

CHAPTER 1

SCIENTIFIC INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH

This chapter provides an outline of the study. The motivation for the research leads the chapter and is followed by the problem statement and the aims of the study. The paradigm perspective is presented to provide context and thereafter the research design and methodology is set forth. The section ends with an outline of the chapters in order to provide an overview of the manner in which information and findings will be reported.

1.1 BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION

Many authors have written about the importance of leadership in shaping behaviour within organisations (Buckingham, 2003; Collins, 2001; Maister, 2003; Pretorius, 2000; Robbins, 2003; Schuitema, 1998; Werner, 2003). Furthermore, many have shown that strategy, organisational culture and structure are strongly influenced by the personality of the leader (Kets de Vries & Miller, 1991 who cited their previous work and work by Toulouse, 1982; Jacques, 1952; Kernberg, 1979; Maccoby, 1976; Payne & Pugh, 1976). This demonstrates that leadership forms a pivotal role in organisations. Organisations are confronted with one constant – change. This, coupled with the transformation in South Africa, makes the capability to lead change more crucial and managers have to become able to lead people, drive transformation and effectively manage performance simultaneously (Spangenberg & Theron, 2002). Change impacts on every organisation and the reactions to these changes vary. It is crucial, at this time, to understand what influences the way in which organisations react to the forces of change. More importantly, understanding the way in which leaders cope with and deal with change becomes essential in predicting organisational readiness for change and will thus enable improved change management processes.

In the rapidly changing environment within which organisations exist, understanding the variables that exaggerate, mitigate or moderate the response to demands for change and transformation becomes essential. With this understanding, Cilliers (1999) argued one would be able to deal with change more effectively. He goes on to suggest that understanding organisational culture and style allows for assessing the readiness and / or resistance to change evident within the organisation and also the organisational change pathology.

Anything that disturbs the equilibrium causes anxiety (Bion, 1961, 1962; Rice, 1963). Organisational change and transformation threatens the security of individuals, groups and the organisation, and can thus be a source of anxiety. Hirschhorn (1993) said that anxiety is at the root of all distorted and alienated work relationships and that anxieties are managed by developing and deploying what Menzies (1960) termed 'social defenses' that depersonalises relationships and reduces the groups' capacity to complete its primary task. Bion (1961, p.189) reported that the basic assumptions are the "defensive reactions to psychotic anxiety", while Hirschhorn (1993, p.59) asserts that "basic assumption behaviour makes groups unproductive because group members are living a dream". It is thus important to be aware of these basic assumptions, though they are not easily accessible or apparent, because of the potential dysfunctionality that could manifest.

Shapiro (1965) suggested that everyone dealing with change has different and specific styles or cognitive, affective and behavioural approaches that are associated with various pathologies (Kets de Vries & Miller, 1991). The ways in which we deal with the environment are, according to Kets de Vries and Miller (1991), deeply embedded, pervasive, and likely to endure. They suggest that understanding the individual requires an understanding of the 'fantasies' that make up the person's interior world – and that even though a mix of styles are prevalent in an individual, one more dominant style emerges in stressful situations. They have found that parallels could be drawn between individual pathology (the excessive use of one neurotic style) and organisational pathology, and that this leads to different problems. In their research they established that psychological orientation of the leader is the dominant determinant of the 'neurotic style' of the organisation and that the consequence is that this influences culture, structure and strategy (Kets de Vries & Miller, 1991). They also reported an apparent link between the common mode of organisational failure and a very prevalent neurotic style. Given the added dimension of a changing external environment this becomes a very significant area to investigate. By implication this would influence the organisation's readiness to adapt to change. According to Rice (1963) a leader must cope with change and each change demands a re-evaluation of the primary task and any constraints on achieving this primary task. The primary task of a work group is to achieve a common purpose (Bion, 1961; Hirschhorn, 1999). Rice (1963, p.275) said that "a leader cannot escape, for long, the responsibility for

leading". He added that since work groups are formed for the purpose of achieving effective performance and will accept change that improve their primary task performance or resist those changes that hinder effectiveness, they will expect the leader to advocate the necessary changes that enables the achievement of their primary task. Work groups will not excuse the leader who fails to create the conditions which allows for effective performance. Rice (1963, p.207) said that "leaders who cannot bring about the necessary adaptations within the enterprise will not survive, or the enterprise which they lead will wither" and then added (p.273) that dependent groups and individuals "expect their leader omnipotently to control their environment or omnisciently to foresee and prepare for every future change without any dislocation of the existing organisation". Finally, the group will expect the leader to recognise and respond appropriately: "in the long run they are unlikely to forgive their leaders for going into collusions with them to avoid reality" (Rice, 1963, p.273). These demands could create even more stress for the leader during times of change. The Kets de Vries and Miller (1991) study hypothesised that the more centralised the organisation and the more power the top executive has, the greater the impact of their leadership style.

Rice (1963) argued that regulating the interaction between internal and external environments of the organisation is a major task of leaders, and for this reason leadership must be located on the boundary between the organisation and the external environment. A boundary creates anxiety (Hirschhorn, 1993), and thus leaders, operating on the boundary are more prone to anxiety and are the first to experience that which comes across the boundary. The leader, on the boundary, does for the group what the ego (in personality) does for the individual – regulating the inner world and the external reality. The ego (leader) has to maintain control over the inner world to allow the individual (group) to come to terms with the environment (Rice, 1963). It follows then that the leader's style in itself could have significant impact on performing this major task.

Kets de Vries and Miller (1991) typified five leadership styles and organisation types and these are outlined in the table below:

TABLE 1.1
THE FIVE LEADERSHIP STYLES AND ORGANISATION TYPES

Fantasy	Style	Culture	Organisation
Persecution	Suspicious	Paranoid	Paranoid
Helplessness	Depressive Dependant	Avoidant	Depressive
Grandiosity	Dramatic Histrionic / narcissistic	Charismatic	Dramatic
Control	Compulsive	Bureaucratic	Compulsive
Detachment	Detached (Schizoid / avoidant)	Politicised	Schizoid

(Kets de Vries & Miller, 1991, p.246)

They highlighted that the most dominant style is likely to emerge under stressful situations. Change demands from internal and external sources can be highly stressful. Therefore if the dimension of change, which is part of every system, is added, how would these leadership styles cope with and deal with change?

Much work has been done to understand the group's response to anxiety, however there seems to be a significant gap in research on how different leadership styles respond to demands of change.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Thus far it has been shown and argued that leadership influences organisational success, and that the leader's personality is a key determinant of structure, culture and strategy for the organisation. It has also been reported that change is a constant challenge to organisational life, and from the systems perspective any change in one part of the system will impact on the other parts and therefore no organisation is excluded from its impact. Leaders operate at the boundary of the open-(organisation)-system, regulating the interplay between internal and external environments. All of this has been studied – what remains unclear is how the different leadership styles of those at the boundary cope with and deal with change. Since

change evokes much anxiety and is, from an open-systems perspective, permeating the organisational boundary where leaders are expected to be operating, it would make sense to do this investigation from a systems psycho-dynamic perspective.

Kets de Vries and Miller (1991) conducted a study wherein they established how different neurotic styles created different organisational cultures and styles. A further study which complements this work was conducted by Cilliers (1999) in which he explored organisational change pathology and the role of the leader in dealing with change. The proposed study will follow-on from the preliminary work done by Cilliers (1999) in that it will more deliberately explore one key variable: the personality aspects of the leader as a variable in organisational change. Do leaders with different personality aspects respond differently to demands for change? Would they deal with and cope differently with these ongoing demands to change? Sofer (1961, cited by Rice, 1963) said that when leaders give priority to protecting the vulnerable aspects of their personality over the needs of the organisation, they divert and pervert the adaptive capability of the organisation and prevent the organisation from fulfilling itself.

Given that there are five leadership typologies (Kets de Vries & Miller, 1991), how do the different styles cope with change? Change is accepted as part of every system (Miller, 1993; Rice, 1965) and presents the necessary stress in the system to distinguish the dominant styles operant (Kets de Vries & Miller, 1991).

1.3 AIMS

For the purposes of this study, a deliberate attempt is made to understand how the profile of the leader, from a systems psychodynamic perspective, influences the way in which he deals with and copes with the demands for change in the organisation. It is indeed of great importance to understand the dynamic that is created by the change event, the planned change intervention and the style of the leader. This study will investigate the latter and attempt to clarify, through application of the systems psychodynamic perspective, how different leadership styles deal with and cope with change so that we are better able to understand how this dynamic impacts on the organisation's ability to cope with change.

The specific aims of the proposed study are:

1. To explore the systems psychodynamic perspective on leadership in the organisation
2. To explore how change is managed in organisations
3. To empirically establish how the different leadership styles cope with and deal with change and to compare these styles
4. To recommend how leaders, organisations and researchers could cope more effectively with change in the future.

1.4 THE PARADIGM PERSPECTIVE

The proposed study was conducted within the organisational psychology field as part of Industrial and Organisational Psychology. The applicable psychological paradigm is the systems psychodynamic perspective.

The most significant meta-theoretical concept that forms part of this study is personality, which will not be directly measured or explained. The leadership styles conceptualised by Kets de Vries and Miller (1991) will be used as the typology that treats personality in a global way and avoids narrow dimensions of cognition and affect (Cilliers, 1999; Kets de Vries & Miller, 1991). Also drawn from Kets de Vries and Miller (1991) are the concepts of organisational types and cultures and their typology will be applied and referred to. Rice (1963) provided some insights on the management of change and the demands on leadership that will also serve as a frame of reference for this study. Hirschhorn (1993) will be consulted with regards defenses in response to anxiety (in this case as a result of demands for change). Sofer (1961, cited by Rice, 1963) will be referenced for his work in which he formulated principles to determine leadership action during crises of change in organisations.

Leadership, as summarised by Lapierre (1991, citing Erikson, 1958; Freud, 1921, 1955; Kets de Vries, 1980, 1984, 1989, 1990; Levinson, 1981), is the result of the personal dispositions, qualities, and attributes of the individual in a position of authority, and may also be seen as the actions which are attributed to the personal vision, beliefs and fantasies of the individual. Lapierre (1991) said that a key part of the definition suggests projection of deep-seated elements of the leader's personality. Understanding the core of the leader (these deep-seated

elements) is best achieved during moments of crisis (Lapierre, 1991) – and a demand for change could be seen as such a crisis.

Linked to Cilliers (1999) and Kets de Vries and Miller (1991) the following assumptions are relevant:

1. Change is a part of every system.
2. The more centralised the organisation is and the more power the leader has, the greater the impact of the leader's personality (in terms of neurotic style) on culture, structure and strategy.
3. The more similar the personalities of the leaders, the more closely they will adhere to the coping styles.
4. The more pronounced the personality style of the leader is, the more it will be reflected in the culture, strategy and structure of the organisation, and the coping styles.

1.5 RESEARCH DESIGN

This study was planned as an exploratory, qualitative investigation to explore the ways that different leadership styles respond to change. The two variables were leadership style and responding to change. The unit of analysis is the organisational leader, divided into five leadership styles, and how they respond to change. In this study and its reporting 'the leader' will be referred to in the male singular (he / his / him) for the sake of convenience, which will include the female leader. The leader's followers will be referred to in the plural (they).

Validity is the absence of random and systematic error (Payze, 2004). All responses were recorded on tape and transcribed after the discussion to ensure that no information was lost and that responses were captured verbatim, thereby preventing any pre-emptive interpretations while responses were being given. This ensured content or substantive validity. Furthermore the validity was ensured by keeping the empirical design simple and using the research question as the key question in the information gathering session. Methodological reliability was ensured by using reasoned consensus (Payze, 2004) since the participants were all experienced psychologists and presumably open to this approach. Another method recommended by Payze (2004) is peer examination, and this was achieved

through sample selection – the sample was a ‘homogeneous’ group of psychologists and they would moderate any potential exaggerations of their peers within the focus groups. The expertise of the sample ensured concept validity, thus the focus group was proposed as a source of validation. The validity and trustworthiness of the definitions provided by the focus group were ensured by establishing congruence with existing literature on the five leadership styles (Kets de Vries & Miller, 1991) being investigated. The method adopted in the focus group; that of first establishing a common understanding of the personality styles under discussion before reviewing the effects of change on these personality styles, is also considered a source of internal consistency. The experience of the facilitator ensured administrator reliability. According to Huysamen (1994) ethical considerations apply at three stages of research, i.e. the recruitment of participants, the data collection (or intervention), and the release of the results. To maintain the ethical standard of this study, all participants were required to be registered and practising psychologists at the time of the focus group. This ensured that the ethical standards as prescribed by the Health Professions Board be the over-arching standard applied by the participants. Furthermore, the aims of the study and the procedure followed were explained to the participants before commencement, thus obtaining informed consent as suggested by Huysamen (1994). The results of this study were closely supervised and appraised by experts in the field of industrial and organisational psychology and formed part of an established academic programme.

1.6 RESEARCH METHOD

The research method adopted included both a literature review and an empirical investigation. The details of which are set forth below.

TABLE 1.2
RESEARCH METHOD

PHASE 1	LITERATURE REVIEW
Step 1	In defining the systems psychodynamic perspective on leadership, it was possible to understand how defenses against anxiety manifest at an individual and group level. Furthermore demonstrating the relationship between leadership styles and organisational types set a foundation for exploring the research question.
Step 2	A literature review was conducted to determine how change is managed within

	organisations from a systems psychodynamic perspective, and in so doing clarified a variety of systematic responses to change.
PHASE 2	EMPIRICAL STUDY
Step 1	<p>Participants</p> <p>A purposeful sample was drawn from a population of psychologists who have been engaged in organisational consulting and who would therefore have had contact with the different leadership styles that were investigated. A sample of four psychologists was used.</p>
Step 2	<p>Data Collection.</p> <p>The responses were collected in a pre-arranged focus group. The focus group discussion was led by a trained facilitator and the entire discussion was recorded and thereafter transcribed. The duration of the focus group discussion was 90 minutes.</p>
Step 3	<p>Data Processing.</p> <p>Determining the experiences of psychologists in relating to and working with different leadership styles was recorded and transcribed. Their experiences were analysed to understand similarities and differences so that the common experiences could be identified. Content analysis was determined to be the most appropriate mode of analysis as it achieves discovery of themes. This entails analysing the data after repeated reading of it, then categorising the data into predefined dimensions, re-reading the content and evaluating the categorisation of data. This approach to data analysis supports an exploratory investigation and enables a renewed appraisal of what characterises the leadership styles.</p>
Step 4	<p>Findings.</p> <p>Reporting of findings was done using the leadership styles as defined up front. The typical characteristics, as provided by the focus group, were used as a frame of reference to which the way in which change is dealt with by the leadership styles was compared. Furthermore the findings were compared to existing literature in order to highlight the way in which these leadership styles responded to change.</p>
Step 5	<p>Conclusion</p> <p>The conclusion is an integration of the findings, which have been aligned to the specific aims of the study. In other words, the conclusion captures how different leadership styles cope with and deal with change.</p>
Step 6	<p>Limitations of the research</p> <p>Limitations of the study were listed.</p>
Step 7	<p>Recommendations</p>

	Answering the research question and solving the formulated problem have been addressed and future research needs were highlighted.
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1.7 CHAPTER OUTLINE

The manner in which this research has been set forth seeks to enable the reader to gain an understanding of the basic concepts that inform the study, its key variables, the findings and finally the conclusions. Therefore the chapters that follow are sequenced as follows:

Chapter 2: Systems psychodynamics

Chapter 3: Change from a systems psychodynamic perspective

Chapter 4: The empirical study

Chapter 5: Findings

Chapter 6: Conclusions, limitations and recommendations

1.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter provided a scientific introduction to the research. The background and motivation was given, followed by the problem statement and aims. The paradigm perspective was presented, followed by the research design. Lastly, the research method and chapter outline was set forth.