



**THE IMPACT OF LEADERSHIP STYLES ON ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT**

by

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## **AUTHOR'S DECLARATION**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, declare that this thesis is hereby submitted to the University of South Africa for the fulfilment of the requirements of Masters in Business Leadership. It has not been submitted previously for the requirements of any degree at this or other universities. Accordingly, it is my own work in design and execution, and further all materials herein have been duly acknowledged.

Signed at \_\_\_\_\_ on this the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_

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**LEBOGANG KHUMALO**

## ABSTRACT

This study examined leadership styles in an organisation in the gas industry and how the different leadership styles impact on employees' commitment to the organisation. Specifically, the study sought to determine the relationship between leadership styles and organisational commitment. Over the past decades, several studies examined the relationship between these concepts. In fact, extant literature suggested a strong correlation between leadership styles and organisational commitment in different sectors, without specific reference to the gas sector. Accordingly, this study focused on determining the leadership styles that leaders in the gas sector demonstrate to ensure organisational commitment.

This study utilised a mixed methods approach. The instrument that was used for collecting quantitative data was developed by the modifying scales utilised by other authorities. It comprised of 21 items plotted on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly agree* to *disagree strongly*. The items focused on leadership styles. In contrast, the section for qualitative data comprised of 6 open-ended items. The instrument was e-mailed to participants via SurveyMonkey. A total of n=61 questionnaires were completed and returned via SurveyMonkey.

In analysing the quantitative data, SPSS was utilised. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the profiles of participants. A factor analysis involving principal component extraction and varimax rotation was performed, resulting in a 2-factor solution that relates to democratic and transformational leadership styles. The qualitative data were collected involving n=10 participants. Themes were developed from textual data and then analysed. The 'describe-compare-relate' technique was utilised to present and report on the findings.

The study found that there is a correlation between management leadership styles and organisational commitment by employees. As such, leadership styles directly influence the extent to which employees commit to their employer organisation. The study also found that management at Afrox apply the democratic and transformational leadership

styles. The findings raise important insights as to which leadership style(s) management need to demonstrate and how management can optimise their leadership styles to benefit their organisation. Such an understanding should be applied to enhance job satisfaction and increase productivity. Based on the findings, directions for future research were proposed.

**KEYWORDS**

Leadership, Leadership styles, Organisational Commitment

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## **DEDICATION**

To my family and friends for their support and encouragement.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

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### 1.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter provides a synopsis of a study that examines the different leadership styles that influence organisational commitment in private organisations. Specifically, the study examined the leadership styles and their influence on the management's commitment to leading an organisation. Accordingly, the main elements constituting this chapter are summed up in Figure 1.

The central part of the model depicts the research problem. The research problem is critical in that it shows the interaction and connection between all elements depend on the clarity of the research problem. Inter alia, the significance of the study, research purpose, research objectives, methods and techniques for addressing the research problem constitute key elements of this chapter.

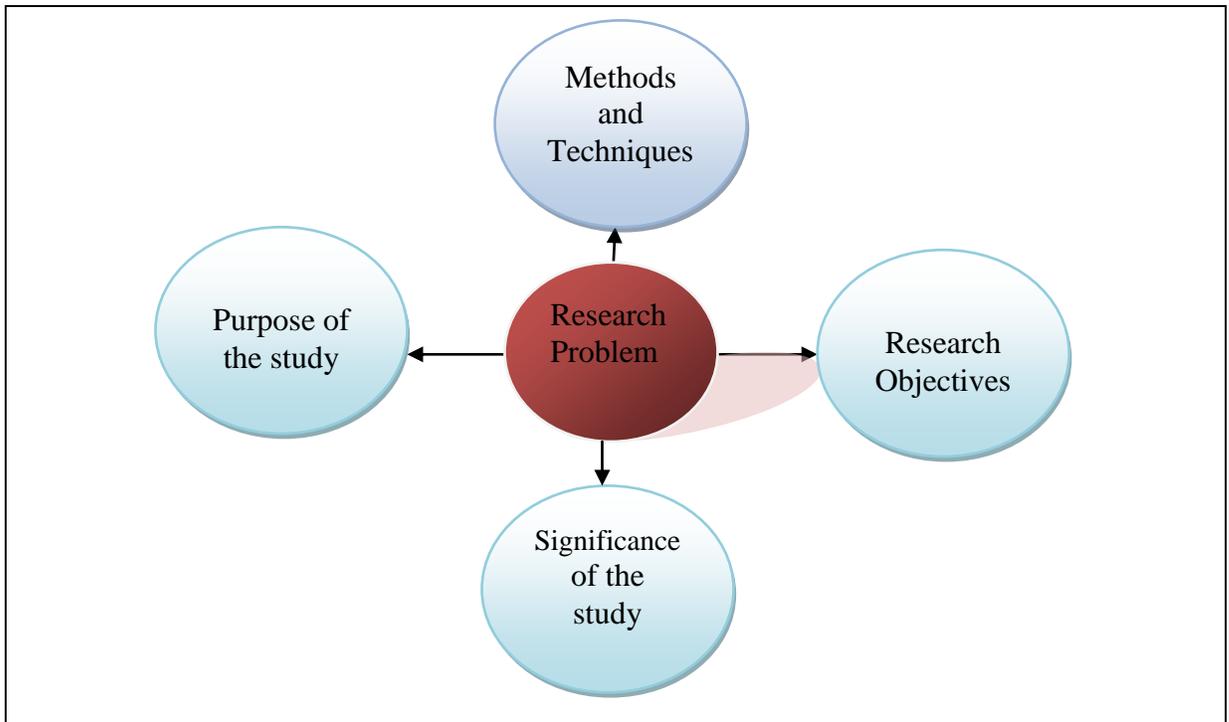


Figure 1: Overview of Chapter 1

Own Source

## 1.2 Introduction and Background of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between leadership styles and organisational commitment in an organisation in the gas industry. Specifically, this study sought to determine if there is a positive or negative correlation between leadership styles and organisational commitment. Related studies have not examined how leadership styles may influence organisational commitment in the specific context of an organisation in the gas industry (Day, 2001; Brotheridge, Lee, Ozcelik, Langton & Aldrich, 2008; Tatoglu, Demirbag & Erkutlu, 2008). This study relied on data collected from a South African-based gas company, African Oxygen Limited, hereafter referred to as Afrox. In light of the fact that the study is case study based, it is imperative to offer a brief background to Afrox to ground the study.

### **1.3 African Oxygen Limited - Afrox**

Afrox operates in sub-Saharan Africa and takes the lead in supplying gases and welding products to mining, manufacturing and industrial companies. It is a subsidiary of the Linde Group, a global gases, engineering and technology company. While Afrox's presence in the gas industry dates back almost a century, the company was listed on Johannesburg Stock Exchange only in 1963 and years later, on the Namibian Stock Exchange.

Afrox has operations in almost 12 African countries, including South Africa, and manages other operations in 5 countries outside of Africa on behalf of its parent company. It has grown by continuously meeting and exceeding the needs and expectations of its customers through innovation (Afrox 2013 Annual Report). Its principal strengths include employing 3 000 qualified and skilled staff, unrelenting above-average growth for shareholders, and building the industry's strongest brand and national distribution network (Afrox 2013 Annual Report). In addition, the Annual Report for 2013 showed that Afrox's revenue for that period amounted R5 825m, an increase of 4.8%. The company's earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation for that period were R880m, an increase of 10.3%.

In contrast to such positive corporate results are South Africa's current economic challenges. Recently, South Africa's competitiveness on the international scene has dwindled. The continuing demur in industrialised sectors of South Africa, worsened by strikes in the motor and mining industries, led to a decline in these industries' sales figures, particularly in the steel industry. The sudden deterioration of the South African currency pushed the costs of raw materials and imports up, triggered resistance to their entire product range due to price hikes and, for this reason, unfavourably impacted on their margins (Afrox 2013 Annual Report). In addition, there are cost pressures about fuel. These pressures depend on foreign exchange undulation and the global crude oil prices, considerably high costs of labour and the 8% electricity price hike (Afrox 2013 Annual Report).

In view of the fact that Afrox has an established presence in 12 African countries, it ranks among the successful global leaders in supplying gases to mining and manufacturing industries. It therefore makes sense to investigate the different leadership styles used by management and leaders and how they influence organisational commitment.

Note should be taken that the study was conducted at a time when Afrox had introduced a strict cost-containment operating model specifically designed for South Africa. The success of the latter model depends on, inter alia, the different leadership styles that management depict and how these styles impact on organisational commitment. In the next sub-section, the research problem is stated to guide the other sections of the study such as significance of the study, the abridged literature review, and methods and techniques for data collecting and analysis.

#### **1.4 Problem Statement**

Previous studies highlight the importance of leadership on organisational commitment. However, there appears to be scant research that previously examined the link between leadership styles and organisational commitment in the context of the gas industry (Hannah, Avolio, Luthans & Harms, 2008; Vesterinen, Isola & Paasivaara, 2009). The gas industry is a sector distinctly different in terms of its service offerings. This study raises important insights as to the best leadership styles for ensuring competitiveness, sustainability and organisational commitment in the gas sector.

#### **1.5 Research Question**

In light of the research problem stated above, the research question is stated as follows:

- ◆ *Is there is relationship between leadership styles and organisational commitment?*

## **1.6 Research Sub-Questions**

In support of the research problem, these research sub-questions were researched:

- ◆ What are the perceived leadership styles that management display at Afrox?
- ◆ To what extent do leadership styles influence organisational commitment at Afrox?
- ◆ Are employees satisfied with the leadership styles of the management?

## **1.7 Research Objectives**

The objectives of this study are as follows:

- ◆ To determine leadership styles at Afrox that enhance organisational commitment;
- ◆ To identify leadership styles at Afrox and their influence on commitment;
- ◆ To determine if employees are satisfied with the leadership styles of their management;
- ◆ To recommend strategies for improving organisational commitment.

## **2. Significance of the Study**

Firstly, the significance of the study lies in making a contribution to the literature on leadership, change management and organisational commitment. A literature survey suggests that previous studies have not examined leadership styles in the context of the gas industry. This study raises important insights into how leadership styles encourage organisational commitment, which appears to have received little research attention in previous studies – specifically in the gas industry. As a result, this study seeks to determine how leadership styles impact on commitment in the gas sector.

Secondly, this study is significant in that it proposes to raise insights for management as stakeholders in any organisation. This study proffers practical assistance to management on how management can inspire or motivate employees, and manage relationships and other variables so that employees can wholly commit to organisational

activities. Most critical, this study informs management on the positive/negative correlation between leadership styles and organisational commitment.

### **3. Leadership**

This section provides a cursory review of the literature related to this study. It is made up of two main constituents, namely leadership and organisational commitment. These concepts are briefly discussed next with the purpose of demonstrating how they fit into the context of this study.

#### **3.1 Definition of Leadership**

The term 'leadership' has multiple conceptualisations depending on the context in which scholars apply it. Several researchers contented that leadership is a position of authority that an individual holds in a group (MacBeath, 2005; Avolio, Walumbwa & Weber, 2009; Ahlquist & Levi, 2011). Such a position offers a leader the opportunity to utilise interpersonal influence to organise and direct members' efforts in the direction of predetermined goals (Ahlquist & Levi, 2011). This definition suggests that the effectiveness of leaders in their positions depends on the amount of interpersonal influence they have on those they are leading. Accordingly, this definition is adopted for the purpose of this study.

The leader is a power hub of a group, in that the leader endeavours to keep members together, instils or breathes life into the group, drives the group towards common goals and must be sure to maintain the group's tone and impetus (Wang, Chou & Jiang, 2005; Vigoda-Gadot, 2007; Yang, 2007). In other words, the leader's responsibility is to form, moderate, manage and change the thoughts, feelings, behaviour, mindset and performance of the members. Some commentators (e.g. Day, 2001; Brown & Treviño, 2006; Hannah *et al.*, 2008) affirmed the fact that leaders continue functioning in those roles at the collective pleasure of the members of the group without which the group disbands. Thus, the effectiveness of the group depends on three key factors, namely; the level of compliance of the followers, the flexibility of the leader to suspend their

personal desires, judgement and discretion (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Avolio, Walumbwa & Weber, 2009; Ahlquist & Levi, 2011), and the leadership style(s) that leaders portray during their tenure. The latter factor constitutes an important aspect of leadership and extant literature identifies several leadership styles.

### **3.2 Leadership Theories**

This study identified four popular theories of leadership namely: behavioural, traits, contingency or situational, and power and influence. The theories inform the leadership styles that an individual can adopt in an organisation.

### **3.3 Leadership Styles**

This section identifies and discusses autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire leadership styles as the most common leadership styles. Modern-day scholars advocate leadership styles such as transactional, transformational, charismatic, etc. as the most effective and pragmatic styles. These styles are explained in detail in Chapter 2.

#### **3.3.1 Autocratic Leadership Style**

The autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire styles constitute a behavioural theory. Autocratic leadership, also known as dictatorship, is where the leader is the focal point of power and regards 'own' decisions and judgement as supreme (Burke, Stagl, Klein, Goodwin, Salas & Halpin, 2006; Vigoda-Gadot, 2007). The style is founded on the transactional theory, which accentuates the relationships that exist between leaders and their followers. In this case, followers simply take orders; the style is devoid of participation of members because members are not consulted (Rad & Yarmohammadian, 2006; Vigoda-Gadot, 2007; Vesterinen, Isola & Paasivaara, 2009). Members are motivated to submit to leadership or perform because of the reward systems and punishment for non-compliance (Burke *et al.*, 2006; Rad & Yarmohammadian, 2006). The disadvantages of the autocratic leadership style appear to outweigh the advantages. The literature identifies the democratic leadership style as the complete opposite of the autocratic leadership style.

### **3.3.2 Democratic Leadership Style**

The democratic leadership style, also known as participative leadership style, derives its roots from the transformational theory (Burke *et al.*, 2006; Rad & Yarmohammadian, 2006; Vigoda-Gadot, 2007). In this case, leadership focuses on change, visionary leadership and enhancing individual and organisational outcomes. Members are given the chance to build up their leadership skills, participate in leadership and contribute to decision-making (Vigoda-Gadot, 2007). It is arguably more efficient than autocratic leadership (MacBeath, 2005).

### **3.3.3 Laissez-Faire Leadership Style**

With regard to the laissez-faire leadership style, the leader does not directly supervise the members, and does not rely on regular communication or feedback. Specifically, it allows the members autonomy and self-rule to make decisions that relate to the completion of the task (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt & Van Engen, 2003; MacBeath, 2005; Rad & Yarmohammadian, 2006). However, the leader is available to offer guidance should the members request it (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt & Van Engen, 2003).

### **3.3.4 Transactional Leadership Style**

This type of leadership style, also referred to as managerial leadership, centres on the function of supervision, organisation and group performance. Transactional leadership is a technique of leadership in which a leader promotes compliance of the followers through rewards and punishments.

Unlike the transformational leadership, leaders using the transactional approach are not looking to change the future. Instead, they are looking to keep things the same, maintaining the status quo. Leaders using transactional leadership as a model pay attention to followers' work in order to find faults and deviations. This type of leadership is effective during crisis and emergency situations, and for projects that need to be carried out in a specific way.

### **3.3.5 Transformational Leadership Style**

Transformational leadership is a style of leadership where the leader collaborates with employees to identify the needed change, creating a vision to guide the change through inspiration, and executing the change in tandem with committed members of the group. It serves to enhance the motivation, morale and job performance of followers through a variety of mechanisms; these include connecting the follower's sense of identity and self to the project and the collective identity of the organisation; being a role model for followers to inspire them and raise their interest in the project; challenging followers to take greater ownership for their work, and understanding the strengths and weaknesses of followers, allowing a leader to align followers with tasks that enhance their own and overall performance.

### **3.3.6 Charismatic Leadership Style**

The guidance provided to an organisation by one or more individuals seen as heroic or inspiring and who have been granted the organisational power to make dramatic changes and extract extraordinary performance levels from the organisation's staff. For instance, a business manager imbued with charismatic leadership could be enlisted to orchestrate a turnaround or launch a new product line or to bring the organisation's employees behind the company's vision, mission and strategy.

In concluding this subsection, several researchers identified a number of leadership theories, which help to explain leadership styles better. The theories, inter alia, include traits, behavioural, power and influence, and situational or contingency theories. The theories explain what type of person makes an effective leader, what effective leaders do in terms of behaviours, and how situations influence effective leadership respectively. Leadership theories are explored in detail in Chapter 2 of this study.

However, no single leadership style suffices to motivate group members, but a blend of styles or a selection of the most appropriate leadership styles selected according to the different circumstances, is useful and positively influences organisational commitment.

The concept of organisational commitment and its dimensions are explored in the next subsection.

### 3.4 Organisational Commitment

Steyrer, Schiffinger and Lang (2008:364) defined the concept of organisational commitment as ‘the relative strength of an individual’s identification with and involvement in a particular organisation’. In recent years, the concept attracted research attention in social sciences. The concept was initially used to explain workplace behaviours, for instance, staff turnover and absenteeism (Lee, 2005; Vigoda-Gadot, 2007; Steyrer, Schiffinger & Lang, 2008; Lo, Ramavah, Min & Songan, 2010). According to Albrecht and Andreetta (2011), organisational commitment is generally approached in the context of a three-component model as depicted in Figure 2 below.

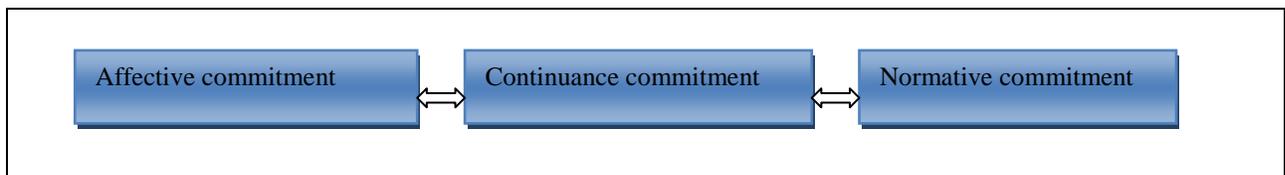


Figure 2: Dimensions of organisational commitment

Adapted from: Albrecht & Andreetta (2011)

Organisational commitment mirrors the psychological connection or bond that binds an individual to an organisation. This psychological connection manifests in different dimensions, namely; affective, continuance and normative commitment (Brown & Treviño, 2006; Hannah *et al.*, 2008; Steyrer, Schiffinger & Lang, 2008). The first dimension, affective commitment, is attributable to emotional attachments. Those employees who – with strong affective commitment – carry on working for an organisation for the reason that they simply want to do so. Their organisations are likely to benefit more because of reduced absenteeism as well organisational citizenship behaviours (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Hannah *et al.*, 2008; Albrecht & Andreetta, 2011). Employees with a strong emotional connection with their organisation work harder and perform better in their roles (Brotheridge *et al.*, 2008) than those do who are motivated by continuance commitment.

The second dimension, continuance commitment, is attributable to economic benefits or fear of loss. In this case, employees evaluate the pros and cons of departure from their present organisation (Steyrer, Schiffinger & Lang, 2008). If the perceived benefits of staying with an organisation appear to outweigh the benefits expected from a new position or new organisation, then that solidifies the employee's commitment to the organisation. The benefits can be in monetary form, role-related expertise attained over a long time as well as social networks (Steyrer, Schiffinger & Lang, 2008; Tatoglu, Demirbag & Erkutlu, 2008; Lo *et al.*, 2010). Research suggests that continuance commitment is likely to increase with experience and age (Steyrer, Schiffinger & Lang, 2008). If an employee has achieved an established, successful position and has experienced several promotions in their organisation, obviously they are prone to be inclined to continuance commitment.

The final dimension, normative commitment, is attributable to obligatory feelings. Employees with strong normative commitment demonstrate the highest level of loyalty even under unpleasant circumstances. They feel indebted to their organisation, and for that reason, they are not prone to leave, have low non-attendance/absenteeism and are open to consider any change they are confronted with in their organisation (Allen & Meyer, 1996; Brotheridge *et al.*, 2008).

Prior studies on organisational commitment and leadership styles produced mixed results. For example, the results of a study by Hayward, Goss and Tolmay (2004) found no correlation between transactional leadership and affective, continuance and normative commitment. Conversely, a study by Allen and Meyer (1996) showed that a relationship exists between transactional leadership and continuance commitment, and the same study found a low correlation coefficient linking transformational leadership and commitment. It is in light of these mixed results that this study examines the relationship between leadership styles in the specific context of the gas industry.

In concluding this condensed literature review, research over the years has drawn much attention to the significance of selecting and retaining committed employees to ensure organisational growth and sustainability. Organisations generating a negative

organisational ambience through their leadership styles are likely to fall behind their competition, owing to low levels of organisational commitment. It is the responsibility of the organisation to formulate and implement strategies that ensure organisational commitment.

#### **4. Research Design and Methodology**

The research design and methodology is a road map for planning and executing research that a researcher follows in conducting a study (Calder, Phillips & Tybout, 1981; Amaratunga, Baldrv, Sarshar & Newton, 2002; Creswell & Clark, 2007). Figure 3 offers a synopsis of an all-inclusive research design and methodology that is presented in the form of a research onion. According to Saunders, Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2011), the research onion, discussed in detail in Chapter 3, provides a comprehensive plan comprising of major rudiments in strata constituting the research methodology and design. While not all elements of the research onion are discussed stratum by stratum, the major issues relating to the methods and techniques are summarised in this chapter. The outermost stratum on the research onion is research philosophies.

##### **4.1 Research Philosophies**

Several scholars contend that the methodological choices researchers make depends on their philosophical assumptions about ontology, human nature and epistemology (Wright & Crimp, 1995; Collis, Hussev, Crowther, Lancaster, Saunders, Lewis, Thornhill, Brvman, Bell & Gill, 2003; Spratt, Walker & Robinson, 2004) as well as the topic under investigation (Blumberg, Cooper & Schindler, 2008; Bryman, 2012; Babbie, 2015). The research onion discussed in Chapter 3 depicts several philosophies. However, the positivist and interpretivist paradigms have been identified as the most apposite philosophies for this study, which rely on collecting both quantitative and qualitative data in order to address the research problem.

## **4.2 Case Study**

This study relied on collecting and analysing both qualitative and quantitative data from management in one organisation, namely Afrox. Accordingly, this investigation constituted a case study. The rationale for adopting the case study as a strategy was based on the fact that this approach is used widely in social sciences, psychology as well as related fields (Amaratunga *et al.*, 2002; Blumberg, Cooper & Schindler, 2008) and that it addresses a realistic problem in an organisation (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner, 2007; Leech, Dellinger, Brannagan & Tanaka, 2010). It also helps to understand specific cases and ensures a more holistic approach to research.

## **4.3 The Mixed Methods Approach**

The fourth stratum related to research choices shown on the research onion as mono-, multi- and mixed methods. This study adopted the mixed methods approach. The approach substantiated, cross-validated and confirmed findings of the study (Jick, 1979; Olsen, 2004). The approach offered most informative, all-inclusive, unbiased and valuable results. It involved collecting quantitative data using an instrument with closed items plotted on a 5-point Likert scale and qualitative data with open-ended items.

## **4.4 Time Horizons**

This study relied on collecting data that is present in a population at a single point in time, thus constituting a cross-sectional study. The rationale for conducting a cross-sectional study was that research for academic purposes is conducted within limited time.

## **4.5 Data Collection and Analysis**

This was the innermost stratum of the research onion. In order to produce satisfactory, meaningful and plausible results, issues related to the development of the instrument,

piloting, sampling, minimum sample, techniques for data presentation and analysis needed to be explained succinctly. Lindsay (1995) suggested that the depth and profundity of the methods and techniques must allow a reasonable researcher to conduct a similar study and obtain similar or almost similar results.

#### 4.5.1 The Research Instruments

The instrument comprised of three sections. Section A collected participants' profiles. Section B determined the leadership styles of management at Afrox. It comprised of 20 items anchored on a 5-point Likert scale to determine leadership styles. In developing Section B of the instrument, previous scales developed by other researchers (e.g. Tepper & Percy, 1994; Bass & Avolio, 1997; Antonakis, Avolio & Sivasubramaniam, 2003) were modified. Perry (2011) argued that it is acceptable for postgraduate students to adopt or adapt instruments developed and used by other authorities. In so doing, students utilise instruments that already satisfy issues relating to reliability and validity. Section C collected qualitative data. It was made up of a total of 5 open-ended items. The structure of the instrument was consistent with scales that were used in prior studies (e.g. Kim & Brymer, 2011). The instrument was subsequently piloted among five managers.

#### 4.5.2 Piloting the Instrument

Piloting means testing effectiveness and efficiency of an instrument in measuring intended constructs, and determining whether participants will easily understand the questions (Simkhada, Bhatta & van Teijlingen, 2006; Feeley, Cossette, Côté, Héon, Stremmler, Martorella & Purden, 2009). The instrument was e-mailed to a senior executive for onward distribution to five managers. It was distributed randomly and the changes suggested by these managers were taken into account to refine the instrument.

#### 4.5.3 Sampling Technique

The population of interest are managers working in organisations in the gas industry. A portion of a population selected for a study and whose information is generalisable to that population is known as the sample (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Participants were selected using the purposive sampling technique. Because final participants were

carefully selected for this study, the probability of producing credible results is high (Saunders *et al.*, 2011).

#### 4.5.4 The Minimum Sample

Field (2009) and Pallant (2013) suggested the use of a ratio of the number of items to participants to determine the minimum sample. The ratios that range from 3:1 to 10:1 are regarded as ideal. In other words, 3 to 10 participants are anticipated to respond to every item in the instrument. For this study, a lower extreme of three was adopted. Because the instrument comprises of 20 items, the minimum sample is 60 participants.

#### 4.5.5 Data Collection

After securing permission to conduct the study in the organisation, the researcher sent the instrument with a covering letter via e-mail to an executive member of the organisation. The covering letter indicated that participation was voluntary, participants did not need to disclose their identities; their information was to be treated with utmost confidentiality and be used for academic purposes only. The executive member identified and distributed the instrument purposively to informed and qualified participants of the study.

The researcher requested participants to complete and return the questionnaire within a week. It was anticipated that about 60 questionnaires were going to be distributed and returned via SurveyMonkey. Data collection took place in August and September 2015. Thereafter, data analysis commenced. The techniques for data analysis of this study are explained next.

#### 4.5.6 Data Analysis

Statistical analysis was carried out with the SPSS version 23 program. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the profiles of participants. Factor analysis was performed in order to identify the leadership styles that management at Afrox use. The factor analysis involved an initial component extraction and varimax rotation in order to determine the final factors.

As a separate part of the investigation, qualitative data was analysed using the content analysis. The texts were read several times to gain familiarity with the data. Subsequently, words and groups of words were developed into themes for further analysis. The 'describe-compare-relate' technique, as proposed by Bazeley (2009) and Mayer (1999), was adopted to analyse and report on themes and citing some responses word for word where necessary.

## **5. Delimitation of the Study**

Delimitations are boundaries within which the research is conducted (Perry, 2011). The following were the parameters of the study:

- ◆ It is based on one organisation in the gas industry in South Africa;
- ◆ It sought to determine the relationship between leadership styles and organisational commitment;
- ◆ Data was collected using a purposive sampling technique from managers.

## **6. Ethical Considerations**

Participants in a study must always be protected from possible negative circumstances. The rules and guidelines laid down by the Research Ethics Committee at UNISA SBL were adhered to. The following ethical issues were adhered to:

- ◆ The research requested for informed consent in writing from Afrox where data were collected. A letter addressed to one director was sent, explaining the nature of the study as well as the extent of their involvement;
- ◆ The letter also explained participants' rights such as the right to withdraw their participation at any point;
- ◆ The researcher assured participants that their participation and responses were confidential, and personal identities were not required and information collected was to be kept with strictest confidentiality and anonymity;
- ◆ The research made sure that participants' dignity and character were upheld. Given the nature of the study, the research did not subject participants to any immodest behaviour.

- ◆ The researcher undertook to report the findings with honesty and without bias, even if the results were unpleasant or contrary to the researcher's prior expectations. In addition, the researcher undertook to appropriately cite all work that is not his own.

## **7. Validity and Reliability**

The following aspects, as recommended McKinnon (1988), were considered:

- ◆ Review of related literature – Academic and industry-based literature relating to leadership and organisational commitment were reviewed;
- ◆ Using key informants – soliciting responses from participants who are in leadership positions in the organisation;
- ◆ With the purpose of testing the constructs and measuring instruments, a pilot study was undertaken. Chapter 3 offers a detailed description of the pilot study and all methodological aspects utilised in the study;
- ◆ The development of the instrument for data collection was based on scales established in prior research studies, which already satisfy issues of validity and reliability.

## **8. Definition of Terms**

Definitions adopted by researchers in different fields of study are not uniform and, accordingly, terms are often open to different interpretations. Key terms are defined below as they are intended to be applied in this study:

### **8.1 Leadership**

Leadership refers to a continuous process of establishing and maintaining a connection between those who aspire to lead and those who are willing to follow. It may also be defined as a process where one individual influences others towards the attainment of group or organisational goals.

## **8.2 Organisational Commitment**

Organisational commitment is a multi-dimensional concept involving an employee's loyalty to an organisation, willingness to exert effort on behalf of the organisation, the degree of goal and value congruency with the organisation, and the desire to maintain membership of the organisation.

## **8.3 Leadership Styles**

A leadership style is the manner and approach of providing direction, implementing plans, and motivating people. As seen by the employees, it includes the total pattern of explicit and implicit actions performed by their leader in the organisation.

## **8.4 Theory of Planned Behaviour**

It is a theory that suggests that a person's behaviour is determined by his/her intention to perform the behaviour and that this intention is, in turn, a function of his/her attitude toward the behaviour and his/her subjective norm.

## **9. Chapter Layout**

Perry (1998) advised adopting a 5-chapters structure as a standard for Masters dissertations in a management discipline. Accordingly, this dissertation is structured as follows:

Chapter 1: The chapter discusses the research problem, background, aim, objectives, research question, research techniques and methods as an overview of the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review – This chapter discusses the literature review of the study. The literature review centres on leadership and organisational commitment.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology – The chapter provides a detailed discussion of the methods and techniques for collecting and analysing data. It includes identifying the population and sampling techniques.

Chapter 4: Discussion of Findings – This chapter presents the findings of the study and discusses them to lay the foundation for offering conclusions and recommendations.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations – The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the conclusions, recommendations and limitations of the study.

## **10. Summary**

Chapter 1 set the foundations of this study. The main elements of the chapter comprising of the research problem, research question and investigative questions were identified and explained. In addition, the rationale for conducting the study was presented as well as the definitions of key terms used in this study. Finally, the research methods and techniques, ethics and research constraints were spelt out. Against this background, the study proceeds to literature review on leadership in Chapter 2.

# CHAPTER 2

## LITERATURE REVIEW

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### 2.1 Chapter Overview

This section provides a cursory review of the literature related to the study. In order to ensure sufficient depth and profundity, the literature review explores definitional issues of the concepts of leadership and organisational commitment, leadership styles, leadership theories, dimensions of organisational commitment, levels of organisational commitment, factors affecting organisational commitment and effects of organisational commitment. These key concepts are discussed next in the context of this study.

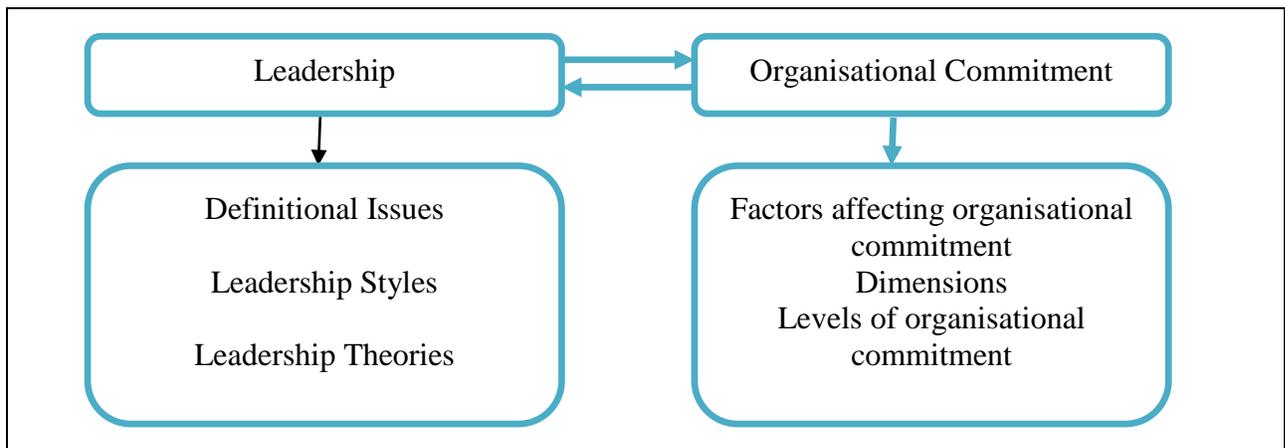


Figure 3: Summary of the literature review

### 2.2 Definitional Issues of the Concept of Leadership

Different scholars viewed the concept of leadership in different contexts. However, two related definitions of leadership were adopted for this study. Yukl (2008:8) viewed the concept as ‘the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives’. Whereas there are several definitions, this

definition relates well to that offered by Northouse (2011:3), who regarded the concept as 'a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal'.

The above definitions suggest few common components. First, leadership is a process. This means that it is a process of social influence, which exploits the exertion of other people in order to attain goals of the group or organisation. Several researchers contented that leadership is a position of authority that an individual holds in a group (MacBeath, 2005; Avolio, Walumbwa & Weber, 2009; Ahlquist & Levi, 2011). Second, leadership entails influencing the followers. Such a position of authority offers a leader the opportunity to utilise their interpersonal influence. This suggests that leaders' efficacy in their positions depends on the interpersonal influence they have on their followers (Ahlquist & Levi, 2011). Third, leadership occurs in a situation where there is a group of people. Fourth, leadership entails the attainment of predetermined goals.

In other words, leaders must possess distinctive competencies to organise and direct their followers' efforts towards common and pre-set goals, and finally the goals need to be understood, shared and pursued by both leaders and followers. Such a portrayal of leadership as a process implies that the concept is viewed neither as a characteristic nor trait, but a transactional experience that occurs involving both leaders and followers (Yukl, 2008; Northouse, 2011). Hence, these two definitions are adopted for this study.

Presenting leadership as a process suggests that those in leadership positions affect and also are affected by the people whom they lead in a positive or negative way (Chen & Silverthorne, 2005; Yang, 2007; Vesterinen, Isola & Paasivaara, 2009). According to these authors, leadership is a concerted and interactive process between the leadership and followers rather than a linear or one-way process in which the leadership affects its followers, but these do not affect the leaders. Viewing leadership as a process makes it possible that every person can be developed into a leader instead of just a selected few individuals who may be perceived to have shown leadership propensities (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Brotheridge *et al.*, 2008; Hannah *et al.*, 2008). For that reason, leadership positions were not regarded as offices confined to a few individuals who were

formally appointed. Instead, anyone willing and having the capacity to lead can still be afforded an opportunity to lead others (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Brown & Treviño, 2006).

### **2.3 The Functions of a Leader**

Most importantly, leaders act as power hubs of a group because they try to keep group members together, instil or breathe life into a group, drive the group towards common goals and must be sure to maintain the group's tone and impetus (Wang, Chou & Jiang, 2005; Vigoda-Gadot, 2007; Yang, 2007). As such, a leader's responsibility is to develop, moderate, manage and change the thoughts, feelings, behaviours, mindsets and performance of group members. Some commentators (e.g. Day, 2001; Brown & Treviño, 2006; Hannah *et al.*, 2008) affirmed the fact that leaders continue functioning in their roles at the collective pleasure of their members without which the group disbands. Thus, the group's effectiveness depends on three fundamental factors, namely; the level of compliance of the followers, the flexibility of the leader to suspend their personal desires, judgement and discretion (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Avolio, Walumbwa & Weber, 2009; Ahlquist & Levi, 2011), and the leadership style(s) that an individual portrays during their tenure of office as a leader. The next subsection reviews literature on the theories underpinning the concept of leadership.

### **2.4 Leadership Theories**

This section identifies and discusses three familiar leadership theories. These are traits, behavioural and situational or contingency theories.

#### **2.4.1 Traits theory**

The Traits theory of leadership describes leaders in terms of their personal characteristics as predictors for leadership efficacy (Day, 2001; Brown, Treviño & Harrison, 2005; Brown & Treviño, 2006; Hannah *et al.*, 2008). According to the Traits theory, an inventory of qualities or characteristics is prepared and then compared to potential leaders in order to predict their chances of success or failure. Prior studies that focused on the trait approach (e.g. Antonakis, Avolio & Sivasubramaniam, 2003; Avolio,

Walumbwa & Weber, 2009; Ahlquist & Levi, 2011) associated traits such as physiological, demographic, charisma, personality, intellectual, task-related and social characteristics with the likelihood of becoming a leader as well as with leader effectiveness. The Traits theory is summarised as shown in Figure 4 below.

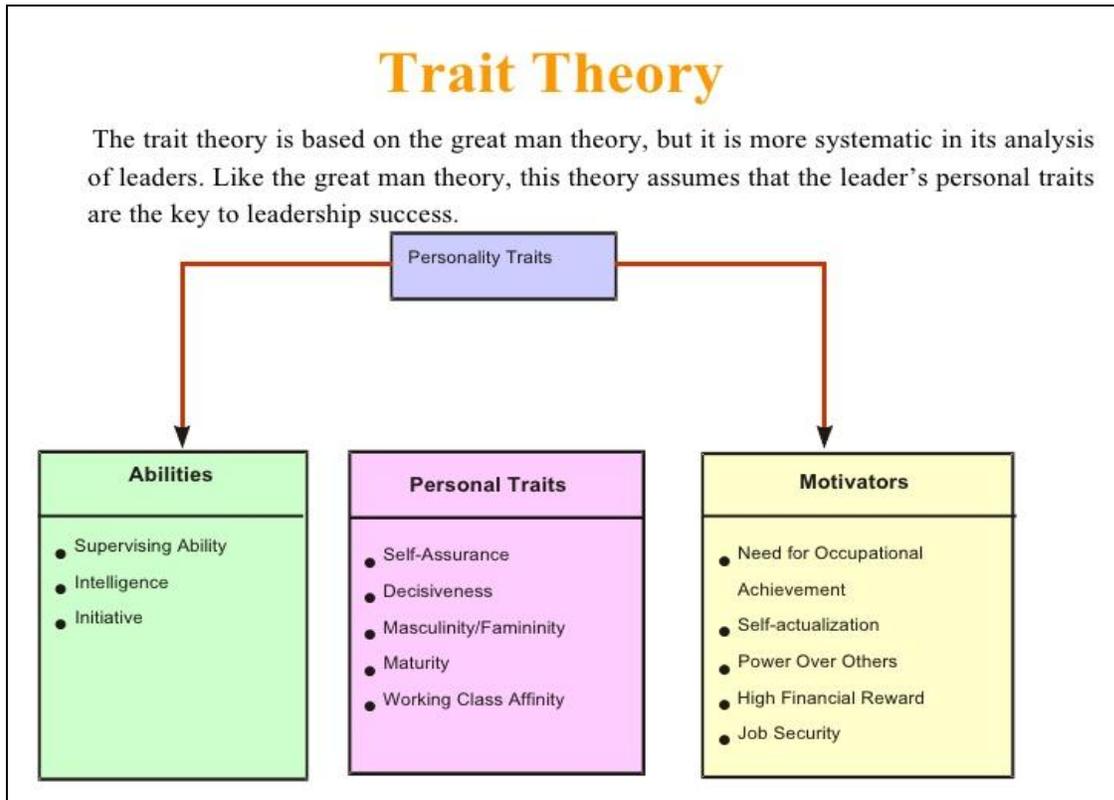


Figure 4: The Traits Theory  
Adapted from Burke *et al.* (2006)

In contrast to the views of proponents of the Traits theory, research contended that traits were not exclusively responsible for classifying whether or not an individual is likely to become a successful leader. Instead, these traits were regarded as prerequisites that equip an individual with leadership potential (MacBeath, 2005; Murphy, 2005). For that reason, the Traits theory was criticised (MacBeath, 2005; Murphy, 2005) because:

- ◆ It does not imply that leadership efficacy is acquired through education, experience and training, as innate qualities still require support for development;
- ◆ It seems weak in explaining how leaders' traits affect the results of the members;
- ◆ It has failed to take specific situations into account (Northouse, 2007);

- ◆ It has an infinite list of leadership traits and thus it is difficult to identify those qualities that can be attributed to an effective leader (Northouse, 2007).

#### 2.4.2 Behavioural theory

The criticisms of the Traits theory discussed above gave rise to the Behavioural theory. Theorists started to examine the concept of leadership as the sum of certain behaviours (Einarsen, Aasland & Skogstad, 2007; Vesterinen, Isola & Paasivaara, 2009; Lo *et al.*, 2010). They specifically evaluated what successful leaders had done, propounded a nomenclature or catalogue of actions, and found prototypes that suggested different leadership styles. In simple terms, behavioural theorists argued that the behaviour of the leader is the best predictor of their influences and thus is a determinant of leadership success (Day, 2001; Hannah *et al.*, 2008; Avolio, Walumbwa & Weber, 2009). There are a few differences between the Behavioural and Traits theories.



Figure 5: Contrasting views of behavioural and traits theorists

Adapted from Lee (2005)

Compared to the Traits theory above, behaviourism appeared to be an egalitarian type of theory (Einarsen, Aasland & Skogstad, 2007; Lo *et al.*, 2010). According to the behaviourist school of thought, to be a leader simply required proper training (Vesterinen, Isola & Paasivaara, 2009; Lo *et al.*, 2010). In contrast, the Trait theory

argued that a leader possesses intrinsic or inborn qualities. For instance, an individual may have been born into a family that displays no or weak willpower and one that is known for allowing people to exploit them. Another person might be coming from a family of successful and influential people who are referred to commonly as born leaders. Theoretically, the person from the former family develops the behaviours of servility, whereas the latter person acquires and nurtures the behaviours of being influential. The behaviourist school argued that had their backgrounds been swapped, each of them would have developed in a different way. Thus, either would likewise be likely to become an effective leader if they were subjected to similar exposure or with proper training (Einarsen, Aasland & Skogstad, 2007; Lo *et al.*, 2010). Figure 6 above illustrates the fact that behavioural and traits theorists come from two opposing ends.

#### 2.4.3 Situational or Contingency theory

The Contingency theory has been in use in literature in different fields extensively. In fact, reference to the Situational theory is traced back to the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Hemphill, 1949). A number of scholars (e.g. Hemphill, 1949; Winston & Patterson, 2006; Vigoda-Gadot, 2007) contented that the efficacy of a leader depends on situational factors such as external relationships, convenience in terms of financial and material resources, managing the demands of the members, structures and culture of the group.

The basis of the Situational Leadership theory is that no distinct style of leadership is the best (Hemphill, 1949; Lo *et al.*, 2010; Kim & Brymer, 2011). This means that it refutes the 'one size fits all' view of leadership. Instead, the theory emphasises that subject to a situation, different levels of leadership may be needed. The first step is that leaders must spot and categorise the most significant tasks. This is followed by determining the level of preparedness of followers by analysing the group's ability and readiness. Finally, leaders utilise the most suitable leadership style fitting a situation, which are summarised as directing, coaching, supporting and delegating. The model below shows the levels of support and directive behaviours required in each situation.

Situational leadership entails the leaders adjusting their style to accommodate the level of the followers who are being influenced (Avolio, Walumbwa & Weber, 2009; Ahlquist & Levi, 2011; Albrecht & Andreetta, 2011). With this type of leadership, the leaders change their style of leadership and not the member to acclimatise to the leader's style (Garman & Johnson, 2006; Brotheridge *et al.*, 2008; Avolio, Walumbwa & Weber, 2009). However, it is important to note that the style may have to be adjusted continually to meet the changing circumstances of an organisation.

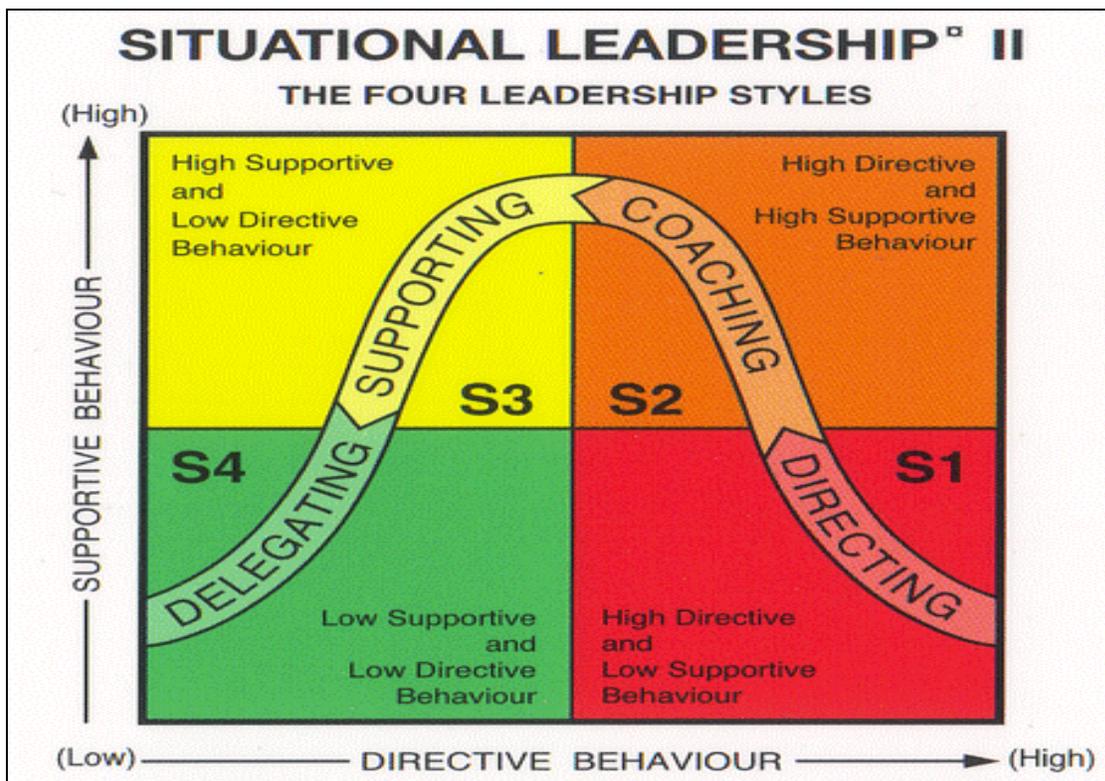


Figure 6: Situational Leadership Model  
 Adapted from Hersey & Blanchard (1969)

The preceding section identified three theories of leadership. A survey of literature relating to the theories was conducted. The next sub-section considers leadership styles.

## 2.5 Leadership Styles

Several scholars identified different leadership styles that most leaders depict. A leadership style can be defined as one's technique or mode of providing direction, implementing plans and motivating people. This study identified several leadership styles, which leaders purposely or involuntarily portray in a group. These include: autocratic, democratic, laissez-faire, transactional, transformational and charismatic leadership styles. These leadership styles are discussed in the next subsection.

### 2.5.1 Autocratic Leadership Style

In the autocratic leadership style, also called dictatorship, the leaders are the focal point of power and regard their decisions and judgement as supreme (Burke *et al.*, 2006; Vigoda-Gadot, 2007). The style has its roots in the transactional theory, which accentuates the relationships that exist between leaders and their followers. In this case, followers perform because of the reward systems or punishment for non-compliance (Burke *et al.*, 2006; Rad & Yarmohammadian, 2006). The disadvantages of the autocratic leadership style appear to outweigh the advantages. For that reason, the autocratic leadership style is not popular among employees (and colleagues) in most organisations. If used in organisations, the leaders may apply it accidentally. The literature identifies the democratic leadership style as the complete opposite of the autocratic leadership style.

### 2.5.2 Democratic Leadership Style

The democratic leadership style, also known as participative leadership style, derives its roots from the Transformational theory (Burke *et al.*, 2006; Rad & Yarmohammadian, 2006; Vigoda-Gadot, 2007). In this style, leadership focuses on change, visionary leadership and enhancing individual and organisational outcomes. Members are given the chance to build up their leadership skills, participate in leadership and contribute to decision-making (Vigoda-Gadot, 2007). This leadership style is arguably more efficient than autocratic leadership (MacBeath, 2005). Employees feel their opinions, suggestions and ideas are taken into consideration. Although members enjoy a certain

level of autonomy, it works effectively in situations where members are highly skilled, passionate and more satisfied about their job as is the situation where the laissez-faire leadership style is utilised.

### 2.5.3 Laissez-faire Leadership Style

With regard to the laissez-faire leadership style, the leader does not directly supervise the members, and does not rely on regular communication or feedback. Specifically, it allows the members total autonomy and self-rule to make decisions that relate to the completion of the assignment (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt & Van Engen, 2003; MacBeath, 2005; Rad & Yarmohammadian, 2006). However, the leader is available to offer guidance at any point should the members request assistance (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt & Van Engen, 2003). According to Hannah *et al.* (2008), this style has its own downside, which includes the following:

- ◆ It is not the best style when members have insufficient knowledge or skills required for completing the task or making decisions;
- ◆ If members cannot set deadlines on their own, manage projects and solve problems, then the task may not be completed, may be completed after the deadline, may be completed with lots of mistakes or may go off-course completely;
- ◆ There may be lack of cohesiveness within the group because the absence of the leader may be misconstrued as suggesting that leaders are not even concerned;
- ◆ This style may need to be adopted only when the leader is satisfied that group members will not face challenges rather than adopting it throughout normal business functions.

### 2.5.4 Transformational Leadership Style

According to Gumusluoglu and Ilsev (2009), the transformational leadership theory was introduced by Burns in 1978 and has since attracted a great deal of research attention. Transformational leadership comprises four elements, that is, 'charismatic role modelling, individualised consideration, inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation' (Gumusluoglu & Ilsev, 2009:462).

First, utilising charisma, leaders instigate high regard, reverence and allegiance, and emphasise having one shared mission. Second, individualised consideration is whereby leaders establish their own relationships with followers, and cater for individual differences, needs, skills and desires. Third, inspirational motivation is whereby the leader clearly communicates the vision for the future, demonstrates how goals can be attained, and instils followers' zeal to achieve goals. Finally, intellectual stimulation is whereby leaders widen and raise the welfare of followers and motivate them to be highly innovative (Hayward, Goss & Tolmay, 2004; Leach, 2005; Kirkbride, 2006; Gumusluoglu & Ilsev, 2009). The effectiveness of the transformational leadership style may be complemented by the transactional leadership style. In the next subsection, the transactional leadership style is discussed.

#### 2.5.5 Transactional Leadership Style

Transformational and transactional leadership styles complement each other, but there are a few noteworthy differences (Bass & Avolio, 1993). The former leadership style is also referred to as managerial leadership. It is a style in which the leader ensures conformity or reverence of the staff, using both rewards and punishments, thus followers are motivated through exchange, e.g. a follower may be motivated to complete a task to obtain rewards or preferences (Hayward, Goss & Tolmay, 2004; Vigoda-Gadot, 2007; Yang, 2007; Nielsen *et al.*, 2008). In contrast, transformational leaders focus on relationships to ensure organisational commitment and collectivism (Einarsen, Aasland & Skogstad, 2007; Gumusluoglu & Ilsev, 2009; Bushra, Usman & Naveed, 2011). These leaders endeavour to get a sense of the followers' needs and motivate followers towards predetermined goals. Thus, they are distinguished by their flexibility in decision-making and making changes as followers work to attain required outcomes.

Relationships between leaders and followers are important to attain organisational goals (Winston & Patterson, 2006; Vigoda-Gadot, 2007; Yukl, 2008). At the same time, Hayward, Goss and Tolmay (2004) suggested that leaders carry out both leadership styles, but in different proportions. Transactional leaders provide satisfaction to their followers' needs and wants through rewards that are available. Conversely, transformational leaders adapt or produce new stimuli that focus on fulfilling followers'

needs. Finally, transactional leaders become accustomed to the prevailing culture, whereas transformational leaders acclimatise the culture to settings outside the organisation.

#### 2.5.6 Charismatic Leadership Style

The charismatic leadership style is rooted in a form of boldness, bravery or extreme of personality, more or less of celestial origin (Burke *et al.*, 2006; Avolio, Walumbwa & Weber, 2009). It was one of the leadership styles propounded by Max Weber in 1947. It assumes that charm and grace result in a huge following, self-belief is a fundamental need of leaders and members follow those leaders whom they have a high regard for instead of any external form of power (Chen & Silverthorne, 2005; Lee, 2005; Hannah *et al.*, 2008). The charismatic leadership style is quite common in church organisations.

Several researchers identified a number of theories of leadership, which help to explain leadership styles better. The theories, inter alia, include; traits, behavioural and situational or contingency theories. The theories attempt to explain what type of person makes an effective leader, what effective leaders do in terms of behaviours, and how situations influence effective leadership, respectively.

The preceding sections have thus far reviewed literature related to functions of leaders, leadership theories and leadership styles. Since this study seeks to determine the connection between leadership styles and organisational commitment, the next section considers prior studies that have examined the aspect.

### **2.6 The Relationship between Leadership Styles and Employee Commitment**

Several prior studies have examined the relationship between leadership behaviour and organisational commitment. The studies confirmed that organisational commitment tends to heighten for those employees whose management or leadership give them the opportunity to partake in decision-making (Steyrer, Schiffinger & Lang, 2008), whose leaders take an interest in employees' welfare (Porter, Steers, Mowday & Boulian, 1974), whose leaders are fair (Lo *et al.*, 2010) and are supportive of their employees. At

the same time, a number of scholars (e.g. Gumusluoglu & Ilsev, 2009; Bushra, Usman & Naveed, 2011; Kim & Brymer, 2011) contended that supervision is one of the significant factors that guides employee commitment to their organisation.

A relationship between commitment and leadership style was reported in prior studies. Several studies found a positive relationship between the two variables. For instance, Lo et al. (2010) concluded that the leadership styles of supervisors are main dimensions of the social context because they shape subordinates' organisational commitment in various ways. Similarly, Ponnu and Tennakoon (2009) found that where the leaders were morally upright it will influence employee organisational commitment in a positive manner and raise the employees' confidence in their leadership.

In a recent study that examined leadership styles and organisational commitment in the mining industry in South Africa, Mclaggan, Bezuidenhout and Botha (2013) found that employees at a mine in Mpumalanga perceived the leadership styles to be more transformational and transactional. Such findings, although conducted in different contexts, relate closely to the results found of Walumbwa, Orwa, Wang & Lawler. (2005b); Walumbwa, Lawler, Avolio, Wang & Shi (2005a) and Steyrer, Schiffinger and Lang (2008). Moreover, the participants perceived that both leadership styles are a product of the augmentation effect, that is, the extent to which transformational leadership depends on transactional leadership.

Moreover, Rafiq Awan and Mahmood (2010) examined the link between leadership style, organisational culture and employee commitment in university libraries. Their findings demonstrated that the leadership style, particularly autocratic and laissez-faire, did not have any influence on the commitment of employees in university libraries. On the contrary, the majority of library professionals tended to be extremely committed to their institutions because they appreciated a result-oriented culture. Also, Lok and Crawford (1999) recorded that the leadership style aspect, a bureaucratic environment, frequently resulted in a lower level of employee commitment and performance, whereas Hunt and Liesbscher (1973) found a negative relationship between these two variables.

In a different study involving 156 participants, Lo *et al.* (2009) investigated leadership styles and employees' commitment to their manufacturing industry in Malaysia. The study was conducted to determine the successful management of employees and to improve productivity and accomplishments of an organisation. The study found that a number of dimensions of transactional and transformational leadership have a positive connection with organisational commitment, although the impacts appear to be stronger for the Transactional Leadership style. Likewise, Marmaya *et al.* (2011) examined employees' views of leadership styles involving Malaysian managers and their influence on organisational commitment. The study found that the managers appeared to be more transformational than transactional in their leadership behaviours.

Bučiušienė and Škudienė (2008) examined the relationship between employees' organisational commitment dimensions and leadership styles. The study found a positive relationship between a transformational leadership style and affective and normative employee commitments. On the other hand, a laissez-faire leadership style emerged as negatively associated with employees' affective commitment. Davenport (2010) conducted a study that sought to determine the relationship between leadership style and organisational commitment as moderated by followers' locus of control. The study recorded that leadership style and locus of control were key drivers of organisational commitment.

Research findings consistently highlighted the positive influence of transformational leadership on organisational outcomes. For instance, transformational leadership was found to result in lower employee turnover, increased organisational citizenship behaviour (Dvir, Eden, Avolio & Shamir, 2002 as cited in Mannheim & Halamish, 2008) and lead to stronger organisational commitment (Bučiušienė & Škudienė, 2008).

Likewise, Bycio, Hackett and Allen (1995) [as cited in Ponnu & Tennakoon, 2009] examined how transformational leadership and transactional leadership affected employee levels of affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment. Findings revealed that transformational leadership was a better predictor of affective, continuance, and normative commitment than transactional leadership.

Consistent with previous studies, Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, Luthans and May (2004) found a positive association between transformational leadership and organisational commitment. Contrary to the previous research, they found that transformational leadership at the indirect senior level had a more positive relationship with employees' level of organisational commitment as compared to the relationship between commitment and ratings of transformational leadership of the followers' immediate supervisor.

As cited in Bučiūnienė & Škudienė (2008), Simon (1994) studied the impact of transformational leadership on organisational commitment and found that transformational leadership has a positive linkage with normative and affective commitment. On the other hand, a negative relationship was found between transformational leadership and continuance commitment. Bass and Avolio (1993) claimed that organisations have a corporate culture, which is represented by the leaders who use transactional or transformational leadership styles. According to their findings, transactional culture creates short-term commitment, but transformational culture creates long-term commitment. Mannheim and Halamish (2008) argued that when transformational leadership is enacted, members of organisations no longer seek merely self-interest, but that which is beneficial to the organisation as a whole.

The findings of Brown and Dodd (2003) [as cited in Bučiūnienė & Škudienė, 2008] indicated a strong correlation between transformational leadership dimensions and affective commitment, a weaker but still strong positive correlation with normative commitment and no relationship with continuance commitment. A negative relationship was found between transactional leadership dimensions and affective and normative commitments, and a statistically significant correlation was found with continuance commitment (Brown & Dodd, 1999). Management styles can influence the commitment level of employees. Eisenberger *et al.* (1990) [as cited in Avolio *et al.*, 2004] argued that managers and organisations must reward and support their employees for the work that they do because this perceived support allows for more trust in the organisation. They discussed the finding that those employees who felt that they were cared for by their

organisation and managers also had not only higher levels of commitment, but that they were more conscious of and conscientious about their responsibilities, had greater involvement in the organisation, and were more innovative.

To sum up, this chapter highlighted that there is a multitude of evidence in the literature that describes leadership styles and employee commitment from a multitude of angles and views. Many articles also repeat the same topics and findings. Consequently, the author chose to include these findings merely to show that they are similar, but from a wide range of domains. In many research studies in the literature, it was determined that there was a strong relationship between leadership styles and employee commitment (Lo *et al.*, 2009; Lo *et al.*, 2010; Avolio *et al.*, 2004; Bučiūnienė & Škudienė, 2008; Lok & Crawford, 1999; Awan & Mahmood, 2009; Ponnu & Tennakoon, 2009). These studies generally were conducted in business organisations, yet there have been few research studies conducted in education organisations, specifically in Ethiopia. The aim of this research is to determine the relationship between leadership styles and employee commitment of Afrox in the gas sector.

In concluding the review of literature on leadership, the concept of leadership was explored, the role of leadership discussed, the different leadership styles identified and explained, and finally the leadership theories were discussed. In the next subsection, the review of literature continues with a discussion around organisational commitment.

## **2.7 Organisational Commitment**

The concept of organisational commitment was defined in many but related ways. Steyrer, Schiffinger and Lang (2008:364) defined organisational commitment as ‘the relative strength of an individual’s identification with and involvement in a particular organisation’. Porter *et al.* (1974:604) viewed organisational commitment as ‘an attachment to the organisation, characterised by an intention to remain in it; an identification with the values and goals of the organisation; and a willingness to exert extra effort on its behalf’. The two definitions suggest that organisational commitment is an attitudinal viewpoint connecting to an employee’s psychological attachment or

emotional commitment to the respective organisation. Employees observe and compare the extent to which their personal principles and aspirations link with that/those of the organisation.

In recent years, the concept attracted research attention in social sciences. The concept was used to explain workplace behaviours, for instance, staff turnover and absenteeism (Lee, 2005; Vigoda-Gadot, 2007; Steyrer, Schiffinger & Lang, 2008; Lo *et al.*, 2010). According to Albrecht and Andreetta (2011), organisational commitment is generally approached in a three-component model as depicted in Figure 7.



Figure 7: Dimensions of organisational commitment

Adapted from: Albrecht & Andreetta (2011)

### 2.7.1 Dimensions of Organisational Commitment

Organisational commitment mirrors the psychological connection or bond that binds an individual to an organisation. This psychological connection manifests in different dimensions, namely; affective, continuance and normative commitment (Brown & Treviño, 2006; Hannah *et al.*, 2008; Steyrer, Schiffinger & Lang, 2008).

#### 2.7.1.1 Affective Commitment

The first dimension is attributable to emotional attachments. These are employees that – with strong affective commitment – carry on working for an organisation for the reason

that they simply want to do so. Their organisations are likely to benefit more because of reduced absenteeism as well organisational citizenship behaviours (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Hannah *et al.*, 2008; Albrecht & Andreetta, 2011). Employees with a strong emotional connection with their organisation work harder and perform better in their roles (Brotheridge *et al.*, 2008) than those displaying continuance commitment.

#### 2.7.1.2 Continuance Commitment

The second dimension, continuance commitment, is attributable to economic benefits or fear of loss. In this case, employees evaluate the pros and cons of departure from their present organisation (Steyrer, Schiffinger & Lang, 2008). If the perceived benefits of staying appear to outweigh the benefits expected from a new position or new organisation, then that solidifies the employee's commitment to the organisation. The benefits are in monetary form, role-related expertise attained over a long time as well as social networks (Steyrer, Schiffinger & Lang, 2008; Tatoglu, Demirbag & Erkutlu, 2008; Lo *et al.*, 2010). Research suggested that continuance commitment is likely to increase with experience and age (Steyrer, Schiffinger & Lang, 2008). If employees had worked in an established, successful position and experienced several promotions in their organisation, obviously they were prone to be inclined to continuance commitment.

#### 2.7.1.3 Normative Commitment

The final dimension is attributable to obligatory feelings. Employees with strong normative commitment demonstrate the highest level of loyalty even under unpleasant circumstances. They feel indebted to their organisation, and for that reason, they are not prone to leave, have low non-attendance/absenteeism and they are open to accept and commit to any change effected in their organisation (Allen & Meyer, 1996; Brotheridge *et al.*, 2008).

Prior research on organisational commitment and different types of leadership produced mixed results. For example, the results of a study conducted by Hayward, Goss and Tolmay (2004) found no correlation between transactional leadership and affective, continuance and normative commitment. Conversely, a study conducted by Allen and Meyer (1996) showed that a relationship exists between transactional leadership and

continuance commitment, and the same study also found a low correlation coefficient linking transformational leadership and commitment.

In concluding the literature review, research, over the years, has drawn attention to the significance of holding on to committed employees to ensure organisational growth and sustainability. Organisations that do not generate a positive organisational ambience through different relevant and applicable leadership styles are likely to fall behind their competition, owing to low levels of organisational commitment. It is the responsibility of the organisation to formulate and implement strategies that are aimed at ensuring organisational commitment.

### **3. Conclusion**

This chapter reviewed literature related to the key concepts of leadership styles and organisational commitment. In reviewing the former, leadership as a concept was defined, functions of leaders identified, and leadership styles and theories were discussed. With regard to the latter, the concept was defined and then the three dimensions discussed. The chapter also surveyed previous studies that examined the relationship between leadership styles and concepts such as organisational commitment, job satisfaction, corporate culture and other relevant elements.

# CHAPTER 3

## RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Chapter Overview

Research design and methodology are the road map for planning and executing a research study that a researcher follows in conducting a study (Calder, Phillips & Tybout, 1981; Amaratunga *et al.*, 2002; Creswell & Clark, 2007). Figure 8 offers a synopsis of an all-inclusive research design and methodology that is presented in the form of a research onion. According to Saunders *et al.* (2011), the research onion proffers a broad plan comprising of the major rudiments in strata which, when put together, constitute a logical research methodology and design. Thus, each of the strata on the research onion was discussed, beginning with the outermost stratum, that is, research philosophies.

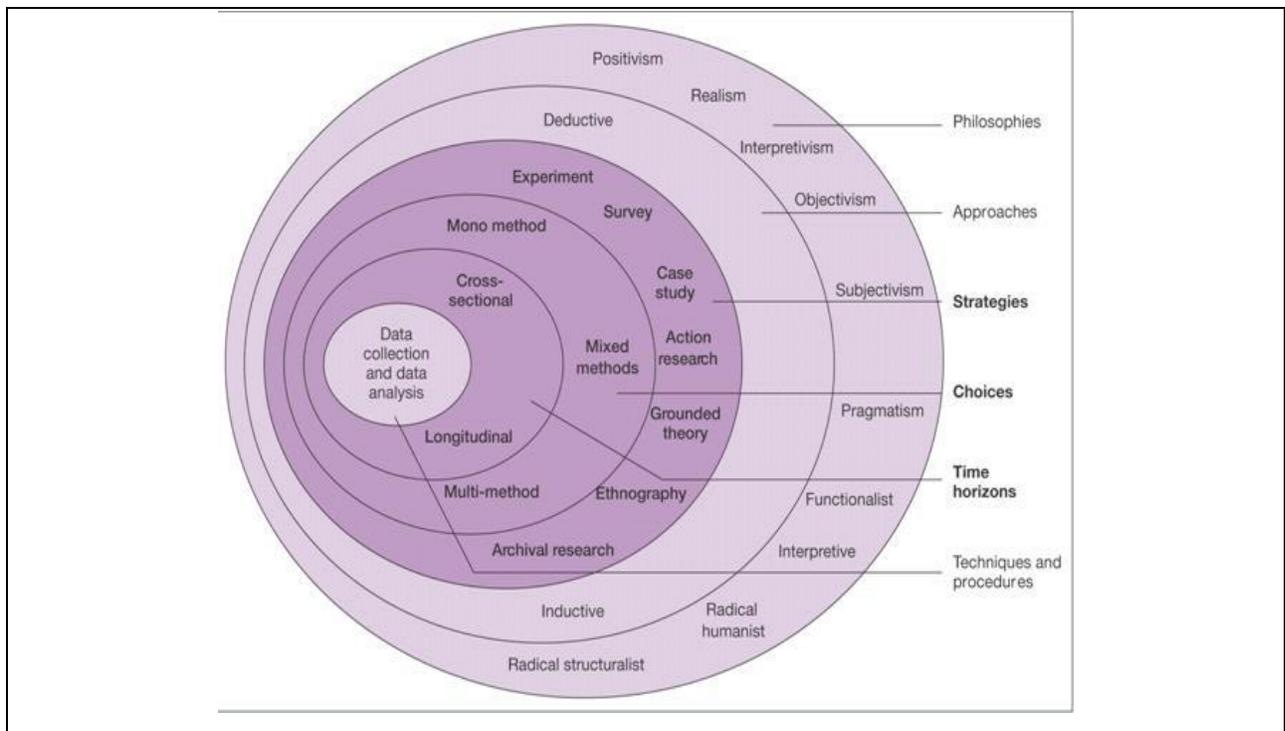


Figure 8: A synopsis of the research design

Source: Saunders *et al.* (2011)

## **3.2 Research Design and Methodology**

### **3.2.1 Research Philosophies**

The methods and techniques adopted in research depend on the researcher's philosophical assumptions about epistemology, ontology and human nature (Bunniss & Kelly, 2010; Henderson, 2011; Sandelowski, Voils, Leeman & Crandell, 2012), as well the research problem being examined. Several studies contended that there were a number of research philosophies as shown in the research onion above. However, this study identified with the mixed method, which involves collecting and analysing both qualitative and quantitative data (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Spratt, Walker & Robinson, 2004; Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner, 2007; Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2009). This meant that this study falls within positivist and interpretivist philosophies. The former relates to quantitative research that involves collecting and analysing numerical data while the latter relates to textual data. Having discussed the stratum relating to research philosophies, the next stratum on the research onion is research approaches.

### **3.2.2 Research Approaches**

The stratum on the research onion shows deductive and inductive approaches. The deductive approach relates to a theory or topic of interest and then narrowing it down to more specific hypotheses that are tested (Coyne 1997). In contrast, the inductive approach makes specific observations and measures, establishes patterns, formulates hypothesis and finally makes conclusions (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). These two approaches support both quantitative and qualitative research, and were both combined and applied in this study, constituting the mixed methods approach.

### **3.2.3 Research Strategies**

The research strategies stratum identifies several strategies such as case study, experiment, survey, etc. This study relied on collecting and analysing both qualitative and quantitative data from management in one organisation, this therefore constituted a case study. The decision to adopt the case study as a strategy was based on the fact that it had been used variously in social sciences, psychology and ecology (Amaratunga *et al.* 2002; Blumberg, Cooper & Schindler, 2008) and that it utilised real life situations

(Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner, 2007; Leech *et al.*, 2010). It also helped to understand specific cases and ensured a more holistic approach to research.

#### 3.2.4 Research Choices

The fourth stratum related to research choices shown on the research onion as mono-, multi- and mixed methods. In spite of the benefits of both mono- and multi-methods, this study adopted the mixed methods approach. Alternatively called triangulation, it authenticates, cross-validates and confirms findings of the study (Jick, 1979; Olsen, 2004). The latter scholars added that the mixed methods proffered the most informative, comprehensive, unbiased and valuable results. Using the mixed methods, this study collected data via an instrument with closed items plotted on a 5-point Likert scale and open-ended items.

#### 3.2.5 Time Horizons

This study relied on collecting data that is present in a population at a single point in time, thus constituting a cross-sectional study. The decision to conduct a cross-sectional study was based on the fact that research for academic purposes is conducted within a limited time.

#### 3.2.6 Data Collection and Analysis

The innermost stratum of the research onion represents data collection and analysis. In order to conduct a study that produces satisfactory, meaningful and plausible results, issues related to the development of the instrument, piloting, sampling, minimum sample, techniques for data presentation and analysis need to be explained succinctly. Lindsay (1995) suggested that the depth and profundity of the research methods and techniques must allow a reasonable researcher to conduct a similar study and obtain similar or almost similar results. Accordingly, all elements of the data collection and analysis process are explained.

##### 3.2.6.1 Development of the Research Instrument

The instrument comprises of three sections. Section A was designed to collect data relating to participants' profiles. Section B was designed to determine the leadership

styles of management at Afrox. It comprised of 21 items anchored on a 5-point Likert scale and sought to determine leadership styles. In developing Section B of the instrument, the study relied on modifying scales previously developed by other researchers (e.g. Tepper & Percy, 1994; Bass & Avolio, 1997; Antonakis, Avolio and Sivasubramaniam 2003). Perry (2011) affirms that it is an acceptable practice for postgraduate students to modify instruments developed by other researchers. The researcher thus used an instrument that already satisfied reliability and validity.

Section C collected qualitative data about organisational commitment. It comprised of five open-ended items. The structure of the instrument was line with scales used in prior studies (e.g. Kim & Brymer, 2011). The instrument was piloted after its development.

#### 3.2.6.2 Piloting the Instrument

Piloting means testing effectiveness and efficiency of an instrument in measuring intended constructs, and determining whether or not participants will easily understand the questions (Simkhada, Bhatta & van Teijlingen, 2006; Feeley *et al.*, 2009). The instrument was e-mailed to a senior executive member of Afrox for piloting to five managers. The executive member then distributed the instrument randomly to the managers, and any alterations were effected accordingly.

#### 3.2.6.3 Sampling Technique

The population of interest were managers at all levels in the gas industry. A portion of a population selected to participate in a study and whose information is generalisable to that population is known as the sample (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Participants were selected using a purposive sampling technique. It is a technique in which persons are selected with intent for a study because of the importance and quality of information they can provide for a study (Teddlie & Yu, 2007). Since participants were carefully selected, the probability of producing credible results is high (Saunders *et al.* 2011). In summary, a total of 61 managers at Afrox were sampled for the study.

#### 3.2.6.4 Determining a minimum sample

Field (2009) and Pallant (2013) advocated for the use of a ratio of the number of items to participants to determine the minimum sample. The ratios that range from 3:1 to 10:1 were regarded as ideal. In other words, 3 to 10 participants were anticipated to respond to every item in the instrument. For the purpose of this study, a lower extreme of three was adopted. Since the instrument comprised of 21 items, the minimum sample is 63 participants. The instrument was e-mailed to 63 participants via SurveyMonkey, out of which 61 were completed and returned, thus yielding a response rate of 96.8%.

#### 3.2.6.5 Conducting the study

Subsections 4.6.2 and 4.6.3 highlight that the purposive sampling technique was utilised. After securing permission to conduct the study in the Afrox organisation from top management, the researcher sent the instrument with a covering letter via e-mail to an executive member of the organisation. The covering letter indicated that participation was voluntary, participants did not need to disclose their identities; it was communicated that their information was going to be treated with utmost confidentiality and would be used for academic purposes only. The executive member then identified and distributed the instrument purposively to informed and qualified participants of the study.

The decision to use this technique was derived from the fact that management is not always easily accessible for research to outsiders. It also ensured a high response rate because the administration and collection of questionnaires was the responsibility of a senior executive member of that organisation via online access using a SurveyMonkey. The decision to adopt this technique was also consistent with prior related studies (e.g. Wang, Chou & Jiang, 2005; Rad & Yarmohammadian, 2006) that successfully utilised the technique.

The researcher requested that completed questionnaire be returned within a week. It was anticipated that a minimum of 60 participants were going to complete and return the questionnaire online. It was also expected that data collection were to take place during

the month of October 2015. Once all questionnaires had been returned, data analysis started. The techniques used for data analysis are explained next.

#### 3.2.6.6 Techniques for data analysis

The analysis of quantitative data was executed utilising the Statistical Package of Social Scientists (SPSS) with the SPSS version 23 program. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the profiles of participants. A factor analysis was performed to identify the factors constituting the leadership styles. The factor analysis involved initial component extraction and varimax rotation to determine the final factors.

In contrast, qualitative data was analysed using the content analysis. The texts were read a number of times to obtain an idea of what they meant and contained. Thereafter, words and groups of words were developed into themes for further analysis. The 'describe-compare-relate' method, as proposed by Bazeley (2009) and Mayer (1999), was adopted to analyse and report on themes and citing participants' responses verbatim where necessary.

## **4. Limitations of the Methodology**

The following were the limitations of the methodology adopted in this study:

- ◆ Data were collected exclusively from one organisation. This meant that the results of the study may not be representative of all organisations within or outside the gas industry;
- ◆ Given that it was a cross-sectional study, the quality of the information may not be as good as results from a longitudinal study;
- ◆ Collecting data via an online self-completion questionnaire has its own limitations, with potential errors (questions answered incorrectly, questions left out, questions being misunderstood). The use of personal face-to-face or telephonic interviews could be a better technique for strengthening the quantitative data collection technique and adding qualitative aspects for future application.

- ◆ The fact that the questionnaire was distributed via the executive manager gave little room for participants to exercise their liberty whether to participate or not. This also affects the quality of the data.

## **5. Conclusion**

The research problem was identified in Chapter 1. Chapter 2 reviewed literature relating to leadership, leadership styles and organisational commitment. This chapter indicated that the study adopted a mixed methods approach. The chapter also provided details of the methods and techniques for data collection and analysis. The next chapter presents the data and results of the study.

# CHAPTER 4

## DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

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### 4.1 Introduction

Chapter 1 stated and justified the research problem, which focuses on the relationship between leadership styles and organisational commitment in the gas sector. Chapter 2 offered a survey of literature around the concepts of leadership and organisational commitment. Chapter 3 provided a detailed account of the methods and techniques that were adopted for collecting and analysing data and consequently, for answering the research problem. Chapter 4 presents the findings in a systematic, sequential and logical manner so that recommendations and conclusions are arrived at. Data analysis for this study comprises of two components, namely quantitative and qualitative data analysis.

### 4.2 Presentation and Analysis of Quantitative Data

Quantitative data for this study was divided into two parts. The first part, Section 4.2.1, is made up of descriptive statistics that analyse the profiles of participants. A factor analysis was performed to identify the factors that constitute the leadership styles. The factor analysis involves an initial component extraction and varimax rotation to determine the final factors.

#### 4.2.1 Descriptive Statistics

A link to the instrument was distributed to management staff via SurveyMonkey. A total of 61 management staff members completed the questionnaire. Section A comprised of items relating to demographic profiles of participants, while Section B comprised of items that relate to leadership styles. The purpose of this section is to provide a summary of the profiles of participants. A number of cross tabulations have been conducted.

**Table 1: Gender and Age cross-tabulation**

	Age				Total
	Under 30	31-40	41-50	51+	
Gender Male	3%	23%	25%	10%	61%
Female	0%	10%	15%	14%	39%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: SPSS Output

Table 1 above shows that 61% of the participants are male, while the remainder are females. In terms of age, 3% of the males are under 30 years and no females with that age category; 33% are aged 31-40 years, 40% are aged 41-50 years, while the remainder are 51 years old and above. The age distribution, though uneven, is spread across all age categories. Overall, there is a slight tendency for males to be younger, while female management staff are slightly older.

**Table 2: Gender and Race cross-tabulation**

	Race				Total
	Black	White	Coloured	Asian	
Gender Male	49%	10%	2%	0%	61%
Female	15%	14%	1%	9%	39%
<b>Total</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: SPSS Output

Table 2 above shows that the participants are predominantly Black (64%), where males are dominating; Whites 24%, Coloureds and Asians constitute the minority groups. This means there is adequate racial representation in the sample.

**Table 3: Gender and Education cross-tabulation**

	Education				Total
	Diploma	Bachelor's	Postgraduate	Other	
Gender Male	13%	20%	23%	5%	61%
Female	5%	13%	10%	11%	39%
<b>Total</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: SPSS Output

Table 3 depicts that there are 13% males and 5% females with Diploma qualifications; 20% males and 13% females with Bachelor's degrees; 23% males and 10% females with postgraduate qualifications, while the remainder hold other qualifications. This shows that participants have attained a reasonably high level of tertiary education, particularly if compared with South Africa's overall educational results. It also reflects that Afrox chose its management staff according to higher educational levels.

Table 4 below shows a cross-tabulation of gender and experience. A total of 21% have worked in management positions for under 4 years; 33% have 5 to 10 years' tenure; 21% have 11-15 years' tenure, while 25% have at least 16 years' tenure. This shows that participants have sufficient working or leadership experience that qualifies them as participants for this study.

**Table 4: Gender and Experience cross-tabulation**

	Experience				Total
	Under 4	5-10	11-15	16+	
Gender Male	16%	26%	8%	10%	61%
Female	5%	7%	13%	15%	39%
<b>Total</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: SPSS Output

Table 5 shows that the majority of the participants (73%) are at middle management level, while the remainder is almost evenly spread between top and lower level management. These participants obviously apply different leadership styles in performing their leadership roles. There is a clear bias of male representation in the middle to top management role, again representative of South Africa's working environment.

**Table 5: Gender and Management cross-tabulation**

	Management			Total
	Top management	Middle level management	Lower level management	
Gender Male	15%	43%	3%	61%
Female	0%	30%	10%	39%
<b>Total</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: SPSS Output

In concluding this sub-section on the descriptive statistics, Table 6 summarises the characteristics of the participants discussed above.

**Table 6: Characteristics of participants**

Item	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	Less than 30	2	3
	31-40	20	33
	41-50	24	39
	51+	15	25
Gender	Male	37	61
	Female	24	39
Race	Black	39	64
	White	15	25
	Coloured	2	3
	Asian	5	8
Education	Diploma	11	18
	Bachelor's Degree	20	33
	Post Graduate	20	33
	Other	10	8
Management	Top Management	9	15
	Middle Management	44	72
	Lower Management	8	13
Experience/tenure	Under 4 years	13	21
	5-10 years	20	32
	11-15 years	13	21
	16 years+	15	25

Adapted from SPSS Output

#### 4.2.2 Bartlett's Test of Sphericity

Prior to performing the factor analysis that identifies the leadership styles depicted by management, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was done to determine the adequacy of the correlation matrix, that is, if the correlation matrix has significant correlations among at least some of the variables (Ho, 2006). It yielded a value of 1254.085 and an associated level of significance smaller than 0.001. The degree of common variance among the 21

variables is 'meritorious' since KMO measure of sampling adequacy = .848. The KMO index must fall between 0 and 1. A value of .6 is a suggested minimum (Ho, 2006).

**Table 7: KMO and Bartlett's Test**

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.848
Bartlett's Test of	Approx. Chi-Square	1254.085
Sphericity	Df	210
	Sig.	.000

Source: SPSS Output

#### 4.2.3 Factor analysis

Based on the results of the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, the factor analysis was performed to determine the leadership styles that management depict.

The initial component extraction with varimax rotation produced the following communalities:

**Table 8: Communalities**

	Initial	Extraction
Others	1.000	.801
Simple	1.000	.823
Problems	1.000	.773
Develop	1.000	.736
Tell	1.000	.561
Appreciation	1.000	.535
Content	1.000	.661
Faith	1.000	.550
Images	1.000	.781
New ways	1.000	.661
Doing	1.000	.650
Recognition	1.000	.530
Working	1.000	.717
Is with me	1.000	.666
Proud	1.000	.907
Help	1.000	.899
Rethink	1.000	.834
Attention	1.000	.639
Accomplish	1.000	.845
Standards	1.000	.738
Ask	1.000	.707

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Source: SPSS Output

The communalities show how much of the variance in each of the original variables is explained by the extracted factors. For instance, in the table above, 61% of the variance in the original 'Others' variable is explained by the three components extracted. Higher communalities are desirable and the cut-off point is  $p > 0.5$ . In the case of the communalities in Table 8 above, all variables are above the cut-off point.

Table 9 below shows that an initial principal component analysis (PCA) results in the extraction of three factors that constitute the leadership styles that management of Afrox depict. These factors have been extracted based on their eigenvalues, which are greater than 1. This is because a factor with an eigenvalue of 1 accounts for as much variance as a single variable. Only those factors that explain at least the same amount of variance as a single variable are worth keeping.

Thus, three factors are retained as shown in a red eclipse in Table 9 below.

**Table 9: Total Variance Explained**

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	<b>11.199</b>	53.329	53.329	11.199	53.329	53.329	6.396	30.459	30.459
2	<b>1.973</b>	9.396	62.725	1.973	9.396	62.725	6.059	28.852	59.311
3	<b>1.841</b>	8.765	71.490	1.841	8.765	71.490	2.558	12.179	71.490
4	.967	4.604	76.095						
5	.713	3.397	79.492						
6	.653	3.108	82.600						
7	.579	2.755	85.355						
8	.529	2.519	87.874						
9	.480	2.288	90.162						
10	.402	1.916	92.077						
11	.374	1.779	93.856						
12	.303	1.444	95.300						
13	.243	1.157	96.457						
14	.185	.881	97.338						
15	.162	.770	98.108						
16	.113	.536	98.644						
17	.106	.506	99.150						
18	.063	.300	99.450						
19	.048	.231	99.681						
20	.037	.174	99.855						
21	.030	.145	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Source: SPSS Output

Consistent with the above explanation of the Total Variance Explained, the scree plot graphs the eigenvalue against the factor number. The SPSS Output shows a scree plot with a 3-factor extraction. The first factor has a higher eigenvalue and each new factor's eigenvalue is much smaller than the last one. On the scree plot, the top 3 factors are greater than 1, confirming the principal component extraction in Table 9.

However, there comes a point when the eigenvalues of the factors tend to become similar, that is, the difference between the factors get very small. There is a point where eigenvalues stop changing very much. On the scree plot below, from about Component 4, the eigenvalues stop changing and fairly flatten. The term 'scree' comes from debris that collects at the bottom of the cliff and flattens enough to collect rather than keep rolling. Only those that are above this point are regarded as significant.

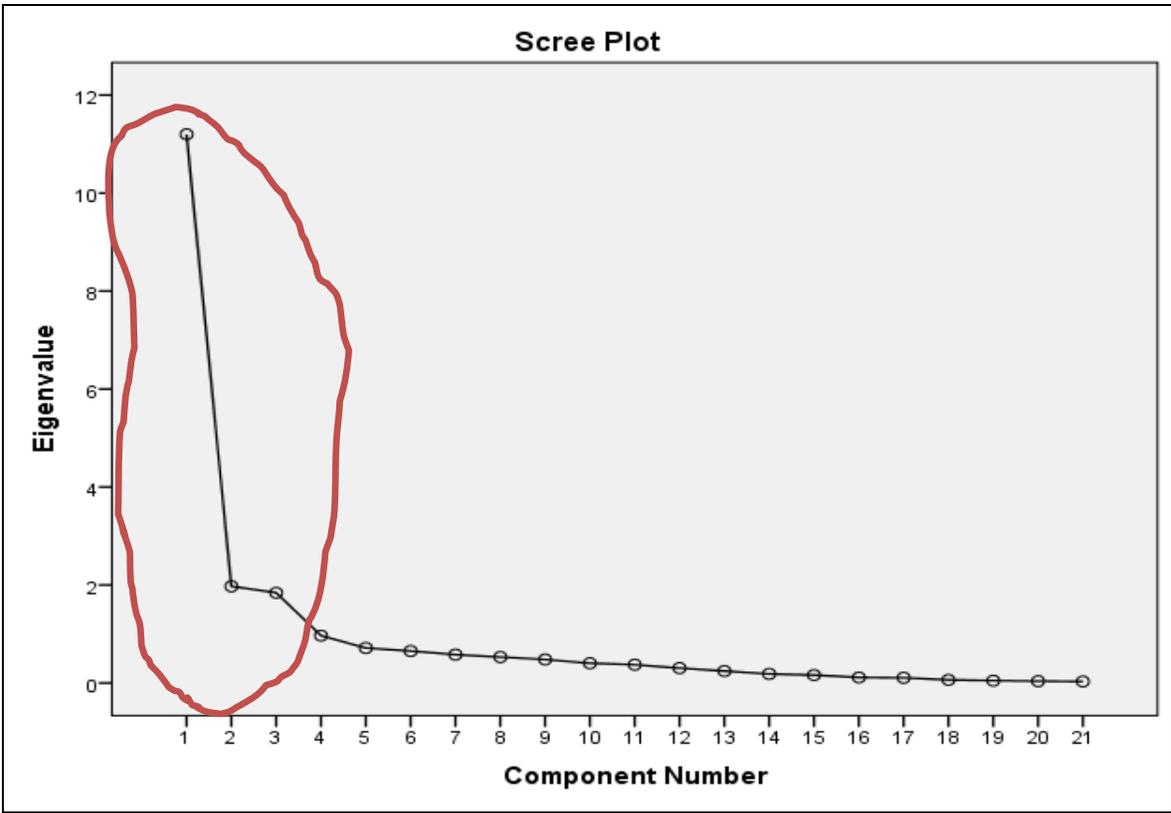


Figure 9: Scree Plot

Source: SPSS Output

Although the Total Variance Explained and Scree Plot confirm a 3-factor extraction, there are significant cross-loadings within the components. For that reason, it was necessary to run a rotated component matrix, which resulted in two factors shown in the Rotated Component Matrix, see Table 10 below.

These two factors were extracted based on two criteria. First, a cut-off point of 0.5 was used to eliminate cross-loadings.

Second, variables are grouped together with values above the cut-off point.

**Table 10: Rotated Component Matrix<sup>a</sup>**

	Component		
	1	2	3
Others	.413	.772	.184
Simple	.450	.780	.110
Problems	.352	.804	.046
Develop	.453	.722	-.094
Tell	.055	.585	.465
Appreciation	.079	.696	-.210
Content	.026	-.061	.810
Faith	.172	.698	.182
Images	.322	.734	.372
New ways	.608	.524	.130
Doing	.326	.694	.248
Recognition	.318	.516	.403
Working	.573	.272	.561
Is with me	.163	.150	.786
Proud	.928	.212	-.030
Help	.928	.192	.041
Rethink	.878	.228	.102
Attention	.670	.283	.332
Accomplish	.842	.325	.173
Standards	.681	.500	.157
Ask	.710	.373	.250

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalisation.

a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.

Source: SPSS Output

From the above table, Factor 1 and 2 comprise 7 and 6 components, respectively, shown in the red eclipses. Factor 1 is made up of: Proud, Help, Rethink, Attention,

Accomplish, Standards and Ask, while Factor 2 is made up of: Others, Simple, Problems, Develop, Tell and Appreciation. Table 11 below shows full details of the variables constituting a factor, that is, the items as they appear in the research instrument and the Cronbach's Alpha.

The coefficients of the variables show a high correlation suggesting a satisfactory internal consistency. The items constituting a factor have been named in Table 11.

**Table 11: Description of the factors**

Item Description	Cronbach's Alpha	Mean	Standard Deviation
<b>Factor 1</b>	<b>.951</b>	<b>20.93</b>	<b>7.353</b>
<b>Democratic Leadership Style</b>			
Others are proud to be associated with me			
I help others find meaning in their work			
I get others to rethink ideas that they had never questioned before			
I give personal attention to others who seem rejected			
I call attention to what others can get for what they accomplish			
I tell others the standards they have to know to carry out their work			
I ask no more of others than what is absolutely essential			
<b>Factor 2</b>	<b>.892</b>	<b>17.44</b>	<b>5.617</b>
<b>Transformational Leadership Style</b>			
I make others feel good to be around me			
I express with a few simple words what we could and should do			
I enable others to think about old problems in new ways			
I help others develop themselves			
I tell others what to do if they want to be rewarded for their work			
I express appreciation when others meet agreed upon standards			

Source: Adapted from SPSS Output

In concluding the factor analysis, the two factors are named consistent with the management literature, as shown in red eclipses in Table 11. The items constituting Factor 1 in Table 11 are more inclined to a democratic leadership style. At the same time, items constituting Factor 2 are inclined towards transformational leadership styles. This means that management at Afrox are associated with two leadership styles.

### **4.3 Presentation and Analysis of Qualitative Data**

This section presents the responses from Section C of the instrument that was designed to collect qualitative data. The responses are presented in the manner in which the questions appear in the instrument.

#### **Question 1: What do you think makes an effective leader?**

Participants use several terms to describe effective leaders, including: decisive, caring, inspiring, engaging, exemplary, visionary, confident, intelligent, hardworking, respectful, motivating, empowering, approachable, effective communicator, and being a good listener. These terms are consistent with the literature on qualities or characteristics of effective leaders.

#### **Question 2: In your organisation, how would you describe the relationship between high-ranking employees and general employees?**

There are mixed views on perceptions of prevailing relationships such as: supportive, good, coercive, healthy, open and honest, characterised by mistrust, etc. Based on the findings, the majority of participants generally have positive perceptions about the relationships that exist in their organisation with a few highlighting mistrust.

#### **Question 3: As an employee, how do you describe your involvement in decision-making?**

Participants have differing views. Some indicate that decision-making is centralised, but they are invited to give input, others indicate that they are involved, but only in certain selected aspects, the minority indicate that decisions are imposed on them from the top. The responses that appear several times include: 'highly involved', 'totally involved',

'involved depending on the situation', etc. Generally, it can be concluded that top management at Afrox considers the views of the remainder of management in the organisation.

**Question 4: In your opinion, do you think the type of leadership styles employed influences organisational commitment?**

The majority of the participants agree that the type of leadership style influences organisational commitment. The reasons for their responses are varied and a selected few are stated as follows:

- *'My employees take ownership in whatever job they do';*
- *'Yes, people feel good and enjoy their work if they can feel free to voice their ideas about their work, so if the leadership of the company does not promote the above then people become demotivated and the results will be lack of commitment';*
- *'Some leadership styles appeal to employees and give them a sense of belonging';*
- *'Certain leadership styles that are democratic allow employees to share in decision- making and therefore gaining commitment';*
- *'... because the style of leadership has an effect on employee participation, motivation and involvement';*
- *'Having a sense of involvement creates commitment';*
- *'An autocratic leadership style will never influence commitment. People will be obedient, others will rebel. However, I believe a person who exercises a more inclusive leadership style, people relate to the decisions taken, they get a sense of ownership. This type of leadership influences commitment in my opinion'.*

In the motivations above, the participants contend that the type of leadership style indeed influences organisational commitment. Where a senior manager exhibits an autocratic leadership style, employees comply because they fear punishment or they rebel. This means that the leadership styles that managers use impact on the level or extent of their commitment.

**Question 5: In your opinion, do employees comply with the required standards and policies because of the leadership styles that management applies?**

The majority of the participants agree that employees comply with required standards and policies because of the leadership styles that management applies. Several statements that seem to summarise the responses of all the participants are as follows:

- *'People respond to leadership the way they are treated or lead, i.e. if they are treated like kids, then they will respond that way';*
- *'Good leadership style makes employees enjoy their work and it becomes easy for them to comply with any required standard and polices';*
- *'Leaders who do not respect, empathise, are unethical and do not walk the talk end up with disgruntled and non-compliant employees';*
- *'Yes, firstly, as a leader you have to comply first to show by example and secondly, because you have made the employees part of sharing ideas and proposing new ideas. In that way they will comply as they are already committed';*
- *'Leadership forges the attitude of an organisation';*
- *'Yes, employees are very committed, hard-working, punctual and put others first before themselves. We are a very good team and all are good players';*
- *'Dictatorship through fear, democratic through involvement, but both are a double-edge sword for obvious reasons';*
- *'Employees are aware that deviations to standards and policies have consequences and the compliance thereto is irrespective of the leadership style. However, weak leaders who make exceptions to the rules are bound to create problems, a culture of non-compliance. However, a manager who leads by example and complies with the rules is guaranteed that he will have his/her team following suit'.*

From the responses, it can be deduced that employees at Afrox comply with the standards of the organisation because of the leadership styles that their management depict. This also concurs with the literature that top management formulates the vision and mission of the organisation and they allow it to cascade down to all stakeholders. As

a result, the leadership style that management shows, as they advance the vision and mission of the organisation, determines organisational commitment.

**Question 6: Would you agree that management should delegate authority to subordinates in order to ensure effective commitment to the organisation?**

All participants agree that delegation of authority ensures organisational commitment. They all support their thinking in different ways. For example, such action builds trust and ensures recognition and appreciation. While three participants feel that delegation ensures commitment, they introduce the term empowerment as a concept that conveys a deeper meaning than delegating. Their responses are recorded verbatim as follows:

- Participant 1: *I would rather call it empowerment than delegation; it is a key to unleashing hidden potentials;*
- Participant 2: *Delegation is a function of competency and trust, but ultimately it is also about empowering the sub-ordinates. Therefore, management needs to delegate to ensure empowerment of the subordinate. Such empowerment becomes successful if it is done genuinely, through competency build-up and support. The more the competency improves, trust also starts developing between the manager and the employee, giving the manager more comfort that the employee can be given more assignments. However, ultimately the manager must understand that accountability cannot be delegated;*
- Participant 3: *Delegation is about empowering and it is definitely urgent for commitment to the organisation. If I am given responsibility, I feel more empowered and become committed.*

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

This chapter presented the analysis and findings of the study, namely quantitative and qualitative data. The next chapter highlights the conclusion and recommendations based on the results presented in this chapter.

# CHAPTER 5

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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### 5.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter presented the findings of the study. The purpose of this chapter is to reiterate the research problem, research question and objectives, present the major findings, draw conclusions and make recommendations based on the results. The next sub-sections reiterate the research problem, research objectives, research question and research sub-questions before the major findings, conclusions are drawn and recommendations are made. All elements are presented in the next sub-sections.

### 5.2 Reiteration of Problem Statement

Previous studies highlighted the importance and impact of leadership on organisational commitment. However, there appears to be scant research that previously examined the link between leadership styles and organisational commitment in the context of the gas industry (Hannah *et al.* 2008; Vesterinen, Isola & Paasivaara, 2009). The gas industry is a sector distinct in terms of its service offerings. This study raises important insights as to the best leadership styles for ensuring competitiveness, sustainability and organisational commitment in the gas sector.

### 5.3 Reiteration of the Research Question

In light of the research problem stated above, the research question is stated as follows:

- ♦ Is there a relationship between leadership styles and organisational commitment?

#### **5.4 Reiteration of the Research Sub-Questions**

In support of the research problem, these research sub-questions were researched:

- ◆ What are the perceived leadership styles that management display at Afrox?
- ◆ To what extent do leadership styles influence organisational commitment at Afrox?
- ◆ Are employees satisfied with the leadership styles of the management?

#### **5.5 Reiteration of the Research Objectives**

The objectives of this study are as follows:

- ◆ To determine the leadership styles applied at Afrox that enhance organisational commitment;
- ◆ To identify leadership styles applied at Afrox and their influence on organisational commitment;
- ◆ To determine if employees are satisfied with the leadership styles of their management;
- ◆ To recommend strategies for improving organisational commitment.

#### **5.6 Significance of the Study**

Firstly, the significance of the study lies in making a contribution to the literature on leadership, change management and organisational commitment. A literature survey suggests that previous studies have not examined specifically the leadership styles applied in the context of the gas industry. This study raises important insights into how leadership styles encourage organisational commitment, which appears to have received little research attention in previous studies specifically in the gas industry. As a result, this study seeks to determine how leadership styles impact on organisational commitment in the gas sector.

Secondly, this study is significant in that it proposes to raise insights for management as stakeholders in any organisation. This study proffers practical assistance to

management on how management can inspire or motivate employees, and manage relationships and other variables so that employees can wholly commit to organisational activities. Most critical, this study informs management on the positive/negative correlation between leadership styles and organisational commitment.

## **5.7 Summary of the Research Sub-Questions**

### **◆ What are the perceived leadership styles that management display at Afrox?**

A factor analysis was conducted to determine the leadership styles that management at Afrox depict. Two leadership styles, that is, democratic and transformational leadership styles emerge as the most frequently applied leadership styles. Although there are other leadership styles that are demonstrated at Afrox, these two styles appear to be the current “trend”. Democratic leaders are characterised by the following: Everybody (employees at higher and lower level) has an equal chance to participate, ideas are exchanged freely, and discussion is encouraged. Democratic leadership focuses on group equality and the free flow of ideas; the leaders offer guidance and control by making sure that everybody has a chance to contribute to decision-making. Transformational leaders collaborate with employees to identify the needed change, creating a vision to guide the change through inspiration, and executing change jointly with members of the group.

### **◆ To what extent do the perceived leadership styles influence organisational commitment?**

Participants confirm that leadership styles influence organisational commitment. However, the extent of such influence or resultant commitment depends on the type of leadership style. For example, where managers are using democratic, laissez-faire, transformational or charismatic leadership styles, employees voluntarily comply with policies and instructions, but where the autocratic leadership style is used, there is bound to be resistance or rebellion because employees are forced or coerced to comply. Employees’ responses to a given leadership style thus explain the extent to which they commit to their organisation.

#### ◆ **Are employees satisfied with the leadership styles of the management?**

Participants indicate that they are involved in decision-making and thus feel that they are an integral part of the organisation. This means that the majority of employees at management level are satisfied with the leadership styles of Afrox top management, which in turn positively influences their organisational commitment.

### **5.8 Major Findings**

The major findings of study and conclusions drawn from both the quantitative and qualitative data are stated as follows:

- ◆ There are two leadership styles that can be associated with the management of Afrox. These are democratic and transformational leadership styles. The two leadership styles were found as a result of performing a factor analysis. While different organisations use different leadership styles, these two leadership styles have been found to be applicable and effective for an organisation such as Afrox.
- ◆ The relationship between the top management and management staff seems to be healthy and transparent. In addition to this, senior employees are involved in decision-making. An inference can be made that the success of Afrox as an international organisation is attributed to the use of the two leadership styles. Thus, it can be concluded that these leadership styles can be recommended to organisations in the gas sector.
- ◆ The type of leadership style influences organisational commitment and thus it can be concluded that there is a correlation between leadership styles and organisational commitment. The results of qualitative data in Questions 4, 5 and 6 confirm this.

### **5.9 Conclusions**

In light of the findings described above, the following conclusions have been drawn:

- ◆ There is a correlation between leadership style and organisational commitment;
- ◆ The management at Afrox apply two leadership styles effectively, namely the democratic and transformational leadership styles.

## 5.10 Implications of the Study

This study raises important implications for management of organisations, including:

- ◆ Managers should be accustomed to different leadership styles because they affect their organisations in different dimensions, such as organisational cultures and politics and eventually the formal performance and organisational commitment;
- ◆ Management need to be aware at the outset of their “automatic” personal leadership style and ideally, which type of leadership style they are going to use in their organisation under which circumstances. Strategies that organisations devise should be aligned to the leadership style of top management as well as middle management so that they can be successfully implemented;
- ◆ The leadership style that an organisation adopts needs to promote teamwork. Ultimately, it is not only the leadership style that produces positive results for an organisation, but it is the ability of members to collectively work towards the attainment of predetermined goals.

## 5.11 Areas for Further Research

This study focuses on leadership styles of management in the gas sector. The study proposes the following:

- ◆ A replication of the study involving several organisations in the gas sector is highly desirable, particularly if leadership styles could then be correlated against the various companies’ turnover and market value;
- ◆ This study identifies two leadership styles being applied within Afrox, namely the democratic and transformational leadership styles. An examination as to the applicability of other leadership styles within the gas sector could also shed more light on the influence of leadership styles on organisational commitment;
- ◆ Future studies may need to include leadership styles and other variables such as divisional leadership styles and outcomes correlated with tenure to determine organisational commitment.

## **5.12 Conclusion**

The study focused on the relationship between leadership styles and organisational commitment. Using a mixed methods approach, the study collected data from management at Afrox. The results revealed that the management of the company utilised the democratic and transformational leadership styles. The revealed results also suggested a strong correlation between the two leadership styles and organisational commitment. The study raises important insights for management not only in the gas sector, but across all sectors.

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## Appendix A: Letter of Introduction



### THE IMPACT OF LEADERSHIP STYLES ON ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT

#### ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of leadership styles on organisational commitment in the gas industry in South Africa. Specifically, it seeks to investigate and describe the different types of leadership styles and the extent to which these impact on their commitment. The styles of leadership utilised in managing employees have an effect on the morale and loyalty of workers. The code of ethics leaders use determines disciplinary procedures and the acceptable behaviour for all workers in an organisation. If leaders have good leadership standards, it encourages workers in an organisation to meet that same level.

In light of the above, this study relies on perspectives and opinions of Afrox employees. Data will be collected via a structured questionnaire comprising of both closed and open-ended items. The questionnaire will be distributed via SurveyMonkey to 63 employees. The significance of the study lies in identifying leadership styles that are commonly utilised in the African context. Identifying the leadership styles used during a change process is likely to inform the different strategies that can be used in evaluating the extent to which leadership styles impact on employee commitment.

Graduate School of Business Leadership

Dear Participant

**Letter of Introduction: Lebogang Khumalo, Student No. 77863216**

I am a student pursuing a Masters in Business Leadership degree at UNISA. As a requirement for completing my studies, I am conducting a research study that focuses on leadership styles and organisational commitment in a privately owned gas company situated in South Africa. The study specifically seeks to examine and describe the different types of leadership styles and their influence or impact on employees' commitment.

The purpose of this letter is to request you to participate in this study by completing and returning the attached questionnaire. Please note that it will take about 10 minutes of your time and that

- 1) participation is voluntary and participants will not receive any form of reward for participating,
- 2) participants may withdraw at any stage for any reason without notice,
- 3) participants' personal identities are not required,
- 4) results will be used strictly for academic purposes and, as such, will be published in the form of a mini-dissertation and
- 5) there is no right or wrong answer. Should you have any questions, please feel free to ask so that you make a decision that is best for you.

In conclusion, the significance of this study lies in advancing knowledge on leadership styles and understanding the dynamics of human behaviour that make significant contribution to the overall success of an organisation.

Thank you for your co-operation in advance.

Kind regards

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Mrs Dadirai Mangondo

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Supervisor / Promoter

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## SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES

*NOTE: In this section, complete this section by placing an X in the box as appropriate.*

### 1. What is your age in years?

< 30	1
31 – 40	2
41 – 50	3
50+	4

### 2. What is your gender?

Male	1
Female	2

### 3. What is your racial group?

Black	1
White	2
Coloured	3
Asian	4

### 4. What is your level of education?

Diploma	1
Bachelors Degree	2
Postgraduate qualification	3
Other	4

### 5. At what level of management are you in your organisation?

Top management	1
Middle management	2
Lower level management	3

### 5. For how many years long have you been in a leadership position?

< 4 years	1
5-10	2
11-15	3
16+	4

## SECTION B: LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOURS

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements where: 1= Strongly Agree, 2= Agree, 3= Not sure, 4= Disagree and 5= Strongly Disagree

	Item	1	2	3	4	5
1	I make others feel good to be around me					
2	I express with a few simple words what we could and should do					
3	I enable others to think about old problems in new ways					
4	I help others develop themselves					
5	I tell others what to do if they want to be rewarded for their work					
6	I express appreciation when others meet agreed upon standards					
7	I am content to let others continue working in the same way as always					
8	Others have complete faith in me					
9	I provide appealing images about what we can do					
10	I provide others with new ways of looking at puzzling things					
11	I let others know how I think they are doing					
12	I provide recognition/rewards when others reach their goals					
13	As long as things are working, I do not try to change anything					
14	Whatever others want to do is with me					
15	Others are proud to be associated with me					
16	I help others find meaning in their work					
17	I get others to rethink ideas that they had never questioned before					
18	I give personal attention to others who seem rejected					
19	I call attention to what others can get for what they accomplish					
20	I tell others the standards they have to know to carry out their work					
21	I ask no more of others than what is absolutely essential					

## SECTION C

*Please answer the following questions in the spaces provided. There is no right or wrong answer.*

1. In your opinion, what you think makes an effective leader?

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2. In your organisation, how would you describe the relationship between high ranking employees and general employees?

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3. As an employee, how do you describe your involvement in decision-making?

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4. In your opinion, do you think the type of leadership styles employed influence organisational commitment?

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5. In your opinion, do employees comply with required standards and policies because of the leadership styles that management applies?

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6. Would you agree that management should delegate authority to subordinates in order to ensure effective commitment to the organisation?

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