adapting to a changing environment and learning new techniques are crucial. With less external stability, organisations develop elaborate information systems which help them monitor the environment.

Organisations are *processors* (via input-throughput-output mechanisms) of energy, materials and information (Farace, Monge & Russell 1977:4). These au-

thors explain that organisations comprise many different systemic levels; thus, one can look at interpersonal systems, or a network of work groups at a higher systems level, with the organisation as an even higher systemic level. They are consistent with the integrative perspective of the organisation, and describe an organisation to include two or more individuals –

- who recognise that some of their goals can be more readily achieved through interdependent actions, even though disagreement may be present;
- who take in materials, energy, and information from the environment in which they exist;
- who develop coordinative and control relationships to capitalise on their interdependence, while operating on these inputs; and
- who return the modified inputs to the environment in an attempt to accomplish the goals that interdependence was meant to make possible.

In times of rapid change and turbulence, the relationship between the open system, (the organisation) and its environment is likely to be affected in the following manner:

- Survival becomes increasingly elusive;
- boundaries separating the system and the environment become increasingly thin and permeable;
- two-way interaction between the system and its environment increases substantially;
- interdependence and interaction between subsystems becomes increasingly complex to monitor, as the subsystems mutate, merge or disappear; and
- the organisation attempts to expose more of its subsystems directly to the environment, in order to get *closer* to the environment, and make itself more sensitive to changes.

In this study, an interdisciplinary approach is adopted. The comprehensive literature survey spans several disciplines, including Business Management, Strategic Management, Organisational Theory, Change Theory, Management Information Systems, Financial Management, Strategic Communication Management, Organisational Communication and Studies on Behavioural Science. An interdisciplinary research approach complements Systems Theory, as Systems Theory adopts a holistic view of science and provides a simple means of categorising, understanding, synthesising and structuring the wealth of information and knowledge gained from specialised disciplines. This is the result of the interdisciplinary approach that will be followed.

In conclusion it can be said that certain philosophical assumptions underlie each of the approaches to research in the Social Science. In order to understand research it should be viewed in the context of the underlying web of beliefs and reasoned arguments. These beliefs and arguments have been introduced in this section. This discussion will be continued in Chapter 6.

## 5. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The *general purpose* of the study is to contribute to theory building. This will be done by *constructing a model* of South African management communication by conceptualising a framework for the identification of the variables typical to Western, Japanese and African management, structured alongside Ubuntu as value system.

Two related goals guide the study. The first is to *identify the important dimensions* and variables associated with management in Western, Japanese and African organisations. This will be accomplished by first reviewing past theory and research, as postulated in literature, and developing a set of dimensions to structure and describe the range of variables relevant to the study.

The second goal is to *construct a model* of South African management communication by refining the dimensions identified after the first goal has been reached. This will be accomplished by grading the variables by South African managers, followed by factor analysis.

## EXPOSITION OF CHAPTERS

### 6. DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study cannot presume to achieve more than providing an *introduction* to and construction of a model for South African management. It will require further research and validation before a measurement instrument can be developed, based on the results of this study.

Due to the researcher's linguistic limitations, literature published in African or Japanese languages was not considered, and includes, for the same reason, work by academics, authors and writers from the Anglo-Saxon linguistic group.

From a strategic point of view, the communication function is part of the dominant coalition in the organisation, but will not be discussed, as it is not relevant to this particular study.

### 7. VALUE OF THE STUDY

As described in the introduction (1) to this chapter, there has been extensive reporting on the 'need' for an alternative management style in the South African organisational context. Multiple streams of literature exist, producing competing or overlapping typologies. None of the individual typologies, however, capture the range of variables and dimensions associated with the model-construction process, which cover the very comprehensive domain of management communication. Instead, each emphasises only a portion of the content. Given the fragmented and overlapping nature of the literature, the field of management would benefit from an analytical and integrated approach to the problem.

The study will further stimulate research in this domain and provide the impetus to explore other avenues in related fields. It will provide a model for further testing, ultimately rendering a measurement instrument.

## 8. EXPOSITION OF CHAPTERS

The exposition of the chapters should be read together with the model described in section 4, which provides the scope and structure of the research. Chapter 1 commences at circle I of the model as explained by Mitroff and Kilmann earlier in this chapter, and demonstrates the existence of a problem situation. The problem situation is the apparent inability of Western management approach to address problems unique to South African organisations.

In Chapters 2, 3, 4, and 5 the conceptual framework of circle II is developed. The elements or variables necessary for defining the nature and extent of the problem, as well as the perspective adopted in the research, are specified.

Chapter 2 contains a philosophical perspective on management and management communication based primarily on the arguments of Peter Drucker, illustrating the relative short history of professional management as a science. The chapter also expounds the premise of this study, that communication is the binding element that keeps the various interdependent parts of the organisation together. An introduction to Western, Japanese and African management styles in this context, starts the construction of the framework.

In Chapter 3 the three management styles are discussed in various dimensions as determined by the literature, *inter alia* the social, environmental and cultural context, decision making and conflict resolution, and career and attitude towards employees.

Chapter 4 attempts to explore the basic principles of Ubuntu as it appears in literature. The exponents of Ubuntu will be described, as well as the business sphere within which it operates.

The comparative analysis follows in Chapter 5, where the three managerial styles are structured alongside Ubuntu, facilitating an overview of the relevant variables exposed by the preceding Chapters 2, 3, and 4.

The research design is explained and substantiated in Chapter 6. The choice of a qualitative and quantitative research design for attaining the research objectives are explained and justified. The empirical research, as well as its design is discussed and an overview is provided of the three kinds of decision making processes, *inter alia* the strategic, tactical and operational decisions.

Chapter 7 summarises and reports the data collected, the statistical treatment of the data, and deals with the results of the empirical study.

In Chapter 8 an overview is given of the study, conclusions are made and recommendations regarding future research, contributions to research methodology, and a framework for a South African management communication model are proposed. Implications of this research for communication in organisations are also addressed.

## 9. SUMMARY

The provision of a unique management style, addressing both Western and African values, is arguably one of the solutions to the Southern African transformation process. The study starts from the premise that communication is a basis for

human organising and provides a rationale for understanding how people organise. An Afrocentric approach to management, and for the purpose of this study, Ubuntu, has been hailed by a number of South African managers and leaders as spanning the great divide between the cultures in South Africa. Ubuntu has mainly thus far, been described from a narrow, single factor point of view. Certain assumptions have been made regarding Ubuntu that will form secondary research questions to be addressed in this research.

This study proposes to address the problem holistically, and to ultimately construct a model of South African management communication. The general purpose of the study is to contribute to theory building. The scope and structure of the research has been identified, as well as its delimitations and value of the study.

In order to add to a better understanding of the role and context of management, the historical origins and development of management are described in Chapter 2.

# CHAPTER 2

## MANAGEMENT:

### A PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVE

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

As discussed in Chapter 1, the premise of this study is that communication is the binding element that keeps the various interdependent parts of the organisation together. The narrow working definition of “communication” and “communicating” namely, the association with whatever kind of speaking and writing is done or received in the course of a task does not apply here. This conduit perspective of communication is essentially an informal model of communication, or, what Axley (1996) refers to as an ‘in-the-head’ model.

For the purpose of this study, the definition as described by Redding (1972:25) applies:

*Communication consists of those behaviours of human beings, or those artefacts created by human beings, which result in messages being received by one or more persons.*

In Redding’s view, a person has communicated as soon as at least one other person derives some meaning from his words, his actions, his silences or his inaction. Similarly, communication takes place if at least one person derives meanings from inanimate objects, intangible event, or indefinable climates. The basic or requisite unit for communication is one person, someone who observes something and creates some personal sense of it. The communication is therefore not sequential or discrete and the roles of “sender” and “receiver” therefore become blurred.

Throughout this study the construct organisation are interchangeable used with company, business and corporation. Peters (1992:13) refers to the word organisation as “bad and naked”. He continues “... it is not an organisation as you and I and our grandfathers have known it. Tomorrow’s effective “organisation” will be conjured up anew each day”(p14). But for the want of a better description of a group of people with a common objective, drawn together in a network of alliances, this word, organisation, will be used.

In terms of the Mitroff and Kilmann (1978) model, which was used in Chapter 1 to describe the scope of the study, this chapter deals with activity 1, namely conceptualisation from a historical perspective, as well as the conceptual framework, circle II. It reviews the development of the organisation and management. Elements or variables necessary for defining the *background* to the nature and extent of the problem are described below.

## 2.2 HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The historical overview of management is primarily based on the arguments of Peter Drucker (1986) which form the basis of the existing arguments on the historical development of Western management and to whom The Economist referred as the ‘*venerable management guru of them all*’ (Innovation in Industry Survey 1999).

A historical overview of management is provided to underline the fact that professional management has not been around that long. In earlier, pre-industrial societies, men and women paced their work according to the sun, the seasons and the demand for what they produced. Small communities encouraged personal, often familial relationships between employers and employees. The explosive growth of urban industry, the factory system in particular, changed the face of the workplace forever. Workers in cities were forced to adapt to the

factory's formal structure and rules and to labour long hours for employers they never saw. Many were poorly educated and needed considerable oral instruction and hands-on training in unfamiliar tasks.

Peter Drucker, who during the 1940's advanced the idea that management was a profession, and like medicine or law it possessed a proprietary core of wisdom, is one of the most respected leaders in Western management. Refer 2.3.1.3 for a discussion on Peter Drucker.

In a society of organisations, managing becomes a key social function and management the constitutive, determining, differential organ of society (Drucker 1986). Puth (1994:4) argues that prominent scholars, communication practitioners and corporate philosophers opine that management in organisations can *only* be achieved through communication.

## **2.2.1 THE FIRST SYSTEMATIC APPLICATIONS OF MANAGEMENT**

The year 1886 marked several important turning points in business and management history (Hellriegel & Slocum 1996:38). The first labour unrest occurred, the first "shop accounting" and "shop management" forum was proposed at the American Society of Mechanical Engineers and the first aspiring mail-order business called Sears, Roebuck and Company was formed. For the first time affordable fine goods were available to both rural and urban consumers. Other organisations that began in 1886 and remain in operation today are Avon Products, Cosmopolitan magazine, Johnson & Johnson, Upjohn and Westinghouse (p39).

Drucker (1986) contends that the first systematic applications of management theory and management principles did not take place in

business enterprise. They occurred in the public sector. The first systematic and deliberate application of management principles in the United States (US) - undertaken with full consciousness of it being a management application - was the reorganisation of the US Army (early 1900) by Elihu Root, Roosevelt's secretary of war. Only a few years later, in 1908, came the first "city manager" (in Staunton, Virginia), the result of a conscious application of then-brand-new management principles such as the separation of "policy" from "management". The city manager was the first senior executive ever who was called a manager; in business, this title was still quite unknown. For instance Frederick W Taylor, in his famous 1911 testimony before the US Congress, never used the term but spoke of "the owners and their helpers". When Taylor was asked to name an organisation that truly practised "Scientific Management," he did not name a business but the Mayo Clinic (Drucker 1986).

Drucker (1986) states that, 30 years later the city manager Luther Gulick applied management and management principles to the organisation of a federal government that had grown out of control. It was not until 1950 and 1951, that similar management concepts and principles were systematically applied in a business enterprise to a similar task: the reorganisation of the General Electric Company after it had outgrown its earlier functional organisation structure.

Currently the most management-conscious institution is probably the military, followed closely by hospitals. Fifty years ago the then-new management consultants considered only business enterprises as potential clients. Today half of the clients of a typical management consulting firm are non-business: government agencies, the military, schools and universities, hospitals, museums, professional associations,

and community agencies such as the Boy Scouts and the Red Cross.

Increasingly, holders of the advanced degree in Business Administration, the MBA, are the preferred recruits for careers in city management, in art museums, and in the Federal Government's Office of Management and Budget in the US. (Although in recent years, the MBA has received considerably less support from business, which accuses it as being too structured, while not containing enough intuition - Fortune (Rethinking middle-management: 1995).

The business enterprise was not the first managed institutions. The modern university and the modern army each antedate the modern business enterprise by a half-century. They emerged during and shortly after the Napoleonic Wars.

The first Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of a modern institution was the chief of staff of the post-Napoleonic Prussian army, an office developed between 1820 and 1840. In spirit as well as in structure, both the new university and the new army represented a sharp break with their predecessors. But both concealed this - deliberately - by using the old titles, many of the old rites and ceremonies and, especially, by maintaining the social position of the institution and of its leaders.

### **2.2.2 THE NEW BUSINESS ENTERPRISE**

The new business enterprise, for example the long-distance railroad as it developed in the United States after the Civil War, the Universal Bank as it developed on the European Continent, were not run by the "owners". They had no owners, they had "shareholders" (Drucker 1986). Legally, the new university or the new army was the same institution it had been

earlier, however, much of its character and function had changed. To accommodate the new business enterprise, a new and different legal persona had to be invented, the “corporation”. A much more accurate term is the French *Socit Anonyme*, the anonymous collective owned by no one and open to investment by anyone. In the corporation, shares become a claim to profits rather than to property. Shared ownership is, of necessity, separate from control and management, and easily divorced from both. In the new corporations capital was provided by large, often very large numbers of outsiders, with each of them holding only a minute fraction and with none of them necessarily having an interest in, or - a total novelty - a liability for, the conducting of the business.

This new “corporation” could not be explained away as a reform, which is how the new army, the new university, and the new hospital presented themselves. It clearly was a genuine innovation. This innovation soon came to provide the new jobs - at first, for the rapidly growing urban workforce, but increasingly for educated people. It soon came to dominate the economy. What in the older institutions could be explained as different procedures, different rules, or different regulations, became in the new institution (very soon) a new function, a new management, and a new kind of work. This then invited study, attention and controversy.

But even more extraordinary and unprecedented was the position of this newcomer in society. It was the first new autonomous institution in hundreds of years, the first to create a power centre that was within society, yet independent of the central government of the national state.

Around 1860 one of the leading social scientists of the time, the Englishman Sir Henry Main, coined the phrase “from status to contract” in his book *Ancient Law*. This phrase refers to the progress of history.

At the time at which Main proclaimed that the law of history demands the elimination of all autonomous power centres within society, the business enterprise arose. And from the beginning it was a power centre within society, as well as being autonomous.

### **2.2.3 NEGATIVE PERCEPTIONS OF THE “CORPORATION”**

To many contemporaries of the new corporation it was a totally unnatural development and one that bespoke a monstrous conspiracy. The first great social historian the US produced, Henry Adams, clearly saw it this way. His important novel, *Democracy*, portrays the new economic power as being itself corrupt and, in turn, as corrupting the political process, government and society. A few decades later, Henry's brother, Brooks Adams, further elaborated on this theme in one of the most popular political books ever published in the US, *The Degeneration of the Democratic Dogma*.

In Germany, Walter Rathenau - himself the successful chief executive of one of the very large new “corporations” - similarly felt that the business enterprise was something radically new, something quite incompatible with prevailing political and social theories, and indeed a severe social problem. In Japan, Shibusawa Eiichi, who had left a promising government career in the 1870's to construct a modern Japan through building business, also saw in the business enterprise something quite new and distinctly challenging. He tried to tame it by infusing it with the Confucian ethic; and Japanese big business as it developed after World War II is largely made in Eiichi's image.

In Europe the new business enterprise was equally seen as a radical and dangerous innovation. In Austria, Karl Lueger, the founder of the (Christian) parties that still dominate politics in Continental Europe, was elected lord

mayor of Vienna in 1897 on a platform that defended the honest and honourable small businessman - the shopkeeper and the craftsman - against the evil and illegitimate corporation. A few years later, an obscure Italian journalist, Benito Mussolini, rose to national prominence by denouncing "the soulless corporation".

Concern with management, whether hostile or friendly, concentrated on the business enterprise. No matter how much management was being applied to other institutions, it was the business enterprise that was visible, controversial, new, and therefore significant.

## **2.2.4 BUSINESS AS SOCIAL INSTITUTION**

Almost a 100 years after management arose in the large business enterprises of 1870, it was clear that management pertained to every single social institution. In the past 100 years every major social function has become lodged in a large and managed organisation. The hospital of 1870 was still the place where the poor went to die. By 1950 the hospital had become one of the most complex organisations, requiring management of extraordinary competence. Today the labour unions in developed countries are run by a paid managerial staff, rather than by the politicians who are nominally at the head.

The identification of management with business can therefore no longer be maintained. Even though textbooks and studies still focus heavily on what goes on in a business - and typically, magazines with "management" in their title (for example, Britain's *Management Today* or Germany's *Management Magazine*) concern themselves primarily, if not exclusively, with what goes on in business enterprises - management has become the pervasive, universal organ of a modern society. Modern society has

become a “society of organisations”. The individual who conforms to what political and social theorists still consider the norm, has become a small minority. The overwhelming majority of people in developed societies are directly or indirectly linked to an organisation. They derive their livelihood from the collective income of an organisation, see their opportunity for career and success primarily linked to an organisation; and define their social status largely through their position within or affiliation to an organisation.

## 2.3 A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF MANAGEMENT THEORY: WESTERN MANAGEMENT

Pepper (1995) argues that formal organisation theory has been driven by five different, though not mutually exclusive, metaphorical conceptualisations of workers and workplace culture. These visions are:

*The machine culture* (classical period 1900 - 1930 - the present):

This was the initial vision of formal organisational design and theory. It was an attempt to construct a working environment around the capabilities of the machines of the industrial revolution. The workers and workplace became extensions of these machines, supervised by managers acting as machine operators.

*The satisfaction culture* (human relations period 1930 - 1960 - the present):

In response to a series of studies known as the Hawthorne Studies and a basic disillusionment with the precepts of the machine metaphor, a new guiding metaphor emerged - the worker as child. Children have needs that caregivers try to meet. In this vision managers are benevolent parents. They listen to the concerns of their children and try to satisfy their needs.

*The teamwork culture* (human resources period 1960 - the present):

The vision of children with needs was changed to a vision of workers who could derive satisfaction from workplace factors. These workers could contribute, and they were vital, creative forces within the organisation team. They were a source that could be tapped and relied upon. It was not that they needed less; rather, it was that organisational designers began to focus on what the organisation itself could supply.

What the organisation could offer the worker was a workplace, a specific working environment, rather than the personal relationship of the satisfaction culture.

*The organismic culture (systems period 1960 - the present):*

At some point, organisation researchers and practitioners came to realise the importance of the environment outside the company walls, as well as the interrelationships of workers and departments within those walls. This was a recognition of complexity and relatedness, of systemic thinking, of contingency theories. The organisation was increasingly seen as a living organism, growing and dying and subject to diseases, neuroses, growth and decline cycles, and so forth.

*The organisation as culture (cultural period 1980 - the present):*

This vision explicitly recognised culture as a definitional quality of organisations. Throughout the history of organisation theory, culture was a present but overlooked organisational factor. In the machine period, the culture of the organisation was understood as efficiency; in the satisfaction period, culture was understood as needs-based relationships; in the teamwork period, culture was understood as a participation/productivity mix; and in the organismic period, culture was systemic complexity. The unifying theme in all of these visions is that culture was imposed from the top down. Culture was what upper management thought it was or wanted it to be. A historical perspective on management theory indicates a strong link with organisational theory.

### **2.3.1 EUROPE IN RELATION TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA (US)**

Throughout the discussion on Western management, reference is made to America or the United States (US). But Western management includes Eurocentric management. In spite of significant cultural differences, Western management theory is taught throughout Europe. (This does not include European countries recently freed from economic dictatorship. Not enough research has been done to venture an opinion on the state of management in these countries). But the US is the undisputed leader on Western management theory and development. Its position as economic leader is still intact.

According to the 1994 World Competitiveness Report, the US had regained the title of the world's most competitive economy. The annual report, published by the International Institute for Management and Development in Lausanne, and the World Economic Forum, Geneva, ranks 41 countries according to their competitiveness.

The report stated that although some clouds remain, particularly on issues related to education and the attitude of the workforce, the US performs high in entrepreneurship, internationalisation and financial vitality.

Northern America's position as economic leader was also confirmed by an article in Industrial Engineering (January 1995) which stated that the US economy was the world's most competitive economy.

The conclusion is confirmed by another report, Critical Technologies Update, (1994) published by the Council on Competitiveness. The Council's report found that the US was making a major comeback in many areas, and continuing its strength in others. America's ranking in such

areas as total quality management, design for manufacturing and the integration of research, designs and manufacturing moved from weak to competitive. In the areas of biotechnology, environmental technology and information technology, the US was the undisputed leader.

One area of improvement may be of special importance. US companies continue to be strong in design and engineering tools, and have improved across the board in commercialisation and production systems. Efforts to break down barriers between research, design and manufacturing and to get products to market faster contributed to this success. Another factor is the growing recognition by the private and public sectors of the importance of creating a workforce skilled in high-performance manufacturing.

### **2.3.2 THE ADVENT OF THE EUROPEAN MANAGEMENT EXPERT**

Max Weber, a German social-historian who is closely associated with bureaucratic management (so named because Weber based his work on studies of Germany's governmental bureaucracy), was one of the first theorists to deal with the problems of organisations. He was only recognised once his work was translated into English in 1947, 27 years after his death (Hellriegel & Slocum 1996:40).

In an article titled "The advent of the Euroguru" (March 1995) published in the Economist it was argued that 20 years before Europe could not muster many management experts, but the situation was changing. There was still only one European whom Americans would admit into the first division. He is Charles Handy, a visiting professor at the London Business School (LBS). But a lot of fresh management thinking was coming from less familiar people. The most impressive article in the January-February

Harvard Business Review (1994), on top management and globalisation, was co-written by Ghosal. A book *Product Juggernauts* which was co-written by Jean-Philippe Deschamps, a French consultant with Arthur Little, gets a top rating by the Harvard Business School Press. A quarter of the people on the editorial board of Strategic Management, a leading American journal, were European.

In the article in the Economist (March 1995) it is further argued that for better or for worse, European management thinkers were beginning to appear more guru-like. Handy's features were familiar to readers of American business magazines. Kay was well on the way to turning himself into a European Michael Porter, Harvard's top showman. Like Porter, he wants to turn management into a science; he also has a highly lucrative consultancy, London Economics. Manfred Kets de Vries, a professor at Insead, a European business school, who specialises in applying psychoanalytical insights to the study of management, had a column in a Dutch newspaper.

Public interest in business has grown in Europe in recent years, partly because politicians such as Margaret Thatcher tried to turn businessmen into figures of respect. Various top managers - Carlo De Benedetti of Olivetti, Alain Minc of Cerus, Wisse Dekker, formerly head of Philips - have taken to philosophising about management. In Britain Sir John Harvey-Jones, a former head of ICI, travelled around the country telling people how to run their companies in "Trouble-shooter", a television series. The recent backlash caused by pay rises (Britain) and corruption (everywhere) has only increased public interest.

At the same time, the quality of Europe's business schools has improved. Insead, LBS and Switzerland's International Institute for Management

Development (IMD) have existed for more than 30 years, yet Jean-Claude Larrch, a professor of marketing at Insead, recalls that in 1970 only one member of Insead's faculty had a business doctorate, a situation that looked entirely different these days. Germany was, in the mid-nineties, in the throes of a heated debate about whether to recognise the MBA qualification.

All this has encouraged American management theorists to take an interest in Europe. Tom Peters did not mention the place in *In Search of Excellence* (1982) but his *Liberation Management* (1992) devoted chapters to Asea Brown Boveri (ABB) and to Germany's medium-sized companies. Henry Mintzberg spends part of every year at Insead. Another first-division American, Gary Hamel, has a part-time position at LBS.

Europeans were rising in their careers by gaining doctorates from American universities and publishing in American journals. Ghoshal has turned down job offers in the US but spends 80 per cent of his spare time consulting there. In most areas of management theory, European thinkers still see themselves as catching up. But there are three areas where they have crept ahead of the US:

### **2.3.2.1 Global companies**

Three Europeans - Yves Doz of Insead, Ghoshal and John Stopford of the LBS - were producing some of the most innovative work on managing multinationals. The lesser American business schools can be remarkably parochial. The dean of one such school in the midwest found that only a tenth of its professors had passports during the mid-nineties.

### **2.3.2.2 Cultural diversity**

Geert Hofstede, of Holland's Institute of International Culture, more or less invented cultural diversity as a management subject, although it matters hugely to companies of mixed national parentage, such as Royal Dutch/Shell and ABB. European academics have been quicker than Americans to notice that attitudes towards pay, hierarchy and a firm's supposed social obligations differ vastly in different cultures.

### **2.3.2.3 Soft management**

Europeans have always been less keen than Americans on scientific management, with its cult of the assembly line and its assumption that workers react best to simple monetary incentives. In the 1950's psychologists at London's Tavistock Institute, led by Elliot Jacques, argued that a better way to boost productivity was to concentrate on the "human side" of running an enterprise, encouraging workers to feel a valued part of the enterprise.

In a strange way, Europe benefits from the fact that management studies are less well established than in America. For one thing, this makes it easier for people to move from business careers into academic ones. Handy spent most of his career as an oil executive before moving to LBS. Arie de Geus pioneered "scenario planning" at Shell before moving there too. And European gurus are still compelled to write about large issues in a way that laymen can understand. Blair Sheppard of Duke University's Fuqua School of Business notes that American theorists tend to write on more esoteric subjects for narrow audiences of fellow-professionals.

By now, a picture of the European management expert of the future is

emerging. A fluent linguist, he is interested in multinationals and cultural differences. A competent technician, he is also interested in history, literature and the arts. He is keen on tackling big issues and general trends, and he is happier writing for general magazines than for technical journals. An example of such an individual is Peter Drucker, who was born in Vienna in 1909 and fled to America on the eve of World War II.

## 2.3 HISTORICAL OVERVIEW: JAPANESE MANAGEMENT

*If we are to develop a convincing blueprint for the Japanese economy of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we must abandon existing economic policies, management styles, and ideas about living standards, and embark upon structural reforms of historical magnitude. (From a Japanese government report, Dec 1994).*

For centuries Japan has been a stubborn nation intent on doing things its own way<sup>2</sup> but that does not mean it has not been willing to change when it had to. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, when it became clear that Japan would fall hopelessly behind the West, the country abolished feudalism and adopted a European education system, a Western-style military, and modern production methods. That period is known as the Meiji Restoration, and is still remembered with reverence as the time when modern Japan and many of its famous corporate giants were born. After World War II, Japan underwent dramatic changes in its economy, military, and government that persist to this day (Schlender 1994).

At the time many researchers seemed to be falling into the trap of explaining the cause for success (and the latter part of the nineties, failure) of Japanese management practices by examining only a small portion of the managerial environment and attributing causality exclusively to the examined part. Similarly, other

<sup>2</sup> At the Olympics and other international events, Japan is represented by emblems dating as far back as the 10<sup>th</sup> century (Business Week 1999:38)

inquirers were falling prey to the traps of functional myopia, imputing success or failure solely to their own functional speciality which they wished to see strengthened in the United States. The jungle of Japanese management theories was reminiscent of the mental entanglement that characterised American management theories in the 1950s.

From a review of the existing literature, Keys and Miller (1994) identified five streams of thought which were influential in depicting Japanese management practice. These themes included:

1. Excellence in manufacturing management;
2. quality circles as an innovative and motivating technique;
3. statistical quality control as the key to productive effectiveness;
4. a long planning horizon; and
5. consensus decision making, as a form of participative management.

Four additional streams of thought about Japanese management went beyond the single-factor approaches to develop broader, more comprehensive conceptualisations. Ouchi (1994:346) described Japanese organisations as ... *characterised by lifetime employment, slow evaluation and promotion, non-specialised career paths, implicit control mechanisms, collective decision making, collective responsibility, and holistic concern for employees*. In sharp contrast he described features of American organisations as including short term employment, rapid evaluation and promotion, specialised career paths, explicit control mechanisms, individuals decision making, individual responsibility, and segmented concern for workers (p. 346). Ouchi (1994) proposed an alternate Theory Z, a hybrid form of the American organisation, which presumably capitalised on the best of both the American organisation and the Japanese organisation. Pascale and Athos (1994) portrayed the Japanese as masters of the soft S's of management: staff, skill, and style, while American managers were thought to

be less effective because they managed largely by utilising the hard S's of strategy, structure, and systems. Caplen (1994:70) suggests the Japanese now study cases where their own techniques have been successfully altered to the Western environment so they can borrow them back.

Hatvany and Pucik (1981:470) suggested that the success of Japanese business was linked to a strategy that maximised its human resources through the development of an internal labour market, the creation of a corporate culture that promotes group values and co-operation, and the implementation of an intensive socialisation process for incorporating new employees into the organisation. Durlabhji (1994) made a notable attempt at holistic modelling of Japanese management by use of comparative interview data, but concluded with the same stereotyping typical of the other early studies.

Although empirical evidence was scarce, Keys and Miller (1994) hypothesised from a mental factor analysis that three underlying factors appeared to be highly influential to Japanese management success. They included the strong adherence of Japanese management to a long-run planning horizon, a commitment to lifetime employment and an unfailing preference for collective responsibility. Keys and Miller (1994) concluded that the development of better integrated, more comprehensive theories, which incorporated factors in the external environment, would be more appropriate in the future than studies of specific elements of Japanese management practice in narrow settings. Much has been learned in the last decade about Japanese management theory and practice. It has to be noted that almost all the literature on Japanese management is written by Western management experts. This leaves a serious gap in the literature available on the subject.

## 2.4 HISTORICAL OVERVIEW: AFRICAN MANAGEMENT

### 2.4.1 INTRODUCTION

Kiggundu (1989:69) pointed out that in Africa, as elsewhere in developing countries, society and environment pervade organisation and management. As elsewhere, there has been a tendency to focus heavily on internal organisational processes at the expense of developing a more complete understanding of the environments in which formal organisations operate. One serious effect of this, in Kiggundu's view, is that whereas African organisations may find they can apply Western management concepts and practices to their technical core with few major modifications, these imported ideas and practices are generally found to be inadequate and/or inappropriate for the organisations relationships with their environments.

It is unrealistic to suppose that anything can be said about the contexts of African organisations which will have equal validity across the whole vast continent. Nevertheless, African nations, most of which have been independent for less than 45 years, do have some similar experiences and characteristics amid great diversity. It is in the nature of this discussion that these similarities will be of primary concern.

Rotberg (1999) argues that in Africa, since the end of colonial rule, only Botswana and Mauritius were able to avoid the pitfalls of human greed. (Botswana averaging a GDP of eight percent annually from 1972 to 1992, and Mauritius six percent annually from 1975 to 1995).

The elements of a national environment are of course interrelated in a complex whole. In the brief explorations of some of those elements which are significant for organisational functioning, it is important to remember that these facets have

been isolated artificially for analytical purposes; in reality they are not isolated in their influences on formal organisations (Kiggundu 1989).

Third World public sector management is widely recognised as a problem area in the study of organisations. There is a broad consensus that public resources in poor countries are being mismanaged, and that an improvement in the effectiveness of public management is an important condition of sustained development (Howell 1978:53). Likewise, Moris (1987:25) comments that the transfer of Western management practice into Africa and Asia has had disappointing results and concludes that the problem is the system itself rather than the special conditions or people in the countries concerned. Reilly (1987:25) describes what in some of the less developed countries is nothing short of a crisis in organisation and management. Blunt (1983:4) refers to organisational malfunctioning ... on a fairly grand scale. Hyden (1983:9) speaks of the incapacitation of the institutions of national development in Africa and the need for drastic changes in the present structure of development management. Scudder (1995:17) speaks of the massive inefficiency. If such writers are to be believed, low management performance in the Third World (particularly in Africa) is not just a symptom of a problem but one of its major causes. There is also the tendency, common in Third World studies (though less common, one notes, in the West), to characterise the problem of ineffective management in terms of gross societal or pan-societal types. Thus, Hyden (1983:9) sees the fundamental problems of African management as lying in the economy of affection - that network of support, communications and interaction among structurally-defined groups connected by blood, kin, community or other affinities, for example religion. Its effect, he claims, is to impose social obligations on individuals that limit their interest and capacity to support public concerns outside the community. It is associated with a peasant mode that keeps alive opportunities for the rural producers to escape the demands of any given macro-economic system. Though generated in the peas-

ant economy, the economy of affection becomes by diffusion, an integral part of society at large.

Reilly (1987) and Clapham (1995), on the other hand, attribute poor managerial performance to The Hombe Theses - a conspiracy by the elite to manage the system in their own interest, and preserve the status quo, aided and abetted by aid organisations, donor governments and third parties with whom, for a variety of public and private reasons, they collude.

Approaches such as these two are clearly more concerned with hypothetical issues of gross societal dynamics than with organisational performance *per se*, and as such have little in common with most studies of Western management.

In accounting for the very limited contribution of organisation theory to the understanding of Third World management has been the underlying ideal-typical bias which such approaches tend to assume. If the growth of development administration as a discipline in the early 1960s was more concerned with the establishment of a new way of conducting administration in developing countries, than with what administration in them actually happened to be like at the time, then the same may be said of much of what is written on the theme of Third World management today.

There are, of course, notable exceptions to this rule, though such works are usually concerned with a fairly restricted field of influence. In general, however, the emphasis is more on normative issues than practical realities. Related to this is a tendency to relegate to a residual position the sorts of environmental influences (particularly those pertaining to the political environment) which are widely recognised to have a critical impact on the practice of management, but the consideration of which is held to be beyond the scope of a study of manage-

ment. There tends to follow a vague acknowledgement that more management training along present lines may not be a solution to the problem, given its location, in large measure, outside the structure and procedures of the organisation in question, but there the matter tends to be diplomatically laid to rest. The systems perspective in studies of Third World management tends, therefore, to be a rather qualified phenomenon (Clapham 1995).

Moris's (1981:65) contention is that non-Western management systems have rational causes subject to analysis and informed action and that a comprehensive understanding from the inside of how they work is an essential precondition for any attempts to improve their efficiency. What is advocated in short, is a behavioural rather than an idealist approach to Third World management.

## **2.5 SUMMARY**

The classical period was developed around the potential of the industrial revolution and the machines that were driving the development of industry. The demands of theorists were to create a workforce out of people unaccustomed to factory life, develop an organisational structure that could facilitate efficiency, and develop a body of theory that was generalisable enough to be taught systematically.

The human relations' period was developed around the misgivings of the classical period. It is thought that the scientific principles of the machine metaphor had overlooked the human needs of the workforce. This period of design, then, focused its attention on the worker as a person, on the assumption that a "fulfilled" worker was a productive worker.

The human resources period was developed around the inability to fully articulate and implement the human relations' ideal. Managers as parents turned out

to be an unworkable vision, and worker needs were retranslated into workplace needs. The new vision was one of job enrichment rather than personal enrichment.

The systems period was developed around the recognition of internal and external complexity. The organisation was seen as complex and in need of integration, environments were viewed as ambitious, demanding adaptation by the organisation. The cultural period was developed around the recognition of the importance of symbols and the tendency of workers to develop their own interpretations of workplace reality. These interpretations determined how the workers acted and were largely out of the control of management. Organisations were now understood as communication events, rather than being understood as closed units within which communication happened.

From a review of the existing literature, single-factor approaches to comprehend Japanese management are not uncommon. The interpretation and integration of Western management principles into the Japanese organisation and culture are a reality.

African organisations may find that they can apply Western management concepts and practices to their technical core with few major modifications, but these imported ideas and concepts are generally found to be inadequate or inappropriate for the organisations' relationship with their environments.

# CHAPTER 3

## DIMENSIONS OF MANAGEMENT

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 2 explicated the philosophical perspective on management and also confirmed the premise of this study, that communication is the binding element that keeps the various interdependent parts of the organisation together. An introduction to Western, Japanese and African management styles started the construction of the framework.

This chapter refers to circle II (conceptual framework), of the Mitroff & Kilmann (1978) model as explained in Chapter 1.

For the purpose of this investigation, Schein's (1985) description of organisation culture applies. He outlines some commonly-used meanings of organisation culture such as observed behavioural regularities, norms, dominant values, espoused philosophy, rules and feeling or climate. However, he goes on to say that these aspects merely *reflect* culture, but none of them are the essence of culture. Culture should be reserved for the deeper level of basic assumptions and beliefs that are shared by members of an organisation and that operate unconsciously. These responses by groups of people are learned responses to a group's problems of survival in its external environment and its problems of internal integration. Leaders or managers design and create the components of structure or context within which the group function. In this sense, structure consists of organisation, information flows, capacity, control mechanisms, reward systems, personal values, emotions, perceptions and expectations.

Leadership is therefore directly involved with the creation of culture. Schein (1995) further adds that when culture becomes dysfunctional, leadership is needed to help the group unlearn some of its cultural assumptions and learn new assumptions, thereby adapting to the new conditions.

## **3.2 SOCIAL, ENVIRONMENTAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT:**

### **3.2.1.1 Introduction**

Chapter 2 clearly illustrates that the Western model of business, which was born in the Industrial Age, has been a mechanistic one. Organisations have been economic agents in an efficient market system, parts of an ever expanding, ever more complex machine. Caught now in the Information Age, it has stretched the models of the Industrial Age to the limits of implosion. It is time to replace the mechanistic view of business with a more organic one, and to endow the recently discovered biological nature of organisations with a new spirituality that recognises the sanctity of individual human life and has compassion for individuals (Gouillart & Kelly 1995:4).

The developed Western world has moved beyond the Industrial Age, but their business model is still rooted there. The ability to manage the flow of information represents the basis for the new business model of the Information Age. Gouillart & Kelly (1995:4) argue, however, that more is involved than fundamental social and business influence; an unstoppable trend toward increased connectivity. As more and more parts of the machine have learned to talk to each other, connectivity has become the dominant feature of modern business. As the trend continues, the role of organisations within society is changing.

The entire history of civilization, and therefore of business, is one of increased connectivity. Verbal and written communication represented the level of connectivity needed to form the earliest civilizations. Gutenberg's printing press raised connectivity to a new level, spreading knowledge that would eventually undermine the simple tyrannies of church and monarch. The rights of church and monarch were displaced by the rights of individuals, giving birth to the democratic movements and culminating in the great revolutions of the eighteenth century (Gouillart and Kelly 1995:5).

The Industrial Revolution had most important social manifestations. It freed the individual from drudgery and physical isolation, and led to urbanisation. The rhythm of life changed profoundly, and because the spirit of the Industrial Age was mechanical, the qualities of the social institutions it created (bureaucracy, hierarchy, command-and-control systems, specialisation) were machine-like as well. The line worker became a cog in a wheel, with no sense of personal connection to the company and often with no sense of communion with the environment (Toffler 1980:23).

### **3.2.1.2 Social complexity**

The developed Western societies have entered the Information Age, replacing the Industrial Age. As was true of earlier social transformations, this one is increasing the level of social complexity and leading to profound changes in society, to which the organisation - the dominant institutional creature of the Industrial Age - must adapt.

Viewed from the perspective of the individual, speech, writing, printing, telephones, radio, and television all represented technological advances

that increased the size and scope of connectivity networks. The Westerner can fax, videoconference, and computer-network with all parts of the world, on demand. Networks are growing inexorably in both size and complexity, and that growth will probably continue (Gouillart and Kelly 1995:7).

### **3.2.1.3 Individual versus organisation**

What is true at the individual level, is also true for organisations. Companies are forming alliances and partnerships with their suppliers and customers, becoming parts of networks, even networks of networks. The physical and financial boundaries between organisations are blurring, and the trend will probably continue (Ohmae 1994).

But while the individual networks expand and business networks become knowledge networks, there is a human element that warrants careful attention and nurturing. Connectivity can be a double-edged sword, triggering either greater individual isolation or a greater sense of community, depending on the role organisations choose for themselves in the future.

On the pessimistic side, increased electronic connectivity may cause a loss of genuine human contact. Encounters become simulations, contrived by electronics. Individuals do not touch, smell, or feel emotional about the things and people they interact with, because they are not there. (Gouillart & Kelly 1995:8).

Another more optimistic scenario is possible. Organisations can provide the new caring that so many seek. This will not happen in the paternalistic fashion of the previous generation, and employees are not likely to see

a return to guaranteed employment. But it will happen in different forms. Successful organisations will develop a new role built around the invention of a new social contract. Gouillart and Kelly (1995) argue that the developed West will see organisations taking responsibility for the renewal of individuals, helping them to acquire new skills. Organisations are redefining the boundaries of their responsibility, accepting accountability for the way they use resources and contribute to the environment. Organisations probably will play a major role in the renewal of education in many countries, and become involved in the solution of major social ills.

#### **3.2.1.4 The virtual organisation**

A new paradigm of organisation, one that will dominate the theory and practice of business organisation, has crystallised in recent years. Called virtual organisation, this new paradigm is clearly manifested in the operations of some innovative organisations; it is undergoing refinement and elaboration in a variety of contexts, and experience of this organisation is accumulating. This concept was introduced by Mowshowitz (1994) in the early 1980s in lectures on computers and the globalisation of business, and has been elaborated in a number of reports and articles over the past decade (Mowshowitz 1985, 1986a, 1986b, 1987, 1992, in Mowshowitz 1994:268). The notion of the virtual organisation rests on a fundamental principle, one as basic as the division of labour itself.

Although Davidow and Malone (1992) do not provide a precise definition of the virtual organisation, their notion is based on what they call the virtual product: that is, “one that is produced instantaneously and customized in response to customer demand” (Davidow and Malone

1992 and Mowshowitz 1994:270). The virtual organisation is depicted as an organisation geared up to produce virtual products, one characterised by *just-in-time* supply, work teams, flexible manufacturing, reusable engineering, worker empowerment, organisational streamlining, computer-aided design, total quality and mass customisation. This collection of features, characteristic of various innovative organisations that rely heavily on advanced information technology, equates virtual organisation with specific corporate practices and structures.

The intellectual origins of the concept lie in three disparate fields: Computer science, foundations of mathematics, and international business. These fields have contributed the phenomena of virtual memory, meta-mathematics, and global management, respectively. Contemplation of the advantages in virtual memory to be gained through switching, the dependence of virtual memory on the logical separation of an object system from a meta-system, and the (almost certainly unconscious) utilisation of switching by global managers eventually led to the theory of virtual organisation presented here. The theory is offered as an explanation of real phenomena in the world of business, not as a prescription for how managers should or should not behave. However, like division of labour, virtual organisation can increase efficiency, lower production costs, and improve the co-ordination and control of functions. Because these effects are generally deemed desirable by managers, the theory provides a basis for projecting economic and social changes in the future (Mowshowitz 1994:273-277).

The economic and social significance of virtual organisation in the future is likely to be comparable to that of the factory in an earlier period. This

new approach to organisation is likely to become a dominant paradigm because it offers unique advantages in the efficiency cost and the effectiveness of goal-oriented activity, Equally important, the requisites for the exploitation of this new approach are in place. Properly implemented, the virtual organisation may deliver increases in efficiency and effectiveness on an unprecedented scale.

The role of technology in virtual organisations warrants special attention. Advances in technology - especially in the fields of transportation, communication, and computing - have made it possible to manage complex enterprises efficiently and effectively. With these technologies, the process of making a product or providing a service can be differentiated and the component task distributed in different places and executed at different times - with complete assurance that the whole process can be integrated and controlled effectively (Mowshowitz 1994:279).

The essence of virtual organisation is the management of goal-oriented activity in a way that is independent of the means for its realisation. This implies a logical separation between the conception and planning of an activity, on the one hand, and its implementation, on the other. By activity Mowshowitz means anything undertaken in an organisation, be it in production, marketing, distribution, research and development, or any other domain.

Walsham (1994) argues that Mowshowitz places too much emphasis on the dehumanisation as associated with the transition to virtual organisation. Handy (1995:47) argues that a virtual organisation can only exist in an environment of trust. Organisations will have to trust

independents, the part-times and the small contractors and suppliers. Another threat to the virtual organisation is the growing “underclass” (Handy 1995:48). They want “hamburgers and heating” not computers. Virtuality will be a recipe for a divided society unless we take from the present to ensure the future, instead of borrowing from the future to ensure the present.

### **3.2.1.5 Cultural concepts**

Managers need to have a grasp of cultural concepts in order to perform their role satisfactorily (Viljoen 1987). Firstly a manager in the workplace must be able to understand and manage different groups characterised by different cultures. For example, the employees in the packing and despatch department of an organisation may have a different set of values and shared meanings from the employees in the audit section. Secondly, managers have to react to, initiate and manage change on a cultural level in their organisations. An extreme example of such a challenge has faced managers in the former public sector who had to foster a culture more appropriate to life in the private sector. Thirdly, more managers have to manage across borders and by definition across national cultures as markets become more global (Vielba 1995:4).

To manage successfully in the contexts described above, managers need more than an instinctive grasp they have of their own culture. Managers need models, frameworks and concepts which they can articulate in order to talk to those in other organisations and from other cultures. They also need to be able to analyse the underlying values of their own organisation and understand how these are linked to the organisational structures and processes of the organisation and the corporate behaviour they see around them.

Vielba (1995:6) found some evidence that managers lack the appropriate exposure to ways of thinking which would facilitate understanding organisational culture in an academic way. He also found that managers find it difficult to discuss the underpinnings of aspects of their own organisational culture. A brief glance at what is taught on management programmes suggests that more could be done to help managers in this area. He argues that a large number of students may benefit from imaginative indirect approaches to culture over and above strictly academic approaches

This area contains many issues, both about how managers think and operate and also about how management education can be made more effective. Recent research pointed to two paradigms that dominate Western approaches to management teaching. The first paradigm focuses on the approach to teaching managers about culture whereby they are taught formal theories and models of organisational and national cultures and are then given an opportunity to play with their new knowledge by applying it to cases or real organisations. The second paradigm focuses on the fusion of knowledge and practice and is closer to some of the innovative approaches described here. In this paradigm, learning begins from the point of view of a manager's experience and proceeds to transfer ideas and tools that help the manager make sense of and operate more effectively in a particular situation. Both approaches are equally valid, but it has been strongly argued that the limited prior academic exposure most managers have and the silence that exist in many organisations supports greater use of the second approach.

### **3.2.1.6 Nationalism**

Contrary to what has been said about the similarities between the US

and Europe in Chapter 2, nationalism acts as a differentiating factor between them. In Europe, residual nationalism can incapacitate the sort of centralisation common in the US. At best, European-based companies find it prudent to keep a few managers in each country, to untangle local laws and sweet-talk local politicians. At worst, they risk being blackmailed by governments into keeping open unnecessary plants (Hammer and Champy 1995:67).

Corporate culture can also be a problem. Hammer and Champy (1995:68; Lincoln, Kerbo & Wittenbaum 1995:417) suggest that German bosses tend to regard themselves as corporate father-figures, while French bosses have not caught up with the elementary notion that the customer is king. They also worry that many European firms are too confident of their own managerial traditions, and too insulated from market pressures, to be bothered to re-invent themselves. Germany could also find that, if re-engineering really is crucial to its organisations' future, its much-praised education and training may turn into an impediment. Germany excels at producing functional specialists, whereas re-engineering requires flexible generalists.

## **3.2.2 JAPANESE MANAGEMENT**

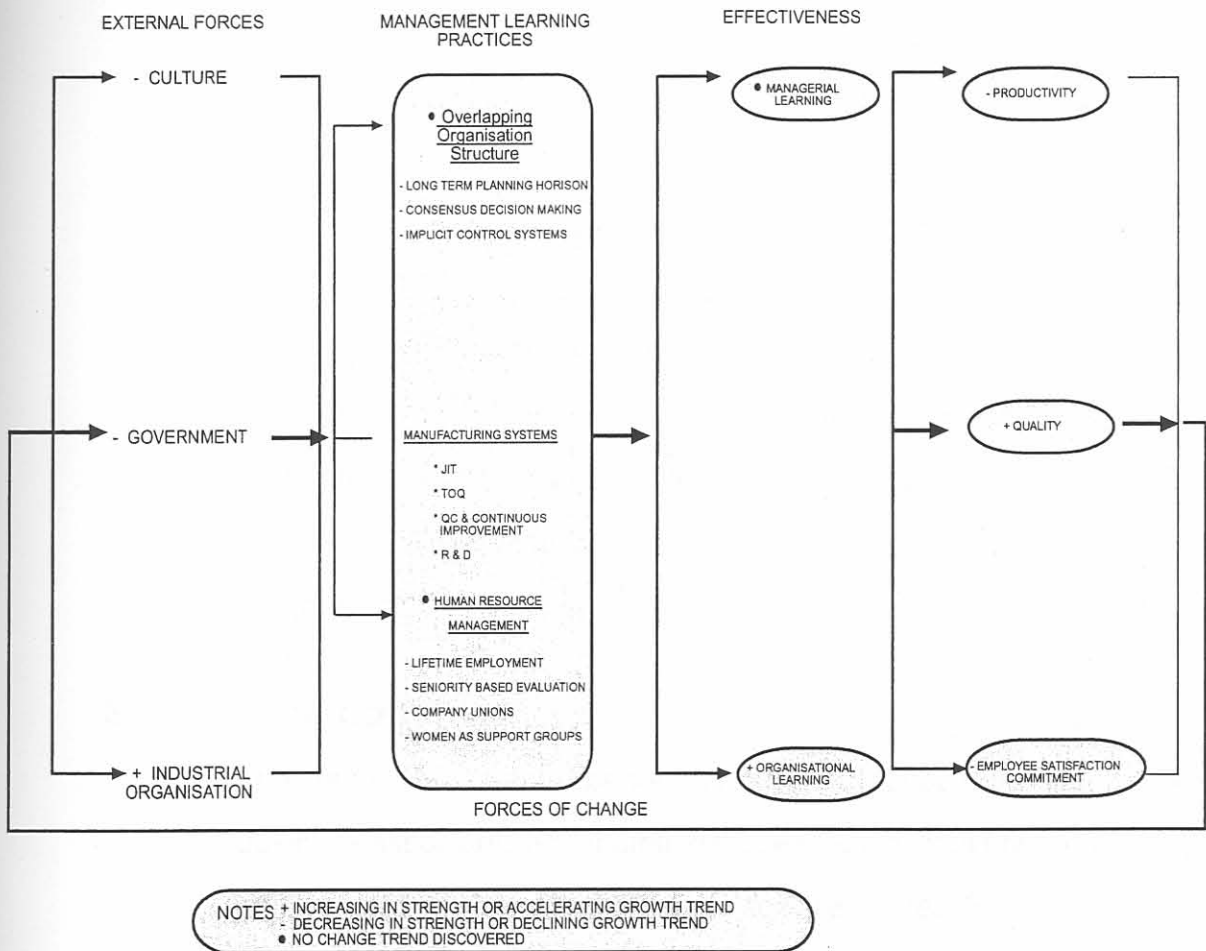
### **3.2.2.1 Introduction**

Japanese management practices are influenced by culture, by industrial organisation, primarily the *keiretsu*, and by government, especially the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI). (See section 3.5.1 for a definition on *keiretsu*).

A number of cultural influences serve as the foundation for current

Japanese management practices. These include the presence of a collective mentality, a great persistence in the face of difficulty, a strong emphasis on social reciprocity as the governing principle of relationships, a physically concentrated and culturally homogeneous society, and an uncommon appreciation for education and learning (Keys and Miller 1994:386). Figure 3.1 illustrates the forces of change on the Japanese management theory, and indicates which forces are not changing, accelerating in strength or decreasing in strength.

Figure 3.1 Paths through the Japanese management theory jungle.



Source: Keys & Miller (1994:384).

The philosophies of Confucianism and Zen Buddhism, widely taught in Japan, have profoundly affected the Japanese work ethic. Confucian philosophy regards the ideal society as one in which relationships, largely based on family and hierarchy, are maintained in perfect harmony over time. An individual's identity is invariably described in terms of group values, consequently, most social and work activities in Japan are group activities. Although individual motives are prevalent among the Japanese, it is not acceptable for these to be displayed publicly (Befu 1989:47). Apparently influenced by the philosophy of Confucianism, Japanese companies enshroud themselves with many of the characteristics of families, since Japanese workers depend on companies for social as well as economic sustenance; for example lifetime employment.

The Samurai remains the most popular folk hero in Japanese society and is admired for his ability, through the use of Zen, to overcome human emotion in pursuit of honourable objects. Today, the philosophy of Zen is used to discipline the mind within the Japanese educational and social systems. Zen maintains that life is a process, not a destination. This belief materialises as an unending drive for improvement (Fry 1994:387) which is embodied in the concept of Japanese long-term planning.

### **3.2.2.2. Relationships**

The Japanese attach special value to personal relationships with business associates and maintain these relationships primarily through adherence to the law of reciprocity in social activities. Such relationships are cultivated over time and often take precedence over what Westerners would consider rational business decisions. New foreign participants in business systems are accepted reluctantly. This strong

emphasis on relationship maintenance frequently allows conflicts to be resolved without resorting to the legal system. In a corporate setting, social reciprocity requires that superiors make personal investments in their subordinates. This approach is thought to build stronger bonds than rewarding employees with corporate resources, such as promotions and salary increases as is common in the Western world.

Japanese society is remarkably homogeneous and, due to the lack of usable land, physically concentrated. In Japan, group membership determines one's status, and products play a defining role in identifying group members. Land and housing are so scarce that the Japanese are unable to invest conspicuously in them, consequently they are demanding about other high status products that can serve as indicators of social status (Mueller 1994:381).

### **3.2.2.3 Natural resources**

Keys and Miller (1994) argue that limited natural resources have forced the Japanese to promote trade with foreign markets, spurring them to make technological and managerial advances in the area of logistics. The space and energy-efficient products of Japan became quite attractive in international markets in the 1970s because of the oil embargo, automobile downsizing and emerging concern for the environment.

### **3.2.2.4 Education**

Japanese society greatly values education and learning. Japanese students are usually considered to be about four years ahead of their US counterparts upon graduation from high school and their test scores are consistently higher than those of American students at all levels

(Stevenson, Chen and Lee 1993). Traditionally the Japanese have provided their employees with excellent education and training through lifetime investment in development and job rotation.

The factors credited with producing this high level of achievement include family involvement, personal discipline and high expectations. The Japanese believe academic success is determined by diligence and persistence, not by innate ability. Therefore, mothers, who seldom work, devote themselves to the task of guiding the education of their children. Consequently, the Confucian philosophy of valuing family relationships produces the motivating force for educational attainment while the Zen philosophy provides the mental discipline for successful study habits (Befu 1989:49).

Much of their great zeal for education, especially international education, springs from cultural imperatives following World War II when Japanese governmental employees were forced to communicate in English with the Western world. The persistence of Japanese expatriates to remain in international assignments for long periods, encourages Japanese companies to invest heavily in international training.

### **3.2.2.5 Industrial organisation**

Many have argued that the secret to Japan's global economic success is due to the rise of the post-World War II *keiretsu*. The leading *keiretsus*, the modern equivalent of the pre-war *zaibatsu*, are often centred in large banks, *Kinyu keiretsu* (financial lineage) or *kigyo shudan* (enterprise group), and include as members other financial institutions, a highly diversified set of large manufacturing firms, and the principal player, the general trading company. The post-World War II McArthur administration broke up the family-owned *zaibatsu*, blaming them for

the military machine that fostered imperialism. However, since 1952, the six largest groups have reacquired control of more than 25 per cent of industry, a concentration similar to the one that existed before the war (Keys and Miller 1994:389).

*Keiretsus* have numerous ways in which to aid affiliates. They can offer sizeable scale economies, highly integrated vertical relationships, networking that limits competition, leverage with highly favourable repayment schedules, considerable foreign direct investment, and significant governmental influence. Most analyses of Japanese practices have overlooked the importance of the small-to-medium-size supplier firms, *chu-sho kigyo*, that have made Japan so technically proficient, and at the same time, highly flexible. Small subcontractors, who negotiate with the large *keiretsu*, must share design and development costs of the large firms, *dai kigyo*, absorb losses and layoffs when business encounters a recession, agree to prices imposed from above, and often provide jobs for retiring executives when central organisations are unwilling to retain them. Induced hiring by smaller firms does not only include corporate managers, 50-55 years of age, but retiring senior officials from government ministries as well. In this manner, strong political and legal skills are imparted to top managers and strong information networks are ensured between government and business (Suzuki 1989:8). Suzuki (1989:8) says, "This flow of human resources from the upper institutions to the lower ones is called *amakudari*, ... *i.e.* a person descending from heaven."

### 3.2.2.6 Government

Political power in Japan lies in the strength of the 21 government ministries, the strongest of which is the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) (Morgan and Morgan 1991). According to several

3.2.3.1 writers, MITI orchestrates the economy with five year plans and rewards strategic industries that fit well into Japan's vertically integrated economy, promoting a planned emphasis and guiding new technology development and implementation. Cutts (1988:52) calls this relationship a "managed competition that fosters acceptance of informal cartel management."

There is little doubt that MITI uses government regulations in a discriminatory manner to restrict Japanese imports. Compared with US successes in Europe, trade with Japan has produced an unfavourable result that some blame on excessive lobbying expenditures by the Japanese. One prolific and rather articulate critic of Japanese unfair trade practices, says, "Japan has developed an insidious program of US influence by propaganda dissemination through funding of US universities and think tanks, by attempts to shape elementary and secondary school reading materials, teaching programs, and all-expense-paid trips to Japan for social-studies teachers, including the rewriting of World War II to omit Japan's atrocities ..." (Choate 1990:102).

Only a portion of the difficulty faced by US firms when entering the Japanese market can be attributed to Japanese government policies. Difficulty of entry is exacerbated by the reluctance of the Japanese to seek what they fear is less stable employment with American organisations. Similarly, customers are reluctant to buy high technology equipment, which requires considerable support, from foreign companies whom they view as less dependable than Japanese firms (Keys and Miller 1994:394).

## 3.2.3 AFRICAN MANAGEMENT

### 3.2.3.1 Introduction

A great deal has been, and continues to be, written about Africa's seemingly endless economic crises. Prognostications range from gloomy to ominous to catastrophic. In line with global trends, current prescriptions for the continent's economic ailments, led by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), involve rigorous austerity budgets, import restrictions, currency devaluations, reductions of government subsidies, stimulation of exports, encouragement of the private sector and foreign private investment, performance incentives, imposition of fees for public services like education and health, and drastic reductions in the size and role of the public sector.

These measures appear to be drastic, but if the descriptions of Africa's economic predicament are accurate, urgent action is certainly needed. According to Kiggundu (1988:191) and Kaijage (1993:42), the crisis in Africa south of the Sahara is "severe, general and worsening"; production is generally stagnant; internal and external balances are in crises; there is a crisis in agricultural performance; there is an institutional crisis with weak and ineffective government decision making and implementing capacity, poor investment and resource allocation decisions, weak industrial sectors, and inefficient and compromised parastatal sectors. Nti (1989:127), Thomas (1996:5) and Hauchler (1992:4) point to low rates of growth, falling outputs of goods and services, and food shortages. Two graphs that are showing upward trends are population, at about three per cent annually overall, and inflation. Some African countries spend up to 50 per cent of their export earnings on debt servicing, an issue that currently enjoys a lot of interest

from lobbying groups in Europe.

Exogenous economic factors contributing to this depressing state of affairs include drastic oil price rises, global recessions, and deteriorating terms of trade. As if these were not enough, nature has conspired in parts of Africa to produce severe deterioration in climatic conditions, through droughts, changing rainfall patterns and desertification (Blunt 1983:147).

Restorative measures of the type described earlier are naturally controversial. To an IMF economist they make eminent theoretical sense, but their social repercussions may be serious. As Nti (1989:127) notes, for example, mass retrenchments of public sector employees - for some reason the imposed target figure always seems to be around 30 per cent - in the context of the African extended family dependency system is likely to cause more serious problems for more people than might be the case in other socio-cultural settings. Few African nations can afford comprehensive social security systems of the type taken for granted in the wealthy industrialised countries; redundancy for one employee is likely to cause hardship to many.

Are there then any alternative or associated steps which African nations can take to escape this economic morass? It certainly seems important that they should search for alternatives, because it is by no means clear that the current pattern of imposed recovery measures will work. Nti (1989:128) is unambiguous: Structural adjustment programmes "do not lead to the restructuring of the economy. The structure remains the same except for readjustment of the budget figures".

Balogun (1989:54) finds some encouragement in what he refers to as “recent concerted efforts” by African governments to consider other ways of overcoming these problems. Asserting that in the past policy responses to alarm signals of the dangers of economic collapse, and associated social upheaval and political instability, were largely inadequate, he points to what he calls recent “radical policy initiatives,” which actually amount to calls for:

- The formulation of effective human resource development and utilisation policies, especially in relation to the development of entrepreneurial skills;
- improved economic management through efficient allocation of resources;
- better management systems;
- reshaping of public services to be more development-oriented;
- improvement of public enterprise performance; and
- the formulation of balanced population policies.

As Kiggundu (1988:193) points out, however, there is little guidance about how such obviously desirable improvements are to be achieved.

Some analysts have argued that although clear similarities exist between Western and African management on the macro (structural) level, significant differences emerge on the micro (behavioural) level (Child 1981). Hofstede (1980, 1984) states that differences in national culture would have an impact on organisational behaviour. In a comparative study of African (Kenyan and Nigerian) and UK managers, Seddon (1985:102), using the Hofstede’s value survey module (VSM), found clear differences in all four dimensions (power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism/collectivism and masculinity/femininity).

3.2.3

The major argument in favour of the applicability of Western management in different cultural settings, is the existence of striking similarities between the bureaucracy of developed and developing countries. All developing countries, including those which escaped Western colonisation, have consciously tried to introduce some version of modern Western management.

3.2.3

The application of Western management to the conditions in developing countries has been defended on the grounds that several of its prescriptions have been successfully employed in such countries. In an evaluation report of 19 case studies, Hage and Finsterbusch (as cited in Vengroff *et al*, 1991) found that the American literature on organisational change (organisational development, organisational design and organisation theory) is relevant to Third World contexts. Their fundamental conclusion is that cultural values may play a role in development management, but the connections are not clear and their argument vague. Leonard (1987) also finds that Western management proves to be a remarkably useful tool for understanding the effects of subordinate staff behaviour on productivity in Kenya's Ministry of Agriculture and that it provides a valid body of theory applicable to any region of the world. Leonard's conclusions are largely supported by more recent work by Belhaj (as cited in Vengroff *et al*) in a very different geographic and cultural setting, the Yemen Arab Republic. See more arguments on the application of management in section 3.4.2.

Jones (1989:69) provides a useful summary of findings regarding the impact of the organisational context (culture) as a "contingent factor in management practice" in Africa. He concludes by saying that a *common theme that emerges again and again from the various contributors to*

*our knowledge of this area is the insistent call for more empirical research.*

### **3.2.3.2 The political context**

African politics is complex and sometimes baffling, as new nations experiment with different systems in attempts to find suitable patterns for governance. It is not the intention to delve into these complexities, but it is clear that political realities are a crucial element of the context in which African organisations function.

One factor that emerged in an investigation done by Thomas (1996:4) as essential to managerial success, was the building and maintenance of political connections. This consisted not in building an independent political base, but in gaining regular access to top politicians in order to influence policy decisions, supply of resources, and protection against politicisation and inappropriate policies. Such political support has to be earned through loyalty and careful network building.

### **3.2.3.3 The socio-cultural context**

An issue of the Journal of International Studies of Management and Organization (Summer 1986) consists of five articles on issues regarding management in African organisations. The guest editor, Augustine Ahiauzu, comments that *it is becoming increasingly widely accepted among social scientists, especially managers and organizational theorists, that patterns of management and employee behaviour in the workplace are largely culture-bound* (1986:3). The five articles in the journal provide examples to support this view. In agreement with the five contributors, Ahiauzu stresses the need for empirical research in this field, particularly into "questions of persistent interest," including:

- The nature and evolution of African management thought and work;
- the meaning of work for Africans;
- frameworks for analysis, theoretical perspectives and methodological consequences, in African organisations;
- cultural variations in African societies and their influences on organisational behaviour;
- tradition and modernity in work organisations; and
- what can be learned from the experiences of industrialised countries.

The most influential large-scale cross-cultural studies are those of Haire, Ghiselli and Porter (as cited in Blunt 1983:11) and Hofstede (1980, 1984). The investigation by Haire and his colleagues produced evidence indicating that in some respects managers had common views that cut across national boundaries. There was also evidence that cultural factors were significant in differences between clusters of countries with common cultural attributes. However, in the three developing countries in the study it was the *shared stage of economic development* that accounted for some common characteristics. Replications of the Haire *et al* study in African countries by, among others, Blunt (1973, 1976), Howell, Strauss and Sorenson (1975), Blunt and Jones (1986), and Jones (as cited in Blunt 1983), similarly have produced evidence of “convergent” and “divergent” elements in the thinking and behaviour of managers.

Hofstede’s massive investigation (1980), was based upon a model developed from his view that culture is essentially the collective mental programming of people in their environment. His data revealed marked differences in national cultures that would be expected to have a significant impact on organisational behaviour.

Murrell (1986) draws attention to the realities of organisational environments in Africa that clearly do not possess the same history of modern organisational or industrial life as the West. Western management models cannot be merely adopted or copied in such environments; they have to be adapted in the “most culturally appropriate manner” (Murrell 1986:29).

Leonard (1987) has provided some specific examples of cultural influences on African managers, and argues that differences in organisation behaviour between them and their counterparts in the industrialised West are due to fundamental differences in values. Leonard stresses the need to develop an understanding of the effects of such cultural realities on organisational behaviour and cautions against the unthinking transfer of alien management concepts and practices. Western social science makes assumptions about the functioning of formal organisations, according to Leonard (1987:903):

- The assumption of purposive rationality, implying commitment to organisational goals; and
- the assumption of economic rationality, which views economics as the fundamental social process that provides an understanding of all human transactions.

He asserts that such assumptions are not applicable in all societies, and that their validity in Africa is particularly limited.

#### **3.2.3.4 Transportation, communications and technology**

In Africa, trade links often have to be maintained across vast distances and difficult terrain. Transport links such as roads and railways are

3.2.3 relatively undeveloped, often old and in need of updating and regular maintenance. These and other factors make the job of the African manager additionally problematic, especially if they are combined with political instability in surrounding countries.

In terms of technology, as Kiggundu (1988:216) remarks, sub-Saharan African is “lagging behind in the importation and effective utilisation and management of foreign technology ... Africa is not a technology developer because almost no research and development takes place on the continent ... Africa is also a poor copier of technology, and there is a tendency to view new technology as static, fixed ...” Nsibambi (1993:36) characterises African management by “... inferior technology, lack of basic decision-making data and problems of national integration,” a description echoed by Gahan (1992:5).

To some extent African agriculture is a victim of its colonial past and an unforgiving and uncaring world economy that is geared to serve the interests of the industrialised countries. But the agricultural crisis is also a function of internal factors, subject to internal control. The imbalance between population growth and food production, together with inept and wasteful government policies and management practices are major contributory factors - although the latter can sometimes be grossly exaggerated, and will in any case vary greatly between countries (Jamal 1988:661).

An article in the *Economist* titled “Africa’s cities” (1990:20) notes: “Africa’s comparative advantage may well be in farming. But efficient agriculture needs efficient towns to provide banks, marketing systems, agricultural training, and so on.”

### **3.2.3.5 Population growth and urbanisation**

The population of sub-Saharan Africa has doubled in size since 1965. By the year 2010 it is expected to have risen to over one billion. These growth rates far exceed those of any other continent (including Latin America and Asia). The sheer magnitude of these increases is complicated by population distribution, density, age, and patterns of migration.

Urban migration and the age distribution (high proportion of young people) of Africa's population have contributed to agriculture's reduced "percentage share of the economically active population, while the growing proportions of female and child labour have qualitatively worsened the composition of labour resources" (Macgregor 1990:7).

These factors clearly have major implications for public policy and the strategic management of organisations.

### **3.2.4 SUMMARY**

It is important to note that the idea that culture, both societal and corporate, has an impact on organisations, is not accepted by all researchers. Based on the literature explored in this section, it can be concluded that although corporate culture (culture internal to an organisation) is a factor that affects management, societal culture (external to an organisation) is equally important because it has a significant impact on an organisation's human resources as well as corporate culture.

In section 3.3 and 3.4 the discussion will include both macro- and micro-research as identified by Smircich (1983). Macro-research studies the

organisation as a whole system and analyses formally described structures such as decision making and conflict resolution. Micro-research studies the work group of the organisation (sub-system) - an organisation's human resources - career and attitude toward employees, the latter which will be discussed in section 3.3.

## **3.3 CAREER AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS EMPLOYEES**

### **3.3.1 INTRODUCTION**

In a previous era, organisations looked after their employees and gave them job security. Job security was appropriate in a static world with routine work. In the Information Age, routine work is done by machines, competition is intense, and the employee skills needed are changing fast.

The purpose of this section (3.3), is to discuss the career of and attitude towards employees, and includes the so-called changing employment contract, the reasons for these changes, entrepreneurship, career planning and communication. The discussion is categorised in similar but non-identical categories, under Western, Japanese and African management.

### **3.3.2 WESTERN MANAGEMENT**

#### **3.3.2.1 Introduction**

Hennesy, Killian and Robins (1995:161) argue that trends are now apparent that seem to indicate we may be in a transitional period between two different ways of dealing with the challenges of business and of society as a whole. The outgoing order is the age of specialisation, and the incoming, the era of integration. The world is becoming more integrated, customised, individualised and global. Each

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of these four forces can be seen to relate to this change from specialisation to integration. Globalisation - and in particular the unification of Europe - takes the separate pieces of our world and integrates them into one global economy.

Environmental concerns integrate the organisation with the physical environment in which it operates. The shortage of qualified labour in developed countries, along with the increased involvement in education and training requires of business, integrates the organisation with the society (supra-system) in which it does business - the society from which it draws both its customers and its workforce.

### **3.3.2.2 A changing employment contract**

The strategy-structure-systems management doctrine rests upon a relationship between the organisation and its employees that is fast becoming irrelevant. It was previously assumed capital was the organisation's most critical and scarcest resource and that labour's role was simply to leverage the organisation's investment in equipment and machinery. An implicit employment contract held that top management's job was to ensure the organisation's short-term profitability and long-term competitiveness by making sound investment decisions, and employees were to support those investments by doing as they were told. In exchange for their loyalty and sacrifice of autonomy, employees got wages and job security. Those assumptions provided the foundation for the modern organisation's authority-based structure and the logic for the systems and processes that were required to pull plans, proposals, and performance data up the hierarchy for top management's input and control (Bartlett and Goshal 1995b:28).

In a post-industrial environment, most companies are no longer well served by the old management doctrine or its implicit employment contract (Stewart 1995:97). In the emerging Information Age, the critically scarce resource is knowledge - composed of information, intelligence and expertise. Unlike capital, knowledge is most valuable when it is controlled and used by those on the front lines of the organisation. In a fast-changing, competitive, global environment, the ability to exploit knowledge gives organisations their competitive advantage.

The implications for top-level managers are profound. If frontline employees are vital strategic resources instead of mere factors of production, corporate executives can no longer afford to be isolated from the people in their organisations. Furthermore, roles and responsibilities must be re-allocated, with those deeper in the organisation taking on many of the tasks formerly reserved for those at the top. In short, corporate executives must adopt the people-oriented model of management that General Electric's (GE) Jack Welch described in an interview with Tichy and Charan (Harvard Business Review, HBR September-October 1989:33): "Above all else ... good leaders are open. They go up, down, and around their organization to reach people ... It is all about human beings coming to see and accept things through a constant interactive process aimed at consensus."

Behind the delayering and downsizing in most companies, a quieter revolution has been taking place. It has redefined employees' roles and, in doing so, has rewritten the implicit contract they have with their employers. GE's old assumption of *lifetime employment* produced what Welch calls "a paternal, feudal, fuzzy kind of loyalty." Welch advocates

a change: “My concept of loyalty is not “giving time” to some corporate entity and, in turn, being shielded and protected from the outside world. Loyalty is an affinity among people who want to grapple with the outside world and win ... The new psychological contract, if there is such a thing, is that jobs at GE are the best in the world for people who are willing to compete. We have the best training and development resources and an environment committed to providing opportunities for personal and professional growth.” (Welch, as cited in Tichy and Charan 1989:34).

What Welch and other corporate leaders advocate is a complete reversal of the traditional company-employee contract. When employees “grapple with the outside world and win”, as Welch puts it, they are essentially taking over what was previously assumed to be a corporate responsibility. Meanwhile, many organisations are seeing their responsibility not in terms of ensuring long-term job security, but, what Welch describes as providing opportunities for personal and professional growth: changing the implicit contract from a guarantee of employment to *employability* as O’Reilly (1994:29) describes this process.

Such a change demolishes the core tenets of the strategy-structure-systems doctrine, which instructs managers to minimise risk by controlling the idiosyncratic individual. Today’s top-level managers recognise that the diversity of human skills and the unpredictability of the human spirit facilitate initiative, creativity and entrepreneurship. The most basic task of corporate leaders is to recapture those valuable human attributes by individualising the organisation. To do so, they need to adopt a management philosophy that is based on purpose, process and people (Bartlett and Goshal 1995a). Byron (1995) supports the existence of the new corporate contract.

In an interview with a displaced senior vice-president of a large company, Byron (1995) reports that he felt that an employee used to have a contract, but now he was virtually working on a *per diem*. The contract with corporate America is a thing of the past and if an employee joins the corporate ranks, he has to understand that he won't be there with one company for more than ten years. An employee guiding concept has to be: The corporation doesn't get him; he gets them. There was an innocence about it in the past; and that innocence is gone.

These employees think like free agents. They have to look out for themselves, find out how much they are worth and consider offers from other teams. Free agents make a point of always knowing their alternatives, having a clear idea of where they could jump if unexpected roadblocks arise in the present job. They work hard at their current jobs but never take them for granted. They direct much of their energy toward shaping and securing their futures. The free agent will not "jump" unless a safe landing is assured; he or she is well aware that the best way to get a new job is to be effective, and appear to be content, in an old one. Lieber (1996:28) argues that an employee has to have a sense of what he contributes to the company and how his skills can be improved.

### 3.3.2.3 Why the change?

Byron (1995:8) argues the change in management style that has made the axe a prominent management tool is not easily explained. In part, it is a move towards delegating authority, granting autonomy, and fixing responsibility at lower levels. The discovery that "half our management team is writing reports for the other half to read" strengthens the will of those who think a weight-reduction programme for the elimination of

middle-management spread may be overdue. They are willing to try and see what happens. Grove (1995:141) argues that first of all, everything happens faster; secondly, anything that can be done will be done, if not by you, then by someone else, somewhere. These changes lead to a less kind, less gentle and less predictable workplace.

According to an editorial "The salaryman rides again", that appeared in the Economist (1995), management theorists started looking at middle managers. The more they looked at the ranks of besuited functionaries who separated the board room from the shop-floor - the product managers, department heads, divisional bosses and executive editors - the more they saw time-servers to be cut. Middle managers' problem is that, at first sight, they seem to be in the way of everything associated with progress. Successful companies are devolving responsibility to self-managing teams of workers - but middle managers make their living by telling people what to do. Desktop computers are giving everybody access to data about the business world - but middle managers are specialists in controlling the flow of information. Collapsing product-cycles are forcing companies to become more agile - but middle managers thrive in a world of bureaucracies.

### **3.3.2.4 Entrepreneurship**

Delayed managers - or "redundant executives," as they are known in England - have to wait to see what happens from an observation post on the outside (Grove 1995:141). Something could happen that would re-engage but not re-employ them with the former employer. Once out, it is a short attitudinal step, though a large one entrepreneurially, to stop thinking of oneself as an outsider - a former employee - and to begin seeing oneself in an "outsourcer" capacity (one who supplies

resources to the company from the outside); the former employee becomes a new entrepreneur who can provide a necessary service to his former employer. From the outside, in fact, he can provide the service he used to provide from within, as an employee. His former employer “outsources” the need and he meets it - for a fee. He does it for other firms too. This is his new business. The firm pays him more on a *per diem* basis but less in total compensation (no benefits) than they would if he were on their payroll. He makes it up in volume and takes care of his own benefits. He also has independence and the challenge of being his own boss.

### **3.3.2.4 The entrepreneurial process**

Perhaps the most widespread and harmful effect of the growth of bureaucratic structures in organisations has been the erosion of managerial entrepreneurship - the externally oriented, opportunity-seeking attitude that motivates employees to run their operations as if they owned them. Few frontline initiatives survive the bureaucracy’s smothering assumption that top managers are the best visionaries for their organisations and alone are responsible for leading their companies into new areas. Any bottom-up ideas that survive the top-down directives are likely to be crushed in the documentation, review and approval processes that supply senior managers with the information and feedback they need to operate as their organisations’ strategic gurus (Goshal and Bartlett 1995a).

Essentially, it requires of an organisation to drop its assumption that those at the top are in the best position to exercise entrepreneurial initiative. A bottom-up entrepreneurial process can occur only when frontline management’s role is transformed from implementer to initiator

and when senior management's role is to provide a context in which entrepreneurship can happen.

At the foundation of an institutional entrepreneurial process is a culture that sets great store by the ability of the individual. That may seem a relatively simple matter for top management to recognise; in fact, many companies include in their annual reports such homilies as "our employees are our most important assets."

In hierarchichal structure specifically designed to control behaviour and minimise the risk of individual idiosyncrasies, Goshal & Bartlett (1995a) argue, it takes more than jawboning and sloganeering to re-establish a genuine faith in the ability of individual organisation members.

### **3.3.2.5 Career planning**

Otte and Kahnweiler (1995:2) believe that a new model of career planning is emerging. It is developmental and takes a long-term view, while laying a foundation for short-term survival. In this approach, "success" has been enlarged to include spiritual and emotional dimensions, as well as traditional economic measures of "making it". From this perspective, finding personal meaning in work is important, and the question "What do you want to be when you grow up?" receives attention throughout one's life. Finding meaning requires attending to "being" goals that go beyond "What do you want to do?" "Being" goals involve the answers to "What is worth doing?" and "What is my purpose in life?" These goals originate from meditating on ideals for living completely. Answering these questions can be highly motivating; ignoring them leads either to eventual burnout or to a lack of joy. How does one engage in effective career planning, given this new situation

of turbulent times and uncertain potential career paths? Otte and Kahnweiler (1995) follow the nonlinear model depicted below. It is a very brief synthesis of some current career literature and emerging practices.

What does an employee do when he follows this model, and how does it work in practice? Otte and Kahnweiler (1995) explains their introspective, individualistic model:

Make each day a quest for learning and personal development, and

1. As you seek to grow, clarify and honour your resistance.
2. Dream of the future; clarify an ideal future vividly, in detail.
3. Study yourself; seek self-understanding.
4. Analyse competencies used in the past.
5. Analyse competencies depicted in an "ideal future."
6. Draft a tentative plan for a next step toward an ideal future.
7. Explore this plan with others you trust.
8. Execute one learning step at a time, reflectively.
9. Rethink; recycle.

McClelland and Burnham (1995:126) define a good manager as one who, among other things, helps subordinates feel strong and responsible, rewards them properly for good performance, and sees that things are organised so that subordinates feel they know what they should be doing. Above all, managers should foster among subordinates a strong sense of team spirit, of pride in working as part of a team. If a manager creates and encourages this spirit, his or her subordinates should certainly perform better.

### 3.3.2.6 Communication

Denton (1995:16) argues that when people speak of continuous improvement, they are really talking about continuous change. To have continuous change, there has to be some factor that binds people together. There must be a common purpose, and each member must understand his or her role. It is like a jigsaw puzzle in which everyone knows the location of the pieces and where they fit. If an organisation wants real, long-lasting change, it must have a way of focusing people on the change - not as individuals, but as a cohesive unit.

Most employees fail to understand how they fit in and why they are important. They just do their job and wait for the next crisis to subside. Great things can happen only when change brings with it an understanding by all individuals, departments, and functions of their roles (D'Aprix 1996:19).

In the West, people are important to organisations, but the belief that they are the most important asset is a misconception. The most important asset of an organisation is not its people, its technology, or even the highly paid managers. Each can be important, but each is simply a tool. Even the most gifted personnel will fail if they operate in a system that is designed to fail (Denton 1995:18).

It is therefore an organisation's "system" of drawing people together for a common purpose that is the one crucial factor to success. If some great unifying factor draws normal, hard-working people together and helps them see their importance and their place in the organisation, those people can do great things. On the other hand, a disjointed effort or approach to introducing change will likely fail (D'Aprix 1996:19). Even

extraordinary people working extraordinarily hard will fail if they have no focus. Denton (1995:20) concludes by arguing that obviously, it would be best to have both extraordinary people and an extraordinary system of introducing change, but it is the latter that creates a great organisation.

Denton in his argument tried to marry the concepts of *Kaizen* (continuous improvement) with change. He (1995:18) emphasises speed as change agent for this continuous improvement, giving it a short term, results-oriented perspective.

### **3.3.3 JAPANESE MANAGEMENT**

#### **3.3.3.1 Introduction**

Warner (1992:510) states that Taylorism, by which is meant the concepts and techniques developed by FW Taylor (1856 - 1915) and his followers, subsumed under the rubric of Scientific Management was introduced into Japanese industry on a wider scale in the inter-war years than was commonly thought. Its impact was mediated by specifically Japanese cultural understanding. As absorbed into Japanese industrial practices, Taylorism became an important factor in the creation of what has been held by some observers to be a uniquely Japanese system of organisation and management given the “societal” context in which it became dominant and successful. In the inter-war period, Japanese employers set out to build organisational cultures, involving high levels of worker commitment and flexibility, for example the cotton textile industry. In industrial relations terms, this model came to be characterised in terms of:

- Seniority (*nenko*) wages;

- life-time employment (*shushin koyo*); and
- enterprise unionism (*kigyobetsu rodo kumiai*).

These “three pillars” of the system have been seen as resting on a fourth, namely “social norms within the enterprise,” involving the notion of an enterprise as a community. The above view must however, be seen as having evolved from an earlier state of affairs, perhaps less “structured” and less “harmonious” (Warner 1992:511).

### **3.3.3.2 Group versus individual**

In the Japanese workplace, group goals and tasks have priority over individual ones; roles and responsibilities are seen as less sharply delineated than in comparable Western firms. Work groups have more autonomy on how tasks are carried out *vis-a-vis* individual accomplishment, with more information shared with the workforce by managers, who place a premium on competence (Lincoln 1989:89).

### **3.3.3.2 Organisational structure**

Organisational structure has received less attention than other functions of Japanese management.

A review of available research on Japanese organisational patterns uncovered three unique features: An unusually large number of vertical levels, overlapping organisations, and corporate research units reporting to top management levels exist. A survey of 51 Japanese and 55 American plants found that Japanese organisations of even smaller mean size, averaged 5.5 management levels compared with 4.9 for the American organisations (Lincoln 1989:94). In spite of this finding, the unusual number of levels in the typical Japanese organisation

actually fosters commitment to the company. Status differentiation is minimal in Japanese firms and numerous, finely layered levels are necessary to support small career steps in the lifetime employment process. Another explanation reported by Hull and Azumi (1988:429), posits that Japanese firms have been able to grow to bureaucratic sizes while still retaining high morale, largely due to good interpersonal relationships of first level supervisors with workers on the plant floor. In the Hull and Azumi (1988) study, morale of workers was correlated with high influence on the part of managers, not workers, suggesting that status differentiation between Japanese workers and managers may be significant. Moreover, workers were more concerned about their supervisors' influence than with their own company-wide participation in management. In most Japanese companies, the chief executive officer's (CEO) total compensation is six to ten times that of the lowest paid factory worker (Ouchi, 1994). Compare this with Chrysler in the US, where the CEO's salary is roughly a thousand times greater than that of his factory worker. Ouchi warns that this great disparity can kill company loyalty (Ouchi 1994:55).

More plausible as a producer of positive results, than organisational levels, is the frequent use by the Japanese of overlapping project and product management teams. Most Japanese cross-functional design teams have members assigned to them who would be considered superfluous in the Western world, but who assist in adding diverse viewpoints. In the ideal sense, the overlapping assignments of product development team members, (the *sashimi* approach), allows employees to involve themselves in the specialties of others and, according to Lincoln (1989), "... ultimately sense tacit knowledge which cannot be articulated." Japan is attempting to improve breakthrough product

development by stimulating creativity through the constant exchange of laboratory and production personnel.

Those who have reviewed productivity per worker agree that the Japanese made significant gains in the 1960s and 70s, and that the Japanese productivity increase plateaued in the late 1980s (Lieberman, Lau and Williams 1990:1196). More recently, productivity gains have been company specific, with some registered by Japanese firms and some by US firms (Lieberman *et al*, 1990). However, productivity advantages existing in the 1990s are largely attributed to Japanese innovations in technology, a few select management practices, and top management selection, rather than to any unique characteristics of the Japanese workers. Based on the literature reviewed, it appears that the forces of change are permitting and even enhancing the continuance of most Japanese manufacturing practices, both domestically and in transplants (Japanese organisations operating outside Japan), except for just-in-time (JIT) purchasing (Lieberman *et al*, 1990:1197). However, Henkoff (1995) disagrees. Refer to his argument in section 3.2.5.

Sullivan (1992:73) reasons that JIT purchasing is declining in Japan because supplier plants are locating near factories, forcing competition for labour, and because the practice merely shifts costs from large manufacturers to suppliers. He also argues that the practice will prove ineffective where labour costs are high and control over vendors is limited. Other JIT systems are also subject to criticism and probably require selective implementation.

US manufacturing capabilities are probably reaching parity with the Japanese (Reitsperger and Daniel 1990:290). Technology is very mobile

and most Japanese manufacturing methods have been adopted by the more alert US firms.

### **3.3.3.3 Training**

A competitive advantage that the Japanese possess and which will be difficult to duplicate in the US, is their passion for self-improvement and an unrivalled persistence in educational pursuits (Warner 1992:63). Most qualitative studies stress the importance of a prestigious university background to career progress, but statistical studies suggest that success in Japan is determined more by management potential and hard work. Since the Japanese usually major in science or engineering and obtain their management training in-house, few Japanese universities include business schools. Open recruitment, testing and selection of applicants are rare. Organisations submit requests for a specific number of workers or supervisors to various trade schools/universities. The educational institution matches the characteristics of the student with the demands of the corporate position and provides a list of prospective employees.

## **3.3.4 AFRICAN MANAGEMENT**

### **3.3.4.1 Introduction**

As mentioned previously, there is limited but sufficient empirical and theoretical research evidence on the nature of managerial work in Africa to make a reasonable attempt at portraying it.

It has been asserted too often that the development of non-Western countries - those of Africa, in particular - is highly dependent upon their assimilation of Western management techniques.

The economic development schemes in Africa since the 1980s are marked by an increasing interest in Western strategic management models as a major supporting component to economic development and growth. In most African countries, the focus is on the strengthening of management capacity and related training. For decades, African bureaucracies have remained the main institution to guide and implement development schemes. The managerial capabilities of African countries have been questioned because performance has been inadequate for the task at hand. Indeed, most of the failure of development programmes, from a *Western* point of view, is attributed to indigenous management incapacity and the weakness of the “soft state” that characterises most African bureaucracies (Hyden 1983 and Thomas 1996:7). The diffusion of modern Western management styles, skills and innovations is viewed to potentially contribute to sustained development for Africa.

Authors such as Crozier, Friedberg and Bourgoin as cited in Vengroff *et al* (1991) assert that the management function is responsive to culture, and/or the level of development or “structural differentiation”. According to Healy, Ketley & Robinson (1993:33), Western models of management are inappropriate to developing countries. These models, they argue, are based on the Weberian ideal type bureaucracy which “is above all a form of organisation dedicated to the concept of rationality, and to the conduct of administration on the basis of relevant knowledge”. This calls for a series of arrangements such as recruitment based on achievement, a career orientation for professionals, specialised and differentiated roles, a well-understood hierarchy and well-defined spheres of competence. Such arrangements do not exist in developing countries.

### 3.3.4.2 Management styles

When compared to Western management, relatively little is known about leadership and management styles in Africa. There is some consensus about the predominant management style in the continent's formal organisations: It is generally reckoned to be towards the authoritarian end of the continuum (from participative to authoritarian, *i.e.* more "tell" than "join"). Kiggundu (1989:226), for example, in his usual forthright style observes that "there is an acute shortage of quality leadership and management in Africa," yet this is a critical but neglected element in linking the "hopes ... of the vast majority of Africans, and the harsh realities of scarcity, deprivation, despair, and powerlessness that have come to characterise the continent". In the face of this desperate situation, Kiggundu asserts that prevailing management styles are authoritarian, personalised, politicised, and "not conducive for management development and the emergence of new leadership. Entrepreneurial, creative, and development talents are suppressed in favour of bureaucratic risk-averse administration based on absolute obedience".

Choudhry (as cited in Blunt 1983:93) is of similar opinion: "... the general tone of management in Africa is prescriptive ... often authoritarian, inflexible, and insensitive...". It is the view of Abudu (1986:18) that some of the causes of this style of management can be traced to Africa's colonial past. Colonial administrators had scant faith in the ability of their African subordinates and therefore tended to keep all managerial authority in their own hands (Khapoya 1994:25). The menial work which was assigned to subordinates was closely supervised. No real authority was delegated. The typical African management style was created that tends to concentrate managerial authority and functions in a small number of positions at the apex of the organisation.

In a typical African organisation, the human resources management function is characterised by routine activities that focus on short term considerations (Kaijage 1993). Task performance receives low priority and is likely to be relegated further by more urgent concerns.

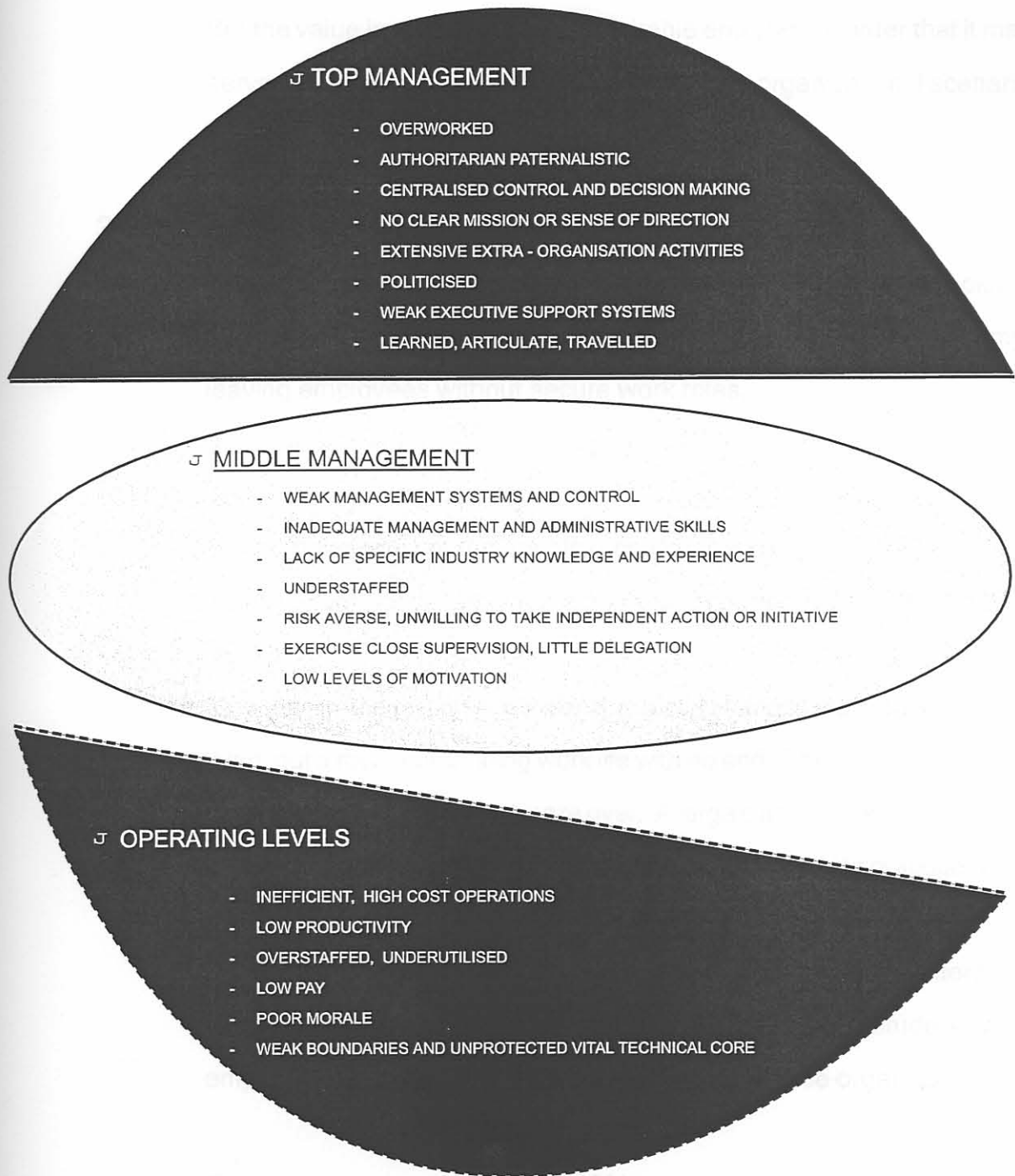
Brown (1989:376) sees this as a distinctive feature of some Third World bureaucracies, which involve a high degree of solidarity among administrators observable in “an extraordinarily forgiving attitude towards individual misdemeanours and an apparent absence of linkage between performance and reward”. Brown continues by providing an insight into such aspects of managerial behaviour that a Western executive would probably find perplexing, when he perceptively observes that “the motivation to participate is not of the same quality analytically as the motivation to perform”. Here Brown touches on a distinctive and significant element in many African cultures - the strong social bonds that are so important to the individual. This element, Brown suggests, finds expression in formal organisations in what he calls “incorporation,” which means inclusion in the social group. This motivation, Brown argues, will be stronger than the motivation to perform tasks for the organisation, and will involve loyalties to individuals rather than to the organisations.

### **3.3.4.3 Organisational systems and control**

Kiggundu (1989) suggests that top managers in a typical organisation in a developing country are authoritarian and paternalistic, autocratic, overworked, highly educated, articulate and widely travelled. However, they also tend not to provide much in the way of visionary leadership or example. Organisations typically do not have clearly stated and widely understood missions or objectives; they are heavily politicised, and have

weak executive support systems. In Kiggundu's view (1989), senior managers also devote too much of their time to extra-organisational activities that have little to do with the organisation's interests, such as political, tribal, religious, or personal family and business activities. Middle managers, on the other hand, are seen by Kiggundu (1989) as possessing inadequate management and administrative skills, insufficient industry specific knowledge and experience, low levels of motivation, and as being risk averse, unwilling to take independent action or initiative, favouring close direct supervision over other methods of co-ordination and, like senior management, to be unwilling to delegate. As a whole, middle lines in organisations in developing countries are understaffed and are characterised by weak and/or inappropriate management and organisation systems and controls. At the operating levels, developing country organisations are judged by Kiggundu (1989) to be inefficient, costly and overstaffed. Operators tend to be under-utilised, underpaid, and not rewarded according to performance. This results in low morale, lack of commitment, high turnover and absenteeism. Moreover, he sees the boundaries of the organisation as being "rather porous, leaving the vital technical core of the organisation unprotected and susceptible to abuse" (Kiggundu 1989:10). In Figure 3.2, the extended connecting lines between different levels represent inadequate co-ordination and communication between the different parts of the organisation, while the broken line surrounding the operating core indicates the permeability of organisational boundaries at that level.

Figure 3.2 A general profile of a developing country organisation



Source: Blunt & Jones (1983:132).

Like Kiggundu, this researcher acknowledges that there will be exceptions to this model in Africa and elsewhere in the developing world. But the value in describing an undesirable end state in order that it may serve as a stark reminder of a common African organisational scenario cannot be ignored.

### **3.3.5 Summary**

The old employment relationship in which people were paid for holding a “position” is dying because it is too confining for a turbulent economy, leaving employees without secure work roles.

This restructuring of work life is not without its problems. New technologies must automate old processes, work must be reorganised into self-contained clusters of activities performed by teams.

There is also a dawning realisation that these changes are not a temporary thing, but a more demanding work life with no end. The comfortable days of coasting along in hierarchy are over. A large class of unskilled workers may be unable to compete in the demanding new world of knowledge work.

Seniority, life-time employment, enterprise unionism and the enterprise as a community seem to form the four pillars of the attitude toward employees and career opportunities in the Japanese organisation.

Prevailing management styles in Africa are authoritarian, politicised and demand obedience and risk-averse administration from employees.

In the next section decision making and conflict resolution will be discussed.

## 3.4 DECISION MAKING AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

### 3.4.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this section is to consider the different facets influencing decision making and conflict resolution within Western, Japanese and African organisations. Leadership, power, empowerment, new attitudes and beliefs, role of management, planning and control mechanisms will be discussed.

### 3.4.2 WESTERN MANAGEMENT

#### 3.4.2.1 Introduction

The definitions of managerial work most favoured by practitioners and management textbooks still rely primarily on the writing of authors such as Fayol and Drucker. In these definitions, management is considered to be involved in broadly stated activities such as planning, motivating, and achieving goals through the work of others. On the whole, management researchers are less easily persuaded by the classical and popular schools, although some argue that classical definitions in particular should not be dismissed out of hand.

The main dissenting voices have been those of Mintzberg (1973, 1989) and Kotter (1982, 1988, 1990) who, in their observations of managerial work, have found that the manager "is not a systematic, reflective planner, deciding on the basis of "hard" information and following through decisions; but a responsive intuitive decision maker, with complex tasks, and decisions based on informal contacts and "soft" information, taken at a hectic pace, (and) constrained rather than intuitive" (Harrow & Willcocks 1990:283). Hecht (1994:27) argues that intuition is rapidly

becoming a key element in business thinking and practice. In a recent survey among managers in nine countries by the Institute for Management Development (IMD) in Lausanne, Switzerland, a surprisingly large number of them admitted to the use of intuition in their business dealing. More than 1300 senior managers from industrialised and service organisations from Japan, the US and UK (they were found to be the most intuitive) followed by those in Austria, Brazil, Holland, India, France and Sweden were included in the summary. More than half the managers surveyed claimed to use intuition and logic or reasoning in roughly equal measures. Martinko and Gardener (as cited in Hecht 1994:29) argue that research has paid insufficient attention to differences between the behaviour of good and bad managers.

### **3.4.2.2 Leadership**

Drucker (1992) argues that leadership is in essence performance. In the first place, leadership is not in itself good or desirable. Leadership is a means. Leadership to what end is therefore the crucial question. History knows no more charismatic leaders than the twentieth century's Stalin, Hitler, and Mao - the *misleaders* (as coined by Drucker), who inflicted as much evil and suffering on humanity as have ever been recorded.

Pretorius (1995) argues that visionary transformational leadership involves the development of an inspiring vision transforming all the people into a cohesive team, infusing them with enthusiasm and creating a climate in which all employees will want to identify spontaneously with the organisation and its ideals.

Drucker (1992) continues to say that precisely because an effective leader knows that he, and no one else, is ultimately responsible, he is not afraid of strength in associates and subordinates. Misleaders are afraid of strength; they always go for purges. But an effective leader wants strong associates; he encourages them, pushes them, indeed glories in them. He holds himself ultimately responsible for the mistakes of his associates and subordinates and sees the triumphs of his associates and subordinates as his triumphs, rather than as threats. A leader may be personally vain - as the US's General MacArthur was to an almost pathological degree. Or he may be personally humble - both the US former presidents Lincoln and Truman were considered to be this, almost to the point of having inferiority complexes. But all three wanted able, independent, self-assured people around them; they encouraged their associates and subordinates praising and promoting them. Tichy (1999:82) refers to this phenomenon as a mechanism he calls *teachable point of view* which turns leaders into teachers and their students into teachers and leaders, and so on.

Hans Smith, Communicator of the Year 1995 and Executive chairman of Iscor Limited, argued at a South African Association of Industrial Editors (SAAIE) seminar held on 7 November 1995 in Johannesburg that an effective manager had to be sincere and have good "ideas" to sell.

Huey (1994:18) argues that effective leaders do not expect to solve all problems themselves. They realise that no one person can deal with the emerging and colliding tyrannies of speed, quality, customer satisfaction, innovation, diversity and technology.

Leaders say no to their egos. They are confident enough in their vision to delegate true responsibility, both for the tedium of process and for the sweep of strategic planning. They are careful to “model,” or live by, the values they espouse. In a distinction that has been around for a while but is now taking on new meaning, they are leaders, not managers. Rutter (1995:27) argues that there are two fundamental questions that any leader must ask: “Where are my followers and where am I leading them?” This argument is echoed by Burke (1998).

Huey (1994:18) refers to this leadership as virtual leadership and explains that it still requires many of the attributes that have always distinguished the best leaders - intelligence, commitment, energy, courage of conviction, integrity. But the difference is this: It expects those qualities of just about everyone in the organisation. The time when a few rational managers could run everything with rational numbers, it seems, was just an anomaly, or part of an era very different from the fast-paced, continually shifting present. Those who cling to the past are in danger of losing their way, while the pioneers who forge ahead are most likely to claim the future.

Chevalier (1995) advises rather cynically that when people at the top start getting involved in petty issues, it may be a good idea to start looking for an alternative “position” where top management is focused on what they are really supposed to be doing (and being paid for).

Spears (1995) argues that servant-leadership has influenced many noted writers, thinkers and leaders. Max De Pree, Chairman of the Herman Miller Company and author of *Leadership is an Art* and *Leadership Jazz* has said, “The servanthood of leadership needs to be

felt, understood, believed, and practiced.” (As cited in Spears 1995:13). And Peter Senge, author of *The Fifth Discipline* has said that he tells people “not to bother reading any other book about leadership until you first read Robert Greenleaf’s book, *Servant-Leadership*. I believe it is the most singular and useful statement on leadership I’ve come across.” (As cited in Spears 1995:13). In recent years, a growing number of leaders and readers have “rediscovered” Robert Greenleaf’s own writings through the writings of De Pree, Senge and others.

### **3.4.2.3. What is servant-leadership?**

In all his works, Greenleaf discusses the need for a new kind of leadership model, a model that puts serving others - including employees, customers, and community - as the number one priority. Servant-leadership emphasises increased service to others, a holistic approach to work, a sense of community, and shared decision-making power.

Who is a servant-leader?

Greenleaf (as cited in Spears 1995) says that a servant-leader is one who is a servant first. In *The Servant as Leader* he writes: “It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant - first to make sure that other people’s highest-priority needs are being served. The best test is: Do those served grow as persons; do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?”

It is important to stress that servant-leadership is not a “quick-fix” approach. Nor is it something that can be quickly instilled within an institution. As its core, servant-leadership is a long-term, transformational approach to life and work. In essence, it is a way of being that has the potential to create positive change throughout society.

#### **3.4.2.4 Power**

Power has to be legitimate. Otherwise it has only force and no authority, is only might and never right. If power is an end in itself, it becomes despotism and both illegitimate and tyrannical (Drucker 1986).

Management must have power to do its job, whatever the organisation. In that respect there is little difference between the church, the university, the hospital, the labour union and the business enterprise. And because the governing organ of each of these institutions has to have power, it has to have legitimacy.

McClelland and Burnham (1995:127) argue that a top manager of an organisation must possess a high need for power, that is, a concern for influencing people. This need must be disciplined and controlled so that it is directed toward the benefit of the organisation as a whole. Moreover, the top manager’s need for power ought to be greater than his or her need for being liked. McClelland and Burnham (1995) confirm earlier convincing evidence that a constant concern for improvement, for growing the business in a cost efficient way, characterises successful managers of *small* organisations.

#### **3.4.2.5 Empowerment**

Empowerment of frontline managers does not mean abdication or

anarchy. One of top management's most important tasks is to establish internal discipline and so set the performance standards that will motivate frontline managers to superior performance (Goshal and Bartlett 1995b).

Top management's objective must be to reduce reliance on formal control systems and increase self-discipline instead. In a self-disciplined organisation, employees come to meetings on time, work towards agreement on defined agendas, and do not question in the corridors the decisions they agreed to in the conference room. Above all, they deliver on their promises and commitments.

For example, every management meeting at Intel (a US based manufacturer involved in technology who has been on Fortune's list of the top ten US organisations for the previous seven years), must have a clear agenda and must close with decisions, action plans, responsibilities and deadline. Such rules do not mean that debate is restricted. In fact, the company calls its management style and shapes as modelled by CEO and president Andy Grove, constructive confrontation (as cited in Goshal and Bartlett 1995a). Management expects everyone with opinions on an issue to contribute. But once an issue has been discussed fully and decisions have been made, dissension stops. The company's philosophy is clear: Everyone is expected to agree or disagree but eventually to commit.

In companies with successful entrepreneurial processes, top management's efforts to infuse the organisation with self-discipline must go hand in glove with a supportive and nurturing management style (Goshal and Bartlett 1995a).

### 3.4.2.6 New attitudes and beliefs

Gradually, new awarenesses are assimilated into basic shifts in attitudes and beliefs. This does not happen quickly. But, when it does; it represents change at the deepest level in an organisation's culture - "the assumptions we don't see," as Schein (as cited in Senge 1995:20) puts it.

Deep beliefs are often inconsistent with espoused values in organisations. The organisation might espouse an ideal of "empowering" people, but an attitude that "they won't let us do it" prevails. Thus, even though espoused values change, the culture of the organisation tends to remain the same. It is a testament to an employee's naïvety about culture that management think that they can change it by simply declaring new values. Such declarations usually produce only cynicism.

The set of deep beliefs and assumptions - the story - that develops over time in a *learning organisation* is so different from the traditional hierarchical, authoritarian organisational worldview that it seems to describe a completely different world. Indeed, in a way it does. For example, in this world an individual surrenders the belief that a person must be "in control" to be effective. He becomes willing to reveal his uncertainties, to be ignorant, to show incompetence - knowing that these are essential preconditions to learning because they set free the innate capacity for curiosity, wonder and experimentalism. He starts to give up faith in the analytic perspective as the answer to all of life's problems. Eventually, a deep confidence develops from within. He begins to see that individuals have a far greater latitude to shape the future than is commonly believed. This is no naïve arrogance. It develops in concert

with awareness of the inherent uncertainties in life, and the knowledge that no plan, however well thought out, is ever adequate. This confidence is based simply on firsthand experience of the power of people living with integrity, openness, commitment, and collective intelligence - when contrasted with traditional organisational cultures based on fragmentation, compromise, defensiveness, and fear.

### **3.4.2.7 From structuring tasks to shaping behaviours**

The structural element of the strategy-structure-systems doctrine that most managers know about allocating resources, assigning responsibilities, and controlling their effective management. The purpose-process-people doctrine of management rests on a different premise: That the organising task - accomplished through the three organisational processes described - is to shape the behaviours of people and create an environment that enables them to take initiative, to co-operate and to learn.

The new philosophy of organisation and management is built on different assumptions about motivation and behaviour. The entrepreneurial process and the competence-building process both assume and shape an environment for collaborative behaviour. And the renewal process capitalises on the natural human motivation to learn by creating the resources and tools that people need to do so. Developing an organisation that fosters those behaviours is something structure alone cannot achieve. To create those fundamentally new organisational processes at the core of the organisation requires top management to use all its tools - structure, systems, and culture (Goshal and Bartlett 1995b).

### 3.4.3 JAPANESE MANAGEMENT

#### 3.4.3.1 Introduction

Japanese long-term planning and persistence in pursuit of goals are legendary. One of the factors supporting this lengthy planning horizon is the “patient capital” produced by the close relationship between Japanese firms and their banks and by the sharing of stock holdings by *keiretsus* (Keys and Miller 1994). Large debt-to-equity ratios allowed by these relationships free firms from heavy reliance on stock financing and the requisite short term profit reporting. Furthermore, Japanese banks are typically among a member firm’s largest stockholders, a practice forbidden in the US by the Glass-Steagall Act. *Keiretsus* also hold some of the largest blocks of stock of group members and competing groups, practices which remove stock shares from the volatility of public trading and promote the stability needed for long term planning. An econometric study of the top 50 Multinational Enterprises (MNE’s) in the world, revealed that US MNE’s report significantly higher profits than Japanese or European firms. The findings of this study support the hypothesis that Japanese firms are not as dependent on profit reporting and are consistent with expectations from *keiretsu* banking support and joint stockholdings. As a result of these *keiretsu* related practices, mergers and acquisitions rarely take place with foreigners (even though Japanese joint ventures are common) and hostile take-overs are almost non-existent (Keys and Miller 1994:383).

Like many of the Japanese management practices, it appears that decision making styles are culturally influenced, in this case, by the preference for collective responsibility and accountability. Japanese decision making has typically been described as a consensus decision process in which emphasis is placed on building agreement. This is

reportedly done through *ringi*, (moving a decision around throughout the organisation), and *nemawashi*, (the process of planting ideas and information throughout the organisation so that informal understanding is obtained before implementation is attempted). It is also posited that the social cohesiveness of Japanese groups promotes consensus between all employees affected by the decisions made. Decision making and control procedures, indeed all general communications in Japan, are often described as being implicit and ambiguous (Ouchi 1981:388). However, the great homogeneity of the Japanese culture and consequent group cohesiveness are said to facilitate *implicit* communications (Barnlund 1993:157). On the negative side, Japanese firms have often been accused of being too ambiguous and slow in their decision making, incorporating little creativity, and often plagued with “group think.”

### **3.4.3.2 The role of top management**

Success is felt to come not from “grand strategy” but from building up skills and capabilities that will allow the company to develop in an uncertain future. This kind of reservoir is built up by husbanding technical skills, by extensive training and by sharing information and responsibilities between the head office and divisions. Plans and policies are developed on the basis of extensive consensus building, so that there is a store of information about the market, competition, costs and technologies (Campbell 1994:22; Japan restructures, grudgingly, 1999:65).

The approach pays more attention to the long-term “health” of the company than to the short-term wealth of shareholders. The drop in the Japanese stock market has led to pressure for shareholders to

receive a better return. Some necessary changes are taking place, but this will have only a minor influence on how top management thinks it should behave.

Campbell argues that Japanese top managers fulfil a custodial function. They aim to ensure the overall health of the community that comprises an extended network of business partners, and work to create a positive balance between the forces of competition and co-operation. The most appropriate metaphor for the president of the company is as the conductor of an ensemble of traditional Japanese instruments. The conductor sits inconspicuously on the end of the last row of musicians. Each musician pays close attention to the sound of those nearby. From the rear the conductor can see if the group is functioning well together. Forceful intervention is always possible and sometimes necessary, but the ideal is a performance based on each player striving to create a whole that is much greater than the sum of the parts (Campbell 1994:23).

### **3.4.3.3 Planning**

The long term planning horizon and the less explicit planning of the Japanese are evolving in favour of a more Western style of formal corporate planning. Yet the Japanese system remains more visionary and is subject to change less often than those systems employed by the US. Recent financial downturns in Japan have caused great harm to some highly leveraged Japanese companies and may have prompted more short-term thinking (Lincoln 1989:105).

### **3.4.3.4 Control**

Consensus decision making based on employee-management participation appears to have been built more on ritual than substance,

and to be even less authentic in transplanted Japanese operations utilising Western employees. Questions about this process have intensified recently because of experiences with Japanese owned and managed US based firms (Keys and Miller 1994:392). One of the few empirical studies testing decision styles of Japanese managers, provides greater evidence for such doubts. It was found that Japanese employees do not express a preference for participative decision making, but rather prefer consultative decision making in which subordinates are asked for their opinions while managers make the final decisions, or a persuasive decision-making style, in which managers make decisions and explain the reasons for them to their subordinates (Keys and Miller 1994:393).

Recent research based on open-ended interviews with a number of leading Japanese and US companies, discovered that the Japanese incorporate creativity through structural techniques such as job rotation, employee suggestion systems, quality circles and a compelling focus on product and process improvements (Basadur 1992:34). Basadur also found that employees were taught to be *constructively* discontented with their jobs, to use “problem-finding cards” and to consider work problems as “golden eggs”.

Similarly, the traditional assertions in the literature about the Japanese’s lack of appreciation for explicit control have been challenged. One survey of the 500 largest US and Japanese firms reported that Japanese controllers attached more importance to monetary control and analytical methods in examining budgetary performance, than did US controllers. Another study that collected company documents and data from headquarters personnel in seven of the giant electronics firms in Japan,

found that even the most clan-like firms in the sample, used formal rules and surveillance-type control extensively (Beechler 1992). Beechler (1992:31) also discovered that regardless of the degree of integration of international subsidiaries owned by the survey companies, there existed a “persistent trend of Japan-centric control of overseas operations”.

The real source of Japanese productivity is the expertise of production workers who are flexible and capable of solving complex problems. Shimuzu (1994:46) argues that in recent years, it has become clear that Japanese take too much time to make decisions, and sometimes make no decisions at all, an argument correlating with the discussion on decision making in section 3.3.1. Corporate profits have been declining over the previous four years, yet almost no CEO’s have stepped down to take responsibility as is the practice in the US. One example illustrating the differences between the US and Japanese approaches, is the case of the huge American company that reduced its payroll by 40 per cent in the US ... its Japanese operation (run by Japanese) cut its staff by only 10 per cent. A number of writers argue that Japanese companies seem to have, in the past, made better use of modern Human Resources Management (HRM) practices such as quality circles, consensus decision making, and co-operative union relationships than US companies (Lincoln 1989:104), probably because of cultural biases for informal social interaction and collective decision making.

Henkoff (1995:75) argues that Japanese organisations are, of necessity, becoming world-class experts at managing through tough times due to the comatose Japanese economy. The Japanese secret to prospering

in lean times can be summed up in one word: Simplicity. They are conjuring the courage to let go of some of their more celebrated managerial concepts, and in the process, they are starting to achieve extraordinary gains in productivity.

### **3.4.4 AFRICAN MANAGEMENT**

#### **3.4.4.1 Introduction**

One of the few empirical investigations that touches upon questions of leadership in African organisations is the large-scale study of managerial behaviour in the SADCC countries of southern Africa, reported by Montgomery (1987:911-929) and supported by Healy, Ketley and Robinson (1993:31-38). One of its findings was that the managers in the study appeared “conservative, preferring the unacceptable present to the unpredictable future” (Montgomery 1987:913). Data from the investigation also seem to support the assumption that African managers are more concerned with matters of internal administration than with policy issues, developmental goals, and public welfare. Montgomery (1987:916) remarks on the “aloofness of public managers from public responses”, which may be a symptom of their concerns with internal issues of resource allocation and relationships, and consequent lack of attention to the achievement of organisational goals. In Montgomery’s (1987:917) view “this finding may well be unique to Africa. It suggests that African managers find their greatest concerns (and triumphs) in administrative rather than substantive issues”. From the orthodox viewpoint of Western notions of leadership in organisations, this finding does appear unusual. As Leonard (1987:900) observes, “the largest part of a leader’s efforts is probably directed at factors that are external to his (or her) organisation”. If Montgomery’s finding is correct, it has serious implications for the performance of African organisations. Such

emphatic concern for internal organisational issues and relative neglect of the organisation's purpose and objectives - the classic caricature which has earned the once neutral word 'bureaucrat' its now pejorative associations - is hardly likely to provide the dynamic organisational performance which Africa so urgently needs.

#### **3.4.4.2 Primary task of management**

Associated with this inward-looking tendency, Montgomery (1987:919) found that the main task of managers in government was the management and allocation of resources. Data indicated that managers were heavily involved in "even trivial details of resource management". Montgomery further observes that this is not especially surprising, given that many African nations are so poor in resources. This argument is also advanced by Brown (1989:376) when he says that "an important and undervalued function of bureaucracies in politically unstable societies is the search for stability, and that incorporation plays as important a role as task performance in defining their rationale."

The SADCC study reported by Montgomery (1987) also provides support for the picture of the authoritarian leadership styles and hierarchical structures. Kiggundu (1988) remarks that this type of organisational milieu promotes fear in the system, "as power is so concentrated at the top". Data from the SADCC study suggest that "the most successful strategies in interorganisational transactions involved appeals to higher authority rather than attempts to reach new agreements ..." (Montgomery 1987:924). One serious consequence of this type of management style reported by Montgomery (1987:925), is that top managers in Africa ... "rarely display leadership by undertaking administrative reforms". This is hardly surprising because, in any

system, initiatives for organisational change involve some form of risk taking - or at least perceived risk taking. This is the last type of managerial behaviour to be encouraged by the kind of autocratic culture that appears to be typical of many African organisations.

In contrast to the position that is claimed to prevail in Western enterprises, African managers are not primarily driven by organisational missions and objectives; neither, if the very limited available evidence is to be believed, do their loyalties lie mainly with their organisations.

A consequence of this, according to both White (1987) and Leonard (1987), is that the link - assumed in Western organisations - between organisational goals and the manager's career rarely exists in Africa; "to a much greater extent than is true in the West, then, commitment must be internally generated by the manager" (Leonard 1987:903).

### **3.5 SUMMARY**

Whenever leadership is discussed, attention invariably gravitates to that illusive issue of power. The very essence of leadership is to get others to do something. In this broad sense everyone is a leader.

Rather than acting with bold determination and extending a brilliant vision to guide others, today's leaders must direct attention away from themselves to focus on the followers. They must unite their vision with the many other visions also waiting to be realised. Handy (1989:112) sums it up by concluding: "The wise organisation realises that intelligent individuals can only be governed by consent and not by command; obedience cannot be demanded and a collegiate culture of colleagues and a shared understanding is the only way to make things happen."

In order to understand the context of Ubuntu as core value for a Afrocentric management approach, the next chapter will be devoted to the origin, history and the components that constitute Ubuntu.

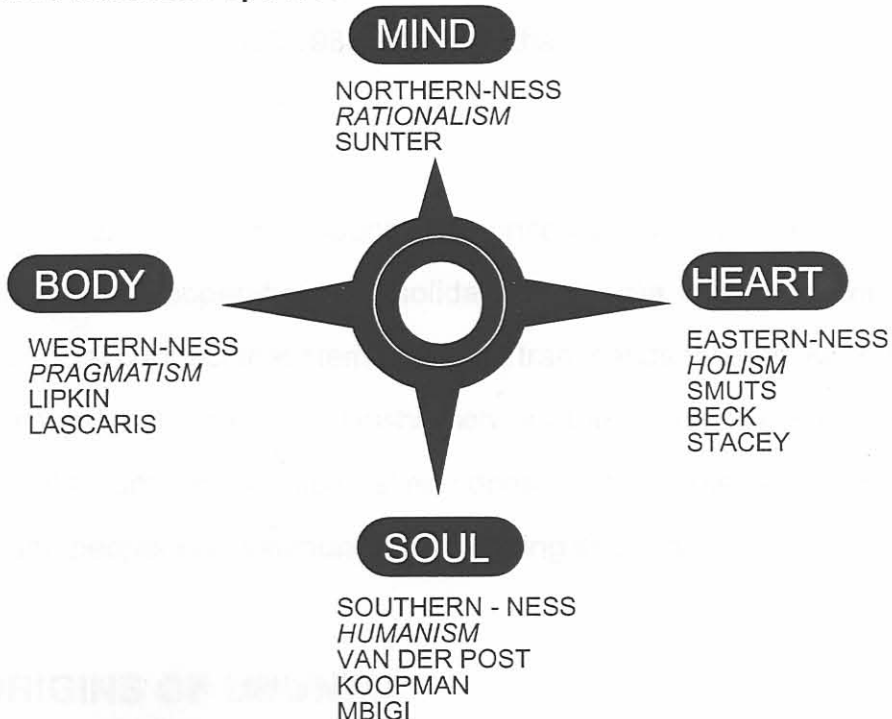
# CHAPTER 4

## UBUNTU

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 3, an overview of the relevant literature on Western, Japanese and African management was given, to form a theoretical framework for Ubuntu. This chapter will attempt to explore the basic principles of Ubuntu as it appears in the literature. As mentioned in Chapter 1, fewer than five primary authors were responsible for most of the literature on Ubuntu, concentrating the current thought and knowledge base. The exponents of Ubuntu are Van der Post, Koopman and Mbigi (Lessem and Nussbaum 1996:43) whose arguments will form the basis of this chapter. The other three business spheres as illustrated in Figure 4.1, will not be represented in this investigation, as it falls outside the parameters of Ubuntu.

Figure 4.1 The four business spheres



Source: Lessem & Nussbaum (1996: 36)

## 4.2 DEFINITION OF UBUNTU

Derived from the root, *ntu* (person), the Nguni word is best translated into “a man is a man”. In the Shona tribe this would be called *unhu* (hereafter referred to only as Ubuntu). Poor African societies thrive on the solidarity principle of Ubuntu (Mbigi and Maree 1995a:41; Dandala 1996:69; Groenewald 1996:21). This embraces the notion of group solidarity - *munhu munhu*, i.e. “a man is a man through others”, and is entitled to unconditional respect, dignity, acceptance and care from his significant relevant group or community. In return for the security offered by the group, the individual will have to conform on survival issues.

Vilakazi (1991) argues that Ubuntu is the belief in the central sacredness, and foremost priority of the human being in all his/her conduct, throughout his/her life. The value, dignity, safety, welfare, health, beauty, love and development of the human being, and respect for the human being, are to come first, and should be promoted to rank first before all other considerations, particularly before economic, financial, and political factors are taken into consideration.

Jabavu (as cited by Godsell 1983) describes Ubuntu as “human feeling” and Murray (as cited by Godsell 1983) “the link that binds man and man together simply because they are men”.

Khoza (1993:122) argues that Ubuntu is a concept that brings to the fore images of supportiveness, cooperation, and solidarity; *inter alia*, communalism. It is the basis of a social contract that stems from but transcends the narrow confines of the nuclear family to the extended kinship network, the community. Boon (1996:32) explains that Ubuntu is not empirical and does not exist unless there is interaction between people in a community, manifesting through the actions of people.

## 4.3 THE ORIGINS OF UBUNTU

Disadvantaged or marginalised groups anywhere in the world survive on collec-

tive unity or solidarity and consciousness. Due to the poverty of their material circumstances, they cannot survive on individual initiative alone. They have to stick together on selective survival issues and unquestioning conformity is expected from everyone on these issues. Loyalty and conformity become prized values for every member of the group. The ability to sacrifice, suffer and display a spirit of service with regard to certain selected survival issues, becomes a mark of heroism. The failure to conform on survival issues such as rent boycotts, mass action, strikes and liberation is met with ruthless measures (Mbigi and Maree 1995b:7).

Anthropologists can trace the historic origins of Ubuntu to the first groups of human beings. The groups were small with the most important link between members being the blood relation (Roux 1995:14).

The most important activity was the hunting of wild animals as sources of food and clothing and subsistence farming. When a tribe became too big, new tribes were formed (food became scarce). Labour was a collective activity and all food was shared equally amongst the community. Their survival therefore depended upon their collective unity (Roux 1995:14).

The principles of Ubuntu were already established in these societies. The importance of these principles is reflected in mythology and legends. Ubuntu was first brought to the philosophical table by Dr ZK Matthews and Prof Samukange, as well as by the African National Congress youth leader Lembede in the 1940s, and was popularised by Steve Biko and Abraham Tiro in the 1970s.

In the 1950s it had been expressed as the concept of negritude by the poet presidents Leopold Senghor and Augustino Neto (Mbigi and Maree 1995a:40). The conceptual difference between Ubuntu, Africanisation and Afrocentricity will be discussed below.

#### 4.4 AFRICANISATION AND AFROCENTRICITY

Vorster (1996:13) argues that there is a considerable difference in opinion about the meaning of the term Africanisation and that the term means different things to different people. The origin of Africanisation can be linked to the rise of the Pan-African movement in protest to the European domination of Africa and African thought. From this emerged two lines of thought: The “negritude” movement and Africanisation. The “negritude” movement gathered impetus among aliens and exiles living in Europe and the US. Nationalist leaders in Africa took the basic ideas of the “negritude” movement and developed Africanisation in an effort to assert the rights of blacks against the claims of white supremacy.

Considering the origin of Africanisation, it can be stated that Africanisation primarily concerns Africans or blacks of African descent and Europeans or whites of European descent who have made their home in Africa - it concerns all people in Africa and people associated with Africa (Vorster 1996:18).

Within the South African context, Africanisation calls upon South Africans to:

- Regard Africa, specifically South Africa, as a basis from which and to which to grow and aspire;
- take pride in being South Africans;
- appreciate and cherish the South African cultural heritage;
- assert their own ideas, rights, interests and ideals;
- anticipate healthy self-concepts; and
- hold their own nationally in the South African and world-wide intercultural context (Vorster 1996:18).

Khoza (1993:118) describes Afrocentricity as Africans putting Africa at the centre of their existence and Africans anchoring themselves in their own continent;

its history, traditions, cultures, mythology, creative motif, ethos and value systems exemplifying the African collective will. It is both theoretical and practical. In its theoretical aspect it entails interpretation and analysis from the perspective of African people as subjects rather than objects on the periphery of the European or so-called Western experience. In its practical implications, Afrocentricity entails authentic Africa-based behaviour in the sociocultural, economic and political arena.

Khoza explains that Afrocentricity is not an attempt to impose an African worldview upon others, nor is it an attempt to develop black supremacy. Afrocentricity proposes that people of African descent or cultural orientation anchor their view and evaluation of the world within their own historical and ontological framework. It is about bold African self-assertion with Africa as a launch pad (Khoza 1993:118; Mosalaka 1996:16).

Africanisation can therefore be described as a philosophy resulting from the need of a group(s) of people to guard what is perceived to be their cultural heritage. It is a movement from the *outside-in* (pushing, re-active dynamism). Afrocentricity on the other hand is a philosophical approach with its emphasis on a pro-active pull dynamism where the movement is from the inside-out.

#### **4.5 SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT AND CULTURAL CONTEXT OF UBUNTU**

Ubuntu is a metaphor that describes the significance of group solidarity and is entitled to unconditional respect, dignity, acceptance and care from an individual's relevant group or community. In return for the security offered by the group, the individual has to conform on survival issues. This group compassion, care and conformity on survival challenges caused by poverty, war, famine, disease, suffering and change is what is called Ubuntu, and it is deeply rooted in African

morality and ethics. The issue is personhood and is the heart and soul of poor African societies, both urban and rural. In the current poor African communities, the freedom from want takes precedence over freedom from choice. A man is only a man through others. "I am because we are." One has to encounter the "we" before discovering the "I" (Mbigi and Maree 1995a:41). Boon (1996:48) argues that there is a massive movement of individuals turning their backs on their traditions and discipline and in so doing, the closeness of community of Ubuntu. They replace it not with the very best of the First World, but often with the very worst.

#### 4.5.1 THE EMERGENCE OF UBUNTU IN AFRICAN ORGANISATIONS

The South African trade unions have been the most dynamic transformative force in South Africa during the past decade. It appears that they operate on the basis of the solidarity principle in the form of endless caucusing and continuous consulting of grassroots members through an ongoing process of mandates. They have also been quite effective in enforcing conformity among their members (Mbigi and Maree 1995a:41). Mbigi and Maree continue to argue that the trade unions have also been quite effective in enforcing conformity among those non-members who work for the same organisations when it comes to survival issues such as Black Liberation, strikes, sit-ins and stayaways. The unions have effectively competed against big business and the apartheid state on the basis of Ubuntu - *i.e.* the solidarity principle. The same can also be said about other liberation movements, such as the United Democratic Front. It is the solidarity, with its emphasis on group conformity on survival issues, that made "necklacing" (a murder ritual - putting a lighted, gasoline-soaked tyre around an individual's neck) possible, rightly or wrongly. The other organisations that came to realise the strategic importance of the solidarity principle were the churches, such as the

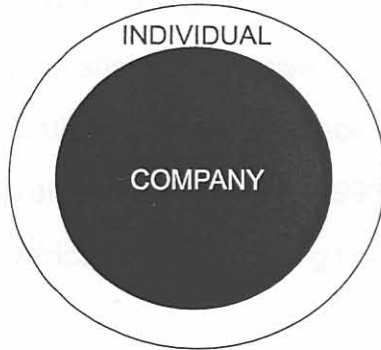
Source: Kropman (1991:32)

African Zionist Church and the Zionist Christian Church, which are perhaps the only truly authentic African organisations with limited Western influence (Mbigi and Maree, 1995a:41).

In South Africa, whites have primarily designed exclusive institutions which give primacy to the individual, his development and self-fulfilment, and which serve to foster liberal democracy. Blacks, on the other hand, believe that man is very much part of the societal fabric and see the need for each individual to find his place in a societal structure, to play his particular role in it and, to a large extent, subordinate himself to the societal needs. In other words, Koopman (1993:41) argues, he desires organisations to be inclusive. Koopman's argument is illustrated in figure 4.2.

**Figure 4.2 Business and humanity**

INDIVIDUAL CARES FOR THE COMPANY



COMPANY CARES FOR THE INDIVIDUAL



Source: Koopman (1991:32)

## 4.5.2 THE VALUE SYSTEMS

Everybody has a value system which shapes their worldview. It is based on a system of beliefs and human experiences within a framework of background education, environmental interaction, upbringing and culture. Language also influences worldview and will determine the way one responds to certain stimuli. Theories on left brain and right brain thinking have also evolved as a result of different value systems (Koopman 1993:43). Koopman uses the example of a well-educated first-world person that will think predominantly with his left brain - boxes, computers, numbers, logic ends instead of means, analytical instead of holistic.

A lesser educated person, in turn, focuses on right brain thinking - creative, survivalist, musical, improvement of process (means) and holistic. In Africa, this was the right equipment to use in order to survive. In right brain thinking greater consideration was given to social structures than technological breakthroughs. A mismatch now comes from forcing a predominantly holistic and inclusive right brain thinker into the straitjacket of a predominantly left brain workplace which has created analytical and exclusive environments (Koopman 1993:43). Koopman goes as far as to equate South African blacks to being right brained and whites left brained.

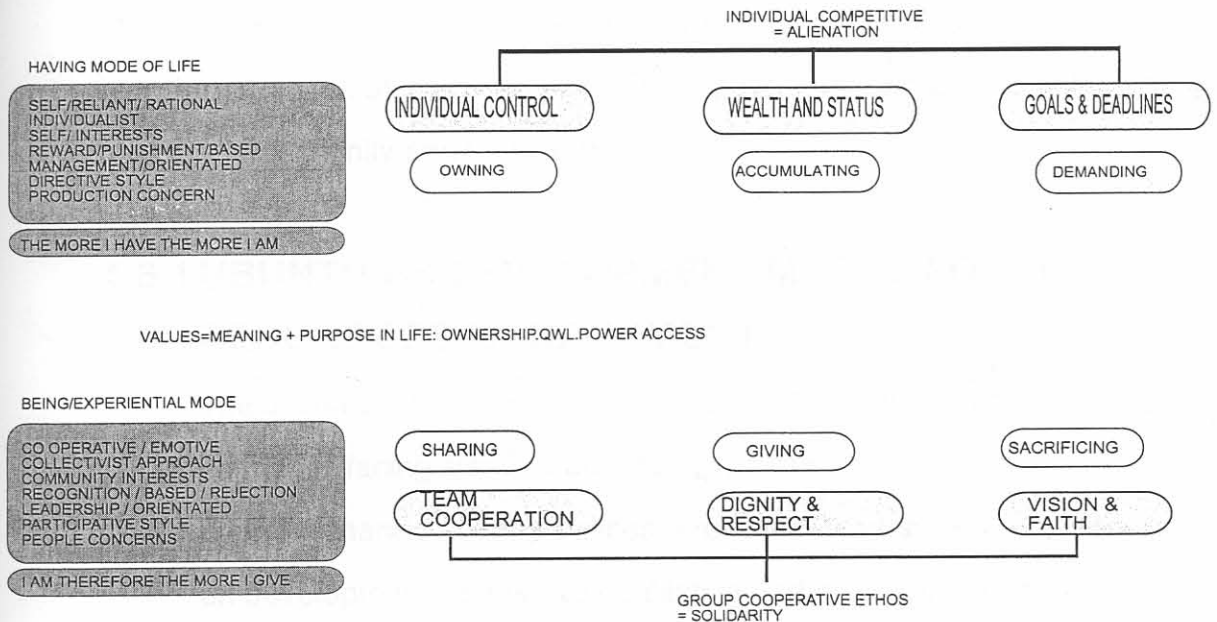
Self-reliant individualist drives are substituted by emotive collectivist drives. The focal objective of man's existence within the framework of self-reliant drives is therefore fulfilment of himself and securing of this hereafter. This can only be achieved through individual effort and merit which differentiates an individual from his fellow man. He becomes competitive, ambitious and achievement-oriented.

Man's existence, as perceived from group cooperative or collectivist drives

on the other hand, is the willing subordination of individuals to the communal good. Preponderant weight is given to man as a member of a community and his interaction with others. Koopman (1993:44) concludes that this individual has to find his roots within and amongst others, and if social organisational governance does not allow him to do this, the purpose of work and the worker's purpose will never be congruent.

Respect for elders, the extended family, an inclination to focus on morals rather than on roles and functions, as well as external loci of control are all examples of the inclusivistic Ubuntu-based value system. Figure 4.4 illustrates the differentiating components of individualism versus communalism.

**Figure 4.4 Individualism versus communalism**



Source: Koopman (1993 : 44).

## 4.6 CAREER AND ATTITUDE TOWARD EMPLOYEES

Ubuntu requires the company to redefine performance relationships, roles and responsibilities of both managers and workers (Mbigi and Maree 1995a:42). The current performance relationships characterised by conflict, mistrust, bitterness, exploitation, alienation, polarisation, low morale and fear need to be transformed into the spirit of co-operation, trust, high morale, independence and co-creation. The manager-labour relationship is replaced by unity in diversity. This is the essence of Ubuntu and it can be an unshakeable basis of business competition and managing business renewal.

Mbigi and Maree argue that management can get access to the work spirit through business-critical awareness and must include a mythological, heroic and tragic narration of the collective experience of all the groups. "In order to know what we can become, we must first know who we are" (Mbigi and Maree 1995a:42). The managerial knowledge base has to be social anthropology and mythology and the organisation's agreed code of conduct must contain the values of respect, human dignity and teamwork.

### 4.6.1 UBUNTU AS DEVELOPMENT MODEL FOR HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

The assumption of Ubuntu as development model is that Africa is a poor continent facing tremendous development challenges; therefore any effective management practices, processes and systems have to focus on development issues. No qualitative and meaningful economic, social and political transformation will take place without the generation of effective management paradigms.

The focus of the developmental human resources model is holistic development. The model focuses on continuous improvement and

development of people, products, systems, structures, markets, productivity and quality, as well as performance. The essence of this approach is a single-minded dedication to total development and transformation. Business and economic transformation in Africa has to be driven by people and not technological innovation, because Africa does not have the resources (Mbigi and Maree 1995b:87).

Under this model, the human resources practitioner would be guided by four cardinal principles:

- The principle of morality
- The principle of interdependence
- The principle of the spirit of man
- The principle of totality

The role of the human resources function, then, becomes developmental and strategic, but rooted in the spirit of the Africa-based human dignity and the creation of an enterprising community (Mbigi and Maree 1995b:89).

## **4.7 DECISION-MAKING AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

The solidarity principle would require managers to preserve the collective unity of the workers by creating effective grassroots teams who are task-based. These have to meet during working hours for a minimum of 30 minutes and a maximum of one hour. The agenda should be set in terms of universal standards of quality, quantity, cost, time and performance relationships. This necessitates the creation of an operations forum, which is a meeting of representatives of the shop stewards' committee and management to look at burning and key strategic issues. These forums can only work if the parties involved are prepared to move beyond bargaining stances and horse-trading practices, so as to focus on com-

mon survival issues. This may necessitate flexibility of ideology and sloganeering, which may require the parties to undergo a fundamental paradigm shift. There has to be a need for a joint passion for co-creation and value-adding (Mbigi and Maree 1995a:41).

Ubuntu as a strategic tool requires managers to extract relevant empowering gut issues. The ability to continuously select relevant business themes and to manage them is crucial, for example downtime, disputes, wastage, rejection rate, set-up time, racism and efficiency rate. It is difficult to maintain solidarity or Ubuntu if there is no central task at hand or the absence of co-creation. The power of Ubuntu lies in its being task-aligned and must include survival issues. Perpetual process-mapping helps in the selection of the appropriate themes, like value chain analysis, with a view to eliminating constraints and enhancing value-adding (Mbigi and Maree 1995a:42).

Managing conflict is an “open” sum process involving immediate family supervisors, elders, and so forth within the framework of morals. This necessitates entering into a “dialogue” from which a sense of “fairness” and “unfairness” towards other members in society can emerge. Koopman (1993:48) argues that in contrast, whites alienate themselves within conflict situations leading them to enter into “negotiations” in order to control an outcome of “rightness” and “wrongness”.

## 4.8 SUMMARY

“A man is a man”, and is therefore entitled to unconditional respect and dignity. Ubuntu is not a racial or trivial concept. The concept of Ubuntu is both particularistic and universal, implicitly expressed elsewhere in the world.

Ubuntu can be reflected in both Africanisation and Afrocentricity and they are not mutually exclusive concepts.

Ubuntu shares its concern for people and represents African humanism in its indigenous essence. It upholds values such as respect, being treated with dignity, and also empathy. Ubuntu reflects group solidarity on survival issues that is essential to all dispossessed people wherever they are in the world.

The concept of Ubuntu emphasises the need to harness the solidarity tendency of the African people and is projected as a normative theory in literature for the development of management practices and approaches. The definition of Ubuntu as related to management, includes a number of elements, *i.e.* collectivism, communalism, team reward, developmental focus, shared values, and empowerment. A comparative analysis can now be formulated based on Ubuntu and the preceding chapter on Western, Japanese and African management practices.

# CHAPTER 5

## ANALYSIS OF MANAGEMENT PHILOSOPHIES

### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 4, Ubuntu as core value system was described. The arguments of Van der Post, Koopman and Mbigi, the exponents of Ubuntu, formed the basis of that chapter. The relevant business sphere was also identified, demarcating the research area of Ubuntu.

Data analysis requires a number of closely related operational decisions, such as establishment of categories or dimensions, the application of these categories or dimensions to raw qualitative data, tabulation and finally progressing into quantitative research, where factor analytical processes will take place.

The establishment of *categories or dimensions*, where raw data were classified into some purposeful and usable categories or dimensions, became apparent in the discussion done on historical background of management in Chapter 2, thereafter also used in Chapter 3. Using the inductive strategy, (refer Chapter 6 for more information) the researcher embarked upon the study without an explicit conceptual framework, but was led by the data itself, discovering relationships or patterns by means of close scrutiny of the data. At this point in the research process, a general understanding of the phenomenon being studied has been reached. In terms of the Mitroff & Kilmann (1978) model describing the scope of this study, this chapter deals with the conceptual framework, circle II.

In this chapter these established categories or dimensions will be tabulated, wielding the qualitative data into a few manageable groups and presented in a tabulated format for further analysis.

The comparative analysis describing Western, Japanese and African management, juxtaposed with Ubuntu as core value, will now follow.

# ANALYSIS OF MANAGEMENT PHILOSOPHY

## SOCIAL/ENVIRONMENTAL/CULTURAL CONTEXT

JAPANESE	WESTERN	AFRICAN	UBUNTU
Perceived significance of titles; important average power distance; power of the elder	Significance of titles unimportant; below average power distance	Titles/status important; above average power distance	Title unimportant; below average power distance; power of the elder
Kinship and business ties relatively strong	Kinship and business ties relatively weak	Kinship and business ties relatively strong	Kinship and business ties; very strong extended family; shared values
Established educational infrastructure. Higher education based wholly on ability. Alma mater and year of graduation important points of identification. A generalist model predominates at university, followed by an apprenticeship at specific company	Established educational infrastructure. Higher education open to majority. Alumni networks and university ties secondary to individual accomplishments. Pre-dominance of technical training in business schools	Weak/absent educational infrastructure. Educated elite (educated in the US, Europe or former Russia)	Developmental focus; integrates traditional and Westernised education; age is an important source of wisdom
Very high on masculinity index; materialistic; differentiated sex roles; decisiveness; sympathy for the achiever; a "live-to-work" philosophy	Scores "average" on masculinity index	Scores "low" on masculinity index; people orientated; interdependence; sympathy for the unfortunate; intuition; a "work-to-live" philosophy	Scores "low" on masculinity index; people oriented interdependence; sympathy for the unfortunate; intuitive integration between work and home; extended family
Collectivistic culture: view themselves as group members and less as individuals	Individualistic culture: view themselves as individuals who together form a group; self reliant	Collectivist culture, but not as collective as the Japanese. Group affiliation more important than individuality	High collectivist culture. Group affiliation much more important than individuality (an individual emerges out of a group); dependent
High face-saving culture: preserving one's prestige/ dignity	Low face-saving culture: very direct	High face-saving culture	High face-saving culture; dignity; inclusive group orientation; greatest fear is rejection by group

JAPANESE	WESTERN	AFRICAN	UBUNTU
Are less accustomed to using the law to resolve conflicts: shun win-lose situations and believe all matters can be resolved through compromise and reconciliation. Never use attorneys in negotiations	Use the law in resolving conflicts. Businesses use attorneys to negotiate or assist in negotiation	Law available to the elite; seen as luxury	Justice is a sense of fairness; do what is right and moral; laws must be in tune with values
High-context culture: information implicitly contained	Low-context culture: information explicitly conveyed	High-context culture: organisation information on a "need to know"	High-context culture: information implicitly conveyed; unconditional dialogue
Leaders in development/ utilisation of modern technology	In forefront with development/utilisation of modern technology	Lagging behind in effective utilisation and management of foreign technology	Low utilisation and management of foreign technology
Greater emphasis on qualitative techniques - relates to Confucian dynamism index - high CD society: long-term (future) oriented	Greater emphasis on and trust in quantitative techniques - low Confucian dynamism society: short-term oriented	Very low Confucian dynamism society - want to satisfy needs here and now	Emphasis on qualitative techniques; belief in non- control over the self
Power not determined by monetary value	The more the individual has, the more powerful he is	Very poor communities; number of children equals wealth	The more the communal person is prepared to give and share, the more respected he/she becomes
Concept of time: proud of heritage; future-oriented	Concept of time: infinite - the past is gone - look to the future; want to control future	Concept of time: past is important, live from day to day; not future-oriented; destiny	Concept of time: circular view of time (past is more important than the future) accept destiny

## CAREER AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS EMPLOYEES

JAPANESE	WESTERN	AFRICAN	UBUNTU
Life-time employment, rare dismissal, non-specialised career path	Short-term employment, frequent dismissal, specialised careers; outsourcing	Life-time employment; uncertain career path	Life-time employment; human rights
In-house training as generalist, for all employees	Specific skill training useful in many organisations, seen as perk; sharing of knowledge	Little in-house training	In-house training important; knowledge sharing
Early career emphasis on following directions, team skills; later, quantifiable objectives, team leadership in decision making	Early career quantifiable objectives; later, individual decisions and inspiring followers	Early career emphasis on following orders/red tape	Early career emphasis on following directions determined by group/internal values, later qualitative objections; de-bureaucratised organisation
Job rotation for all to develop generalists	Transfers for middle managers to broaden views	No job rotation or transfer due to poor manpower/management development strategies	Job rotation based on teamwork
Evaluation on proficiency at tasks, teamwork skills, ability to contribute to development of others	Evaluation on achievement of individual quantifiable objectives	No specified evaluation techniques. Very little evaluation - low priority. No linkage between performance and reward	Evaluation based on teamwork and teamwork skills
Promote on seniority, training	Promote for doing something beyond the job paid for; "added value"	Little promotion; when promoted it is because of nepotism, family status; sometimes because of bribery	Promotion unimportant but dependent upon leadership skills; how will it benefit group?
Entry directly from school, promote from within	Fill top levels from outside - gives "fresh blood"	Promote from within, otherwise political appointment	Entry on advice of group nepotism; "is he/she part of the group"?
Emphasis on group co-operation	Emphasis on accomplishments, ability; individual as team player	Emphasis on group co-operation; loyalty to group stronger than loyalty to organisation	Emphasis on group co-operation; loyalty to group and organisation; inclusive philosophy; developmental and transformative

JAPANESE	WESTERN	AFRICAN	UBUNTU
Outstanding performance not equated to fast movement up ranks/ rapid salary increases; instead, additional responsibility/ recognition - "elite track"; hiring based on education not skills, low wages consistent through industry, bonuses, fringe benefits, allowances tied to organisational performance	Performance must be rewarded quickly with promotion/pay increases or the employee will leave; hiring based on skills of immediate use to company, high wages in top organisations, bonuses tied to achievement of objectives, perks due to status	Allowances tied to socio- economic environment. Large gap between management and worker benefits. Individual performance protected by group. Individual wage supplemented by private work/interests (usually in the form of bribery)	Hiring based on adaptation/inclusion/belonging in group; individual performance influences group performance; small gap between management and worker benefits; group opinion more important than materialistic benefits
Relative pay equality between workers/ management; pay increases with age and seniority	Wide salary discrepancies, based on position and level in company	Infrequent pay increases; wide salary discrepancy between senior levels	Group-related pay increases; little salary discrepancy between senior levels; group reward for group effort
Payment-by-results based on group performance	Payment-by-results on individual performance	Payment based on socio- economic environment	Payment based on socio-economic environment based on group performance and consent; do not want to be separated by money
Personal well-being, housing, recreation, and security considered	Personal matters left at home; ratings on performance	Personal and work life are intertwined; workers supplement income outside institution	Personal and work life integrated; group well-being
Organisation a system of personal relationships, values, social interactions	Organisation a system of roles	Organisation an extension of social interaction values; weak task differentiation	Organisation an extension of social interaction and group values
Business paternalistic; emphasis on status, security and harmony; preservation of group most important	Business mechanistic; emphasis on smoothly functioning parts; realisation of profits most important	Business paternalistic/ authoritarian; emphasis on group security and preservation	Business co-operative; group harmony important; convivial business outlook
Quality control circles based on belief that cause of poor performance is unknown and workers will find causes and remedy if given opportunity	Layers of inspectors becoming less; based on belief that workers holding back, need to be checked on	Little quality control; group protective of individual; low morale and productivity; exercise close supervision	Quality control is group effort; high morale; high correlation between productivity and empowerment

JAPANESE	WESTERN	AFRICAN	UBUNTU
Concern with person	Concern with product	Concern with survival; "winner-takes-all" philosophy	Concern with group; concerned with process; unity in diversity
Feeling of caring about people; use of open office facilitates communication	Care about output and meeting profit objectives; private offices limit communication	Weak formed channels of communication; top-down communication on a "need-to-know" basis	Open informal communication (continuous dialogue); communication facilitates Ubuntu; "story-telling"
Corporate task to attend to whole person - economic, social, spiritual, and psychological needs	Employees seen as objects, units of production; corporate task to attend to economic needs	Employees seen as objects; corporate task to attend to social/ subsistence needs	Employees and organisation - inclusive; humanism

## DECISION MAKING AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Subordinates' ideas and suggestions encouraged; obligation to include all people; effective implementation requires reconciliation of competing interests	Decisions fixed, bound in time, definite point of reference; alternatives selected before action; decisions separate from implementation, effective implementation may involve a winner and a loser	Subordinates not encouraged to make suggestions. "Acceptance" culture - do not ask questions; little "risk taking"	Consensus seeking through debate; solidarity; empowerment of people in the decision-making process
Collective decisions; use "Ringi" system; everyone feels their view is heard and will support; groups responsible for outcome, use of "action behind the scene"	Individual decisions, implementation involves lobbying or coercion; individuals responsible for outcome, use announcements; accountable to self	Top management make decisions; management involved in "trivial" decision making. Organised leadership and highly personalised management styles	Employment of the people; collective sense of responsibility and cause accountable to group
Top management coordinates decisions and middle management formulates	Movement away from individual to leadership. Top management formulates decisions; middle management feeds information to top (flatter organisation)	Top management make all decisions; little up or downward communication	Top management seek group consensus; continuous dialogue
Solutions formulated by those close to the problem; information flows bottom-up and horizontal; information channels link clusters of decision points	Solutions formulated by those with authority; information flows top down	Solutions formulated by those with authority; information flows top down	Solutions and problem-solving consensus; continuous information sharing - horizontally and vertically

JAPANESE	WESTERN	AFRICAN	UBUNTU
Middle managers provide impetus and are shapers of solutions to problems; co-ordinate and assure functional areas in agreement; implementation immediate	Middle managers functional specialists who carry out bosses' orders; unanimity based on win- lose	Weak middle management; controlled by top management; follow orders, low motivation; exercise close supervision	Empowered middle management group following; unanimity based on win-win
Emphasis on information flows; CEO improves on initiative of others, creates atmosphere in which subordinates motivated to seek better solutions	CEO makes key decisions, sets policy; welfare of organisation depends on his or her actions	CEO controls institution; makes most decisions; welfare depends on his/ her actions and standing in community; political affiliations; authoritarian/ paternalistic	CEO leads organisation; creates atmosphere for high productivity; emphasis on dialogue; transformational leadership
Top management facilitates decisions, objectives implicit	Top management issues edicts; objectives explicit	Top management has no clear mission/ direction	Top management has clear vision; shared objectives
Process important, question(s) framed by group; consensus, maintaining harmony, right spirit considered; indirect speech and subtle nuances used	Executives gather relevant information, ask for advice, evaluate on basis of efficiency and effectiveness	Few questions are asked; existence philosophy day to day	Continuous dialogue; process driven; consensus seeking
Harmonisation culture: people are part of their environment; technology is a means to maintain a balance in nature	Control culture: conviction that individuals and organisations can substantially influence the future; masters of own destiny via technology: rational approach to reality	Subjugation culture: subject to their environment; technology is a waste of effort; inferior technology	Humanistic culture; people/group are primary concern; co-operative; focus on common survival issues
Kaizen - continued improvement focus on process	Innovation - once off, results oriented focus	Maintenance	Continuous learning; process-oriented focus
Resolution involves long- term perspective	Short-term perspective, immediacy	Short-term perspective; reflective; past important	Circular perspective (past; present; future) reflective
Co-operation based on team spirit, individual sub-ordinated to group	Spirit of competition and rivalry	Co-operation based on team spirit, individual sub-ordinated to group	Co-operation based on team spirit; individual subordinated to group
Disagreement with superior often but polite	Disagreement with superior seldom but violent	Disagreement with superior seldom but polite	Disagreement addressed by debating and reaching consensus

JAPANESE	WESTERN	AFRICAN	UBUNTU
Disputes settled through conferral and trust, no detailed contracts, flexibility and compromise stressed	Disputes settled through contracts, binding arbitration, direct and confrontational, adversarial	Disputes settled through conferral and trust, no detailed contracts; superior tells subordinate what to do (authoritarian)	Disputes settled through dialogue and trust; team member not coerced but led to agreement; no detailed contracts - build on trust/team work
Takes time, process is important, solved by adjustment - win-win	Time is money, conflict solved by orders, coercion - win-lose	Takes time (time is not a consideration) conflict solved by orders, according to rank/superiority - win-win (subordinate doesn't lose face)	Takes time; process is important; conflict resolved after reaching consensus - win-win
Company unions: supporting link in their integrated human resources practice	Unions: low key position	Unions perceived as anti-business	Unions play facilitating role; management and unions are allies

## DISCUSSION ON DIMENSIONS

This study examines Western, Japanese and African management, juxtaposed with Ubuntu as core value, demonstrating the differences, and in some cases, the similarities among them. These tabulations do not presume to exhaust the possibilities of dimensions as discussed, but rather represent the first step in this direction.

The dimensions are as follows:

- Social, environmental and cultural;
- Career and attitude toward employees; and
- Decision making and conflict resolution.

These dimensions constitute an integrated whole for each cultural group. The dimensions can also be described in terms of macro-level and socio-structural processes, and those based on interpersonal processes, all of which are present in the above-mentioned analysis. These dimensions will be discussed in detail in section 8.1 in Chapter 8. No one dimension is unambiguously more important than the other. The conscious strategic process and structural design choices of each organisation will differ according to its circumstances: Company size, ownership, philosophy and commitment to particular ideals, accessibility to technologies, as well as opportunities, threats, strengths and identified weaknesses. The dimensions identified above represent the fundamental, basic organisational design.

Organisations are complex systems operating within dynamically interacting environmental forces. The internal environment of an organisation is represented by its internal work culture, whereas the external environment represents the organisation environment (for example, educational environment and technology) and the socio-cultural environment (for example, the constructs as described

by Hofstede (1980), power distance, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity/femininity and more). Power distance concerns the extent to which power hierarchy and inequality are acceptable in society and its institutions; masculinity/femininity deals with what individuals value most in life. In masculine societies, assertiveness, achievement and acquisition of money and other material possessions are emphasised, whereas in feminine societies, interpersonal harmony, quality of relationships, and caring for others are important. Individuals in cultures with high uncertainty avoidance are described as being more risk averse and less tolerant to ambiguities and deviations from norms.

In the first dimension, social, environmental and cultural factors are conceived as shared value orientations among people in a given society. Organisations, like people, have values. To be effective in an organisation, an employee's values must be compatible with the organisation's values. These shared values (the value system of the individual/group and the organisation's value system), do not need to be the same, but they must be close enough to compliment or co-exist.

The second dimension, career and attitude toward employees, describes the human resource management practices in different areas, *i.e.* job design, supervision and control, and reward systems.

The third and last dimension is decision making and conflict resolution. This dimension could theoretically be included in the second dimension, but two dimensions were created, to capture the multidimensionality of the variables more effectively.

### 5.3 SUMMARY

In this chapter, the qualitative data described in Chapters 2, 3 and 4 were tabulated. The framework, which covers dimensions like decision making and conflict resolution, career and attitude toward employees and social, environmental and cultural factors, sets the data base from which statements will be inferred for the empirical research component. An overview of the dimensions constituting the framework was provided.

The activities described by the Mitroff & Kilmann (1978) model represented by circle II, the development of a conceptual framework for the study, and activities 1 and 2, (conceptualisation and modelling), have now been concluded with this chapter.

A description of the meta-methodology of this study is covered in the following chapter, Chapter 6.

# CHAPTER 6

## META-METHODOLOGY

### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

An international, as well as a national literature search on management communication, theories relating to this concept, and a comparison relating to these theories were undertaken, the results of which were discussed in Chapters 2 to 5. The objective of this literature study was twofold, the **first** being to provide a conceptual foundation for the development of a theoretical framework for a uniquely South African management communication philosophy. In this regard the underlying constructs were discussed based on a systems approach.

The **second** objective of the literature study was to condense large volumes of data into manageable clusters to formulate guidelines for the empirical investigation.

In terms of the Mitroff & Kilmann (1978) model, which serves to guide the scope and structure of this study, this chapter represents activity 2 (modeling) and circle III, scientific framework. The results of the empirical investigation will be used to develop a model for the future development of a measurement instrument.

### 6.2 THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

#### 6.2.1 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

As mentioned in Chapter 1, a description of a measurement instrument to monitor the existence and applicability of a uniquely South African management communication style has not been described, and that the

broad aim of this study was to take the first steps in the construction of a model which will, with further research, eventually result in such a measurement instrument.

## 6.2.2 THE RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design is the conceptual structure within which research is conducted (Kothari 1997:37), and is tantamount to rational decision making<sup>3</sup> during the research process (Mouton & Marais 1996:33). **Three kinds** of decisions are involved in any<sup>1</sup> research process *i.e.* strategic, tactical and operational decisions (Groenewald 1986:7). **Strategic** decisions determine the general orientation of the study, points of departure and methods for the whole undertaking on the longer term, the most important of which he describes as the form of explanation used for the research problem. He argues that the most important decision to make regarding the scientific approach to the research problem is the choice between the nomothetic and the idiographic approaches, an argument which originated with Wilhelm Windelband in 1894 (Mouton & Marais 1996:48). Windelband emphasises that the classification which he proposes is a methodological classification, and that it does not relate to a classification of the scientific content as such. For this reason it is more appropriate to regard the nomothetic and ideographic as the extremes of a single continuum, depending on whether the similarities in differences are emphasised (nomothetic) or whether the focus lies with differences in similarities (ideographic).

Emory & Cooper (1991) are concerned with the lack of a simple classification of research designs, saying that it can be viewed from a number of different perspectives.

<sup>3</sup> Mouton and Marais (1996:23) makes a distinction between the decision-making process on the one hand, and the determinants of research decisions on the other hand, the latter focusing on the researcher's framework of problem-oriented beliefs which is a determinant of his or her research decision. The researcher has addressed these beliefs implicitly throughout the research process.

The research design specifies the methods and procedures for the collection, measurement and analysis of the data.

**Tactical** decisions in research design refer to the manner in which data are obtained and arranged in order to yield findings, and are considered in conjunction with operational decisions about the preferred sources of data and the strategic decision.

**Operational decisions** refer to the choice of techniques of observation and are determined mainly by considerations regarding the researcher-object relationship.

### 6.2.2.1 Strategic decisions

The strategic decisions made in this research has been described in the foregoing chapters, and are based on theories derived from the literature, facilitating the conceptual framework and general orientation towards the concept.

As mentioned in 6.2.2, the general orientation and departure for any study determine the choice that will be made between a nomothetic and an idiographic approach. The idiographic approach typically concentrates on the study of one case, event or phenomenon at a time. With this approach a researcher attempts to understand the occurrence ( or *visa versa*) of this phenomenon or event in terms of all the factors that contributed to it, including those which ostensibly occurred by chance or which are unique. Mouton and Marais describe it as “that which is unique or distinctive in a situation” (1996:49).

Groenewald (1986) argues that the idiographic mode of explanation aims at incorporating a multitude of factors, including accidental factors, and the adequacy of such an explanation is usually judged on the comprehensiveness of this collection of relevant factors and is suited to studies where conceptualisation is system-specific or culture bound.

At the other end of the continuum, as explained by Groenewald, is the nomothetic mode of explanation, which constitutes the study of a multitude of cases, events or phenomena in terms of factors or variables which possibly occur in a causal relationship to each other. Its aim is typically an attempt to determine the statistical probabilities of relationships between causes and effects. Instead of incorporating as many factors as possible – as in the idiographic approach – an attempt is made to isolate variables or factors, in order to eliminate the operation of other excluded variables, so that the contribution of the isolated variables to the phenomenon may be established.

Nomothetic enquiry tends to use context-free, system-inclusive conceptualisation by which the unique meaning-constructs are forfeited for the sake of generality of the concepts. Nomothetic explanations are judged in terms of the proportion of the variation among cases which can be explained by means of the causal model in the class of phenomena under discussion.

Considering the distinction between an idiographic and nomothetic approach to scientific practice, this study can be described as having a bias toward the idiographic approach as illustrated by Figure 6.1.

**Figure 6.1** The position on the continuum between the idiographic and nomothetic approach of the study.



Source: Researcher's interpretation

The position on the continuum between the idiographic and nomothetic approach of the study can be motivated as follows:

**The phenomenon**

The aim of this study is to construct a uniquely South African management communication model. The purpose of the model is to ultimately develop an instrument to measure management communication in South African organisations.

As the field of study is pre-theoretical, an analysis of the current state of the theory of management communication in Western (primarily the US as largest economy in the world), Japanese (second largest economy in the world) and African (as the continent where South Africa is situated) will determine the theoretical framework for the study. All the relevant factors constituting a management communication model have to be considered, suggesting an idiographic approach. In studies where the construction of a model occurs, detail is important to establish a frame of reference.

However, an attempt will be made to isolate variables or factors to identify the relevant factors and the relationship between them, indicating a nomothetic approach.

## **Construction of a model**

The term “model” is an ambiguous term in the social sciences, and is sometimes used as a synonym for theory. Achinstein (1968) and Gorrell (1981) maintain that the differences between models and theories are largely differences of degree. For the purposes of this study, the differences are emphasised.

The heuristic function (Mouton and Marais mentions that heuristic literally means *to discover or to reveal*) is the most common characteristic of models, while the explanatory function is usually attributed to theories. In a model, an attempt is made to represent the dynamic aspects of the phenomenon by illustrating the relationships between the major elements of the phenomenon in a simplified form, supporting the nomothetic approach.

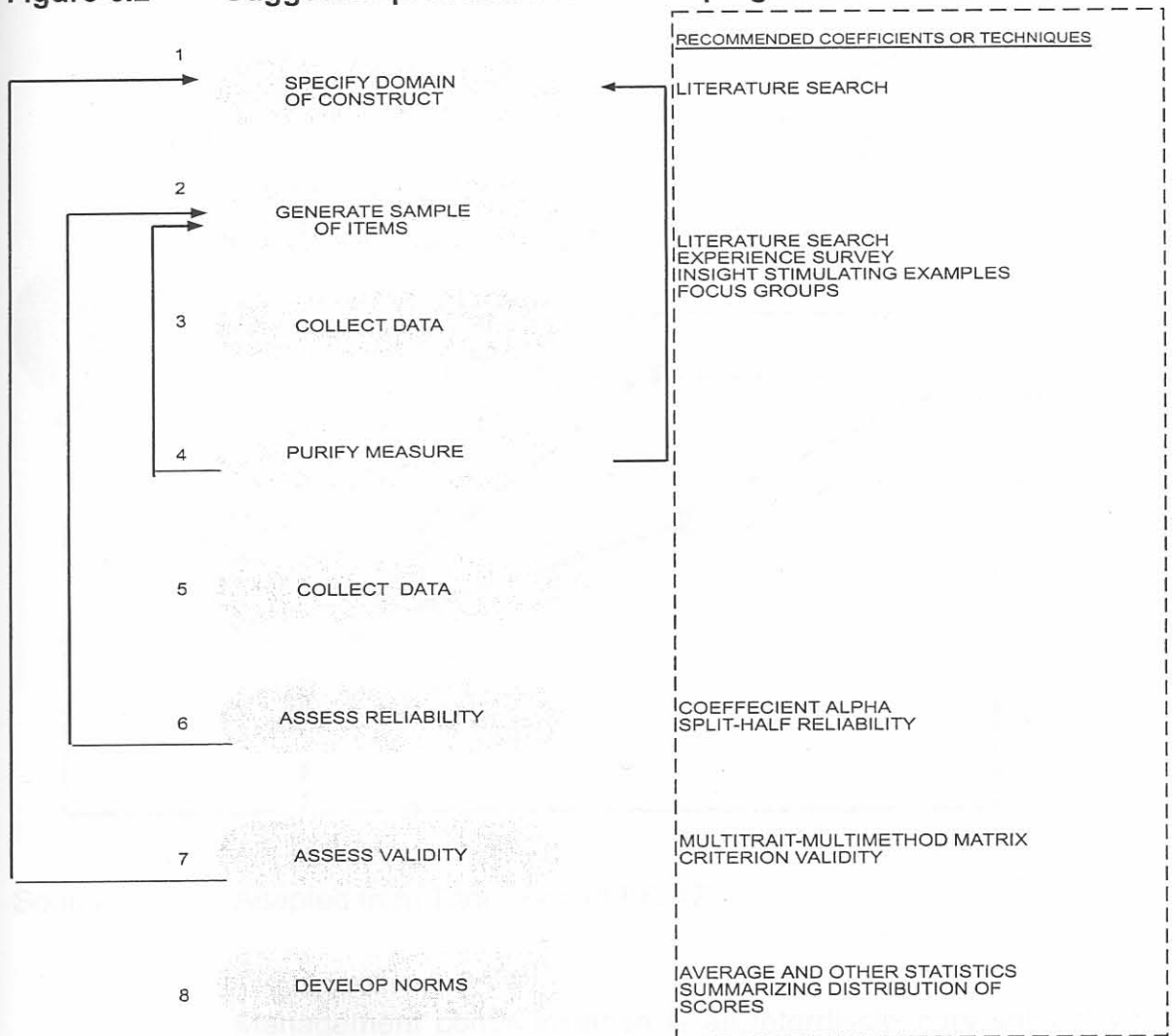
Models do not pretend to be more than a partial representation of a given phenomenon. Certain irrelevant information are conveniently excluded in the model, while the most obvious, and in the case of this study, scientifically proven characteristics of the phenomenon, are included. This guiding function of models is referred to as the heuristic function and suggests new areas of research. Certain relationships and dimensions are emphasised to an unusual degree, suggesting this study is of contextual interest and therefore has an ideological approach.

## **A paradigm for developing constructs**

Churchill (1979) outlines a procedure which can be followed to develop better measures of marketing (or any other) variables. The framework represents an attempt to unify the scattered bits of information in one place on how one goes about developing improved measures and how

one assesses the quality of the measures that have been advanced. He continues by saying that persons doing research of fundamental nature are well advised to execute the process suggested in Figure 6.2. and at least follow steps 1 through to 4, in order to produce *quality research*. For the purpose of this study, steps 1 through 4 will be followed in order to construct a model of South African management communication. It is not intended to generalise the results of the study, leaving this for future studies on the phenomenon, indicating an idiographic research approach.

**Figure 6.2 Suggested procedure for developing better measures**

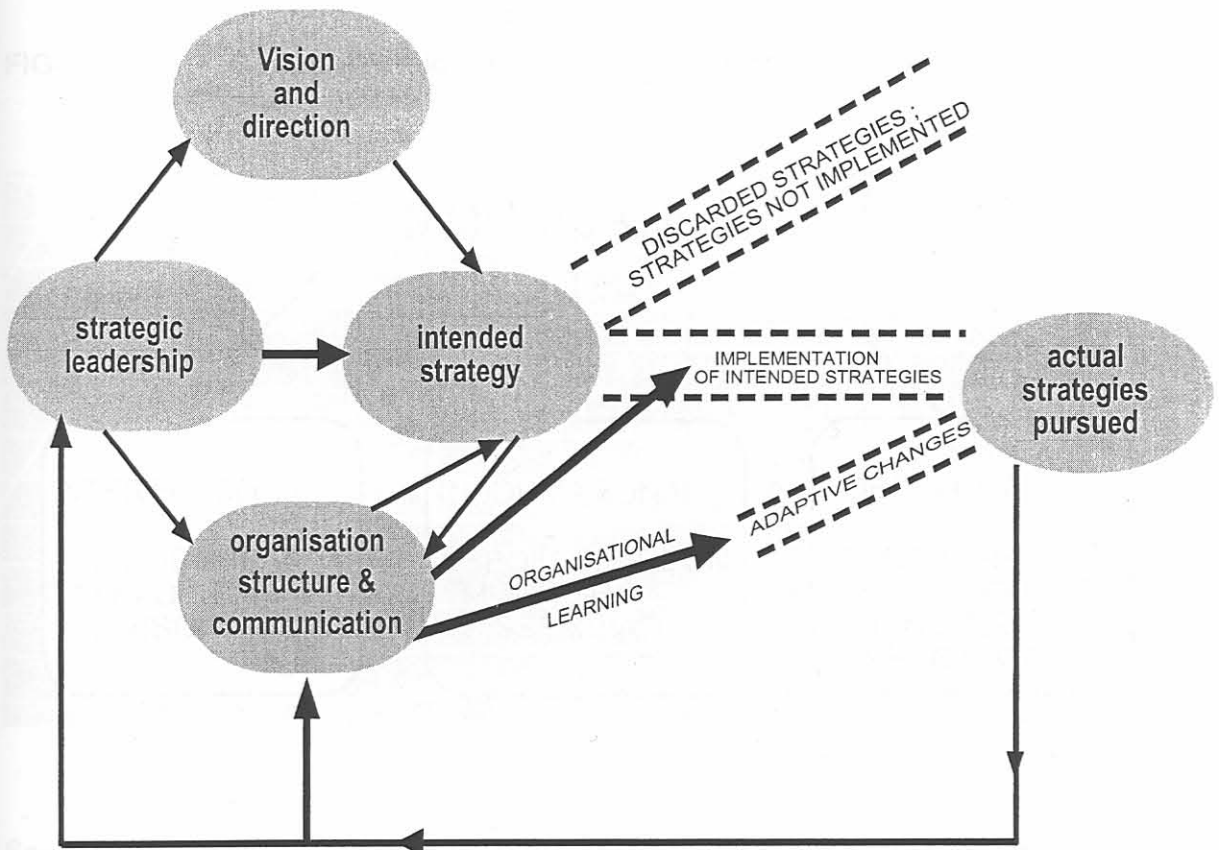


Source: Churchill (1979:66)

## The conceptualisation of management communication

Thompson (1996:46) describes a strategic leader of any organisation as someone who has to **direct** the organisation, see to it that the intended strategies will be implemented through the **organisation structure** and enables employees throughout the organisation to be strategically aware and informed of the changes that are taking place (**communication**).

Figure 6.3 Strategic leadership and strategic change



Source: Adapted from Thompson (1996:47)

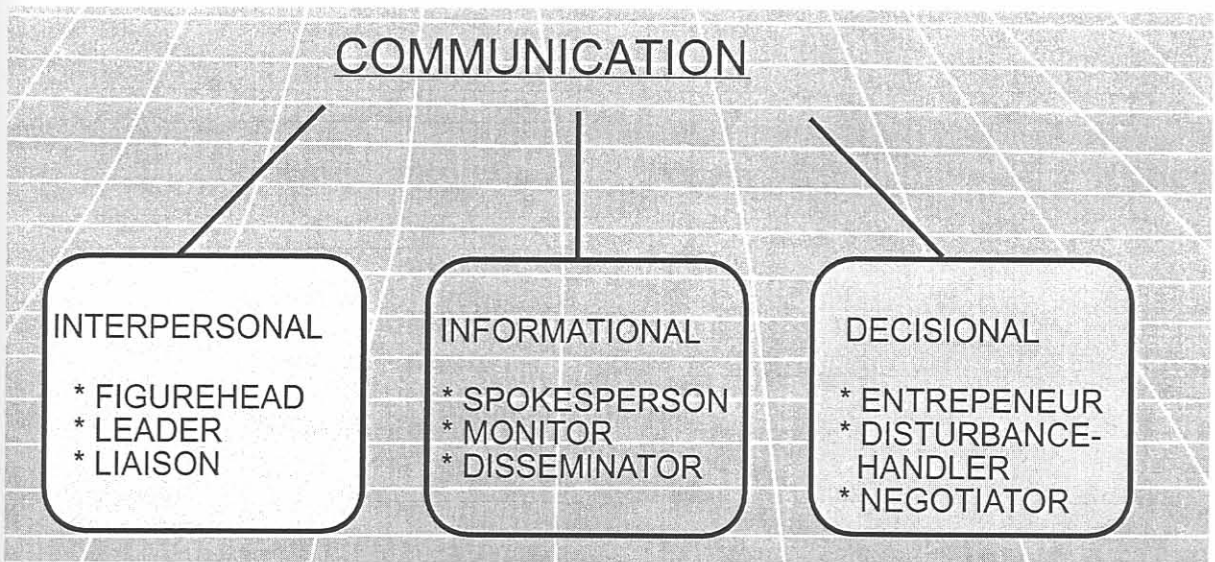
Management communication is an interdisciplinary subject which integrates communication and management, an argument supported

by Groenewald (1998:45).

It is not a functional department in an organisation, but includes all communication permeating the organisation.

Communication is to an organisation what blood circulation is to a person and it affects how people in an organisation relate to each other. Henry Mintzberg describes the manager's job in terms of three categories of roles (interpersonal, informational, and decisional): Communication plays the vital part in each.

**FIGURE 6.4** Communication and management roles



Source: Adapted from Mintzberg in Hellriegel & Slocum (1996:481).

Groenewald (1998) describes management communication as a science which originated from the integration between the domains of communication and management and has a strong pragmatic

orientation. It is a construct of management which makes the manager more (or less) effective in his job, therefore impacting on the organisational goals, although this construct has not reached the “disciplined” ( in the Foucaultian sense) stage.

Studying the construct management communication therefore will have a “spontaneous” emergence of factors, relating to both communication and management, using an idiographic approach. The exploration of the concepts relating to communication management will result in serendipitous findings (the comparative analysis between the various management styles) and thus lead to the discovery of new categories to be researched and generalised through nomothetic studies (refer Figure 6.2).

### **Organisational culture as context**

The relevance of cultural diversity within organisations has to be highlighted in this study as it constitutes the main logic and context within which processes, structures and behaviours can be intelligibly described (also refer Chapter 1). The cultural variable is therefore a crucial element in this study.

Calls for increased attention to *diversity* issues in both research and practice have become a familiar refrain in the 1990s. In response, empirical research on diversity-related phenomena has touched on a number of issues, addressing such topics as organisational demography (Tsui, Egan & O'Reilly 1992), the dynamics of cross-gender (Raggins & McFarlin 1990) and cross-race developmental relationships (Thomas 1993; Scheu-Lottgen & Hernandez-Campoy 1998; George, Jones & Gonzalez 1998), the latter with an emphasis on non-permanent foreign

workers in visiting countries. The following topics have also received its fair share of attention: The impact of diversity training programme (Rosen & Rynes 1995), and the impact of diversity on work-team composition (Jackson 1992; Watson, Kumar & Michaelson 1993; Watson, Johnson, Kumar & Critelli 1998). A common message and theme throughout these studies is how to be successful in unfamiliar cultures, and how to *adapt* to these cultures. The development of models and theories is however underemphasised and necessary describing processes that underlie diversity management in a newly created democracy, such as South Africa, with an indigenous, local but multi-lingual diverse workforce, where the criteria for interaction are not guided by an embracing culture.

The anthropological, sociological and management literature define *culture* in many and diverse ways. A definition used by Hofstede (1984) is relevant to this study:

*'Culture is the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one human group from one another. Culture, in this sense, includes systems of values, and values are among the building blocks of culture'*.

This definition identifies culture as a set of values which are shared by a group. Cultural values shared by one group may be rejected by another. The values are learned by members of the group, and hence taught by other members. A culture is passed down from one generation to the next. It is therefore acquired and not innate.

This study is not concerned with material expressions of culture, for

example art and craft forms, clothing and fashion design, and food and cuisine. This study also excludes behaviour that can be explained in terms of individual psychological make-up, and does not view culture in static terms, but has to take into account the dynamic nature of culture, while not assuming the superiority of one culture over another.

This study is not an ethnographic study (a study primarily concerned with the rendering of theory of culture and cultural behaviour) but a study which aims to identify and describe those elements that contribute to the construction of management communication, which may be culturally-bound to a large extent. The two constructs are therefore not mutually exclusive.

The ideographic approach is emphasised here to a *lesser* extent as the universal aspects of the phenomena rather than the unique, are stressed. In this type of research the unique is forfeited in order to identify the generality of concepts or mental constructs, enabling the construction of a framework facilitating a comparative analysis which is structured along cultural groups.

### **6.2.2.2 The tactical decisions**

Mouton and Marais (1996), Kothari (1997), and Emory and Cooper (1991) maintain that there is no simple classification system of research design. The many perspectives from which research designs can be viewed will influence the decision-making process. Mouton and Marais add that it is erroneous to assume that a single correct research methodology, appropriate for all situations, may be found. In most cases the researcher will only be able to control some of the threats to validity and nuisance variables. Rational decision making, therefore, means

that the researcher will frequently have to make concessions, and will find that it is impossible to control all the research factors that may pose a threat to the validity of the findings. It is possible, however, by paying attention to nuisance variables in a critical and systematic manner, to ensure that the ultimate research findings are likely to be more valid. This is the primary aim of the research design for this study.

In terms of a description of this study, it can be stated that it is a *formal, exploratory/descriptive, cross-sectional* and *ex post facto* study. This means that in this study a specific domain is being explained by eliciting responses from purposively identified participants, categorising on an agreement scale statements derived from an extended literature survey and subsequent analysis thereof.

This study is described an *exploratory/descriptive* study which may seem to cover two types of studies. Bless and Higson-Smith (1995) argue that the purpose of exploratory research is to gain insight into a situation, phenomenon, community or person. The need for such a study could arise out of lack of basic information on the area of interest. Most frequently, they argue, one must become more familiar with a situation in order to formulate a problem or develop a hypothesis. Thus, before being in the position to search for an explanation related to the characteristic, a certain amount of background information, namely a description of the *object of research*, must be gathered. In such a case, according to Bless and Higson-Smith, the type of research will be *exploratory*, which is a particular type of *descriptive study*.

The study is described as such because although the research problem has been crystallised and formulated, the independent variables have

to be identified from a broad base of international literature, and should, as part of the study's objective, lead to further research and exploration of the concept.

The decision to adopt an approach for this particular study, which lies on the idiographic/nomothetic continuum as explained in section 6.2.2.1, was substantiated in the discussion on the strategic decisions. This consideration, combined with the necessity of achieving a thorough picture of all the factors relating to the construction of the model, requires an approach to the selection of the data source that will elicit such information.

Research can be either qualitative or quantitative. *Qualitative research* refers to several methods of data collection, which include focus groups, field observation, in-depth interviews and case studies, to name a few. Although there are substantial differences among these techniques, they all involve what writers refer to as "getting closer to the data". Wimmer & Dominick (1994) describe qualitative techniques as increasing a researcher's depth of understanding of the phenomenon under investigation, and being flexible. Some disadvantages associated with this method is the sample sizes which are normally small, prohibiting the researcher to generalise the data.

*Quantitative research* requires that the variables under consideration be measured.

This form of research uses numbers to communicate variances. This type of research allows for greater precision in reporting results and permits the use of powerful methods of mathematical analysis.

For the purpose of this study, both qualitative and quantitative research

methods will be used, increasing the internal validity of the study, facilitating a better and more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. The term, *triangulation*, refers to the process of using both research methods in one study. This study does not imply in any way that the one method is superior to the other.

Using the categorisation (on a continuum) between the two methods as described by Mouton & Marais, the constructs relevant to this study can be depicted (indicated in bold typeface) as follows:

### CONCEPTS (Operational specificity)

QUALITATIVE	QUANTITATIVE
<b>Surplus meaning: the concept can be interpreted in a number of ways</b>	Unambiguous meaning: new words with a unique meaning could even be created
<b>Sensitising concepts; meaningful sketches</b>	Precisely identified terms
<b>Intuitive experience for labeling</b>	Can be operationalised in terms of measuring instruments
<b>Reasonable degree of connotatively rich meaning</b>	Strives towards complete denotative meaning

### HYPOTHESES

QUALITATIVE	QUANTITATIVE
<b>Frequently undeclared or merely stated in the form of a general research goal</b>	Stated explicitly, at least in the form of a research question
<b>Emerging from the development of the investigation</b>	Ought to be formulated beforehand
Can often not be rejected	Can be rejected

## OBSERVATION

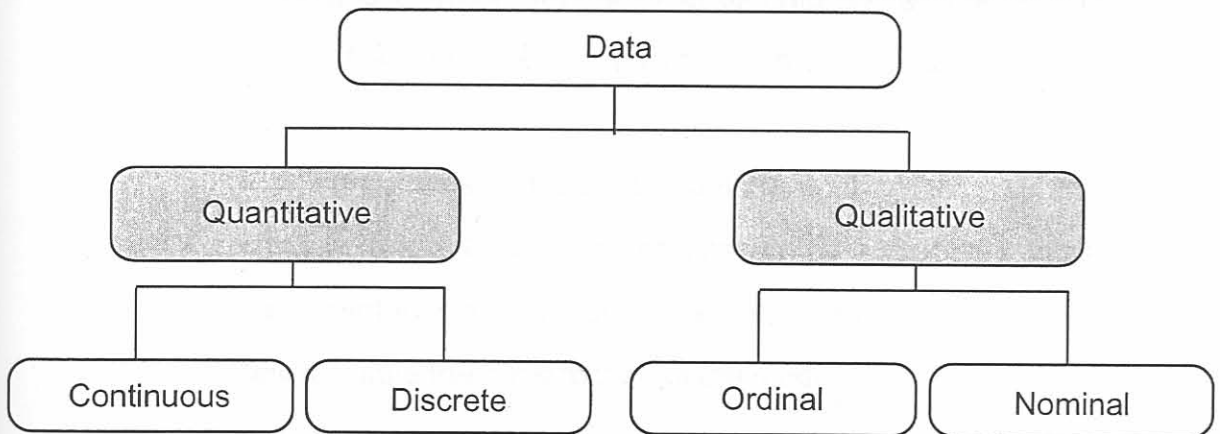
QUALITATIVE	QUANTITATIVE
'Subjectifying' and personally experienced	'Objectifying'
Researcher involved with events/phenomena	Researcher remains aloof
Spontaneous and fortuitious examples	Pre-planned observation
Occurs in a non-structured manner	<b>Observations may even be scalable</b>
Open to make it possible to record unexpected events	<b>Usually with inventory previously drawn up; expected observations placed in categories in anticipation</b>
Contextualising (context taken into account)	Context controlled as far as possible

Source: Adapted from Mouton & Marais (1996: 160-162)

### Different kinds of data

Schematically, the different kinds of data can be represented as follows:

FIGURE 6.5 Schematic representation of the different kinds of data



Source: Steyn, Smit, Du Toit & Strasheim (1999:6).

If any characteristic or property that is particular to a person or entity is measurable on a numerical scale, information on such a characteristic or property is called quantitative data. When observations of a particular characteristic can assume only fixed isolated values, data are known as discrete data, and when it can assume all possible values within a particular logical interval, such data are called continuous data.

Characteristics that cannot be reflected numerically because they are inherent in a person or entity, are described as qualitative information (sometimes referred to as categorical data, according to Steyn *et al.*) Sometimes, qualitative data can be represented in a quantitative manner. For example, employees' attitudes toward their work are quantified, when descriptions like 'poor', 'fair', 'good' or 'excellent' are rank ordered on a scale of say 1, 2, 3 and 4 respectively. In this example, there is a definitive order in the categories and one would refer to ordinal data, in contrast with, for example, information on the colour of a person's eyes, which will be classified as nominal data.

In the example used for ordinal data, the figures 1 to 4 have no physical meaning; they are only used to rank attitudes. Steyn *et al* explain the importance of distinguishing between different types of data when choosing appropriate statistical techniques, as the technique to be applied is often determined by the kind of data that are to be analysed.

For the purpose of this study, qualitative information will be described initially, and following the process of comparative analysis, will be represented in a quantitative manner, using ordinal data, which in turn will facilitate the construction of the model.

Both primary data (the empirical research process), and secondary data (the literature survey), will be used as data sources.

### **6.2.3 THE OPERATIONAL DECISIONS**

It has been stated that operational decisions are those decisions that relate to the choice of data source and this has been discussed in the previous section on the selection of the research design. In order to achieve a comprehensive description of the factors that contribute to the

construction of the model, a combination between a qualitative and quantitative research design (triangulation) has been selected as described in 6.2.2.

The two important operational decisions relate to what instrumentation to use and from whom the information should be obtained. With this purpose in mind, the *role of the literature survey* needs to be contextualised.

As no general consensus has been reached on a uniquely South African management communication model, the research domain of this study is pre-theoretical, and the literature survey therefore has to fulfil research needs pertaining to this study.

The literature survey needs to expose ('lay bare' as referred to by Smith 1998), by 'pointing out' not only past and present arguments concerning the research domain, but also inconsistencies and hiatuses regarding the theories that exist in literature. This exposition is not done for the 'participants' of this study, but for 'onlookers', to paraphrase Smith (1998:6). In addition, the literature survey has to be comprehensive to the point that it can facilitate a comparative analysis between the identified styles of management, which in turn will render the statements to be used in the empirical research study.

This study does not follow rhetorical argument, as its response is 'yes, I (we) will' or 'no, I (we) will not', but follows a dialectical conversation, which has a 'yes, I see it that way' or 'no, I do not see it that way' response to an argument. A dialectical conversation can simultaneously be entertaining both of two *contrary* received opinions, each of which might or might not hold self-evident truths, reaching a mutual *understanding* concerning the subjects matter under discussion.

It was decided to use key informants who share known interests and a common objective, that is to say, to attain a formal qualification as a manager in a South African organisation, thus qualifying as sharing a common interest in management skills and training. After considering a number of techniques, it was decided to investigate the phenomenon using a rating research method, facilitating statistical procedures.

These aspects will now be described.

### **Instrumentation and selection of the sample**

The conceptual focus, research questions and sampling criteria determine the type of instrumentation of a study. This study is formal in which the construction of a model has to be theoretically and empirically investigated, and the belief systems are obtained from knowledgeable management-sensitive panel of experts working in any South African organisation. In reviewing the various research techniques, it was decided that both the literature survey (secondary data) and Q-methodology (a qualitative technique which allows for quantitative data analysis) were most suitable for attaining the research objectives of this study.

Q-methodology permits subjects to construct models of their belief system. Q-methodology and Q-sorting is well-known in behavioural research and was originally developed by Stephenson in 1953 (Anastasi 1988; Stephenson 1967; Tate 1982; Kerlinger 1986; McKeown & Thomas 1988). Although the literature on Q-methodology contains more than 1 500 bibliographic entries (Brown 1986), and journals reporting research from Q-studies can be found across the social sciences spectrum, a description of the method and its techniques will be introduced, illuminating the method used in this study.

Fundamentally, Q entails a method for the scientific study of human subjectivity. Subjectivity, in this context, means nothing more than a person's communication of his or her point of view. As such, subjectivity is always anchored in *self-reference*, that is, the person's 'internal' frame of reference. This does not render it inaccessible to rigorous examination, nor does it serve to reify the self in any metaphysical or phenomenological sense. Self-referent subjectivity of this sort, is 'pure behaviour', an argument supported by Brown (1980:46). Q-methodology provides a systematic means to examine and reach understanding about experience and adhere to the methodological axiom that *subjectivity is always self-referent*.

According to Kerlinger (1986), the main strength of Q-methodology is its affinity to theory. What he means is that if a theory, or aspects of theory, can be expressed in categories and if items that express the categories can be produced, then Q can be a powerful approach to test theory. Factor analysis is the principal analytic procedure to accomplish this. Another strength of Q-methodology is its suitability for intensive study of the individual, for testing the effects of independent variables on complex variables, its heuristic quality and its usefulness in exploratory research. It is the latter two strengths that apply in this study.

Q-methodology would hold special promise for those seeking to make the study of human subjectivity more intelligible and rigorous, through the operational medium of a Q-sort. This is accomplished by a participant systematically rating a purposively selected set of statements, according to a specific condition of instruction, for the purpose of this study from 'most strongly agree with' to 'most strongly disagree with'. The nature of the statements is constrained only by the domain of subjectivity in which the researcher is interested (a domain Stephensen 1978b, has termed a 'communication concourse').

Data-analysis occurs with the intercorrelations of the  $N$  Q-sorts as variables and the factor analysis of the  $N \times N$  correlation matrix. Resulting factors represent points of view, and the association of each respondent with each point of view is indicated by the magnitude of his or her *loading* on that factor. The final step in data analysis involves the calculation of factor scores, whereby each statement is 'scored' for each factor. Factor scoring aids the task of understanding and interpreting the meanings of the factors in two ways: firstly, through the construction of a *factor array* (a composite Q-sort, one for each factor), and secondly, through the determination of statements whose ranks in the arrays are statistically different for any pair of given factors. Finally, interpretation of the factors is advanced in terms of consensual and divergent subjectivity, with attention given to the relevance of such patterns to the construction of the emerging model.

### **Methodological issues**

What distinguishes Q-methodology from conventional measurement strategies, is the temporal locus of and inferential basis for an attribute, for example, tolerance. A concept such as tolerance is not assumed to have a priori meaning apart from and independently of the respondent's self-reference. As such, it is subject to a host of meanings, each of which may well be 'sensible' from the standpoint of the respondent's own logic.

The importance of *contextuality* as it relates to factor interpretation has to be highlighted. The principle of contextuality is tied to self-reference and also to Q-methodology's premises as a *method of impression*, as opposed to expression (Beebe-Center 1929, as quoted in McKeown and Thomas 1988), a distinction also relevant to the differences between Q- and R-method.

Under methods of expression, respondents are measured for traits, attitudes, and the like from an *external* point of view. The respondents' own point of view on the matter is of little theoretical interest and technical significance. With methods of *impression*, the personal, intra-individual significance of 'test stimuli' is of primary importance. When responding to them, the subject assigns scores in terms of some relevant conditions that has bearing, in one way or another, on his or her *internal* frame of reference.

Having no inherent meaning or status as facts, individual items in a Q-sample are assigned meaning and significance, first in Q-sorting by the respondent, and secondly in factor interpretation by the researcher.

There are two basic techniques for choosing items for the Q-sample. The first is based on *unstructured sampling*, in which statements presumed to be relevant to the topic at hand are chosen without undue effort made to ensure coverage of all possible sub-issues. The risk with unstructured samples is that some issue components will be under- or over-sampled and, consequently, that a bias of some kind will be incorporated inadvertently into the final Q-sample. *Structured samples* are composed more systematically and seek to avoid weaknesses found in the other. The customary practice is to apply the design principles of factorial experimentation whereby Q-sample statements are assigned to (experimental) conditions designated and defined by the researcher. This application can be deductive or inductive. A *deductive design* is based on a priori hypothetical or theoretical considerations. *Inductive designs* emerge from the patterns that are observed as statements are collected.

The dimensions that guided the final assignment and selection of

statements for the purpose of this study, were implied by the statements 'laid bare' by the comparative analysis between management styles as described in Chapter 5, suggesting that a structured sample and inductive design were used.

### 6.3 SUMMARY

In this chapter the methodology used for the empirical research was explained. The position of the study on the continuum of the idiographic – nomothetic approach was described in the context of the research domain and the selection of the research design was substantiated. The operational decisions inclusive of the instrumentation, selection of the sample and relevant methodological issues were explained and special care has been taken not to assume that the reader has prior knowledge of Q-methodology, and thus by explicating the method, ensuring a working knowledge of it.

Chapter 7 will report on the results of the Q-sort and the processing of the data from which certain conclusions will be drawn.

# PROCEDURE

## CHAPTER 7

# RESEARCH DESIGN AND RESULTS

### 7.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter summarises and reports on the data collected, the statistical treatment of the data, and deals with the results of the empirical study. This will be done by following guidelines and working within a framework suggested by noteworthy researchers, *inter alia* McKeown & Thomas (1988), Stephenson (1953), Brown (1980) and Kerlinger (1986). The computer software utilised to analyse the data consisted of the SPSS (Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences) software programme.

In terms of the Mitroff model, which was used in Chapter 1 to describe the scope of the research, this chapter deals with activity 5, namely feedback in the narrow sense, between the solution (circle IV) and the conceptual model (circle II).

### 7.2 THE FIELD RESEARCH

The field research took place during August and September 1999. Important practical considerations had to be taken into account in the planning of the field research. Firstly, tertiary institutions presenting an MBA programme had to be consulted and permission had to be obtained, after the terms and conditions under which the Q-sorting would take place, were agreed upon. These institutions were chosen for their sound academic reputation and had to have a student profile closely representing the broader South African population.

It is important to note that the students had to be formally registered MBA-students, who have enrolled more than six months prior to August 1999, thereby ensuring their '*seriousness*' and '*dedication*'. The assumption is made here that those students who were not serious or dedicated enough, would not continue with their studies after six months.

## 7.2.1 PROCEDURE

Once permission for the research had been granted by the respective institutions of higher learning, dates and objectives could be set with the relevant lecturers.

An informative instruction page (refer Appendix A) was handed to the participants. The importance and role of the instruction page is emphasised by Schreuder (1999) and should explain to participants what will be expected from them. The instruction page was tested on three post-graduate students, who understood the brief without additional verbal explanation from the researcher, a prerequisite for the instruction page. This 'pilot' exercise also served to monitor the time it took to complete the Q-sort, and the result was a mean average of 18 minutes. As part of the conditions agreed upon between the researcher and the respective institutions of higher learning, a ten-minute discussion on Q-method was followed by a short introduction to the background of the study. Seven biographic questions were included on the instruction page, as part of the study. These questions included questions regarding age, gender, culture group, industry sector, and number of years in current position.

In completing the Q-sorts, respondents followed an unforced distribution scheme on an agreement scale (using a five point Likert-type scale), where 1 represented "strongly *disagree* with" and 5 "strongly *agree* with", and 3 "neutral". The 60 statements, each printed on a separate sorting card, were sorted into the five piles. Each participant received separate numbers, facilitating the sorting process and minimising confusion. The raw response data on the sort were prepared for analysis by a process of coding and tabulation. After coding, the data were captured on computer and various procedures in the SPSS system were applied to the data. The 60 x 60

correlation matrix was factor analysed, using the principal components method with an oblimin (with Kaiser normalisation) rotation. Several solutions were considered, but a four-factor solution was deemed most adequate. Criteria for “adequacy” can vary from study to study, but in this case it was strongly indicated by the fact that 17 items had loadings exceeding statistical significance on one or more of the four factors. (See discussion on factor analysis in 7.2.2).

All significant and relevant results are reported in the text. Summaries of significant and non-significant results are reported in the addendums.

## 7.2.2 FACTOR ANALYSIS

One of the strong points of Q-methodology is its analytical possibilities. Kerlinger (1986) feels so strongly about this strength that he states the impossibility of discussing Q-methodology without discussing factor analysis.

Preliminary to a consideration of factor analysis, it is essential to clarify what is being factored. In R-method, correlation summarises the relationships among, and factor analysis denotes the clusters of, the  $N$  traits. What is important in this connection is that the units of measurements for the  $N$  traits are singly centered by column. Trait A, for example, will be regarded as a measure of intelligence; hence all values in column A are expressed in terms of IQ scores. Depending on its nature, trait B may be measured in terms of some other unit (for example, daily caloric intake). As a practical matter, there is nothing to prevent correlating persons (columns) in this fashion, but what possible meaning could be attributed to the deviation of mean scores (effected by the normalisation subsumed in correlation) when they are composed of such diverse measuring units? McKeown and

Thomas (1998) answer this question by stating that Stephenson (1953) addressed this problem thus: *All observations in Q-technique are premised on a common unit of measurement, namely, "self-significance"*.

## **Factor analysis: principles and purposes in Q**

Factor analysis is fundamental to Q-methodology, since it comprises the statistical means by which subjects group themselves, through the process of Q-sorting. Once Q-sorts have been correlated, the mathematics of the factoring process are *virtually* identical to those followed in R-method application. It is in statistical respects that that Q and R are most alike, despite the persistent (and thus mistaken) notion that they represent rival factor analytic systems (refer Chapter 6 for more detail on this argument).

The factoring process commences once a matrix of Q-sort correlations is provided. According to McKeown and Thomas (1998) it makes no difference whether the coefficients in the correlation matrix are Pearson's  $r$ , Spearman's  $\rho$ , or any other commonly employed non-parametric measure of association. Likewise, they argue, it makes no difference whether the specific factoring routine is the principal components, centroid, or any other available method. The concern here is with the *principles* and *products* of factor analysis as applied in Q-studies, not with the statistical *means* by which these principles are effected or these products realised. These latter issues subsume mathematical complexities extending well beyond the scope of this study.

In short, factorisation substantially simplifies the interpretive task, bringing to attention the typological nature of audience segments on any 'subjective' issue.

## PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the participants in this study had to be MBA students who have enrolled more than six months prior to August 1999. A description of the participants will now be made.

**Table 7.1:** Frequency Tables: Age, Gender, Title, Industry Sector, Number of years in position and Cultural Group

Table 7.1.1: Age

Age Group	<i>f</i>	%	Cumulative <i>f</i>	Cumulative %
20-24	3	1.2	3	1.2
25-29	53	21.4	56	22.6
30-34	58	23.4	114	46.0
35-39	67	27	181	73.0
40-44	38	15.3	219	88.3
45-49	8	3.2	227	91.5
50-54	1	0.4	228	91.9
55+	2	0.8	230	92.7
Not marked	18	7.3	248	100.0

Of the 248 participants, the majority (71,8%) were in the age group 25-39. A large percentage, (7,3) did not indicate their age. Few were younger than 25 years or older than 49.

**Table 7.1.2: Gender**

Gender	<i>f</i>	%	Cumulative <i>f</i>	Cumulative %
Female	56	22.6	56	22.6
Male	182	73.4	238	96.0
Not marked	10	4.0	248	100.0

Not surprisingly, by far the majority of participants were male, representative of the national distribution of the MBA enrolment profile. However, to have nearly a quarter of the participants be female may suggest an improvement on the representation of females in the management cadres of the future.

**Table 7.1.3: Title**

Title	<i>f</i>	%	Cumulative <i>f</i>	Cumulative %
Manager	80	32.3	80	32.3
Head of Dept	15	6.0	95	38.3
Consultant	40	16.1	135	54.4
Director	18	7.3	153	61.7
Senior Man.	31	12.5	184	74.2
Entrepreneur/own	21	8.5	205	82.7
Other	38	15.3	243	98.0
Not Marked	5	2.0	248	100.0

Close to a third (32.3%) of the participants were managers, with a further 12,5% on senior management level. Interestingly, 16,1% of the participants were consultants and 8,5% were entrepreneurs, indicating the need for management training, even in your “own time” (as opposed to an individual who are sent/nominated by his/her institution for further studies).

**Table 7.1.4: Industry Sector**

Sector	<i>f</i>	%	Cumulative <i>f</i>	Cumulative %
Financial Service	39	15.8	39	15.8
Healthcare	21	8.5	60	24.3
Transport	18	7.3	78	31.6
Construction	8	3.2	86	34.8
Telecommunication	20	8.1	106	42.9
Academia	8	3.2	114	46.1
Government body	28	11.3	142	57.4
Pharmaceutical	7	2.8	149	60.2
Military	7	2.8	156	63.0
Mining	8	3.2	164	66.2
Leisure	5	2.0	169	68.2
Marketing	10	4.0	179	72.2
Public Utility	10	4.0	189	76.2
Retail	9	3.6	198	79.8
Food	7	2.8	205	82.6
Media	8	3.2	213	85.8
Consultancy	27	10.9	240	96.7
Other	7	2.8	247*	99.5*

\* Frequency missing = 1 (0.5%)

The industry sector most represented here was the financial services (15,8%), followed by government body (11,3%) and consultants (10,9%).

**Table 7.1.5: Years in current position**

Years	<i>f</i>	%	Cumulative <i>f</i>	Cumulative %
Less than 1 yr	44	17.7	44	17.7
1 - 3 yrs	110	44.4	154	62.7
4 - 7 yrs	62	25.0	216	87.1
8 yrs +	31	12.5	247	99.6
Not marked	1	0.4	248	0.4

Close to half of the respondents (44,4%) had been in their current positions between one and three years. A surprising 17,7% had been in their current positions for less than one year and considering that all the respondents had been enrolled in the MBA-programme for longer than six months, it will be interesting to know whether they were appointed in those positions because of the enrolment or as a proviso for the appointment. This issue will be taken up in Chapter 8.

**Table 7.1.6: Area of Job/Interest**

Job/Interest	<i>f</i>	%	Cumulative <i>f</i>	Cumulative %
Gen/Bus Man.	82	33.1	82	33.1
Operations*	35	14.1	117	47.2
Human Res.	17	6.9	134	54.1
Technology	36	14.5	170	68.6
Finance	34	13.7	204	82.3
Marketing	16	6.5	220	88.8
Training	9	3.6	229	92.4
Other	18	7.2	247	99.6
Not Marked	1	0.4	248	100.0

*\*Including Production/distribution*

Most respondents were either involved in general management or had a keen interest in general management (33,1%). The second largest domain trails far behind, with technology (14,5%) second and operations (14,1%) third.

**Table 7.1.7: Culture Group**

Culture Group	<i>f</i>	%	Cumulative <i>f</i>	Cumulative %
White SA	117	47.2	117	47.2
Black SA	77	31.0	194	78.2
Coloured SA	6	2.4	200	80.6
Indian SA	30	12.0	230	92.6
White non-SA	10	4.0	240	96.6
Black non-SA	6	2.4	246	99.2
Other	1	0.4	247	99.6
Not marked	1	0.4	248	100.0

As could be expected at this point in time, the majority of the respondents belonged to the white South African culture group (47,2%). With 31% of the respondents from the black South African culture group, this provided a satisfactory representation of the group, although not representative of the broader population. No distinction was made between language as it was assumed that the white (predominantly Afrikaans and English first language) cultural groups shared the basic cultural values and norms. The same goes for the various black South African groupings. This point will be further discussed in Chapter 8.

## 7.3 RESULTS

The four principle component factors extracted from the correlation matrix will be reported first, followed by an overview of the factors.

### 7.3.1 THE PRINCIPLE COMPONENT FACTORS

Accordingly, the four orientations are identified as:

- Factor 1: Individualism
- Factor 2: Collectivism
- Factor 3: External locus of control
- Factor 4: Group think- decision making

#### Factor 1: Individualism

The first factor extracted consists of six variables, and an appropriate description for this factor would be 'individualism' (see table 7.2).

This view represents a strong bias toward individual growth, diversity as a strength in organisations, taking ownership for one's own life; individual contributions for the benefit of the group; and internal locus of control.

**Table 7.2: Factor 1: Individualism**

Factor loading	Mean score*	Item number	Item description
830	4.72	S28	Continuous learning is important
787	4.57	S10	Different types of people contribute to the success of an employer
761	4.41	S16	One should be in control of one's own future
729	4.34	S12	One feels good when one can contribute to the wellbeing of one's group
617	4.20	S11	It is important to keep one's dignity at all times
554	4.27	S38	Doing something 'extra' (not mentioned in one's job description), can give great job satisfaction

\*5 = strongly agree; 1 = strongly disagree; rounded off to the nearest two decimals

N of cases = 246; Alpha = .8086

The view from Factor 1 is not simplistic. Although it has an individualistic overtone, the statement scores above suggest a marked “emphatic” undertone. Statements 28, 10, 12 and 11 suggest a concern with the “other” in the organisation. Statement 28 suggests a continuous learning curve and thus interaction with other learners. Considering that the study was undertaken amongst MBA students, all working adults, this statement should have a high agreement score. The high agreement score on S10 indicates a tolerance or even an acceptance for differences in the workplace.

**Factor 2: Collectivism**

The second factor identified can best be described as ‘collectivism’.

**Table 7.3: Factor 2: Collectivism**

Factor loading	Mean score*	Item number	Item description
.662	3.62	S7	Everyone has to be part of a group at work
.651	3.18	S6	To be rejected by one’s colleagues has to be avoided at all times
.510	4.05	S3	One should have opportunities for helping other people
.479	3.97	S9	One has to deliberately include a new employee in discussions at work

\*5 = strongly agree; 1 = strongly disagree; rounded off to the nearest two decimals

N = 242

Alpha = .5108

In contrast to Factor 1, a specific collective attitude permeates the perspective of Factor 2.

The defining features of Factor 2 are its fundamental concern with colleagues, their well-being *per se*, and support to the group. With reference to Ubuntu, its core elements of respect, dignity, care and acceptance are strongly represented here.

**Table 7.4: Factor 3: External locus of control**

Factor loading	Mean score*	Item number	Item description
.673	3.33	S22	One should reflect more on the past for guidance in the future
.663	3.18	S50	The organisation is responsible for career planning and training
.545	4.07	S52	An organisation/employer should not only see to economic needs, but also to employees' social, spiritual and psychological needs
.479	3.00	S20	An organisation should be an extension of one's social life

\*5 = *strongly agree*;

1 = *strongly disagree*; rounded off to the nearest two decimals

N of cases = 245

Alpha = .5330

As indicated by the scores of the statements speaking to the primacy of the organisation over the individual, it is clear that this is an external locus of control viewpoint. The individual in this instance expects the organisation to play a paternalistic role, taking responsibility for the individual. This can be seen in direct contrast to the 'empowerment' drive advocated by business and political leaders in South Africa (refer 'Future research' in Chapter 8 for more on empowerment).

**Table 7.5: Factor 4: 'Group think' – decision making**

Factor loading	Mean score*	Item number	Item description
.759	3.22	S44	Compromise result in nobody losing face
.638	3.61	S30	To have consensus on a matter is more important than having one's ideas implemented
.526	4.06	S25	Disagreement must be debated and an agreement reached through consensus

5 = *strongly agree*;

1 = *strongly disagree*; rounded off to the nearest two decimals

N = 245

Alpha = .5334

Factor 4 and Factor 2 share a high regard for group values that serve to call for the wellbeing of the group members, as opposed to the wellbeing of the individual, who may or may not be part of a group. This factor needs to be read together with S13, "A successful individual need not share the limelight/success with colleagues", which has a mean score of 2.22 and S21: "The individual in the group and not the group should be accountable for results" with a mean score of 2.57. The participants clearly disagreed with the latter two statements.

The data obtained from the Q-sort ( $n = 248$ ) were statistically manipulated by means of a principal component factor analysis with oblimin rotation to identify various factors. A principal factor analysis assisted in identifying new or obscured factors regarding the field of study, determining the interrelationship of the 60 statements contained in the sort.

No significance level can be attached to the solution. Significance levels can be used to assess the robustness of the correlation matrix before it is imputed into the factor analysis. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was done for this. The use of multivariate analysis was done, since the dependent variables were not correlated. This figure was significant at the .001 level, so, the analysis could proceed. Following this, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was performed (the sum of the squared correlations *to* the sum of the squared correlations *plus* the sum of the squared correlations). This tests whether the partial correlations among variables are small. The higher the figure the better. Anything above 0.6 suggests that the data are appropriate for factor analysis. This measure was found to be acceptable as well.

The sample size was appropriate for factor analysis, which at 248 amounted to 4.13 participants per statement.

A scree plot of the eigenvalues indicated a levelling out of values after the fourth identified factor, suggesting that four factors could be extracted. (A copy of the original scree plot is attached as Appendix B). All four of these proved to have eigenvalues greater than 1.0, thus satisfying Kaiser's criterion of factor significance. However, because on its own this criterion does not always produce a good solution, the oblimin rotation was repeated. As a result, four factors were identified which together explained 52.5% of the common variance in the matrix. Values of as low as 50% are satisfactory for short tests, though tests with many items (80 and more) should yield values of 80% or even higher (Kehoê 1995).

All four factors had a sufficient number of variables with loadings greater than 3.0 to justify interpretation. These factors were named according to each factor's central theme and common denominator. All factors loaded positively.

**Table 7.7: Eigenvalues, percent of total variance and cumulative percentage of identified factors**

Factor	Eigenvalue*	% of variance	Cumulative %
1	4.358	25.636	25.636
2	2.246	13.213	38.849
3	1.280	7.530	46.379
4	1.050	6.174	52.554

*\*An eigenvalue of 1 was used as cut-off point for the purpose of this analysis*

Component 1 accounts for 25.6 % of the total variance. The four components together account for 52.5 % of the total variance.

Communalities are presented in the table below. The communality of a variable is the proportion of the variance of that variable that can be explained by the components.

**Table 7. 8: Communalities**

Item	Communality	Item	Communality
S3	.486	S20	.517
S6	.491	S22	.490
S7	.442	S25	.420
S9	.401	S28	.694
S10	.640	S30	.462
S11	.605	S38	.529
S12	.591	S44	.603
S16	.629	S50	.445
S52	.491		

No items were removed as all communalities were greater than .40

### 7.3.2 ITEM ANALYSIS

Before a principal component factor analysis was done on the items, the mean values of the individual items were calculated to determine to what extent respondents agreed or disagreed with the various items. The item analysis provides a general overview of participants' experiences regarding the 60 statements which constitutes the sort.

The results are tabled according to the level of agreement (see Appendix C).

The lowest mean value indicate the lowest level of agreement and the highest mean value indicate the highest level of agreement or the lowest level of disagreement.

This was based on the assumption that a mean value of 1 would indicate *total disagreement* and a mean value of 5 *total agreement*. A mean value of 2 could be regarded as *disagreement* and a mean value of 4 *agreement*.

It can be noted that of the 60 statements taken from the comparative analysis in Chapter 5, 13 were taken from Japanese, 20 from Western, 14 from African and 13 from Ubuntu.

It has to be emphasised that no distinctive clusters emerged from these statements and that no clustering of statements from any one cultural group emerged.

In general, no statement was identified with which the participants totally agreed or disagreed, although there appeared a tendency to agree with statements rather than to disagree. Statement 28 ("Continuous learning is important"), with the highest mean value of 4.75, has to be seen in the

context of the profile of the participants, who are all actively involved in 'continuous learning', otherwise they would not be studying toward an MBA.

Certain inferences can be made from these results. All the statements with high mean values can be described as 'softer managerial issues', discussed in Chapter 3. (As opposed to 'harder' issues such as systems and structure). The participants clearly viewed these 'softer' issues as important, emphasising the human relations component of management.

Although the role of the individual in the group was not negated, the participants nevertheless wanted to downplay any possibility of being put 'on the spot'. Face saving and coping mechanisms played an important role. Time was of the essence, process was seen as not being that important, although new ideas should not *only* have short term results to the organisation. A little competition between colleagues was healthy and might do some good, as long as it was not overemphasised.

Negotiation and dialogue were of primary importance. It should be done regularly, in such a way that it is not perceived as 'top-down' decision making, as the participants wanted to be involved in decision making processes, not seeing themselves as functional specialists who carry out top management's orders. Power and money were perceived to go together, while job titles were not important. The law should not be used in resolving conflicts, and should only be used as a last resort.

The participants felt strongly that employees could neither expect to be promoted on seniority alone, nor stay in a current job for a long time. They also felt strongly that knowledge should be shared with colleagues and

not kept to oneself.

## 7.4 SUMMARY

In this chapter the results of a survey done at institutions of higher learning were discussed, and certain inferences were made. The results were compiled in three separate sections: The profile of the participants, the four principle component factors extracted from the correlation matrix, followed by an overview of the factors.

The profile of the participants indicated that the majority were from the age group 25-39, and predominantly male. Close to half of the participants were either managers or on senior management level, and between one and three years in their current positions. Most of them were either involved in general management or had a keen interest in general management. Nearly half the participants were white South Africans and a third black South Africans.

The four principle component factors extracted from the correlation matrix were discussed. The process and role of factor analysis in Q-methodology were described in a detailed manner.

The results were presented in such a way that the conclusions could be used as recommendations and guidelines in the development of a model to be formulated in the final chapter, Chapter 8.

# CHAPTER 8

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

*The tendency to separate the opposites as much as possible and to strive for singleness of meaning is absolutely necessary for clarity of consciousness, since discrimination is of its essence. But when the separation is carried so far that the complementary opposite is lost sight of, and the blackness of the whiteness, the evil of the good, and the depth of the heights, and so on, is no longer seen, the result is one-sidedness, which is then compensated from the unconsciousness without our help. The counterbalancing is even done against our will, which in consequence must become more and more fanatical until it brings about a catastrophic “enantiodromia”(being torn asunder into pairs of opposites). Wisdom never forgets that all things have two sides, and it would also know how to avoid such calamities if it ever had any power.*

(Jung 1953)

### 8.1 INTRODUCTION

The need for a unique management style, addressing both Western and African values, has been highlighted in Chapter 1. It is however difficult to address the problem when there are no benchmarks or if a conflict of interest exists. Furthermore, all research on the topic done to date has concentrated on one aspect of the South African business environment only.

This study, which starts from the premise that communication is a basis for human organising and therefore a management function, has maintained throughout that the organisation has elements that interact in a constantly changing set of meanings constructed through communication.

2.2 The overall problem identified in this study was to formulate a basis for theory development by comparing Western, Japanese and African management theories and philosophies, enabling the researcher to juxtapose these with the core value system, Ubuntu. These theories and philosophies are neither exhaustive nor mutually exclusive, but rather interrelated so that categories support or compete with one another. In general, the comparative analysis was roughly grouped into dimensions based on macro-, socio-structural processes and those based on interpersonal processes. Although this dichotomy is a simplification of a range of views, it provided a parsimonious way to begin discussing issues of management. Furthermore, throughout the study, cultural comparisons between identity groups presented a mixture of similarities and differences. A description of a measurement instrument to monitor the existence and applicability of a uniquely South African management communication style has not been described, and the broad aim of the study was to take the first steps in constructing a model that will, with further research, eventually result in such a measurement instrument. The initial and perhaps most important contribution of the framework was to create an awareness among management of the differences (and similarities), that may exist in an organisation found in a multicultural society.

In this chapter a uniquely South African management model is formulated. In order to do this concisely, a framework has been derived from the theoretical foundations laid in the previous chapters, as explicated in Chapter 6. The theoretical basis for the framework of the model was described and graphically presented in the previous chapters and is now used to explain the recommendations based on the results from the empirical research.

This chapter starts with an overview of the research. The conclusions reached as a result of the research are discussed and the contributions made to research are summarised. Finally, the areas requiring further research are identified, and brief comments are made on the implication of this study on communication in organisations.

## 8.2 OVERVIEW

**Chapter 1** motivated the study by focusing on the background to the problem. It highlighted the value of a “South Africanised” approach and its contribution to the complexities experienced in South Africa, but also pointed to the lack of an explanation on how this could be applied and the absence of an holistic approach to the problem. It further highlighted the need for a better understanding of the phenomenon. This was the need addressed in this study. The scope and the structure of the study were explicated, using the systems view of problem solving, giving a holistic view of the different varieties of scientific activities. Systems theory provided a general conceptual framework or meta-theory for this study. The study started from the premise that communication forms a basis for human organising and provides a rationale for understanding how people organise.

**Chapter 2** gave a philosophical perspective on management based primarily on the arguments of Peter Drucker, illustrating the relative short history of management as a profession. The chapter also explicated the premise of this study, that communication is the binding elements that keeps the various interdependent parts of the organisation together. The society of organisations were described, where management became a key social function with management the constitutive, determining and differential organ of society. Negative perceptions of the ‘corporation’ *inter alia* its so-called unnatural development and one that suggested a ‘conspiracy of some sort’, with Henry Adams as one of its proponents, portrayed a picture of an evil, illegitimate ‘corporation’. But almost 100 years after management arose in the early large business enterprises of the latter half of the nineteenth century, it was clear that management pertained to every single social institution. Management had become the pervasive, universal organ of a modern society. The overwhelming majority of people in the developed societies were directly or indirectly linked to an organisation. They derived their

livelihood from the collective income of an organisation, saw their opportunities for career and success primarily linked to an organisation and defined their social status largely through their position within an affiliation to an organisation. An introduction to Western, Japanese and African management styles in this context, started the construction of the framework.

**Chapter 3** presented an overview on the literature on management. The three management styles, Western, Japanese and African, were discussed in various dimensions, as determined by the literature, *inter alia* the social, environmental and cultural context; decision making and conflict resolution in the organisation, and the career and attitude toward employees.

To understand the multi-faceted nature of management, different theories on management were discussed throughout the chapter. A closer look into these theories revealed common elements on Western management:

- The developed Western world has moved beyond the Industrial Age, but their business model is still rooted there.
- The ability to manage the flow of information and the management of knowledge represents the basis for the new business model of the Information Age, a dilemma that is being addressed by management philosophers.
- The entire history of civilisation, and therefore of business, is one of *increased* connectivity and interaction, either by personal interaction or technological means.
- This connectivity can become a double-edged sword, leading to either

greater individual isolation or a greater sense of community, depending on the role the organisations choose for themselves in the future.

- The human element warrants careful attention and nurturing. Care has to be taken not to further divide society, for example the dehumanisation as associated with the transition to virtual organisations.
- Organisations are redefining the boundaries of their responsibility, accepting accountability for the way they use resources and contribute to the environment.
- Managers have to be sensitised for the softer issues of management, suggesting a rethink on their training and curriculum. Managers need more than the instinctive grasp that they have of their own culture. They need models, frameworks and concepts which they can articulate in order to successfully interact with people from other cultural groups.
- Popular (*buzz words*) concepts and the exponential growth of management literature over the past decade, for example on re-engineering, all imply the *need* for new management thought, as the current thought and practice do not satisfy the fast changing needs of organisations. However, disillusioned authors argue that these 'new' concepts appear to be a revolution, change or revision, but are actually just more of the same.
- The trend in Western theory has been to view organisations as autonomous bodies and to examine how they can accomplish their goals most efficiently and rationally.

Theories on Japanese management also reveal common elements:

- Japanese management practices are influenced by culture, industrial organisation and by the government, especially the Ministry of International Trade and Industry.
- Japanese society greatly values education and learning.
- Japanese society is remarkably homogeneous, and maintains that life is a process, not a destination, which may account for the Japanese being masters at benchmarking and continuous improvement.

Common elements on African management includes:

- African nations are constantly involved in a fight for survival: Pressing issues include: hunger, (civil) war and poor infrastructure resulting in foreign debt, involvement of foreign agencies, for example the IMF.
- Western management models cannot merely be adopted or copied in African third world countries, but what should be done in its stead is conspicuous in its absence, although all arguments suggest that *culture* should play a central role.
- The large class of unskilled workers will not be able to compete in the demanding new world of knowledge work, resulting in African countries falling even further behind the industrialised West.
- Power is concentrated at the top of the organisation.

- Managers are not concerned with issues pertaining to the organisations' purpose and objectives.

**Chapter 4** attempted to explore the basic principles of Ubuntu, as it appeared in the literature. It was noted that fewer than five primary authors were responsible for most of the literature on Ubuntu, concentrating the current thought and knowledge base. The exponents of Ubuntu are Van der Post, Koopman and Mbigi, whose arguments formed the basis of the chapter. Three other business spheres were identified which fall outside the parameters of this study.

To understand Ubuntu is to understand its origins. As discussed in section 4.2, *poor* African societies thrive on the solidarity principle of Ubuntu, and in return for the security offered by the group, the individual will have to conform to the group on *survival* issues. Ubuntu is the belief in the central sacredness, and foremost priority of the human being in all his/her conduct, throughout his/her life. Furthermore, it does not exist unless there is interaction between people in a community, manifesting through the actions of people.

After Ubuntu was defined, its origins, as well as the background on Africanisation and Afrocentricity were discussed. A distinction was drawn between these three concepts, as they are often used interchangeably in the literature. A conclusion was reached that Africanisation is further removed whereas Afrocentricity closer associated with Ubuntu, justifying the latter to be used, in some cases, a synonym with Ubuntu.

The social, environmental and cultural context of Ubuntu were discussed, followed by career and attitude toward employees, and decision making and conflict resolution, thereby following the structure as set in Chapters 2 and 3.

**Chapter 5** structured a comparative analysis based on the literature survey described in Chapters 2 to 4. The dimensions identified were tabulated, wielding the qualitative data into a few manageable groups and presented in a format for further analysis.

### Methodology and

**Chapter 6** discussed the two objectives of the literature study, the first was to provide a conceptual foundation for the development of a theoretical framework for a model of South African management communication. The second was to condense large volumes of data into manageable clusters to formulate guidelines for the empirical investigation.

The research problem was briefly discussed, referring to Chapter 1 for more detail. The research design as the conceptual structure within which the research was conducted was then discussed. Three kinds of decisions involved in any research process, *inter alia* strategic, tactical and operational decisions were then described.

The general orientation and departure of the study determined the choice between a nomothetic and an idiographic approach. The position on the continuum between the idiographic and nomothetic approaches was illustrated and motivated.

In the discussion on the tactical decisions, it was explained that there was no simple classification system of research designs. This study was described as a formal, exploratory/descriptive, cross-sectional and *ex post facto* study. This meant that this was a study that covers a specific domain, eliciting responses from purposively selected participants, categorised on an agreement scale, with statements derived from an extensive literature survey and the subsequent analysis thereof. The motivation for these tactical decisions was then given.

The two important operational decisions related to what instrumentation was to be used and from whom the information had to be obtained. With this purpose in mind, the role of the literature survey was contextualised

The Q-methodology and the importance of *contextuality* was highlighted in a discussion on methodology. The principle of contextuality is connected to self-reference and also to Q-method's premise as a method of *impression*, as opposed to *expression*.

**Chapter 7** summarised and reported on the data collected, the statistical treatment of the data, and dealt with the results of the empirical study.

The field research took place over a two-month period at business schools from a number of institutions of higher learning. The frequency tables for age, gender, title, industry sector, number of years in position and cultural groups were discussed, giving a description of the profile of the participants, and thus putting it in context with the results of the Q-sort.

The majority of the participants were male, between 25 –39 years of age, more than half were either managers, directors or part of senior management, primarily involved in general management and had been in their current jobs for between one and seven years.

Nearly half the participants were white South Africans ( $f = 117$ ), and one third black South Africans ( $f = 77$ ). This ratio was not representative of the broader population, but the researcher was satisfied that both groupings were adequately represented. This ratio will improve and become more representative in the foreseeable future, as previously disadvantaged cultural groups catch up. The backlog experienced to date will be cancelled out.

Four principle component factors were extracted from the correlation matrix:

- Factor 1: Individualism
- Factor 2: Collectivism
- Factor 3: External locus of control
- Factor 4: Group think – decision making

Factor 1, individualism, has its roots in the Western management philosophy, whereas factors 2 to 4 can be grouped under African and Ubuntu, and in the case of factors 2 and 4, Japanese management philosophy.

The research was carried out in accordance with the Mitroff and Kilmann (1978) research model described in Chapter 1 (Figure 1.1). Chapters 2 to 5, formed the activity of 'conceptualisation' used to develop the conceptual framework. From the conceptual framework, a process of 'modeling' (activity 2) took place and a scientific model (not to be confused with the 'model' that is the aim of the study), was developed (Chapter 6). The constructs of the study were defined, demarcated and classified in Chapter 6 to form the basis of the scientific model. The 'model solving' activities were described in chapter 7. Chapter 8 derives at the 'solution', being the operationalisation of the 'model solving' activities described in Chapter 7

Systems theory provided a general conceptual framework in terms of which more specific theories could be discussed. Such a meta-theory identified classes of variables and logical relationships among them, but did not specify particular relationships between specific sets of variables, as do substantive theories.

### 8.3 CONCLUSIONS

The following general conclusions can be drawn, based on this study:

- The core elements of Ubuntu are respect, dignity, acceptance and care, need elements that proved to be universal. These elements are therefore not exclusive to Ubuntu and thus South Africa, but is pervasive among any society. To refer to Ubuntu as *the* solution to South African managerial problems, is to give these elements a group name, while suggesting a more humane, softer approach to management in general. Furthermore, to describe this approach as being an Afrocentric approach to management is to move toward an exclusive rather than inclusive term. The recommendation in this regard is to refer to it as a South African approach. A South African approach suggests an approach taken 'by the people, for the people' whereas an Afrocentric approach suggests an approach 'moving *from* white associated values *to* black associated values' .
- However, the use of traditional Western mechanisms of getting a message across will have to be integrated with the traditional African mechanisms.
- Three of the four factors identified as important to South African managers, are closer to the communalism end of the continuum, with one factor closer to the individualism end. Nothing is therefore clear-cut. Integration of both individual and communal values into the organisation, and the understanding and knowledge of values representing both ends are needed.
- The empowerment drive in organisations is universal. It is the *method* by which such empowerment is dealt with in the organisation that differs from culture to culture.
- The secondary research questions, as formulated by Khoza in Chapter 1, are being answered implicitly throughout this chapter. A condensed version will be described now:

- Is the continent's business environment sufficiently homogeneous? The answer to this will have to be that it is not. Most African countries are in a state of survival and pre-occupied with survival issues which change the rules that are applicable to South African organisations.
- Can we look at the South African situation and superimpose its values on the rest of Africa? South Africa has a responsibility to other African countries, in its role as strongest economic power in the region. But its value system is not applicable to other African countries, based on the fact that we have different problems, systems and infrastructure unique to South Africa. Once again, what works for South Africa will not necessarily work in another culture (refer to middle layer of proposed model). However, when considering the core elements of Ubuntu which are universal, the answer is yes, for reasons discussed at the beginning of this section.
- Are values that are characteristically African, transcending African boundaries? Values that are characteristically African do transcend African boundaries in that they are mostly universal. The symbols of African culture differ, even amongst African countries.
- Are these values relevant to economic development, business management and communication management in particular? These values are relevant provided they are understood (by management and non-management), interpreted and *integrated* into the existing mechanisms of the organisation.

Based on the research, the following conclusions regarding the transferability of management styles have been reached:

- Most large organisations in the US were created decades and even centuries ago, and have subsequently been managed at top level, at least until recently, by a fairly homogeneous group of people. These 'founding fathers' naturally reflected their own cultural value systems in establishing the rules, policies, and practices that have shaped the organisation. For the most part, the policies and practices remain intact today despite the enormous changes that have occurred in society and the workplace in the course of the previous century. However, relations based on race, culture, gender, nationality and other group identities were overtly less tolerant and inclusive than they are today. Loden & Rosener (1991:28) explain that the American businesses have been shaped primarily by the values and experiences of Western European white men. One major consequence of this has been the continuous undervaluing of others with core identities different from themselves.
- Culture is specific to a group or society of people and no *absolute measure* exists for evaluating culture. Instead, culture is described based on its manifestations: symbols, heroes, rituals and values. Symbols, heroes and rituals are subsumed under the term 'practices', since these are visible manifestations to outside observers. Values, on the other hand, are considered the core of culture. They are developed at an early age and can be inferred by outside observers.
- The debate around whether management know-how is universal or culture-bound is not a new one (Neghandi & Estafen 1965). Research attention on the issue of cross-cultural transfer of management know-how has been growing steadily since the 1960s. Research in the field can be classified into two types of studies: The applicability and transferability of Western management know-how to developing countries since the 1960s, and the

transfer of Japanese management know-how to both developed and developing countries since the 1980s. Western and Japanese management are deeply rooted in their own socio-cultural soil, wholesale import of this know-how is impractical since the content must be suitable to the new environment and local circumstances. Western economy is in the post-industrial stage, with well-developed infrastructure, a complete market mechanism and a buyer's market, whereas Africa is in the early stage of industrialisation, with an under-developed infrastructure, embryo market systems and very low personal income. It is obvious that post-industrial management models are not suitable to the African context, especially on the micro-level (with some relevance to the macro-level). What African managers need is useful, acceptable and affordable know-how which can be used to address their problems. In a nutshell, no matter which source African managers borrow from, adaptation to local customs holds the key to the success of the transfer.

- Fan (1998:213) argues that learning consists of absorbing, digesting, adapting and applying of which the latter two are the most important stages in the transfer of management know-how. Adaptation has to be made both *conceptually* and *contextually* because: (a) Western and Japanese management know-how are defined on the basis of assumptions and norms which are fundamentally different from their African counterparts, and (b) African organisations operate in an environment that differs from the Western and Japanese environments in almost every aspect. The purpose of the adaptation will be to identify those *factors* which would be inappropriate or unacceptable in the African setting and modify them to fit into the African context.
- African organisations operate in an environment that differs from those in

South Africa in most aspects. Similarities are found in informal business operating throughout South Africa but (specifically in rural areas), which have little or nothing in common with formal business in the rest of South Africa. As of January 1998, South Africa ranked 25<sup>th</sup> in the world for Internet-linked host computers per capita, an indicator of Internet-based economic activity within given countries. South Africa was behind Spain and Italy. The only developing countries ranking higher than South Africa was Singapore (10<sup>th</sup>) and Hong Kong (17<sup>th</sup>) (Economist 1998). With an estimated 122 025 host computers compared to second-ranked in Africa (Egypt, with only 2 013) South Africa is well positioned to be a knowledge-based economy (Network Wizards, 1998).

As a result of the interdisciplinary literature survey and systems approach adopted in this study, a number of other conclusions regarding human resource management, change, flexibility and management emerged as the research progressed:

- The business environment is changing rapidly because of political, economic, social and technological developments. The nature of the change has progressed from somewhat predictable to unpredictable change. Past events and patterns are less likely to be repeated in exactly the same form in an increasingly uncertain and competitive business environment. In addition to these global changes, South Africa has unique problems typical to a first *and* third world environment and has had a heterogeneous population for over three centuries, which has shared nothing except geographical area.
- As a result of the rising uncertainty and complexity in the business environment, the survival of organisations is increasingly being threatened. It follows that organisations that are flexible and thus able to adapt rapidly

and efficiently to change, are more likely to survive and succeed than their less flexible counterparts. This implies that the *value* of flexibility and adaptation measures increases as the levels of uncertainty in the environment increase.

- Concepts like *rethinking* and *re-engineering* (which are, at the beginning of the 21st century, better known as knowledge management, enterprise software, Internet technology, organisational agility, value engineering, and growth strategy), all imply the call for continuous, innovative approaches to management and the way organisations are managed. Two schools of thought, the 'management works' (of which Peter Drucker is a leading voice), and 'creative destruction' including 'complexity theory', (of which Joseph Schumpeter is the prophet), are relevant when studying management communication. The first school of thought argues that the quality of management determines a business's fate. The opposing view ('creative destruction') is that, while good management may make a difference for a short time, an organisation's fate is determined by forces outside management's control. If management determines an organisation's fate, then why do 'good' management, sound strategy, and plenty of resources not guarantee strong performance or even survival? The advocates of management answered this question by arguing that casualties among traditionally strong organisations can be expected, as some managers are coping better with change than others, and some industries are particularly unstable. Complexity theorists reject that explanation, arguing that radical uncertainty is not limited to certain industries - it is now endemic. Management as we know it is too cumbersome for today's fast, unpredictable pace, and is now moving in a nonlinear fashion. It can be concluded that not one, but both of these

schools of thought are still relevant in today's organisation, as (a) the management school over-emphasised the influence of the 'good' manager on the future/success of the organisation and (b) underestimate the influence of the volatility of the system within which their organisation operates. Furthermore, (c) the complexity school undervalue the lessons of experience and adaptation, and (d) overemphasise the role and interpretation of evolving threats and emergent strategies. Arguments from both schools of thought have to be considered for an organisation to survive. It can also be noted that as this is the realm within which western management thought and practice have developed, again stressing the great divide between the first world and third world organisations. The same solution (western management) cannot be an answer to their different problems.

- The transition to a more technological work environment obviously calls for massive re-education of the existing workforce. It is not only going to revolutionise management, but also *how* and *what* they learn. Management and executive development are increasingly going to focus on cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary education of business and professional leaders. In this new emerging work culture, human information and technology resources take center stage. Wide-ranging issues are to be addressed by organisations, from the use of technology to update the workforce to human-machine interface, from changed needs about occupations and organisational relations to coping with a diversified and decentralised workforce. The approach to people and their development within human systems are changing.
- To the extent that 'external locus of control' is one of the four factors

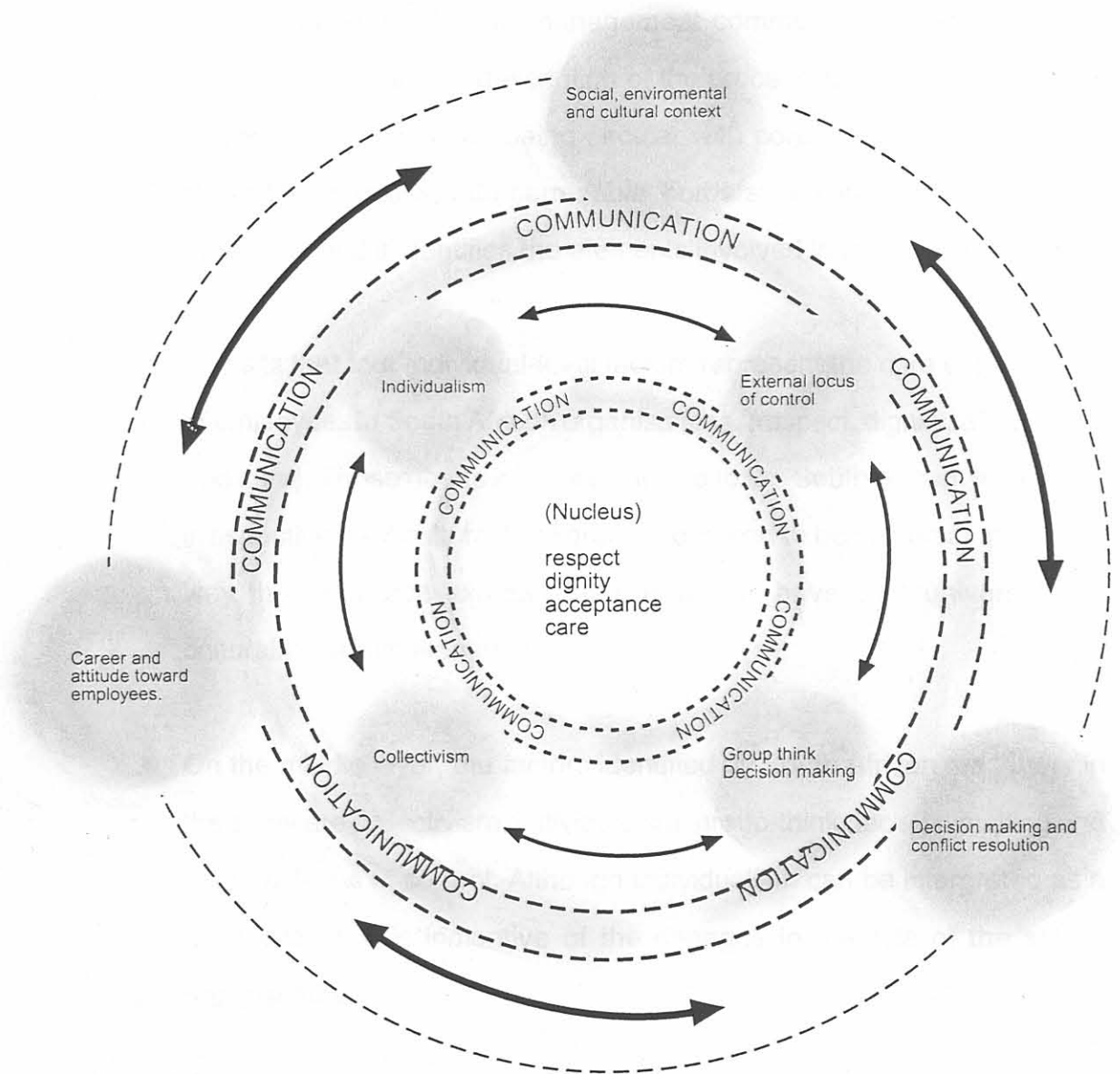
identified in the empirical research section of this study, motivation and reward systems in organisations tend to be build on assumptions of *internal* locus of control. These two areas (motivation and reward systems), need to be relooked.

- The authoritarian personality as discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, involves a range of traits such as aggressiveness, power orientation, political conservatism and cynicism. In addition, the Dutch researcher Ijzendoorn (in Cox, 1993) has shown that persons with authoritarian personalities are less tolerant toward members of other cultural groups. This may have a significant impact on the screening processes for new employees, as well as training and development efforts of organisations.

## 8.4 THE FRAMEWORK FOR A SOUTH AFRICAN MANAGEMENT COMMUNICATION MODEL

The construction of the theoretical framework for a South African management communication model is described in Figure 8.1

Figure 8.1 Framework for a South African management communication model



Source: Researchers interpretation

## 8.5 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Figure 8.1 presents the framework for a South African management communication model, which was developed as a result of the research activities described in Chapters 2 to 7. There are features of the model that can be viewed as somewhat distinctive:
- This is a general model designed to explicate constructs *influencing* the process of South African management communication, and does not provide a substantive description of the process itself. It does however, suggest the process as being circular with core values relevant to the start of the process, with permeable 'borders' between the constructs of the model and it identifies the elements involved in the process.
- It posits that four individual-level factors represent the core expectations of employees in South African organisations, (respect, dignity, acceptance and care). These needs are not exclusive to the South African workforce, irrespective their cultural background, but tend to be universal. It is in the way the workforce *express* them that may have *both* universal and culturally-specific elements.
- On the middle layer, the factors identified by South African managers in the study are collectivism, individualism, group-think decision making and external locus of control. Although individualism can be interpreted as a discrepancy, it is indicative of the changes in the role of the self in organisations.
- The structural level, decision making and conflict resolution, career and attitude toward employees, and social, cultural and environmental context constitute the outer layer.

- Holding these factors together is communication, which constitutes the glue that keeps the layers together, the medium that facilitates interaction.
- These three layers collectively define the elements present in a South African management communication model.
- The core layer (affective processes) starts with the softer issues of management, moving to the harder issues of management on the outer layer. Management thoughts and philosophy are part of the softer issues, followed by concepts, theories and models, and on the harder side, techniques, methods and practices.
- It follows then that the middle layer (cognitive processes) represents the unique layer (unique to South African organisations) and will be the independent variable for future research.
- It should be noted that the model proposes that the process is a complex interaction of individuals, individuals within groups, and their environment. The environment includes both intergroup, intra-organisational dynamics and organisational forces. In this regard, the model builds on the systems theory, explained elsewhere in this study.
- This model assumes that management thought and philosophy are best understood by examining the interplay between the individual, group and the environmental situation.
- Although the concepts/constructs of the model have boundary spanning features, it was necessary for illustration purposes to divide them into an open systems, layered style.

- Factors that constitute South African management are made salient by this proposed model and may be used as a teaching tool.

## 8.6 IMPLICATIONS FOR COMMUNICATION

- This study acknowledges the importance of communication in general, within an organisation.
- This study verifies communication as a basis for human organising and a form of human behaviour derived from a need to connect and interact with other human beings. Furthermore, it proved to be complex, multidimensional and occurred whenever meaning was attributed to behaviour or the residue of behaviour.
- A term which originated with and was developed by Hall (1983) and illustrated in Chapter 5, describes language characteristics of high-context cultures, such as black South Africans, and low-context culture, such as white South Africans. The way in which one communicates and especially the circumstances surrounding that communication have been described by other authors, such as Triandis (1976) and Hofstede (1980) to be categorised into countries which fall between collectivist to an individualist orientation. Whether the high-low model will work among the various culture groups in South Africa calls for further research.
- Communication is seen as the *substance* of culture. Symbols, core values, and rules of culture are all enacted *in* communication.
- Communication structures cannot be imposed upon a workforce in South Africa. Understanding through dialogue, means that the current *systems* of information and communication would have to be restructured to allow for a more participatory process.

- Communication plays a critical role in stimulating innovation in organisations. Van de Ven (1986) argue that effective interpersonal transactions help people combine and integrate their ideas, so that they make the whole greater than its parts. Katz (1982) and Katz & Allen (1985), found that communication patterns distinguish successful from less successful project teams in Research and Development organisations. Drucker (1985) and Keller & Hovland (1983) argue that effective communication appears to characterise innovation companies. But how do these constructs as explicated in the proposed model (earlier in this chapter) influence, distract or add to innovation in organisations? This question warrants further research.
- As mentioned elsewhere, the use of traditional African mechanisms of getting a message across will have to be integrated with traditional Western mechanisms. Note that it is suggested that the one will not be replaced with the other, but *integrated*. On an abstract level, it can be described as a whole set of communication mechanisms that are chosen and combined, based on the circumstances and communication objectives.
- Collectivist cultures value harmony with others, dislike competition that may create confrontation and circumvent disagreement. Dependency upon the group offers them a sense of security and it does not serve as a drive to be personally assertive. Consequently, tentative styles of communication are preferred among collectivists. These and related consequences of the resulting styles of communication need to be understood by the communicating manager, as well as the communication department within the organisation.
- A large number of research studies regarding intercultural communication

have been undertaken since the early eighties. Although this body of knowledge exists, it serves no purpose if it is not studied and shared in the workplace. The communication department in the organisation in particular, in its role as change agent, should take the responsibility to study and interpret this knowledge for the organisation.

## 8.7 CONTRIBUTIONS TO RESEARCH

The study has made mainline contributions to management communication and some ancillary contributions to related disciplines.

The contributions to management communication are the following:

- It identified and exposed, through an interdisciplinary literature survey, the major issues confronting management communication and managers in adapting to a highly competitive and rapidly changing business environment. Based on this literature survey, a framework of the major management styles and African management was formulated, to compare with Ubuntu as core value system. These challenges may be used as: (a) criteria for assessing the contribution of research, improvements or innovation in management communication; (b) a means of focusing on those areas of management communication requiring change or further research; and (c) a point of departure for studying the interrelationship between management and its environment from an open system perspective.
- It provided a model (as a point of departure) for South African organisations with which it can compare itself, benchmark against or simply use as a sounding board for current management practice.

- It exposed the relevance of Ubuntu as value system for a unique South African management philosophy, and considered its uniqueness *per se*.
- Through a comparative analysis, it considered the similarities and differences between African management and Ubuntu, whilst considering the applicability of Ubuntu throughout the continent of Africa.
- It suggested that problems confronting management be solved by viewing it as an open system which interacted freely with its environment. The demand of the environment should drive the nature of change required in management and management training.
- It emphasised the need for interdisciplinary research in management, so that the problem areas identified may be approached in a holistic manner/perspective.
- New areas of research were suggested. It illustrated the importance of communication and management to be approached holistically and in an integrated way.

Ancillary contributions to other disciplines include:

- It provided an overview of the available literature on the *status quo* of relevant issues facing the organisation of the day.
- It took a construct, management communication in organisations, and explicated its relevance to the survival of the organisation, by including functions and roles traditionally belonging to other areas in the organisation.
- It focused on the importance of using the core competencies of the organisation to identify the areas where change is needed.

- It provided and sensitised management to the different attributes of the various managerial styles.
- It created a greater awareness of the value of softer management issues in organisations, which may be used to competitively position or reposition the organisation and its human resources strategy.

Two ancillary contributions are made to research methodology:

The successful application of the Mitroff & Kilmann (1978) model described in Chapter 1 constituted empirical proof of the model's validity. The model was found to be a valuable research tool in that:

- it helped to delineate the scope of the research;
- the circles and activities suggested an appropriate chapter arrangement;
- it encouraged a holistic approach to the research process; and
- as the model has no specific starting point or end it made provision for a process related approach.

The use of Systems Theory as metatheory for the study provided structure to the research, in that:

- it made it possible to use an interdisciplinary approach;
- it provided an effective means for explaining the complex relationships between the management function in the organisation and its suprasystems and subsystems;
- it provided a useful method for studying the constructs in the study from a holistic perspective; and
- it emphasised the importance of continuous feedback to enable the system to reposition itself or influence its environment in response to change.

The use of Q-methodology as tactical research decision proved to be a valuable research method in that:

- it facilitated the strategic decisions as stipulated in Chapter 6;
- it was a qualitative technique which allowed for quantitative data-analysis, which was a research objective;
- it permitted subjects to construct models of their belief systems and provided a systematic means to examine and reach understandings about experiences;
- it allowed to make the study of human subjectivity intelligible and rigorous, through the operational medium of a Q-sort;
- Q-method's premise as a method of impression, as opposed to expression, was a distinction relevant to this study; and
- it lent itself to factor analytical procedures, another research objective.

The procedure suggested by Churchill (Chapter 6) were followed and served the following purpose:

- it outlined a procedural process to follow ensuring a better measure of variables;
- it represented an attempt to unify the scattered bits of information on how one goes about developing improved measures;
- it assessed the quality of measures to be advanced;
- it validated the execution of the minimal steps 1-4 as illustrated in the procedure; and
- it facilitated a more careful planning of data collection and analysis.

## **8.8 AREAS OF FURTHER RESEARCH**

A number of areas of further research can be identified within the domain of this study. Many of these areas tie up with the recommendations made earlier in this chapter.

- As regards the analysis of the data on *cultural groups* of this study, it was mentioned in Chapter 6 that no comparison was made on the data (or between various cultural groups). Further analysis should be done on these data, to determine whether any significant differences/similarities exist, using a two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA).
  
- Although the phenomenon of a South African management style exists in South African organisations as indicated by the model earlier in this chapter, it is not visible and has not been described in the format used in this study. The model therefore needs to be validated in the construction of a measurement instrument by testing it in the broader management corps in South Africa, thereby facilitating generalisation.
  
- Potential pitfalls and questions left unanswered as a result of the delimitations of this study that need to be addressed are:
  - South Africa has to be careful not to 'integrate' cultural groups who do not understand why they have to pull together. On the failure of the two Germanies to integrate : 'Unification has come to encourage cultural and political separation and even generate a distinct East German ethnicity' (Grabher 1995:178). The author goes on to say that eastern Germany is a land that has developed a capitalism without (eastern German) capitalists.
  
  - Empowerment means (at least in the West), that resources are being widely shared in the organisation, top to bottom, enabling everyone to first determine what requires to be done then doing it effectively. But do individualistic and collectivist cultures understand it in the same way? Empowerment efforts may be sidetracked if there is a difference in their interpretation of the concept.

- There lies a danger in group decision making when it takes place at all costs. Porter (in an article in *Harvard Business Review* 1996) argues that the Japanese 'decision-by-consensus' system impedes the radical choices and creativity that are prerequisites of successful competitive strategies. Care have to be taken that decision making processes and creativity are not hampered as a result.
- Tjosvold & McNeely (1988) found that staff members who believed that they had *cooperative goals* expected to discuss a problem productively, communicate their information and ideas effectively, felt positive about discussions, used their resources efficiently, made progress on tasks, developed creative, high-quality solutions and were confident they could work together in the future. In comparison, employees who had competitive goals had pessimistic expectations, thought they communicated ineffectively, had negative feelings about discussions, worked inefficiently and were unable to develop quality, creative solutions. How does culture influence goal formulation? And if it does have an influence, how does a multicultural workforce such as they are in South Africa achieve synergy on their organisational goals? Further research could determine the significance of such influences and indicate solutions to the problem.
- Darling & Fischer (1998) argue that management team-building within a multinational organisation is greatly enhanced if the interactive style reflected by each person is considered. The blend of behavioural style can affect the collective achievements of the entire management team, as well as the accomplishments of each member of the team. In this context, behavioural style is a pervasive, enduring and culture-free set of interpersonal characteristics focusing on how one acts – on what one says and does. The above authors identify four behavioural styles, *inter*

*alia*, Relater, Analyser, Director and Socialiser – no one of which is necessarily better or worse than any other. The concept of behavioural style and a consideration of its elements are useful in helping to understand *one self* and the interpersonal behaviours of *others*. In addition to employees understanding their own behaviour or the behaviour of others in the multicultural organisation, Darling & Fisher stress the importance of the four behavioural styles in facilitating *style flex*, a term they use to describe the way to interact and communicate within another person's comfort zone, without losing one's integrity or naturalness of expression. The idea is neither to change one's basic behavioural style nor to imitate the other person. Further research could (together with the sensitising application possibilities of the model discussed earlier in the chapter), sensitise employees to better understand one another, desensitising cultural and racial issues in the organisation. This recommendation is complementary to 'third culture building' that was proposed by Beesley (1995). The emphasis here is not to build a new form of management as suggested by 'third culture' building, but rather to improve self-knowledge, insight and empathy for others in the organisation, resulting in a better utilisation of existing resources. This way no sacrifices need to be made, but differences accommodated, retaining cultural identities throughout the process.

- Further studies need to address the practical problems which may arise during the adaptation and application stages of the processes described in the recommendations, elsewhere in this chapter: How to overcome conceptual barriers, how to reduce the resistance to change, how to reconcile new practice with the existing system, and how to assess the effectiveness and measure performance after the integration process, to name just a few.

## 8.9 SUMMARY

This study has attempted, at least in part, to critically formulate a basis for a South African management communication framework. At the very least, it has provided impetus to explore other avenues of research.

The expectation is clear that today's employee wants a more caring, supportive management style, irrespective his or her cultural background, whilst becoming accustomed to continuous instability in the work environment. These changes require that two factors – corporate and human – have to mesh. If they do not mesh, no amount of corporate visioning, planning and strategy will enable business to survive, much less hold their competitive ground. Management, especially in South Africa, will have to think and argue more from a post-modern (human behaviour is not exclusively motivated by independent rational thinking), and less from the modernist, rational (all humans are rationally thinking subjects) perspective.

Management in South Africa has to encourage diverse perspectives, but be sensitive to cultural difference *and* similarities, and to *integrate* the positive aspects of both into the mechanisms of the organisation. Mutual acceptance of different culture groups in an organisation will not happen on its own accord. It will take visionary leadership to show the way.

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## PERSONAL DETAILS:

Please circle the relevant category:

Age:

20 – 24	25 – 29	30 – 34	35 – 39	40 – 44	45 – 49	50 – 54	55+
---------	---------	---------	---------	---------	---------	---------	-----

Sex:

M	F
---	---

Title:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Manager<br><input type="checkbox"/> Head of Department<br><input type="checkbox"/> Consultant<br><input type="checkbox"/> Director | <input type="checkbox"/> Senior Manager<br><input type="checkbox"/> Entrepreneur/own business<br><input type="checkbox"/> Other |
|---|---|

Which industry sector applies to your organisation?

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Financial services<br><input type="checkbox"/> Healthcare services<br><input type="checkbox"/> Transport<br><input type="checkbox"/> Construction<br><input type="checkbox"/> Telecommunication<br><input type="checkbox"/> Academia | <input type="checkbox"/> Government body<br><input type="checkbox"/> Pharmaceutical manufacturer<br><input type="checkbox"/> Military<br><input type="checkbox"/> Mining<br><input type="checkbox"/> Leisure<br><input type="checkbox"/> Marketing | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Utility<br><input type="checkbox"/> Retail<br><input type="checkbox"/> Food<br><input type="checkbox"/> Media<br><input type="checkbox"/> Consultancy |
|---|--|---|

Years in current position:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 1 year<br><input type="checkbox"/> One to three years | <input type="checkbox"/> Four to seven years<br><input type="checkbox"/> Eight years or more |
|--|--|

Which area does your job role fits into and/or which is of interest to you?

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> General Business Management<br><input type="checkbox"/> Operations (incl. Production/Distribution)<br><input type="checkbox"/> Human Resources<br><input type="checkbox"/> Technology<br><input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) ..... | <input type="checkbox"/> Finance<br><input type="checkbox"/> Marketing<br><input type="checkbox"/> Training |
|---|---|

Culture group:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> White South African<br><input type="checkbox"/> Black South African<br><input type="checkbox"/> Coloured South African<br><input type="checkbox"/> Other | <input type="checkbox"/> Indian South African<br><input type="checkbox"/> White non-South African<br><input type="checkbox"/> Black non-South African |
|---|---|

### PLEASE READ THE INSTRUCTIONS

This research involves people's orientation towards certain issues in *their* organisations. Hence, there are no right or wrong choices. All responses are to reflect the degree to which you agree or disagree with the statement.

The task required of you as respondent is to sort a number of statements on the individual cards into the number of categories, 1 to 5, where 5 represents "most strongly agree with" and 1 "least agree with".

**How to start:**

1. Pick out of the 60 statements, the statements you "most strongly agree with" and put them in a pile marked "5".
2. Secondly, pick the statements you "least agree with" and put them in a pile marked "1".
3. Then pick the statement you can "agree with", and put them in a pile marked "4".
4. Pick the statements you "do not agree with", and put them in a pile marked "2".
5. The balance of the cards can be filed under "neutral", "3".

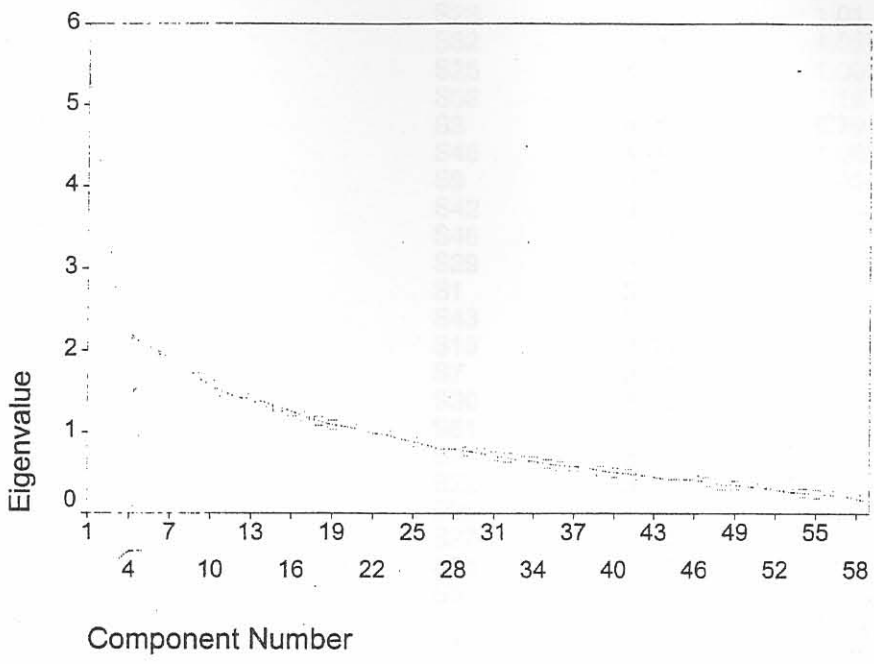
Please staple the piles of cards (with their applicable numbers), fold it in this page, and wrap it with the elastic band.

# Appendix B

Items according to increasing levels of agreement:

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation
309	4.73	0.71
310	4.67	0.72
326	4.62	0.75
312	4.58	0.82
320	4.57	0.82
311	4.56	0.82
313	4.55	0.81
308	4.54	0.74
305	4.53	0.76
302	4.52	0.76
303	4.51	0.76
304	4.50	0.76
342	4.49	0.76
346	4.48	0.76
329	4.47	0.76
31	4.46	0.76
343	4.45	0.76
319	4.44	0.76
37	4.43	0.76
330	4.42	0.76
331	4.41	0.76
332	4.40	0.76
333	4.39	0.76
334	4.38	0.76
335	4.37	0.76
336	4.36	0.76
337	4.35	0.76
338	4.34	0.76
339	4.33	0.76
340	4.32	0.76
341	4.31	0.76
344	4.30	0.76
345	4.29	0.76
347	4.28	0.76
348	4.27	0.76
349	4.26	0.76
350	4.25	0.76
351	4.24	0.76
352	4.23	0.76
353	4.22	0.76
354	4.21	0.76
355	4.20	0.76
356	4.19	0.76
357	4.18	0.76
358	4.17	0.76
359	4.16	0.76
360	4.15	0.76
361	4.14	0.76
362	4.13	0.76
363	4.12	0.76
364	4.11	0.76
365	4.10	0.76
366	4.09	0.76
367	4.08	0.76
368	4.07	0.76
369	4.06	0.76
370	4.05	0.76
371	4.04	0.76
372	4.03	0.76
373	4.02	0.76
374	4.01	0.76
375	4.00	0.76
376	3.99	0.76
377	3.98	0.76
378	3.97	0.76
379	3.96	0.76
380	3.95	0.76
381	3.94	0.76
382	3.93	0.76
383	3.92	0.76
384	3.91	0.76
385	3.90	0.76
386	3.89	0.76
387	3.88	0.76
388	3.87	0.76
389	3.86	0.76
390	3.85	0.76
391	3.84	0.76
392	3.83	0.76
393	3.82	0.76
394	3.81	0.76
395	3.80	0.76
396	3.79	0.76
397	3.78	0.76
398	3.77	0.76
399	3.76	0.76
400	3.75	0.76
401	3.74	0.76
402	3.73	0.76
403	3.72	0.76
404	3.71	0.76
405	3.70	0.76
406	3.69	0.76
407	3.68	0.76
408	3.67	0.76
409	3.66	0.76
410	3.65	0.76
411	3.64	0.76
412	3.63	0.76
413	3.62	0.76
414	3.61	0.76
415	3.60	0.76
416	3.59	0.76
417	3.58	0.76
418	3.57	0.76
419	3.56	0.76
420	3.55	0.76
421	3.54	0.76
422	3.53	0.76
423	3.52	0.76
424	3.51	0.76
425	3.50	0.76
426	3.49	0.76
427	3.48	0.76
428	3.47	0.76
429	3.46	0.76
430	3.45	0.76
431	3.44	0.76
432	3.43	0.76
433	3.42	0.76
434	3.41	0.76
435	3.40	0.76
436	3.39	0.76
437	3.38	0.76
438	3.37	0.76
439	3.36	0.76
440	3.35	0.76
441	3.34	0.76
442	3.33	0.76
443	3.32	0.76
444	3.31	0.76
445	3.30	0.76
446	3.29	0.76
447	3.28	0.76
448	3.27	0.76
449	3.26	0.76
450	3.25	0.76
451	3.24	0.76
452	3.23	0.76
453	3.22	0.76
454	3.21	0.76
455	3.20	0.76
456	3.19	0.76
457	3.18	0.76
458	3.17	0.76
459	3.16	0.76
460	3.15	0.76
461	3.14	0.76
462	3.13	0.76
463	3.12	0.76
464	3.11	0.76
465	3.10	0.76
466	3.09	0.76
467	3.08	0.76
468	3.07	0.76
469	3.06	0.76
470	3.05	0.76
471	3.04	0.76
472	3.03	0.76
473	3.02	0.76
474	3.01	0.76
475	3.00	0.76
476	2.99	0.76
477	2.98	0.76
478	2.97	0.76
479	2.96	0.76
480	2.95	0.76
481	2.94	0.76
482	2.93	0.76
483	2.92	0.76
484	2.91	0.76
485	2.90	0.76
486	2.89	0.76
487	2.88	0.76
488	2.87	0.76
489	2.86	0.76
490	2.85	0.76
491	2.84	0.76
492	2.83	0.76
493	2.82	0.76
494	2.81	0.76
495	2.80	0.76
496	2.79	0.76
497	2.78	0.76
498	2.77	0.76
499	2.76	0.76
500	2.75	0.76
501	2.74	0.76
502	2.73	0.76
503	2.72	0.76
504	2.71	0.76
505	2.70	0.76
506	2.69	0.76
507	2.68	0.76
508	2.67	0.76
509	2.66	0.76
510	2.65	0.76
511	2.64	0.76
512	2.63	0.76
513	2.62	0.76
514	2.61	0.76
515	2.60	0.76
516	2.59	0.76
517	2.58	0.76
518	2.57	0.76
519	2.56	0.76
520	2.55	0.76
521	2.54	0.76
522	2.53	0.76
523	2.52	0.76
524	2.51	0.76
525	2.50	0.76
526	2.49	0.76
527	2.48	0.76
528	2.47	0.76
529	2.46	0.76
530	2.45	0.76
531	2.44	0.76
532	2.43	0.76
533	2.42	0.76
534	2.41	0.76
535	2.40	0.76
536	2.39	0.76
537	2.38	0.76
538	2.37	0.76
539	2.36	0.76
540	2.35	0.76
541	2.34	0.76
542	2.33	0.76
543	2.32	0.76
544	2.31	0.76
545	2.30	0.76
546	2.29	0.76
547	2.28	0.76
548	2.27	0.76
549	2.26	0.76
550	2.25	0.76
551	2.24	0.76
552	2.23	0.76
553	2.22	0.76
554	2.21	0.76
555	2.20	0.76
556	2.19	0.76
557	2.18	0.76
558	2.17	0.76
559	2.16	0.76
560	2.15	0.76
561	2.14	0.76
562	2.13	0.76
563	2.12	0.76
564	2.11	0.76
565	2.10	0.76
566	2.09	0.76
567	2.08	0.76
568	2.07	0.76
569	2.06	0.76
570	2.05	0.76
571	2.04	0.76
572	2.03	0.76
573	2.02	0.76
574	2.01	0.76
575	2.00	0.76
576	1.99	0.76
577	1.98	0.76
578	1.97	0.76
579	1.96	0.76
580	1.95	0.76
581	1.94	0.76
582	1.93	0.76
583	1.92	0.76
584	1.91	0.76
585	1.90	0.76
586	1.89	0.76
587	1.88	0.76
588	1.87	0.76
589	1.86	0.76
590	1.85	0.76
591	1.84	0.76
592	1.83	0.76
593	1.82	0.76
594	1.81	0.76
595	1.80	0.76
596	1.79	0.76
597	1.78	0.76
598	1.77	0.76
599	1.76	0.76
600	1.75	0.76

Scree Plot



*Scree plot generated from SPSS*

# Appendix C

## Items according to decreasing levels of agreement

Statement	Mean*	Standard Deviation*
S28	4.75	0.71
S10	4.59	0.72
S16	4.43	0.95
S12	4.37	0.82
S38	4.30	0.92
S11	4.24	0.97
S23	4.23	1.01
S32	4.20	1.05
S25	4.09	1.00
S52	4.08	1.16
S3	4.07	0.79
S46	4.04	1.08
S9	3.96	1.03
S42	3.91	1.15
S48	3.80	1.07
S29	3.73	1.20
S1	3.71	1.19
S43	3.70	1.26
S15	3.65	1.26
S7	3.63	1.27
S30	3.62	1.18
S51	3.61	1.30
S2	3.40	1.24
S22	3.36	1.17
S26	3.31	1.22
S27	3.30	1.36
S36	3.27	1.36
S5	3.26	1.21
S6	3.24	1.27
S44	3.22	1.24
S59	3.22	1.43
S8	3.21	1.25
S24	3.19	1.36
S50	3.15	1.35
S4	3.15	1.23
S14	3.11	1.44
S34	3.06	1.35
S31	3.03	1.19
S20	3.01	1.31
S37	2.87	1.27
S60	2.87	1.32
S39	2.86	1.29
S41	2.86	1.26
S57	2.76	1.40
S55	2.75	1.33
S58	2.69	1.44
S54	2.66	1.40
S35	2.65	1.28
S45	2.62	1.32
S53	2.60	1.22
S21	2.57	1.34
S19	2.39	1.20
S40	2.37	1.21
S33	2.34	1.28
S56	2.28	1.28
S47	2.26	1.31
S13	2.22	1.24
S18	1.92	1.13
S17	1.54	0.89
S49	1.48	0.76

*\*Rounded off to the nearest two decimals*