SELF PERCEPTION OF LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOURS IN THE WORKPLACE

By

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ii

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SUMMARY

The general purpose of this study was to determine whether there is a difference in self-perception between male and female leaders. The sample group included male and female leaders in a few companies (e.g Fluor, Human Dynamics, The Munt, Rand Merchant Private bank etc) companies. Each manager's self-perception was tested against the way in which others (managers, peers, subordinates) perceive him or her. The difference between the self-rating and that of the others was measured to establish the difference in perception between self and others. The results showed that men were slightly more self-aware than the females. It is recommended that it would be beneficial to find ways in which the environment can be prepared to limit the impact of gender differences on the implementation of the 360 feedback system (or any other performance management system) and to investigate variables such as cultural differences, age and the concept of self-perception.

Key words: leadership, self-perception, 360-degree system, gender and leadership competencies

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF APPENDICES

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH

This dissertation focuses on the self-perception differences between male and female leaders. In this chapter the background and the substantiation for the research is given. This flows into a problem statement and research questions. The aims of the research are then stated. The paradigm perspective is discussed and the research design and methods which gives structure to the research are formulated.

1.1   BACKGROUND TO AND MOTIVATION OF THE RESEARCH

"Good leadership is one of the most valued of all human activities. To be known as a good leader is a great accolade. It signifies the talent to bring people together, to get them to work effectively together to meet a common goal, to co-operate with each other, to rely upon each other, and to trust each other" (Jacques & Clement, 2000, p. 3).

Jacques and Clement (2000, p. 3) define leadership as "That process in which one person sets the purpose or direction for one or more other persons, and gets them to move along together with him or her, and with each other, in that direction with competence and full commitment". Leadership is important and relevant in modern organisations because it forms a fundamental part of many organisational key success factors.

Zak, Gold, Rychman and Lenney (1998) state that in view of the increased access females have to management positions (and therefore leadership in organisations), it is important to establish whether any gender differences exist, specifically in relation to leadership behaviour. They refer to evidence suggesting that, although the proportion of females in managerial positions is increasing, there still seem to be doubts about female leadership skills. Male managers also tend to define management in masculine terms (as "the only right way").

Lee and Hoon (1993) refer to a "dramatic increase" in the numbers of working women over the last two decades and as a result the fact that women's leadership behaviours have drawn much attention from organisational experts. There is reason to believe that the different leadership styles of men and women may affect employee perceptions of the job itself. The performance of male and female managers is important to organisations because organisations are required to create an environment that encourages the continuous competence, learning and development of their staff (Ulrich, 1992). However, impacting on performance, there are often significant differences in the ways in which employees see themselves opposed to the way others in the organisation perceive them.

Interestingly, there is a growing body of research on 360-degree feedback systems and on self-assessment/perception that has demonstrated that women managers are less likely to overestimate their performance than their male counterparts. This means that they show greater self-perception (as defined by self-other ratings) and may therefore be more open to actively working on the development areas identified in this process. This led Fletcher (1999) to infer that female managers may benefit more than male managers through the use of performance management feedback, as they would be more willing to commit to the development issues identified in a performance management process.

There are many ways to measure performance and identify development needs in male and female managers. These can include formal appraisals, observation, feedback forms, performance discussions and 360-degree performance feedback measures.

Ideally, performance management is an ongoing communication process that establishes and sets clear expectations and understanding. It is a means to prevent poor performance, improve performance, and identify barriers to performance (Sacher Associates, 1992). These systems can provide important and relevant information, but may also be the target of bitter criticism and complaints.

Nevertheless, the results of performance measures can be used to identify developmental and therefore training needs in specific individuals. According to Fletcher (1999) performance results, as described above, will be influenced by gender and may benefit one group more than the other.

Organisations need to recognise that there may be a significant difference between the way an individual perceives himself/herself, and the way he/she is perceived by others. If he/she does not recognise this, performance management systems may not be effective.

1.2   PROBLEM STATEMENT

Masciuch's (1990) defines self-concept (or self-perception) as an overall mental structure composed of domains that vary in number and type throughout the individual's life span. "Self-concept" may range from a surface perception, having a relatively small effect on performance, through to an underlying important influence that greatly affects behaviour. Self-perception may therefore have a direct influence on an individual's job performance. Self-perception of male and female managers may or may not influence differences in leadership styles and behaviours which directly influences job performance.

Fletcher (1999) comments that if, as has been indicated, gender does influence self-perception, self-assessment or self-awareness, then ways should be found to minimise the impact of gender differences in the implementation of developmental or performance-related initiatives.

In the literature research, the impact of gender self-perception differences identified the following research questions:

- Do gender difference in self-perception exist between male and female managers?

- If gender differences in self-perception exist, how do these differences influence leadership behaviour?
- If gender differences in self-perception exist, how are these impacting on organisations?

1.3   AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

With reference to the above-mentioned problem statement and research questions, the aim general aim of this research was to determine if there is a difference in the self-perception of male and female managers.

In terms of the literary survey the specific aims are to:

- Explore previous research in gender differences in leadership with specific reference to self-perception
- Establish whether gender differences in self-perception between male and female leaders exist
- To define leadership and explore if gender differences in self-perception of male and female leaders impact on organisations and how

In terms of the empirical study, the specific aims are as follows:

- To ascertain if there is a difference in self-perception between male and female leaders
- To ascertain if there are specific competency areas in which there are differences in self-perception between male and female managers
- To make recommendations for future research regarding the findings with regard to the impact of self-perception on male and female leaders

The 360-degree and High Performance Leadership Development (HPLD) questionnaire will be used to determine the differences in how male and female

leaders perceive themselves compared to managers, colleagues, peers and sub-ordinates.

In order to achieve the above objective, it was also necessary to determine if the high performance leadership development (HPLD) questionnaire is valid and reliable.

1.4   PARADIGM PERSPECTIVE

The paradigm perspective refers to the frame of reference for viewing the world, consisting of a set of concepts and assumptions (Bailey, 1987). This research will refer specifically to organisational development, employment relations and training and development.

Behaviourism will be used as the applicable psychological paradigm. The 360-degree feedback system establishes a person's strengths and weaknesses. The ultimate outcome would be to influence and change behaviour, which should then lead to increased performance levels. The 360-degree feedback system is based on the way in which superiors, peers, customers and sub-ordinates perceive and observe the performance and hence behaviour of individuals (Maddi, 1996).

The thrust of behaviourism is behavioural change – the increase or decrease in the frequency of overt, easily discernible responses, when followed by stimuli that act as positive or negative reinforcers. The subject matter of behaviourism is observable behaviour since what can be observed can be studied objectively. Watson, a behaviourist theorist, as cited by Bergh and Theron (1999), maintains that the environment determines behaviour. Behaviourism can therefore be linked to 360-degree assessments and self-perception because both refer to behaviour as well as the environment.

According to Bergh and Theron (1999, p. 8), "the contemporary approach in psychology is not to adhere rigidly to one or other schools of thought, but to combine concepts and methods from different schools. This is an eclectic approach involving metatheories. The subject to be studied should ideally be studied holistically, keeping all the concepts, models and theories from different schools in mind".

The above includes systems theory, structuralism, humanism and psychoanalysis. For example, the systems model emphasises that an individual is a system comprising a number of subsystems such as the body, mind intelligence and emotions. These, in turn, are influenced by other systems such as the political environment, family, culture, marriage and/or religious groups. These factors influence the way a person perceives himself/herself and the way others perceive him/her.

The problem area can also be linked to the theory of structuralism through its relevance to consciousness. Structuralism studies structural elements of the conscious experience and attempts to understand psychological processes such as sensation, attention, perception, reaction, feeling and emotion. Structuralist analysis is also referred to as introspection, which refers to self-observation and self-perception (Bergh & Theron, 1999).

The humanistic school of thought argues that people cannot be seen as simply reacting to external stimuli (as per behaviourism and psychoanalysis). Humanists argue that the subject of psychology focuses on positive aspects of conscious mental activity where humans strive for psychological growth and improvement, self-actualisation and autonomy. This theory provides further insight into the concepts of performance management and the struggle for conscious improvement and self-actualisation.

Psychoanalysis refers to the role of the unconscious in behaviour. Given this theoretical framework, psychoanalysts work with conscious mental content and unconscious mental content. These unconscious processes are accessible through free association in which the unconscious activities come to mind by "entering" the conscious. This theory suggests that the subconscious will influence the individual's self-perception as well as the perception that others have of him/her.

1.5   RESEARCH DESIGN

Cooper and Schindler (1998), define research as a systematic inquiry aimed at providing information to solve problems. Thus business research can be defined as a systematic inquiry that provides information to guide business decisions. It is a process of rational decision making during the research process, in order to plan and structure the research in such a way that the validity of the research findings is maximised (Mouton & Marais, 1990).

The business decisions being referred to in this study deals with the differences in self-perception of male and female leaders. Conducting this type of research is vital to gain knowledge, especially in the business environment.

1.5.1   Variables

Two types of variables can be identified when determining the relationship between variables, namely independent and dependent variables. The independent variable is the one capable of effecting change in the other (dependent) variable. The value of the dependent variable is therefore determined by the independent variable (Bailey, 1987).

In this research study, the following research variables are applicable:

- independent variable – gender

- dependent variable – self-perception (of the leadership behaviour) of male and female managers and how it affects their leadership behaviour

This research thus investigates the difference in self-perception in the leadership behaviour of male and female managers.

1.5.2 Hypothesis

Mouton and Marais (1990) define a hypothesis as a statement in which an assumed relationship of difference between two variables is stated. Within the framework of quantitative research, hypotheses are tested, which means that a statistical relationship between two phenomena is tested. With the variables listed in section 1.5.1 in mind, the hypothesis for this research can be formulated as follows:

H0: There is no difference in self-perception between female and male leaders and therefore will not impact their leadership behaviour.

H1: There is a difference in the self-perception in female and male managers' leaders which impact their behaviour

1.5.3 Evaluation process

In order to evaluate the self-perception of female and male managers, a quantitative research design was used. A non-experimental (Ex-Post Facto) study was conducted. Quantitative research involves data collection methods that emphasise the use of formalised, standard, structured questioning practices where the response options have been predetermined by the researcher and administered to significantly large numbers of respondents (Hair, Bush & Ortinau, 2000).

The unit of analysis is an individual, namely the male and female manager. A leadership questionnaire (HPLD) based on the work of Eichstad (1998) was given to the participants in this research. They were requested to complete the questionnaire

by conducting a 360-degree assessment (including a self-assessment) of their leadership behaviour. An analysis of the self-perception versus the perceptions of others was conducted to measure the differences in self-perception with that of the perception of others.

The 360-degree feedback system provides information on an individual's self-perception and self-awareness compared with the way in which their managers, peers and subordinates see the individual.

1.6 RESEARCH METHOD

1.6.1 Phase 1: Conceptualisation

The concept of self-perception and awareness and self-perception differences between male and female leaders were reviewed. The existing body of knowledge refers to self-perception and self-awareness (these terms are used inter-changeably), and the role fulfilled by personality variables and feedback-seeking propensities.

Leadership was also reviewed because a leadership questionnaire was used (together with a 360-degree assessment system) to assess male and female managers.

A literature review on the 360-degree feedback system was included because this system is directly linked to the way individuals see themselves compared with the way in which others perceive them. The difference between self-perception versus others perception of the same individual can therefore be determined using the 360-degree feedback system.

1.6.2   Phase 2: The empirical study

The empirical investigation consisted of the following steps:

- Step 1:   description of population and sample
- Step 2:   choice of the research instruments
- Step 3:   data gathering by administering the questionnaire
- Step 4:   statistical analysis of the questionnaire results
- Step 5:   formulating the research hypothesis
- Step 6:   reporting and interpreting the results
- Step 7:   discussing the limitations in the research
- Step 8:   drawing a conclusion
- Step 9:   making recommendations

1.7   CHAPTER LAYOUT

The layout of the chapters is as follows:

- Chapter 1:   Introduction to the research
- Chapter 2:   The concept of self-perception
- Chapter 3:   Leadership and the leadership questionnaire
- Chapter 4:   The use of 360-degree measurement tools
- Chapter 5:   Research method
- Chapter 6:   Research results
- Chapter 7:   Integration, limitations and conclusion

1.8   SUMMARY

Chapter 1 served as the introduction to this research project. The objectives and the hypothesis were stated together with the expected outcomes.

A literature review on self-perception and gender differences in self-perception was outlined, and the research project was placed in a paradigm perspective.

Chapter 2 represents the first step in the literature study, extensively exploring the concepts of self-perception, possible gender differences, and the implications of having a positive self-perception. The tool used in this research, the 360-degree performance evaluation questionnaire, is elaborated on further.

CHAPTER 2: SELF-PERCEPTION

Chapter 2 represents the first step in the literature study and will cover the subject of self-perception, self-awareness, and self-reflection – terms which are used interchangeably in various literary sources.

2.1   INTRODUCTION

Self-awareness is important in employee development. According to Covey (1989), self-awareness and the examination of the self are fundamental to effectiveness. Self-reflection is extremely important for management learning and development. According to Argyris (1991, p. 99) "to persist in learning, managers and employees must also look inward. They need to reflect critically on their own behaviour".

Vehicles for self-assessment, such as the 360-degree feedback system involve the learner and those surrounding him/her intensely and provide various inputs which can lead to self-development. Fletcher (1999) argues that the 360-degree feedback system represents a shift in the culture and values of organisations because it allows for multiple feedbacks, and is not based only on the traditional manager-staff relationship, but includes all of the parties with whom the staff member interacts. It provides a different way of assessing individuals in the organisation and establishing areas for development.

According to Flecher (1999), there is a growing body of research on 360-degree feedback systems and self-perception which indicates that females show greater self-awareness, as defined by self-other ratings, and are less likely to overestimate or underestimate their performance compared with their male counterparts. This in turn affects their openness to self-development initiatives.

Hence, if female managers are more self-perceptive, the inclusion of a 360-degree feedback system as an input to performance is likely to benefit female

managers in particular because they will be more willing to buy into the development issues identified in a 360-degree process (Fletcher, 1999). Fletcher's view is of particular interest in this study.

2.2 DEFINING SELF-PERCEPTION AND SELF-AWARENESS

Authors who have researched these concepts in managerial staff use the terms, "self-perception" and "self-awareness" interchangeably. The issue of "self" addresses a person's self-concept, - the way I perceive my behaviour and myself. Daniels (1998) states that the way we perceive ourselves is central to our outlook and overall functioning in the world.

Awareness is defined in Reber's (1985) psychological dictionary as: alertness and consciousness and an internal, subjective state of being cognizant or conscious of something. Collins (1994) dictionary defines awareness as: appreciation, consciousness, enlightenment, familiarity, knowledge, mindfulness, perception, recognition, understanding, acquaintance, cognisance, realisation, and sensibility.

Perception (Reber, 1985) is defined as: those processes that give coherence and unity to sensory input. An awareness of the truth of something. Collins (1994) defines perception as: awareness, conception, consciousness, grasp, impression, insight, observation, recognition, and understanding.

The dictionary therefore represents awareness and perception being similar concepts. In essence, it means knowing one's self, having knowledge of the self, understanding the self, being aware of the self, and being conscious of one's self. For the purposes of this study, the term self-perception will be used also meaning self-awareness and self-knowledge.

A sense of "self" is not something with which individuals are born. Instead, it is something they create out of their experiences and interpersonal relationships. More

than 2,000 years ago, Socrates said "Know thyself". This is one of the most famous aphorisms (sayings) in any language, and one that created the concept of wisdom and peace of mind.

The concept of "self" evolved from a religious and philosophical ideal to become a slogan for positive mental health. Knowing oneself, deeply and fully, means that an individual must face himself/herself honestly and openly. It opens the door to simple, psychological truths about oneself. This means that individuals should have good self-perception and self-awareness because this will lead to self-understanding. Self-understanding refers to a frame of reference about the self-concept. It is a theoretical view that begins with the idea that each person has self-esteem (feelings of personal worth) and a self-concept (an idea of personal identity and self-awareness/self-perception) (Hamachek, 2000).

The above ties in closely with Masciuch's (1990) thinking, which defines self-concept as an overall mental structure composed of domains that vary in number and type throughout the individual's life span. "Self-concept" may range from a surface perception, having a relatively small effect on performance, through to an underlying important influence that greatly affects behaviour. Hence depending on the use of the 360-degree feedback, the results can potentially have a profound influence on performance and change.

Wilson (1995), however, observes while it is likely that self-concept has some influence on performance, it is important to note that it is not the *only influence,* and that there are many other possible variables in its effect on behaviour. His statement is relevant when one reviews the limitations of this study, as detailed in chapter 8.

One should keep in mind that self-esteem is closely linked to self-perception and self-awareness. Self-esteem is defined as the extent to which an individual's regards his/her characteristics as favourable in a self-evaluation. Some people consistently evaluate themselves positively, and are optimistic about their

general abilities. According to Riding (1998), individuals who have high self-esteem desire to think, feel and act in ways that enhance their self-concept, whereas persons with low self-esteem engage in self-protective strategies to minimise their risk of failure**.**

Korman (cited in Riding, 1998), suggests that high self-esteem individuals perform best in an environment in which their talents and abilities can be used to elicit self-affirming or self-enhancing feedback from similar others. This refers directly to 360-degree assessments and obtaining feedback on self from others. If the individual is very self-aware, and his/her view of self is congruent with the way in which perceive him/her, he/she they will be more accepting of criticism and therefore of development plans that could result from the 360-degree assessment process.

According to self-perception theory, individuals often infer their beliefs by examining their own behaviour. A state of increased, objective self-awareness will lead to attitude-behaviour consistency. Individuals in a state of objective self-awareness view themselves as an observer would view them; hence there is high agreement between self and others. In this case, in a 360-degree assessment, the rater and ratee ratings will be very close. The way in which a person perceives himself/herself and the congruency with the perceptions of others indicates the degree to which individuals understand their own strengths and weaknesses.

Self-perception and self-awareness and their relationship with management competence have become an increasingly important issue for both practitioners and academics. Feedback received from participation in 360-degree appraisals and similar programmes is intended mainly to enhance managers' awareness of their competence as viewed by others (London & Smither, 1995; Zak et al, 1998).

Self-perception and self-awareness are, of course, highly subjective and personal. They are an integral part of people's lives. In fact, self-evaluation is a fundamental task of self-regulation and the way in which one behaves on a day-to-day basis. Objective self-awareness, self-perception and self-concept have implications for the wide variety of an individual's behaviours, affective states and cognitive activities. Career planning, decision making and self-development rely heavily on the process of "taking stock" of one's self on a number of dimensions, including interests, skills, abilities, values, needs and lifestyle considerations. This information ("taking stock") is obtained from a wide variety of sources, including 360-degree assessments. Without feedback on where one stands, how one is doing, and how one is perceived with respect to one's goals, effective self-regulation and self-development for change are virtually impossible (Webster & Ellis, 1996).

Increasing awareness of the self will lead to increased comparisons between the self and the perception of what is acceptable in terms of standards of correctness. This leads to the ability to change and adapt. Such awareness has a direct impact on the way an individual's work performance is perceived (Duval & Lalwani, 1999; Swanson & Lease, 1999).

However, human beings change and develop over time. They must adapt over time in order to survive and to make sense of their world. The sense of self is an abstract human creation. It is highly complex and refers to a variety of characteristics, traits, emotions and mental processes. The self is developing and evolving all the time and by its very conception, is creative. Over time therefore the self will change because of experiences, feedback from others and from gaining self-knowledge. Daniels (1998) believes that in most cases this learning will lead to more well-rounded, well-balanced individuals who understand themselves, and their impact on their environments.

2.3   SELF-PERCEPTION AND RECEIVING FEEDBACK

It is well documented that most individuals do not enjoy having to give negative feedback to others, and therefore tend to avoid it. As a consequence, most people may be receiving less negative feedback than is realistic, and the little they do receive is often sugarcoated. Yammarino and Atwater (1997) state further that this may lead to and contribute towards a tendency for individuals to see themselves in an unrealistic positive light.

Inaccurate self-perception can also lead to individuals tending *to discount or rationalise negative feedback*. Hence they are more welcoming and accepting of positive feedback because they perceive it to be more accurate.

This tendency may occur because positive information is more consistent and in agreement with our self-perception.

2.4   GENDER DIFFERENCES IN SELF-PERCEPTION

There are distinct biological differences between males and females. Although the distinction should end there, it does not. Garcia (1998) argues that gender, not sex, accounts for the socially learned traits, behaviours, and attitudes associated with, and expected of, men and women. Moreover, males and females are assigned roles based on their sex, and stereotyping of roles, based on gender. The tendency is then to equate behaviours and traits with a person's biological sex.

Males used to dominate the working environment, both in power and numbers. However, more females have entered the job market and they are now more evident at managerial levels in organisations. For example, a rapidly expanding female workforce is one of the key features of the South African business environment (Garcia, 1998).

There has been a steady increase in women's participation in paid employment. Between 1995 and 2001, black females in business increased by 15% on average, and white females by 11,3% (Statistics SA, 2003).

According to Smith (1998), organisations "corporate Achilles heel" is its all-male monoculture, whose "rugby-scrum mentality" makes it difficult for women (and men who do not fit this particular image) to penetrate.

Females were traditionally linked to qualities that include compassion, passiveness, patience, and commitment in the home.

These behaviours were labeled feminine qualities and were often seen as not being conducive to their becoming successful and promotable managers. Female traits and behaviours were therefore associated with low-level positions. Females were traditionally regarded being unqualified for power positions (such as management), and were placed in positions reinforcing a male superiority.

This used to (and it may still) prohibit females from competing with men for higher-status positions, and thus keeps women subordinate to men. Females were made to feel they did not have the competencies it took to hold down such positions, and they perceived men and masculine traits to be superior to their feminine traits.

Men, on the other hand (fairly or unfairly), were traditionally inculcated with qualities that included competitiveness, aggressiveness, risk-taking and commitment in the workplace. These behaviours were labeled masculine qualities and were regarded as favourable for the traditional hierarchy. It was therefore assumed that employees who were high in the power hierarchy were highly valued and thus positively evaluated (Smith, 1998).

The increase in the number of working females brings more complexity into organisations. Attitudes and stereotypes towards women help maintain the barriers

to women's advancement and contributions to management. It is difficult for females to fit into the *accepted organisational behaviour model.* The female way of working is often perceived to be unacceptable, or not aligned with the traditional definition of high performance.

According to Rosener (cited by Garcia, 1998), it would seem that the female's path to management would continue to gain acceptance in the workplace. In modern organisations, females will mostly be categorised as transformational managers (bringing about change) and men as transactional (negotiation) managers.

It needs to be acknowledged that new ideas arise from diversity and differences in thinking processes. A management culture needs to embrace a variety of differing perspectives by capitalising on the benefits of gender diversity.

2.4.1   Gender perceptions within organisations

Smith (1998) states that negative perceptions of females, and the perceived differences in the way they work and manage, may impede the equitable participation of women in management. It is important to study gender differences to ensure that females are treated fairly. *Understanding and acceptance of gender differences will lead to enhance personal performance and organisational effectiveness.*

In organisations there are still discrepancies in the way males and females are treated in areas such as education, training, legislation, attitudes and behaviours, employment conditions, rights and benefits, child-care provisions, and equal opportunities policies. Korac-Kakabadse, Korac-Kakbadse and Myers (1998), found that the sex-role perspective has produced contradictory results. According to them, there are stereo-type perceptions that women are insecure, over controlling, unable to engage in team play behaviour, and do not like sharing information.

However, what were once labeled women's weaknesses and cited as reasons for them being ill suited to top jobs, are currently the very traits that are perceived to be the traits executives should possess. Some feminist research claims that females are better leaders with superior managerial instincts. It suggests that males and females manage in sharply different ways.

According to Smith (1998) there is a perception that the female approach is superior and that females are better team players than men. Others suggest that men hoard information, while females are natural disseminators, and that leadership traits are more common in executive females that in executive men. The above indicates that *gender differences are important in organisation*, and the way in which these differences are handled within organisations is of equal importance.

Self-esteem is one of the most widely used measures of self-perception and seems to be linked to both gender-role orientation, and to task performance. High self-esteem is associated with masculinity in men.

Self-esteem levels have also been shown to interact with a variety of social and physical situational characteristics to influence various types of tasks.

The influence of self-esteem on both males and females must therefore also be studied to establish its influence on performance. However, self-perception and self-awareness seem to play only a small part in overall gender differences (Kirchmeyer, 1998; Beyer & Bowden, 1997).

With reference to the above, Beyer and Bowden (1997) found that women tend to have lower self-esteem and this leads to underachievement. Swanson and Lease (1990) confirm that it is possible that women underrate their skills and abilities more often compared with men.

However, females showed more self-assessment accuracy than did males in a study conducted by Halman, Fletcher, Randall, Ferguson and Patterson (2000). A

significant point they raised is *that increased self-awareness is critical in maximising performance within organisations.*

Other than gender differences in self-perception, it is also important to note that where the relationship between self-esteem and self-assessments has been researched, they found that individuals with high self-esteem evaluated themselves more favourably than people with low self-esteem (Halman et al, 2000). Other than male/female differences, individual self-esteem plays a key role in self-perception/self-awareness.

Carr, Thomans and Mednick (cited by Beyer & Bowles, 1997) found that females have lower expectancies of performance than males in many areas of achievement. Several authors have suggested that females' low expectancy of performance is indicative of a tendency to underestimate their abilities, therefore revealing low self-confidence. Research on causal attributions for performance has also produced evidence of females' lower self-confidence and their underestimation of their own abilities (Beyer & Bowles, 1997; Wohlers & London, 1989).

In a study by Swanson and Lease (1999) there were significant differences between the self-ratings of females and males. Men rated themselves more highly than women on realistic skills while women rated themselves more highly on social skills. *Gender therefore seems to influence various categories of self-perception.*

However, a greater number of significant differences were found for women's ratings of other women and men's ratings of other men. Firstly, concerning skills, women rated other women significantly higher than themselves on three of the six Holland categories (artistic, enterprising, and conventional). The study showed that the relationship between self-esteem and self-ratings of abilities and skills were somewhat more pronounced for women than for men.

London and Wohlers (1991) found that *agreement* between self-ratings and subordinate ratings was higher for female managers than for male managers. Hence the way females perceive themselves is far *more congruent with the way others see them*. There is also evidence that in terms of rating congruence or self-perception, women may be more likely to seek feedback, attend to and accept it (more so than is the case with men) (Halman et al, 2000; Burke, 2001).

The literature on gender differences is filled with studies documenting cognitive differences between the genders. One study referred to by James and Greenberg (1997) found the following in the field of financial analysis: males have higher self-confidence scores than females and were therefore perceived to be more self-aware than their counterparts. The study concentrated on six measures of self-confidence on which the men reported higher self-confidence scores than the women. In each situation the difference was statistically significant.

In another study cited by Webster and Ellis (1996), men rated themselves more positively than women, which imply that they are more confident in the way they see themselves. This study confirms that males tend to overestimate themselves, whereas, among women, an equal proportion was under estimators, accurate and over estimators. They conclude that there is a tendency for men to overvalue themselves more than women and this may be result of the different view of men's and women's self-concept and self-esteem.

Their research concluded that the development of the self-concept and the way men demonstrate it, comes from a positive self-concept derived from the sense of having abilities that only a few others have.

According to Lindeman, Sundvik and Rouhiainen (1995), women base their self-worth more on social relationships. This difference in self-perception may be a

reason for the result that men tend to enhance themselves, especially on ability assessments. Their studies found that young men have high self-esteem and high work motivation while older women have low self-esteem and a weakened motivation for their daily work.

Research cited by Fleming and Watts (1980), however, found evidence that females have lower self-esteem and occupational underachievement, and that they underrate their skills and abilities more often than men. They refer to two studies that suggest that further attention to the issue of gender differences in self-ratings is warranted. For example, they reported moderate positive correlations between ability self-estimates and actual ability test scores.

However, the magnitude of the correlations varied by gender. The relationship between self-esteem and self-ratings of abilities and skills was somewhat more pronounced for women than for men.

James and Greenberg (1997) made an interesting observation in that self-perception and self-awareness are sometimes formed and based on the stereotyping of the group to which the person belongs. Individuals therefore look at the group to which they belong and assume that they must display the "same as them" behaviours.

Individuals also sometimes view a group of which they are part through the "lens" of their own self-perceptions – that is, we sometimes stereotype an "in-group" in terms of an active personal conception (i.e. the way we perceive them). This could therefore indicate why females show similar trends in self-perception/self-awareness.

Goleman (1998) refers to this type of stereotyping as extremely disabling for groups. He mentions that calling attention to someone's group affiliation, when that identity is irrelevant, can invoke a stereotype about that group in the minds of

all concerned, including those belonging to that group. Group stereotypes can have an emotional power that negatively affects work performance. This is relevant in gender issues in the workplace and the way males and females are stereotyped.

When individuals accept themselves as part of the stereotyped group, they may become particularly vulnerable to doubting their own abilities, questioning their own talents and skills and therefore undermining their own sense of capability. Their anxiety then acts as a spotlight, both for themselves, in their own minds, and for those who watch them.

As Goleman (1998) states, long exposure to negative stereotyping can take hold and intimidate those who belong to that group. This intimidation becomes emotionally potent and destructive in the workplace.

This is extremely relevant in terms of self-perception and self-awareness, especially with reference to organisational culture and acceptance of females. It is important to keep in mind that self-perception is influenced by the way individual sees himself/herself as part of the stereotyped group and the way this perception can influence a person's thinking and therefore his/her performance.

Gender differences do not have to be problematic because they are simply differences that exist between the genders. However, Korac-Kakabadse et al (1998) state that these differences must not lead to "gender-blindness" and/or negative stereotyping. For example, women's under representation in the higher organisational ranks is often attributed to low commitment to the organisation. They cite research that has indicated that men and women display different levels of drive and fortitude. However, workplace experiences determine attitudinal commitment and will therefore affect a specific gender's attitude.

It is important to note that gender differences do change over time. This line of thinking therefore assumes that the broader contexts in which changes occur are a more powerful influence than specific gender differences. Differences between men and women should be celebrated from a diversity point of view, rather than being assessed as the model right, or the model wrong. Differences in styles, skills, and opinions challenge and create new ways of conducting business.

In research cited by Burke (1992), females are likely to value information they receive from a variety of sources more than men. The reason is that they perceive this information as potentially useful to them as women, based on their perception that they are seen as outsiders. If the above is true, it could be assumed that females will see more value in a 360-degree feedback exercise than men.

2.5 TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS OF POSITIVE SELF-PERCEPTION

Seeing ourselves as others see us provides an opportunity for an accurate self-assessment, therefore leading to openness to and readiness for self-development.

A comprehensive, organisation-wide training needs assessment and evaluation effort is critical in organisations because all individuals, regardless of job position, should be monitored, evaluated and assessed, from a variety of sources, on various job-relevant dimensions. From that should flow developmental issues, which need to be addressed constructively and, systematically (Yammarino & Atwater, 1997).

Key to the above is the way individuals see themselves compared with the way others perceive them suggests several implications for training and development. The use of feedback in training and development *enhances self-perception accuracy and self-other agreement.* This is critical in training and development. Individuals need information about their knowledge, skills, and abilities, as well as their individual characteristics, performance, and leadership.

Individuals need to receive performance information from several sources, not only in the traditional manner of manager-staff feedback. They need to understand whether this information is similar to or different from, their own perceptions of themselves and also require constructive feedback to help them to change or maintain appropriate on-the-job behaviours and attitudes.

Yammarino and Atwater (1993) feel that as an organisation's approach to the 360-degree assessment (and consequent training and development interventions) improves, a decline in self-other rating discrepancies should be observed. This can be used as an indicator of improved self-perception accuracy.

2.6   SUMMARY

This chapter explained the concept of "self" and discussed the terms "self-understanding", "self-awareness" and "self-perception." In this research, these terms are used interchangeably.

The importance of self-perception, possible gender differences in self-perception, and stereotypical behaviour in male and female managers and leaders was discussed. This literature review supports the alternative hypothesis that there are fundamental differences between males and females. These differences can influence the working environment and may influence the way performance is managed and training and development interventions are handled.

The 360-degree measurement tool was further discussed as an effective tool to measure differences between self-perception and the way others perceive oneself.

Chapter 3 will concentrate on management and leadership, specifically gender differences in leadership, and the 360-degree performance questionnaire used for this research project

CHAPTER 3: LEADERSHIP

3.1 INTRODUCTION

There is evidence to suggest that males and females solve problems differently, communicate differently and value professional relations differently. The basic issues are whether or not women design jobs in the same way as men and whether they employ unique leadership characteristics and methods which differ from those of males (Lee & Hoon, 1993).

3.2 GENDER DIFFERENCES IN LEADERSHIP

Lee and Horn (1993) established that women tend to communicate with co-workers to satisfy their need for affection, while men tend to communicate to satisfy their need for control. Lee and Horn (1993) maintain that the qualities inherently found in

women have enabled them to become effective mentors, because they tend to naturally support their protégés, both professionally and psychologically.

Unfortunately, Lee and Hoon (1993) refer to a gender-centred model, which highlights masculine and feminine tendencies. They refer to various studies which have found males and females to be equal in leadership competence, yet, women still face socially prompted stereotypes about masculinity and femininity that undermine their credibility as organisational leaders. There are psychological differences between men and women which result in them favouring specific leadership styles and behaviours at work.

According to the model, effective female supervisors are more likely to emphasise consideration and personal relations, while men are more likely to prefer more task-oriented leadership type behaviours. Furthermore, task-oriented styles of leadership are usually viewed as masculine, while relationship style leadership is usually perceived as more feminine. Also, men have traditionally rated their work performance, individual ability and intelligence to be higher than those women, and they attribute their successes to these masculine characteristics more than women do.

However, it is generally accepted that females develop a feminine style of leadership, which is characterised by caring and nurturing, while men adopt a masculine style of leadership, which is dominating and task driven. There is also an expectation that individuals must behave in accordance with societal expectations about their gender role (see the previous discussion on negative stereotypes). Through the normal socialisation processes, individuals learn to conform to cultural expectations about their gender roles. (Zak et al, 1998)

Smith (1998) concludes that the reasons for the low proportion of women in senior management generally rests, not on individual merit or competence, but on institutionalised (cultural) discrimination against females.

3.3 RATINGS IN LEADERSHIP ASSESSMENT

According to Atwater and Yammarino (1998), there appears to be a relationship between self-other rating agreement and leader effectiveness. They are of the opinion that an investigation of differences between self-other ratings may have implications for research and practice, especially in the area of leadership development.

According to James and Greenberg (1997), a manager who receives average ratings from subordinates on a multirater feedback instrument, and whose self-ratings are higher, is not necessarily less effective than a manager who receives the same average ratings from subordinates, but whose self-ratings are about the same or lower than the subordinate ratings.

James and Greenberg (1997) go on to say that what predicts effectiveness is the level of performance as seen by others, not the relation between self-ratings and level of performance. However, they maintain that this does not mean that self-other discrepancies are not useful information on 360-degree assessment instruments. Discrepancies in ratings may play a motivational role in the development process.

Those managers whose self-ratings are less in agreement with the ratings of others may be more motivated to re-evaluate their self-views after receiving feedback, and may acknowledge the differences in perception as significant. Smithers et al (cited by James & Greenberg, 1997) reported that managers were able to improve their performance after receiving feedback from multirater instruments (such as the 360-degree assessment method).

3.4 THE 360-degree SYSTEM USING A LEADERSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE

For the purpose of this study, the 360-degree system was used. Within the 360-degree system a questionnaire is loaded which the person being assessed then answers and his/her assessors (e.g. supervisors, peers, sub-ordinates). It is however essential to use one specific measurement for 360-degree performance assessments to ensure that all participants are measured in the same way, thus adding to the reliability and validity of the overall study results.

The 360-degree feedback system was specifically designed for people development and performance evaluation. The 360-degree feedback system is popular in the business environment, because the potential this type of feedback process has to improve individual, team and business performance (Fletcher, 1999).

This system enables managers, peers, subordinates and even customers, to assess employees because this type of system is perceived to be less biased and subjective than traditional "manager to subordinate" relationships. By making people aware of the way they are perceived, development needs can be mapped out to address performance gaps.

The 360-degree feedback system provides a unique opportunity for all employees to find out how their managers, colleagues, direct subordinates, fellow team members, peers, internal and external customers, and suppliers perceive their behaviour. Lepsinger and Lucia (1997) have described this as an important "reality check".

An explanation of why the system can be perceived as a "reality check" can be found in Edwards and Ewen's (1996) statement that in rapidly changing conditions, 360-degree feedback systems fulfill the need for providing individuals with a more holistic and useful set of feedback criteria, and can be regarded as being fairer, more accurate, credible and motivational than traditional performance management systems.

The system provides an opportunity to develop aspects of learning, motivation, employability, self-knowledge, and self-development. It also helps to avoid career derailment and accelerate learning.

If individuals are open to and trust 360-degree feedback approach, and the feedback is in line with their own perceptions of themselves, they will be *more willing to change or improve any areas of their performance* which others have identified as a development need. Self-perception is therefore crucial to the success of a 360-degree type intervention.

Research indicates that gender play a role in self-perception of leadership behaviour. As already mentioned, Fletcher (1999) inferred that one gender may benefit more than another in performance management feedback. It is important for leaders to be self-aware about their behaviour and how others perceive them because it will have an impact on how they buy into their own growth and development.

The 360-degree feedback assessment tool is used to test the differences between self-perception and the way others perceive the individual.

The concept of 360-degree feedback revolves around the participation of multiple assessors such as a self-assessment by the individual, and colleagues, manager(s), subordinates, customers, and/or any multiple combinations thereof (Edwards & Ewen, 1996; Ulrich, 1992).

The 360-degree system, as explained by Ward (1995) refers to the 360-degree assessment tool as:

- multirater feedback system
- multisource feedback system
- full-circle appraisal
- group performance review

The term "360-degree feedback" can therefore be described as a fairly rounded approach, a form of assessment in which feedback is received from multiple sources.

The process is applied for personal development and/or performance improvement purposes and includes some form of shared feedback with the assessed person. In addition to the multi-assessor nature of the process, the assessors need to be reasonably familiar with the person being assessed – they must frequently interact with him/her to be sufficiently familiar in order to assess behaviour and performance. As a result, the person receives open comprehensive feedback information (Kaufman, Thiagarajan & MacGillis, 1997).

If 360-degree feedback is used effectively, it can help to improve management and leadership competence, communication, teamwork, performance, customer service and organisational change (Craig, 1998; Yukl & Lepsinger, 1995). From a pragmatic and process perspective, the application is efficient, particularly when using the latest digital technology and fair, balanced and participative.

The study was based on the following 10 high performance managerial competencies:

Table 3.1   High performance leadership development competencies

High performance managerial competency	Behavioural definition
Information search	Gathers many different kinds of information and uses a wide variety of sources to build a rich informational environment in preparation for decision making in organisations.
Conceptual flexibility	Identifies feasible alternatives or multiple options in planning and decision making; holds different options in focus simultaneously and evaluates their pros and

High performance managerial competency	Behavioural definition
	cons.
Interpersonal search	Uses open and probing questions, summaries, paraphrasing etc to understand the ideas, concepts and feelings of another; can comprehend events, issues, problems, and opportunities from the viewpoints of others.
Managing interaction	Involves others, and is able to build cooperative teams in which group members feel valued and empowered, and have shared goals.
Developmental orientation	Creates a positive climate in which staff increases the accuracy of their awareness of their own strengths and limitations; provides coaching, training and development resources to improve performance.
Self-confidence (also referred to as Charisma)	States own "stand" or position on issues; unhesitatingly takes decisions when required, and commits self and others accordingly; expresses confidence in the future success of the actions to be taken.
Presentation	Presents ideas clearly, with ease and interest so that the other person (or audience) understands what is being communicated; uses technical, symbolic, non-verbal and visual aids effectively
Proactive orientation	Structures the task for the team; implements plans and ideas; takes responsibility for all aspects of the situation even beyond ordinary boundaries -–and for the success and failure of the group.
Achievement orientation	Possesses high internal work standards and sets ambitious, risky and yet attainable goals; wants to do things better, to improve, to be more effective and efficient; measures progress against targets.

High performance managerial competency	Behavioural definition
Concept formation	Builds frameworks or models or forms concepts, hypotheses or ideas on the basis of information; becomes aware of patterns, trends and cause/effect relations by linking disparate information.

Source: Cockerill (1993)

Cockerill (1993) conducted a statistical analysis of the reliability of the high performance managerial competencies. The ratings showed reliability in assessing seven core dimensions of managerial behaviour for example information search, conceptual complexity, team facilitation, impact, charisma/self-confidence, proactive orientation and achievement orientation.

This research study therefore strongly supports the view that the high performance managerial competencies (HPMC) are "relatively stable sets of managerial behaviour, and reinforce the importance of placing great reliance on effective competency definitions, competency rating scales, assessor training and exercise design" (Cockerill, 1993, p. 6).

It is therefore a critical role of management to ensure that business units are appropriately structured to suit their unique environment. Consequently, managers must be able to cope successfully with the diversity, tensions and problems of integration created by having departments and units with different external environments and internal structures in the same organisation.

Since most organisations are facing an accelerated rate of change in their external environments, it is also vital for mangers to know how to reduce the levels of task

structure and build flexible teams of people who collaborate with themselves, as well as with staff from other units and appropriate organisational stakeholders.

In a dynamic environment, the high performance managerial competencies use the central theme of a significant and positive relationship between the HPMC and organisational department or unit performance, whilst in a stable environment, no relationship exists between HPMC and performance.

Cockerill (1993) found that in a dynamic environment, six of the seven HPMC dimensions are significantly and positively related to one or more dimension of performance. Achievement orientation was the one dimension that was unrelated to performance. He found that the outputs of a department are higher when the manager has greater capacity in conceptual complexity, information search, and charisma.

Departmental, or unit, climate is better if the manager is stronger in charisma, team facilitation, impact and conceptual complexity. A department or unit has more adaptability if the manager is better at information search, conceptual complexity, charisma and proactive orientation. The resources of a department or unit are higher if the manager is more competent at conceptual complexity, information search, and proactive orientation.

In a dynamic environment, these competencies appear to be critical – which gives strong support to the original research of Schroder, Driver and Streufert in 1967 (cited by Cockerill, 1993).

Cockerill's (1993) findings suggest that managers must accurately assess the rate of change in the environment of their departments/units; they need to tailor the core dimensions of their structure to the environment and develop and use particular behaviours to achieve this task.

In these circumstances, integrated strategies for organisational change are needed, which emphasises the development of managerial competence, the redesign of jobs and unit structures, team development and the creation of reinforcing reward and technology systems.

Hence there is strong research data to support the relevance and impact of HPMC in the workplace.

3.5   SUMMARY

This chapter dealt with leadership and management in detail. Eichstadt's high performance management criteria were discussed in detail because they form the base of the 360-degree performance evaluation questionnaire, the high performance leadership development (HPLD) questionnaire selected as the assessment measure.

The next chapter explores the 360-degree assessment tool in detail: its application, the process the way in which feedback is obtained and ratings can be interpreted and the benefits of using this system.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHOD

This chapter reflects the empirical investigation with the view to establishing the correlation between self-perception and gender. This empirical study consists of the following steps, namely:

Empirical study
Population and sample
Measurement instruments
Administration of the measurement instruments
Data collection and coding
Statistical processing

Chapter 4

Results

Reporting and interpretation

Integration

Conclusions and limitations

Limitations

Conclusion, and recommendations

Chapter 5

Chapter 6

4.1   POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The sample population is a set of all cases of interest (Shaughnessy, 2003, p. 128). The population for behavioural research comprises study objects, which may be individuals, groups, organisations, human products and events, or the conditions to which they are exposed (Welman & Kruger, 2001, p. 46).

The sample of this study was limited to managerial personnel (which includes senior and middle managers) in organisations ranging from the financial, hospitality, engineering, health care, and manufacturing sectors. Managerial personnel were selected for the leadership questionnaire to make possible the use of the full 360-degree capability (managers, peers and subordinates). Because of the nature of this study, males and females were quota-controlled in the study to determine if there are any gender differences in self-perception.

Several organisations were used in the study because it was not possible to obtain a large enough sample from one organisation.

Assessment required two levels: (1) the ratee had to assess himself/herself, and (2) the ratee had to be assessed by three or four raters (supervisors/managers, peers, subordinates or customers).

4.2   MEASURING INSTRUMENTS

4.2.1   Biographical information

Biographical questionnaires formed part of the HPLD questionnaire used in this study. The following variables were measured i.e. gender and leadership.

4.2.2   The 360-degree system

For the purpose of this study a 360-degree assessment system was used. A leadership questionnaire namely the High Performance Leadership Development (HPLD) was loaded on the 360-degree system to measure self-perception.

The value of 360-degree feedback is based on the following four key principles necessary for individual, group and team learning:

The first principle concerns the nature and speed of feedback which are regarded as key elements in enhancing individual and company learning (De Geus, 1997; Pedler, Burgoyne & Boydell, 1991).

The second principle revolves around the use of multiple sources for assessment, which results in higher quality, valid and more reliable information than single source assessment (Church & Bracken, 1997).

The third principle is about the impact this type of feedback has on increasing the level of insight that individuals have of their attitudes and behaviour. This is a key factor in assisting individuals, groups and companies, to understand their strengths, development areas and weaknesses to enable them to modify and change their behaviour and improve performance (Bridges, 1991; McCrimmon, 1997).

The fourth principle focuses on the area of motivational theory, particularly as it pertains to the individual's desire to participate and learn. This is largely determined by the person's level of effort and participation as the assessor and

person being assessed, and his/her perception of the benefits and costs of his/her participation (Robbins, 1994; Westerman & Rosse, 1997).

4.2.2.1   *The process of 360-degree assessment and feedback*

The success of 360-type assessment and feedback is largely dependent on the application, the "how", within the context of a company. Several authors caution that careful consideration should be given to the following aspects (Chlebos, Grace, Klus, Jarson, Montee, Sawisky, Speer, Stefka & Traeger, 1996; Gebelein, Kinard & Mitchell, 1998; Jones & Bearly, 1996; London & Smither, 1995, Church, 1996):

- The purpose and objectives of the exercise must be clearly understood and communicated to all involved
- The design of the measures to be used must be aligned with role success factors and competencies (validity), and staff must be involved in this design process
- Management and staff must be committed to the process, take responsibility for their participation as assessors, and use the results constructively in order to improve behavioural competencies and performance
- Management must receive regular feedback on trends in order to initiate and consolidate company-related changes

These exercises should become a regular part of the company's activities and should not be a once-off event.

An estimated 90 percent of Fortune 100 companies use some form of multirater assessment. As a tool, 360-degree feedback has been advocated as being extremely useful in a variety of applications for human resource management (Atwater & Waldman, 1998; Carless, Mann & Wearing, 1998), and it is widely recommended for the planning of individuals as well as input data for performance appraisals.

An advantage of multirater systems is that it gives people feedback that may not usually be shared with them.

Individuals can glimpse how others who know them well, and come into contact with frequently, perceive them. This can be especially enlightening in pinpointing someone's "blind spots", and can therefore be vital for development as well as being an essential catalyst for effective change. According to Theron and Roodt (1999), the expectation is that by using various raters to appraise performance, the 360-degree assessment process is deemed fair and objective.

4.2.2.2   360-degree assessment application and use

According to Ward (1995), research in the USA has found that 360-degree assessment techniques motivate behaviour change, and have proved to be fair and credible if properly applied.

The 360-degree system provides a means to comprehensively reveal how successful an individual is in all his/her important work relationships. It shows what the individual considers his/her own strengths and weaknesses to be, compared with what others think. It therefore tests self-perception against what others think of him/her.

Receiving this data can be a powerful experience for an individual. It reveals how successful he/she is in managing relationships, as seen by both parties. Feedback is often extremely motivating if it is balanced and gives information on strengths as well as highlighting areas for development.

The following three factors, namely the nature and variety of the assessors or respondents, the balanced nature of the feedback, and the face validity of the

activities measured, make it easier for participants to accept what is said and to use it as a basis for change and development (Ward, 1995).

360-degree appraisals require people to rate themselves, which can lead to interesting comparisons with the way the individual is seen by others. *Participants who are able to see themselves as others see them will get fewer surprises than those who have only a restricted or subjective view of themselves.* In general, such systems are based on the simple assumption that observations obtained from multiple sources will yield *valid and reliable (and therefore more meaningful and useful)* results for the individual (Church & Brachan, 1997; Ward, 1995).

4.2.2.3   *Self-perception in 360-degree assessments*

The rationale behind 360-degree feedback intervention rests with the concept of *self-perception*. Because individuals are not that good at evaluating themselves according to objective criteria, anonymous feedback from subordinates and peers should help managers see themselves as *others see them*, and provide them with developmental feedback about changes required in their behaviour.

Most 360-degree systems will contain two key elements, the first being the self-perception inventory, and the second feedback on the way others see the individual. The 360-degree assessment is therefore a systematic process of assisting personal development by contrasting the collective opinions of a range of contrasted with the individual's opinions. Managers can therefore use 360-degree assessments to make a contribution, at a diagnostic level, to identifying particular areas of an individual's development (Lepsinger & Lucia, 1997; Atwater & Waldman, 1998).

4.2.2.4   *Feedback*

Feedback from a performance management perspective relates to communicating to an individual about the way he/she is viewed and perceived by another. People "see" or "perceive the world" through their own set of filters; what they think of

themselves may be entirely different from what someone else thinks. This is in fact the essence of the 360-degree assessment. The idea is to create a consistent method to assess an individual's performance, using the collective judgment of people around the individual who have insight into the individual's day-to-day behaviours. One of the success factors of a 360-degree appraisal system is the high level of communication between the person being rated and his/her manager, peers, clients and subordinates. These people cannot be effective assessors if they are not fully up to date on information on the person being rated on a day-to-day basis, and the way he/she is applying his/her knowledge and skills.

Whether individuals will see value in such a process will depend on the individual's desire for feedback, and also on whether or not they respect the opinion of the person providing the feedback. If they can link what is being said about them to their *individual perception* of performance or personal competence, they may be prepared to take the information seriously and effect change (Bahra, 1997; Theron & Roodt, 1999).

360-degree assessments do lead to individual change. One study, cited by Antonioni (1996), shows that persons being rated whose self-ratings were higher than their overall 360-degree ratings tended to reduce their self-ratings in subsequent appraisals. Moreover, there is some empirical support to suggest that ratees with more accurate self-perceptions are known to be better performers and more successful.

360-degree feedback affords managers a unique opportunity to find out how they are perceived by their bosses, colleagues, fellow team members, and internal and external customers and suppliers (Bahra, 1997). Giving managers feedback on the way others perceive them, can "from many a blunder, free us" by providing a reality check. "When people learn how others perceive them, they can become aware of what specific skill they need to develop and can therefore

better choose the training and development experiences that will benefit them" (Lepsinger & Lucia, 1997, p. 202).

360-degree assessment systems are used to compare individuals' self-assessments with others' rating of them on various performance dimensions. The extent of the congruence of "self" ratings with "other" ratings has been used as a measure of self-perception and self-awareness, and this variable has been found to be significantly related to a number of performance outcomes.

One advantage of using the 360-degree assessment system has been to facilitate this comparison of self-ratings and colleagues' ratings on a large scale to identify self-perception. Self-assessment, especially when done for developmental reasons, tends to set the stage for receiving constructive feedback from others. Persons being rated who do a self-assessment can highlight the discrepancies between the way they see themselves and the way others see them. This usually creates a constructive tension and motivates person being rated to examine those areas that were marked by appraisers as areas needing improvement.

However, self-appraisal is useful as a unique source of information in the appraisal process, as an independent evaluation criterion and as a means to increase employee understanding of performance feedback (Furnham & Stringfield, 1998; London & Smither, 1995).

Antonioni (1996) mentions that one of the service companies involved in his study did not use self-appraisal when it started, and later learned from experience that self-appraisals play a vital role in helping the person being rated (ratee) to learn to think about the way others see and perceive him/her.

Ratees who tend to overrate themselves are often surprised by lower ratings from their appraisers. The unexpected low ratings let individuals know that they

need to improve in specific areas, or at least discuss the discrepancy between their ratings and those of their appraisers.

Three issues namely the nature and variety of the assessors or respondents, the balanced nature of the feedback and the face validity of the activities measured, make it easier for participants to accept what is said and to use this as a basis for change and development.

Most forms of 360-degree assessments require people to rate themselves, which can lead to some interesting comparisons between self-perception and the way others perceive the individual. Participants who are able to see themselves as others see them (this relates to accurate self-perception) will receive fewer surprises than those who have only a restricted or subjective view of themselves (Ward, 1995).

4.2.2.5   360-degree assessment interpretation

Theron and Roodt (1999) warn that there are less obvious issues relevant in the 360-degree assessment process, one being that raters have different relationships with the person being rated (ratee), leading to different perceptions of the same ratee. In addition, raters, possibly because they use different mental models, have a different understanding of the same questionnaire, which could be as a result of different relations with the ratee.

Haines (2000) defines a mental model as a mental framework or mind-set. It is a way of understanding or misunderstanding the world in which we live. Mental models are ways of thinking which are based on our own beliefs and assumptions, generally unexamined and unvoiced.

Theron and Roodt (1999) indicate that when the assessment questionnaire is used on the same ratee by different raters, they apply several different understandings of the same questionnaire. Technically speaking, they thus assess the ratee using a different

questionnaire, and even though the questions are the same, the various raters interpret them differently.

This is one of the reasons why 360-degree assessment should be used with care. If anything, the 360-degree feedback should lead to discussion, communication and coaching between manager and employee.

The above is directly related to the value and credibility of use of 360-degree assessments. It is therefore necessary to keep this in mind, and more research into the factors that impact on the validity of 360-degree measurements is needed.

4.2.2.6   *Self-other agreement*

Interesting research was conducted by Yammarino and Atwater (1997) in terms of the way the different "self-other" ratings are interpreted. They argue that high self-other rating agreement should be the aim of all feedback development tools such as the 360-degree feedback system. The reduction of self-other rating discrepancies and the enhancement of other ratings and self-ratings will pull more individuals into an "in-agreement" (self-other) category, and these people will tend to be the best performers, managers, and leaders.

Knowing what influences the ratings can tell one something about the 360-degree assessment result accuracy.

However, a more complete way to determine their accuracy comes from examining the extent to which ratings from different sources are in agreement, the way in which ratings differ between rater and ratee, and to what extent these are significant. Accurate ratings are self-ratings and other ratings that are *in agreement*, as determined by a direct comparison of the two.

This does not mean that where there is no congruency it is always false; it does not mean that self-ratings are always "false" and other ratings are always "true"; nor is the converse statement appropriate (Yammarino & Atwater, 1997).

4.2.2.7 *Benefits of using the 360-degree assessment*

Accurate self-perception is defined as the degree of agreement between self-evaluations and other-evaluations and is related to positive individual and organisational outcomes, and vice versa. Hence a vital and fundamental assumption driving the 360-degree assessment process is the notion of behavioural change through a process of enhancing self-awareness.

Church and Brachen (1997, p. 152) having the following to say in this regard:

"Many practitioners and researchers would agree that when managers compare composite ratings of their work-related behaviours from their co-workers with self-perceptions on the same behaviours, they are forced into a cognitive process of reflection that ultimately results in greater levels of awareness of their own actions and the consequences those actions have on others across various levels in and out of the organisation".

Moreover, research efforts have begun to establish a link between self-other ratings similarity – meaning seen as self-perception by some, and assessment accuracy by others and therefore influencing managerial performance. Several longitudinal analyses have suggested that multirater methods do indeed have a significant impact on managerial behaviour over time and hence the excitement about and promise for the future of 360-degree assessment methodologies in organisational settings (Church & Brachen, 1997; Furnham & Stringfield, 1998).

Carless et al (1998) cite London and Smithers, who argue that discrepancies between self-ratings and other-ratings can enhance self-awareness and stimulate the need for behaviour change. Preliminary evidence supports this assumption. Studies have shown that feedback from subordinates can lead to improved performance. Feedback is essential if the performance of a manager is to improve. It is argued that 360-degree feedback is valuable because it comes from multiple perspectives and from those whose opinions are important.

Obtaining information on an individual's performance from multiple sources enhances the credibility of the information and therefore, presumably the individual's motivation to change his/her behaviour. It is argued that 360-degree feedback, compared with feedback from a single person, usually the superior, is associated with greater reliability, fairness, and the person's acceptance of performance appraisal feedback (Carless et al, 1998).

Discrepancies between self-ratings and subordinate ratings raise self-perception, highlight gaps between goals and job performance, and suggest areas in need of improvement. When managers receive feedback indicating that their subordinate ratings are lower than their self-ratings, they might begin to question whether their behaviour reflects their self-image.

According to self-consistency theory (Korman, 1976), these managers should be motivated to improve their performance, thus reducing the discrepancy between the way they perceive themselves and the way others perceive them and restoring a sense of *cognitive balance*.

4.2.3   High Performance Leadership Development (HPLD) questionnaire

The management questionnaire used for this study was developed by Carl Eichstadt (1998) using the high performance managerial competencies (HPMC), and focus groups discussions. He used the research of Schroder, Driver and Streufert in 1967, and Brenner in 1991, as well as a validation study on high

performance managerial competencies (HPMC) done by Cockerill (1993). A leadership questionnaire was used. It was essential to use the same measure for all assessments in order to ensure consistency. All the respondents therefore completed the same leadership questionnaire.

4.2.3.1   *The questionnaire*

The high performance leadership development (HPLD) questionnaire was developed using high performance managerial competencies (HPMC) (Cockerill, 1993). The theoretical base of this instrument was discussed in chapter 3 and construct validity was determined using the Cronbach alpha (see sec. 5.2.2.1 and chapter 6 for results).

The leadership competencies, which were covered in this questionnaire, are:

Table 4.1   High performance leadership development competencies

High performance managerial competency	Behavioural definition
Information search	Gathers many different kinds of information and uses a wide variety of sources to build a rich informational environment in preparation for decision making in organisations.
Conceptual flexibility	Identifies feasible alternatives or multiple options in planning and decision making; holds different options in focus simultaneously and evaluates their pros and

High performance managerial competency	Behavioural definition
	cons.
Interpersonal search	Uses open and probing questions, summaries, paraphrasing etc to understand the ideas, concepts and feelings of another; can comprehend events, issues, problems, and opportunities from the viewpoints of others.
Managing interaction	Involves others, and is able to build cooperative teams in which group members feel valued and empowered, and have shared goals.
Developmental orientation	Creates a positive climate in which staff increases the accuracy of their awareness of their own strengths and limitations; provides coaching, training and development resources to improve performance.
Self-confidence (also referred to as Charisma)	States own "stand" or position on issues; unhesitatingly takes decisions when required, and commits self and others accordingly; expresses confidence in the future success of the actions to be taken.
Presentation	Presents ideas clearly, with ease and interest so that the other person (or audience) understands what is being communicated; uses technical, symbolic, non-verbal and visual aids effectively
Proactive orientation	Structures the task for the team; implements plans and ideas; takes responsibility for all aspects of the situation even beyond ordinary boundaries – and for the success and failure of the group.
Achievement orientation	Possesses high internal work standards and sets ambitious, risky and yet attainable goals; wants to do things better, to improve, to be more effective and efficient; measures progress against targets.

High performance managerial competency	Behavioural definition
Concept formation	Builds frameworks or models or forms concepts, hypotheses or ideas on the basis of information; becomes aware of patterns, trends and cause/effect relations by linking disparate information.

Source: Cockerill (1993)

4.2.4 Data collection

The 360-degree assessment process was used to measure self-perception as against the way the individual is perceived by others. For this study, the Internet-based 360-degree product, called LEAP (Leadership and Performance) was used to assist in the efficient distribution and assessment of the questionnaire. All participants completed the questionnaire using the LEAP Internet site (www.lleap.com). The LEAP on-line system administered and reported the results of the study (See appendice 2).

Results were extracted into Excel spreadsheets and then statistically analysed using the SAS (Statistical Analysis System).

4.2.4.1 *Construct validity of the HPLD questionnaire*

The HPLD questionnaire was used because it includes high performance leadership competencies. This questionnaire has previously been analysed for reliability and validity. Part of this study therefore included a Cronbach alpha test on the results of the HPLD questionnaire.

The questionnaire had to adhere to the following criteria stipulated by Bailey (1987), which should ensure that the information collected was complete, valid and reliable:

- The questionnaire was relevant to the study and the respondents,
- The questionnaire was clearly constructed,
- The response categories were easy to respond to, with a clear indication of what each category means,
- Leading questions were avoided,
- Clear instructions were given at the beginning of the questionnaire.

As a first step in determining the construct validity of the HPLD questionnaire, the 44 items were subjected to an item reliability test using the Cronbach alpha. The result of this procedure indicated that:

- some items of the questionnaire had acceptable levels of reliability
- some items needed to be *removed for the purpose of the analysis of this study*

4.2.4.2   The Cronbach alpha

The Cronbach alpha statistic was used to analyse the results of the HPLD questionnaire to identify item reliability.

The Cronbach alpha provides a clearer picture of the individual effect together with the group mean effect on the response variable. This statistic is an ordinary linear model (Kreft & De Leeuw, 1998). The Cronbach alpha measures how well a set of items (or variables) measures a single unidemensional latent construct.

The Cronbach alpha is used to test internal consistency, based on the average inter-item correlation (ATS, 2003). Construct means the hypothetical variable that is

being measured. Summated scales are an assembly of interrelated items designed to measure underlying constructs in the questionnaire.

It is therefore important to know whether the same set of items would elicit the same responses if the same questions were administered to the same respondents (ATS, 2003). When the data show a multidimensional structure, the Cronbach alpha will usually be low.

If the inter item correlations are high, then there is evidence that the items are measuring the same underlying construct. If the measurement is "high", it indicates that the items measure a single unidimensional latent construct (ATS, 2003).

Nunnaly, as stated in ATS (2003) indicates 0,7 to be an acceptable reliability coefficient, although lower thresholds have been used in other literature.

4.2.5   Cronbach alpha results

The second step entailed analyzing the results by means of component analysis. The results of this analysis indicates that the HPLD questionnaire assesses leadership behaviour along the following dimensions:

Table 4.2   Category item analysis – the Cronbach coefficient alpha

Category	Relevant question	Cronbach coefficient alpha

A: Managing information	23, 32, 39, 43,	0,17
B: Business development	21, 25, 26, 27, 31	0,77*
C: Business judgement	8, 16, 33, 41	0,42
D: Teamwork	3, 12, 20, 22, 40	0,81*
E: People development	1, 13, 42, 44	-0,07
F: Interpersonal sensitivity	6, 14, 18, 19, 37	0,85*
G: Impact	7, 11, 15, 28, 29	0,63
H: Inspires confidence	9, 10, 17, 24	0,81*
I: Business implementation	9, 10, 17, 24	0,81*
J: Customer-focused improvement	2, 30, 34, 38	0,59

Note: * A value of 0,7 or higher indicates a high internal reliability and therefore reflects the underlying construct.

From the above results, the following categories display a high Cronbach alpha and reflect the underlying constructs: business development, teamwork, interpersonal sensitivity, inspires confidence and business implementation.

Those with moderate, yet acceptable high Cronbach alphas are the categories of impact and customer improvement. Although the category business judgement has a relatively low Cronbach alpha, it is still acceptable.

The following categories have low indices and are not considered to be reliable: managing information and people development. Hence, these categories and their related items are excluded for further analysis and discussion.

Overall, two of the categories are indicated by the Cronbach alpha results as not supporting the reliability of the instrument to assess leadership competence. It is therefore suggested that since this study has been done, further development work should be done on the questionnaire and research studies conducted.

4.3   ADMINISTRATION OF THE MEASUREMENT INSTRUMENTS

The HPLD questionnaire, using the 360-degree Internet on-line system, is virtually self-administering. Participants need to log on to the LEAP (360-degree) website and insert their prescribed username and password. They complete the questionnaire, submit it on-line and log-off the system once they have completed it.

The LEAP system handles all administration, calculations and reporting of the results. Each individual can view his/her results on-line (once all raters and ratees have completed their questionnaires). (See appendice 2). To obtain statistical comparison data on gender, results had to be extracted from the LEAP site into Excel spreadsheets.

The following procedure was followed for data collection in the research design:

- Each ratee participant organisation was sent a request asking them to participate.
- Each ratee response, together with the individuals who were selected as raters, was returned to the researcher.
- Ratee and rater information was then loaded onto the LEAP Internet site and participants were advised of their unique user-ID and password.
- The respondents then completed the assessments on-line (on the LEAP Internet site).
- Once ratee and rater had completed the assessments, reports were generated using the results of the assessment.

4.4   DATA COLLECTION AND CODING

All the information was computer generated and then scored. Data was collected on the LEAP Internet site. Individual and group reporting is generated

automatically by the LEAP software and is available virtually immediately on the administration section of the LEAP website.

Further data was extracted using Excel spreadsheets. The spreadsheets were then reworked and statistically analysed using the SAS (Statistical Analysis System).

4.5 STATISTICAL PROCESSING

After determining scale reliability and the factor structure of the HPLD questionnaire, statistical analysis was conducted on two different sets of data:

The difference in self-perception between males and females was determined using the T-test, Wilcoxon two sample test and effect size.

4.5.1 Parametric versus non parametric assessments

Parametric and nonparametric tests were conducted to give a diverse and full overview of the results. The nonparametric test was conducted because normal distribution could not be assured. The sample size is another factor limiting the applicability of parametric tests because there is no surety that the variable is normally distributed and nonparametric methods are therefore most appropriate when the sample sizes are small. A parametric test would have been sufficient if the population was assumed to be normally distributed. As is the case in this study, nonparametric methods were developed to be used in cases when the researcher does not know about the parameters of the variable of the interest in the population (StatSoft, 2003).

The Wilcoxon and the T-test was used and the Wilcoxon is the nonparametric version of the T-test (Tilley, 1990). The Wilcoxon takes into account the size of the differences between pairs of scores. After working on the different

scores, they are ranked from lowest to highest, without regard to their sign, and then the sum of the ranks for the positive and negative difference scores is taken. According to Tilley (1990) a rating close to 0,05 on the Wilcoxon would be considered significant.

Nonparametric tests (also referred to as distribution-free tests) is also known as rank randomisation tests, because they deal with ranked data and compare the observed distribution of ranks with the expected distribution of ranks when the null hypothesis is true (Tilley, 1990).

There have been long-standing and heated debates over the issue of parametric versus nonparametric tests. The parametricians argue that nonparametric tests are largely redundant and unnecessary because parametric tests are sufficiently robust and useful with respect to violations of their underlying assumptions. They maintain that parametric tests are more powerful and versatile than nonparametric tests.

The nonparametricians counter the above argument by saying that parametric tests are inappropriate, not only because of the problem of assumption violations, but because they are intended to be applied to interval or ratio scale data whereas most of the dependent variables measured in psychological research rarely rise above ordinal scaling for which nonparametric tests are ideally suited (Tilley, 1990).

Parametric and nonparametric tests were used to give a balanced view. The results for the two test types were very close.

4.5.2   Effect Size

Effect size is simply a way of quantifying the difference between two groups. It uses the idea of "standard deviation" to contextualise the difference between two groups

and standard deviation is a measure of how spread out a set of values are. The effect size is the difference between the mean values of the two groups, divided by the standard deviation. Effect size can be interpreted in terms of the amount of overlap between the two groups. This method is easy to calculate, readily understood and can be applied to any measured outcome in Social Sciences (Coe, 2000). Coe (2000) argues that it moves beyond simplistic "does it work or not" to the far more sophisticated, "how well does it work in a range of contexts". He therefore concludes that effect size is an important tool in judging effectiveness in research. The use of effect sizes is summarized by Coe (2000) as follows:

- Effect size is a standarised, scale-free measure of the relative size of the effect of an intervention and is particularly useful for quantifying effects measured on unfamiliar or arbitrary scales and for comparing the relative sizes of effects from different studies

- Effect sizes can be interpreted in terms of the percentiles or ranks at which two distributions overlap, in terms of the likelihood of identifying the source of a value, or with reference to know effects or outcomes

- Use of an effect size with a confidence internal conveys the same information as a test of statistical significance, but with the emphasis on the significance of the effect, rather than the sample size

Cohen (cited by Steyn, 2000) gave some guideline values as an aid to the interpretation of the extent of practical significance:

- 0,2: small effect. The experiment ought to be replicated to determine whether there is an effect or whether the result is practically non-significant
- 0,5: medium effect. Point toward practical significance. A better planned experiment or survey might result in more significant results
- 0,8: large effect. The results are practically significant and of practical importance

Rosnow and Rosenthal (1996) warn that a highly significant results should not automatically be interpreted as reflecting large effects. Sometimes a significant effect might not be reported because the result failed to be significant (a Type II error). The effect size is also not dependent on the sample size, where the significance p-value is linked to the size of the sample.

The scale used in this study is displayed in the table below:

Table 4.3   Interpretation of effect size

The effect	Scale
Neglible effect	>=-0.15 and < 0.15
Small effect	>=0.15 and <0.40
Medium effect	>=0.40 and <0.75
Large effect	>=0.75 and <1.10
Very large effect	>+1.1 and <1.45
Huge effect	>1.45

4.6   HYPOTHESIS TESTING

In psychological research, hypothesis testing amounts to deciding whether or not any differences between scores for different levels of the independent variable are likely or unlikely (Tilley, 1990).

A hypothesis needs to be well constructed, because if it is not accepted, it may be difficult to recognise the problem and redirect the search for the relevant information (Murphy & Davidshofer, 1998; Kline, 2000).

According to Kerlinger (1986) there are essentially two criteria for hypothesis statements, namely:

1.   Hypotheses are statements about the relationship between variables
2.   The hypothesis statement should be clear enough for the empirical testing of the stated relations.

These criteria mean that hypothesis statements contain two or more variables that are measurable, or potentially measurable, and that they the way in which the variables are related.

The hypothesis for this study is:

H0: There is no difference in self-perception between female and male leaders and therefore will not impact their leadership behaviour.
H1: There is a difference in the self-perception in female and male managers' leaders which impact their behaviour

4.7   SUMMARY

This chapter explained in detail the research methodology used for this research project. The questionnaire chosen to conduct the research, the HPLD questionnaire, was discussed, as well as the measurement instrument namely the 360-degree performance evaluation system.

Reliability and validity were discussed, as was the statistical process used to collect, analyse and present the data. This was followed by a discussion on parametric and nonparametric tests. Chapter 6 deals with the results and their interpretation.

CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH RESULTS

5.1   REPORTING AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

5.1.1   Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to give the research results of the empirical study designed to examine the difference self-perception and those of colleagues and supervisors, with special interest in the difference between males and females in terms of their self-perception.

The first section will focus on the difference between self-rating and group ratings (average of subordinates and supervisors) for males and females separately.

In the second section, males and females will be compared with regard to the differences in their self-perception and group perception.

An almost equal split was obtained between males and females:
*   45% female
*   55% male

5.1.2   Significance of the scale

The scale used in this study is displayed below:

Table 5.1   **Interpretation of effect size**

The effect	Scale
Neglible effect	>=-0.15 and < 0.15
Small effect	>=0.15 and <0.40
Medium effect	>=0.40 and <0.75
Large effect	>=0.75 and <1.10
Very large effect	>+1.1 and <1.45
Huge effect	>1.45

5.2   DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SELF-PERCEPTION AND THOSE OF RATERS

All respondents were rated by some colleagues (between 3 to 8) on the same (HPLD) questionnaire on which they rated themselves. These questions were written to measure 10 constructs and an average rating on each construct was obtained for each person's own rating and that of others. The average rating obtained for colleagues is referred to as "group ratings", while the rating by the respondent of himself/herself is referred to as "self-rating".

Figure 6.1 indicates the average scores on each of the 10 constructs as given by the respondents and by the colleagues/group.
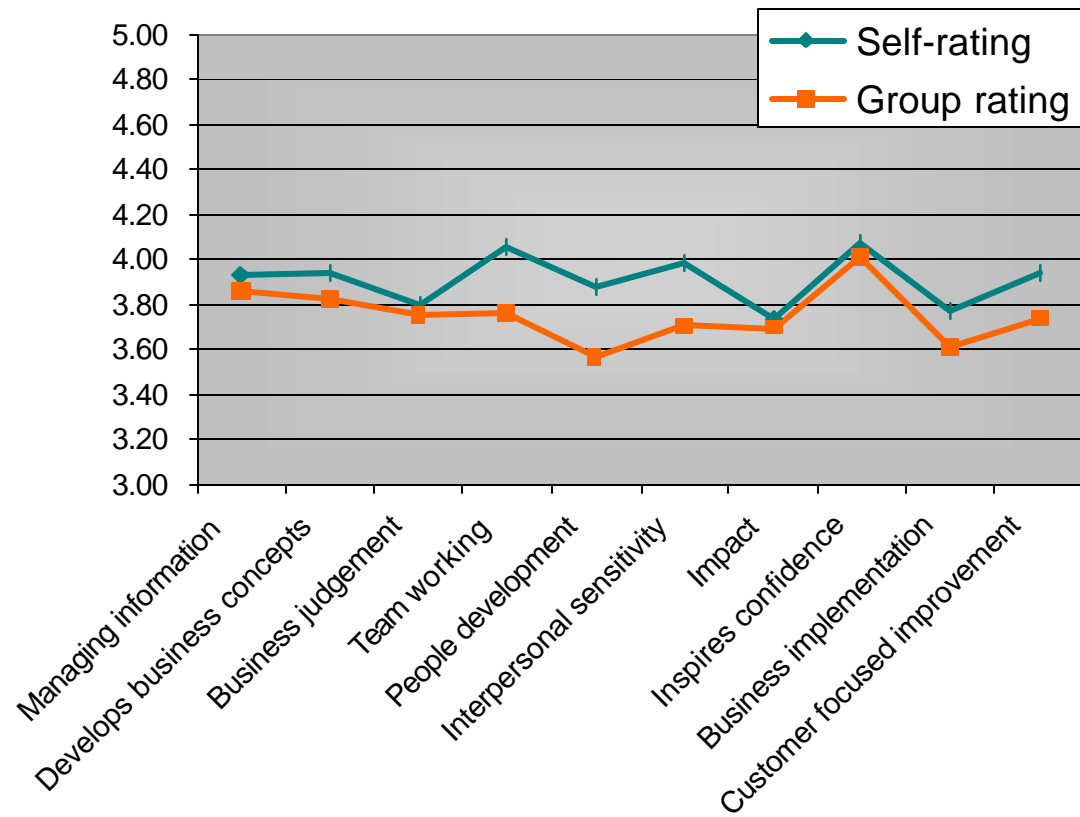
Figure 5.1   **Comparison between the mean scores of the self-rating and group rating (total group n = 60)**

Table 5.2   **Comparison of self-perception with group perception: paired t-test (parametric, nonparametric and effect size) (n = 60)**

	t	df	p-value	Wilcoxon	Effect size
Develops business concepts	1.433	59	0.157	0.191	0.183
Business judgement	0.538	59	0.593	0.483	0.070
Team work	3.586	59	0.001*	0.002	0.423
Interpersonal sensitivity	3.122	59	0.003*	0.002	0.377
Impact	0.646	59	0.521	0.831	0.084
Inspires confidence	0.720	59	0.474	0.587	0.093
Business implementation	1.791	59	0.078	0.055	0.227
Customer-focused improvement	2.253	59	0.028*	0.036	0.281

* Indicates significance.

There is a difference between the self-ratings of respondents and the ratings by the group in terms of the dimensions "team work" and "interpersonal sensitivity" and "customer-focused improvement" (p-values smaller than 0,05). "Teamwork" and "interpersonal sensitivity" also show medium effect sizes. These aspects are the "human" or interpersonal type dimensions.

The difference between self-perception and group perception is investigated separately for males and females.

Group ratings did not differ for the men and women as indicated in figure 6.2. Self-ratings also did not differ significantly although the females did tend to rate themselves higher than the males on the interpersonal aspect and lower on business-related dimensions.
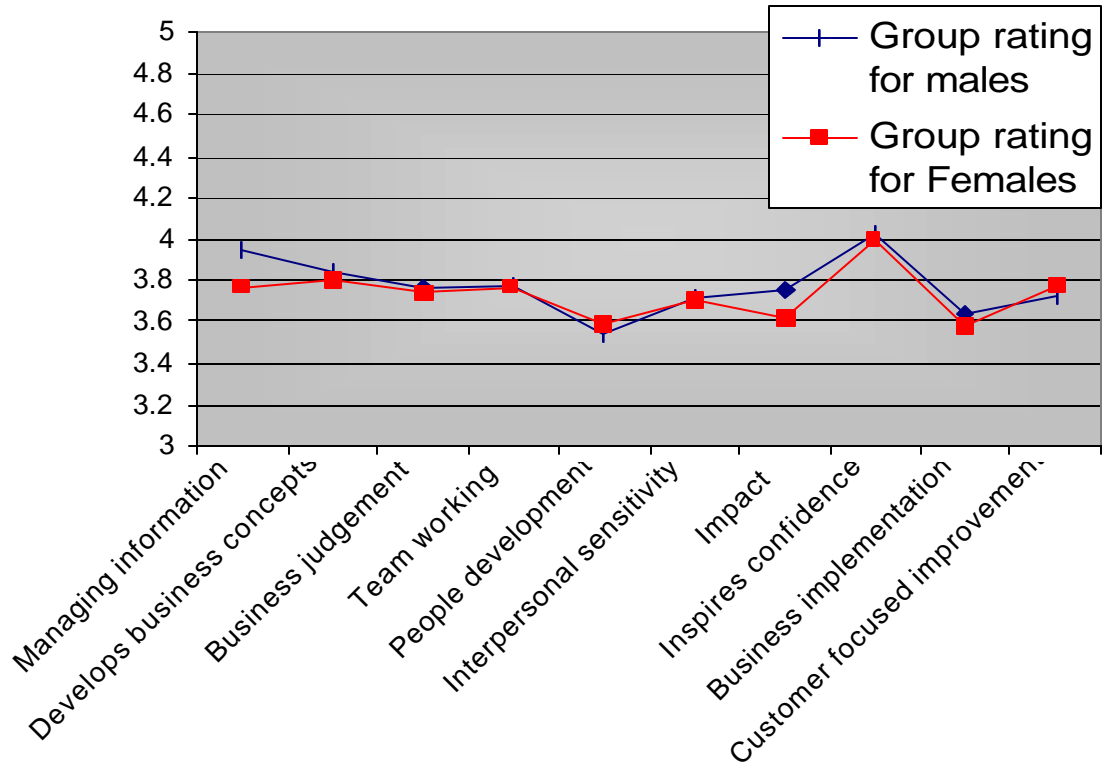
Figure 5.2   Comparison between the mean self-ratings for males and females (n = 60)
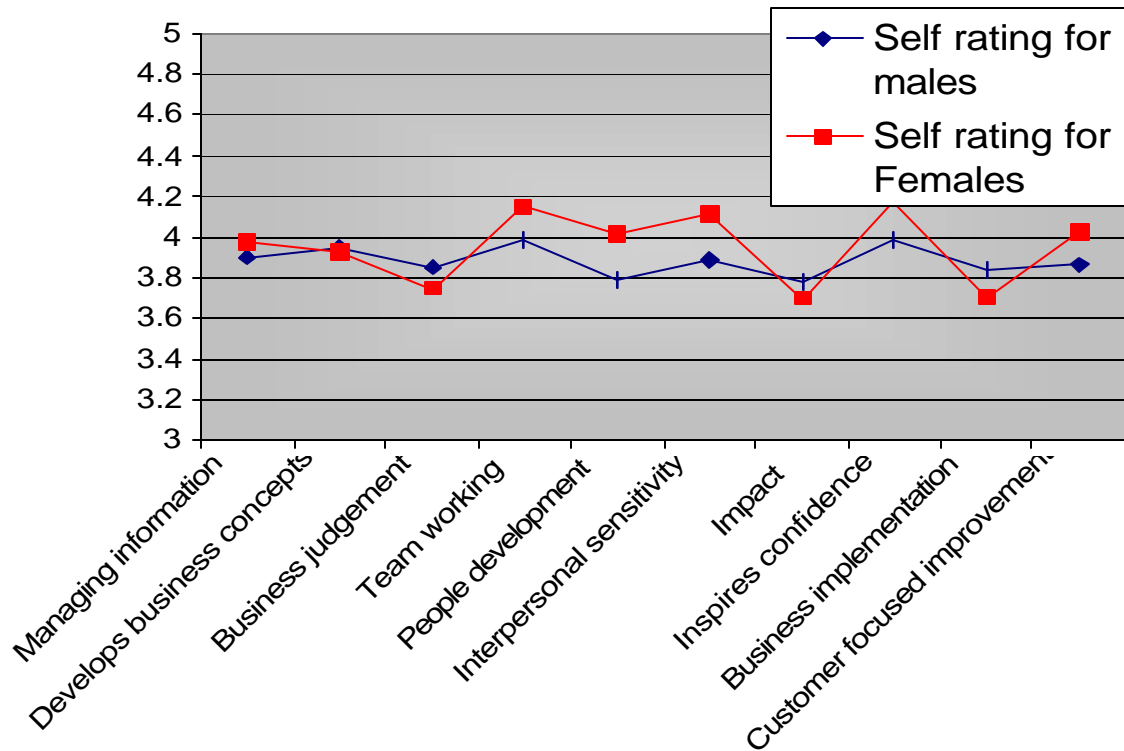
Figure 5.3   Comparison between the mean self-ratings for males and females (n = 60)

5.3   DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SELF-PERCEPTION AND THOSE OF RATERS

The self-ratings and group ratings of the females and males (Figure 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3) are compared graphically in the figures below, and tables 5.2 gives the parametric T-test and nonparametric test results and effect sizes.
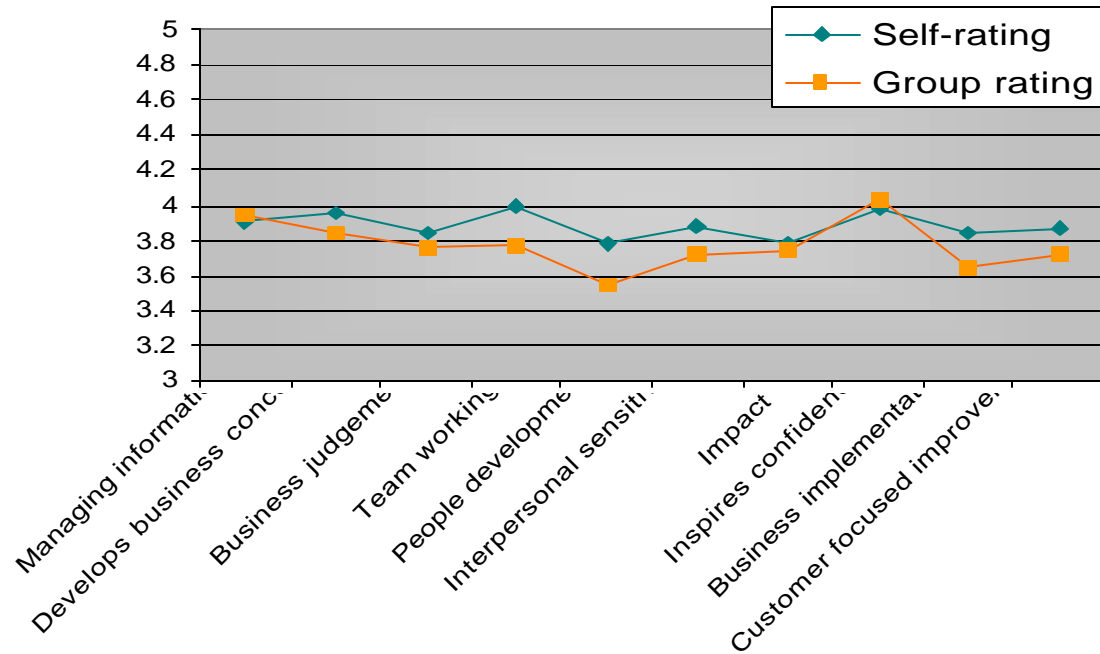
Figure 5.4   Comparison of the self-ratings and group ratings of males (n = 33)

Overall, males rate themselves only slightly higher than the group rates them and their self-perception appears to be close to the group ratings. The self-ratings and group-ratings on "inspires confidence" and "management information" were particularly close to each other, meaning that self-perception was strong in these categories.

 It is on the dimensions already identified where they show the greatest variability however, these differences for the males are not statistically significant as indicated in the table below.

Table 5.3 **Comparison of self-perception with group perception for males: paired t-test (parametric, nonparametric and effect size) (n = 33)**

	t	df	p-value	Wilcoxon	Effect size
Develops business concepts	0.959	32	0.345	0.374	0.17
Business judgement	0.762	32	0.451	0.266	0.13
Team working	1.930	32	0.063	0.100	0.32*
Interpersonal sensitivity	1.346	32	0.188	0.228	0.23
Impact	0.336	32	0.739	0.979	0.06
Inspires confidence	-0.383	32	0.704	0.768	0.07
Business implementation	1.486	32	0.147	0.096	0.25*
Customer focused improvement	1.313	32	0.198	0.264	0.23*

* Indicate significance.

Some small effects can be seen in terms if the "team work", "business implementation" and "customer-focused improvement".

Although these values are not significant at the 0,05 level, however, compared to effect size, one might regard these three as well as "develop business concepts" as small effects/differences.

With reference to the figure 5.5 it is clear that females' self-perception is even higher, indicating that the effect of the difference will be even larger among females. Females also rated themselves more highly than did the group.
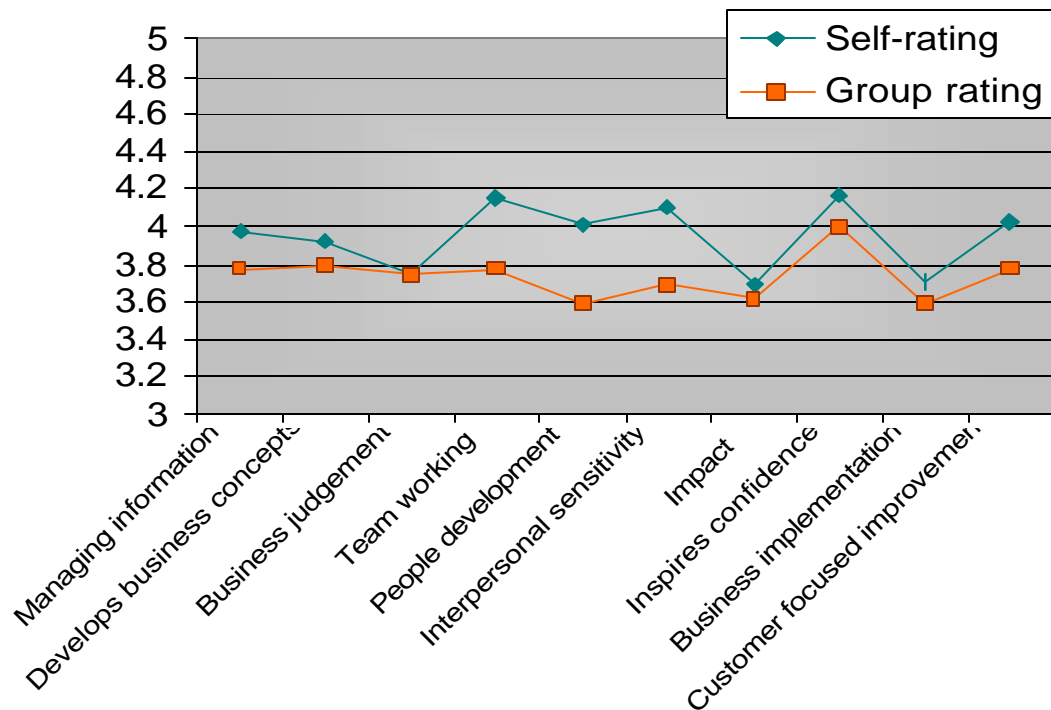
Figure 5.5   **Comparison of the self-ratings and group ratings of Females (n=27)**

Table 5.4   **Comparison of self-perception with group perception for females: paired t-test (parametric, non parametric and effect size) (n = 27)**

	t	df	p-value	Wilcoxon	Effect size
Develops business concepts	1.061	26	0.298	0.318	0.204
Business judgement	-0.009	26	0.993	0.970	0.002
Team working	3.260	26	0.003*	0.007	0.539
Interpersonal sensitivity	3.328	26	0.003*	0.001	0.547
Impact	0.557	26	0.582	0.778	0.109
Inspires confidence	1.560	26	0.131	0.204	0.293
Business implementation	0.985	26	0.334	0.304	0.190
Customer focused improvement	1.843	26	0.077	0.070	0.340

* Indicate significance.

Medium effect sizes were found for the females on the "interpersonal" and "teamworking" dimensions. Small effect sizes were found for "inspiring confidence" and "customer focused improvement". Females tend to overestimate themselves even more than men on these types of issues.

Although these separate comparisons do give an interesting perspective on where male's and females' misperceptions lie, determining whether females are indeed more unaware on the dimensions compared with males is done by calculating difference scores for both gender and comparing those in a t-test for independent measures (difference score = self-perception – group perception)

Table 6.4 gives the t-test and Wilcoxon as well as the effect sizes for the differences between males and females on their difference scores.

Table 5.5   **Comparison of difference scores of males and females (parametric, non parametric and effect size) (n = 60)**

	Mean difference males	Mean difference females	t	df	p-value	Wilcoxon	Effect size
Develops business concepts	0.109	0.129	-0.123	58	0.903	0.858	0.016
Business judgement	0.088	-0.001	0.496	58	0.622	0.466	0.065
Team working	0.217	0.385	-1.020	58	0.312	0.360	0.133
Interpersonal sensitivity	0.165	0.407	-1.383	58	0.172	0.179	0.179
Impact	0.033	0.076	-0.262	58	0.794	0.766	0.034
Inspires confidence	-0.039	0.168	-1.387	58	0.171	0.217	0.179
Business implementation	0.199	0.125	0.395	58	0.694	0.567	0.052
Customer focused improvement	0.139	0.253	-0.667	58	0.507	0.361	0.087

Mean difference = self rating – group rating. A negative score therefore indicated that the self-rating was lower than that of the group rating, this occurring mostly only for the men. The women show positive scores which indicate that their self-ratings were higher than those of the group ratings. The difference is not statistically significant, although one must remember that when the two groups being compared (males and females), show difference scores in opposite directions, the t-test for differences is not as powerful. This is one of the reasons why, even with far from significant p-values, small effect sizes are still found.

5.4 CONCLUSION

In general, the respondents overestimated themselves in terms of interpersonal dimensions such as team work and interpersonal sensitivity.

It would appear that the females in particular rated themselves more highly than the group. Although evidence was not found to claim differences between males and females in terms of self-perception, there are grounds for suggesting that this might be the case because some medium effect sizes were in fact found.

CHAPTER 6: INTEGRATION, LIMITATIONS AND CONCLUSION

This chapter focuses on integration, limitations and the conclusion.

6.1   FINDINGS

The general aim of this research was to establish if there is a difference in the self-perception of male and female leadership behaviours.

Literary survey
The aims of the literary survey (stated in chapter 1) were addressed and achieved by:

Chapter 2 (The concept of self-perception): This chapter explored and clarified the concept of self-perception and gender differences in male and female leaders. It also explored the importance of such differences in individuals as well as the workplace. It also explored previous research into gender differences in leadership with reference to self-perception. This chapter also refers to training and development implications of self-perception.

Chapter 3 (Leadership): This chapter explored leadership within gender with reference to gender differences as well as assessment ratings in leadership. This chapter also referred to leadership performance competencies and its impact in the workplace.

The aims of the empiric study (stated in chapter 1) were addressed and achieved in Chapter 4 by:

- Ascertaining that there is a difference in self-perception between male and female managers

- Ascertaining that there are specific leadership competency areas in which there are more differences in self-perception between male and female leaders

In terms of the above:

The items 'managing information' and 'people development' (items on the HPLD questionnaire) were identified as not measuring the underlying construct. However, the rest of the items in the questionnaire measure the underlying construct. Further research and development work will have to be conducted on the questionnaire. For the purpose of this study, the two items (managing information and people development) were not included in the interpretation of the study results.

There is a difference in self-perception between n male and female managers. This study's results indicate that male managers have better self-perception than female managers. More specifically, overall, males rate themselves only slightly higher than the group rates them and their self-perception appears to be close to the group ratings. The self-ratings (for males) and group-ratings on "inspires confidence" and "management information" were particularly close to each other, meaning that self-perception was strong in these categories.

In contradiction with the males, significant and large effect sizes were found for the females on the interpersonal dimensions. Females tend to overestimate themselves even more than men on these types of issues. Moderate effects for inspiring confidence and customer-focus improvement were also found for women.

It may be possible that factors such as the leadership questionnaire's reliability and that fact that the respondents were not from the same organisational culture, impacted on the results of the study. It is important to recognise the impact that the above could have had on this study.

The results of the study were presented in Chapter 5 which covered the reporting, interpretation and integration of information.

6.2   LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

Regarding the literature study, it was found that there are few literature resources available in this specific field of self-perception. Few studies have been conducted in this field and the studies, which are available, span a wide range of different applications and cut across self-awareness, self-knowledge and self-esteem.

In the empirical study, it was found that the leadership questionnaire used in the study is not fully reliable or valid and two items were therefore excluded from result interpretation. This may have impacted on the results of this study.

The participants were also drawn from a wide range of organisations (with different organisational cultures) and a wide range of occupational backgrounds. These factors may have also influenced the final results. The ideal situation would have been to analyse a group of males and females in the same organisation (with the same organisational culture) and in similar occupations.

6.3   CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the integration of the research findings, it can be concluded that the research succeeded in its overall aim, but the limitations in the study may have influenced the final results.

The hypothesis for this study is:

Ho: There is no difference in self-perception in female and male managers' leadership behaviour.

H1:   There is a difference in self-perception in female and male managers' leadership behaviour

The Ho hypothesis was *rejected* as the results of the study found that male managers seem to have a better self-perception than their female counterparts.

Because of the above, male or female managers – depending on their level of self-perception will be more receptive to the 360-degree type feedback system and will be more inclined to accept the information and developmental issues which may be identified in such a system.

The above findings indicate that it would be beneficial to find ways in which the environment can be prepared to limit the impact of gender differences on the implementation of the 360 feedback system (or any other performance management system).

Against the background of the aforementioned conclusions, recommendations will be formulated for the leadership questionnaire and the self-perception results.

6.3.1   The high performance leadership (hpld) questionnaire

The HPLD questionnaire's research results indicate that some of the categories in the questionnaire do not measure what they were intended to measure. The questionnaire will have to be researched and developed further. More studies will have to be conducted to ensure the reliability and validity of this measure.

6.3.2   Gender research in terms of self-perception

Further research will have to be done to establish if there is a difference in self-perception between males and females.

One should bear in mind that by investigating general trends in ratings and situational influences, an important dimension may have been overlooked – that of self-perception as an individual difference variable in its own right. Self-perception is deemed to be extremely situational and the issues surrounding question interpretation and perception require further investigation. This is a research area in the field of 360-degree assessments, which merits further study to identify the impact on individuals using these instruments. With particular relevance to the current work, Deaux and Major (1987) argue that gender-based expectations and norms are especially susceptible to situational activation.

Further research is required to investigate the situational factors mentioned by London and Smithers (1995). They refer to a self-perception theory that individuals often infer their beliefs by examining their own behaviour. Hence trust may develop through a self-perception process in which, after engaging in a trusting action, people decide that they trust partners. As in self-disclosure, consent for a partner to engage in an activity that others find threatening may be viewed as proof of trust in one's mate.

The tendency to develop trust through a self-perception process may also be enhanced by situational variables. Specifically, a state of increased, objective self-awareness should affect the self-perception process in two different ways. Firstly, as found by Hull and Levy in Zak et al (1998), heightened self-perception by seeing oneself as others see one (seeing oneself in a mirror) increases attitude-behaviour consistency. Secondly, individuals in a state of objective self-perception view themselves as an observer would view them.

Increased self-perception and communal orientation of the participants will predict greater trust in partners than lack of self-perception and an exchange orientation will. (Zak et al, 1998). Previous studies of managerial progression rarely examined a range of personal and situational determinants, and the few

that did, offered little theoretical substantiation to account for differential effects across gender.

Stereotyping may also influence the results in a study based on gender differences. It would therefore be interesting to investigate the influence of stereotyping on gender differences in terms of self-perception because stereotyping of the self may also occur if one focuses on one's own social group. However, one sometimes also views a group of which one is part through the "lens" of self-perceptions - that is, one sometimes stereotypes an in-group in terms of an active personal conception.

Tacit awareness refers to the perspective (or lens) through which our cognitive processes operate. One may, for example, attribute abilities to oneself because one's in-group possesses them, or one may attribute one's own abilities to one's own in-group. This could have an interesting significant impact on a gender study in terms of self-perception (James & Greenberg, 1997).

James and Greenberg (1997) argue for a link between gender-based performance comparisons and female-male differences in spatial task performance by arguing that women's internalised stereotypic association of femininity with poor maths skills (with spatial ability as an important component of some of these) is more likely to be active and influential when girls or women perceive that gender comparisons are likely to occur. This would make for an interesting and relevant research study.

Another suggestion for research would be to examine the impact of *personality types* in gender and their impact on self-perception. In support of this contention, McGregor, Eveleigh, Syler and Davis (1991), demonstrated that Type A individuals displayed greater reactions than Type B individuals to uncontrollable events that were extremely salient, whereas the opposite was true of events of low salience.

They found that significant *gender* effects indicate that certain sex-role stereotypes may still be operative in our society. For example, the significantly higher appearance scores reported by the men may have been prompted by the plethora of "macho" role models that currently permeate the popular media. Likewise, the sports section of any newspaper or television newscast illustrates why men in society perceive themselves to have superior athletic ability. Type A individuals have a higher opinion of their intellectual abilities and scholastic competence than their Type B counterparts. This finding may be seen to support the competitive nature of the Type A individual.

On the basis of this logic, it is predicted that Type As would have superior academic records. It is especially noteworthy that *Type A individuals have a significantly higher self-perception* of their global self-worth than Type B individuals. Clearly, Type A individuals expect to succeed in what they undertake (McGregor et al, 1991). It would be interesting to research the impact of personality type on self-perception.

Another interesting factor, which was not included in this study, is the impact of race and culture on self-perception and gender. Race and culture must influence self-perception and may effect males and females differently because of their particular backgrounds.

Other limitations to this study could include the following:

- Process of control of the gender quota was not done scientifically enough.
- Regarding the age of the participants, older persons are perceived to have better self-perception. It would be beneficial to test only a certain age group.
- The number of years' experience in a management position may also have influenced this study.

This study was both interesting and challenging. The main frustration and difficulty was finding enough people to participate in this study.

The LEAP web-driven approach was extremely effective because it made the collection of data fairly easy and seamless. No manual collections or calculations were required, and the managers were satisfied with the format of the feedback reports.

There are many other interesting research studies which can be conducted on self-perception or gender issues, which are relevant to the workplace.

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