

**THE SYSTEMS PSYCHODYNAMIC ROLE ANALYSIS OF
THE 21ST CENTURY LEADER**

by

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DECLARATION

I, Michelle Madurai, declare that “The systems psychodynamic role analysis of the 21st century leader” is my own work, and that all the sources that I have used or quoted from have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

SIGNATURE

DATE

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ABSTRACT

The 21st century is characterised by globalisation, turbulent change, an information explosion and an electronic revolution. The result is organisations with decentralised structures, increased employee empowerment and growth alliances. This changing landscape calls for a more holistic, collaborative outlook on leadership, placing the emphasis on relationships, context and transformation where leadership occurs at multiple levels in organisations. While organisations work towards future sustainability in response to the demands of this landscape, leaders are faced with their own personal transition within their roles. Leadership is a socially constructed process that is co-created amidst pressure from self-expectations, follower expectations and organisational requirements. Leadership as a boundary-keeping role that functions on the periphery between the organisation and the external environment, evokes anxiety.

The researcher sought to explore, describe and analyse the lived leadership role experience of 21st century leaders as it plays out above and below the surface of consciousness. At the conscious level, the normative role refers to job description and content. At the unconscious level, the existential role deals with the role in the mind of the individual, while the phenomenal role relates to what others perceive and project onto the individual fulfilling the role. The level of congruence between these three roles and its consequent impact on the individual leadership experience were explored.

Hermeneutic phenomenology, using the systems psychodynamic perspective as a theoretical framework, enabled the researcher to apply in-depth description and interpretation. A case study research approach was adopted where individual cases were analysed and then consolidated into a cross-case analysis of findings.

The study revealed the underlying mental activity and irrational behaviour relating to anxiety, conflict and defences that manifest for 21st century leaders. By integrating the findings with both systems psychodynamic literature and leadership literature, nine themes emerged, namely anxiety, leadership identity, boundaries, authority, role, task, containment, valence and perceived performance. These themes culminated in a research hypothesis about the constant evolution of the leadership role in the context of the current business landscape.

Key terms: 21st century, organisation; leadership; role analysis; anxiety; conscious; unconscious; congruence; lived experience; human behaviour; defences; systems psychodynamic perspective

CHAPTER 1: SCIENTIFIC ORIENTATION TO THE RESEARCH

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to provide the reader with an orientation to what the rest of the study will deliver. It begins with a discussion of the background on and motivation for the research, and the research problem and question. The research aims, paradigm perspective and research design are then summarised. The research procedure is explained, and the chapter concludes with the chapter layout.

1.2 BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION

The 21st century is characterised by rapid globalisation, change, the information explosion and the electronic revolution (Boninelli & Meyer, 2004; Verwey, Van der Merwe, & Du Plessis, 2012). It has created organisations with decentralised structures, increased employee empowerment and communication in all directions, resulting in the growth of alliances and networks (Holman, 2010; Lončar, 2005). This, in turn, presents leaders with the challenging task of leading through constant chaos, complexity and instability, whilst attempting to remain effective and relevant in their roles (Lončar, 2005; Ilipinar, Montana, Johnston, Spender, & Truex, 2011; Youssef & Luthans, 2012).

The current world of work requires leadership to take on the role of influencing others to accomplish things in a markedly different way to approaches that worked in the past (Bennis, 2007; Bennis & Sample, 2015). A global, cross-cultural approach to leadership is becoming more significant as organisations become interconnected to remain competitive and sustainable (Booyesen, 2016; Steers, Sanchez-Runde, & Nardon, 2012). This changing landscape calls for a more holistic, collaborative outlook on leadership, placing the emphasis on relationships, context, and transformation (Kets de Vries & Korotov, 2010). There has been a shift in focus from leader-as-entity to leadership as a socially constructed process (Hogg, 2001).

While organisations go through change, leaders are faced with their own personal transition, in the midst of which, they are expected to support teams, foster collaboration and introduce new ways of thinking (Wheatley, 2005). The pressures they face impact how they take up their roles as leaders (Cilliers & Terblanche, 2010). This demonstrates the need for research to explore the leadership experience in this era as it plays out above and below the surface in the organisational context (De Klerk, 2012; Struwig & Cilliers, 2012). Current literature calls for a phenomenological approach to studying leadership that is not merely quantitative, but also focuses on the lived experience of leaders (Barker, 2001). The systems

psychodynamic view of organisations looks beyond the rational view of work and sees organisations as living systems that are both conscious and unconscious (Gould, Stapley, & Stein, 2001; Struwig & Cilliers, 2012). It focuses on the complex dynamics of human behaviour, thereby making it a valuable framework for studying and shaping the many facets of leadership (Kets de Vries, Florent-Treacy, & Korotov, 2013). Applying the systems psychodynamic theoretical framework affords one the opportunity to tap into what leaders experience below the surface. Hence it was beneficial for the researcher to understand the underlying mental activity and irrational behaviour relating to conflict, defensive behaviour and anxiety that manifests in 21st century leaders (Kets De Vries & Engellau, 2004).

In this study, the researcher sought to explore and understand what leaders experience as they exercise leadership in a complex, dynamic, emerging environment. An exploration from this perspective should provide valuable insight for consulting psychologists who work with leadership effectiveness in organisations through coaching and other organisational development (OD) interventions. It should also make a contribution to the personal growth of those who take up the role of leadership by enhancing their self-awareness, enabling them to manage their effectiveness in role.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Leadership theory has predominantly focused on the rational, economic view where leadership is applied in a specific context with specific individuals (Bennis, 2007; Fiedler & Garcia, 2005; Hogg, 2001; Vroom & Jago, 2007; Yukl, 2010). Despite the extensive research and writing about leadership, the psychology of leadership remains a facet still to be comprehensively understood (Kets de Vries, 2001). The systems psychodynamic perspective, however, offers a lens which reveals that leaders' behaviour has more to do with unconscious processes than rational consideration (Stacey, 2011). Research on systems psychodynamics as an organisational consultation stance in the South African context has covered a range of organisational phenomena including diversity, culture, the followership experiences of leadership, organisational bullying, boundaries, leadership coaching, wellness and transformation, and improvement interventions as social defences (Cilliers & Koortzen, 2012). Most of this research has worked with organisational phenomena that are either impacted by or have an impact on leadership. However, they have not specifically focused on the leader in role, in the context of the 21st century world of work, and its implications for leaders both consciously and unconsciously.

Leaders function on the periphery of two levels, facilitating the boundaries between the internal and external environment, providing direction and containing uncertainty on behalf of others (Obholzer & Miller, 2004). The challenge this presents is that in the midst of all of this,

leaders are faced with their own anxieties, fears and uncertainties, which may manifest when taking up their roles (Kets de Vries, 2006; Stapley, 2006). Systems psychodynamic literature refers to individuals assuming different roles (Cilliers & Koortzen, 2005). At the conscious level, the normative role addresses aspects such as job description or content, while at the unconscious level, the existential role deals with the role in the mind of the individual, and the phenomenal role relates to what others infer and consequently project onto the individual (Cilliers & Terblanche, 2010; Obholzer & Roberts, 1994). It was on the basis of this that the researcher decided to explore the level of congruence or incongruence between these three roles and its consequent impact on the individual leadership experience.

It was hoped that the study would shed light on this through the following research questions:

- How is the 21st century organisation conceptualised and how has the phenomenon of leadership evolved in this era?
- What has the impact been on leadership functioning above and below the surface of consciousness?
- How does the systems psychodynamic perspective, BART framework and related behavioural constructs provide a theoretical container for answering the main research question?
- What insight does the formulated research hypothesis provide into understanding the leadership role in the 21st century?
- What meaningful recommendations can be formulated regarding the transfer of knowledge in taking up the role of leadership in this era?

The main research question was formulated as follows: What is the lived leadership role experience of 21st century leaders from a systems psychodynamic perspective?

1.4 RESEARCH AIMS

The general aim of the study was to explore, describe and analyse the lived leadership role experience of 21st century leaders from a systems psychodynamic perspective.

The literature aims were as follows:

1. To conceptualise the 21st century world of work; the characteristics of organisations that exist in this world of work; and the phenomenon of leadership as it has evolved in this era

2. To conceptualise the systems psychodynamic perspective in the context of this study
3. To conceptualise the leadership role from the systems psychodynamic perspective in order to study the role on the basis of this theoretical framework

The empirical research aims were as follows:

1. To explore and understand the lived experience of a group of leaders appointed in formal leadership roles with the aim of presenting working hypotheses that could be integrated into a research hypothesis for the study
2. To formulate recommendations for (a) organisations towards obtaining greater insight into the challenges leaders are faced with in taking up the role; (b) consulting psychologists towards gaining a deeper understanding of leaders' lived experience as it plays out above and below the surface; and (c) future research in the field of leadership.

1.5 PARADIGM PERSPECTIVE

The theoretical paradigm was systems psychodynamics (Neumann, 1999) which originates in the work of Bion, Miller, Rice, Trist and others at the Tavistock Institute in London (Stacey, 2011). It is an interdisciplinary field which integrates psychoanalysis from the work of Freud and Klein on the human unconscious and the psychological theory around it (Fraher, 2004b; Kets de Vries & Engellau, 2004); group relations theory informed by the study of the group as a holistic system (Hayden & Molenkamp, 2003; Struwig & Cilliers, 2012); and open systems theory that views systems as a unitary whole composed of interdependent parts that is clearly delineated from its external environment (Koortzen & Cillers, 2002; Stapley, 2006). This paradigm works on the basis that the observable and structural features of organisations continually interact with its members, creating patterns of individual and group processes (Gould et al., 2001).

The empirical paradigm was hermeneutic phenomenology (Eatough, 2012; Finlay, 2009). Simple hermeneutics was used to understand the participants' experiences of being a leader as told through their stories, and the meaning they attached to these experiences (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009). Double hermeneutics was used to interpret their experiences from systems psychodynamics as the theoretical paradigm. The influence the researcher had on the research process was explored through triple hermeneutics by interpreting the unconscious interaction between the researcher and participants (Whitehead, 2004).

1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN

A qualitative research approach was selected for this study in order to explore, describe and analyse the lived leadership role experience of 21st century leaders (Eatough, 2012). This qualitative approach served the study well in that it provided rich data to work with in understanding this meaning-making process (Krauss, 2005).

Case study research was selected as the research strategy (Silverman, 2005) because it is anchored in the constructivist paradigm which claims that truth is relative and dependent on an individual's perspective (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Adopting a collective case study approach (Silverman, 2005) allowed for close collaboration with participants, while enabling them to tell their stories (Crabtree & Miller, 1999) about their leadership experience in taking up their roles.

The research method which comprised the research setting, the entrée and establishment of the researcher role, sampling, the data collection method and procedure, and the data analysis are presented.

- The study was conducted in corporate organisations in the Gauteng province of South Africa. These organisations were in various industries including financial, mining, market research, engineering and manufacturing.
- Access to participants and their organisations was negotiated and obtained in the following ways: (1) through fellow associates, serving as gatekeepers to their respective clients; and (2) from the researcher's own business client database.
- The researcher fulfilled various roles, including doctoral student, industrial psychologist, consultant, coach and as instrument of research.
- The sampling strategy was determined by the research question, the scale of the study and the type of material that needed to be collected (Johnson & Waterfield, 2004). The study sought to explore the unique leadership experience of participants, implying a small and limited sample size to enable the researcher to conduct an in-depth study of the phenomenon (Smith & Eatough, 2012). A purposeful, convenient sample of eight participants was selected on the basis of specific criteria and according to the participants' availability and willingness to participate (Babbi & Mouton, 2001; Koerber & McMichael, 2008; Mason, 2005).
- The data collection method was a semi-structured, in-depth interview (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). The instrument developed by the researcher was referred to as the

leadership interview. The rationale, purpose, interview structure and script, role of the interviewer, recording and transcription of data, and validity and reliability of the instrument were carefully considered.

- The data collection procedure included setting up the leadership interviews, conducting the interviews to extract the data and consideration of practicalities. Participants were contacted telephonically to determine their interest in participation in the study. This was followed up with an email to provide further context and an informed consent sheet. Upon receipt of signed informed consent, the interviews were scheduled. These were scheduled and conducted according to the participants' availability. The interview setting was important and the researcher indicated specific requirements to ensure a conducive setting for participants to feel at ease. The interview sessions were recorded using a recording device and later transcribed for the purpose of analysis.
- The data analysis method utilised to analyse the data was thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), by applying triple hermeneutics (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009). In keeping with the research paradigm of hermeneutic phenomenology, the hermeneutic cycle (Kafle, 2011), which entails reading, reflective writing and interpretation, was applied. At the first level of hermeneutics, the researcher repeatedly immersed herself in the data to gain an understanding of its essence (Finlay, 2009). The researcher applied the systems psychodynamic lens at the second level, linking it to basic assumptions and behavioural constructs. This is where the researcher started to bring the data and the systems psychodynamic literature together, resulting in interpretation. At the third level, the researcher explored her personal, emotional response to the research. She reflected on and analysed the demands the actual research encounter may have had on her as the instrument of research (Finlay, 2009; Eatough, 2012). Single cases were analysed before moving to cross-case analysis and the emergence of themes.

The strategies employed to ensure quality data consisted of quality, rigour and the trustworthiness of the research (Loh, 2013; Merrick, 1999). Trustworthiness encompasses credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability and authenticity, as adapted from the work of Lincoln and Guba (1985, in Tobin & Begley, 2004), which was applied to the study

- Credibility refers to the research topic being accurately described and interpreted through the researcher's experience (Whitehead, 2004). The credibility of the researcher, together with careful selection of setting, population and theoretical framework, was considered.

- Transferability refers to the degree to which the findings can be applied or transferred to different settings or populations (Johnson & Waterfield, 2004).
- Dependability is demonstrated through establishing an audit trail (Whitehead, 2004) that ensures that the research process is logical, traceable and clearly documented, allowing others access to the researcher's documentation of data, methods, decisions and end product (Tobin & Begley, 2004).
- Confirmability refers to the researcher showing how interpretations have been made during the research study (Whitehead, 2004). The researcher needed to show that the findings were clearly derived from the data (Loh, 2013).
- Authenticity is demonstrated if the researcher can show fairness in terms of giving all the participants equal voice – that is, a range of different realities is taken into account – and that participants have been left feeling empowered (Tobin & Begley, 2004).

From a hermeneutic phenomenological perspective, it was also necessary to take into account the quality concerns of orientation, strength, richness and depth (Van Manen, 1990), which were applied in the study.

Ethicality was ensured by obtaining approval to conduct the research in the organisations where participants were employed (Creswell, 2007). Ethical approval was also given by the academic department of the university. Context was created and expectations clarified by way of an information sheet which was provided to participants. An agreement pertaining to voluntary participation, confidentiality, approval for recording the interviews and the option for withdrawal being made known, was jointly signed by the researcher and each participant (Terre Blanche, Durrheim, & Painter, 2006). Ethical steps relating to the use of interviews as a data collection method were also applied to the study. These included reducing the risk of unanticipated harm, protecting the interviewees' information; effectively informing interviewees about the nature of the study; and reducing the risk of exploitation (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006).

1.7 CHAPTER LAYOUT

The chapter layout is as follows:

Chapter 1: Scientific orientation to the research. The aim of this chapter is to provide the reader with an orientation towards what the rest of the study will deliver.

Chapter 2: Leadership in the 21st century. In this chapter, the 21st century world of work, the characteristics of organisations that exist in this world of work and the phenomenon of leadership as it has evolved in this era, are conceptualised.

Chapter 3: Systems psychodynamic perspective. In this chapter, the systems psychodynamic perspective in the context of this study is conceptualised.

Chapter 4: Leadership role analysis from a systems psychodynamic perspective. In this chapter, the leadership role from the systems psychodynamic perspective is conceptualised in order to study the role on the basis of this theoretical framework.

Chapter 5: Research design. The aim of this chapter is to describe the research approach, strategy and method adopted in the study, together with the strategies employed to ensure quality data and the ethics of qualitative research and reporting.

Chapter 6: Research findings. This chapter presents the research findings by means of individual cases, followed by a cross-case leadership role integration, extracting themes with working hypotheses and concluding with a research hypothesis.

Chapter 7: Conclusions, limitations and recommendations. This chapter deals with the conclusions drawn, based on the research aims of the study, with attention being focused on the limitations of the study and recommendations for practice in organisations and for possible future research.

1.8 RESEARCH CONTRIBUTION

This study makes an academic contribution to understanding and analysing the experience of being a leader in today's world of work. It provides recommendations for (a) organisations towards obtaining greater insight into the challenges leaders are faced with in taking up the role; (b) consulting psychologists towards gaining a deeper understanding of leaders' lived experience as it plays out above and below the surface; and (c) future research in the field of leadership.

1.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter provided the background to and a motivation for the research study. It articulated the research question and aims of the study and the research design was summarised. The chapter concluded with the chapter layout.

CHAPTER 2: LEADERSHIP IN THE 21ST CENTURY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to conceptualise the 21st century world of work, the characteristics of organisations that exist in this world of work and the phenomenon of leadership as it has evolved in this era. A review of leadership theories is provided in order to describe the evolution of this phenomenon over the past 17 years advancing into the 21st century. The review begins with a description of the 21st century and the related characteristics of organisations in this era. Leadership as a phenomenon is then defined and early fundamental theories underpinning the study of leadership are described. This is followed by an in-depth review of leadership theories and research in the last 17 years. The review concludes with an integration of the demands of the 21st century on organisational leaders.

2.2 THE 21st CENTURY ORGANISATION

The 21st century refers to the era from between 2001 and 2100. Although only 17 years into this century, it has already experienced an increasing rate of turbulent change, global competitiveness, growing complexity and an information and electronic revolution (Taylor, 2004; Verwey et al., 2012).

Senge's (1998, p. 129) response in the late 1990s to the question of organisations coming to terms with the demands of the 21st century, stated that organisations have to "develop a sense of connectedness, a sense of working together as part of a system, where each part of the system is affecting and is being affected by the others, and where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts". Ever-increasing globalisation has resulted in extensive restructuring and downsizing as well as an increasing consolidation of businesses through mergers, acquisitions and strategic alliances on a global scale (Kets de Vries, 2001). Standing at the brink of the turn of the century, Senge's (1998) response was clearly an indication of the need for organisations to create interconnectedness for future sustainability.

The dimensions discussed below characterise the 21st century organisation as it is evolving in this era.

2.2.1 The changing landscape

De Meyer (2010) attributes the changing landscape to the following eight significant trends: globalisation; the fragmentation of value chains; an increase in knowledge workers; the demands civil society places on organisations to be drivers of social change; diffusion of the sources of knowledge production and innovation; the increasingly networked nature of

multinational organisations; the increasing need for risk management; and the role of information and telecommunication technologies in networking.

Organisations of this era are characterised by decentralised structures, increased employee empowerment, a sense of urgency, the need for innovation and communication in all directions, resulting in the growth of alliances and networks (Lončar, 2005). The traditional bureaucratic organisation can no longer deal with the rapid changes and complexity the new world of work presents. Classic organisational theory depicted organisations as well-oiled machines that needed to remain stable. This was accomplished through structure and standard operating procedures that provided the organisation with stability and leadership with control (Barker, 2001). Organisations have since evolved into responsive, social systems that are both open and closed, allowing for adaptability to complexity in a turbulent environment (Verwey et al., 2012).

2.2.2 The knowledge era

While the prior industrial era presented organisations with the challenge of optimising production, the new knowledge era poses the challenge for organisations to create an environment in which knowledge accumulates and is shared at a low cost (Uhl-Bien, Marion, & McKelvey, 2007). Knowledge management is about organisations knowing how to convert information into knowledge. Wheatley (2005) identifies the following principles that facilitate knowledge management in today's organisations:

- Knowledge is created by human beings – hence the need for a shift to attending to human needs and dynamics.
- It is natural for people to create and share knowledge as it underpins basic human motivation.
- Everybody is a knowledge worker, so everyone should have access to anyone anywhere in the organisation.
- People choose to share their knowledge, and with this willingness to share comes commitment to the organisation and leadership.
- Knowledge management is not about technology and it is born in chaotic processes that take time to evolve.

Taylor (2015) differentiates between the reductionist paradigm of the industrial era and the connectivist paradigm of the knowledge era. The table below provides this differentiation between the two paradigms in understanding organisations of the 21st century.

Table 2.1

Understanding organisations in the 21st century (Adapted from Taylor, 2015, p. 3)

Reductionist paradigm	Connectivist paradigm
Organisations can be understood and managed from an “independent parts” perspective.	Organisations can only be understood from the perspective of the whole system.
An organisation’s boundaries with the outside world and the boundaries within need to be maintained.	Organisations have connections that create blurred boundaries.
Linear chains of causality can be used to understand the dynamics of the organisation.	Organisations behave in non-linear ways through a web of connections that create and maintain the system.
Change can be introduced incrementally in organisations.	Organisations are always in dynamic flux, creating high degrees of movement in the system.
Organisations have “simple complexity”, meaning the complexity of organisations is oversimplified.	Organisations have complex complexity, meaning that ambiguity and uncertainty are a given.
Organisations can be controlled from a key point.	They can be influenced but they cannot be controlled.

The emphasis is on the shifting dynamics of change between traditional, hierarchical organisations and modern, highly connected organisations (Taylor, 2015). In traditional organisations, change is initiated at the top, the source of intelligence comes from the top of the organisation and change occurs through forcefully sustained progress towards a specific goal. In contrast, in modern organisations, change is initiated from anywhere, the source of intelligence exists throughout the organisation and change occurs through a coordinated nudging and waiting by those who share a vision. The continuing challenge for organisations in the 21st century is to live with the tensions these two systems create while organisational structures adapt to evolving realities.

2.2.3 The meaning of work

The meaning of work is changing in the sense that there is marked difference between work that derives meaning and employment that derives an income. The characteristics of the worker are being redefined as a result of the concept of work being classified differently in the new world of work (Cappelli & Keller, 2013). Individuals want to experience meaning in the workplace, where they feel fulfilled and inspired by their work. They are becoming increasingly discerning and want to work in organisations that promote employee wellness, drive social responsibility and actively contribute to caring for the environment (Law, 2016).

2.2.4 Governance and corporate citizenship

Governance plays a key role, together with links to corporate citizenship (Van der Merwe & Verwey, 2007; Verwey et al., 2012). There is growing trend towards the corporatisation and privatisation of public service, where organisations are expected to engage in public-private partnership to contribute to nation building (De Meyer, 2010).

2.2.5 The changing customer profile

Today's customer has an increased sophistication and demands high quality and efficient service. This implies creating, anticipating and responding to customer demands and innovating in both product and service development (Armstrong, 2005). Customer relationships are changing as a result of accessibility to information and decision making through social media and networking, thereby changing the business landscape. In this global economy, customers have vast options and organisations are challenged to conduct business in the manner that is most responsive to their wants (Pinnow, 2011).

2.2.6 Changing organisational structures

New organisational forms are emerging in response to the fast-changing nature of today's business environments and are defined as having structures and operations designed to facilitate fluid relationships between the organisation and its environment (Gordon, 2002). These structures aim to improve the organisation's flexibility to respond to change and are characterised by interconnectedness and interdependence. From a complexity theory perspective, McCarter and White (2013) state that the globalised interconnectedness of the new world of work requires organisations to respond almost instantly to global changes or risk failure. Decentralisation is the way in which organisations structure themselves in order to respond more efficiently, and this has resulted in more empowerment of employees and sharing of leadership practices. This implies that the traditional centralised-control hierarchical structure is giving way to a chaordic structure. According to McCarter and White

(2013), the term “chaordic”, which is a combination of the words “chaos” and “order”, was coined by Dee Hock in 2000. It is described as a fundamental organising principle of evolution and nature that enables living organisms to be flexible and adaptable to their ever-changing environments. According to this principle, organisations are living chaordic systems that are influenced by and influence their environments. The traditional command-and-control method is no longer effective in this era of complexity and is being replaced by flexible structures that offer employees more freedom, personal development and opportunities to participate (Pinnow, 2011).

2.2.7 Paradigm shift in how organisations are viewed

A paradigm shift in the way organisations are viewed is required because complexity, by virtue of its definition, cannot be controlled. Creating the capacity and capability for continuous change is critical and requires the following three fundamental shifts (Armstrong, 2005):

- creating and sustaining an “adaptive organisation” capable of reinventing and delivering new strategies
- acquiring and developing people’s competence
- mobilising people’s contribution alongside changes in technology and business processes, which is critical to creating unique relationships with customers

Organisations should be viewed as living systems that have the capacity to self-organise, sustain themselves and move towards greater complexity and order as needed (Stacey, 2011; Wheatley, 2005). According to Wheatley (2005), self-organised systems have the ability to respond intelligently to the need for change, organising themselves into adaptive patterns and structures without any externally imposed plan or direction. She (2005) highlights three primary domains of these systems, namely identity, information and relationships. Identity is the sense-making capacity of the organisation, information is the medium of the organisation and relationships are the pathways of the organisation.

This paradigm shift requires organisations to move from what Kets de Vries (2001) calls the three C’s of control, compliance and compartmentalisation to the three I’s of ideas, information and interaction. According to him, this paradigm shift demands a radically different kind of organisation that tends to be flat and organic rather than hierarchical and fixed. In this context, leaders are essential in the movement towards self-organisation, and they themselves require a shift in mind- set towards believing that the system is talented enough to organise in whatever way the future requires.

2.2.8 The authentizotic organisation

Kets de Vries (2001) refers to the so-called “authentizotic” organisation, which is the kind of organisation that meets human needs and could set the standard in this 21st century. This type of organisation is characterised by a strong sense of community and people orientation, and strives for the following: it provides a safe holding environment and sense of meaning; it has an orientation towards fun and enjoyment; it is selective in entry; it inculcates a sense of ownership and empowerment; it emphasises training and development; it is relatively flat in structure, providing accessibility to leadership; and it establishes accountability as the norm.

It has become clear that organisations, viewed in this paradigm shift as living systems, are continuously evolving in response to the changing landscape of the 21st century and that those organisations that fail to do so risk future sustainability.

2.3 DEFINITION OF LEADERSHIP

Given that this study is about leadership in the 21st century, one should note that representative and substantial supporting conceptualisations and theories on leadership in this era are still emerging. The scientist and practitioner therefore need to study the existing literature and include the already known demands of this new era to understand leaders' experiences. Leadership as a phenomenon has been studied scientifically over the past 100 years, resulting in a significant amount of literature and theory. The subsections below focus on defining leadership for the purpose of the research study, and providing an in-depth overview of early leadership theories that underpin the phenomenon and a detailed review of leadership theory in the last 17 years. The latter forms the window of review in relation to the study.

Leadership research has yielded as many definitions of the phenomenon as the number of persons who have attempted to define it (Bass, 1996). According to Vroom and Jago (2007), leadership is not a scientific term with a formal, standardised definition. However, most definitions of leadership have the common view that leadership has to do with influence over others and that it does not exist in isolation (Fiedler & Garcia, 2005; Hogg, 2001; Nohria & Khurana, 2010; Osborn, Hunt, & Jauch, 2002; Robbins, 1998, 2012; Vroom & Jago, 2007; Yukl, 2010; Zaccaro, 2007).

Questions are often asked about the type of influence that is being exercised and over whom. There is a fine line between influence that is exercised by coercion, which relates to power and compliance, and influence that results in followers' commitment to want to achieve the set goals. The latter implies an emotional, value-based leadership. Blomme,

Kodden, and Beasley-Suffolk (2015) refer to mutual influence, and the fact that such influence is an important feature of a relationship of cooperation. They (2015) state that leadership comes into play when one or more individuals play a significant role in defining collective norms and values, and in this context leadership is viewed as a group-oriented process.

Research shows that leadership is not an individual phenomenon but that it is grounded in a relationship (Avolio, 2007; Bennis, 2007; Kets de Vries, 2001; Kouzes & Posner, 2007). This implies the existence of a leader, followers and a common goal (Bennis, 2007). Covey (2004) offers an elementary and practical definition that sees leadership as communicating to people their worth and potential so clearly that they come to see it in themselves.

According to Kets de Vries (2001), leadership can be viewed as both a property and a process. As a property, leadership is a set of characteristics – that is, behaviour patterns and personality attributes that make certain people more effective at attaining a set of goals. As a process, leadership is an effort by a leader, drawing on various bases of power, to influence members of a group to direct their activities towards a common goal.

Hogg (2001) defines leadership as a process of influence that enlists and mobilises the involvement of others in the attainment of collective goals. He (2001) emphasises that it is not a coercive process in which power is exercised over others. The enlisting and mobilising components speak to leaders being followed by choice and not by coercion. Followers play a role in constructing the leadership relationship by influencing how the leader behaves (Avolio, 2007).

Similarly, Veldsman (2016a) offers a definition that presents leadership as a choice that is exercised, which is a shared responsibility among a set of individuals in an organisation who have a dominant focus on influencing stakeholders in the achievement of outcomes in a specific organisational context.

Yukl (2010) defines leadership 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 in order to accomplish shared objectives. His (2010) definition emphasises not only the leader in the process, but also those who follow. By implication, the leader does not accomplish the required objectives by themselves, but has to facilitate a process of mutual accomplishment. Factors that come into play are trust, collaboration and values. Facilitation implies the enablement of others, which is in contrast to coercion through power.

Osborn et al. (2002) also posit that leadership remains ill-defined, possibly because of the gap between it being regarded as a socially constructed phenomenon versus an analytically pure one. This speaks to the ambiguity of leadership and leadership research, because the phenomenon is not something one does by itself, but rather emerges from actions and interactions. They further argue that from a social construction perspective, the meaning attached to leadership may vary considerably across time as it is embedded in the collective minds of those who observe it. Their definition of formal leadership is that it is the incremental influence of position holders exercised via direct and indirect means to maintain and/or alter the existing dynamics in and of a system.

Barker (2001) also views leadership as a social process within a social system. He argues that conventional knowledge about leadership is based on a direct cause-and-effect relationship between the leader's abilities, traits, actions and the leadership outcomes. He argues further that when leadership is defined, the definition clearly addresses the nature of the leader and not the nature of leadership. He (2001) calls for a phenomenological approach to studying leadership, which would be more than a mere quantitative study of a phenomenon that is not as linear, mechanical and predictable as the conventional view would posit.

Vroom and Jago (2007) provide a working definition that sees leadership as a process of motivating people to work collaboratively to accomplish great things. They mention the following implications of this definition:

- Leadership is a process and is not the property of a person.
- The process involves a particular form of influence called motivating.
- The nature of the incentives, extrinsic or intrinsic, is not part of the definition.
- The consequence of the influence is collaboration in pursuit of a common goal.
- The "great things" are in the minds of both leader and followers.

Vroom and Jago's (2007) definition is most closely related to the view the researcher adopted in this research study. Hence, taking this and some of the other perspectives highlighted above into consideration, the researcher defined leadership for the purposes of this research study as follows:

Leadership is a facilitative process of motivating, enabling and authorising others to collaborate in the pursuit of a shared vision and goals, taking into consideration the complex, constantly changing environment within which the organisation exists, by providing direction to effect the required change.

2.4 EARLY LEADERSHIP THEORIES

Leadership theories have advanced from leadership being an inherent trait or attribute, to an exhibited set of behaviours, to being based on certain situational factors, through to leadership being a phenomenon that can be learnt, developed and applied in specific contexts.

The researcher focused specifically on leadership theory and research over the last 17 years. Since this is the window of review, it was deemed important to expose the reader to the fundamental theories that have informed the conceptualisation of leadership in this research. To this end, an overview is provided of the earlier leadership theories underpinning this foundation.

2.4.1 Trait theory

Trait theory originated in the 19th century, when leadership qualities in powerful men were examined and conclusions were drawn that leaders are born with certain traits that make up part of their personality and differentiate them from their followers (Galton, 1869, cited in Zaccaro, 2007). According to Kets de Vries (2010), this theory of leadership carries with it the implicit assumption of hierarchical relationships, suggesting the existence of power, organised into ranks, with the leader at the pinnacle. A significant number of trait studies were conducted between the 1930s and 1940s, but as Steers, Porter, and Bigley (1996) point out, leader traits as a basic unit of analysis appeared to yield little analytical or predictive value. Significant research was conducted aimed at isolating leadership traits that did not yield the desired results. Robbins (1998) asserts that the cumulative findings from more than half a century of research lead to the conclusion that some traits increase the likelihood of success as a leader, but none of the traits guarantee success. It became apparent that trait theory did not take other significant factors into account such as skills, abilities, the needs of followers or situational factors that could influence the leader's effectiveness.

2.4.2 Behavioural theory

The 20th century then saw a shift in focus to behavioural theories, where the displayed skills and behaviours of leaders were studied in order to determine leader effectiveness. Two major research studies were initiated at the same time during the 1950s relating to leader behaviours as the basic unit of analysis. The Ohio State Leadership studies was conducted under the direction of Stogdill and associates, while, the University of Michigan studies were directed by Katz and associates (Robbins, 1998). The Ohio State studies yielded two

categories of leadership behaviour, namely initiating structure and consideration. The former referred to the extent to which leaders structure their role and those of their followers for goal attainment. The latter referred to the extent to which the leaders demonstrated concern for their followers. The University of Michigan studies also yielded two dimensions, namely relationship oriented and task oriented. Relationship-oriented leaders place the emphasis on interpersonal relations, while task-oriented leaders focus mainly on accomplishing the group's task (Steers et al., 1996). An additional contribution was Blake and Mouton's (1964) managerial grid which is based on leadership styles relating to concern for people and for production. These studies placed specific focus on the relationship between leader behaviour and group performance. Two important theoretical limitations were observed about behavioural studies. Firstly, behaviour content categories such as consideration and initiating structure appeared to be too broadly defined; and secondly, these research programmes failed to take into account the effect of situational factors on leader behaviour and effectiveness (Steers et al., 1996). This influenced the shift in focus to contingency theories in the 1970s.

2.4.3 Contingency theory

Contingency theory came to the fore to examine the impact of situational factors on leadership behaviour. Fiedler's (1964) contingency model, House's (1971) path-goal theory, Vroom, Yetton, and Jago's (1973, 1988) normative decision model, and Hersey and Blanchard's (1969) situational leadership model, are significant theories that emerged during this time (Steers et al., 1996).

Fiedler's contingency model proposes that leader effectiveness is dependent on the leader's style and the degree to which the situation provides him or her with control. This model implies that a leader's style is fixed and cannot be changed to fit changing situations (Robbins, 1998). The essence of the path-goal theory is that the leader's role is to enable followers to attain their goals and to provide direction in the overall attainment of the organisation's goals. Research evidence supported the logic behind the theory, making this theory one of the most respected approaches to leadership (Robbins, 1998). The normative decision model related leadership behaviour and participation to decision making. It deals with the form in and extent to which the leader involves his or her followers in the decision-making process (Vroom & Jago, 2007). In contrast to Fiedler's model, this model assumes that leaders can adjust their leadership style to different situations (Robbins, 1998). Hersey and Blanchard's situational leadership model focuses on the followers. According to Robbins (1998), this emphasis reflects the reality that it is the followers who accept or reject the

leader, and that this, together with the followers' readiness to achieve a specific task, determines leader effectiveness.

Horner (1997) postulates that contingency theories made the assumption that the effects of one variable on leadership were contingent on other variables, and this opened the door for the possibility that leadership could be different in every situation. Transactional leadership originated in the work of Burns (1978), Kohlberg (1969, 1976) and McGregor (1960) and focused specifically on the leader promoting compliance from followers through reward and punishment (cited in Robbins, 1998).

2.4.4 Re-emergence of trait theory

During the 1980s, trait theory re-emerged after research was presented that challenged the arguments against this theory. Zaccaro's (2007) review of trait-based perspectives of leadership saw charismatic and transformational leadership become prominent during this period, recognising the importance of both situation and extraordinary individual qualities in leader effectiveness. He argued that substantial empirical evidence was growing for the argument that traits are significant precursors of leadership effectiveness. According to Zaccaro (2007), combinations of traits and attributes, integrated conceptually in meaningful ways, are more likely to predict leadership than the independent contributions of multiple traits.

2.4.5 Functional leadership theory

Functional leadership also emerged with specific focus on what leaders do (Hackman & Walton, 1986; McGrath, 1962, cited in Morgeson, DeRue & Karam, 2010). It challenged trait theory on the basis that leadership could be taught or trained and is not solely dependent on inherent traits or attributes. The relationship between leader and followers came into stronger focus. Graen's (1976) leader-member exchange (LMX) emphasised the relationship between leader and followers, specifically the ingroups and outgroups that leaders create by differentiating between followers and how the leader relates to both of these groups (Steers et al., 1996). A limitation of this research was that it did not suggest the patterns of exchange between leaders and followers that would result in leadership effectiveness (Steers et al., 1996). Furthermore, it did not recognise that leaders could have special exchange relationships with all followers, and that these relationships might simply appear different in nature.

The work of Adair in 1973 on action-centred leadership identified the three components of task, individual and team, and demonstrated that the leader gets the job done through the

work team and relationships (Bolden, Gosling, Marturano, & Dennison, 2003). It is a leadership model that is still used today in leadership development programmes.

Transformational leadership emerged in the early 1980s with specific focus on the leader demonstrating concern and providing intellectual stimulation for his or her followers. House's charismatic leadership theory in 1977, Bass's transformational leadership in 1980 and Conger and Kanungo's charismatic leadership theory in 1987 were primary contributions to this theory (Steers et al., 1996).

Charismatic leadership posits that followers make certain attributions about extraordinary leadership when they observe certain behaviours in leaders. Bennis (cited in Robbins, 1998) studied effective, successful leaders and found that they shared the following four common competencies: They had a compelling vision or sense of purpose; they could communicate that vision clearly so that their followers could readily identify with it; they demonstrated consistency and focus in their pursuit of this vision; and they knew how to capitalise on their own strengths. Conger and Kanungo (Robbins, 1998) provided the most comprehensive analysis and came up with ten characteristics of charismatic leadership, which included the following: self-confidence, a vision, the ability to articulate the vision, strong convictions about the vision, behaviour that is out of the ordinary, the perception of being change agent and environment sensitivity.

The work that emerged on transformational and charismatic leadership created a marked differentiation between transactional leadership, which was the nature of prior trait, behavioural and contingency-based leadership theory, and transformational leadership. This was further emphasised by Bass (1990) in his research on the shift from transactional to transformational leadership. The former was deemed to produce mediocre leadership effectiveness when compared to the latter, which was deemed to be of superior performance in terms of effectiveness. It has been argued that the two theories of leadership should not be viewed as opposing approaches, but that transformational leadership builds on to transactional leadership, elevating followers' performance and efforts to another level (Covey, 2004; Robbins, 1998).

The table below indicates the difference between transactional and transformational leadership.

Table 2.2

Characteristics of transactional and transformational leaders (Adapted from Robbins 1998, p. 374)

<p>Transactional leader</p>	<p><i>Contingent reward</i>: Contracts exchange of rewards for effort, promises rewards for good performance, recognises accomplishments.</p> <p><i>Management-by-exception (active)</i>: Watches and searches for deviations from rules and standards, takes corrective action.</p> <p><i>Management-by-exception (passive)</i>: Intervenes only if standards are not met.</p> <p><i>Laissez-faire</i>: Abdicates responsibilities, avoids making decisions</p>
<p>Transformational leader</p>	<p><i>Charisma</i>: Provides vision and a sense of mission, instils pride, gains respect and trust.</p> <p><i>Inspiration</i>: Communicates high expectations, uses symbols to focus efforts and expresses important purposes in simple ways.</p> <p><i>Intellectual stimulation</i>: Promotes intelligence, rationality, and careful problem solving.</p> <p><i>Individualised consideration</i>: Gives personal attention, treats each employee individually, coaches and advises.</p>

2.4.6 Leadership and motivation

Another significant contribution to consider in relation to leadership research is motivation theory. According to Horner (1997), there is a strong link between leadership and motivation in that the leader plays a role in creating an environment that motivates people to produce and move in the leader's direction. This is seen especially in relation to charismatic or transformational approaches to leadership versus transactional leadership approaches. Steers et al. (1996) assert that although the two concepts are interrelated, one should note

that they are not totally intertwined and that other variables may exist that could also affect each of them respectively.

This subsection provided an overview of early leadership theories underpinning the conceptualisation of leadership. The next subsection explains the leadership studies that have emerged in the last 17 years, since this is the window of review.

2.5 21ST CENTURY LEADERSHIP THEORIES

Leadership theory is not a linear process but is dynamic and multilinear in nature. While early fundamental theories provide a foundation, new theories continue to emerge to address perceived shortcomings in leadership research. Old theories also re-emerge providing a new perspective and evidence for their existence.

The year 2000 marked the commencement of the 21st century, and the world of work has since grown more complex. Globalisation has increased since the turn of this century and continues to evolve at a fairly rapid rate. According to Bennis (2007), as early as the mid-20th century, a whole new way of thinking about leadership came to the fore. There was a shift in focus from charismatic trait-based leadership to more emphasis being placed on followers, groups and systems. Rost's (1991) seminal work on leadership in the 21st century revealed a distinction between pre- and post-industrial leadership theories. A shift in focus occurred from determining what causes leaders to emerge and be effective to exploring and understanding how leadership develops (Avolio, 2007; Kaiser, Hogan, & Craig, 2008; Nohria & Khurana, 2010; Raelin, 2016).

The discussion below provides an evolutionary view of leadership research and theory as it has developed over the first 17 years of this era.

2.5.1 Leadership and emotional intelligence

Goleman's (2000) research on effective leadership yielded six distinct leadership styles, springing from different components of *emotional intelligence* that would result in leadership that produces results. Firstly, it is necessary to understand what emotional intelligence is all about. Goleman (2000) defines it as the ability to manage ourselves and our relationships effectively. It consists of four fundamental capabilities, namely self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and social skill. The table below indicates the set of competencies linked to each capability.

Table 2.3

Emotional intelligence capabilities and corresponding traits (adapted from Goleman 2000, in Collinson, Grint, & Jackson. 2011, p. 4)

Self-awareness	Self-management	Social awareness	Social skill
<p><i>Emotional self-awareness:</i> ability to read and understand your emotions and recognize their impact on the work performance, relationships, and the like.</p> <p><i>Accurate self-assessment:</i> a realistic evaluation of your strengths and limitations.</p> <p><i>Self-confidence:</i> a strong and positive sense of self-worth.</p>	<p><i>Self-control:</i> ability to keep disruptive emotions and impulses under control.</p> <p><i>Trustworthiness:</i> a consistent display of honesty and integrity.</p> <p><i>Adaptability:</i> ability to manage yourself and your responsibilities.</p> <p><i>Achievement orientation:</i> skill at adjusting to changing situations and overcoming obstacles.</p> <p><i>Initiative:</i> the drive to meet an internal standard of excellence.</p>	<p><i>Empathy:</i> skill at sensing other people’s emotions, understanding their perspective and taking an active interest in their concerns.</p> <p><i>Organisational awareness:</i> ability to read the currents of organisational life, build decision networks and navigate politics.</p> <p><i>Service orientation:</i> ability to recognise and meet customers’ needs.</p>	<p><i>Visionary leadership:</i> ability to take charge and inspire with a compelling vision.</p> <p><i>Influence:</i> ability to wield a range of persuasive tactics.</p> <p><i>Developing others:</i> propensity to bolster the abilities of others through feedback and guidance.</p> <p><i>Communication:</i> skill at listening and sending clear, convincing and well-tuned messages.</p> <p><i>Change catalyst:</i> proficiency in initiating new ideas and leading people in a new direction.</p> <p><i>Conflict management:</i> ability to de-escalate disagreements and orchestrate resolutions.</p> <p><i>Building bonds:</i> proficiency at cultivating and maintaining a web of relationships.</p> <p><i>Teamwork and collaboration:</i> able to promote cooperation and building teams.</p>

Secondly, an understanding is required of the six leadership styles that Goleman (2000) deemed to be effective when leaders utilise their well-developed emotional intelligence to produce desired results. These include coercive, authoritative, affiliative, democratic, pacesetter and coaching leadership styles. Coercive leaders demand immediate compliance; authoritative leaders mobilise people towards a vision; affiliative leaders create emotional bonds and harmony; democratic leaders build consensus through participation; pacesetter leaders expect excellence and self-direction; and coaching leaders develop people for the future. A significant conclusion drawn from this research is that no single one of these leadership styles is most effective, but that each one has its place in terms of what is relevant and required in a given context. Furthermore, given the connection of these styles to different components of emotional intelligence, it would benefit leaders to develop emotional intelligence as this would enable them to understand which style would be most suitable in a given situation.

Higgs and Dulewicz (cited in Higgs, 2003) developed the following elements of emotional intelligence: self-awareness, emotional resilience, motivation, interpersonal sensitivity, influence, intuitiveness, and conscientiousness and integrity. According to Higgs (2003), emotional intelligence is strongly linked to effective leadership.

Kets de Vries (2001) agrees that emotionally intelligent leaders create stronger interpersonal relationships, are better at motivating themselves and others, are more proactive, innovative and creative, lead more effectively, function better under pressure, cope better with change and are more at peace with themselves.

Goleman (2000) posits that the business environment is constantly changing and that the leader needs to respond in kind. Koning and Kleef (2015) researched the impact of leaders' emotional displays in encouraging or discouraging organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB), especially where the emotional display was deemed inappropriate. OCB refers to the tasks undertaken by followers that are not covered by their formal job description, for example, helping a new colleague find his or her way in the team and organisation. It was found that followers were less willing to invest their spare time working on voluntary tasks after the leader had displayed inappropriate anger. This is an indication that knowing how to respond requires emotional maturity in dealing with one's own and others' anxieties or emotions (Hackman & Wageman, 2007) and resilience to deal with adversity (Verwey, Minaar, & Mooney, 2016).

The turn of the century saw a definite shift in leadership research from the leader as an individual to what leadership is being applied to, namely followers, group and context.

2.5.2 Leadership from a systemic perspective

Other leadership work early on in this era emphasised the need to adopt a system's approach to understanding leader-follower interaction in relation to task and context (Lord & Emrich, 2000). According to Taylor (2015), leadership requires a new way of relating, a new way of influencing, new ways of working and new ways of leading. According to him, leadership in a highly connected system requires a shift in focus relating to meaning making, to enable people to see the connection between what they do and the organisation's shared sense of purpose. This is achieved by leaders facilitating the flow of energy, identifying new ways of relating and influencing, facilitating organisational learning and developing the capacities of others.

Avolio (2007) calls for a more integrative approach to leadership theory to position leadership research in this era. This approach comprises five elements he deems essential for an integrative, systemic focus. These elements include, firstly, the cognitive elements that relate to implicit theories of self. Secondly, individual and group behaviour is exhibited in relation to follower perceptions and context at group level. Thirdly, the historical context relates to what has transpired prior to the emergence of leadership, and the consequent differing orientations towards leadership. Fourthly, the proximal context relates to the context in which the leader-follower relationship is embedded, which includes elements such as work unit climate and performance domain. Lastly, the distal context is the organisational culture and characteristics of the broader sociocultural environment. Avolio (2007) argues for a more integrative approach to leadership, on the basis that leaders are an integral part of the system, and are responsible for and also subject to the forces that affect this system. Systemic leadership calls for leaders to think strategically, in a goal-oriented manner, in broader contexts and in long-term patterns where they have an analytical focus on knowledge about the parts of the system and a synthetic focus regarding their roles in the system (Pinnow, 2011).

2.5.3 The social construction of leadership

The social psychology perspective on leadership emerged, bringing with it a focus on the social construction of the phenomenon. Marchiondo, Myers, and Kopelman (2015) refer to leadership as a relational construct, a phenomenon that is socially constructed between workgroup members. Uhl-Bien (2006) views leadership from this perspective as relational leadership. She describes it as a social influence process which is not dependent on the hierarchical role of the leader and emerges as organisational members form relationships. Hogg (2001) views leadership from a social psychology perspective as a structural feature of ingroups, and states that leaders and followers have interdependent roles embedded in a

social system bound by common group membership. He presents the notion of prototypicality of leadership, where the most prototypical person (in relation to the ingroup's prototype) is able to exercise leadership by having his or her ideas accepted more readily, which in turn, empowers the leader and publicly confirms his or her ability to exercise influence. This applies to both emerging and formally defined leaders. Marchiondo et al. (2015) present a leadership identity construction theory perspective, where leadership is seen to be a process of mutual influence that unfolds over time and situations as individuals claim and grant leader and follower roles. This shapes leadership perceptions through the claiming (the individual explicitly or implicitly negotiating a leadership role) and the granting (being acknowledged as a leader) of leadership roles.

Research shows that as groups become more salient and people identify more strongly with them, the leader's prototypicality becomes an increasingly significant basis for leadership perceptions (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009; Blomme et al., 2015; Hogg, 2001).

Pittinsky and Simon (2007, p. 445) refer to intergroup leadership, which relates to group cohesiveness being the goal of leadership where "prototypical leaders exemplify what makes the group distinct from and better than rival groups". The leader is faced with the challenge of appearing prototypical to each group and the collective.

Barker (2001) focuses on the nature of leadership as a function of individual wills and needs, and views leadership from a chaos theory perspective as a continuous process where organisations and their leaders respond to change in one of three ways. Firstly, the classical organisational system strives for stability and the leader changes as little as possible to maximise control. Secondly, the equilibrium-seeking system strives to meet the change in demands but still focuses on stabilising the system. The leader in this context needs to be reactionary and adaptive. Thirdly, in the transforming system, no form of control or theory of prediction exists. The leader's role in this context cannot be defined up front but rather emerges from the transforming processes. Barker (2001) therefore calls for a phenomenological approach to studying leadership that is not merely quantitative but focuses on the lived experience of leaders.

2.5.4 Cognitive psychology and leadership

Leadership research from a cognitive psychology perspective focuses on how leaders and followers think and process information. According to Avolio et al. (2009), self-concept theory, meta-cognitions and implicit leadership theories are some of the theories that inform this perspective. They define self-concept as the evaluations one makes of oneself based on self-beliefs, together with the way these evaluations are organised for processing. Both the

leader's and followers' self-concepts are at play in the interaction. Implicit leadership theories refer to cognitive structures containing traits and behaviours of leaders that followers use to interpret their leader's behaviour (Schyns & Schilling, 2011).

It is important to consider that the same behaviour may be interpreted differently by different people, based on their specific implicit leadership theories. People seem leader-like to the degree that their characteristics match followers' preconceived perceptions of leadership (Hogan, Curphy, & Hogan, 1994). Based on implicit theories of leadership, followers have developed leadership schemas, which they attempt to match to the leader's attributes in order for an individual to be considered a leader (Javidan, Dorfman, Howell, & Hanges, 2010). Research indicates that these implicit theories imply both effective and ineffective attributes of leadership (Schyns & Schilling, 2011). Depending on the situation, followers activate different prototypes, compare the potential leader to these prototypes and then behave according to how they have categorised the said leader (Junker & Dick, 2014). The greater the fit of the leader to the positive prototype, the more the individual will be regarded as a competent, effective leader.

Cognitive research approaches to leadership have the potential to enhance existing theories in terms of providing evidence of how leaders and followers attend to, process and make decisions and develop (Avolio et al., 2009).

2.5.5 Distance leadership

Leader distance is a crucial component of leadership that is partly explained by the distance that exists between the leader and followers. According to Antonakis and Atwater (2002), distance can be manifested in three independent dimensions. Firstly, leader-follower physical distance has to do with how far or close the followers are located from their leader, and acts as a negative moderator on leadership outcomes. Secondly, perceived social distance has to do with the degree of intimacy and social contact between the leader and followers, linked to the perceived differences in status, rank, authority, social standing and power. Thirdly, perceived leader-follower interaction frequency relates to the perceived degree of interaction between a leader and followers, where frequent interactions indicate a close relationship. This dimension is independent of social and physical distance dimensions. Antonakis and Atwater (2002) focused on leader distance playing a vital role in explaining the leadership influencing process and how trust and identification in the leader develops. There is a link between leader distance and the nature of leadership, particularly the social followers' identification with prototypical leadership.

In the context of the 21st century organisation, where virtual teams are becoming the norm in the globalised context, leader distance could pose a challenge in terms of leadership effectiveness. Factors to consider include the impact of structure and technology on leader-follower interaction, specifically the leader's influence on follower motivation and performance, trust formation in the absence of face-to-face interaction and the quality of communication (Avolio et al., 2009). Traditional models of leadership would need to transform in order to be relevant and effective in this context.

2.5.6 Distributed leadership

The traditional leadership approach emphasised the dualistic nature of the leader-follower relationship, specifically pertaining to power. According to Gordon (2002), traditional leadership theories differentiate clear boundaries of identity between leader and followers and domination. This domination is characterised as the natural superiority of the leaders and giving in of will by the followers. He argues for dispersed leadership theories, which are characterised by blurred boundaries of identity and collaboration. Collaboration is characterised as the sharing of power between the leader and followers and that this influences power in terms of where it lies and how it is shared. Distributed or shared leadership is seen as decentralisation of leadership skills and responsibilities. This is a shift in leadership theory from leader as entity, where the emphasis is on attributes or style of a person, to leadership as a process of shared practice. With 21st century organisations experiencing rapid change and needing to be flexible and efficient in responding to the changing landscape, a shift to the sharing of power and control is required in the new world of work. The result is leadership emerging at all levels of the organisation. Gordon (2002) does, however, caution against the possibility that leadership could be dispersed at the surface level, but that this dispersion may not be in existence at a deeper level. According to him (2002), it could be that under the guise of sharing power and control, dominant power-holders could still be exercising power through a network of compliant self-leaders.

Gronn's (2002) perspective identifies distributed leadership as the sum of the parts, which alludes to a holistic approach to leadership. He differentiates between numeric and concertive distributed leadership. Numeric refers to the aggregated leadership in an organisation that allows for the possibility that all organisation members may be leaders at some point. Concertive is a more holistic view characterised by spontaneous collaboration, intuitive working relationships and institutionalised practices that have been formalised either by way of design or adaptation. Fletcher (2004) refers to post-heroic leadership, where leadership is a distributed, shared set of practices. It is seen as an emergent process where leadership occurs in and through relationships and networks of influence. According to

Bolden et al. (2003), this is about a less formalised approach to leadership, where the leader's role is disassociated from the organisational hierarchy.

Future research on this leadership approach should focus on gaining agreement on a definition of shared leadership and variables that may impact on the level of shared leadership such as team competence, the environment and the leader's impact on the team's ability and motivation to be self-directed (Avolio et al., 2009).

2.5.7 Transformational and charismatic leadership

Charismatic and transformational leadership theories have turned out to be the most frequently researched theories in the past 20 years (Avolio, 2005; Avolio et al., 2009; Dinh et al., 2015; Lowe & Gardner, 2000). Accumulated research on these leadership theories has found that charismatic or transformational leadership is positively associated with leadership effectiveness. Despite this significant contribution to leadership research, it is still unclear why some leaders engage in this type of leadership approach and others do not (Avolio et al., 2009).

In his evaluation of transformational and charismatic leadership theories, Yukl (2010) found that these theories have made a vital contribution to understanding leadership processes. Firstly, newer theories emphasise the importance of emotional reactions by followers to leaders, whereas older theories emphasised the rational-cognitive aspects of leader-follower interactions. Secondly, they acknowledge the significance of symbolic behaviour and the role of the leader in making events meaningful for followers. Lastly, they include a comprehensive set of variables (traits, behaviours, mediating processes and situation), which is better integrated into explanations of effective leadership. One limitation, however, is that these new theories lack sufficient specification of underlying influence processes (Yukl, 2010). In addition, more attention should be focused on situational variables that determine whether transformational or charismatic leadership will occur and how effective it will be. The two adjectives "transformational" and "charismatic" are often used interchangeably, but have some apparent distinctions (Yukl, 2010). One source of apparent difference is the emphasis on attributed charisma and personal identification with the leader.

Kark, Shamir, and Chen (2003) conducted research to identify the processes that transformational leaders use to exert their influence on followers and understanding the possible effects these different influence processes could have on followers. They argue that personal identification with the leader and social identification with the work group are indicative of the contradictory outcomes of transformational leadership. They also state that personal identification mediates the relationship between the transformational behaviours of

leaders and their followers' dependence. Social identification mediates the relationship between the transformational behaviours of leaders and their followers' empowerment. Their findings show that transformational leadership is positively related to both personal identification with the leader and social identification with the work group. They also found that empowerment and dependency were independent. Their research highlighted the paradoxical nature of transformational leadership.

2.5.8 Contextual leadership

There is also a renewed focus on situational factors in leadership, with a specific focus on context in the leadership process. Osborn et al. (2002) specifically emphasise leadership being embedded in context. They highlight the fact that the context of leadership has become increasingly more complex in this era because it relates to the environment, technology or structure. They present four contexts for leadership studies. These include stability, crisis, dynamic equilibrium and edge of chaos. Stability is the context at lower levels in the organisation, where stable conditions exist between and among macro variables such as external environment, structure and technology. Crisis is the context in which middle management function, where there is a dramatic departure from prior practice and sudden threats to high-priority goals with little or no response time. Dynamic equilibrium is characterised by stability within a range of shifting priorities with programmatic change efforts. Edge of chaos is the transition phase delicately poised between order and chaos that many adaptive systems seem to naturally evolve towards. The latter two contexts are visible at more strategic levels in the organisation. According to Osborn et al. (2002), the boundary condition for contexts is defined in terms of the degree of change and focus of such change. As these boundaries change, important aspects of leadership change in response.

Kaplan and Kaiser (2003) refer to versatile leadership, which is the ability to continually adjust one's behaviour, applying the right approach, to the right degree, for the circumstances at hand. They emphasise the balance between two elements. Firstly, the forceful and enabling leadership duality focuses on how leaders go about getting things done. Secondly, the strategic and operational leadership duality focuses on what the leader gets done. Versatile leadership is about finding the balance between the two dualities in an attempt to avoid lopsided leadership. This speaks to the potential of strengths becoming liabilities in certain circumstances. It was found that uneven skill development, skewed mental models, one-sided values, the fear of inadequacy and then tendency to polarise, all impact the extent of versatile leadership. This represents a similarity to the work Hershey and Blanchard undertook in 1969 on situational leadership (as cited in Robbins, 1998).

Vroom and Jago (2007) conducted an analysis that yielded three distinct roles that situational variables play in leadership. They posit that organisational effectiveness is affected by situational factors that are not under the leader's control, situations shape how leaders behave and situations influence the consequences of leader behaviour. Their research highlights the need to understand the key behaviours involved in the leadership process – in other words, the underlying contextual variables shaping leadership behaviour.

Zaccaro (2007) studied the combination of traits and situation in the leadership process. According to him, individuals with particular kinds of skills and expertise can be leaders in one situation but not in others that may require markedly different knowledge and technical skill sets. The crucial question he poses is whether leaders are capable of displaying significant behavioural variability. This speaks to understanding how leaders' attributes interact with situational variables in shaping outcomes (Hackman & Wageman, 2007) and refers to the identification of traits or attributes that promote agility to adapt and change one's behaviour as the situation or context changes.

Recent research has sought to determine the validity of situational leadership in effectively supporting follower competence and commitment across different situations and found that it becomes increasingly more difficult for leaders to achieve this in larger work groups (Thompson & Glaso, 2015; Thompson & Vecchio, 2009). This brings to the fore the importance of leadership's engagement with the context. Veldsman (2016b, p. 338) believes that "putting the right set of glasses on to provide 20/20 vision is the ultimate action by leadership in achieving the best leadership-context fit ...". He highlights the significance of the following three independent components that make up this set of glasses: developing a worldview in understanding reality; adopting a decision-making framework to enable well-founded decision making; and developing a value orientation that guides leadership to make ethical decisions.

2.5.9 Ethical leadership

Ethical leadership refers to the honesty and consistency between leaders' espoused values and their behaviour (Yukl, 2010). Many examples of unethical behaviour of executive leaders in global organisations, the likes of Enron, Worldcom and Barclays, to name a few, have been exposed in recent years. This has resulted in the reiteration of the importance of ethical behaviour on the part of those in leadership roles. With the focus on ethical behaviour of leadership specifically in this era, there is a call for further research to define the concept and how it affects effective leadership (Dinh et al., 2014). Van Vuuren (2016) calls for leaders to develop ethics competence to successfully manage the ethical behaviour in and ethical challenges of their organisations. Servant, authentic, spiritual and responsible

leadership are ethical leadership theories that have come to fore in recent times. These theories are discussed below.

2.5.9.1 Servant leadership

According to Verwey et al. (2012), the term “servant leadership”, initially coined by Greenleaf in 1977, who discussed the need for a leadership model that identifies serving others as a priority, was brought into focus by the work of Spears in 2002. Spears’ work built on Greenleaf’s original concept and produced ten characteristics of the servant-leader. These include listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualisation, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people and building community. From a South African perspective, Geldenhuys and Veldsman (2010) link servant leadership to Afrocentric leadership, which is a contrasting leadership paradigm to Western leadership. It is inherent in African culture and functions on the basis of the community concept of management of Ubuntu which means “I am because we are” (Nkomo, 2011). As with servant leadership, teamwork, inclusive participation and the focus on the collective brotherhood of humankind makes it distinctly different from the individualistic, competitive Western leadership perspective (Geldenhuys & Veldsman, 2010).

Yukl (2010) asserts that the potential consequences of servant leadership may not be all beneficial for the organisation because it prioritises the welfare of followers, which may create an incompatibility between organisational needs and members’ needs. He argues that further research is needed to determine how servant leadership affects followers and the conditions that determine if this type of leadership is likely to be effective. Avolio et al. (2009) contend that further research needs to examine how personal values of servant leaders differ from those of other leadership styles.

2.5.9.2 Authentic leadership

Authenticity is defined by what others see in an individual and as such can be controlled by that individual. This definition underpins what Goffee and Jones (2005) refer to as authentic leaders who remain focused on where they are going, but never lose sight of where they came from. George (2003) describes authentic leaders as having a genuine desire to serve others through their leadership, to lead with purpose, meaning and values, and who are dedicated to developing themselves because they know that becoming a leader takes a lifetime of personal growth. He identifies five dimensions of authentic leadership, namely understanding their purpose, practising solid values, leading with heart, establishing connected relationships and demonstrating self-discipline. Avolio et al. (2009) define authentic leadership as a pattern of transparent and ethical leader behaviour that

encourages openness in sharing information needed to make decisions while accepting followers' inputs. The four factors that cover this definition are balanced processing, internalised moral perspective, relational transparency and self-awareness. Balanced processing is about objectively analysing information before making a decision. Internalised moral perspective relates to being guided by internal moral standards that result in self-regulation. Relational transparency has to do with presenting one's authentic self through openly sharing information and feelings as appropriate for situations. Self-awareness refers to the demonstrated understanding of one's strengths and weaknesses, and the way one makes sense of the world.

Yukl (2010) sees authentic leadership as including positive leader values, leader self-awareness and a trusting relationship with followers. He sees the theory as attempting to integrate earlier theories about effective leadership with concerns for ethical leadership. Wulffers (2016) indicates that the degree of authenticity perceived by followers is dependent on what they observe in the leader's behaviour and has an impact on the leader-follower relationship in terms of trust, transparency, predictability and integrity. Research on authentic leadership is in the early stages and progressing. According to Avolio et al. (2009), further work is required to determine whether it represents a base for good leadership, regardless of its form. There has been a call for field research to determine the transformative nature of developing this kind of leadership (Wulffers, 2016). Yukl (2010) highlights a few limitations of the theory. These include the differences in the definition of authentic leadership that needs to be resolved, and the importance of self-awareness, which is central to authentic leadership being clarified in terms of how to define and measure it.

2.5.9.3 Spiritual leadership

Spiritual leadership is another variation of ethical leadership that describes how leaders can enhance the intrinsic motivation of followers by creating conditions that increase their sense of spiritual meaning in the work (Veldsman, 2015; Wheatley, 2005; Yukl, 2010). According to Verwey et al. (2012), spiritual leadership came to the fore with specific focus and emphasis on service orientation and collaboration. Earlier leadership theories had not approached spiritual leadership because of its religious connotations. The 21st century sees spirituality as transcending religion and being about calling, purpose and living with meaning, even in the workplace. Spiritual intelligence is about drawing from multiple ways of knowing and integrating the inner life of mind and spirit with the outer life of work in the world (Verwey et al., 2016) – hence the shift in focus to this type of leadership. Research is still in the early stages in terms of conceptualising and measuring spirituality in the workplace as a construct. Part of the challenge is attempting to define spirituality without tying it to one particular

religion or philosophical base (Avolio et al., 2009). Whereas traditional leadership theories are rooted in a mechanistic mindset, the spiritual leadership paradigm operates from a positive values system aimed at creating meaning and purpose in work for others and promoting good corporate governance (Law, 2016).

2.5.9.4 Responsible leadership

Another variation of ethical leadership that has emerged recently is responsible leadership. Pless and Maak (2011) define it as a relational and ethical phenomenon, which occurs in social processes of interaction with those who affect or are affected by the leadership relationship. It is a multilevel response to deficiencies in existing leadership frameworks and theories, to high-profile scandals on individual, organisational and systemic levels, and, to new and emerging social, ethical and environmental challenges in an increasingly connected world (Pless & Maak, 2011). In their exploration of constructs and leadership theories that are relevant to responsible leadership, specifically those that are value centred such as ethical, servant, authentic and transformational leadership, Pless and Maak (2011) found a resulting differentiation. Responsible leadership includes the social and natural environment as an important unit of analysis; links leadership to the outcomes of sustainable value creation or social change; and defines followers in a broad sense as stakeholders within and outside the organisation.

Contributions to this theory of leadership include Freeman and Auster's (2011) work on conceptualising authenticity and personal values in relation to responsible leadership. Cameron (2011) equates responsible leadership with accountability, dependability, authority and empowerment, referring specifically to virtuous leadership. In their study on the conceptual link between responsible and transformational leadership, Groves and LaRocca (2011) examined how transformational leadership could advance responsible leadership through leader values, leadership behaviour and leader-follower value congruence. Research on this leadership theory is in its infancy. Some work has been done on the development of an instrument measuring responsible leadership (Voegtlin, 2011), considerations have been put forward on defining the concept (Waldman, 2011) and Maritz, Pretorius, and Plant (2011) explored the interface between responsible leadership and strategy-making efforts. Responsible leadership is about navigating through complexity in an ethical manner that occurs through social interaction that gives both purpose and direction to such leadership (Schulschenk, 2016).

Ethical leadership appears to be at the forefront of effective leadership in the 21st century. Extensive research is still required to fully define it and to measure its effectiveness. It appears to meet the need for leadership in the 21st century to work with a more complex

organisational terrain, where the focus is not only on generating profit, but also on fostering employee well-being and social responsibility (Law, 2016; Veldsman, 2015).

2.5.10 Cross-cultural leadership

Interest in the role of leadership across cultural contexts has grown as a result of globalisation in the 21st century. In the South African context, for example, many organisations have a strategic imperative to expand into the rest of Africa or have merged with international organisations. The shift towards globalisation saw South African organisations suddenly being thrust into the international competitive arena and this global context presented a borderless, boundary-free world (Denton & Vloeberghs, 2003). The impact has been that leaders are now exposed to leading across different cultures and managing the diversity this brings into the workplace.

From a global leadership perspective, Steers et al. (2012) argue that much of what has been studied on leadership proposes a particular leadership model that has been constructed on the basis of primarily Western beliefs, values and cultures, offering this model to the world as a universally accepted strategy for managerial and organisational effectiveness. They state that the approach to studying leadership is from the following three perspectives: (1) the universal approach, which focuses on leader as leader, where the belief is that leadership traits and processes are relatively constant across cultures; (2) the normative approach, which views the leader as global manager, where effective global managers are characterised by certain enduring personal skills and abilities; and (3) the contingency approach, which focuses on the leader as local manager, where leadership is a culturally embedded process and the characteristics of success will vary from situation to situation. Steers et al. (2012) state further that while these approaches have added value to the attempt to understand leadership in a global context, there are two issues that require focus to advance this understanding. Firstly, leadership is a cultural construct that is embedded in the diverse cultures where it is exercised and changed accordingly. Secondly, expectations relating to successful leadership can vary considerably across cultures. Research in a South African context has shown a duality of leadership in terms of Afrocentric and Eurocentric models of leadership in relation to the two statements above (Booyesen, 2007a). Findings confirmed that in South Africa there appears to be both an individualistic and a communalistic orientation, depending on the racial composition of work groups (Booyesen, 2001).

With such challenges in mind, there is a greater call for research focusing specifically on leadership in a global context (Dinh et al.; 2014; Veldsman & Johnson, 2016). One such study was by Caligiuri and Tarique (2012). They found a combined effect of personality

characteristics and cross-cultural experiences as predictors of dynamic cross-cultural competencies such as tolerance of ambiguity, cultural flexibility and reduced ethnocentrism. Their contribution adds weight to the international experience gained outside of traditional organisational settings in the development of global leadership.

Another contribution is Youssef and Luthans' (2012, p. 541) study that proposes a positive approach to global leadership, which they define as "the systematic and integrated manifestation of leadership traits, processes, intentional behaviours and performance outcomes that are elevating, exceptional and affirmatory of strengths, capabilities and developmental potential of leaders, their followers and their organisations over time and across cultures". They identify three challenges in the global context that this approach could address, namely distance, cultural differences and cross-cultural barriers. They reviewed emerging leadership theories and found that ethical leadership theories such as authentic and spiritual leadership offer valuable insights into conceptualising positive global leadership.

Project GLOBE (Global Leadership and Organisational Behavioural Effectiveness) conducted in 2004 was a multinational study of culture and leadership aimed at developing both organisational and societal cultural dimensions and examining the beliefs different cultures hold about effective leadership (Avolio et al. 2009; Steers et al. 2012). While the research determined that certain implicit leadership theories such as charismatic or transformational leadership and team orientation have universal endorsement, its principal finding was that to a large degree the qualities of effective leaders are culturally contingent. Booyesen (2016) emphasises that leading effectively in multicultural organisations requires the following: leaders need to understand how culture impacts on their taking up the leadership role; they must cultivate a global mindset to leverage cultural differences; and they must work towards creating inclusive organisation cultures. With the continuing globalisation of the new world of work, it is evident that further research is warranted to determine what constitutes effective global leadership and how today's leadership could develop the necessary skills, attributes and abilities.

2.5.11 Complexity leadership

There has been a growing sense of tension that leadership models that were designed for the past century do not capture the leadership dynamic of organisations' operating in today's knowledge-driven economy (Avolio et al., 2009). According to Paruk (2016), the complexity and nature of change has become so vast that followers turn to leaders as a stabilising force and source of direction in enabling them to adapt. He emphasises the crucial role leadership plays in understanding and contextualising the dynamics underpinning such complexity,

shielding the organisation from the negative impact of such complexity, while concurrently leading the change process required to enhance organisational efficiency and efficacy.

From a complexity theory perspective, effective leadership is about learning to capitalise on interactive dynamics (Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2001). This implies that there needs to be a shift in leadership from controlling for outcomes to promoting the desired outcomes by fostering innovation in this globalised, unstable era (Elkington & Booyesen, 2015). Marion and Uhl-Bien (2001) define complex leadership by highlighting the elements of activity that differentiate this type of leadership from past industrial era models. The first element is fostering network construction. This refers to the leader's ability to manage and develop networks that provide the structure within which innovation can emerge. Secondly, leaders catalyse bottom-up network construction. They indirectly foster this type of network construction through delegation and providing followers with encouragement or resources. Thirdly, such leaders become leadership "tags". They provide a philosophy that binds people together. Fourthly, they drop seeds of emergence, which they achieve by encouraging others to try new things and evaluate what emerges. This implies that they create organised disorder in which dynamic things can happen. Lastly, complex leaders think systematically, looking at the scenario holistically and identifying broader patterns of events.

Marion and Uhl-Bien (2001) indicate strong links between complexity and transformational leadership, which speaks to a facilitating rather than controlling leadership style. They (2001, p. 409) refocus transformational theory to "the analysis of the relationship between direct transformational environments and fitness and role of leadership in catalysing as opposed to creating such environments". They also indicate an obvious link to charismatic leadership, emphasising the contribution complexity theory could make to understanding how charismatic leaders emerge or the conditions under which charisma is fostered. A significant conclusion highlighted is that leaders are part of the dynamic rather than being the dynamic itself.

Applying the concepts of complexity theory to the study of leadership, Uhl-Bien et al. (2007) derived a framework that depicts leadership as an interactive system of dynamic, unpredictable agents that interact with each other in complex feedback networks, which can then produce adaptive outcomes such as knowledge dissemination, learning, innovation and further adaptation to change. Their framework envisions three leadership functions, namely administrative, adaptive and enabling leadership. Administrative leadership refers to the actions of individuals or groups in formal managerial roles who plan and coordinate activities to accomplish organisationally prescribed outcomes efficiently and effectively. Adaptive leadership is about adaptive, creative and learning actions that emerge from interaction

within a social system such as an organisation. Enabling leadership works to catalyse the conditions in which adaptive leadership can thrive and to manage the interplay between the organisation's bureaucratic (administrative) and emergent (adaptive) functions.

Uhl-Bien et al. (2007) refer to this interplay as entanglement, which describes the dynamic relationship between the formal, top-down, administrative forces and the informal, complexly adaptive emergent forces of social systems. They (2007) emphasise that, in formal organisations, one cannot disentangle the bureaucratic forces from the complex emergent forces. Both exist and can either help or hinder one another. This is where enabling leadership comes in to manage the entanglement by (1) creating appropriate organisational conditions to foster adaptive leadership in places where innovation and adaptability are needed; and (2) facilitating the flow of knowledge and creativity from adaptive structures into administrative structures.

Horth and Palus (2003) refer to creative leadership which can be used to deal with complex challenges. They identified six competencies which include paying attention, personalising, imaging, serious play, collaborative inquiry and crafting. Paying attention is the disciplined art of taking time to observe, while temporarily suspending the perceptual shortcut of already knowing what one sees. Personalising is about tapping into one's own unique life experience to provide insight into and perspective on shared challenges. Imaging is about using images to make sense of data and communicate effectively. Serious play is about learning about the complexities of an issue through exploration, experimentation, rule bending and limitation testing. Collaborative inquiry is the ability to sustain productive dialogue in addressing complex issues within and across community boundaries. Crafting is about skilfully synthesising issues, objects, events and actions into integrated, meaningful wholes. These competencies appear to be more relevant to art than to science, but Horth and Palus (2003) argue that bringing these competencies into the workplace could address some of the leadership challenges of the 21st century. According to them, the developmental challenge for leaders would be to find effective ways of applying these competencies in the work context.

Avolio et al. (2009) argue that the complexity leadership field requires further substantive research to advance it beyond conceptual phase. Yukl (2010) supports this by stating that research is needed to learn how interactions and relationships change over time and how historical and contextual factors affect these processes. He (2010) suggests that research using intensive, longitudinal studies that include qualitative descriptions of the relevant processes and relationships might be more suitable.

2.5.12 Collaborative leadership

De Meyer (2010) identifies four characteristics of collaborative leadership, namely collaboration, listening, influencing and adaptation. Collaboration implies co-acting with other people in order to succeed in implementing change. De Meyer (2010) posits that effective leaders in this context are able to operate in these networks and become drivers of such networks. Listening is about mastering the art of responding quickly to the needs and uncertainties of others through the enhanced ability to listen attentively. Influencing from an evidence base is about being able to influence and convince others without resorting to manipulation. Adaptation refers to the flexibility and rapid responsiveness to changing circumstances. De Meyer (2010) emphasises that collaborative leadership should not be considered an all-encompassing ideal approach to leadership. It should be viewed as an approach that could be appropriate in some instances, but not all. He warns of the so-called "dark side" of such a leadership approach. There is the possibility that listening could result in procrastination, influence may become manipulation and flexible adaptation may come at the expense of thoroughness.

According to Hurley (2011), collaborative leaders build trust, align diverse interests, share power and sustain high-quality lateral cooperation with their peers, while facing intense pressure for performance. He states that the key dimensions of collaborative leadership are as follows: (1) leadership from the inside out, which refers to the importance of self-leadership in the midst of the focus on collective innovation and accomplishment; (2) authentic relationships that are established through openness and engagement, driven by mutual trust; and (3) commitment to the whole, which is the result of a shared purpose, mutual accountability and coresponsibility. Hurley (2011) calls for a shift from ego system to eco system, which requires a shift in leadership consciousness, together with a complementary set of leadership skills through which collaborative leaders can do their work. He highlights four core competencies required for collaborative leadership. These include self-leadership, relational intelligence, team orchestration and networking. Raelin (2016) presents a leadership-as-practice view of collaborative leadership that challenges the more traditional views of leadership because it does not rely on the attributes of individual leaders or focus on the dyadic leader-follower relationship. Instead, the focus is on the inherent collective action that emerges from mutual, discursive, evolving patterns in the moment and over time among those engaged in the practice of shared or distributed leadership (Raelin, 2016).

2.6 LEADERSHIP THEORY INTEGRATION

Despite a hundred years of research that has accumulated in studying leadership, it still remains a fairly unformed phenomenon, as highlighted below (adapted from Bennis, 2007).

The concept of leadership eludes us – it constantly turns up in another form to taunt us again with its slipperiness and complexity. So we have invented an endless proliferation of models, concepts, terms and measurements to deal with it and still it is not sufficiently defined or operationalised.

The proliferated enormity of the field of leadership research has grown since the new millennium and will continue to do so in the coming decades as evidenced by the identification of a total of 66 different leadership theory domains and a wide variety of methodological approaches (Dinh et al., 2014). Given this huge amount of leadership research, the researcher highlighted early fundamental leadership theories in which there remains established interest and relevance. A window period for the 21st century (the last 17 years) was then explored to determine the requirements and patterns that have emerged in leadership research in this era. This window of review is by no means exhaustive as it presents a frame in time about a phenomenon that continues to evolve at a rapid pace in response to the 21st century landscape.

A significant shift has taken place in approaching the study of leadership over the 21st century. Early research focused on leadership as being dichotomous in nature, differentiating between leaders and non-leaders; effective versus ineffective leaders; good and bad leaders; and leader as an entity that controls and influences others to achieve goals (Avolio, 2007; Kaiser et al., 2008; Nohria & Khurana, 2010). As the world evolves and increases in complexity, organisations need to respond to this changing landscape in order to remain sustainable, and leadership, in turn, has to evolve to promote this sustainability (Bennis, 2007; Veldsman & Johnson, 2016).

2.6.1 Relevant aspects of early leadership theories

While early research focused on identifying the traits critical for leadership (who leaders are), a shift in focus occurred towards behavioural theories focused on task and people orientation (what leaders do). From here, the research shifted focus to situation-specific leadership theories, where the premise was that different contexts may call for leaders to draw from their repertoire of traits and behavioural styles, adapting these to what is required in the specific situation (when leaders do what) (Glynn & DeJordy, 2010).

Transformational and charismatic leadership continues to feature strongly in research on the phenomenon. It may be that the four characteristics, namely charisma, inspiration, intellectual stimulation and individualised consideration, which were identified in the 1990s, are more relevant in today's era than they were in earlier years (Bass, 1996; Robbins, 1998).

According to Dinh et al. (2014), established leadership theories that continue to remain relevant include the following: neo-charismatic leadership (charismatic and transformational leadership theories); leadership and information processing (leader-follower cognition and implicit leadership theory); and social exchange theories (leader-member exchange and relational leadership). While contingency and behavioural research interest has waned, trait-based leadership theory continues to feature in an integrated approach with other leadership theories (Dinh et al., 2014).

2.6.2 21st century leadership theories

The 21st century's changing landscape calls for a more holistic, collaborative outlook on leadership and places the emphasis on the following: relationships, context and transformation (Kets de Vries, 2010). The focus has shifted to a more holistic view of leadership, away from leader-as-entity to leadership as a socially constructed process, with more emphasis being placed on how leadership is co-created in the workplace (Crevani & Endrissat, 2016; Hogg, 2001; Klein, Rice, & Schermer, 2009; Marchiando et al., 2015; Pinnow, 2011). Regarding relationships, leaders need to find the balance between task and relationship management in order to mobilise people successfully (Gronn, 2002; Hurley, 2011; Kets de Vries, 2013). Researchers are beginning to look at leadership through a different lens, and the emerging school of thought identifies two common patterns (Higgs, 2003). Firstly, the focus of study has shifted to what leaders actually do. Secondly, the determinant of effectiveness includes the leader's impact on followers and their subsequent ability to perform.

Deontic theories (philosophical logic attempting to capture the essential features of the concept of leadership) and altruistic theories (the practice of concern for the welfare of others) have come to the fore quite significantly in the study of leadership for the 21st century (Dinh et al., 2014). Leadership theories comprising these two perspectives include the following: authentic leadership (Avolio et al., 2009; Goffee & Jones, 2005; Wulffers, 2016; Yukl, 2010); spiritual leadership (Law, 2016; Wheatley, 2005); ethical leadership (Van Vuuren, 2016); servant leadership (Verwey et al., 2012); and responsible leadership (Cameron, 2011; Freeman & Auster, 2011; Pless & Maak, 2011; Schulschenk, 2016).

Identity-based perspectives of leadership have also gained momentum, where followers identify strongly with prototypical leaders and this becomes a basis for leadership perceptions (Blomme et al., 2015; Dinh, 2014; Hogg, 2001). Implicit theories of leadership also feature, where followers' implicit assumptions of good leadership influence how they interpret the leader's behaviour and their consequent authorisation of the said leader as competent and effective (Junker & Van Dick, 2014). Individuals who assume the role of leadership have their own prototypes of what a leader should do, and this influences how they respond in certain situations (Gentry, Booyesen, Hannum, & Weber, 2010). From a leadership identity construction perspective, leaders use their personal experiences with their own leaders to develop these leadership prototypes that either boost or hinder their motivation to assume the role of leadership (Guillen, Mayo, & Korotov, 2015). Marchiondo et al. (2015) emphasise the relational nature of leadership as a construct. They highlight the process by which individuals come to be seen as a leader through the mutual influence that unfolds over time and situations as leadership is claimed (by leaders) or granted (by followers). This process influences leadership perceptions relating to competence and decision making. Leaders' responses are influenced by their social identity and group membership. For example, they act or respond towards conflict in the workplace on the basis of how strongly they identify with the social group they are connected with and to what extent they are accepted or authorised by the group (Gentry et al., 2010).

According to Yukl (2010), future research needs to make a contribution to the field of leadership in terms of explaining or predicting the effects of leaders on individuals, groups and organisations, instead of merely proposing relationships or the causal effects of leadership. Avolio et al. (2009) argue that quantitative strategies for studying leadership have been predominant over the years, but recent years have seen increasing attention being focused on qualitative or integrated mixed-method strategies to studying the phenomenon. The emphasis has been on the following: a shift in focus to more positive forms of leadership being integrated into literature; the follower becoming an integral part of the leadership dynamic system; growing interest in what genuinely develops leadership; distributed leadership becoming more relevant; and leadership being viewed as a complex and emergent dynamic in organisations.

2.6.3 Leadership types and styles

The focus on context reiterates the importance of adaptability of leadership styles to changing variables (Nye Jr., 2010). Leadership is a social relationship that requires the exercising of power to mobilise others to achieve the shared objectives of the organisation (Nye Jr., 2010). This implies that followers empower leaders and leaders empower followers.

Prior contingency theory work on leadership created the assumption that one type of leadership fits all situations, but Lorsch (2010) argues that effective leadership is contingent on the relationship between leaders and followers. Leaders must strive to understand what followers want and are experiencing. Followers, however, must understand the leader's goals and how they could contribute to the achievement thereof (Lorsch, 2010). This speaks to a collaborative leadership style that may be appropriate in some situations (De Meyer, 2010; Hurley, 2011). Goleman's (2000) leadership styles (coercive, authoritative, affiliative, democratic, pacesetter and coaching) as they relate to emotional intelligence are also relevant to the adaptability of leadership to changing variables. From a context perspective, leaders require emotional intelligence to enable them to determine which style would be best suited to a given situation.

Given that transactional and transformational leadership feature strongly in this era, the changing world requires a further distinction between these two styles of leadership. The former can be viewed as being equivalent to managing the status quo of organisational life, while the latter is more transcendental in nature, implying the ability to define oneself to others in a way that clarifies and expands their vision of the future (Covey, 2004). Glynn and DeJordy (2010) differentiate between the two when they refer to the "plumbing" and "poetry" of leadership. Transactional leadership deals with the "plumbing" of ensuring the organisation runs smoothly, while transformational leadership tends to work on the transformational aspect of developing the organisation for future sustainability. The former refers to what leaders do to be effective, while the latter is about utilising inspiration and values to create meaning and purpose beyond the work at hand. The work of Shokane, Stanz, and Slabbert (2004) explored the nature of transactional, transformational and non-leadership dimensions in the South African context and confirmed the need for organisations to integrate these leadership dimensions because the two styles complement each other. Parker and Veldsman (2010) highlight that becoming world-class organisations requires transformational, distributed leadership.

Because leadership is embedded in context (Osborn et al., 2002; Veldsman & Johnson, 2016; Vroom & Jago, 2007), a versatile style of leadership is required that enables the leader to continually adjust his or her behaviour, applying the right approach to the right degree in the context at hand (Kaplan & Kaiser, 2003). Complexity leadership speaks to a facilitating rather than controlling leadership style in capitalising on the interactive dynamics that emerge in this knowledge-driven economy (Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2001).

2.6.4 Leadership attributes and competencies

Extensive research conducted by Kouzes and Posner (2007) across different countries over a constant period of time has indicated four leadership attributes. A leader must be honest, forward looking, inspiring and competent. They have weaved these four themes into five practices of exemplary leadership. These include model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act and encourage the heart. Credibility is the foundation that puts it all together. There are definite links between these five practices of exemplary leadership and transformational charismatic leadership. Zupan (2010) supports this view that leaders can accomplish fundamental change through such practices. In today's complex, fast-paced world of work, such a view of leadership could enable leaders to remain grounded, while enabling those who follow to respond to change in a sustainable manner (Paruk, 2016).

Kets de Vries (2001) highlights seven crucial competencies for leadership effectiveness, including the following: surgency (referring to characteristics of assertiveness, achievement and action orientation), sociability, receptivity, agreeableness, dependability, analytical intelligence and emotional intelligence.

In his extensive study of leadership, Bennis (2007) identified six competencies of exemplary leadership in this era. These include creating a sense of mission, motivating others to join this mission, creating an adaptive social architecture for those who follow, generating trust and optimism, developing others and getting results.

Transformational skills are crucial to introduce change and mobilise followers in this era, and include creating a shared vision, aligning people to that vision and creating a motivating climate (Handford & Coetsee, 2003).

In the 21st century, emphasis is placed on context-fit leadership that is underpinned by the following capabilities: the ability to perform competently relative to contextual demands; intelligence in engaging the context; maturity in engaging consistently with and uplifting self and others; ethical leadership where leaders do the right thing at the right time in the right place; and authenticity in nurturing others to experience meaningful work (Veldsman & Johnson, 2016). The leader's role is to set the context for others to be successful by responding flexibly to emerging situations in the construction of meaning for self and others (Chatman & Kennedy, 2010).

2.6.5 Conceptual framework of leadership

There is a call for an integrated conceptual framework of leadership, where different approaches are viewed as part of a larger network of interacting variables that are meaningfully interrelated (Yukl, 2010). To this end, a number of leadership elements need to be considered for such a framework.

Haslam and Reicher (2014) reiterate that leadership is a process not a property – in other words, it is not something one has, but rather something one does. They further posit that leadership involves others, which makes it incumbent on leaders to win others over in doing what is asked of them rather than being coerced into compliance.

There is a shift from managing the complexity of change to becoming an effective change leader – one who has the ability to involve people in change, making it meaningful for them, encouraging innovation and building a flexible, adaptable organisational culture for continuous learning (Paruk, 2016).

According to Dinh et al. (2014), leaders are embedded in organisational systems that are continually evolving, which creates a complex picture of how individuals think, feel and behave in response to this changing landscape. The stability found in the dominant leader-centric approach to leadership has been challenged, creating the opportunity to view and understand leadership in a less traditional manner (Dinh et al., 2014).

In relation to the above, practice-centred approaches to leadership are coming to the fore from a shared leadership perspective (Raelin, 2016). Leadership-as-practice emphasises the importance of practices and not the practitioner (leader), where leadership is seen to be co-created and the work of leadership takes the form of patterns of action and interaction that have been informed by everyday activity (Crevani & Endrissat, 2016). These routinised patterns represent a form of social knowledge that only members of the organisation recognise and understand, creating collective knowledge (Denis, Langley, & Rouleau, 2005). Leadership emerges from these day-to-day individual and collective leadership actions that influence the shape and direction of the organisational context (Woods, 2016). There is a similarity to the relational leadership perspective (Uhl-Bien, 2006), in that both approaches are aimed at producing less individualistic and more processual accounts of leadership (Crevani & Endrissat, 2016).

The social context in which leadership takes place and the leader's effect on the group or organisation as a whole plays a vital role in determining the contextual features within which the phenomenon unfolds (Dinh et al., 2014). Leadership occurs at multiple levels, including

the individual, dyadic, group and organisational level in this changing social context. Leadership is no longer based on an individual entity that has influence over others, but has evolved into a socially constructed process (Hogg, 2001) between the leader and significant others, where leadership is distributed and shared for the accomplishment of a common goal (De Meyer, 2010; Raelin, 2016).

There is a shift in focus from leaders controlling for desired outcomes to leaders enabling desired outcomes in dealing with the complexity organisations are faced with (Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2001). Leadership can no longer be viewed as an influential act of an individual or individuals, but should rather be seen as being “embedded in a complex interplay of numerous interacting forces” (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007, p. 279). It is not a dynamic in and of itself, but forms part of organisational dynamics as they play out in this knowledge economy. It is about the leaders’ ability to collaborate, motivate and manage networks across cultural boundaries while responding to the complexities they are faced with in today’s world of work (Avolio et al., 2009; Booysen, 2016; De Meyer, 2010; Fletcher, 2004; Gordon, 2002; Gronn, 2002; Kets de Vries, 2001, 2010; Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2001; Uhl-Bien, 2007).

In conclusion, the review of leadership research over the last 17 years highlights the evolution of theories and approaches in response to the changing landscape of the 21st century, creating a demand for a multidisciplinary approach to studying the phenomenon. Against this backdrop, an integrated view follows describing the demands this era places on leadership.

2.6.6 Demands of the 21st century on leadership

The 21st century presents leaders with the challenge of leading others through constant chaos and instability, while attempting to remain effective and relevant (Ilipinar et al., 2011; Lončar, 2005; Youssef & Luthans, 2012). Leadership is faced with engaging the unknown, the uncomfortable and the unprecedented and it is being viewed as a complex, emergent dynamic in organisations (Holman, 2010). A global, cross-cultural approach to leadership is becoming more significant as organisations become interconnected to remain competitive and sustainable (Booyesen, 2016; Steers et al., 2012).

The context of change has seen a shift of power and control in organisations. Researchers are posing questions about where the power actually lies and which role players have a voice. The process of leadership is value laden. Effectiveness is dependent on the means the leader uses in trying to achieve goals (Bennis, 2007; Robbins & Judge, 2012).

While organisations go through change, leaders are faced with their own personal transition. In the midst of their own transition they are expected to support teams, foster collaboration and more participative processes and introduce new ways of thinking (Wheatley, 2005). In this era of increasing uncertainty, new organisational dynamics are emerging that affect employees, leaders and core operating functions, as highlighted below (Wheatley, 2005).

- Employees experience increased fear, which results in withdrawal, self-preservation, defensiveness and a reactive response to changes.
- Leaders, in turn, experience pressure from unreasonable demands of those they lead, as people look to be saved.
- Core business functions such as planning, forecasting, budgeting, staffing and development no longer yield results in restoring stability to the organisation.

New organisational capabilities are required to counter the negative organisational dynamics stimulated by uncertainty (Wheatley, 2005). These include the following: fostering a clear organisational identity; focusing people on the bigger picture; communicating quickly and honestly; preparing for the unknown; keeping meaning at the forefront; using rituals and symbols to express people's experiences; and paying attention to individuals. These capabilities need to first be developed by leaders in order for them to build the capability from a collective perspective.

The leader-follower relationship transcends the mere exchange of goods and services for a salary or a wage, which is indicative of industrial age thinking. There has been a shift from the traditional psychological contract to the paradox of employability where organisations afford employees opportunities, but employees have to take responsibility for their own careers (Kets de Vries, 2001). The knowledge era ignited a classification of work that sees individuals wanting to derive meaning from what they do (Law, 2016). This classification of work has an impact on the nature of the leader-follower relationship in that trust and collaboration become critical in the achievement of goals (Capelli & Keller, 2013).

The current world of work requires leadership to apply a markedly different approach to what worked in the past in assuming the role of influencing others to get things done (Bennis, 2007; Bennis & Sample, 2015). As the world becomes more complex, leaders have to respond to this complexity with agility and systemic thinking, while still attempting to remain effective through authentic relationship building, all of which places tremendous pressure on leaders in taking up the role effectively (Veldsman & Johnson, 2016). In this globalised world, leadership is not confined to top positions. Instead, top leaders need to rely on many

others to exercise the responsibilities of leadership and this they do by facilitating connections rather than exercise command (Kanter, 2010).

From a South African perspective, a major paradigm shift is taking place that is characterised by re-engineered and restructured organisations that are more flexible. They have a broader span of control, increased empowerment of employees, the creation of learning organisations that are responsive and adaptive and democratised workplaces, as South African businesses become more aware of the need for corporate governance to ensure global competitiveness (Denton & Vloeberghs, 2003).

These organisational demands create pressure that is experienced at both a conscious and unconscious level and may manifest in a leader's behaviour in various ways. It is imperative to understand what is happening above and below the surface in terms of the experience of being a leader (Kets de Vries, Florent-Treacy, & Korotiv, 2013). In the co-creation of leadership, pressure from the organisation and expectations of self and others could result in role anxiety and role conflict as leaders attempt to meet the demands placed upon them (Cilliers & Terblanche, 2010; De Klerk, 2012). The systems psychodynamic perspective provides a lens through which to view this experience accordingly. This perspective is explored in chapter 3 in terms of its theoretical foundations and its consequent perspective of the leadership role.

2.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The purpose of this chapter was to conceptualise the 21st century world of work, the characteristics of organisations that exist in this world of work and the phenomenon of leadership as it has evolved during this era. A description was provided of 21st century organisations as this created the leadership setting in this era. A definition of leadership was formulated for the study after various definitions of the phenomenon from prior studies had been explored. A brief outline of early fundamental theories underpinning leadership research then followed. This laid the foundation for an in-depth review of leadership theories over the last 17 years. The chapter concluded with an integrated view highlighting the emerging demands of the 21st century on leadership and the need to understand the leadership experience at both a conscious and unconscious level. The systems psychodynamic perspective provides a lens through which leadership can be studied in this way and will be discussed in chapter 3.

CHAPTER 3: THE SYSTEMS PSYCHODYNAMIC PERSPECTIVE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to conceptualise the systems psychodynamic perspective in the context of this study. Anxiety, as a concept, is discussed in terms of it being the basis from which human experience is shaped and developed. This is explored in conjunction with the related defence mechanisms that manifest in human behaviour. A discussion of basic assumption theory then follows, which informs the functioning of groups. Attachment theory and transactional analysis are explained as they play a significant role in the leader-follower relationship. The chapter concludes with a summary that sets the scene for the next chapter, which provides an analysis of the leadership role from this perspective.

3.2 HISTORY AND ORIGINS

The Tavistock Institute of Human Relations was set up in London in 1946 by a group of psychoanalysts from the Tavistock Clinic, and social scientists from other institutions. During the 1950s and 1960s, a distinctive approach to the understanding of life in organisations was developed by members of this Institute, including Trist, Miller and Rice (Fraher, 2004; Stacey, 2011).

The systems psychodynamics perspective was developed at the Tavistock Institute on the basis of its annual international group relations training events, over a period of 60 years (Cilliers & Terblanche, 2010; Dimitrov, 2008; Fraher, 2004). These training events were based on Bion's foundational theories of group relations, which initially emerged from his creation of a therapeutic community to enable soldiers to re-engage in their roles in the war, and continued to develop in his further work in therapeutic groups from a social psychiatry perspective (Hayden & Molenkamp, 2004).

In 1957, Rice was authorised by the Tavistock Institute to take over the leadership of what became the new experiential learning events that were held at the University of Leicester and became known as the Leicester Conference (Dimitrov, 2008). Rice (1975) was instrumental in the development of the learning model of the group relations conference. Together with a cadre of others, such as Trist, Mary Barker, Turquet, Gosling, Miller and Rioch, he expanded the application of group relations theories and practices by utilising psychoanalytic ideas in enriching the understanding of organisational processes (Colman & Bexton, 1975; Hayden & Molenkamp, 2004). Under Rice's directorship, two major changes occurred relating to leadership and authority and resulted in a shift in perspective in terms of exploring and understanding the patterns of group dynamics (pertaining to leadership and

authority) that emerged during these conferences (Rioch, 1975). This new way of thinking, learning and then applying knowledge became known as the Tavistock method and provided clients with a temporary, experiential learning environment away from the organisational distractions of the business world.

Systems psychodynamics is “a term used to refer to the collective psychological behaviour” (Neumann, 1999, p. 57) within and between groups and organisations. Although Gould et al. (2001, p. 1) observed that “the field of systems psychodynamics had its birth with the publication of Miller and Rice’s seminal volume *Systems of Organisation* (1967)”, Miller and Rice never explicitly used the term in their book (Fraher, 2004). According to Fraher (2004), the first mention of the term systems psychodynamics in print form was in 1993 in the Tavistock Institute’s 1992/93 review.

The systems psychodynamic framework functions on the basis that the observable and structural features of organisations continually interact with its members, creating patterns of individual and group processes (Gould et al., 2001). This view of organisations looks beyond the rational and economic view of work, seeing organisations as living systems that are both conscious and unconscious (Struwig & Cilliers, 2012), and are in interaction with their environments.

3.3 SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT

Systems psychodynamics is an interdisciplinary field that integrates psychoanalysis, object relations theory, group relations theory and open systems theory (Gould et al., 2001). The various theories that comprise this set of influences are discussed in the subsections below.

3.3.1 Psychoanalysis

The first element of influence is psychoanalysis. Freud’s theories of psychoanalysis explored the importance of the human unconscious (that part of our being that is hidden from rational thought, affect and interprets the conscious reality), which led to the building of a psychological theory around the concept (Dimitrov, 2008; Freud, 1955, 1949; Kets de Vries & Engellau, 2004). He discovered that it is a source of motivation and an active mind’s way of hiding thoughts and desires from awareness (Gabriel & Carr, 2002). The human unconscious is made up of the id, ego and superego (Freud, 1955), which can be described as follows: (1) the id is where various urges, drives or instincts reside and operate entirely unconsciously; (2) the ego is responsible for engaging logic, memory and judgement in attempting to satisfy the id within the parameters set by external reality; and (3) the superego is concerned with obeying morality and social norms and is considered to be the conscience

of the mind (Freud, 1955; Gabriel & Carr, 2002). Rice thought of the ego as performing a leadership function for the individual, determining which way an individual will go, and how he or she will or will not behave (as cited in Rioch, 1975).

Although the unconscious is unknown to the individual, it retains a dynamic influence on one's life, one's development and the relationships that develop through an individual's life (Shapiro & Carr, 1991). From a social psychology perspective, psychoanalytic theory provides a means of studying live objects that are seen, experienced and recognised subjectively (Stapley, 2006). According to Kets de Vries (2006, p. 9), "a great deal of mental life – thoughts, feelings and motives – lies outside of conscious awareness", but affects conscious reality.

Stapley (2006) differentiates between conscience and attitude. He (2006, p. 26) defines attitude as "relatively lasting organisation of feelings, beliefs, and behaviour tendencies directed towards specific person, groups, ideas or objects", and states that conscience will undoubtedly affect attitude. He also refers to the unconscious, conscious and subconscious. While the unconscious is that part which one is completely unaware of, the conscious is the part which one is aware of in one's everyday living. The subconscious is also what an individual is unaware of, but according to Stapley (2006), through careful examination of one's thoughts, feelings and motives, the content of the subconscious can become accessible. Another element he believes also comes into play is that attitudes and beliefs often combine to form all-encompassing values that are normative standards by which human beings are influenced in their choice of actions and result in emotional involvement when something occurs contrary to one's values (Stapley, 2006). He also emphasises that the conscious mind develops slowly, and that according to psychoanalytic theory, the unconscious makes individuals interpret most of what happens in light of earlier experiences.

3.3.2 Object relations theory

Klein's (1985) object relations theory, which both built upon and departed from the work of Freud, made an essential contribution to the foundation of systems psychodynamics. Although her work focused primarily on children, Klein's theories were applied to adults and groups through the work of Wilfred Bion (Dimitrov, 2008; Fraher, 2004). Her work made a significant contribution in understanding the complex ways that early childhood connections to objects continue to influence individuals throughout adulthood (Fraher, 2004). In essence, the term object-relations, acknowledges that from birth, the infant has relations, most significantly to the mother (Klein, 1975, 1985; Motsoaledi, 2009) whom the infant views as part of self (Stapley, 2006). Both the capacity to love and the sense of persecution have deep roots in the infant's earliest mental processes (Klein, 1975). This experience continues

to develop into adulthood influencing future relationships. The infant's perception of the external world consists of two parts, namely the good part of the mother (good breast) that feeds and comforts it, and the bad part (bad breast) that denies it food and comfort (Klein, 1975). The infant copes with this distress by splitting its inner life into a loving part, which is projected onto the good part of the mother, and introjects back into itself, and in the same way, persecutory feelings like aggression are projected onto the bad part of the mother, introjecting that back into itself (Klein, 1988; Stacey, 2011).

The theory emphasises the importance of the individual's relations with actual (external) and fantasised (internal) objects (Klein, 1985). Czander (1993) reiterates the use of the term "object" rather than "person", because the object of relation is not necessarily always a person but could be an organisation, a group, an idea or even a symbol. He states that in this lies the main feature of object relations theory, which indicates the crucial contribution it makes to psychoanalytic theory of work and organisations. He also emphasises individuals to be object seeking in their response to the need to be attached, related or connected to other objects such as people, work and the organisation. Czander (1993) highlights the importance of Klein's conceptualisation of how individuals perceive, based on their internal state of anxieties in relation to the external reality facing them. According to him, in the work context, the organisation is an external reality that impacts on the internal state of individuals, as they attempt to master the internal conflicts, and their resulting anxieties.

Klein (1985) postulated that early childhood development comprises two distinct yet interrelated developmental positions that are flexible, fluid states. These positions are referred to as the paranoid-schizoid and the depressive positions, and are discussed below (Diamond & Allcorn, 2009; Fraher, 2004; Gustafson & Cooper, 1985; Hinshelwood, 1987; Klein, 1975, 1986, 1997; Klein, 2006; Stacey, 2011).

- *Paranoid-schizoid position.* This refers to the infant reconciling the conflicts between its perception of the satisfying mother and the withholding mother by splitting the mother into two separate objects. The infant then perceives one object to be nurturing and good, while it perceives the other to be frustrating and bad. Similarly, the infant learns to distance itself psychologically from its own unpleasant destructive feelings by projecting them onto something else. These destructive feelings or fantasies show up in everyday life as prejudices and unaccountable irritations. It is a persecutory form of anxiety and the earliest form of pain experienced from birth onwards. This mode of experience is characterised by efforts to manage and evacuate emotional pain that results from the anxiety created from loving and hating the same object (Diamond & Allcorn, 2009) and manifests as the fear of retaliation. As the individual matures, these

destructive feelings evolve into realistic appreciations of actual dangers in the world. This splitting of an object into good and bad becomes the basis for stereotypes later in life.

- *Depressive position.* As the infant grows and develops, it tries to reconcile this inner conflict by recognising the mother and significant others as whole objects containing both good and bad parts. Feelings of sadness, guilt and reparation are experienced by the infant for the harm it thinks it has caused, leading to a strong urge to repair what has been damaged or to restore life. It develops through life as the human struggle towards constructive efforts of love, devotion and duty. Klein (1986) considered it to be an integral part of normal development. According to Diamond and Allcorn (2009), the depressive mode of experience serves to contain emotions and differentiation of self and others. They (2009, p. 15) further state that “it provides for the reflective and empathic give and take that makes interpersonal relations productive, creative and synergistic”. It manifests as the fear of others’ total indifference in adult functioning.

Stapley (2006) postulates that the dominating feature of object relations is this social orientation, in other words, the impulse to form relationships. He also emphasises the need individuals have to make meaning, internalising knowledge and feelings in relation to stimuli from the external environment. This is how individuals make sense of and cope with the world around them. He acknowledges that Freud first discovered that the unconscious mind consists mainly of repressed sentiments that have their foundations in infancy. According to him, repression means the exclusion of painful and unpleasant material from consciousness. Past experiences have moved into unconsciousness, beneath the surface, from where they may affect behaviour without entering into consciousness.

Through the process of development, a child achieves an inner organisation of objects which may include people, ideas, events and values, making the mind a fairly organised place (Stapley, 2006). When some ideas conflict too much with other ideas, they become unacceptable to the consciousness, and are dealt with through defence mechanisms such as repression. According to Stapley (2006), conflict resolution occurs by the taking in of external objects, which then form internal mental images becoming part of one’s internal knowledge pool. Early introjections result in the creation of the conscience or the superego which serves the purpose of providing a means to know what to do and what not to do (Stapley, 2006). The outcome of this inner conflict in the mind is anxiety. This anxiety may not necessarily have a negative impact, but could also result in learning and growth. Klein (1985, 1997) made a crucial contribution to looking at the adult world from the perspective of its roots in infancy – that is, the mind, habits and views that have been built up from early

infantile phantasies and emotions through to complex and sophisticated adult manifestations.

3.3.3 Group relations theory

Hayden and Molenkamp (2004) define group relations, the third element in this set of influences, as the study of the dynamics of the group as a holistic system. According to Dimitrov (2008), contrary to traditional psychoanalysis, this field of study apply theories to the study of the group as a social system. He identifies the following three contributions that prove to be pivotal in the history of group relations:

- The first contribution was Le Bon's study of large, unorganised groups and later, McDougall's study of organised, task-oriented groups, which provided key observations about group behaviour by introducing the idea of studying the group as a whole.
- The second contribution was the work of Bion and others who experimented by shifting to an outsider within perspective, using self as an instrument in studying group behaviour.
- Lewin provided the third contribution through his introduction of the first experiential learning event, which led to the development of the group relations conference.

The contribution of Follet and Mayo (Fraher, 2004) was also recognised in emphasising organisations as complex interactive systems, reiterating the perspective that organisations are living systems that are both conscious and unconscious (Struwig & Cilliers, 2012). According to Stapley (2006), although interaction across individuals or groups is heavily influenced by individual processes and dynamics, there is an understanding that considers the group as an organism with a group mind. The group-as-a-whole perspective implies that members of the group are in continually interdependent relationships, where the group has a life of its own as a consequence of the fantasies and projections of its members (Hayden & Molenkamp, 2004). This requires that individual actions be studied as actions carried out on behalf of the group. Individual meaning-making processes result in a state of relatedness with others, culminating in mutual influence and collective thinking (Stapley, 2006).

Referring back to Klein's work (1955, 1975, 1985), infants develop dependence on the basis of their primary identification with the mother as object. This results in a maternal holding environment that influences an individual's life into adulthood, showing up in interaction with others in the group and organisational context. Being a member of a group will trigger unconscious feelings associated with early and highly potent emotional bonds, reminding individuals of that situation and influencing them to treat the group as if it were that maternal holding environment (Stapley, 2006). He refers to the group-as-a-whole perspective, where

members respond to the "group in the mind" as being similar to the "mother in the mind", providing a holding environment. He describes the group being viewed as a whole – as an organism or entity that possesses dynamics, structure and development independent of the members, who are reduced to individuals being part of the whole. Shapiro and Carr (1991) identify three basic structures of the holding environment, namely task, boundaries and role. These will be discussed in the next chapter, with specific focus on the leadership role as context.

3.3.4 Open systems theory

The fourth element in the systems psychodynamic set of influences is open systems theory. According to Dimitrov (2008), early theorists such as Hegel, Marx, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, to mention a few, laid an intellectual foundation that ignited the general inquiry into the nature of social systems. He states that refinements in the systems approach included developments in psychophysical systems, field theory or action research methods; the understanding of social systems as defences against anxiety; open systems thinking; and sociotechnical approaches.

Stapley (2006, p. 214) defines an open system as "an organised, unitary whole composed of two or more interdependent parts, components, or subsystems, and delineated by identifiable boundaries from its external environment".

The following open systems theory principles are highlighted (Astrachan, Flynn, Geller, & Harvey, 1975; Lofgren, 1975; Miller & Rice, 1975; Stacey, 2011):

- An organisation is an open system – a set of interconnected parts, in turn, interacting with other organisations and individuals outside it.
- Interconnections imply that a system imports energy and information from outside itself, transforms that energy and information in some way and then exports the transformed results back to other systems outside itself. The work done by the system is measurable by the difference between what is imported and ultimately exported, as this transformation process is aimed at achieving the organisation's primary task.
- A permeable boundary separates a system from its environment, but also links it to its environment, and this requires boundary management.
- Relationships across the boundary are always changing and the environment is always changing. The influx and out flux across this boundary must remain functional under pressure.
- The boundary region must exhibit an appropriate degree of both insulation and permeability if the system is to survive. It is the role of leadership to manage the

boundary region, and to regulate it so that the system is protected and changes adaptively.

Open systems theory examines the relationship between the organisation and its social, economic and political environment, taking into account the complexities of the environment, its changing nature and the consequent impact on the organisation (Morgan-Jones, 2010). According to Trist and Murray (1993) the term “sociopsychological” was coined to emphasise the influence of psychological forces on social systems. They posit that the premise of the sociopsychological perspective rests on two levels. First, there are socio-factors that influence reality in an organisation, such as the organisation’s structure, products and services, and its culture, policies and procedures. At the second level there are psychofactors that affect organisations such as the fears, anxieties, values, hopes and beliefs of the people that work in them. Another key concept that came to the fore is the sociotechnical perspective which is about optimising human elements and technological imperatives in organisations, without sacrificing one to the other (Fraher, 2004).

Bion (1961) identified the following three levels at which the social system is engaged: (1) the microsystem, which refers to the individual; (2) the mesosystem, which refers to the group, department or team; and (3) the macrosystem, which is the organisation (Koortzen & Cilliers, 2002). What occurs at each of the three levels has an impact or mirroring effect on the others.

3.4 ANXIETY AND DEFENCE MECHANISMS

Anxiety is now discussed in terms of the various types of anxiety that occur and the defence mechanisms that manifest in response to it. These defence mechanisms are described as they manifest at the following three levels: individual leadership behaviour, the social context of leadership and leadership as a system domain.

3.4.1 Anxiety

In the section under psychoanalysis, repression was explained as the process by which painful and unpleasant material is excluded from consciousness (Stapley, 2006). Anxiety is a state of mind created by unbearable thoughts and emotions that are dealt with by using repression as a coping mechanism. According to Stapley (2006), there are two stages of anxiety. First, there is the small, initial amount of anxiety that is referred to as signal anxiety that occurs at the initial perception of danger. It is a stimulus that activates the response of flight or fight. Actual anxiety is the second stage that kicks in when an individual has no means of adjusting in order to cope with the perceived danger, and the anxiety increases to

a certain threshold. This stage of anxiety is a force that becomes an increasingly regressed mental state where there is an increase in the use of fantasy and other irrational methods are adopted.

The various types of anxiety are now discussed.

Primitive anxiety can be subdivided into two types, namely persecutory and depressive anxiety (Czander, 1993; Klein, 1955):

- Persecutory anxiety is found in the paranoid-schizoid position that was discussed earlier. It is associated with the fear of annihilation, occurring when objects in the environment overwhelm and annihilate the ideal object and the self, triggering anxiety and conscious fears such as paranoia. The individual then makes use of a number of defences to manage these fears, such as introjection and projection, where the good and bad parts are split to keep the persecutory objects from damaging the idealised objects contained in the ego.
- Depressive anxiety is associated with fear that one's individual destructive impulses will destroy the loved and dependent object. The individual experiences guilt and mourning brought on by the anger and rage experienced toward the loved object. This is where the depressive feelings emanate from, which often leads to the need for reparation. In the work context, employees could project their inner depressive state onto the organisation and leadership, claiming that they are not cared for.

Free-floating anxiety is how Freud described neurotic anxiety in 1949, a form of anxiety that is ready to attach itself to any thought which justifies its existence, implying that it is not bound to something specific (Freud, 1949).

Performance anxiety is a social anxiety disorder manifested via various signs and symptoms (Nicholson & Torrisi, 2006) that has an impact on those individuals who are afraid of performing in public and in the workplace. It manifests in a paralysing fear that commonly appears in the form of stage fright or actions similar to those of a deer caught in headlights caused by the fear of humiliating oneself or being rejected by others (Nicholson & Torrisi, 2006). It can also be observed in the work context where an individual may feel anxious about being watched by other colleagues in how he or she performs in his or her work duties. At the root of performance anxiety is a drive towards an unattainable perfection, with extremely high, if not impossible expectations for oneself (Van Niekerk, 2011).

According to Stapley (2006), the original experiences that are repressed are not lost, but rather become part of one's self-concept, and may resurface when confronted with an experience in the future that elicits similar emotions as the original experience.

3.4.2 Defence mechanisms

In essence, repressed experiences, although quite primitive and unsophisticated in nature, are carried into adult life and manifest in the work setting in various psychological defences. Defences are unconscious psychological processes of thinking and feeling that function automatically in order to reduce anxiety. There are various types of defences that individuals utilise to cope with anxiety and fear. According to Stapley (2006), these defence mechanisms depict how the meaning-making process operates. He further states that these methods of coping become part of one's internalised pool of knowledge and feelings, serving as an unconscious guide to one's decision making in situations resembling the first experience that developed the said defence. According to Roberts and Brunning (2007), defence mechanisms are meant to enable individuals to cope, but do have the tendency to prevent people from dealing with reality, and in such instances, prove to be dysfunctional.

These defence mechanisms are now discussed in relation to adult functioning. Freud formulated the basic defence mechanisms, his daughter Anna Freud added to these and neo-Freudians contributed many more (Blackman, 2004; Czander, 1993; Shapiro & Carr, 1991; Stapley, 2006; Vansina & Vansina-Cobbaert, 2008).

- *Splitting*. This is the splitting of an "object", being a person, value or concept into two different parts that are identified as being "good" or "bad". In adult life, one is capable of understanding that people are psychologically whole individuals who are capable of being both "good" and "bad". However, when faced with extreme anxiety, previous primitive experience could be evoked, creating a polarised split between "good" and "bad" objects.
- *Projection*. This is the process of attributing one's own unacceptable behaviour to others, which results in the pushing out from the self an "object", such as unwanted "bad" feelings and aspects of the self that one does not want to own. The outcome is a conscious awareness that someone else is experiencing the unwanted feelings because it is a relocated piece of personal experience.
- *Introjection*. This is the unconscious process of taking in all sorts of "objects", namely a person, value or concept, and it has origins in emotional experiences. Hence when good

objects are evoked, they arouse pleasant emotions, and when bad objects are evoked, they arouse unpleasant emotions.

- *Projective identification.* This is both a defence mechanism and an object relationship. It refers to efforts of individuals to rid themselves of certain unbearable mental contents by projection, and a psychological interaction where they deposit the unwanted feelings into another person, who then alters his or her behaviour mirroring the attributed behaviour. A continuing connection is established in which the projections are taken into the self and sustained by unconscious collusion.
- *Displacement.* This entails the shifting of one aspect of a conflict from the original object to a substitute one.
- *Rationalisation.* This relates to the unconscious manipulation of one's opinion in order to evade the recognition of the unpleasant or forbidden by denying its reality.
- *Denial.* This is the unconscious process of disowning some aspect of a conflict, with the result that the conflict no longer appears to exist. It relates to the aspects of a situation that the person does not want to perceive and occurs beneath the surface.
- *Sublimation.* This involves the redirection of unacceptable aspects of the self into areas that are acceptable to others. It is the most desirable mechanism as it is the most constructive, turning the unacceptable into acceptable and useful. The results tend to be positive for both the individual and his or her surrounding society.
- *Identification.* This entails the substitution of one's actual desires by "existent" external desires. Identification with qualities of significant others is evoked when an individual seeks an answer to a problematic and conflicting situation. This defence mechanism goes back to infancy where the infant, dreading abandonment, seeks favourable responses by identifying with the mother and significant others, and continues to play out in adult life, when faced with similar situations.
- *Intellectualisation.* This involves the use of intellect for defensive purposes, where the individual becomes fixated with exploring a peculiar theory or behaviour. This helps the individual not to face feelings associated with the anxiety that is being provoked.
- *Identification with the aggressor.* This refers to overcoming one's misery by identifying with the person who appears as a source of danger to one's desires, thereby internalising the aggressor in the mind. This introjection occupies a special place in the mind, constituting what Freud refers to as the superego. The outcome is that those

identifying with the aggressor take on the characteristics of the aggressor (e.g. abused children becoming abusive parents).

- *Regression*. This is a reversion to a less mature level of behaviour. The basis of regression is that the individual mentally returns to an earlier period of life that was more gratifying or less stressful than the present period. The effect is that it provides relief from the anxiety to the extent that one can regain one's balance at a lower level.

The above defence mechanisms and others (Blackman, 2004) manifest at an individual level in leaders' behaviour as they engage others in achieving the work of leadership. In relationships with followers, peers and superiors, leaders respond to and anticipate how others will react to them. Leaders also react to the perceived reaction of others and not to their actual reactions, resulting often in ineffectual and even dysfunctional interactions (Koortzen, 2016). Examples of how this could manifest include introjection of what others perceive their role as leaders to be; projective identification with unwanted feelings projected onto them by followers dealing with anxiety of change; or the intellectualisation and rationalisation of their anxiety-provoked experiences of performing well as leaders.

3.4.3 The social context of leadership dynamics

Anxiety is prevalent in social settings and manifests in social defences. Menzies (1970) first used the term "social defence" in connection with her study of nursing staff and their use of the organisation in dealing with the anxiety that presents in taking up their roles. An important aspect of socially constructed defences that Menzies (1975) highlights is that it is an attempt by individuals to externalise and give substance to their characteristic psychic defence mechanism, becoming an aspect of external reality with which old and new members of an organisation must come to terms. According to Krantz and Gilmore (2009), Menzies' research illustrates how various organisational features, such as structures, policies, operational procedures and beliefs, could be used to reinforce individual psychological defences and in the furthering of task accomplishment. According to Kets de Vries and Engellau (2004, p. 29), the purpose of these social defences is to unconsciously transform and neutralise strong tensions and affects such as anxiety, shame, guilt, envy and many more, as these defences are "woven into the fabric of an organisation in an effort to assure safety and acceptance". They state further that when these defences become the dominant mode of operation for the organisation, they become dysfunctional bureaucratic obstacles to organisational functioning. This speaks to Menzies' (1975) proposition that the success and viability of a social system like an organisation are intimately connected with

the techniques it uses to contain anxiety. In other words, the inefficiency experienced is an inevitable consequence of the chosen defence system.

Hinshelwood (1987) identified the following essential features of social defence systems:

- A social defence system is collective and provides support for the group members who make use of it unconsciously.
- It is defensive in that it protects members from experiences that might be emotionally too unpleasant or overwhelming. This protection is effective against anxieties of a particularly threatening and primitive nature.
- Social pressure to adopt an identity or role results in a rigid institution which defeats its own purpose and is difficult to change.

A social defence system develops over time as the result of collusive, unconscious interaction and agreement between members and tends to become an aspect of external reality, mirroring individuals' own internal psychic defences against anxiety (Krantz & Gilmore, 2009; Menzies, 1970; Stapley, 2006). Kets de Vries (2006) posits that social defences impact on the organisation in various ways such as contributing to passive-aggressive patterns of behaviour, fostering indecisiveness and entrenching a culture of process where certain activities are executed as rituals and do not contribute to the organisation's future. According to Vansina and Vansina-Cobbaert (2008), once these social defences become established as procedures, they become embedded and remain even when the sources of tension have been removed.

The following defence mechanisms, *inter alia*, are observed in organisational systems as the social context of leadership (Blackman, 2004; Czander, 1993; Dimitrov, 2008; Kets de Vries & Engellau, 2004; Menzies, 1975; Stapley, 2006):

- Splitting occurs when organisational members are unable to view themselves and/or their organisations as consisting of good and bad, healthy and unhealthy, and idealised and despised parts. Instead, members view their department as "good" and split off the rest of the organisation as "bad" in response to organisational anxiety. For example, in response to fear and anxiety, members could view leaders as "bad" and followers as "good".
- Repression occurs where organisational members make the thought and sensory content of an experience unconscious. It is evident in organisations in which employees deny that organisational change is occurring, despite the fact that jobs are being

eliminated, leadership is changing and morale is low. It manifests as business as usual, where members continue working as if nothing is going to change in their lives.

- Projective identification occurs when an organisational member attributes to another member his or her own affect, impulse or wish, distorting the manner in which he or she sees the other person. It is a psychological interaction that is evident when an organisational member – rather than experience his or her own inadequacy – blames and scapegoats another member for the organisational problems, and then that member identifies with the projection and acts like he or she is inadequate in addressing organisational problems. In addition to being an internal defence, it should also be considered to occur in an interpersonal context, given the fact that it is influenced by an external object in the form of another member. Leaders are often the scapegoats when members find it difficult to deal with change, as they are blamed for creating the uncertainty. They then identify with this projection, and begin to feel inadequate in managing change in the organisation.
- Introjection occurs when one “takes in” some part of the external world, making it part of oneself. The member is seen to identify with or internalise the mental representation that is formed. Implicit theories of leadership could be introjected by leaders in how they take up the role in terms of expectations and required behaviour.
- Displacement occurs when an organisational member may have a specific feeling towards something or someone, but actually experiences it towards someone or something else. This could manifest in a way that organisational members feel a specific way about the organisation, but experience this feeling towards other organisational members or attribute it to leaders in the organisation.

3.4.4 Leadership as a system domain

Bain (1998) widened the arena relating to organisational defences when he introduced the term “system domain”, which refers to institutions with a similar primary task (Hyde & Thomas, 2002). According to Bain (1998), the said institutions are likely to have similar social defences against anxiety which is a function of the shared primary task and is transferred as individuals move between institutions, carrying with them the “institution or organisation in the mind”. These defences remain relatively unchanged because they are ingrained in the organisational structures, authority systems, professional training, funding arrangements, technology and knowledge bases of these similar institutions (Hyde & Thomas, 2002). The system domain in the mind is a pattern of behaviours, experiences and

expectations that an individual internalises as a result of his or her past working experiences and carries with him or her from place to place (Bain, 1998).

Looking at leadership as a system domain, individual leaders internalise projected patterns of behaviours, experiences and expectations as they move from one leadership role to another. As with the concept of the “organisation-in-the-mind”, it is a set of experiences held in the mind, the leader’s own reality which, through experiencing and imagining forms in their inner psychic space, influences how he or she interacts with his or her environment (Hutton, Bazalgette, & Reed, 1997). This is in response to the similar primary task that is inherent in the role, as leaders carry with them “leadership in the mind”.

3.5 BASIC ASSUMPTION THEORY

The study of leader-follower relationships focuses on the psychology of groups (Kets de Vries & Engellau, 2004). This is informed by basic assumptions theory where the basic premise is that when individuals come together as a group they behave as a system (Bion, 1975). Bion’s theory is the cornerstone of the Tavistock method and serves as a framework for the group-as-a-whole approach (Hayden & Molenkamp, 2004). His work around group-as-a-whole, the here-and-now and basic assumption life, remain vital to the understanding of group life and functioning (Sorenson, 2005). Anxiety is experienced in the group establishing itself as a system and results in certain behaviours manifesting in order to reduce the experienced anxiety (Bion, 1961).

The group-as-a-whole perspective implies that individual behaviour in groups is the result of group forces that mobilise individual action, that when an individual speaks out they are speaking, in part, via the unconscious of the group (Wells, 1985). Bion (1961, 1975) hypothesised that groups operate from two modes (Bion, 1955). One mode he called the productive sophisticated group or the work group, which he described as operating at task level, maintaining close contact with reality. The other mode he called the basic assumption group, which he described as focusing primarily on easing the group’s anxieties and avoidance of pain or other unwanted emotions (Bion, 1961).

This psychotic mode of group functioning finds its roots in the paranoid-schizoid position (Bion, 1983; Fraher, 2004) and refers to the assumptions that are basic to the group’s behaviour (Rioch, 1975). Bion’s (1961) work derived three basic behavioural assumptions, namely dependency, pairing, and fight/flight. Two more basic behavioural assumptions emerged from further research, resulting in one-ness/we-ness (Lawrence, Bain, & Gould, 1996) and me-ness (Turquet, 1974). These basic behavioural assumptions are now discussed.

3.5.1 Basic assumption dependency (baD)

According to Shapiro and Carr (1991), dependence recalls the unconscious human search for the assurance that the psychological self is secure enough to allow for risk taking. Groups subject to the dependency assumption look for a strong, charismatic leader and are united by feelings of helplessness, inadequacy, neediness and fear of the outside world (Kets de Vries, 2004, 2009). The group bestows supernatural powers on the identified leader, resulting in unrealistic expectations and rendering the group dependent and powerless (Fraher, 2004). The leader's inevitable failure to meet these unrealistic expectations creates disappointment and frustration and the consequent selection of a new leader, who is also doomed to failure. According to Koortzen and Cilliers (2002), this defence against anxiety can also be seen as a manipulation of authority out of its role, for example, from leader to parental figure, playing out the fantasy of feeling safe and cared for. According to Kets de Vries (2006), dependency impairs followers' critical judgement and leaves them unwilling to take the initiative.

3.5.2 Basic assumption pairing (baP)

This assumption sees individuals pairing up with another individual or subgroup, they perceive as powerful, in order to help them cope with anxiety, alienation and loneliness (Kets de Vries, 2004). The group invests in irrational hopefulness for the future in these two individuals or subgroups in the hope that the pairing will produce a saviour that will rescue them from these disturbing emotions (Fraher, 2004). In organisational terms, the group's expectation is that the pair will somehow produce a reliable solution to the organisation's problems (Shapiro & Carr, 1991). Pairing results in splitting up of the group when anxiety is experienced because of differences, and this could manifest as ganging up against the perceived aggressor or authority figure (Koortzen & Cilliers, 2002). According to Kets de Vries (2006), diversity, which is a given within groups, could result in intra- and intergroup conflict, which, in turn, could cause splits in the larger group into smaller systems in which individual members could feel safe and secure.

3.5.3 Basic assumption fight/flight (baF/F)

In groups subjected to the assumption of fight/flight, there is a tendency to classify the system or their world-view into friends and enemies (Kets de Vries, 2004). He differentiates between fight reactions and flight reactions: (1) Fight reactions manifest themselves in aggression against the self, peers and authority, and (2) flight reactions manifest themselves in avoidance, absenteeism and resignation. According to Koortzen and Cilliers (2002), psychological flight reactions include defence mechanisms such as avoiding threatening

situations or emotions in the moment, rationalising and intellectualising. Bion observed that in these two modes of self-preservation, leadership that either mobilises the group to attack or to lead it in flight is recognised to be appropriate leadership by the group (Fraher, 2004). Kets de Vries (2009) emphasises the fact that the fight/flight reaction is not only directed towards an external enemy but may apply to internal enemies that qualify, whose perceived imperfections may set off such a reaction. Shapiro and Carr (1991) argue that the two elements of this assumption are linked as fight *and* flight, and not either flight *or* fight. They further state that Bion correctly observed the underlying dynamic of both attitudes as the same. Kets de Vries (2006) posits that leaders who fall victim to fight/flight dependency inadvertently use ingroups and outgroups to motivate followers and to channel anxiety outwards. He goes on to say that while this may energise the group to pursue their cause, it can result in dependence on the leader. The emotional climate is characterised by overactivity and urgency without any reflection (Vansina & Vansina-Cobbaert, 2008).

3.5.4 Basic assumption one-ness (baO)

The fourth basic assumption introduced by Turquet in 1974 is one-ness and is characterised by members seeking to join in a powerful union with an omnipotent force to surrender self for passive participation in order to feel safe and whole (Fraher, 2004). According to Koortzen and Cilliers (2002), it is as if the individual team member becomes lost within oceanic feelings of unity, where the team strives towards cohesion and synergy, in the belief that problems will be solved by this strong united force. The group “embodies” meaning and identity on behalf of others, where a schizoid split occurs in members, disassociating from their individuality and becoming identical units in a whole (Morgan-Jones, 2010). Shapiro and Carr (1991) view this assumption as a further stage of regression, that is, beyond dependency back to existence itself.

3.5.5 Basic assumption me-ness (baM)

The fifth assumption referred to as me-ness is the opposite of one-ness and was explored by Lawrence, Bain, and Gould in 1996. It emphasises the individual's desire to remain separate from the group and is observed in the individual wanting to be cut off from the disturbing effects of the group and withdrawing into the inner world of self (Fraher, 2004). This is referred to as a socially induced schizoid withdrawal (Fraher, 2004). The individual team members behave as if the group is a non-group, denying its existence and focusing on members' individual realities and personal boundaries (Koortzen & Cilliers, 2002). The overriding anxiety is that the individual will disappear in the group, which results in a culture of selfishness in which individuals appear to be only conscious of their own personal boundaries (Vansina & Vansina-Cobbaert, 2008).

3.6 ATTACHMENT THEORY

Obegi and Berant (2009) acknowledge the work of Bowlby (1969), the founder of attachment theory, when they describe the theory as an enduring tie that one individual has with another who fulfils needs of safety or comfort. It has roots in infancy where infants attach to their parents for reassurance during times of distress. This theory is then linked to and is another response to anxiety.

Shaver and Mikulincer (2009) differentiate between infant-parent attachment and adult-adult attachment, which develop as the individual grows and learns from life experience. Attachment is active across an individual's lifespan and manifests in thoughts and behaviours relating to proximity seeking in times of need. Shaver and Mikulincer (2009) indicate further that attachment-related interactions are different from other forms of social interaction in that these interactions are organised around the need for protection, encouragement, comfort or support from the attachment figure, which enables the individual to restore emotional balance where required. This process of turning to a special individual deemed to be an attachment figure occurs either consciously or unconsciously. According to Bowlby (1969, in Obegi & Berant, 2009), human infants are born with a repertoire of attachment behaviours that are organised by an adaptive behavioural system known as the attachment system.

Shaver and Mikulincer (2009) state that individuals develop internal working models of self and others that regulate their attachment system in the following ways: (1) Upon seeking proximity with an attachment figure, and a primary attachment figure proving to be available, the individual will experience relief and comfort as a result of proximity to this person. (2) Where the primary attachment proves unavailable, the distress initially experienced is compounded by attachment-related doubts, resulting in secondary attachment strategies called either hyperactivation or deactivation. Hyperactivation occurs when the individual's proximity-seeking attempts intensify, resulting in demanding or coercing the attachment figure's attention, in a sense, setting the attachment system into overdrive. Deactivation occurs when efforts are made by the individual to escape, avoid or minimise the pain and frustration caused by the unresponsiveness of the attachment figure, keeping the attachment system turned off so as to avoid recurrence of the unpleasant emotions being elicited, which is detachment. These strategies result in the following three organised states of mind: (1) avoidant attachment, (2) anxious attachment, or (3) disorganised attachment, which manifest in defensive processes (Mikulincer, Shaver, Cassidy, & Berant, 2009).

According to Mikulincer et al. (2009) defences to these organised states of mind manifest in the following ways:

- The aim of avoidant attachment is to protect the individual from experiencing feelings or needs that would activate the attachment system, thereby increasing the possibility of feeling vulnerable, rejected or abandoned. This is achieved by blocking awareness of emotion, thought, image, fantasy or memory that might activate the attachment system. It can also be achieved by maintaining an exaggerated sense of self-worth and entitlement and could be a means of devaluing or looking down on others.
- Anxious attachment results in individuals viewing experiences of an attachment figure's availability as a sign of their own deficiencies and helplessness. Anxiously attached individuals are overly dependent on relationship partners, overly eager to coerce or cajole signals of acceptance and loyalty, and quick to express distress when these exaggerated needs are not met.
- Disorganised attachment reflects an individual's failure to develop a single organised attachment strategy in response to the caregiving environment because the caregiving is presumed to be so threatening or chaotic that no single strategy would be effective. This is in direct contrast to avoidant and anxious attachment and is the most insecure state of mind. It stems from experiences with an attachment figure who was seriously abusive, frightened or frightening, when the individual sought proximity and safety from him or her.

Attachment theory indicates the importance of developing attachment security as it contributes to a solid and stable psychological foundation required for emotional stability and effective functioning. However, where an individual fails to form secure attachments, he or she is unable to build a secure psychological foundation that facilitates accurate, undistorted perception of internal and external events, resulting in everyday experiences that threaten his or her sense of safety (Mikulincer et al., 2009).

In the context of the leader-follower relationship, attachment security manifests as a result of uncertainty and security issues followers seem to face in today's turbulent world of work. The nature of leader-follower relationships makes them conducive to attachment/detachment dynamics. Followers seek proximity from their leaders in times of need. The need to feel safe, secure and comforted is amplified during times of change and uncertainty. This is further discussed in the next chapter where the systems psychodynamic perspective of the leadership role is explored.

3.7 TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS (TA)

TA was prominent in psychology in the 1960s–1970s, and is presently being revived in organisational consulting and leadership development, specifically from a systems psychodynamic perspective (Erskine, 2010; Fowlie & Sills, 2011; Tudor & Summers, 2014). This section explores the work of Eric Berne, a psychoanalyst who made a significant contribution to group therapy through TA (Berne, 1961; Spenceley, 2016; Tudor & Summers, 2014).

The discussion below explains the various aspects of TA, including life scripts, ego states, TA as a process and the research that has emerged in response to expanding Berne's work.

3.7.1 Life scripts

A life script is a complex set of transactions that is recurrent in nature and may play out throughout an individual's life. Berne (1972, cited in Stuthridge, 2010) defined life scripts as a series of decisions, formed as coping strategies in childhood, which continue to shape an individual's life course outside awareness. Tosi (2010) brings a narrative theory perspective, as she describes the lived and narrated script, which is shaped and reshaped as the individual finds new meanings and integrates new and old experiences. Stuthridge (2010) further expands this perspective by positing a notion of script as an internal narrative process, which manifests externally as a predictable embodied emotional pattern of relating to self and others.

3.7.2 Ego states

According to Berne (1961), an ego state is a coherent system of feelings that motivates a related set of behaviours towards a given subject. He later defined it as a consistent pattern of feelings and experience directly related to a corresponding consistent pattern of behaviour (Berne, 1966). From a transactional analysis perspective, there are three manifestations of ego states, namely *Parent*, *Adult* and *Child*. These are recurring in nature, manifesting in every grown-up individual who once had been a child who was dependent on someone in a parental role, and later developed the capacity for adult reality testing (Berne, 1961). According to Berne (1977), the ego states manifest in the following ways: (1) the *Parent* manifests in the language, intonations, attitude, posture and mannerisms of one or both of the individual's parents; (2) the *Adult* manifests in accomplishments which are beyond a child such as accurate analysis of complex realities and realistic manipulation of concepts; and (3) the *Child* manifests in child-like behaviour and attitudes and archaic modes of relationship.

Certain behaviours manifest according to ego states (Berne, 1961; Spenceley, 2016):

- *Parent ego state.* This is a set of feelings, attitudes and behaviour patterns which resemble those of a parental figure. The individual behaves as a nurturing parent, characterised as being overprotective or rescuing. This ego state also manifests as the critical or controlling parent characterised as setting limits and defining values or reality.
- *Adult ego state.* This is an autonomous set of feelings, attitudes and behaviour patterns which are adapted to the current reality. It is characterised by rational thinking as individuals apply reality testing and manipulation to current realities.
- *Child ego state.* This is a set of feelings, attitudes and behaviour patterns which are relics of the individual's own childhood. The child state is split into the free child characterised as creativity, spontaneity and intuition or the adapted child characterised as learnt adapted ways of surviving by either conforming or rebelling against parent rules.

In the section on psychoanalysis, the fact was highlighted that Freud (1955) defined the unconscious as comprising three parts, namely the id, ego and superego. Various urges, drives or instincts reside in the id, and operate entirely unconsciously. The ego is responsible for engaging logic, memory and judgement in attempting to satisfy the id within the parameters set by external reality. The superego is concerned with obeying morality and social norms and is considered to be the conscience of the mind (Gabriel & Carr, 2002). In Berne's (1961) conceptualisation of ego states, he focused primarily on the ego, eliminating the theoretical concepts of id and superego, postulating that these two psychological dynamics are part of the ego which is composed of three states of psychic organisation. These states he described as fixations from childhood; introjections of elements of the personality of others and an integrating state in full contact with what is occurring internally and externally (cited in Erskine, 1991, p. 79). Berne (1961, p. 24) hypothesised that "an ego state is the phenomenological and behavioural manifestation".

3.7.3 The TA process

Berne (1977) identified TA as the process of diagnosis to determine which ego state is active in an individual during a given transaction or series of transactions, the possible script driving his or her reaction and the consequent impact on the said individual's interaction with others. TA aims to analyse these scripts in understanding how they contribute to the individual's identity and functioning.

The following three types of transactions influence communication: (1) Complementary transactions occur at an Adult-to-Adult level and result in communication continuing. (2) Crossed transactions occur at a Parent-to-Child level, resulting in a crossed transaction where transference and countertransference emerge and communication stops. (3) The last type is the ulterior transaction which also occurs at a Parent-to-Child social level and manifests as an unconscious process, where the meaning of communication is underpinned by ulterior motives.

3.7.4 TA research expanding on Berne's work

Scilligo (2011, cited in De Luca & Tosi, 2011) expanded on Berne's work by attempting to make the concepts of ego states more operational for the purpose of research and diagnosis. One of his greatest contributions was his systematic integration of the research and theories of social psychology into TA (Cornell, 2015). According to Cornell (2015, p. 192), both Berne and Scilligo conceptualised "script" as an enactment of transference, bringing to the fore the introjective aspects of transference that "unconsciously shape an individual's sense of personal possibility and form: who I am, who I must be, the shape I need to take, what I can and cannot do". In his model of structural analysis of social behaviour, Scilligo (2011), while maintaining the distinctions between the various types of information processing carried out by the various ego states, introduced a perspective in which each ego state also wrestles with the affective tensions of living in the world with others (Cornell, 2015).

According to De Luca and Tosi (2011), ego states are characterised by the following: (1) they give rise to distinct, organised behaviours; (2) are responsive to social situations; (3) are influenced by natural development and past experience; and (4) mediate between social contexts and internal, phenomenological experiences. Tudor and Summers (2014) describe them as relational patterns of experience where the Adult ego state represents the creative, flexible, resourceful self and the Parent and Child ego states represent the rigid, compulsive psychological defensive patterns, particularly during stressful times. They emphasise that personal growth is achieved by expanding the Adult relational capacity and reducing the Parent and Child probabilities.

There has been a paradigm shift away from observing ego and cognitive insight to the importance of unconscious, relational interactions as the primary means of growth (Cornell & Hargaden, 2005). According to Novellino (1984, cited in Cornell & Hargaden, 2005), transference and countertransference come to the fore as significant aspects of the unconscious at play in interaction, specifically subjectivity and personal script responses. These are discussed in chapter 4 in the context of the leader-follower relationship.

Co-creative TA is a contemporary interpretation of TA that integrates recent developments in philosophy and psychology (Tudor & Summers, 2014). Tudor and Summers' (2014) contribution to recent TA theory is in the form of a four-model framework for understanding what happens within and between people. They define ego states as a relational way of being that is co-created through interaction with others. This framework describes healthy and dysfunctional patterns and can be used to generate effective strategies to support personal and professional development.

In conclusion, Berne (1976) demonstrated an interest in group dynamics in relation to group psychotherapy, which is aligned to group functioning from a systems psychodynamic perspective in organisations. This can be seen in the elements he highlighted as important knowledge on group dynamics for effective group therapy. Reference is made to factors such as the actual seating of group members, authority (both personal and group) and group processes that play out as transactions occur between group members. In this he emphasises the role of the leader, and the make-up of the group as a result of this leadership. According to Berne (1977), members demand certain absolute qualities of leaders and they develop a specific group culture to which standards of behaviour are connected that need to be reinforced.

Ego states manifest in the context of the leader-follower relationship impacting on the interaction between the two parties. Depending on past experience and developed life scripts, both follower and leader have the propensity to function from particular ego states, which in response, set off the ego state functioning of the other party. For example, followers functioning in the basic assumption dependency mode may function from the child ego state, requiring guidance, direction or protection from the leader, shifting the said leader into the parent ego state.

3.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter facilitated an understanding of the systems psychodynamic approach in terms of its origin, schools of thought, anxiety as a driver of human experience, group functioning, attachment theory and TA. These elements provide a backdrop against which organisational functioning manifests and can be interpreted both at a conscious and unconscious level. The interplay between the two levels, particularly in times of change, and the ensuing uncertainty created, are evident in the microsystem (individual), mesosystem (group) and macrosystem (organisation). In this context, in the next chapter, the leadership role is explored from the systems psychodynamic perspective with specific focus on leadership above and below the surface of consciousness.

CHAPTER 4: LEADERSHIP ROLE ANALYSIS FROM A SYSTEMS PSYCHODYNAMIC PERSPECTIVE

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to conceptualise the leadership role from the systems psychodynamic perspective in order to study the role on the basis of this theoretical framework. This is achieved by understanding the systems psychodynamic view of the organisation and the group, aligning that to what leaders represent in and for their organisations. The systems psychodynamic view of leadership is then described, together with this classification of leadership functioning. Given that the focus of this chapter is role analysis, the systems psychodynamic conceptualisation of role follows, leading to a discussion of the relevant constructs in understanding the leadership role. The chapter concludes with a leadership role analysis and literature review integration.

4.2 THE SYSTEMS PSYCHODYNAMIC VIEW OF THE ORGANISATION AND THE GROUP

Organisations are not simply rational systems stemming from individuals pursuing organisational goals – they are like the human beings that create, manage and inhabit these systems, and comprise conscious and unconscious dynamics that make them complex and challenging to understand (Diamond & Allcorn, 2009). Armstrong (2004) defines the organisation as an object with four distinct boundaries, namely the task dimension (process), management dimension (structure), identity dimension (enterprise) and ecological dimension (contextually embedded). According to Diamond and Allcorn (2009), organisations and groups exist predominantly as a result of dynamic, changing individual and collective projections rooted in unconscious fantasies and emotions.

As individuals join organisations, they transfer their unconscious desires and expectations to their image of both the organisation and its leader, resulting in organisations becoming psychological containers for their projections, anxieties and conflicts (Diamond & Allcorn, 2009).

Organisations contain a pathological version or “dark side” that is collectively and unconsciously constructed (Armstrong, 2009). One of the needs individuals have for organisations is to use them as a defence against anxiety, which leads to the development of socially constructed defence systems (Menzies Lyth, 2009). This concept was discussed in chapter 3 in terms of the social context of leadership and the related defence mechanisms that manifest in this context. Specific reference is made to the organisation-in-the-mind,

which is created from the filtered experience of the organisational environment, based on perceptions and how the organisation is constructed in the mind (Stapley, 2006). The outcome is that members of the organisation begin to act as if the constructed organisation-in-the-mind exists, and then behave in accordance with this perceived experience.

Chaos and complexity are phenomena that exist both inside and outside organisations in this era, resulting in disorganised order. Organisations are characterised as adaptive feedback networks that leaders need to manage (Diamond & Allcorn, 2009). The result is deregulated, networked environments where continual organisational instability is experienced, causing change fatigue and unsatisfied individual dependency needs (Cooper & Dartington, 2004).

Organisations tend to be a reflection of the personalities of their leaders. Five dominant organisational types, each with its own executive personality, organisational style, corporate culture, strategic style and underlying guiding theme, result from the above and are discussed below (Dimitrov, 2008; Kets de Vries, 2001).

- Dramatic or cyclothymic organisations are characterised by attention-seeking, dramatic leaders, people with a sense that they are in control of their destiny, bold decision making and risk taking.
- Suspicious organisations have a general atmosphere of distrust and paranoia, specifically among leadership with hypersensitivity to hidden meanings and motivations as well as relationships and organisational issues. This focus on external threats leads to a centralisation of power and can contribute to a conservative, reactive business strategy in which initiative is stifled.
- Compulsive organisations are preoccupied with trivialities and characterised by a highly rigid and well-defined set of rules, along with elaborate information systems and ritualised, exhaustive evaluation procedures. These organisations are slow and non-adaptive, with relationships defined in terms of control and submission.
- Detached organisations are characterised by a cold, unemotional atmosphere where non-involvement with others in and outside the organisation is the norm. This organisational climate stems from leadership that steers clear of hands-on involvement, believing that it is safer to remain distant and isolated than to grow close and collaborative.
- Depressive organisations are inactive, have a lack of confidence and are extremely conservative. With the past dominating their thinking, these organisations are

characterised by a strong sense of indecision, an unwillingness to take risks, a focus on diminishing markets, an underdeveloped sense of competition and apathetic, inactive leadership.

Paranoid leaders foster excessive controlling and suspicious organisations that are characterised by oppressive cultures fostering feelings of abuse, feeling mistreated and disrespect (Diamond & Allcorn, 2009).

The study of leader-follower relationships focuses on the psychology of groups (Kets de Vries & Engellau, 2004). The group comes together to achieve a task, and the basic premise is that when individuals come together as a group, they behave as a system. The here-and-now and basic assumption life remain vital to the understanding of group life and functioning (Sorenson, 2005). Anxiety is experienced in the group establishing itself as a system, and results in certain behaviours manifesting in order to reduce the experienced anxiety (Bion, 1961). The group-as-a-whole perspective implies that individual behaviour in groups is the result of group forces that mobilise individual action, and when an individual speaks out, he or she is speaking, in part, via the unconscious of the group (Wells, 1985). Group membership implies an interpersonal compromise between the desire for dependency and the demands for autonomy (Diamond & Allcorn, 2009).

Stacey (2011) highlights the following unconscious group processes and how they play out in relation to organisational dynamics:

- Any attempt to fundamentally change an organisation upsets the balance and the nature of power and raises the levels of uncertainty and ambiguity, thus increasing anxiety. The dynamics of any real-life organisation are inevitably unstable.
- Increased anxiety unleashes unconscious processes of regression. Work groups become swamped with basic assumption behaviour in which they are incapable of effecting strategic developments. Strategic issues themselves could raise anxiety levels because such issues threaten power positions and this could trigger basic assumption behaviour. In such circumstances, it is quite likely that long-term plans, mission statements, visions and the like are being used as defence mechanisms.
- Success has to do with the management of the context or boundary conditions around a group. The main factors that establish the context are the nature and use of power, the level of mutual trust and the time pressures on people in the group.

The following systems psychodynamic concepts encompass organisational life (Astrachan, cited in Klein, 2006): Container-contained is the holding function that occurs in groups and

organisations. The primary task is the work that needs to be done for the organisation to survive. A boundary defines what is inside and outside the group or organisation. Authority is what leaders utilise to regulate institutional boundaries to minimise chaos. Leaders are “Janus-like”, looking both inward and outward as they stand on the periphery amidst multiple conflicting pressures. Social defences are unconscious behaviours used to reduce anxieties. Task and social roles are integrated by leadership, which serves a boundary regulatory function.

To conclude, the organisation is given life by its members through the organisational structures that emerge, and in return, the members’ definitions of self are given context in which to manifest and take on meaning (Penwell, 2006). This leads to a discussion about what this means for those who take up a leadership role. It is important to understand what leaders represent in and for organisations. The next section provides a systems psychodynamic view of leadership in order to explore this point.

4.3 THE SYSTEMS PSYCHODYNAMIC VIEW OF LEADERSHIP

In today’s world of work, it would help if leaders in organisations had a heightened understanding of systems psychodynamics. The systems psychodynamic perspective focuses on the complex dynamics of human behaviour, thereby making it a valuable framework for studying and shaping the many facets of leadership towards rationality, and not only effectiveness and efficiency (Kets De Vries, 2013). Leadership theory has predominantly focused on the rational, economic view where leadership is applied in a specific context with specific individuals. The systems psychodynamic perspective shows that groups function at both a conscious and unconscious level. The consequence of this is that groups can easily proceed into basic assumption mode affecting what leaders do and do not do. Groups therefore play a role in the co-creation of leadership (Klein et al., 2009). In 1994, Obholzer and Roberts (cited in Koortzen & Cilliers, 2002) identified leadership as managing what is inside the structural boundary in relation to what is outside the boundary.

In 1970, Bales identified the emergence of the following two kinds of leadership roles: (1) the task leader who offers suggestions, shows disagreement and guides the group to focus on task completion; and (2) the social-emotional leader who asks for suggestions, shows solidarity and soothes tempers by encouraging tension release (Stacey, 2011). When leaders of this kind do not emerge, group members begin to deal with their frustration in unconscious ways, resulting in basic assumption functioning (Stacey, 2011). It becomes apparent that leaders’ behaviour may have more to do with unconscious processes than rational consideration. As Rice highlighted, (cited in Fraher, 2004) the mature ego is one

that can define the boundary between what is inside and what is outside, and can control the transaction between the one and the other.

According to Obholzer and Miller (2004, p. 33), without followership there would be no leadership, referring to “an inherent tension between leadership and followership”. They identify the following core functions of leadership:

- Leadership is about vision and strategy for the future. In relation to this, a core task of leadership is to ensure that the primary task of the organisation remains uppermost in the minds of its members and it is constantly reviewed in light of the changing external environment, adapting accordingly.
- Following on the above, leadership is essentially about the management of change, both internal and external to the organisation, and the establishment and maintenance of mechanisms that will enable the changes at a pace that is emotionally possible and realistic to both internal and external needs.
- Leadership also fulfils an “osmotic” boundary-keeping function, which requires communication of the values, ideals, worth and products of the organisation to the outside world. This establishment and maintenance of a necessary structure for the organisation to run smoothly includes an awareness of everyday practical issues that are integral to the organisation’s well-being.
- Both authority and power are required for leadership to fulfil this boundary management function. While authority is both a product of external organisational sanction and the internal world of the leader’s inner world of experience, power is still required to “make things happen”. Power means having the resources to be able to enact and implement decisions. In relation to this, leadership requires an awareness of the presence and workings of the individual and collective unconscious.
- Leadership and institutional dynamics are interconnected. This being said, many organisations delegate this focus to the human resource function. This results in the perceived “soft” elements being disowned and not addressed by leadership. Leadership needs to consider and address these dynamics in relation to the primary task of the organisation. For example, basic assumption functioning needs to be considered in relation to members either upholding the primary task of the organisation or becoming preoccupied with reducing the anxiety being experienced, hence creating an internal focus. Such concepts describe and determine the behaviour of individuals in groups and

the organisation, and the resulting leadership requirements, both conscious and unconscious.

The complexity of leadership manifests at three systemic levels, namely the macro, meso and micro systemic levels (Greyvenstein & Cilliers, 2012). At the macro level, leadership is faced with post-modern organisational challenges of the 21st century such as globalisation, the new economy and increased competition (see chapter 1). At the meso level, leadership is faced with increasingly complex technical and dynamic interpersonal organisational systems. At the micro level, leadership faces the task of transforming their role from managing tasks and people towards a dynamic and systemic leadership role.

According to Obholzer and Miller (2004), followership, in turn, must be an actively participative process that is differentiated from a passive, dependent state of mind of the individual and the group. It must be based on a process of consultation, participation and involvement. This implies that followers also take on a leadership role where required in the leader-follower interaction.

Research on leadership views the phenomenon as dichotomous in nature. Examples of this are good versus bad leaders; effective versus ineffective leaders; ethical versus unethical leaders; autocratic versus democratic leaders; and so on (Bennis, 2007; Kets de Vries, 2001; Kouzes & Posner, 2007; Yukl, 2010). An important dichotomy to highlight in the systems psychodynamic context is functional versus dysfunctional leadership, which is discussed in the subsection.

4.3.1 Functional leadership

Leadership is about the way people behave in organisations, and effective leaders focus on meeting the needs of their followers, consider group processes, calming the anxieties of members of their group, while liberating energy and inspiring positive action (Kets de Vries & Cheak, 2014).

Psychodynamic processes play a critical role in organisational life, specifically with regard to leadership. According to Kets De Vries and Engellau (2004), anyone wanting to create or manage an effective organisation needs to understand the dynamics of leadership and the intricacies of the leader-follower relationship. Leadership is about human behaviour and the complexities that surround it.

Obholzer's and Miller's (2004) view is that one of the core elements of the task of leadership is to ensure that the primary task of the organisation remains in focus and is constantly reviewed in light of the external environment. Hence by virtue of its boundary-keeping

function, effective leadership plays a significant role in maintaining effective organisational functioning (Obholzer & Miller, 2004). According to Goethals (2005), Freud's theory of leadership is highly relevant to understanding leadership. It includes the idea that groups have an instinctive need for leadership and that individuals with strong personalities and compelling ideas are likely to succeed as leaders.

Leaders can become more effective in taking up the role with a heightened understanding of systems psychodynamics (Kets de Vries, 2013). This is evident in enhanced self-awareness about their impact on others, and vice versa, and learning to manage this impact (Kets de Vries, 2001). This speaks to emotional intelligence as a critical attribute of effective leadership (Goleman, 2000; Kets de Vries, 2001). Knowing how to respond requires emotional maturity in dealing with their and others' anxieties (Hackman & Wageman, 2007). Du Toit, Veldsman, & Van Zyl (2011) refer to the development of psychosocial maturity as a means for leaders to cope with the demands placed on them. Leaders have to face their internal worlds of unresolved issues and patterns of behaviour as this could influence exercising their leadership (Du Toit et al., 2011), and, if neglected, could result in derailment and burnout (De Beer, Rothmann, & Scherrer, 2016). This calls for a heightened self-awareness and self-knowledge to handle the ambiguity, complexity and ethical dilemmas leaders are faced with (Du Toit et al., 2016).

Leaders will also be better equipped to manage the boundary between themselves (internal world) and the environment they function in (external world) more effectively (Stapley, 2006). They can authorise and enable followers to become leaders in their own right, in order to create a space of learning, creativity and growth (Kets de Vries, 2004).

An awareness of the presence and workings of unconscious intrapersonal, interpersonal and organisational processes is essential in preventing leaders from colluding with or being caught up in anti-task behaviour (Koortzen, 2016). This will enable them to be proactive in expecting such processes to emerge and to ensure that they cause minimum disruption (Obholzer, 2001). Leaders who encourage reflective processes for learning, psychological regression and defensive actions create a vital operating culture and context (Diamond & Allcorn, 2009).

4.3.2 Dysfunctional leadership

Leaders experience their own anxieties as they function in role as a result of isolation. According to Kets De Vries (2009), they internalise projections of followers' expectations that they should be exceptionally capable, which could lead them to believing they are infallible, and reality-testing may suffer. He states that they could also experience guilt about their

success as a result of envy of others, which could make them so anxious that they engage in self-sabotage or even become dysfunctional in decision making.

The following six patterns of dysfunctional leadership have been identified that manifest in leadership functioning (Kets de Vries, 2001):

- First, many leaders have a tendency towards *conflict avoidance*, which results in them not recognising that boundary setting needs to sometimes take precedence over conciliation. It is characterised as being afraid to do anything that might threaten acceptance and an inability to make difficult decisions or exercise authority.
- *Tyrannisation* of subordinates is the second dysfunctional pattern of leadership that has the potential to trigger a response of unconscious impersonation of the “aggressor”, that is, the abusive leader. It results in a ripple effect of aggression throughout the organisation as people begin to acquire some of their “aggressor’s” power. It is a pattern that leads to leadership incompetence and has the potential to increase total organisational aggression.
- *Micromanagement* is the third dysfunctional pattern and is characterised by leaders who are so detail oriented that they cannot let go of control, causing issues of trust and consequent low morale to develop. Micromanagement is a major cause of leadership derailment.
- The fourth pattern, *manic behaviour*, is seen in leaders who appear to have boundless energy, pushing themselves and others to the limit. They become so hyperactive that they do not always notice what they are doing or its impact. Such leaders become inward focused, losing sight of the external focus they need to maintain in relation to the environment, and particularly their main constituency, namely their customers.
- *Inaccessibility*, the fifth pattern, refers to leaders who are so full of self-importance that they have no time to engage others. It may not occur to them to lead by example or to walk around the workplace listening to their constituencies. They tend to be lofty and unapproachable, shielding themselves behind secretaries and closed-door policies.
- The sixth dysfunctional pattern, *game playing*, refers to leaders who think only about themselves, trying to hog the limelight, whether it is aimed below or above them. Their personal goals tend to sway the organisational goals. They are unwilling to plan for leadership succession and experience high turnover among their followers.

4.3.3 Neurotic forms of leadership

It is also necessary to differentiate between functional leadership, where leaders assist with containment of anxiety and the creation of a possibility of learning, and dysfunctional leadership where leaders may become caught up in and cause others to be caught up in neurotic defences that block such learning and growth (Stacey, 2011).

According to Kets de Vries (2001), the nature of neurotic leadership is influenced by an inner theatre of representations of people and situations, formed in childhood, that have come to play significant roles as core conflictual relationships. This inner play with conflictual relationships is then projected onto the real world they have to deal with. From a leadership perspective, leaders project their inner conflicts onto a bigger “stage” in the form of those they lead. At the same time, followers also project their inner conflicts, keeping leader and followers engaged in a particular dynamic. Kets de Vries (2001, 2009) identifies the following neurotic styles:

- *Aggressive disposition.* Leaders who are socially forceful, intimidating, energetic, competitive and power oriented fall into this category. They expect people to be hostile towards them and become aggressive in advance to counteract such hostility.
- *Paranoid disposition.* Such leaders are always looking for hidden motives and are suspicious of others. They are hyper-vigilant, constantly scanning the environment and taking unnecessary precautions. They are fond of mechanistic devices to measure performance.
- *Histrionic disposition.* Such leaders are characterised by the need to attract the attention of others at all costs. They love activity and excitement and tend to overreact to minor incidents, often throwing tantrums.
- *Detached disposition.* Such leaders find it difficult to form close relationships. They tend to be cold and aloof.
- *Controlling disposition.* These leaders have an excessive desire for control and order in their lives. The resultant hostility may emerge as tyrannical ways of behaving or the opposite of submission.
- *Passive-aggressive disposition.* This style is found more in followers than in leaders and is characterised as being highly dependent, defiant and provocative, demanding much from the leader.

- *Narcissistic disposition.* Such leaders see themselves as exceptional and special, having exaggerated feelings of their own power and control over the organisation and the environment. Research on narcissistic leaders differentiates according to the degree and quality of such leaders. Kets de Vries and Miller (1985) differentiate between constructive and reactive narcissistic leaders. Constructive narcissism refers to someone with rare, mild and infrequent tendencies that are unlikely to do damage. Reactive narcissism refers to pervasive, frequent and severe tendencies that are destructive in nature. Stein (2013) argues that changes in the environment may lead to changes in the narcissistic leader, and that in times of downturns, constructive narcissistic leaders may be triggered to become reactive narcissistic leaders.

The manner in which these styles engage each other across leaders and followers creates the environment in which they have to work. These patterns of interaction, in turn, have a powerful impact on how effectively an organisation learns and adapts.

4.4 THE SYSTEMS PSYCHODYNAMIC CONCEPTUALISATION OF ROLE

As stated previously, the aim of this study was to explore, describe and analyse the lived leadership role experience of 21st century leaders from a systems psychodynamic perspective. Role is contextualised as part of boundaries, authority, role and task (BART) (Hayden & Molenkamp, 2004; Obholzer & Roberts, 1994), which is a contextual framework that enabled the researcher to explore role as the primary focus of this study. Role is discussed first because it is the core construct of the study. This is followed by a discussion on boundaries, authority and task and then other relevant behavioural constructs in role analysis. The aim is to foster an understanding of the systems psychodynamic leadership role with the focus on both the conscious and unconscious components that manifest.

4.4.1 Role

Role can be used as a boundary to differentiate between what is regarded as self and others. In taking up a role, individuals draw a boundary around the role, distinguishing self within the role from others in other roles (Stapley, 2006).

Reed and Bazalgette (2006, p. 45) conceptualise role as “a mental regulating principle, based on a person’s lived experience of the complex interaction of feelings, ideas, motivations, aroused in working to the aim of a system, integrated consciously and unconsciously and expressed in purposive behaviour”. They emphasise as follows the limitations of what they deem the normal use of the term “role”:

- The term “role” is prescriptive because it is largely defined for an individual.

- It tends to be static, in that a changing context both within the organisation and its immediate environment is not considered.
- A hard and fast distinction is drawn between role and person.

According to Czander (1993), in defining a said role for themselves, individuals identify the relationships they are expected to maintain with other individuals, departments and systems both inside and outside the organisation. According to Roberts and Jarrett (2006), role is the point where the individual and organisation intersect. A role is not merely given by the organisation, but is also taken by the individual in the role when he or she makes it a personal experience bringing into it his or her knowledge, skills, beliefs and understanding of what is required of him or her (Roberts & Jarrett, 2004). Hirschhorn (1985) sees role as personalising work relationships as individuals enact the role, making it come alive by publicly setting its boundaries. Napper (2010) regards roles as being co-created in a particular context which has a psychological impact and meaning in shaping the individual's role and his or her coherence. This implies relationships between individuals and objects, organisations and environments that are powerful and complex and that have an impact on the taking up of a role. There is also a link to life scripts, which was discussed under TA in the preceding chapter. Individuals often choose the settings or context within which they wish to live life, based on a particular life script, and this drives their decisions and behaviour in terms of the roles they are drawn to (Napper, 2010).

Furthermore, it is necessary to differentiate between a formal and informal role. According to Green and Molenkamp (2005), the formal role is much like a job description that defines the duties to be performed against set parameters in collaboration with identified people and processes. Clarity on this formal role is critical for both the individual in the role and those who work with the individual. The informal role refers to those roles individuals take on that serve to fill gaps of authority and abandoned tasks, and these can range from implicit to explicit or conscious to unconscious (Green & Molenkamp, 2005).

Regarding the various perspectives on role, anxiety and perceived risk are inherent in taking up an organisational role (Hirschhorn, 1985). Other factors that could contribute to the level of anxiety experienced include the individual's socialisation into the role; the fit between his or her personality and the role requirements; fulfilling various roles that overlap; and changes in a role that require adaptation (Czander, 1993). In the event of such anxiety becoming too difficult to bear, the individual might escape by stepping out of his or her role, transforming the anxiety along a chain of interactions through psychological processes such as projections and introjection (Koortzen & Cilliers, 2002). When anxiety mobilises behaviour, at

times, the individual experiences others not as they are, but as they need them to be, resulting in a depersonalisation of others when individuals step out of role (Hirschhorn, 1985).

4.4.2 Boundaries

Boundaries stem from the need to classify and categorise the world being experienced, as in everyday life where there are deadlines, due dates and the like that have to be adhered to (Green & Molenkamp, 2005; Stapley, 2006).

Stapley (2006) distinguishes between three boundaries, namely spatial, temporal and psychological.

- Spatial boundaries are those created around territory.
- Temporal boundaries are those concerning time such as division of time into minutes and hours. These are artificial boundaries that individuals put into place from their lived experience and are a reflection of their meaning-making processes.
- The third category is psychological boundaries that individuals put into place to demarcate self-identity, where a mental line is drawn across one's set of experiences differentiating between everything on the inside being "self" and everything outside that boundary being "not-self". Likewise, psychological boundaries in groups are also important in that they define who belongs to the group and who does not.

According to Stapley (2006), the meaning-making experience itself is at the boundary between the world of external interaction and the world of internal interpretation. When conflict is at play between the two worlds, individuals tend to "dig in their heels" and stick to their boundaries, resulting in self-preservation.

Koortzen and Cilliers (2002) refer to time, space and task as basic boundary management in organisations that are used to contain anxiety, with the aim of making the workplace controllable and pleasant. *Time* boundaries are used to order, structure and contain the work setting. The *space* boundary refers to the workplace itself, for example, an open-plan office or closed offices for individuals or teams. The *task* boundary refers to knowing what the work content entails. Koortzen and Cilliers (2002) posit that anxiety about knowing what to do, and according to which standard, is contained in structures such as job descriptions and departmental structures. This influences the boundary culture of an organisation, which can be understood by reflecting on how individuals and groups in the organisation deal with boundaries (Green & Molenkamp, 2005).

Leadership by its very nature is a boundary-keeping function that sits on the periphery between the organisation and the external environment (Obholzer & Miller, 2004). Leaders play a significant role in managing the boundaries described here, in order to maintain organisational functioning and to contain the consequent uncertainties or anxiety created by the changes occurring between the organisation and external environment. Boundaries can be seen as a container that holds and supports the task, depending on it being clearly specified, agreed upon and adhered to (Green & Molenkamp, 2005).

4.4.3 Authority

Human beings start their lives depending on authority figures, starting with the mother and father. According to Stapley (2006), childhood experiences and meaning-making of these experiences leave individuals with either positive or negative experiences. For example, if an individual grew up fearful and disliking such authority figures, this experience could carry through into future adult relationships with authority figures, impacting on the individual's behaviour towards the said figures of authority. Factors such as dependency, competition and trust manifest in their interaction (Stapley, 2006). It is necessary to understand the various sources of authority that individuals may tap into.

Hirschhorn (1997) refers to personal authority, which he defines as the emotional appreciation individuals bring into their role of who they are, who they wish to become and what they contribute to the organisation. According to him, exercising personal authority allows individuals to bring more of themselves to the role, making them more psychologically present. Personal authority comes from within, that is, how an individual authorises himself or herself within the role.

From a leadership perspective, authority refers to the formal and official right given to perform the tasks of the leader's role. This includes what is bestowed from above (organisation and direct reporting line), the side (colleagues), below (subordinates) and self (self-authorisation) in fulfilling the tasks inherent in the role as leader (Cilliers & Terblanche, 2010). Leaders may have formal authorisation by virtue of the role they fulfil, but they have to authorise themselves personally within the role (Green & Molenkamp, 2005). They also need to generate and sustain the informal authorisation of those they lead by finding a way to connect followers with the work task at hand and the set of roles that define members' individual contribution to this work task (Eishold, 2004).

Stapley (2006) differentiates between authority and power, stating that the two concepts are frequently used interchangeably, but could have markedly different meanings. He defines power as the capacity a person has to influence the behaviour of another person(s) so that

the other person(s) will do something they would otherwise not have done. Sources of power include reward power, knowledge power, position power, expert power and personal power. Authority, however, implies that the person with authority has the sole right to do anything within the terms of his or her authority. Stapley (2006) emphasises the fact that this is different from influence or power, where the influencer has to gain the necessary approval from someone or somewhere. He states that power or influence may then not necessarily coexist with authority.

Stapley (2006) identifies two sources of authority, namely managerial and leadership authority. The former refers to that part of the leader's authority the organisation has delegated to him or her. The latter is that aspect of the leader's authority that is derived from the recognition of other organisational members that the leader has the capacity to perform the task. Managerial authority is delegated to the leader, and while he or she is held accountable for it, he or she can delegate to others responsibility for the work that needs to be done. By contrast, leadership authority can rest with the manager, but does not have to. Any member of the organisation can exercise his or her personal authority for leadership. Stapley (2006) aptly states that the true nature of authority lies in the leader's ability to affect the behaviour of a member of the organisation if the leader has the required authority over that member. He further states that the real source of authority actually lies in the acceptance of this authority by those subjected to it.

The following three levels of authorisation exist (Dimitrov, 2008):

- Representative authority implies being restricted in giving and sharing sensitive information about the system across the boundary.
- Delegated authority refers to more freedom in sharing, but with a clear boundary around the contents thereof.
- Plenipotentiary authority gives the person freedom to cross the boundary using his or her own responsibility in decision making and conduct.

While, on the one hand, Stapley (2006) speaks of those subjected to authority, on the other, there are also those who exercise their authority based on past experience of how this may have played out in their lives. In the context of leadership, it is essential to consider both elements as they play out in the leader-follower relationship.

Also important is the point Czander (1993) makes that even though authority is contained within a said role, by contrast, power can be projected onto the role. An individual fulfilling a particular role may be perceived as having power because of the nature of the role. In

leader-follower relationships this often plays out in that a follower may attribute certain power to the leader, responding to the role and not the person. According to Eisold (2004), authority is legitimised by both leaders and followers, and is created by them working together towards a common goal in the service of shared tasks. Behavioural constructs such as transference, mirroring and counter-transference, which will be discussed later in the chapter, then come into play in anxiety-provoking situations.

4.4.4 Task

The task is the basic component of work. Czander (1993) explains that an organisation is designed to perform a task. Each task requires a technical or operating system and a system of functions to control, coordinate and service its technology. These systems are delineated by boundaries. Tasks are dynamic, and even though a similar task may have been done previously, a change in the time boundary alone makes it a different one (Shongwe, 2014). Each individual involved with the task brings his or her individual, differing perceptions and has a tendency to import his or her histories and experiences in order to perform the task (Green & Molenkamp, 2005).

From the leadership role perspective, task refers to the leader's adherence to the primary task of his or her role, and the consequent off-task or anti-task behaviour that may manifest as a result of contained anxiety (Cilliers & Terblanche, 2010). This off-task or anti-task behaviour manifests as basic assumption behaviour of dependency, pairing, fight/flight, oneness and me-ness as described in the preceding chapter (Bion, 1961).

4.4.5 Role dynamics

In the context of role, the focus here is on the boundary surrounding work and position between leader, follower and organisation, where role dynamics differentiate between the normative, existential and phenomenal roles (Cilliers & Koortzen, 2005; Cilliers & Terblanche, 2010; Obholzer & Roberts, 1994).

- The *normative* role relates to the objective job description and content of the role. It is usually the document the organisation makes use of and provides to the individual when he or she is invited to join the organisation.
- The *existential* role focuses on how the leader believes he or she is performing. These beliefs are "coloured" by the individual's past experience with taking up previous roles and the consequent lens through which he or she perceives his or her performance in the role.

- The *phenomenal role* refers to what can be inferred by others' mostly unconscious behaviour towards the leader. The individual makes interpretations about others' views of his or her performance in role, based on how he or she behaves, what he or she says and any other dynamics of the interaction that play out.

Incongruence between these different roles creates anxiety (Cilliers & Koortzen, 2005). When the normative and existential roles are out of alignment, the resultant behaviour is the phenomenal role, which could manifest as resistant behaviour (Hoyle, 2004). According to Sievers and Beumer (2006), the process of taking a role in an organisation is people's attempt to discover how best to commit to meeting the tasks required in achieving the organisation's purpose. This process has underlying tension, conflict and anxieties at play that may influence how they experience the said role. It emphasises what Kets de Vries (2013) refers to as dissonance between what leaders say and do. Role is intricately connected to authority and boundaries, and any misperception about the role may create misperception about authority and boundaries (Green & Molenkamp, 2005).

Analysis of the leadership role is now explored in relation to the BART framework and other relevant behavioural constructs.

4.5 LEADERSHIP ROLE ANALYSIS

Reverting back to Czander's (1993) definition of role as a mode of adaptation to authority, structure, culture, duties and responsibilities, the leadership role is discussed in this section. Leadership behaviour is viewed as the interplay between the person, the role he or she occupies, and the team and organisational dynamics operating in his or her environment (Koortzen, 2016). This makes leadership a critical role because it relates to managing the boundary between the organisation and the environment it engages with (Obholzer & Miller, 2004). According to Borwick (2006), role connects the individual to the organisational system, and the organisational system to the individual. This leads to the complexity of taking up a leadership role specifically as role dynamics play out.

Various behavioural constructs are discussed below in relation to taking up the leadership role. This includes the BART framework, together with other relevant systems psychodynamics behavioural constructs at play.

4.5.1 Leader-in-role

When individuals take on a role, they manage the boundary between person and role by determining the skills, attitudes, and feelings they will devote to the role and what they will withhold (Stapley, 2006). This shapes the person's identity, which is constantly being

negotiated and renegotiated in interaction with others, and impacts on how the role is taken up. Identity refers to the nature of the leader's role behaviour and the branding, climate and culture of the organisational system (Cilliers & Terblanche, 2010).

According to Reed and Bazalgette (2006), taking on a role implies formulating a regulating principle within oneself, which enables one to manage one's behaviour in relation to what is expected in order to further the purpose of the organisational system within which the role exists. This is where the term "person-in-role" comes from. In the context of this study, the focus was on leader-in-role – the leader's inner world of understanding, feelings, memories and recognitions are in continuous interaction within an external changing world. The leader has his or her own needs, desires, fears and anxieties into which the experiences of the workplace enter. There is a process of consciously and unconsciously monitoring what the person will allow himself or herself to know or perceive, for his or her own survival's sake and for the sake of the organisation (Hutton et al., 1997). Hence the role is always dynamic in nature, constantly being influenced by changes both inside and outside the organisation. According to Hirschhorn (1985), anxiety is inherent in taking up a role as individuals have to perform tasks that pose risks and threats, and where the anxiety is too great, individuals will step out of role to escape. Hirschhorn (1985) states that this stepping out of role implies a violation of boundaries, as the anxiety is transmitted along a chain of projections and introjections where individuals experience other people not as they are but rather as they need them to be.

Reed and Bazalgette (2006) also contend that role is an idea in the mind – it cannot be seen but can be observed through the behaviour of those fulfilling the role. Through this observation, one can deduce what system the individual has in his or her mind and what he or she imagines is required to achieve the purpose or primary task of that system. One could say that the person or leader has several roles to fulfil within the system.

In taking up the leadership role, there needs to be congruence between the normative, existential and phenomenal roles (Obholzer & Roberts, 1994). Where incongruence occurs, underlying tension, conflict and anxieties manifest that may influence how the role is taken up, and this could result in dissonance between what leaders say and do (Kets de Vries, 2013). Role is intricately related to authority and boundaries, and any misperception about the role may create misperception about authority and boundaries (Green & Molenkamp, 2005).

Against the backdrop of the new world of work, the leadership role is inherently complex. Leaders are faced with multidimensional challenges that are part of a two-way, dynamic process between the leader and the led (Maltz & Witt, 2006). They argue that both the

leader and the organisation need to understand these challenges so that the leader can effectively take up the role. They further emphasise the need for leaders to move beyond the frame of role, task and authority to take in the continuously changing context for their authority.

4.5.2 Leadership role and group functioning

Conflict is a natural and human condition that drives behaviour. Gould et al. (2001) state it is as central to human life as eating, sleeping, breathing and reproducing. According to Cilliers and Koortzen (2005), it is the result of anxiety and is inevitable in human interaction. When an individual is faced with conflicting data, he or she responds from an internal pool of knowledge, which is the conscience or superego that indicates what to do or not to do (Huffington, Armstrong, Halton, Hoyle, & Pooley, 2004b). When conflict is experienced, it sets this process in motion, resulting in an attempt to resolve the conflict in order to reduce the anxiety that has been created. In the group context, Cilliers and Koortzen (2005) differentiate between the following splits in difference: (1) intra-personally (within the individual between ideas and feelings); (2) interpersonally (the experience of differences between two or more team members); (3) intra-group (between factions or subgroups); and (4) inter-group (between one team or department and others in the larger system). Conflict is inherent in the leader-follower interaction and will manifest in various defensive responses at an individual and group level as anxiety levels peak. Obholzer (2001) states that the basic behavioural assumptions identified by Bion (1961, 2003), Turquet (1974) and Lawrence (1996) have implications for leaders in that they determine the behaviour of individuals in groups and the resulting leadership “requirements”, both conscious and unconscious. These conscious and unconscious demands shape the role to be taken up by leaders, resulting in the co-creation of leadership.

4.5.3 Valence

Valence, a term first used by Kurt Lewin in the 1930s, refers to the intrinsic attraction (positive valence) or aversion (negative valence) of an event, object or situation for a specific individual. It is an unconscious predisposition for an individual to repeatedly choose to behave in particular ways when placed in provoking contexts (Kahn, 2014). This individual predisposition to take up particular kinds of roles often relates to the group’s basic assumption functioning (Hayden & Molenkamp, 2004).

Morgan-Jones (2010) reiterates Bion’s definition that valence is a primary force that guides the individual’s and group’s behaviour in relation to a set of common emotional standards. Valence is an unconscious dynamic that does not change much from one group setting to

the next, and influences both the formal and informal roles an individual fulfils (Green & Molenkamp, 2005). Individuals tend to take up similar roles across different group contexts, where, for example, they may be described as the “leader”, “protector” or “rescuer”, and they consistently repeat this behaviour in group after group, meaning they have valence for this role-based behaviour (Kahn, 2014). The conscious and unconscious demands that shape the role of leadership will guide the leader in how he or she takes up the role of leadership, what he or she works with on behalf of the group and the emotional standards he or she gravitates towards on behalf of others.

4.5.4 Relatedness

At an abstract, unconscious level, the organisation is always in the mind of the individual and group. It is an inner-psycho model of the organisation’s reality that influences perceptions and consequent behaviour (Koortzen & Cilliers, 2002; Roberts & Brunning, 2007; Sievers & Beumer, 2006). Individuals are held together by a sense of their function in relation to the larger enterprise and feel connected to the “institution in the mind”, without discovering what the institution actually stands for (Shapiro & Carr, 1991).

Reed and Bazalgette (2006) differentiate as follows between “organisation in the mind” and “institution in the mind”:

- “Organisation in the mind” is focused around the emotional experience of tasks, roles, purposes, boundaries, rituals, accountabilities and so forth.
- “Institution in the mind” refers to the emotional experience of ideals, hopes, beliefs, dreams, symbols and so forth.

The former speaks to management, while the latter speaks to leadership, and the two combined constitute the whole in terms of taking up a role.

In the same way, leadership could also be in the mind of the individual and group. People have implicit theories of what they think leadership should look like, based on their previous experience of “good” versus “bad” leadership and what they consequently expect from their leaders (Schyns & Schilling, 2011). These perceptions could connect individuals in how they then behave towards and what they require of leaders.

4.5.5 Containment

According to Diamond and Allcorn (2009), containment refers to the capacity of one individual to act as a container of emotions of another individual. According to Vansina and Vansina-Cobbaert (2008), it is an internal psychological process that one individual does for

certain psychological features of another individual. For example, an individual might manage to stay calm under stressful conditions, while the others who are emotionally upset might feel the said individual's concern and orientation towards solving the difficulties that have aroused anxiety.

This is very true of leaders, who play a vital role in containing the anxiety of those that follow, in order for the organisation to focus on the primary task at hand by providing a holding environment for the processing of experiences (Huffington, James, & Armstrong, 2004a). Diamond and Allcorn (2009) assert that in instances where leaders fail to contain these anxieties effectively, regressive actions kick in, resulting in individuals living and experiencing the past in the present moment. The said individuals may then project their aggression and anxieties onto the leader (Diamond & Allcorn, 2009). They state further that effective containment promotes a safe and secure psychological space where individuals can reflect and dialogue their experiences, resulting in learning and growth.

This implies that leaders need to have the emotional capacity to manage the anxieties and discomfort of those they lead, while remaining aware of their own anxiety and discomfort (Wheatley, 2005). Leaders present themselves as agents of change and with this comes the need to create such a holding space for those who require it.

4.5.6 Transference

Transference, which is a vital element of the leader-follower interface, is the act of processing information and organising one's experiences so that relationship patterns from the past can be used to deal with situations in the present (Kets de Vries, 2001; Vansina & Vansina-Cobbaert, 2008). This processing and organising of one's experiences then colours and distorts one's perceptions of others (Roberts & Brunning, 2007). According to Diamond and Allcorn (2009), it involves the displacement of patterns of thoughts, feelings and actions from the past onto the present and is especially prevalent where issues of power and authority are present. It is rooted in childhood experiences with significant figures and affects relationships in adulthood (Klein, 1975). The nature of the leader-follower relationship creates a conducive setting for such patterns to manifest, as issues of power and authority are a constant dynamic in this relationship.

The following two subtypes of transference are relevant here:

- *Mirroring* is about taking one's cues about how to be and how to behave from those around one, and becomes an ongoing aspect of one's daily life. This dynamic between leader and follower can become collusive. Followers are eager to use their leaders to

reflect what they would like to see, and leaders conversely find the affirmation of followers hard to resist (Kets de Vries, 2013). In the case of anxiety being created by a leader's aggression, followers may resort to a defensive process, referred to as "identification with the aggressor" (Kets de Vries, 2004). In such instances, people feel compelled to become like the aggressor in order to protect themselves from hurt or pain, resulting in a ripple effect of the leader being impersonated and a culture of aggression being generated in a system. A climate of dependency is created, where the world is viewed as starkly black and white – that is, the leader sees people as either for or against him or her, and responds to them accordingly (Kets de Vries, 2013).

- *Idealising* is a way of coping with feelings of helplessness by idealising people who are deemed important, like those in leadership roles, in the hope that one could acquire some of the power of those being admired. It aims to serve as a protective shield to followers and helps to explain follower experience where submission becomes a prominent aspect of work life (Diamond & Allcorn, 2009).

According to Dimitrov (2008), when these transference patterns persist, followers gradually stop responding to the leader according to the reality of the situation, allowing their past (unrealistic) hopes and fantasies to govern their interactions with the leader.

4.5.7 Countertransference

Countertransference refers to the feelings experienced by those who are the recipients of others' projections (Shapiro & Carr, 1991). It is the reaction to transference and arises from the context in which an individual's feelings and attitude are influenced by transference on to them, fuelling transference back onto the source (Diamond & Allcorn, 2009). From a leadership perspective, countertransference is the experience evoked in a leader as a response to his or her followers' transference, resulting in the leader adopting a projected role on behalf of his or her followers (Kahn, 2014). In instances where this projected role tends to be congruent with the leader's personality or personal history, the leader may unconsciously accept and collude with the transference projection (Hughes & Kerr, 2000).

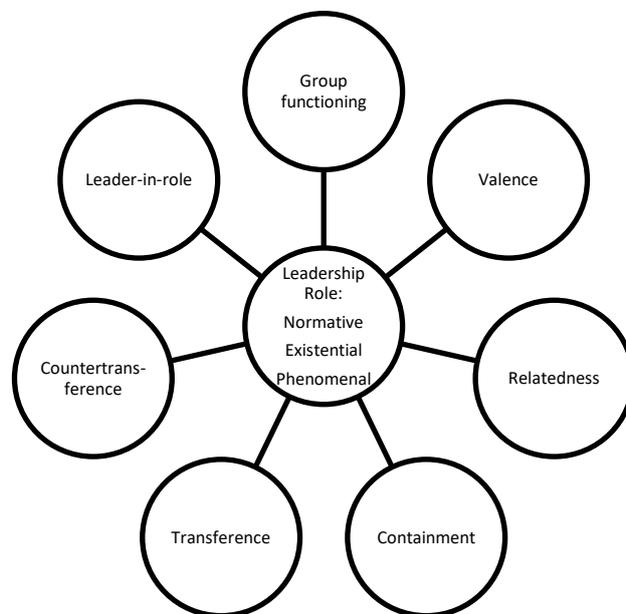
Kets de Vries (2004) refers to the "dark side" of leadership and followership, stating that the world is filled with many followers who deprive their leaders of much-needed critical feedback, and with leaders who need to preserve their own hold on reality, avoiding the pressure to reside in a hall of mirrors. He emphasises the fact that owing to the prevalence of such collusive practices, both leaders and followers need to work at understanding themselves and being open to feedback for self-enhancement. Kets de Vries (2004) further argues that leaders have a responsibility to enable followers to become leaders in their own

right, in order to create a space of learning, creativity and growth both for the individual and hence for the organisation. Practices like coaching provide the platform for such reflection and self-enhancement. Organisational members bring to the workplace their internalised world of object relations and this affects working relationships through transference and countertransference (Diamond & Allcorn, 2009).

In conclusion, the leadership role can be illustrated by the diagram below, taking into consideration the various constructs in understanding and analysing the leadership role from the systems psychodynamic perspective. This provides a frame of reference that was applied in the analysis of the empirical work of the study.

Figure 4.1

Leadership role analysis

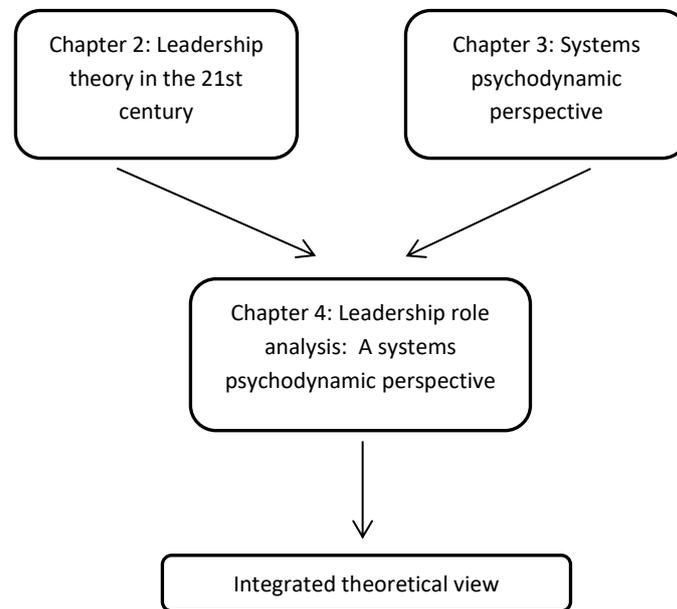


4.6 LITERATURE REVIEW INTEGRATION

This section serves as an integrated theoretical view of the literature review conducted in this research. The figure below depicts chapter 2 and chapter 3 informing chapter 4 and the emergence of an integrated theoretical view.

Figure 4.2

Literature review integration



The leadership landscape in which today's leaders operate is a reflection of extreme contexts of complexity, diversity, ambiguity and flux, which requires leaders to think and act globally, while living and acting locally (Booyesen, 2016). This calls for global, responsible leadership that speaks to ethical leaders who are agents of positive social change, implying that leadership transcends the immediate organisational environment (Veldsman, 2015). This is closely aligned to Madonsela's (cited in Veldsman & Johnson, 2016) definition of "true leadership", which is purpose-driven leadership that involves consciously influencing others to embrace and pursue a cause or desired outcome. She highlights the need for leaders to make a threefold difference: leaders need to be purpose driven in order to make a difference; they need to be vision driven, which requires a clear sense of the desired future; and leadership is about service to one's collective and humanity.

Against this backdrop, the complexity of leadership manifests at three systemic levels, namely macro, meso and micro (Greyvenstein & Cilliers, 2012): At the macro level, leadership is faced with post-modern organisational challenges of the 21st century such as globalisation, the new economy and increased competition; at the meso level, leadership is faced with increasingly complex technical and dynamic interpersonal organisational systems; and at the micro level, leadership faces the task of transforming their role from managing tasks and people towards a dynamic and systemic leadership role.

The conceptual framework of leadership derived in chapter 2 reiterates that leadership is something a leader does that involves enabling others and is embedded within continually evolving organisational systems (Dinh et al., 2014; Haslam & Reicher, 2014). Leadership is socially constructed and occurs at multiple levels, resulting in leadership that is distributed and shared for the accomplishment of a common goal (De Meyer, 2010; Hogg, 2001; Raelin, 2016). In this era of increasing uncertainty, new organisational dynamics are emerging that affect followers, leaders and core operating functions (Wheatley, 2005). The implication is that at an unconscious level, various defence mechanisms may manifest in response to the anxiety that is created.

Leadership is about human behaviour and revolves around the highly complex interplay between leaders and followers in a particular situational context (Kets de Vries & Engellau, 2004). The inherent tension that exists between leadership and followership (Obholzer & Miller, 2004) results in leaders projecting their inner conflicts on a bigger “stage” in the form of those they lead, while at the same time, followers also project their inner conflicts, keeping leaders and followers engaged in a particular dynamic (Kets de Vries, 2001).

From a theoretical perspective, early research attempts to conceptualise leadership as a phenomenon did not address the subconscious forces at play in human interaction and per se the leader-follower relationship (Kets de Vries & Korotov, 2010). However, subsequent theories started to emerge that shifted the focus to the interplay between leader and followers and the impact thereof on followers engaging in the vision and direction provided by leadership. The importance of emotions, the significance of earlier life experiences and the dynamics of interpersonal relationships were themes that were coming to the fore and being applied to new theories of leadership (Kets de Vries et al., 2013).

Patterns that have emerged that continue to shape the leadership landscape and related role requirements of the 21st century leader are discussed in the subsections below.

4.6.1 Shared leadership

This era has seen a shift to the sharing of leadership, in the sense that it is a process and is not vested in a specific individual. Leadership as a practice becomes quite relevant in this context where the work of leadership takes the form of patterns of action and interaction that is informed by everyday activity (Crevani & Endrissat, 2016). Above the surface (conscious level), leadership is spread across a number of individuals, resulting in decision making and accountability being shared and boundaries overlapping. This implies collaboration, which needs to be integrated across the organisation (Huffington et al., 2004a). Beneath the surface (unconscious level), this has implications in terms of clarity about roles, boundaries,

authority, tasks and the related anxiety it may create (Obholzer & Roberts, 1994). Leader-follower behavioural responses to this anxiety may manifest as work group basic assumption behaviour (Stacey, 2011), transference in the form of mirroring and idealising (Kets de Vries, 2004; 2013) and countertransference (Kahn, 2014).

One of Bennis's (Asghar, cited in Bennis & Sample, 2015) greatest contributions to leadership was his insight into the fact that democratic, collaborative organisations can adapt and thrive in ways that hierarchies cannot. Organisations of the 21st century are characterised as networked, open systems with structures that are flatter, complex and fluid (Huffington et.al, 2004a), which is aligned to this insight. The psychological experience of taking up a leadership role is marked by uncertainty about the meaning of relationships with others and within oneself (Huffington, et al., 2004a). Leadership is a function of the whole organisational system, where what is achieved in the role is more than only the result of personal characteristics, but rather what the organisation is collectively capable of working with (Dimitrov, 2008). This implies that the individual taking up the leadership role can only be the leader the organisation allows. Leadership roles are taken up in a context that exerts influence on the leader just as much as the leader influences the organisational context.

4.6.2 Leadership and management

There is a definite distinction between leadership and management, but both are required for organisations to function well. According to Bennis and Sample (2015), good management is essential because it utilises a certain blueprint to move the organisation forward in an established direction, while good leadership involves the ability to know when to move in new directions, without a blueprint.

There is alignment between the above and what Glynn and DeJordy (2010) view as the "plumbing" and "poetry" of leadership. The plumbing component ensures the smooth running of the organisation, while the poetry is about developing future organisational sustainability. This is linked to transactional (plumbing) and transformational (poetry) leadership, which continues to feature as relevant in effective leadership. With the shift in this era towards rapid globalisation, there is a need for transformational leaders of good character and credibility to enable them to deal with psychological barriers that manifest as defence mechanisms aimed at maintaining the status quo as they are faced with distrust and resistance (Denton & Vloeberghs, 2003).

Applying this perspective to the South African context, a duality exists between Eurocentric and Afrocentric leadership. The former orientation to leadership is congruent with Western management approaches that hinge on transactional leadership, while the latter orientation

is congruent with African humanism approaches (such as Ubuntu), which hinge on transformational leadership (Booyesen, 2001; Geldenhuys & Veldsman, 2010). Research has confirmed the need to integrate the transactional and transformational leadership dimensions in response to the different cultural expectations of the external environment, because the two dimensions complement each other in addressing possible gaps (Booyesen, 2001; Shokane et al., 2004). The challenge for South African business leaders is to develop the ability to compete globally and function parochially (Manning, cited in Booyesen, 2001). Against the backdrop of South Africa's sociopolitical changes and its return to the global business arena, leaders are challenged to promote change in a markedly different approach to the past (Nkomo & Kriek, 2011) requiring an Afrocentric, transformational leadership style. There is also a link to social identity theory, where South African leaders are faced with the challenge of understanding and adapting to new identities and enabling followers to do the same (Mare, cited in Nkomo & Kriek, 2011). Leaders' markedly Western leadership paradigms are being challenged as they face social identity paradoxes in the workplace (Booyesen, 2007b).

It has been found that in dealing with the complexity of today's turbulent conditions, a social defence manifests where leadership is split both in concept and practice into two defences, that is, managerialism and heroic leadership (Krantz & Gilmore, 2009). Managerialism results when the methods and techniques employed to accomplish the social purposes of the organisation become elevated to ends in themselves. Heroic leadership occurs when the leadership function of strategic thinking and direction setting is valued to the denigration of management – and the focus shifts to the hope that someone will be able to save the organisation through the force of vision and personality. This split results in the one element being idealised and the other devalued in an attempt to neutralise the doubts, uncertainties and anxieties stimulated in response to emerging organisational environments (Krantz & Gilmore, 2009). This split creates dysfunctionality in taking up the role of leadership, as both elements are critical to effective leadership – leadership yields ideas, while management provides the machinery to realise those ideas.

4.6.3 Leadership of complexity

French, Simpson, and Harvey (2001) introduced the concept of creative leadership and the contribution of negative capability to this approach of effective leadership. Negative capability is a phrase that was coined by the poet, John Keats, in 1950, and refers to the human capacity for containment – that is, the capability of “being” in uncertainty and ambiguity. French et al.'s (2001) article mentions leadership working at the edge of certainty and uncertainty, being able to hold or contain the uncertainty presented so as to create a

space where creative thinking can emerge. This speaks to moving between knowing (which finds itself in positive capabilities) and not knowing (which finds itself in negative capability), where the interaction between the two will allow transformation from the unknown to the known. From this transformation, creative thinking can be worked with and developed into action and innovation. There is a distinct link between this concept and what was explored in complexity leadership in chapter 2. Marion and Uhl-Bien's (2001) work in this regard calls for a shift from controlling outcomes to enabling desired outcomes. This sits well with the notion of "being" in uncertainty to create space for creative thought. From a systems psychodynamic stance it reiterates the importance of leaders developing the capacity to create a holding environment of containment so that followers can reflect and dialogue their experiences (Diamond & Allcorn, 2009). This, in turn, creates opportunities for learning, growth and creative thinking to emerge.

4.6.4 Containment in the face of uncertainty

According to Segal (2011) the practice of leadership is filled with moments of surprise, perplexity and uncertainty, and this presents engagement and disconnection as distinct responses to these conditions. He advocates for leaders to shift from a detached, disconnected stance to an engaged stance, where the nuances of lived experience are worked with to deal more effectively with uncertainty. He brings into view the Heideggerian perspective of human beings and their relationship with the world, by emphasising the art of listening to anxiety and uncertainty, stating that from anxiety flows questioning, which allows for conceptualising and taking perspective on situations through the opening up of possibilities. This is in contrast to leadership adopting an attitude of "soldiering on" in the face of uncertainty, instead of learning to listen to it, holding it and seeing what emerges (Segal, 2011). "Soldiering on" creates room for panic to set in and disconnection to occur in the sense that management techniques or processes are then relied upon to effect control, which excludes the lived experience of the leader in this context.

This brings to the fore the concept of containment as a vital function of leadership today. It is the ability to create a holding space to provide containment and enable followers to anchor themselves, particularly during times of turbulent change. According to Roberts and Brunning (2007), this process of containment allows followers to think and act effectively rather than needing to rid themselves of unpleasant feelings. However, if the leaders are also overwhelmed by anxiety, they are unable to provide support, resulting in followers resorting to unhelpful defence mechanisms and consequent distorted perceptions of leadership. According to Simpson and French (2005), leaders need to contain the pressures that cause dispersal into thoughtless activity during times of instability by creating a

relational and mental space that could promote tolerance of ambiguity, uncertainty and anxiety.

Linking up with attachment theory, attachment anxiety involves feelings and behaviours that arise in the context of close relationships. Hence from this perspective, leader-led relationships can be likened to parent-child relationships (close relationships) with attachment components, where follower needs and motives might shape expectations of the leader-follower relationship (Hansbrough, 2012). This analogous comparison stems from the similarity between the parent and leader roles, in that both include guiding, directing, taking charge and taking care of less powerful others whose fate is highly dependent on them (Hansbrough, 2012). Leadership is deemed a safe haven that is sought for protection during times of crises and uncertainty (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2009). This interaction has an influence on the perceptions of and behaviours towards leaders. Leader-follower attachment styles also have implications for authentic leader-follower relationships. Hinojosa, McCauley, Randolph-Seng, and Gardner (2014) found that followers who feel more secure are more likely to establish authentic relationships with their leaders, and that this secure attachment is associated with transformational leadership behaviours. Leaders may introject these behaviours in how they take up the role and what they may contain on behalf of followers.

TA, which was briefly discussed in the previous chapter, also comes into play in terms of the ego states that may emerge in the leader-follower interaction (Berne, 1977; Spenceley, 2016). Related to the systems psychodynamic perspective of leadership, the three ego states may manifest in the following ways: (1) The Parent ego state refers to echoes of significant others, that is, parental figures, in the life of the individual. Images of these parental figures are introjected by the leader and may provoke dependency in those who follow (Bion, 1961; Koortzen & Cilliers, 2002); (2) The Child ego state refers to echoes of the younger self, where the individual re-experiences thoughts, feelings and behaviour of how he or she responded in the past to similar situations. This relates to transference and countertransference (Diamond & Allcorn, 2009), which occurs in the leader-follower relationship, where issues of power and authority are a constant dynamic; and (3) The Adult ego state is about the here-and-now – that is, the thoughts, feelings and behaviours appropriate in the reality-testing of the current situation the leader and follower are faced with, which speaks to the focus on the primary task at hand (Spenceley, 2016). These ego states emerge in the event of the said leader not meeting expectations, and the anxieties, defence mechanisms and related behaviour may then manifest for both followers and leaders.

4.6.5 Co-creation of leadership

Leaders are a product of the following two sets of forces: (1) deep unconscious conflicts within themselves but outside their awareness; and (2) human interactions ranging from early infancy experience and the family environment, through to massive social movement, all which combine to co-create leaders (Klein et al., 2009). This co-creation of leadership occurs through the process of projective identification, where members split off parts of themselves into the leader for containment and enactment (Blackman, 2004). The roles of leader and follower emerge through the manifestation of basic assumptions as per Bion's theory (1961, 1975). This then impacts on the leaders' identity, resulting in an identity crisis between how leaders think they should take up the role and what their followers' project on to them.

Klein et al. (2009) suggest the following tenets of the co-creation paradigm of leadership: Leadership roles are influenced by the needs and dynamics of the evolving group being led; leaders and followers cannot exist without each other, as this applies to their roles, identities and so forth; leadership is not a person but rather a function and process that influences both leaders and followers to achieve goals and objectives; and some components of leadership are outside the awareness of leaders and followers. Implicit theories of leadership also have an impact, where followers' implicit assumptions of "good" leadership influence how they interpret the leader's behaviour and their consequent authorisation of said leader as competent and effective (Junker & Van Dick, 2014). Leaders themselves use their own past personal experiences with *their* leaders to develop leadership prototypes that either boost or hinder their motivation in taking up the role (Guillen et al., 2015). Hence both leaders and followers could be held together and be influenced by "leadership-in-the-mind", which is similar to the relatedness of the organisation being in the mind (Sievers & Beumer, 2006).

In this co-creation of leadership, role dynamics emerge that differentiate between the normative (job description and content), existential (leaders' introjected perceptions of their performance) and phenomenal (others' projected perceptions of leaders' performance) roles of leadership, which could result in role congruence or incongruence (Obholzer & Roberts, 2004). Incongruence between the three roles creates anxiety (Cilliers & Koortzen, 2005). When the normative and existential roles are out of alignment, the resultant behaviour is the phenomenal role, which could manifest as resistant behaviour (Hoyle, 2004).

Furthermore, leaders and followers are embedded in a shared context of relatedness to the organisation and its tasks, resulting in them mutually authorising each other to function in their roles (Krantz, 2006). Through this shared context, an institutional perspective emerges.

Given the constantly changing landscape in which they function, there is the possibility that leaders may sometimes need to betray those they lead in the service of the task. Krantz (2006) refers to “virtuous betrayal”, which recognises a transcendent need that supersedes the personal bonds of mutuality and loyalty. When leaders are unable to reconcile conflicts between personal and institutional perspective, they face the challenge of betrayal. This challenge brings with it repercussions that stimulate intense emotions and defensive responses that impact on the leader-follower relationship.

4.6.6 The lived leadership experience

The role of leadership from the systems psychodynamic stance is to enhance people’s capability to value the tension of conflicting points of view, to tolerate the ambiguity that comes from experiencing change and to manage the anxiety of facing uncertainty (Maltz & Witt, 2006).

In their extensive years of research, Bennis and Sample (2015) highlighted the following as crucial insights in the study of the leadership: (1) the ability to process failure, which is foundational to effective leadership as leaders stumble and experience setbacks along the way; and (2) the unsentimental recognition that real leadership can involve painful trade-offs on the part of the leader and the importance of the mature leader knowing his or her own moral core intimately in order to be guided by it in such challenging times. Leaders have to cope with intense, complex emotional pressures, including managing their own uncertainties, containing the uncertainties of others, resisting unconscious attempts to idealise or denigrate and responding to the longing of others for protection and care (Krantz, 2006).

The psychodynamics of leadership focus on the lived human experience of leaders in organisations, providing insights into how people become leaders, how they interact with followers and how their individual past experiences influence the organisation as a system (Kets de Vries et al., 2013). A constantly changing organisation cannot offer sufficient containment of anxiety, leading to more anxiety, and in order to cope with this discomfort, the need for containment from something or someone is created and projected on to leadership (De Klerk, 2012).

The systems psychodynamic perspective indicates that organisations and teams function at the following two levels (Bion, 1961): (1) the sophisticated work group – focusing on the primary task to be achieved; and (2) the basic assumption group – responding to the anxieties, fears and discomfort the environment is creating. Since leaders function on the periphery of these two levels in a constantly changing environment, they need to facilitate the boundaries between the internal (organisation) and external (environment) components,

providing direction and containing uncertainty while enabling change (Obholzer & Miller, 2004).

Given that leadership fulfils a boundary-keeping function (Alderfer & Klein, 1985), it is important to consider what could emerge: leadership could either become too drawn into the system and what is happening internally, or become too cut off by being only externally focused (Roberts & Brunning, 2007). Valence also features as individual leaders could take up similar roles across different group contexts, based on the predisposition they may have for specific role-based behaviour such as leader, protector, rescuer and so on (Kahn, 2014). Conscious and unconscious demands shape the role of leadership as leaders gravitate towards specific emotional standards on behalf of others, and as they serve a specific purpose for the organisation (Morgan-Jones, 2010).

Leadership occurs in a dynamic, complex, emerging state and not a static, ordered, controlled state (Holman, 2010; Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2001). This impacts on how leaders take up the role and what is expected of them in relation to the defences that may manifest in response to the resulting anxiety they and others experience. Research appears to focus primarily on leadership's impact on others (i.e. individuals, groups, context and organisation), but not as extensively on what leaders themselves experience in the role and the consequent impact of their experience.

As stated previously, the aim of this study was to explore the lived experience of leaders by focusing on their normative, existential and phenomenal roles in terms of congruence, as it relates to the patterns that were discussed here, that shape the leadership landscape of this era. In conclusion, this integrated literature review, together with the leadership role analysis, provided a frame of reference in the findings discussion to follow in chapter 6.

4.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The purpose of this chapter was to conceptualise the leadership role from the systems psychodynamic perspective in order to study the role from this theoretical framework. Specific focus was placed on what appears to manifest consciously and unconsciously when the leadership role is taken up. Critical patterns that shape the leadership landscape of this era were also discussed. The importance of role congruence was highlighted, and was explored in this study in terms of the possible anxieties that may manifest where incongruence exists. Chapter 5 explains the research design employed in this study.

CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH DESIGN

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to describe the research approach, strategy and method adopted in the study, together with the strategies employed to ensure quality data and the ethics of qualitative research and reporting. It begins with a description of the research approach and strategy. The research method is then discussed in relation to the research setting, entrée and establishment of the researcher roles, sampling method, the data collection method and process, and the data analysis method. The strategies employed to ensure quality data are then explained, followed by an explanation of the ethics of qualitative research and reporting. The chapter concludes with a summary.

5.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

A qualitative research approach was selected for this study in order to explore, describe and analyse the lived leadership experience of 21st century leaders (Eatough, 2012). Given that leadership is a complex human experience unique to each individual leader, it was necessary to gain an understanding of the meaning leaders attach to taking up the role. This qualitative approach served the study well in that it provided rich data to work with in comprehending this meaning-making process (Krauss, 2005). It provided an in-depth understanding of the participants' experience from the systems psychodynamic perspective, with reference to what is experienced above and below the surface (Cilliers & Koortzen, 2005).

The study focused on the development of understanding consequent to (not prior to) an analysis of data (Rennie, 1999). The research design therefore comprised empirical work at the commencement of the study. This was followed by a literature review in order to gain an understanding of the following:

- the 21st century world of work and the kind of organisations that exist and function in this world of work
- the kind of leadership required in the 21st century
- the systems psychodynamic perspective of the leadership role

Analysis and interpretation then followed, and this is discussed under the data analysis section.

In keeping with exploring the lived experience of participants, the research paradigm chosen for the study was hermeneutic phenomenology (Eatough, 2012; Finlay, 2009). The study focused on the unique, subjective experience and insights of participants, as told through their leadership stories and the meaning they assigned to this experience (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009; Groenewald, 2004). A meaningful sense of understanding was sought by focusing on illuminating details and perhaps seemingly trivial aspects in the participants' experience that might be taken for granted (Kafle, 2011).

The study endeavoured to gain descriptions of lived situations – that is, first-person accounts set down in everyday language – with the aim of avoiding abstract intellectual generalisations (Finlay, 2009). This sought to tap into the intentional relationship between the individual and the meanings of the things they are experiencing (Finlay, 2008). Important qualities of this research approach included a *description* of the phenomenon of leadership; a *reduction* of the phenomenon so that the “things themselves could be returned to”; and the *essence* or core meaning of participants' experiences that made it what it was (Kafle, 2011).

The epistemology and ontology underpinning the study related to the constructivist view that as the researcher interacts with participants, knowledge is established through the meanings attached to the phenomena being studied, keeping in mind that this knowledge is time and context dependent (Krauss, 2005). The underlying belief system of the researcher supported the philosophy that as humans we have different experiences based on differing realities. This spoke to exploring and understanding the lived experience of leaders from their *unique* realities – the way they construct meaning and what it means for *them* (Krauss, 2005). Hence the researcher's underpinning belief was that “knowledge lies within the subjective”. She was an integral part of the research process, interacting with participants in order to “co-create” the process (Krauss, 2005). The philosophy guiding her approach focused on the subjective relationship between researcher and participants and not in the computing of responses into a program to obtain objective generalisations about individual experiences. The researcher presented as the research instrument, inviting participants to tell their story and utilising her experience or expertise to enable them to extract meaning (Jervis, 2009; Terre Blanche et al., 2006).

The researcher applied the hermeneutic skill of reflectively analysing the rich textured descriptions that emerged, going beyond the surface expressions to read between the lines and access implicit dimensions and intuitions (Eatough, 2012). Double hermeneutics was utilised to interpret the data through a systems psychodynamic lens, enabling the researcher to explore below the surface tapping into the unconscious aspects of taking up the leadership role (Cilliers & Koortzen, 2005).

Another key element considered in this study was the influence the researcher had on the research process itself. Given that a co-creation of data emerged from the researcher-participant relationship (Finlay, 2009), her own subjective experience could not be excluded because it was inextricably linked to interpretation (Whitehead, 2004). Triple hermeneutics was used to interpret this unconscious interaction between the researcher and participants (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009).

5.3 RESEARCH STRATEGY

Qualitative case study research was selected as the research strategy (Silverman, 2005) because it is anchored in the constructivist paradigm, which claims that truth is relative and dependent on an individual's perspective (Baxter & Jack, 2008). This fitted well with the epistemological and ontological philosophy underpinning the approach of this study of the meaning-making experience being unique to each individual.

A key aspect of this study was that of context – that is, the backdrop against which the role of leadership was fulfilled, namely the 21st century. Case study research was chosen since it allowed the researcher to cover the contextual conditions that were relevant to the complex phenomenon being studied (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

Participants shared their individual accounts from which insight and understanding were gained of their lived experience as leaders, providing individual cases as the unit of analysis (Voss, Tsiriktsis, & Frohlich, 2002). An approach of examining more than one case study helped to gain a collective understanding (Stake, 1995). It enabled the extraction of a cross-case integration of the findings, allowing for leadership to be explored through a variety of lenses and for multiple facets of the phenomenon to emerge (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

This collective case study approach (Silverman, 2005) also allowed for close collaboration with participants, while enabling them to tell their stories (Crabtree & Miller, 1999). A benefit of multiple cases was that it augmented external validity, increased the generalisability of results and helped guard against interviewer bias (Voss et al., 2002). A common pitfall of case study research is the tendency to answer a question that is too broad or that may focus on too many objectives (Baxter & Jack, 2008). The researcher guarded against this by placing boundaries on the cases worked with. In this instance, the cases were bound by definition and context. The phenomenon was defined, with specific focus on the normative, existential and phenomenal roles of leadership (Cilliers & Koortzen, 2005) and was explored in the context of the 21st century. From a case study research perspective, these boundaries determined the scope of the study in terms of breadth and depth (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

5.4 RESEARCH METHOD

In this section, the research setting, the entrée and establishment of the researcher roles, sampling, the data collection method, the data collection procedure and the data analysis method are explained.

5.4.1 Research setting

The study was conducted in corporate organisations in the Gauteng province of South Africa. These organisations were in various industries, including financial, mining, market research, engineering and manufacturing. All of them were undergoing constant rapid change impacted by globalisation, technological advancement, growing complexity, the demand for innovation and an ever-increasing knowledge economy (Verwey et al., 2012). These factors affected how they operated and what was required in order to remain sustainable in this changing world of work (Taylor, 2015). Organisational strategy was often reviewed, resulting in restructuring, mergers and acquisitions being the order of the day (Kets de Vries, 2001).

Leaders participating in the study fulfilled formal roles in various organisational levels, including executive, top management and middle management. Organisational objectives and expectations included the following:

- At executive level, a highly strategic focus was required to formulate and drive organisational strategy.
- At top management level, a combination of strategic and operational focus was required to operationalise organisational strategy.
- At middle management level, a strong operational focus with limited strategic focus was required to implement organisational strategy and enable business performance.

These objectives had to be achieved against the backdrop of complexity and uncertainty, as change continuously occurred. Many of the leaders simultaneously fulfilled more than one role across the three levels highlighted above. The teams and departments these leaders were responsible for were in a constant state of flux, transitioning between various changes, including structural, procedural, legislative and economic changes, as they attempted to meet organisational demands for performance.

5.4.2 Entrée and establishing researcher roles

Access to participants and their organisations was negotiated and obtained in the following ways: (1) through fellow associates, serving as gatekeepers to their respective clients; and (2) from the researcher's own business client database.

The researcher fulfilled various roles, which are now discussed.

- *Doctoral student.* In her role as doctoral student in the field of consulting psychology, the researcher was acutely aware of organisational behaviour and its impact on individuals, groups and organisations. Having been exposed to systems psychodynamic consultation in her work, she was able to apply this lens in order to understand the data in depth. She took up the role of interviewer, in sourcing the empirical data of participants' experiences; observer in recording field notes; analyst, in analysing the sourced data and interpreter, in making interpretations.
- *Industrial psychologist.* The researcher is an industrial psychologist who does consultation work with organisations in the corporate sector. This brings her into contact with leaders at all levels in organisations. She is experienced in working with leaders on various matters, including coaching, team optimisation, change management and leadership development.
- *Consultant and coach.* The researcher is an organisational development (OD) specialist and executive coach, who functions as an independent consultant, providing a service to clients across various industries. Her service offering and experience include consulting and coaching from a system psychodynamic perspective. She was able to apply this expertise and experience in conducting the study.
- *Self as instrument of research.* Having experienced and worked with leaders in their work settings, the researcher was well aware of the impact of the changing world of work on the role of leaders. She was intrigued by what this lived experience might look like below the surface in terms of unconscious behaviour that manifested in how people took up the role of leadership (Smith & Eatough, 2012). As a researcher, she became increasingly aware of the impact of hearing the lived leadership stories in terms of the emotions and thoughts it evoked for her (Finlay, 2003). She was therefore influenced by the data, and the data was, in turn, influenced by her (Finlay, 2009). She adopted an attitude of self-awareness and active reflection relating to her own unconscious behaviours, mental models about the phenomenon and personal experience of the study (Eatough, 2012), which emerged as a written narrative. This narrative was later analysed

from a systems psychodynamics perspective, in terms of her role in the research setting, its related unconscious interaction and resulting interpretations (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009).

5.4.3 Sampling

The sampling strategy was determined by the research question, the scale of the study and the type of material that needed to be collected (Johnson & Waterfield, 2004). The study sought to explore the unique leadership experience of participants, implying a small and limited sample size to enable an in-depth study of the phenomenon (Smith & Eatough, 2012). A purposeful, convenient sample was selected, based on specific criteria and according to the participants' availability and willingness to participate (Babbi & Mouton, 2001; Koerber & McMichael, 2008; Mason, 2005).

Given the case study research strategy adopted in this study, careful, critical consideration of the parameters of the population being studied was considered by adopting this purposeful sampling approach (Voss et al., 2002; Silverman, 2005). As discussed in the research strategy, the cases, as units of analysis, were bound by definition and context to ensure that the scope of the study was well defined in terms of breadth and depth (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

Voss et al. (2002) highlight the importance of the sampling logic that is used in case study research. They state that each case should either predict similar results or produce contrary results, but for predictable reasons. In this study, the participants were deliberately chosen to predict similar results based on the following criteria:

- (1) They had to be in a formal leadership role.
- (2) They had to be employed in organisations in the corporate sector.
- (3) They had to be readily available and accessible to participate in the research.

Through purposeful sampling, a defined group of participants was sought for whom the research question being posed would have relevance and personal significance (Smith & Eatough, 2012) to enrich the data that emerged. Participants who met the identified criteria were invited to participate (Koerber & McMichael, 2008), and the final sample of eight was identified.

This number of participants was identified with the probability of increasing the sample size if the data required further richness for interpretation (Fusch & Ness, 2015), where saturation point had not been reached or nothing new had emerged from the data (Cilliers & Terblanche, 2010). Of the initial eight participants, one indicated interest but failed to

respond to the formal invitation. A ninth potential participant was then approached to ensure that the sample size remained at eight participants.

The small sample size afforded the researcher the opportunity to conduct an in-depth study of the phenomenon of leadership and yielded the depth of richness required in the data (Groenewald, 2004; Johnson & Waterfield, 2004).

The sample consisted of participants who had taken up formal leadership roles, ranging from executive to middle management level in various organisations in the corporate sector. The race and gender composition of the sample was not deliberately aimed for, but emerged as a result of participants who expressed interest in participating in the study. They had varying degrees of experience in leadership roles. Their responsibilities included management of direct reports and of their respective areas of business. The table below sets out the demographics of the research participants.

Table 5.1

Demographics of the research participants

Research Participant	Title	Level	Age Range	Race	Gender
1	Area manager	Middle management	Fifties	White	Male
2	Regional head	Middle management	Thirties	Indian	Female
3	Partner	Top management	Forties	White	Male
4	General manager	Top management	Forties	Black	Male
5	Managing director	Executive	Thirties	White	Female
6	Head: Enterprise operations	Top management	Forties	White	Male
7	Sales manager	Middle management	Forties	Indian	Male
8	HR executive	Executive	Fifties	White	Male

5.4.4 Data collection method

From a qualitative research perspective a semi-structured, in-depth interview was developed and utilised as the data collection method (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). The researcher referred to this instrument as the Leadership Interview. The instrument is now discussed under the following subheadings: rationale; purpose; the Leadership Interview structure and script; the role of interviewer; recording and transcription of data; and the validity and reliability of the Leadership Interview.

5.4.4.1 Rationale

The Leadership Interview focused on understanding participants' experiences and the meaning they make thereof (Greef, 2002). From a phenomenological interviewing perspective, the relationship between researcher and participants is reflective in nature (Wimpenny & Gass, 2000). The instrument was designed to enable the researcher to explore meaning and perceptions to gain a better understanding and generate hypotheses (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). This informal, fluid exchange of dialogue served well in collecting the rich descriptive set of data required (Mason, 2005) as it enabled the researcher to probe for more information and seek clarification where necessary. It also allowed for the collection of a large amount of information directly from participants.

5.4.4.2 Purpose

The purpose of the Leadership Interview was to elicit individuals' lived experience and related thoughts, feelings and attitudes. The researcher gained an understanding of the participants' emotional and mental responses to their realities, by deriving the meanings and interpretations they ascribed to these realities (Loh, 2013).

5.4.4.3 Leadership Interview structure and script

The Leadership Interview was informed by the socioanalytic interview of Long (2013), a qualitative in-depth interview that works according to an existential and phenomenological approach. Her instrument aimed to uncover, understand and hypothesise about thoughts and feelings relating to unconscious processes and dynamics. The approach of Long's (2013) instrument was aligned to the structure required in the data collection method for this study.

Hollway and Jefferson's (2000) Free Association Narrative Interview (FANI) also informed the Leadership Interview, with the following principles being incorporated into the design (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009):

- making use of open-ended questions designed to encourage the respondent to talk about the meaning and quality of experience
- eliciting a story, which is a principle that allows the researcher to look at various forms of unconscious communication, transference, counter-transference and projective identifications present in the interview relationship
- avoiding the use of “why” questions to elicit clichéd or socially desirable answers from participants
- using participants’ ordering and phrasing, which involves careful listening in order to ask follow-up questions without offering interpretations

The Leadership Interview was a two-hour, in-depth interview. The script began with an introduction to create context and set the scene of the interview. It was designed with open-ended questions aimed at exploring the participant’s experience and gaining understanding. A funnel approach was adopted in setting up the interview questions, starting with a broad question and progressing to more specific questions (Voss et al., 2002).

The interview questions began with a broad primary question, intended to be non-threatening to the participant, namely “Tell me about your role as a leader”.

This was followed by three secondary questions that were more specific, and included probing prompts for the researcher to make use of where deemed necessary.

- What is expected of you in your role as a leader?
- How do you see yourself performing in this role?
- How do you think others see you performing in your role?

The Leadership Interview ended with an opportunity for the participant to reflect on what had emerged from the conversation. The following closing questions were posed:

- What part of the conversation was the easiest for you?
- What part of the conversation made you anxious or was difficult?
- Is there anything that was not covered which you would like to share? Please share it.
- Please summarise the themes about you as leader, which came up as a result of this conversation.

These closing questions provided the participants with self-insight that could be applied in their respective leadership journeys. For instance, participants could have been in a coaching programme that would enable them to take the learning into further application. For

others, the insight could have been that they may need to embark on coaching or other self-development opportunities.

5.4.4.4 Role of the interviewer

The interviewer's role was to ensure that rapport and trust were established, which would allow for in-depth exploration (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). It was also the interviewer's role to clearly explain the purpose of the interview, as this could impact on participants' assumptions or perceptions about what to share and to what depth. This was achieved by highlighting the information provided in the invitation to participate, by way of an information sheet. The researcher had to gather information without controlling the flow of information, and had to record it accurately (Corbin & Morse, 2003).

5.4.4.5 Recording and transcription of data

The interviews were recorded using an audio recorder to enable transcription and analysis. Participants were requested to provide consent to the audio recording on the information and consent sheet. Audio recording reduced the possibility of interviewer error and allowed for the researcher to remain present in the conversation rather than become preoccupied with making field notes (Breakwell, Smith, & Wright, 2012). Personal biases could shape what the researcher saw, heard and recorded. The use of audio recording also contributed to the reduction of observer bias, particularly where the data was transcribed verbatim rather than summarised (Voss et al., 2002). Prior to and after each interview, the researcher set aside time to write down her field notes, which were reflected upon during the data analysis phase. These field notes were written in a reflexive manner, where the researcher recorded what she heard, saw, experienced and thought in the course of collecting the data (Groenewald, 2004).

5.4.4.6 Validity and reliability of the Leadership Interview as a research instrument

It is not always possible for researchers to plan or control the circumstances under which the interviews take place. However, their approach and attitude towards participants can contribute to securing valid and reliable data. The discussion below demonstrates the validity of the Leadership Interview as a research instrument.

In a semi-structured interview such as the Leadership Interview, the validity may be questionable because the researcher had no control over the integrity of the information being provided by the interviewee (Corbin & Morse, 2003). The researcher overcame this by making use of a systematic set of questions to guide the conversation, as set out in the Leadership Interview script (Breakwell et al., 2012). Another means to secure valid and

reliable data was to ensure a conducive setting by incorporating the following phases in the interview process (Corbin & Morse, 2003):

- *Preinterview phase.* Before the actual start of the interview, the researcher reiterated the purpose and nature of the study, reviewed the information sheet and consent form, and checked for understanding.
- *Tentative phase.* A broad, open-ended question was asked to ease the participant into the interview. This allowed for the conversation to gradually become more in depth. As the participant became more at ease with the researcher and the process, more specific questions were asked.
- *Immersion phase.* Participants may have varying ways of becoming immersed in the narration. Some might become easily introspective and thoughtful, revealing more of themselves. Others might limit their conversations to facts. In moving back and forth between various events, they become immersed in the narrative. At other times, participants may be distressed by the emotions the narrative may evoke. The researcher needed to read the situation, knowing where to stop the narration to allow the participant a moment to regain composure. The emotions were acknowledged and the participant was given options to continue, change the topic at hand or even end the interview.
- *Emergent phase.* Regardless of the option chosen by the participant (as per above), this phase was critical to concluding the interview at a less distressing level. The researcher posed a few closing questions that enabled the participant to reflect on the thoughts and emotions that emerged from the narrative. In addition, participants were encouraged to share information that was not covered by the interview questions. Lastly, they were afforded an opportunity to extract their insights about their leadership journey for self-development. This phase enabled participants to feel in control of the information being shared.

Rigour could also be established in the Leadership Interview through the following criteria (Wimpenny & Gass, 2000):

- *Evidence of spontaneity from participants.* The conversation flowed as the participant shared his or her story easily and enthusiastically.
- *Balance of interviewer and interviewee time.* The participant took up most of the time talking, while the researcher probed, acknowledging what she heard, and asked questions for clarity.

- *The clarity achieved by the story provided.* The recording revealed a well-explored story of the participant's lived experience.

This discussion served to describe the validity and reliability of the Leadership Interview as the research *instrument*. The strategies employed to ensure quality data, from a research *process* perspective, are discussed later in this chapter.

5.4.5 Data collection procedure

In this study, data was collected by adopting the following procedure:

5.4.5.1 Setting up the Leadership Interviews

- Potential research participants were contacted telephonically to determine their interest in participating.
- This was followed up with an email being sent to interested individuals. The email served to provide further information on the research study, together with an informed consent form that had to be signed in order for the individual to be included in the study.
- Upon receipt of this signed consent, availability was checked and the interviews were scheduled. Interview dates were identified according to the availability of participants.
- In instances where the participants were known to the researcher, the email providing information was adequate context and the interview was scheduled.
- In situations where the client was unknown to the researcher, an introductory meeting was scheduled prior to the interview. This meeting aimed to establish rapport and afford both participant and researcher an opportunity to briefly become acquainted. It allowed for the parties to move into the scheduled interview itself with greater ease.

5.4.5.2 Conducting the Leadership Interviews

- The Leadership Interview was piloted prior to collection of the data. The individual, with whom the pilot was conducted, was an associate consultant who works in a similar setting as the researcher, has systems psychodynamics background and has also fulfilled various leadership roles. Feedback gained from a debriefing of the pilot interview provided recommendations that were incorporated into the final interview instrument before data collection commenced.
- Leadership Interviews were scheduled and conducted according to participants' availability.

5.4.5.3 Extraction of data

The interview sessions were recorded using a recording device and later transcribed by a transcription expert. This individual was asked to complete and sign a transcription confidentiality agreement, ensuring that all transcribed data was kept safe and confidential. Transcripts as a source of data offered more than recollections of conversations. It provided details of, say, pauses and overlaps that added to the richness of data to work with (Silverman, 2005).

5.4.5.4 Practicalities

The interviews took place in a setting conducive to conducting qualitative research. Participants were afforded the opportunity to select a space of choice, keeping in mind the researcher's requirements for such a setting. These requirements included the following: (1) The interview room had to be noise free, adequately lit and well ventilated; and (2) The participants had to feel comfortable to speak freely in the selected space.

5.4.6 Data analysis

Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data collected (Braun & Clarke, 2006) by applying triple hermeneutics (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009). It is a widely used qualitative method in psychology that offers an accessible and theoretically flexible approach to analysing qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Through its flexibility it provided rich, detailed, yet complex data, which the researcher sought in this study. The benefit of this analytical method is that it does not need detailed theoretical and technological knowledge often required by approaches such as grounded theory and discourse analysis (Boydell, 2009; Cheek, 2004). It also differs from content analysis where the focus is at a more micro level and the unit of analysis tends to be a phrase or word (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). In this study, the unit of analysis was the individual case. The study was experiential and not evaluative in nature, and thematic analysis served it well in that it provided the openness for new data to emerge as individual cases were analysed across settings, presented individually and then integrated according to manifesting themes and discussions (Baxter & Jack, 2008). An inductive approach of thematic analysis was adopted, where emerging themes were strongly linked to the data itself and to the research topic (Braun & Clarke, 2006) by reviewing themes against existing literature (Voss et al., 2002).

Having the benefit of not being wed to any pre-existing theoretical framework (Braun & Clarke, 2006), implies that thematic analysis could be used across different theoretical

frameworks (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). It therefore enabled the researcher to reflect reality and to unravel the surface of reality through the application of the systems psychodynamic lens as a theoretical framework. Through the application of this lens, manifesting basic assumptions and relevant systems psychodynamic behavioural constructs were identified and interpreted (Smit & Cilliers, 2006; Struwig & Cilliers, 2012). It is evident that the interpretive power of thematic analysis was enhanced beyond mere description with the application of the systems psychodynamic lens.

In keeping with the research paradigm of hermeneutic phenomenology, the hermeneutic cycle (Kafle, 2011) that constitutes reading, reflective writing and interpretation, was applied in the analysis of the data.

The following data analysis process was followed, proceeding from triple hermeneutics through to extraction of themes and hypotheses (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Struwig & Cilliers, 2012):

- *First-level hermeneutics.* At this level, the researcher repeatedly immersed herself in the data to gain an understanding. She read through the data several times to glean the essence and identify the significant themes or narratives that were emerging (Finlay, 2009).
- *Second-level hermeneutics.* Here the researcher applied the systems psychodynamic lens, linking it to basic assumptions and behavioural constructs. It is at this level that the researcher started to bring the data and the systems psychodynamic literature together, resulting in interpretation. The data was anchored on a role analysis framework to enable interpretation from this perspective. From a systems psychodynamic perspective, role dynamics differentiate between the normative, existential and phenomenal roles (described in chapter 4). The objective of the role analysis was to understand how participants attached to the said roles. It was an exploration of the anxieties that manifested when individuals experienced incongruence in these assumed roles.

The following steps were followed in conducting the role analysis:

- *Step 1.* The data was reviewed and separated, per case, according to the three roles, namely normative, existential and phenomenal roles.
- *Step 2.* Each case was studied in search of systems psychodynamic themes (as described in chapters 3 and 4). Levels of congruence or incongruence between the three roles were noted per case.

- *Step 3.* Individual cases were explored for overlapping patterns or themes, resulting in cross-case leadership role integration.
- *Third-level hermeneutics.* At the third level, the researcher explored her personal, emotional response to the research. She reflected on and analysed the demands the actual research encounter may have had on her as the instrument of research (Eatough, 2012; Finlay, 2009). This was written up as the researcher's experience, firstly per individual case, and then integrated under the cross-case leadership role integration.
- *Extraction of themes and hypotheses.* Emerging themes became the building blocks for cross-case analysis and interpretation. Systems psychodynamics literature was further applied to interpret these themes (described in chapters 3 and 4). Working hypotheses were derived per theme, which culminated in a research hypothesis.

5.5 STRATEGIES EMPLOYED TO ENSURE QUALITY DATA

In this section, issues pertaining to the trustworthiness, quality and ethics of the study are addressed.

5.5.1 Trustworthiness

In qualitative research, validity is considered through elements such as the quality, rigour and trustworthiness of the research (Loh, 2013; Merrick, 1999). Trustworthiness encompasses the elements of good practice that is present throughout the research process (Merrick, 1999). It refers to the elements of credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability and authenticity, as adapted from the work of Lincoln and Guba (1985, cited in Loh, 2013).

The discussion below highlights how these elements were applied to enhance the trustworthiness of the study (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Loh, 2013; Tobin & Begley, 2004).

- Credibility is an alternative to what is deemed internal validity in quantitative research criteria (Johnson & Waterfield, 2004), and refers to the research topic being accurately described and interpreted through the researcher's experience (Whitehead, 2004). In this interpretive research, the researcher was the primary instrument for collecting and analysing the data (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). The credibility of the researcher was considered in terms of experience, competence and qualifications. Furthermore, careful selection of setting, population and theoretical framework was considered.

- Transferability is equivalent to external validity, and refers to the degree to which the findings can be applied or transferred to different settings or populations (Johnson & Waterfield, 2004). The research question and research objectives were well formulated. A research protocol was clearly defined to describe and guide the research procedures, which allows for others to apply the findings and research process (Voss et al., 2002). Multiple sources of data were also used to enhance transferability, including audio recordings, transcripts and a reflexive journal of field notes, to ensure that the research was explored from multiple perspectives (Baxter & Jack, 2008). From a case study research perspective, multiple cases of interviews were conducted to increase generalisability in terms of external validity (Voss et. al., 2002).
- Dependability is the alternative to reliability in quantitative research and speaks to the results of the study being repeatable. It is demonstrated through establishing an audit trail (Whitehead, 2004) that ensures that the research process is logical, traceable and clearly documented, allowing others access to the researcher's documentation of data, methods, decisions and end product (Tobin & Begley, 2004). In this study, the methods were clearly articulated and due consideration was given to the researcher, the participants, the instrument used for measurement and the description of the context.
- Confirmability refers to the researcher showing how interpretations have been arrived at during the research study (Whitehead, 2004). It speaks to the neutrality of the data, not the researcher, to enable others to reach the same interpretations of meaning and significance as the original researcher (Johnson & Waterfield, 2004). It needs to be shown that the findings are clearly derived from the data (Loh, 2013; Tobin & Begley, 2004). Input from the supervisor provided another lens for objective interpretation and checking of the researcher's interpretations.
- Authenticity is demonstrated if the researcher can show fairness in terms of giving all the participants an equal voice – that is, a range of different realities is taken into account and participants are left feeling empowered (Tobin & Begley, 2004). The semi-structured nature of the research instrument provided the opportunity for differing realities to be shared. The researcher concluded each Leadership Interview with closing questions aimed at extracting self-insight that could empower participants in future self-development.

From a hermeneutic phenomenological perspective, it was also essential to take into account the quality concerns of orientation, strength, richness and depth (Van Manen, 1990).

The following table provides a description of how these quality concerns were applied in the study.

Table 5.2

Hermeneutic phenomenological quality elements

Element	Description	Application to the study
Orientation	The involvement of the researcher in the world of the participants and their stories.	The nature of the researcher's work and expertise brings her into regular contact with leaders and their worlds. Her role as coach and facilitator means that she is extensively involved in the realities of the lives of leaders. This enabled her to relate with ease to participants' stories.
Strength	The convincing capacity of the narratives to represent the core intention of the understanding of inherent meanings expressed by the participants through their stories.	Participants' actual words were quoted, where relevant, in writing up the findings. This further enhanced an understanding of the meanings expressed by participants.
Richness	This is intended to serve the aesthetic quality of the text that narrates the perceived meanings of participants.	A two-hour interview yielded an average of 28 transcribed pages of data per interview. This provided a rich narrative of participants' perceptions and related meanings.
Depth	The ability of the research text to penetrate and express the best intentions of the participants.	The funnel model adopted in setting up the questions ensured that the interview was able to reach a level of depth that could provide an adequate indication of participants' intentions in the stories they shared.

5.5.2 Ethical considerations

Ethicality (Creswell, 2007; Terre Blanche et al, 2006) was ensured by

- obtaining permission to conduct the research in the organisations where participants were employed
- providing participants with an information sheet and discussing it with them in order to create context and clarify expectations of participation in the study
- the researcher and each participant jointly signing an agreement pertaining to voluntary participation, confidentiality, approval for recording of interviews and the option for withdrawal

DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006) highlight the following four ethical issues to take cognisance of, which were applied in using interviews as a data collection method:

- *Reducing the risk of unanticipated harm.* As a registered industrial psychologist, the researcher was able to provide psychological support where interviews appeared to create undue stress for participants. In the case of participants unravelling issues that required more in-depth focus, she advised them to seek the necessary professional help.
- *Protecting the interviewee's information.* Participants' information was safeguarded and kept confidential.
- *Effectively informing interviewees about the nature of the study.* Participants were duly informed about the nature of the study, they were afforded an opportunity to ask questions, and answers were provided to bring clarity or comfort where needed.
- *Reducing the risk of exploitation.* The interview was concluded with an opportunity for participants to reflect on their leadership experience, and for them to identify insights from the conversation that they could apply in their respective, individual self-development journeys.

5.6 REPORTING

The research findings were first reported for individual cases, in accordance with the applied role analysis framework and consequent interpretation. The researcher's experience of each respective case was also included and interpreted. This was followed by a cross-case leadership role integration that informed the themes and working hypotheses. Emerging working hypotheses were then integrated into a research hypothesis. The conclusion, limitations, recommendations and suggestions for future research then followed.

5.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter presented the research design and methodology of the study. The research approach and strategy were discussed. This was followed by an explanation of the research method, with specific focus on the research setting, entrée and establishing researcher roles, sampling, data collection, data procedure and data analysis. Lastly, the strategies employed to ensure quality data, ethical considerations and reporting of the study were described. Chapter 6 deals with the research findings.

CHAPTER 6: RESEARCH FINDINGS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to present the research findings of the study. Individual cases provide a description of biographical background, followed by the normative, existential and phenomenal roles and the researcher's experience of each specific case. This is then integrated into a cross-case leadership role integration following the same format. A discussion of extracted themes with working hypotheses follows, which results in the formulation of a research hypothesis.

6.2 CASE STUDY 1

The biographical background, normative, existential and phenomenal roles, congruence and incongruence in the leadership role, as well as the researcher's experience of participant 1, are discussed below.

6.2.1 Biographical background

This participant was a white man in his late fifties from an Afrikaner background. He was married with children. He did not mention his academic qualifications.

6.2.2 Normative role

The participant was an area manager in a financial services organisation. At the time of conducting the study he had been with the organisation for about 24 years. During this period he had been predominantly in a regional leadership role. The primary focus of his role was to generate sales in his area. This he achieved in a target-driven setting through the performance of the consultants who reported to him.

6.2.3 Existential role

In his extensive leadership experience, this participant had experienced the role transition from managing people to get the job done, to leading people to bring out the best in them. His understanding of what was expected of him was achieved by classifying and categorising the world he experienced (Stapley, 2006). When describing his role, he had to compartmentalise the various focus areas, namely people, client needs and regulatory environment. This helped him to identify what was required of him as a leader and to determine what might be neglected, which he discovered was the focus on people. He realised that achieving targets drove how he led, and that neglecting the people side could result in the group assumption mode of me-ness manifesting in the form of self-preservation.

He explained this as follows: *“They feel there’s no support for them and they start doing things for themselves and not for the team.”* He continuously talked about exercising leadership across the spectrum – that is, work, family, friends and life in general. His worldview of the concept was that it encompassed all of his life.

The participant made extensive use of intellectualisation as a defence for how a leader should take up the role. He often spoke about his role in the third person, distancing himself from it, instead of personalising it. This was evident in the following statement: *“a leader needs to walk the talk and they need to be part of the business. They need to be seen, they need to be prepared to be in the trenches with the people ...”*. He also strongly introjected the leadership requirements of being confident, knowledgeable and the expert. Further evidence of emerged in the following statement: *“the whole time you need to be informed, you need to be educated; you need to always be a step ahead of people”*. Performance anxiety relating to this requirement also manifested in the following comments: *“I always joke about it when I speak to people, I always say I’m in a fortunate position that I’ve got a personality that the people never know and I never give them an opportunity to actually determine what I know and what I don’t know.”*

He described management to be the “old way” and leadership the “new way”. This indicated a split identity as a leader, implying that one cannot do both and that it is either management or leadership. This is also linked to the social defence of splitting management and leadership in concept and practice (Krantz & Gilmore, 2009). In this instance, leadership was being idealised as being more effective. Accessibility of leadership came to the fore when he described how managers were feared in the past versus the current scenario where leaders were called by name: *“in an office set-up like this, the area manager, you would never call him on his name, because that was how the hierarchy worked ... that’s changed dramatically”*; and *“... that’s how leadership evolved from management to leadership”*.

He strongly introjected the role of leadership to provide direction and parameters, referring to the analogy of being the captain of the ship – *“navigating through stormy waters and avoiding the iceberg”*. Part of this navigation was determining what information should be shared with staff, which he explained as follows: *“within business it’s not always a good thing to share the low lights in business or the frustrations you have, because that tends to make people negative”*. A strong link was also made to enabling change in the organisation by believing that the change was the right thing for the business, and showing the benefits the change would bring to everyone. He also introjected as follows the need to bring stability once change had been implemented: *“And then, once the changes have taken place you*

need to try and get the ship into the calm waters again once we've gone through the turbulent times."

The participant often made use of the word "we", indicating a tendency to function in group assumption mode and making use of depersonalisation. The word "co-create" came up often, referring to the joint responsibility of the leader and followers to create the "right" environment, and he reiterated the importance of this in his life. He believed that through this co-creation, boundaries were established and agreed upon, which all team members had to abide by. This set off the group assumption mode, one-ness (baO) as is indicated in the following statement: *"if the rules are set and it's been co-created and it's been co-drafted, because then everybody who is part of it, everybody who bought into it ... then you need to pull in and if you don't pull together then that person needs to be addressed"*.

In terms of authorisation, he talked about earning people's respect and trust as a leader and not expecting to be respected because of a title. This speaks to the real source of authority actually coming from the acceptance of this authority by those subjected to it (Stapley, 2006). Paranoid anxiety manifested when he talked about remaining *"inside the circle"* to avoid *"being seen as the enemy, where there is no trust and they try to work against you the whole time"*.

He introjected guilt for having stopped giving recognition, as was indicated by his people, but could not identify the reason that this had occurred. He strongly introjected the meeting of others' needs, justifying its importance. Further evidence of this strong introjection was his decision to arrange a session for people to have a discussion about him in his absence. The aim of such a session was to afford people an opportunity to voice how they experience him, feeling free to do so as he would not be present. In contradiction to this, he talked about the importance of being accessible as a leader. He stayed engaged to his people by having coffee with individuals and staying in touch with what was happening in their lives. He believed that accessibility could, however, only be achieved through physical boundaries such as a separate office rather than sitting in an open-plan space. Anxiety about being accessible seemed to be dealt with by putting this boundary in place, so that he could control the engagement between himself and others. Sense of belonging was also often expressed in the conversation. He strongly introjected creating an environment in which people feel they belong and want to contribute.

He practised shared leadership believing that once you had established the direction and boundaries, you could let others take the lead where deemed relevant. The following phrase was indicative of this: *"there are times when you're allowed to stand back as a leader and*

say, there are other people that have got different strengths and in specific instances better strengths than what I as a leader have, so let them lead the way in this specific area”.

From a TA perspective, he adopted an adult-to-adult mode in leading others, utilising the life script, “I trust you until you prove me wrong”. Evidence of this was in the following phrase: *“You’re an adult; you need to take accountability and responsibility of your actions. I’m not there to criticise, I’m not there to tell you what to do and how to do it.”* In instances where people stepped out of the boundaries that had been set, the parent-child ego state would kick in, because he adopted a regulatory mode of disciplining those who went off track. He rationalised this behaviour in the following way: *“All human beings want to know whether they’re on the right track, whether they are doing a good job or whether they’re not doing it ... it’s like a kid, you need to discipline a kid.”*

He strongly introjected the expectation for leadership to provide containment during times of uncertainty, anxiety or pressure. He referred to *“being at the forefront”* or *“taking the pains”*. The analogy of being the captain of the ship also supported this introjection. From an attachment theory perspective, he strongly introjected the need for attachment security, where followers seek proximity, needing to feel safe and secure in times of uncertainty (Mikulincer et al, 2009). He also felt drawn to being the rescuer where people do not perform well by being aware of their difficulties and providing *“the safety net to actually pick this guy up before he hits the ground ...”*

Performance anxiety became evident as soon as the word “perform” entered the conversation, particularly when asked how he believed he was performing in the role. This was evident in the following statement: *“(laughter in his voice) Well, it’s been difficult, you know ... (sighs)”*. There was strong introjection of setting the example as a leader, where one’s behaviour is observed by others and one needs to *“walk the talk”*. His religious principles were also an important guide in this regard. He shared his experience of his first performance appraisal, where he thought he had done a good job, only to be shown evidence from a *“little black book”* that the manager had kept records indicating that he had not performed as well as he thought he had. He described it as a bad experience and that his response was to keep a similar “carbon book” detailing his performance. The result was a *“hell of a fight as to who is wrong and who is right”* in subsequent performance appraisals. The defence of sublimation manifested in that this experience changed his way of thinking and how he approached performance evaluation with his people, going forward. Evidence of this was the feedback he had received from both followers and peers. When peers congratulated him on how well his department had been doing, he justified it to be the team’s effort in co-creating the kind of environment that allowed them to perform so well. He

projected shared ownership onto his people, which they identified with in how they functioned as a team.

6.2.4 Phenomenal role

The organisation projected the additional role of knowledge anchor onto the participant. Superiors, followers and peers alike would rely on him for guidance and advice, based on his extensive years of experience in the industry and organisation. Evidence of this was in the following statements: *“our new head of business was appointed 18 months ago ... he started relying on me to give him inputs as to what needs to happen in the business”*; and; *“my colleague from my central office said, ‘I would like you to work through this for me and give me your inputs and your views on it’*”. He perceived such requests to be a positive indication of his success in the role and identified with the projections as it made him feel needed and valued.

When he had considered a career change, his team’s response was as follows: *“Please don’t leave the business because if you leave the business we’ll be in serious trouble.”* This indicated the group assumption mode dependency (baD) at play. This seduced him into staying because he was needed rather than him going out to explore further growth opportunities for himself.

When asked how he thought others saw him performing, performance anxiety manifested as indicated in the following statement: *“Well, you know, (laughter in voice) once again it’s difficult because it all depends on the mind-set of a person at a specific time...”*. He rationalised their views of perceived competence based on their interaction with him by saying the following: *“I think they see me as a valid part of the leadership team ... that they value the inputs I’ve given to the business and that they need me in the business ...”*; and; *“So yeah, (sighs) I think looking through other people’s eyes, I think they perceive me as being successful.”* This continuous projection had placed a significant burden on him *“to consistently deliver on what other people think I’m able to do”*. His identification with this projection had created a fear of failure or disappointing those who looked up to him. This was evident in the following comment: *“... the fear of disappointing the people that look up to me as being the captain of the ship because one stupid mistake can sink the whole way of thinking, the whole way of doing”*. As a leader he had strongly identified with the organisation’s projection that leaders need to continuously give to others to get things done. This “giving” included influencing others and keeping them focused, without expecting to gain anything in return. In achieving this, leaders were not recognised but were expected to continue giving. The impact it had on him was that it was difficult to remain positive, to stay focused and *“... to keep on portraying the fact that I’m happy to be here”*. As a means to

share the load of this expectation, he would gauge where it was appropriate to stand back, and he would “lead from behind”, authorising others to take the lead.

He introjected the expectation that leadership “never really switches off”, remaining preoccupied with finding better ways to get things done. As a means to cope with this, he would detach from the role after working hours, by physically switching off his computer and leaving it at the office, and re-engaging in the role after the weekend. This helped him to manage the boundaries between self and work more effectively. It also enabled him to re-energise to take on the next task or challenge, balancing work and life where possible.

6.2.5 Congruence and incongruence in the leadership role

The normative and existential roles of this participant were congruent to some extent. He was appropriately experienced to take up the role. He was able to lead others to perform in alignment with what was required in achieving targets and generating sales. This was evident in the feedback he presented about the good performance of the team. However, anxiety was still experienced about how he perceived he was performing against what the organisation required. At the phenomenal level, the projection of being knowledgeable and providing guidance created a heavy burden to carry, even restricting him from exploring other opportunities for growth. The projection of leaders needing to keep giving without expecting return gain created a challenge to remain positive and motivated. This spoke to the need for self-care practices to re-energise him for the challenges of taking up the role. His self-care practices included family time and spiritual upliftment.

6.2.6 Researcher’s experience

The researcher’s anxiety about this interview manifested at the following two levels: (1) it was the first interview she conducted, which would possibly set the scene for the ones to follow so she was preoccupied with the need for the interview to yield rich data for analysis; and (2) the participant was not as familiar to her as other participants. She had arranged to see him for an introductory meeting so that they could establish rapport and some level of familiarity prior to the actual interview. At the time of the interview she had received news about a death in the family and had to make a choice whether to continue or reschedule and she chose to do the former. She utilised denial and flight as defences to avoid the painful experience of loss by immersing herself in preparing for the interview.

As the conversation progressed from small talk to the actual interview, the researcher observed that the participant became nervous, which heightened her own performance anxiety. This led to a highly intellectual discussion about how leadership should be taken up.

This changed gradually as he talked about his leadership philosophy and brand, shifting it to be more self-focused and personal. The researcher felt her own anxiety subside as she began to actively listen to what was being shared. She had expected to have to probe for information but was surprised that he could associate freely with the topic. This created an easy flow of interaction. She observed that when the questions about performance were posed, his posture changed. He turned his chair to face towards the door. It indicated his discomfort in discussing this and was indicative of flight away from the question. He did, however, reflect on it in terms of his own perceptions.

It was difficult for him to own his success at leading the team as he kept saying that it was a team effort. The researcher became preoccupied with this as she could identify with this behaviour in her own life. She felt the urge to tell or even coach him to own the success, but remained silent, being aware that she needed to stay in role as researcher. However, at the end he came to his own realisation that he needed to value his contribution to the business and the team.

The closing questions were added post the pilot interview and worked well to close off the interview. It allowed the participant to identify themes that he could work further with in his own self-development journey.

At the end of the conversation the participant conceded that he had not looked forward to this interview and had agreed to it merely to honour what he had committed to. This created anxiety for the researcher, as she had not been aware of this and so she introjected ensuring the interview was of value to him and not just a means for her to gather data. He conceded that it had been highly beneficial for him to reflect with someone on a neutral basis and to see how he had evolved in his leadership style over the years. The participant seemed to have made a connection with the researcher as he projected the need to reflect on to the researcher, even extending an invitation to engage again in future. Transference occurred in the researcher feeling the need to be knowledgeable and provide guidance to the participant, similar to what had been projected onto him by the system.

6.3 CASE STUDY 2

The biographical background, normative, existential and phenomenal roles, congruence and incongruence in the leadership role, as well as the researcher's experience of participant 2, are discussed below.

6.3.1 Biographical background

This participant was an Indian woman of Muslim background. At the time of the study, she was in her late thirties, married and had children. Her academic qualification was a master's degree in business administration (MBA).

6.3.2 Normative role

The participant was based in a financial services organisation. Her normative role consisted of two components. She was a regional head and was also acting regional executive. This second role was the result of a vacancy that had not been filled for more than a year. This resulted in her having two management teams, that is, (1) area managers reporting to her as regional head, and (2) the rest of the regional heads reporting to her as regional executive. At the time of the interview she had had about ten years' experience in a leadership role. From a talent management perspective, she had been included in the organisation's list of talented individuals. This had created opportunities for her to learn and grow through a structured in-house leadership development programme.

6.3.3 Existential role

From an existential perspective, the split in focus posed a challenge for the participant in working at two different levels. On the one hand, she had to keep the focus on her business area's performance, while, on the other, she had to "take care" of the region's overall performance. This raised issues of boundaries, authorisation and power in how she engaged those around her to get things done. It also created the experience of keeping busy with things that were not actually part of her job. She described it as *"always putting out fires"* and *"I'm so busy running around in circles trying to make everybody else happy ..."*

Having been in leadership roles for a period of ten years, she introjected that the further she progressed up the ranks, the less control she had, the less important technical knowledge became and the more important her interpersonal skills became.

She had discovered that power is bestowed upon a leader and that you do not just earn it by the title you hold. This was evident in the following statement: *"you only have as much power as the person below you gives you ... you might have a title but it really means nothing if you're unable to lead those teams giving you power"*. She strongly introjected the importance of being there for people by helping them to grow to the best they could be. She believed that helped them buy into her as leader and to believe in her vision.

With this came a strong drive for self-authorisation as this had been a challenge for her since her early days as a leader. Being a young, Indian female leader, her first leadership role had set this pattern of behaviour in motion. Performance anxiety was evident when she was asked how she had grown as a leader: *“Yeah, for me ... (chuckles) it’s always been challenging ... how do you lead people with a lot of knowledge and a lot of management skills, but evolve it from management to leadership?”* She had experienced many hurdles, where she had to prove herself, while positioning her own brand. Dealing with the issue of perceived incompetence she strongly introjected the need to display competence. She had used learning and academic development to build the skills required *“to get people on her side”*. It had worked in the past and continued to work for her in the current role. She had also placed herself under a lot of pressure in this strong introjection, by pushing herself to the limit. The following statements provide evidence in this regard: *“... on top of that I started doing the MBA ... Needing to do that and now continue sustaining a high performing team and then still two small kids and the loss of my parents ... so it was very difficult (breathes loudly)”* and *“... the MBA helped me... I’d lived the leadership journey, so then the MBA made sense because I’ve worked with the people and I understand it and that helped me blossom and grow”*.

She used the analogy of riding a bicycle to describe her lived leadership experience: *“... you’re going to fall, you’re going to get hurt, you’re going to get cut, but when your brain learns balance then you just (snaps fingers) get on that bike and you just ride”*.

Being an authentic leader emerged when she used the analogy of being an actor in taking up the role. She talked about wearing a mask and playing an acting role: *“You do what you need to do ... you’re an actress at the work environment, you’ve got to keep everything happy and it’s a show and you’ve got to help people ... to do it authentically as well, but you’re really just on show ...”*.

Transference relating to issues of trust became evident that had been entrenched in her life scripts, given her earlier experiences of what she seemed to represent to those she led. She represented a young, inexperienced leader who needed to prove her competence to do the job. It was interesting that she initially spoke about the importance of being authentic, as indicated by the following statement: *“as leader it’s being there for the people, showing them who you are, being authentic, and being vulnerable”*. Yet it seemed that although she knew the value of being authentic, her past experience had influenced how much she actually exposed herself to those she led. She described some “painful lessons” of discovering that as a leader she would not be liked by anyone, despite efforts to be *“a nice boss”*.

An incident, early on in her leadership journey, had played a critical role in this transference being created. Team members had accessed her personal finances, which was quite a shock to her and left a strong sense of betrayal. They had abused their mandates and had to be disciplined for it. She conceded that they should have been fired, but she had decided against that. The work environment became quite unpleasant and they eventually left the system of their own accord. In another incident, team members who had aspired to occupy her role refused to submit to her authority. The group assumption mode fight (baF) manifested and then shifted to flight (baF) when they eventually left the system. The result of these experiences was that the pattern of transference continued to manifest as indicated in the following comments: *“You can’t be friendly. You can’t get your personal stuff involved. You can be authentic, but there are some things you’ve got share, some things you’ve got to hold back ... Trust is a big thing for me ...”*

Despite her paranoid anxiety relating to trust, she strongly introjected the need for leadership to protect the people. She provided containment, referring to being a shock absorber, a buffer, a cushion or a safety net as she introjected the need for attachment security by those that followed. She also referred to being *“strong for your people”*. She was trying to create a support system for leaders reporting to her to remain grounded amidst the pressure, by practising and encouraging self-care among them. She talked about having a *“safe place”* to re-energise when containment depleted her energy. For her, this *“safe place”* was her home, her family and her spiritual beliefs.

She introjected guilt in the need to ensure that she did no harm in taking up her role and that she remained true to her values of integrity and ethical behaviour. This was evident in the following statement: *“... if you can sleep at night without there being a pain in your gut then you’ve done the best you can ...”*

The participant displayed a strong valence for being competitive because she mentioned this fairly often during the conversation. This, together with a valence to take up leadership, pushed her to win and achieve results. It also caused her to drive others to perform.

Performance anxiety manifested when she talked about asking for feedback from her staff about their experience of her as a leader. She acknowledged being in denial when their responses were provided. In order to reduce the anxiety it created for her, she contained what had been said in a document: *... I took all that stuff and put it in an excel template because I thought I was such a wonderful leader ... (takes a breath) and (giggles) because we all do ... I ring-fenced it; it was so many views of me ... there was a common thread of being competitive, achiever, you know ... I sat down and I thought, is this really the perception?”* When asked how she thought she was performing, she split this into the

following two parts: (1) the organisation was happy with her results and wanted more; and (2) personally she felt she was stagnating and needed something new. At an organisational level, she believed that she was delivering what was being asked of her but that it was not sustainable. At a personal level, the assumption mode of flight manifested in her wanting to flee from this painful experience. Her use of the words, "*Personally ... I'm dying*", was indicative of this. She introjected guilt for the impact this performance had on the people.

When asked about others' perceptions of her performance, she had disregard for what peers thought of her performance. It concerned her that she did not care what these role players thought of her, and she became preoccupied with rationalising this behaviour. This is evident in the following statement: "*... I don't care. Is that ugly? That might be ugly, but right now I couldn't really care about what they think about my performance. I only care about my people and how they feel and my direct reports and if they are okay, and is my boss okay ...*". It seemed that she had displaced her anger towards the organisation, and what it expected her to do, onto her peers. It also indicated a mirroring of her superior's behaviour, as is evident in the following comment: "*(Sharper voice) And (boss) don't care! He doesn't care! You're going to do what he wants you to do or you're going to go, you know ... and I feel like that's so cold – but I just said it, didn't I? ... I need to work with that because then I'm going to be exactly what they want.*" Fulfilling the regional executive role also placed her in a compromising situation in that she was accountable for the region's performance and would place pressure on her peers to perform. "Not caring" became a defence for not dealing with the dynamics that may have been created by this. The following statements are evidence of this: "*I don't want to spend my brain power worrying about what does my colleague think I'm doing ... The negative noise, I just cut it out ... I just don't tramp on toes ...*".

6.3.4 Phenomenal role

The organisation projected the role of "fixer or rescuer" onto this participant. Her valence for taking the lead and taking on such challenges saw her being transferred to departments where poor business performance needed to be addressed. She was often met with a pattern of resistance or denial from those in the said department. Group fight/flight assumption kicked in as a means of dealing with the anxiety that was evoked. Her strong identification with this projection was also influenced by her valence for being competitive. She acknowledged that it caused her to be quite tough on people. This then reinforced the cycle and kept the group in this assumption mode. She felt a heavy burden to save the organisation and its people, indicating a strong dependence on a saviour to sustain the organisation's existence. The following statement is further evidence of this: "*I'm going to hold you accountable ... ultimately you see me as a bitch, I see it as me saving you a job ...*

so it's okay if you see it as that. I know eventually it will all make sense, so I'm okay to take that ...".

She described the culture of the organisation as being “*very, very bad*”, and felt the need to repeat this a few times throughout the conversation. Words like “*unforgiving*”, “*ranking people*”, “*casualties*”, “*butchered*” and “*self-serving*” were used in this description. It was apparent at the time that the organisation was under tremendous pressure to perform, which took precedence over everything else, creating hardly any focus on the people, who were taking intense strain. Under this pressure, the organisation was not ready for authentic, vulnerable leaders. The participant mentioned that this was seen as a sign of weakness. Self-preservation manifested as a defence against the fear of being exposed and being removed if one failed to succeed.

A trend had emerged that people, and more so leaders, were not allowed to make mistakes. There was a sense of needing to justify one's existence. From a leadership perspective, a leader could not be seen protecting his or her people from the pressure, but rather had to drive them to produce results, even if it meant using manipulation to get things done. At the time of the interview, the participant was in a space of internal conflict in terms of such actions clashing with her personal values. She felt torn between doing what would “save” the organisation and shielding the people from what they had to endure as she used rationalisation to deal with her own anxiety. This is indicated by the following words: “*I know I will leave at some point, it's already (short pause) too much of nonsense that clashes with my principles*”; and; “*... So it's very unethical right now. But is it really unethical? No. We've got a (organisation) to save. I feel we can do a little more better without having so much pressure, but they see it as (short pause) the pressure is going to bring the results.*”

The participant used the phrase “*slave leadership*” a few times. Initially, she referred to this as leadership not being about her, but rather about the people she led – providing clarity, guiding them and helping them grow. It seemed she may have referred to servant leadership, but the same phrase was used a few times. Later on in the interview she talked about “*the organisation owns you ... they will make you do things that are unethical ...*”, and this seemed to indicate that she felt enslaved to do what the organisation wanted and not what she felt comfortable doing. She may have also been enslaved to the organisation's continued need for her in the role of fixer or saviour. Her own valence to compete and achieve fuelled her identification with this projection. At the same time she felt moved to fight this projection because it was in conflict with her identity. She explained this as follows: “*the more ruthless you are perceived and effective ... you are going to keep going up. You're going to keep going up. And I don't (sharp voice) want to go up! Because it's going to*

change me ...". The organisation considered her to be a talented individual, and placed an expectation on her to continue up the ranks and sacrifice more of herself in doing so. Her need to move out of the current role into something new was restricted because she served a better purpose in the position she was in at that moment. She carried suppressed anger towards the organisation for this, but rationalised the organisational need as being necessary for sustaining the organisation.

6.3.5 Congruence and incongruence in the leadership role

The participant experienced incongruence in her role. At an existential level, she was adequately qualified and experienced, having the track record to prove accordingly. The split in focus as regional executive and regional manager created significant anxiety because it kept her functioning in crisis mode. She also experienced internal conflict in terms of her own identity and the identity the organisation projected onto her. This was further impacted by a clashing of organisational expectations with her personal values. She internalised the expectation to fix, rescue or save, but was perceived as the aggressor when she fulfilled this expectation. This resulted in paranoid anxiety where she did not trust the system and had a continuous need to protect herself. Undue anxiety was created in how she engaged at all levels in the organisation, but particularly strongly at peer level. She also experienced the organisation having a hold on her personal development and progression. She was kept where she served the organisation's purpose well. She needed an outlet for the containment and preservation of self, which she found in focusing on her family and spirituality.

6.3.6 Researcher's experience

The researcher experienced less anxiety in conducting this interview than the first one. Her connection to this participant as an existing client may have had an impact on her level of anxiety. However, it also posed a challenge in that she had to consciously manage the boundaries between her roles of consultant and researcher. The participant immediately started talking about business, and the researcher had to steer the conversation towards the leadership interview to remain in role. The conversation commenced at a superficial level and then became more in depth as the participant began to reflect. The participant demonstrated a level of comfort to share her story as was evident in the sharing of her fears and concerns. Further supporting evidence of her level of engagement was her body language, where she leaned forward, made eye contact and spoke animatedly. There were also many periods of silence during which she would reflect before responding. The learning for the researcher was that when a participant is deep in reflection, it takes little from the researcher to keep the conversation going. She, in turn, became more relaxed, as her own

performance anxiety settled down, and she let the conversation flow, immersing herself in the story being told.

A common theme throughout the interview was the participant's anxiety about protecting and saving people. A lot was happening for her and seemed to be driven by the concept "money equals power". Her valence to be competitive was transferred into the researcher/participant relationship as competition emerged between the two. A second recurring theme was the participant's inner conflict between her personal values and what she believed the organisation was forcing her to do. The researcher began to identify with these themes, internalising the weight of the burden it presented. This manifested in her feeling physically tired during the conversation. Carrying the burden on the participant's behalf weighed her down. When the researcher asked the participant how she thought she was performing, an internal conflict between making money for the organisation and personal achievement aligned to her values re-emerged. The researcher felt seduced into rescuing the participant from this dilemma, as a result of their connection.

A significant learning for the participant was that she did not care about what peers thought of her performance. She became preoccupied with this discovery and began to rationalise it. It appeared to relate to the issue of trust and vulnerability. The researcher could have probed further to determine the source of this, but chose not to when she observed that the participant became quite emotional. She attempted to diffuse the emotion so that the participant could remain intact and continue. The researcher has a valence for emotional connections, and she strongly introjected the safeguarding of the participant during the interview.

6.4 CASE STUDY 3

The biographical background, normative, existential and phenomenal roles, congruence and incongruence in the leadership role, as well as the researcher's experience of participant 3, are discussed below.

6.4.1 Biographical background

This participant was a white man in his late forties. At the time of the study, he was married and had children. His academic qualification was in engineering. He had been in a leadership role for several years.

6.4.2 Normative role

The participant worked for an engineering organisation. His normative role consisted of two components. He was the managing director (MD) of a business unit in the organisation and was also head of one of the subunits in that business unit. This resulted in the following split reporting lines to him: (1) the rest of the subunit heads reported to him as managing director; and (2) the managers in his own specific subunit reported to him as head of the subunit. He had been with the organisation for more than 20 years. At least fifty percent of that tenure was in a leadership role. He had limited experience in the managing director role because it was still relatively new to him, but more experience in the subunit head role.

6.4.3 Existential role

The participant talked about transitioning from “junior” to “senior” in the organisation. Progressing through the ranks had enabled him to develop his technical knowledge and experience, eventually leading him to the senior role he now held. He seemed to be driven by the mind-set that academic qualifications and achievement equal clever, competent people. This was mirrored in the approach he used in recruiting new employees and in his perceptions of good performance.

He differentiated between technical and formal leadership. There was comfort with leading others in the technical aspects of the business, but less comfort with the leadership aspect of his identity, which he explained as follows: *“I’m comfortable with what I know.”* He introjected not measuring up to those he idealised as good leaders. He claimed incompetence, specifically in managing the more senior individuals reporting to him. The following quotation is evidence of this: *“I would feel that I’m a weaker ... very weak in dealing with (short pause) major issues from senior people.”* At other times, he projected incompetence onto others, saying that people were not capable of doing the technical work. He guided them, but they seemed unable to continue on their own, resulting in him constantly being drawn into the operational level of work. This surfaced basic assumption mode of dependence as they relied heavily on him to *“pitch in and get things done”*. This is evident in the following statement: *“I get a lot of people that are ‘Oh I can’t do this, let’s go and ask’ and ‘can you show me again?’ and it just kept on and on.”*

He strongly introjected a splitting between the two roles he fulfilled. He saw the role of head of his business unit as good and the role of MD as bad. Issues of boundaries emerged. He struggled with identifying when he was functioning as MD and when he was functioning as business unit head. Authorisation issues also manifested as he introjected perceptions of him being weak in leadership. The split was also evident in how he assessed his

performance as perceived by “junior people” to be good, versus his performance as perceived by “senior people” to be poor. The participant was highly self-critical about his perceived performance. Performance anxiety manifested in the frequent use of the word “*weak*”; nervous laughter; and deep breaths when asked about how he thought he was performing. This perceived poor performance manifested specifically in relation to senior managers. He used statements like the following: “*I sometimes feel that they know more than me ...*” and “*I’m not a good public speaker so I don’t formulate the words to convey my thinking ...*”. The manifesting anxiety was compared to the experience of “*being a student in boarding school, getting a knot in my stomach*”, when dealing with senior individuals. Junior staff appeared to respect his formal authority, seeking his advice or assistance, where needed.

He demonstrated conflict aversion relating to issues between senior managers. He made use of denial as a defence to avoid managing the conflict among team members. The following statements substantiate this: “*... hoping it would just go away*” and “*I’m not one who likes confrontation*”. He also rationalised their behaviour to be that of children, saying the following: “*They are big boys who should sort themselves out.*” This indicated him projecting an adult-to-adult approach, in how he expected people to function.

He often used the words “*you*”, “*there*” and “*leadership thing*” to create distance between himself and the role, thereby depersonalising the role. This further indicated the need to avoid conflict as the role itself appeared to create intense internal conflict.

A significant challenge for him at the time was that the organisation was fairly work driven, which placed tremendous pressure on the more experienced, competent people as a result of less competent individuals not delivering optimal results. He strongly introjected guilt for overloading the seasoned individuals to compensate for this gap in the business. This was evident in his owning of bad recruiting decisions and acknowledging that he was less consistent as a leader. He carried guilt for overworking these individuals instead of recognising or rewarding them for putting in extra effort. It also reinforced him taking up a rescuer role in getting the work done, reinforcing group dependence in the department. The organisation had appointed him as an HR committee chairman, tasked with understanding the reason for high turnover in the organisation. This further reinforced the guilt he introjected in owning, on behalf of the organisation, the pressure being placed on experienced, competent people and the consequent implication of them considering exiting. He displayed a strong valence for carrying guilt on behalf of others.

The participant strongly identified with being a problem solver who motivates people. He believed that this, together with affording individuals opportunities to grow, were

characteristics of good leadership. However, he felt this was negatively affected by the conflict dynamics between him and the other senior managers in his area. Their behaviour, as a leadership team, spilt over into what individuals in the team saw and mirrored in their respective roles. It was also negatively affected by the drive to make money at the expense of taking care of those who were performing well.

6.4.4 Phenomenal role

The participant's placement in the MD role had been pre-empted by an anxiety-provoking event where the previous MD had been removed (a process he was included in) and the participant became his successor. This set the scene for what the organisation required of the participant. The covert expectation implied was that he had to change, address or improve what his predecessor had failed to do. This created significant performance anxiety for him in showing up differently from his predecessor and doing things right. This, coupled with his own strong introjection of being a weak leader, deauthorised him in the role. It manifested particularly when he had to deal with senior individuals, who also were his peers.

The organisation's expectation to "*make money at all costs*" conflicted with his personal need to create opportunities for individuals to develop their full potential. A consequent split was created between what the organisation required him to do as leader and what he believed he should be doing for his people. Driving productivity was the priority at the expense of individual growth. It had an impact on succession planning and also kept him in operational mode. This was evident in him having to take over where individuals had failed to deliver on what was required by clients, in order to protect the organisation's credibility.

His authority as MD had not been recognised by senior management reporting to him. He was deauthorised by powerful others who should have submitted to his authority. His introjection of "*I'm a weak leader*" further reinforced this deauthorisation, as senior managers made and implemented decisions on his behalf, as indicated in the following statement: "*I will get led along by the stronger personalities ...*". This provided evidence that he was struggling to manage the boundaries and authorisation between his role as MD and that as subunit head. This dynamic projected confusion into the system, as people expected such decisions to come from him and this made them unsure of what to action. It also presented role conflict for him in functioning effectively. His tendency for conflict aversion at times resulted in him not taking up the role as MD, reinforcing the perceptions of weak leadership. The following statements substantiate this: "*... I put my name down for the MD but actually realised that that's a very lonely, hard job to do ... I can get walked over*".

6.4.5 Congruence and incongruence in the leadership role

The participant experienced incongruence in his role, particularly the split between his role as MD and as subunit head. This created internal conflict in that he perceived his performance to be bad in the one role versus good in the other. The organisation expected him to be tough and to deal with issues head on. His conflict aversion would not allow him to do that, resulting in him utilising defences such as denial or rationalisation to avoid the conflict. He did not feel authorised in the role, specifically in relation to senior staff. There were issues of power at play at this level, which deauthorised him in his role. This participant was a good example of an individual who was outstanding at a technical level and subsequently placed in a leadership role without the necessary support and development to make the transition from specialist to leader.

6.4.6 Researcher's experience

The researcher experienced this interview as quite tiring. This was attributed to her feeling intense anxiety and to a significant level of resistance from the participant to explore aspects of his leadership style that appeared to hinder his effectiveness. A significant amount of time was spent exploring the different masks being worn between leading junior and senior staff. When the perceived conflict at the senior level came up, the participant became extremely anxious. The researcher observed a change in his posture as he sat up and leaned forward. It was clear that he could not stay with that particular discussion and soon changed the subject to talking about the junior level at which he experienced more comfort and confidence.

The researcher found that she had to ask many probing questions to take the conversation to a deeper level, but the resistance continued to emerge in the defence of intellectualisation or avoidance, and this is where her tiredness began to manifest. The researcher's tiredness seemed to mirror the participant's tiredness from the constant changing of masks in leading two different levels of staff. This interview did not run its duration of two hours, and was concluded when the researcher realised that the wall she had experienced at the beginning of the interview was firmly back in place. However, there were times during the conversation when the participant let his guard down and started to work at a deeper level. He often moved back to a "safer" superficial level on the brink of deeper insight about his lived experience, which triggered frustration in the researcher.

Despite requesting that they should not be disrupted during the interview, there was a moment when someone came looking for the participant. The individual required help with

something that anyone in the participant's office could have assisted with. This provided evidence of the dependence upon the participant to get things done.

When closing the interview, the issue of maintaining confidentiality became extremely important to the participant. It provided evidence of the trust issues prevalent in the department. Issues of boundaries, power, perceived competence and authorisation appeared to be themes emerging from this interview. Upon reflection, the researcher realised that she introjected the need for the participant to work with the challenging dynamics of his role and the need to improve it. This highlighted her internal conflict about role boundaries, because this showed her gravitating towards her coaching role. It also challenged her mind-set about leadership and what she may have projected onto participants to share. The junior/senior interplay that was explored in the interview was transferred to the researcher/participant interaction. It manifested as dependence on the researcher for guidance; and at times regression into being a "junior" in the interaction, giving his power to the researcher. Countertransference occurred in the researcher not taking up the role of coach or consultant, but remaining in her role as researcher by not providing the required guidance projected onto her.

6.5 CASE STUDY 4

The biographical background, normative, existential and phenomenal roles, congruence and incongruence in the leadership role, as well as the researcher's experience of participant 4, are discussed below.

6.5.1 Biographical background

This participant was a black male from an English background. At the time of the interview, he was in his early forties. He did not indicate whether he was married or what his academic qualifications were.

6.5.2 Normative role

The participant held a general manager role in a mining organisation. He headed up a business unit in a specific function, reporting to an executive committee member. At the time of the study, he had been in the employ of the organisation for three years. His role was twofold in that, on the one hand, he had to manage his business unit to deliver required objectives. On the other hand, he was specifically tasked with effecting a culture change in his environment that could be replicated across the organisation as a whole. He had extensive experience in taking up a formal leadership role.

6.5.3 Existential role

The participant talked about his role according to the split that was created by the organisation's twofold expectation. On the one hand, his responsibility for delivery of objectives as a business unit had not been difficult. He attested to having a good team that stood behind him in getting things done. On the other hand, the other expectation was for him to take up a change agent role in effecting significant change in organisational culture. The participant had strongly introjected the identity of change leader and had been met with much resistance. Changes had occurred at two levels: (1) in his own department in its ways of working and engaging, and (2) in his department's engagement with other stakeholders. This expectation required that he influence at all levels, up, down and across, requiring both formal and self-authorisation. It also related to having both authority and power to make things happen. He strongly introjected making informed decisions as a leader and not being swayed by those who held the power.

The basic assumption of fight manifested in the system's resistance to change, specifically towards him as the object representing change. This was evident in the following comments: "... people spend lots of energy trying to discredit the information" and "we are shining torches in some dark places ...". Further evidence was the following statement: "... I'm fighting for a cause. I'm wanting to move the organisation forward ...". There is a sense that the resistance emanated from the fear of being exposed.

He strongly introjected initiating change, when he talked about "coming in with no legacy ...", and that change was "quite a painful experience". He described this role (as change agent) as being "... draining, tiring and at times disheartening ...". However, at the same time, he felt energised to take on the next challenge when he succeeded in influencing change. The participant introjected being "an anomaly" in that he was quite different and the organisation reacted in a certain manner to this difference. This may have created a valence for taking on the role of change agent.

The aspect of authentic leadership was evident when he introjected the importance of "being the real me" and "... not trying to pretend that I'm something that I'm not ...". He acknowledged that, at times, when he did not know something, it was "okay" as a leader to say so. He identified with staying true to himself and with retaining his integrity rather than aligning himself to something that he knew to be wrong. The following statement supports this: "... Be the real you and I think the rest will take care of itself ...".

He strongly introjected the need for leadership to drive the vision by providing direction, and aligning people to follow. This he believed was achieved by creating a cohesive team that

“... rally around a cause...”. It was interesting that even though he was able to achieve this, he did not perceive himself to be visionary. He highlighted the importance of learning about leadership from others, splitting his experiences into good and bad leadership. Through these experiences he learnt to mirror the good behaviour. Splits manifested in terms of his role from an organisational perspective, how he thought he performed, and others’ perceptions of his performance.

He reiterated many times the importance of making the organisational structure feel flat to people, introjecting an adult-to-adult approach in leading others. This related to the co-creation of leadership, which enables leaders to emerge from all levels in the organisation. He often made use of the word “fundamental” which could talk to getting to the basics of leading others towards goal achievement.

He spoke significantly about his interaction with the CEO, particularly in respect of the required change in culture. This was linked to the need for both authority and power in enabling the change that was required as he needed to be authorised by this individual. He strongly introjected providing containment to those being led. He believed that in the face of uncertainty or difficulty, one needed to be positive and to hold that space for others to remain hopeful.

6.5.4 Phenomenal role

The organisation identified the need for a change in culture, which the participant was called upon to drive and implement. However, as he began to bring about shifts in behaviour, a decision was made to disband his department. He received feedback that they were becoming too different. Despite the organisation’s need for change, it regressed to maintaining the status quo. The following statement substantiates this: “... we know we asked for this but now you’re taking it too far ...”. Fight assumption mode kicked in to deal with the anxiety that was elicited by the uncertainty. The organisation projected the need for change onto the participant and his department so that it did not have to deal with it. Dependence assumption mode manifested in appointing someone to lead the change and save the organisation from itself. This, however, then turned into blaming the appointed leader when it failed to go according to plan. This is evident in the decision to disband the department, a decision which was later overturned. The organisation’s culture was characterised by a lack of accountability and senior management being protected at all costs. This was evident in the ownership for change enablement being placed with an individual in a non-exco role. The said individual had to be self-authorised to effect change because the necessary authorisation was not forthcoming. The culture was also characterised by lack of clarity about expectations.

When asked about how he believed he was performing, a split manifested in how he saw his performance versus how the organisation saw it. He under-evaluated his performance in relation to what the organisation evaluated, based on his perception that the “*organisational bar was set too low for senior management*”. This provided further evidence of lack of accountability by senior management in the organisation. Performance anxiety kicked in when he talked about not functioning at the correct strategic level. He split the perceptions of others into two camps – one that welcomed his enablement of change, and the other, of those who felt their lack of accountability had been exposed. He also talked about the team performing well. The basic assumption of one-ness had manifested in response to resistance from the rest of the organisation. He referred to “... *we have a great team!*” a few times, and showed a sense of loss that the team would have to move into other subunits in the near future. There was a split between us (his team) being good and the rest of the organisation being bad.

Free-floating anxiety manifested when he talked about the possible change in his role that was about to occur that would authorise him differently in effecting organisational culture change. This was evident in the laughter that preceded this discussion. He also strongly introjected the expectation to be an advisor and to take on what the CEO could not fulfil. In addition, anxiety manifested in sharing this privileged information with the researcher.

In adapting to change, the basic assumption dependence manifested, with people looking to him to be the saviour. His countertransference was to reinforce an adult-to-adult approach in encouraging others to own their role in effecting change.

6.5.5 Congruence and incongruence in the leadership role

The participant experienced role confusion and related boundary challenges in terms of his normative and existential roles. What he had been appointed to achieve versus what he had actually been allowed to do in effecting change were incongruent. This was further influenced by his strong identity with being a change leader in the organisation. He mentioned that as he tried to move the organisation forward, it in turn resisted, pushing him back. He was fighting against the organisation and had to be resilient. This placed him under significant pressure in terms of what he represented to the organisation in terms of change. However, he was aware of what he represented to the system and that he should not take it personally. This highlighted the role of leader in using self as instrument in enabling change. His belief was that leadership is learnt through living it and not necessarily in what is found in textbooks.

6.5.6 Researcher's experience

The researcher and participant were slightly familiar with each other. She had been referred to him to invite him to participate in the study. He, in turn, had briefly interacted with her because she had been co-opted to work in his organisation as a coach and facilitator. He appeared eager and open to explore his leadership experience. Reflection seemed to come naturally to him as he explored the meaning of what he had been experiencing, particularly in the recent years. He came across as a seasoned leader, who was comfortable in his own skin and not afraid to explore in order to gain understanding. This created a highly dynamic, energising conversation. At some point, he shared highly confidential information, stating that he felt comfortable that it would be kept safe, projecting his anxiety about it onto the researcher. She, in turn, internalised this projection as paranoid anxiety manifested for her. She used rationalisation to normalise the pressure through self-talk about keeping her word and honouring his trust. When asked whether there was something he wanted to share which had not been asked, he mentioned his interest at not being asked about role models of leadership. It seemed important to him to describe the individuals he idealised as good leaders and who had influenced his leadership style. This provided evidence for mirroring how he needed to behave as a leader. When asked to summarise the themes that had emerged from the conversation, he transferred this to the researcher, saying he expected her to provide the summary. He projected the role of coach onto the researcher, but she remained in role as the researcher.

6.6 CASE STUDY 5

The biographical background, normative, existential and phenomenal roles, congruence and incongruence in the leadership role, as well as the researcher's experience of participant 5, are discussed below.

6.6.1 Biographical background

This participant was a white woman in her late thirties. She indicated that she was married and had children. Her professional qualifications were researcher and psychologist.

6.6.2 Normative role

The participant was the managing director of a market research organisation. She was relatively new in the role, but not new to the organisation, as she had previously fulfilled various other leadership roles in the organisation. She managed a significant number of leaders, who also had significantly large portfolios. Furthermore, the nature of the

organisation had required her, at times, to take up multiple roles, for example, sales director, client service director or HR director, when gaps emerged.

6.6.3 Existential role

The participant experienced a pull in various directions as the role requirements described above played out. This posed a challenge in terms of functioning at the correct level of work. She found that when under pressure, “... *old habits kicked in ...*” and that she regressed into operational work, leaving a gap in terms of the strategic focus of being MD. She gravitated towards what was known, familiar and perhaps comfortable for her. The consequence was that people abdicated their responsibilities, and dependence assumption mode manifested. In terms of TA, parent ego state with corresponding child ego state then played out in a reinforcing cycle. The more others abdicated responsibility, the further responsibility she assumed, becoming the controlling and regulating parent. She appeared to have a valence for rescuing others. In addition, her ability to structure order from chaos resulted in her being seduced into rescuing those who seemed not to cope with their work pressures. This, together with her valence to naturally lead others, resulted in dependence and a lack of ownership of followers.

The words “*interpersonal*” and “*intrapersonal*” were used often in the conversation. She depersonalised working with self and others by compartmentalising it according to these terms.

She described the leadership role as “*a lonely place to function*”. Persecutory anxiety manifested in that she experienced being constantly scrutinised, that her intentions were not always understood and that one carries responsibility on behalf of others, not necessarily by choice. This introduced the importance of self-care as a leader, something she was aware of but not practising in taking care of herself. Authenticity as a leader also came to the fore when she talked about remaining authentic in “... *a very artificially constructed world ...*”.

The participant strongly introjected the impact of leadership behaviour in moulding and shaping the organisation’s culture. This became even more important in her role as MD. The following statement is evidence of this: “... *any time you (short pause) don’t stick to your role and you do something else, you build into the culture and you need to un-build it*”.

She found herself being challenged in discovering her identity in the MD role. She made statements such as the following: “... *I actually feel that I need to reinvent myself (short pause) and to be very honest with you, I don’t always know how ...*” and “... *it feels to me a little bit as if my core competency is becoming irrelevant ... I need to figure out what I need*”.

to be and I need to build some of that ...". She also introjected being a stronger implementer rather than a strategist, which may have made the transition to MD more challenging. The focus on multiple roles also impacted on her role boundaries in that she had to wear various hats, as and when required. This hindered her focus on defining herself in the MD role, as she became drawn into what the system needed her for.

She was acutely aware that when faced with intense pressure, her reaction was to withdraw, rationalising the need for timeout to re-energise. This indicated the manifestation of flight assumption mode to become re-grounded amidst anxiety. She displayed a heightened self-awareness in knowing her habits, as well as when she seemed to make use of them, splitting them into good and bad. This came up often in the conversation.

In making sense of the chaos and complexity, she used her strength of being highly structured to bring order. Others also became dependent on her use of this defence in dealing with their own anxiety, as they projected this need onto her. Her need to have control was rationalised as an attempt to minimise risk for the organisation.

Relating to role dynamics, there was some dissonance between what she said and did, particularly in her engagement with followers. The implication of this was that perceptions of favouritism were created when she did not act consistently in her role(s). Business dictated that sales staff deserved greater attention or even benefits, which could have influenced these perceptions accordingly. She introjected guilt for this and attempted to change the perceptions by taking various departments out to lunch or making time to walk about in the mornings, greeting staff.

When asked how she believed she was performing, performance anxiety manifested in coming to grips with the MD role. She was quite self-critical in her evaluation of her performance, but also felt reassured that she could easily improve the performance, given her awareness of her shortcomings in the current role.

The participant adopted the life script "*control what I can control, so what I can't control is manageable*". She projected this expectation onto those she led, specifically in how they were allowed to work with her. She demonstrated awareness of the impact of this in restricting others' creativity, even mentioning "*... not a pleasant person sometimes ...*". It was interesting that she did not receive feedback on this from others. This could be attributed to her being the MD and people not feeling secure to share this with her.

6.6.4 Phenomenal role

The organisation had set the participant up to establish control and maintain the status quo, when it was faced with uncertainty or pressure. Her valence to rescue and restore order served the organisation well in this regard. The consequence of this was that she provided containment on behalf of the system, which kept her from fully taking up her role as MD. Her valence for leadership also played a role in that it kept the system in a state of dependence. From an individual perspective, it placed her in a situation of being susceptible to burnout. From a collective perspective, the system struggled to function on the periphery of certainty and uncertainty. The opportunity to sit in the chaos for a while longer to create space for creative thinking to emerge was not fully utilised (Simpson & Harvey, 2002).

The organisational culture was characterised as being reactive when faced with pressure, with a lack of individual accountability and dependence on leadership in getting things done. The role conflict the participant experienced was mirrored in the roles of her leadership team as well. Individual leaders held large portfolios, creating a focus on breadth rather than depth. This could have contributed to the reactive way of doing things. One way in which leadership tried to deal with this need for containment on behalf of the system was to have a norm in place that leaders should be aware of what they were carrying that needed to be worked with by ensuring that such individuals took leave when necessary. They created an opportunity for leaders to physically remove themselves from the system to re-energise as well as to minimise the potential risk this might pose for the organisation. This was evident in the following statement: “... *make sure we compensate for one another and we (short pause) take the heavy energy out of the system ...*”.

When asked how she thought others perceived her performance, she was confident that they perceived her performance to be better than she did. Her immediate direct impact seemed to override the focus on her performance as MD. It appeared that the organisation was more understanding of her settling into the MD role, giving her more leeway in this regard, given that she was achieving what was aimed for from a business perspective. By being drawn back into the operational focus, the participant was kept from fully taking up her role as MD. She rationalised this need of the organisation as being the result of certain vacant senior roles such as sales director or new appointees in critical roles still finding their feet. The following statement substantiates this: “... *that’s a reality for any leader that you sometimes need to go where the business needs you to be ...*”.

6.6.5 Congruence and incongruence in the leadership role

The participant demonstrated the required expertise and academic qualification to take up the role successfully. However, underlying conflict existed between taking up the role of MD (in the generic sense), being an MD of this particular organisation and regressing into the operational roles, as and when required. Furthermore, the participant experienced conflict between building her identity as MD and regressing to her old role(s), which served a specific purpose in the organisation. She demonstrated a heightened sense of awareness about this inner conflict and indicated that she was trying to work with changing her approach in order to be more effective in the new role. This manifested as push and pull in various directions as environmental and organisational stressors applied pressure on her.

6.6.6 Researcher's experience

The researcher experienced heightened anxiety in interviewing this participant because she was the least familiar participant. She did attempt to meet with the participant prior to the actual interview, but without success. It was then agreed that they spend the first 30 minutes of the interview creating some level of comfort before proceeding with the interview. A second factor that influenced the researcher's anxiety was that the participant shared the same academic background as the researcher and was a specialist in conducting research. The researcher felt that she was being scrutinised differently as was evident by the kind of questions the participant asked, and performance anxiety set in. This created a distance in the conversation as both parties attempted to tread carefully. The participant's valence for taking charge and processing information in a compartmentalised manner came to the fore in how she approached the interview and what she shared. However, once a level of comfort had been established, she demonstrated openness to exploring her experiences. The researcher was surprised by this, seemingly expecting a defensive response to the interview, given the senior role the participant fulfilled. The researcher introjected how leaders were *supposed* to respond in this context – that is, to protect themselves and the organisation, coming across as bold, strong and confident, not showing signs of “*weakness*”. As soon as the interview had been concluded, the wall re-emerged as the participant distanced herself from the researcher. The researcher introjected a sense of being dismissed, and wondered what this meant regarding how leaders cope with the demands placed on them by the need to engage others. She strongly internalised empathy for leaders in what they experience in these unsettling, pressurised times in the world of work.

6.7 CASE STUDY 6

The biographical background, normative, existential and phenomenal roles, congruence and incongruence in the leadership role, as well as the researcher's experience of participant 6, are discussed below.

6.7.1 Biographical background

This participant was a white male of Afrikaner background. At the time of the interview he was in his early forties. He was married and had children. His academic background was in IT and he was well versed in leadership studies and theory.

6.7.2 Normative role

The participant fulfilled a chief operating officer role in a financial services organisation. He headed up a relatively significant portfolio managed by seven direct reports. The management team comprised two levels, namely team leaders and managers. While the managers had more of a strategic focus, the team leaders were operationally focused. The participant's experience in a formal leadership role was about 13 years in the organisation.

6.7.3 Existential role

During the initial part of the conversation, the participant used intellectualisation extensively to depersonalise the role by talking about it theoretically, placing it outside of himself. Basic assumption mode of flight manifested, as he intellectualised about the concept from an object relations perspective, using analogies and models to explain his experience. He used the analogy of the leader being a captain of a ship (organisation) at sea (external environment). This analogy alluded to above the surface and below the surface dynamics. He identified with the boundary-keeping role of leadership between the organisation and the environment. He differentiated between having a formal leadership role that authorises one and the importance of self-authorisation in achieving strategic objectives, introjecting the need to self-authorise. Another aspect of leadership he introjected was being a thought leader when he talked about "... *Become a master of an idea or concepts ... become that go-to person ...*".

He highlighted the importance of authenticity as a leader by talking about "*staying true to oneself ...*". He also mentioned having the courage to say when one disagrees with something. He introjected being authentic by ensuring his intent was pure and that he lived by his values.

He strongly introjected the role of change leader by default of the leadership role, referring to the need to collaborate and manage complexity in enabling change to occur effectively. At the same time, he also strongly introjected the need to be a container, keeping people “safe and protected” during times of change and uncertainty, filtering what people were exposed to. The following statement is evidence of this: “... *extracting the essence and then making that very practical for people ... creates focus and safety and direction ...*”. A consequence of fulfilling this need was that he experienced work-life balance to be completely out of sync. He had been working long hours, but not being able to engage the people at grass-roots level and also not able to spend time with his family, explaining the situation as follows: “*family life being at risk*”; “... *there’s just not enough time*”; “... *potentially just burn out ...*” and “*in the meantime I’m also dying...* Resilience emerged as a vital skill of being a leader, and being able to bounce back from what one experiences.

Various splits manifested in terms of how he experienced the role. These included splits between strategic and operational focus; management and leadership; good and bad performance; and senior leadership versus junior leadership. The senior and junior leadership split emerged from the challenge he faced leading two groups with significantly different needs, capabilities and thinking. He perceived the senior group to be good in that he could “... *bounce ideas, thoughts and concepts which enhanced my thinking and stimulates ...* versus the junior group as bad in that they were “... *Like teenagers ... very selfish and they just want their stuff ...*”.

He introjected the effect leaders have on organisational culture by indicating that people mirror what they see and hear leaders do, and this then becomes a way of being. The following statements are evidence of this: “... *people watch you How you react in certain situations, what decisions do you make, what do you tolerate ... and pushing the boundaries*”. He seemed acutely aware of his impact as a leader on those who follow, and introjected the need to create appropriate ways of behaving in the work environment.

Free-floating anxiety manifested when the focus shifted to the impact of change on him personally. He said it was hard to talk about it. Moments of suppressed anger towards the organisation manifested regarding the impact of change on the people. As a leader he internalised the burden of guilt about this impact, using the following words to describe it: “*frustration*”, “*anger*”, “*uncertainty*”, “*tiring*” and “*anticipation*”.

Performance anxiety also kicked in when asked about how well he believed he was performing. He dealt with this anxiety by splitting it into inputs and outputs and rationalising what he aimed to achieve versus what others seemed to gain from the outputs. He also rationalised his good performance as being based on him receiving more responsibilities.

His justification was as follows: *“People must trust me ... Have belief in my abilities to get some stuff done ...”*. When asked how others perceived his performance, his response indicated that he introjected an adult-to-adult approach in managing the performance of others. He was aware that this might not have been viewed as good performance by others, based on the fact that this approach had not yielded immediate results. He strongly introjected empowering others to sustain their own results by not rescuing them and doing the work on their behalf. At the same time, he internalised guilt for not being fully connected to the people, because his primary focus was on *“connecting upwards”* in light of what was happening in the organisation.

6.7.4 Phenomenal role

The organisation had been experiencing an identity crisis as a result of a recent merger, which had resulted in the integration of two different brands and related identities. The way business was conducted was changing; the workforce was changing; and the vision, strategy and consequent operating model were also changing. The result for the participant in his immediate environment was that duplicate operational processes had to be integrated and this had a major impact on the people. This placed a heavy responsibility on the participant to enable the required changes while continuing with business as usual. Role conflict manifested in that he felt torn between working at strategic level and being seduced into functioning at operational level. He felt the pressure of the organisation’s expectations for him to enable change successfully. Furthermore, performance anxiety kicked in as he questioned his ability and competence to make change happen. He also felt the pressure to hold things together in the midst of the uncertainty. The following statement testifies to this: *“... create that perspective, the safety, the focus. The world is crumbling around us, but let’s just focus and get this done.”* During this uncertain period, the organisation had made use of strategy and structure to contain the anxiety. The impact on leaders was that it had enabled them to rationalise the changes so that people could move forward.

The participant had also been placed in a difficult situation in that he had to be selective in what he disclosed to people about where the organisation was going and the impact thereof. This had placed a heavy burden of guilt on him in that he was aware that certain people could be impacted, but he had been unable to protect them from the decisions that needed to be made. This can be linked to “virtuous betrayal” (Krantz, 2006) in that what was required to sustain the organisation had to take precedence over the impact on people. This was further influenced by the baggage the system carried about previous change initiatives that had not gone well and had *“... left a bit of a scar”*. The participant had internalised guilt on the organisation’s behalf for what others had endured in the past. The previously mentioned

suppressed anger provides evidence of what the participant carried on behalf of those being impacted.

6.7.5 Congruence and incongruence in the leadership role

The participant experienced incongruence in his leadership role in that he was constantly being pulled between strategic and operational levels of work. His normative role required that he focus at a strategic level to support the business unit to successfully enable the changes required. However, from an existential perspective, he had been drawn into the operational demands of sustaining business during this pressure-prompted time in the organisation. He had been acutely aware of where his focus was and its impact on his effectiveness as a leader. He had also internalised guilt on behalf of the system for the impact of change on the people.

6.7.6 Researcher's experience

The researcher was relatively familiar with this participant because they had shared a prior work relationship. As she initiated the conversation, she became aware of guarding against falling into a prior role she had fulfilled in this organisation as HR business partner. She had to consciously reaffirm the boundaries of being present as the researcher in this context. Given the researcher's history with the organisation, she found herself thinking back to her tenure there and became aware of the possibility of transference of old experiences in the conversation. She found herself tapping into what this participant had expected from her then, as he transferred the need for guidance or coaching in terms of his current leadership challenges.

The participant made extensive use of humour to deal with the anxiety evoked by the conversation, which the researcher accommodated. A pattern emerged where once humour was used to diffuse the anxiety, he was able to take the conversation to a deeper level. Despite his familiarity with the researcher, the participant remained anxious and spent a significant amount of time using intellectualisation as a defence. This made it challenging for the researcher to remain present in the moment as she felt the need to facilitate the conversation in a specific direction. She observed that whenever emotions or the topic of change came into the conversation, he leaned forward. Upon sharing this observation with him when concluding the interview, he initially became defensive, but then acknowledged that it was difficult for him to talk about emotions. During these anxious moments, the researcher also experienced performance anxiety, as she became aware of holding the space for the participant to feel safe to explore sensitive issues.

6.8 CASE STUDY 7

The biographical background, normative, existential and phenomenal roles, congruence and incongruence in the leadership role, as well as the researcher's experience of participant 7, are discussed below.

6.8.1 Biographical background

This participant was an Indian male from a Hindu background. At the time of the study, he was in his early forties, married and had children. He did not talk about his academic qualifications, except to mention that he needed to complete his outstanding master's degree. He was well versed in leadership theory, citing various theoretical concepts that he had learnt and applied in his role as a leader.

6.8.2 Normative role

The participant was a regional sales manager in a financial services organisation. He was responsible for a significant sales target and portfolio. It was a highly operational role that had a direct impact on the bottom line in terms of business performance. He had to achieve this target through a number of sales consultants reporting to him.

6.8.3 Existential role

The participant started off by highlighting what was expected of him in his current role. The words that came to the fore included the following: "... *The intensity and pace is very high ...*" and "... *need to be action orientated and to be able to drive results ...*". He differentiated between this role and the prior role he had held by making a comparison between being directly responsible for performance (current role) and managing others to perform (prior role). The differentiation was further evidenced in the shift in focus from strategic to operational. It became apparent that his exit from the previous role had not been by choice, but as a result of organisational restructuring, and that it had been quite a traumatic experience for him, as free-floating anxiety manifested when he shared this. Initially, when the restructuring process had occurred, he had not been successfully placed and had found himself in limbo and uncertain about his future in the organisation. He had withdrawn and become detached from his people in an attempt to cope with the change that had been imposed on him. Eventually the opportunity for the current role had become available, allowing him to remain in the organisation. He had experienced a major change between the two roles which resulted in him having to deal with loss, redefining his identity in the new role and redefining himself as a member of the organisation. Further evidence was his use of rationalisation to justify the benefits of the current role in enabling him to perform more

effectively, and in having more control over how he conducted business. This had enabled him to cope with accepting the change that had been imposed upon him. An internal conflict also manifested as a result of a “*collision of personal and organisational values*” in terms of how change was being implemented.

Another means of coping with what he had experienced was to ensure that he remained relevant by enhancing his business knowledge. This enabled him to engage others more effectively including staff, peers and clients. This had been helped along by his valence for learning, as one of his life scripts was “continuous learning is important”.

The life script “work hard to achieve in life” emerged from sharing his lived experience and it became apparent that he projected the same expectation onto others.

He identified with being a situational leader, introjecting being adaptable and flexible in meeting the organisation’s needs. Part of this was the ability to stand still amid chaos in order to gain a better understanding of the situation. When describing his leadership style, he referred to being a mediator, being socially adept and building bridges to connect with others. It became clear that he had a valence for mediating between others in resolving issues or propelling them towards common ground. This valence showed up through his life story and had been strongly introjected in how he had taken up the role of leader. This appeared to be an “a-ha” moment for him in the interview, as he discovered this pattern in his life. He realised that this skill had been honed since childhood and had become part of his identity. He also spoke about this in relation to humility as a leader, introjecting the need to establish real connections with people.

He also made use of intellectualisation as a means to talk about the role outside of himself. He referred to theoretical models and concepts of leadership, indicating his exposure to leadership development and training. At the same time, he demonstrated an acute awareness of the conscious and unconscious aspects of taking up the role and openness to receiving feedback. This was evident in the following phrases: “*I think so often you are unaware of what you need to compensate yourself for ... don’t see the shortcoming unless someone else points it out to you ...*”. He was also able to reflect quite easily, taking into consideration awareness of self and others.

He strongly introjected the need to provide containment for those one leads by taking on the role of protector or rescuer. The following statement testifies to this: “*... when something goes wrong ... I cover my people ...*” and “*... I see myself as that conduit that must absorb the pressures ...*”. From a TA perspective, he strongly identified with being the nurturing parent operating from parent-to-child ego state. He conceded that it was both physically and

emotionally draining. He spoke about the internal conflict between keeping his own emotions intact and being there to support, provide direction and protect those who follow him.

He strongly introjected the need for leaders to create a harmonious environment conducive to inspiring people to give their best. Together with this, he strongly identified with being able to understand what needs fixing and how to go about fixing it. He referred to authentic leadership, saying that “... *it makes you human to show emotion...*”, but that it needs to be managed. He spoke extensively about “*the perceived view versus the real me*”. He worked hard in his role at keeping these two elements as closely related as possible. This led to a discussion of performance in that perceived views could negatively affect how his performance was viewed. He strongly introjected this, as if one could be in complete control of or pre-empt what others might think of you and what they do with that information. Performance anxiety manifested when he was asked about how others saw him performing. He rationalised what he believed their perceptions to be in relation to the concept of “perceived view” and “real me”. His assumption was that others probably perceived him to be good at networking and leading staff, but not as good on financial performance as he should be. Performance was strongly hinged on what impact he had on the business, more so than what impact he had on those he led. He believed that his career and future in the organisation were significantly influenced by what others thought of him. The following comments are substantiate this: “... *for me it’s important for the perception around me to be good ...*” and “... *the perception of what I can do must be as close to the reality of it ...*”. There appeared to be transference from his prior traumatic experience of “losing” his higher level role to ensuring that he remain relevant and needed in the current role.

6.8.4 Phenomenal role

The organisation had found itself in an identity crisis amid a takeover by a global organisation, as it attempted to come to terms with the required transition. The turmoil the organisation experienced created a push and pull situation between “*remaining true to its South African roots and merging with the global market*”. This inner organisational conflict was mirrored in the collision of values that the participant highlighted when he explored his lived experience as a leader. The following statement testifies to this: “... *you can’t contain your feelings about stuff ... and if you’re very verbal about how you see things ... the boardroom can get very heated ...*”.

During this turmoil, the organisation had made use of the participant in diffusing negatively charged situations by him taking on a rescuing, stabilising role where business warranted it. He carried significant guilt on behalf of the system for the impact change was having on the people. His valence for mediating and connecting people found him easily seduced into

taking up this role. This was further enhanced by his strong introjection with fixing what was not working. This pattern emerged throughout his experience as a leader, and more so in recent times. The most recent evidence was yet another change that was about to occur in his current role. He was tasked with taking on a new business area that had undergone major change as a result of leadership issues, poor morale and substandard performance. His responsibility was to stabilise and rebuild the team so that they could improve business performance. His keenness in “*getting stuck into the challenge*” was driven by his valence for connecting others and building bridges. This would serve the organisation well in what it needed him to achieve.

Containment was an important projection he identified with as he felt drawn to protect and safeguard people during these uncertain times. He likened himself to a conduit that “... *absorbs the pressures at the forefront ...*”, often being seduced into the nurturing parent role. From an attachment theory perspective, this was also influenced by the attachment security needs of those he led.

6.8.5 Congruence and incongruence in the leadership role

The participant experienced congruence to some extent between his normative and existential roles. He was an experienced, seasoned manager with a proven track record of business performance, and therefore met the requirements of his role. Having experienced the traumatic incident of being placed at a lower level role as a result of restructuring and working through a time of intense uncertainty, he had been left with some unresolved issues relating to his future with the organisation. Paranoid anxiety manifested around his perceived performance and value-add to the organisation. This placed him in a situation of needing to constantly compensate for his future existence in the organisation.

6.8.6 Researcher’s experience

The researcher and this participant shared a common history, which created a heightened sense of familiarity. They had worked in the same organisation for some time where she had consulted for his business as a client; both had experienced a traumatic restructuring process; and they had remained connected since then from a networking perspective. This shared history made it easier to establish rapport and flow into the actual research interview. However, the researcher was acutely aware of the impact of this on the outcome of the interview. Despite familiarity, once they had entered the research boundary, anxiety manifested for the participant and the conversation became superficial for a brief period of time. Both researcher and participant used intellectualisation as a form of flight, to avoid the discomfort created by the anxiety of remembering the experience of being uncertain about

one's future in an organisation. When the participant had his "a-hah" moment of realisation, the researcher strongly identified with his valence as it was something she gravitated towards in her own life as well. She had to resist the urge to provide advice on this from a coach perspective and to remain in her researcher role.

6.9 CASE STUDY 8

The biographical background, normative, existential and phenomenal roles, congruence and incongruence in the leadership role, as well as the researcher's experience of participant 8, are discussed below.

6.9.1 Biographical background

This participant was a white man of Afrikaner background. At the time of the interview he was in his late fifties, married and had children. He did not mention his academic background. His extensive experience as a leader was evident in what he shared about the role of leadership.

6.9.2 Normative role

The participant fulfilled the role of human resources (HR) executive in a manufacturing organisation. After a long tenure in his previous organisation, he was newly appointed and had been in the current role for two months. At the time of the study, he had a dual focus as HR executive and HR manager for the organisation. The HR manager role was vacant at the time while the organisation recruited for a potential candidate. The HR executive role, which he had been recruited for, was newly created. He was expected to position HR as a strategic function in the organisation, so that it could make a contribution to the growth of people and business. At the time of the interview, he had 22 years' experience in formal leadership roles, indicating solid, grounded experience as a leader.

6.9.3 Existential role

The split in role resulted in a split in focus and functioning for this participant. The HR executive role required a highly strategic focus, while the HR manager role required much more of an operational focus. His prior role in his previous organisation had also been a management role with an operational focus. He talked about the challenge of maintaining the strategic focus, where needed. This was further evident in the push and pull he experienced between the internal focus (on the team) and the external focus (organisation and environment). He was extremely aware of the change in thinking required in the role. This was evident in statements such as the following: "*understanding what our business is*

about ...” and *“... identifying ways to grow the business for future sustainability ...”*. He described the events that had led to the vacancy in the HR manager role and its consequent impact on his role. The HR manager role had been fulfilled by the individual who had interviewed him for the executive role. Upon his appointment, the said individual had resigned, and his exit *“... left a big gap ... and that institutional knowledge was gone now ...”*. Paranoid anxiety seemed to manifest in terms of not knowing the actual reasons for the resignation as he introjected guilt on some level for this individual’s departure: *“He didn’t have anything against me ... I think he needed to move on as well ...”*.

This split in focus also posed a challenge in defining himself and establishing his identity in the role as HR executive. His identity was also impacted by what he carried along from his experience in his previous organisation. He described his prior two roles in that organisation as a traumatic experience that had had a lasting impact on him, which might have affected how he had taken up his current role. He had negative perceptions of the leader he had reported to then, indicating that her way of leading was in direct conflict with his own values and leadership principles. He characterised her leadership as follows: having artificial relationships with followers; functioning in self-preservation mode; and being underhanded and aggressive in her approach. He had found himself identifying with the aggressor, as he and others began to mirror her behaviour to safeguard themselves. He had continued this way for a short period of time, but as inner conflict set in, he eventually went into basic assumption flight mode. He had sourced a transfer to a different department. The role there was not well aligned to his expertise and knowledge. He did, however, learn a lot within the short period of time he spent in it until the current role in this new organisation presented itself. The trauma and anxiety evoked by these experiences had caused the participant to move into flight mode to the extent that he had actually left the organisation that he had worked at for a long time in order to escape from the unpleasant circumstances.

Based on his extensive leadership experience, he believed he had grown, learnt and matured. He introjected democratic leadership, believing in giving people space to learn, make mistakes and grow. He said he achieved this by putting boundaries in place to empower others to achieve. From a TA perspective, this indicated an adult-to-adult ego state of functioning. The parent-child ego state kicked in where he thought it was required, that is, with younger, inexperienced followers. He also referred to trusting people from the outset, unless they proved otherwise, and that this was a development area for him. He explained this as follows: *“I trust too easily and it bites me in the long run ...”*. He seemed to experience an inner conflict between making decisions from his head versus his heart as he strived for fairness. This was further influenced by the projection to be more autocratic, which he found extremely difficult to identify with. The coping mechanisms he utilised

included taking time to think it through before making the decision or consulting others before making the decision.

He also appeared to have a valence for being a “fixer” as he shared several examples from his experience when he was moved to particular departments to restore order, effectiveness and improved business results. He strongly introjected this expectation, and indicated a good success rate in meeting the said expectations, which he described as follows: “... *it was me saying, ‘you’ve fixed up what you needed to fix up, you can hand over now and move on’...*”.

Authentic leadership was important to him in that he believed he needed to remain true to who he was, by living up to his values, principles and leadership philosophy. This style of leadership was idealised by those who followed him, further authorising him to stay true to his leadership identity. The following statement substantiates this: “*there are some individuals still thanking me today saying, ‘you gave me my self-confidence.... You were my last boss and allowed me to gain some dignity back’...*”. Depressive anxiety manifested in him indicating that he felt a sense of guilt when he had to step into self-preservation mode to safeguard himself. The following comment indicates this: “... *a realisation that if I don’t do that I’ll get axed or pushed out, because it was my brief – go and do it ...*”. He acknowledged that from this perspective he sometimes had to make difficult decisions that would negatively impact others, but this was necessary for his own and the organisation’s sustainability, relating to virtuous betrayal (Krantz, 2006).

The change in role and organisation had not prevented him from carrying “baggage” from this experience into his current role. This was evident from the performance anxiety that manifested as he mentioned his loss of self-confidence and self-worth. He was looking forward to feeling important again in this role, in making significant decisions, but found it hard to “*find his voice*”. Being in a new, higher-level role, in a new industry was daunting. The following statement testifies to this: “... *so MD asked me, ‘So how is it?’ and I said, ‘It’s like sink or swim... I’ve come up for air now’...*”. He had the further challenge of being a white male coming from a corporate, formal culture into a less formal culture. He was anxious about fitting in. There was transference of what he felt and how he had reacted to the previous unpleasant experiences.

6.9.4 Phenomenal role

Being placed in the newly established role of HR executive had placed tremendous pressure and responsibility on the participant. Not only had he been tasked with entrenching the new role, he had also been instructed to effect change in how certain aspects of running the

organisation proceeded, specifically from an HR process perspective. He explained this as follows: “... *that’s why I was brought in ... to actually provide more stability and to bring structure and procedures in place ...*” The participant’s valence for being a fixer had served the organisation well in this regard. In as much as the organisation needed this, it might also have been resistant to adapting to the changes required as it had placed the responsibility with the participant.

From an object relations theory perspective, he represented the “older white male” to the organisation and whatever meaning may have been attached to that. For example, he may have represented the knowledge holder or the saviour that would rescue the organisation by establishing order and control. He was acutely aware of the potential this created to identify with the projection and what he could be used for in the system. He also strongly introjected the need to allay scepticism or distrust of his motives, particularly among the black staff. Some resistance to what he objectified is indicative in the following words: “... *I haven’t won everyone over yet ...*”; “*Nobody wears ties in (organisation)!*” and “... *the corporateness will follow me for a while ...*”. These are examples of where he stood out and was ridiculed for what he represented.

6.9.5 Congruence and incongruence in the leadership role

The participant experienced some degree of congruence between his normative and existential roles. He was highly experienced in his field of expertise and a seasoned, grounded leader with a proven track record of success. Given the need to define the role of HR executive, being drawn into operational levels of work had made it difficult for him to find his identity in the new role. The expectations placed upon him carried the potential to trigger past experiences, resulting in transference and the consequent impact on his effectiveness. He represented change for an organisation that was undergoing significant evolution as it transitioned into a corporate. This would bring resistance towards what he aimed to implement on behalf of the system.

6.9.6 Researcher’s experience

The researcher and participant shared a history based on mutual trust and respect as he had been her manager in a previous role. The researcher had had her own experience of idealising him as a leader, as she had identified with his style of leadership and related values. This emerged for her as she attempted to move into the role of researcher. As was the pattern throughout the research interview process, intellectualisation was used to deal with the anxiety created by the interview itself. When asked about his learning as a leader, he referred to a “dark year” in his previous role that had eroded much of his confidence in his

competence. By talking about the “dark year”, he was able to depersonalise the experience and speak about it outside of himself. Given her connection with this participant, the researcher colluded with him to explore in this way. As he shared his experience, the researcher introjected some of his emotions and found it difficult to listen and remain present in the conversation. It triggered her similar experiences in the past. At the same time, she was inspired by him as a leader as she had been his subordinate at the time, but he had shielded her and others from what he was going through. This had intensified her idealisation of him as a leader. She had also experienced great empathy for him as a leader, becoming acutely aware of the emotional turmoil leaders often face under pressure. She introjected the need to provide him with guidance to deal with his unresolved issues, by suggesting to him that he consider counselling in order to further explore this realisation.

6.10 CROSS-CASE LEADERSHIP ROLE INTEGRATION

The normative, existential and phenomenal roles are now discussed from an integrated perspective. This is followed by an integration of the researcher’s experience for the various case studies.

6.10.1 Normative role

The normative role describes the leadership content of the role. This includes the day-to-day tasks, demands, knowledge and competence required to take up the role, which lie above the surface. All eight participants were able to engage the subject of leadership quite effectively because they had all held formal leadership roles over a period of time. Three participants functioned at an executive level that required a highly strategic focus. Another two participants fulfilled roles in top management, which required a strategic focus with some operational focus. The remaining three fulfilled middle management roles, where a strong operational focus was expected with some strategic focus. Sixty percent of them indicated that they held academic qualifications, while forty percent did not mention academic studies. This indicates that academic studies may hold different meaning for different individuals in the context of leadership. Most of them had been exposed to leadership development or training that had to some extent shaped their leadership style and philosophy.

6.10.2 Existential role

All the participants described taking up their roles as highly pressurising, filled with uncertainty and eliciting conflict relating to expectations. Many of them fulfilled split roles as a result of overlapping organisational demands, and demonstrated an awareness of the impact of this on themselves and those they led. Most participants had developed a sound

idea of what they believed to be good versus bad leadership and strongly introjected what they deemed to be good leadership. Defining one's leadership identity proved critical to all participants in how they showed up as leaders.

From a TA perspective (Berne, 1977), some participants strongly introjected the nurturing, regulating or controlling parent ego state in getting things done. The impact was that the basic assumption mode dependence manifested, as the followers waited upon the participants to give direction or take control instead of owning their performance. Other participants strongly introjected the rational adult ego state in holding others accountable for getting things done. In this instance they enabled others to own their performance. The more experienced participants introjected both ego states, and approached each situation according to what was required of them as the leader in that particular moment.

All the participants made use of intellectualisation as a defence, depersonalising the role by working with the concept of leadership outside of themselves. They explored the concept by way of models, theories or analogies of leadership that they had learnt and applied over time. Words such as "leadership thing", "we", "it", "a leader" and "captain" came to the fore in the conversation. As the participants functioned on the periphery of managing the boundaries between the internal (team, department or organisation) and the external (environment), many of them introjected the role of leadership to be the following: (1) provide direction; (2) provide containment in times of uncertainty; (3) put controls in place when stability is required; and (4) protect and safeguard people from harm during difficult times. This often manifested as the rescuing parent ego state, as they responded to the followers' attachment security needs (Mikulincer et al., 2009). Guilt manifested as they felt pressured to focus on organisational needs at the expense of people's needs, linking to "virtuous betrayal" (Krantz, 2006). This was specifically evident as the role of change agent was projected onto most participants in enabling those around them to adjust to organisational changes and shifts in behaviour. This also created dissonance between what participants said and did in achieving what they were expected to achieve in role (Kets de Vries, 2013).

Some participants referred to power and authority as being earned and not "just given" by virtue of the formal role they held. They believed that power was bestowed upon them as a leader based on their impact on others. Many of them also strongly introjected the need for self-authorisation in taking up the role of leadership effectively.

Most participants experienced role conflict as their personal values clashed with organisational expectations. Strategic versus operational focus also created conflict in knowing where to focus and when. Six of the eight participants experienced a split in role, which created competing boundaries and authorisation dynamics. Role conflict was further

enhanced by a struggle with identity, as the participants were faced with the challenge of discovering who they should be in the role – that is, discovering how best to commit to achieving the organisation’s purpose (Sievers & Beumer, 2009). For some participants, the social defence of splitting management and leadership in concept and practice manifested (Krantz & Gilmore, 2009) in order to deal with this role conflict. This split resulted in leadership being idealised and management being devalued, or vice versa, as they attempted to work with the ambivalence this created when faced with organisational demands.

Performance anxiety emerged for most of the participants when asked how they thought others saw them performing. Rationalisation was used as a defence by most as they rationalised their perceived performance and what influenced it, how it was measured and what they could or could not control (Stapley, 2006). All participants talked about performance from an organisational evaluation perspective and not from their own personal criteria for performance. They tended to explore it against the standards created by others, using words like “performance ratings” and “exceeding requirements”.

Authentic leadership was explored by most participants, as they intellectualised their attempt to live it out in their roles. For some, this was difficult to do because they encountered resistance to truly being themselves in the role, while others felt the need to protect themselves as paranoid anxiety manifested from trust issues, causing them to mask who they really were when in role. Transference occurred when demands or pressures arose that triggered thoughts, emotions and patterns from past experiences.

Most participants introjected the need to provide attachment security during times of change and uncertainty as those around them projected the need for protection, safety, comfort or support onto them (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2009).

6.10.3 Phenomenal role

The organisation had specific ways of “using” individual leaders and projected these uses onto them. As a result of individual valence, some participants were seduced into fulfilling specific roles on behalf of their respective organisations (Kahn, 2014). For example, some participants demonstrated a valence for “fixing” or “rescuing” teams in need and were used to fulfil that purpose in instances where the organisation needed to establish control or stabilise an environment. Others had a valence for being competitive or being a knowledge anchor and were kept in roles where they served this purpose. In some instances, fulfilling this need restricted them from pursuing other opportunities for their personal growth and development.

When faced with pressure, most participants found it difficult to articulate their leadership identity, often regressing into old habits or ways of working that had served them well in the past (Stapley, 2006). In some “pressured” instances, this enabled them in the role, but in other instances, became a stumbling block to effectively taking up the role of leadership.

An inner conflict of values in terms of “what I believe versus what the organisation expects me to do” played out as most participants struggled to fulfil organisational needs at the expense of compromising their values in taking care of their people.

From an object relations perspective, some participants represented specific “objects” in their organisations (Czander, 1993; Klein, 1985). Two participants represented the “older white male” and with that the preconceived ideas that seemed to be typically equated to this representation including experience, knowledge, leadership control or stability. Another participant, a black male, represented “change” to the organisation because it projected ownership thereof onto him, while it resisted the actions he attempted to put in place to bring about required changes as per his brief. Other participants were seen to represent a “saviour” or “rescuer”, as followers manifested the basic assumption mode of dependence and waited to be led along or saved (Fraher, 2004; Kets de Vries, 2009). A few participants represented the “fixer” and were often used to effect improvement where teams were failing, morale was low and business performance was poor.

Some participants were idealised for being “good leaders” and often felt the pressure to live up to the expectations that came with this idealisation. At times they also experienced guilt for not taking care of the people as they believed they should (Fraher, 2004). However, some of them mirrored the behaviour of those they idealised to be good leaders as they attempted to model these leaders’ “good” behaviour.

The need for containment was projected onto all participants as they felt drawn into protecting people, becoming a buffer that absorbed the pressures that could pose potential harm to those they led. They also acted as a filter in terms of what information to share and when. This created a heavy burden to carry on behalf of others, as it manifested as free-floating anxiety (Motsoaledi, 2009). For some participants it created a feeling of being weighed down in the role.

6.10.4 Researcher’s experience

This section describes the researcher’s experience from the “*me as instrument*” perspective (Jervis, 2009; Terre Blanche et al., 2007). In the role the researcher assumed, the boundaries between researcher, coach and consultant became quite challenging. Given her

background and expertise as a coach and consultant, she found herself being seduced by participants to take up these roles. Furthermore, her relationships with some of the participants from a business perspective also contributed to this dynamic.

An issue of trust manifested prior to the interviews taking place, particularly when informed consent was dealt with. Paranoid anxiety manifested in questions being asked about how they would be safeguarded and whether their respective organisations would be protected from a confidentiality and anonymity perspective. In this instance, the researcher may have represented containment, a threat or a source of mistrust.

As soon as the researcher shifted the conversation from small talk to the interview questions, all the conversations took on a superficial level of intellectualisation. The researcher observed that the interaction became quite tense and anxiety provoking for participants. Some shifted uncomfortably in their chairs, others used humour or laughter, and others again went into flight by talking about business, as a means to deal with the anxiety they were experiencing. There was also a pattern of saying the “right” things about leadership. The researcher may have represented intellect to participants. The implication could have been, “we must sound clever” or “we must impress”, which created underlying performance anxiety. From an attachment theory perspective, it also seems that as leaders, the participants’ first attachment was to intellect.

When the word “perform” came up, performance anxiety also manifested, as all participants used rationalisation to reflect their “good” performance. They also spoke automatically about performance management from an organisational perspective and not from their own perspective. Their anxiety was also evident in the need to know how they had “performed” in the interview itself in relation to other participants. An interpretation offered here is that leaders may always be on the back foot in terms of performance. There was a pattern of exploring at a superficial level at the outset, and gradually becoming more in depth in the conversation, as they felt more comfortable about sharing personal information, which further indicated the need to perform well.

Transference occurred between researcher and participants in various ways. In some interviews, the researcher felt tiredness, specifically where participants were contending with difficult challenges and role conflict. With two of the participants, competition transferred into the interaction as they identified strongly with certain similarities between themselves and the researcher. This speaks to the merging of egos and identities between researcher and participant. These similarities took the form of common professional qualifications, same racial grouping, gender or age. With others it showed up as seduction into identifying with

shared, similar experiences with some participants. In some instances, the researcher had shared tenure in the same organisations as the participants.

The researcher felt the urge to rescue or save those participants who needed direction or affirmation about their effectiveness as leaders. She was faced with having to assume the rescuing or nurturing parent ego state in such instances. Countertransference occurred where she remained in the researcher's role and did not succumb to the seduction of becoming the coach or consultant. She avoided providing guidance or advice in these instances, as that was not her role in the context of the research study. Her own valence to help others played a role because the need for containment was projected onto her when anxiety manifested. Where emotions ran high, she held the space (containment) to allow some participants to work through it, and then facilitated the flow of the conversation back to the topic at hand.

The researcher strongly introjected the need to ensure that all the participants concluded their interviews appropriately. Her strong Feeling (F) and Judging (J) preferences, as per the Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), played out here. From the Feeling perspective, she placed herself in the shoes of the participant and was acutely aware of their vulnerability. Given the sensitive, personal nature of sharing their lived experience, she strongly introjected safeguarding the participants during the interviews. From a Judging perspective, she felt the need to bring things to closure on their behalf. To ensure this, she created an opportunity at the end of the conversation for them to reflect and extract insights that they could apply in their roles. She had to step out of the researcher role and tap into her coaching expertise to enable them to do this. It was appropriate at this point to provide coaching as a form of containment of the research interview. All participants expressed the view that the conversation was value-adding and that they could derive learning to apply in their roles.

6.11 DISCUSSION OF THEMES

In the next section, the findings of the study are discussed and interpreted. Several themes manifested, namely anxiety, leadership identity, boundaries, authority, role, task, containment, valence and perceived performance. Each theme is reported individually, is integrated with the literature and results in a working hypothesis. A final integration emerges in a research hypothesis.

6.11.1 Theme 1: Anxiety

Theme 1 indicates how leaders experienced anxiety in taking up their roles. Anxiety is a state of mind created by unbearable thoughts and emotions that are dealt with by using repression as a coping mechanism (Stapley, 2006). By virtue of the nature of the leadership role, anxiety was inherent, as the leaders functioned on the periphery of the boundary between their respective organisations and the external environment, both of which were constantly changing in this world of work. All of them attested to functioning under immense pressure and uncertainty.

Anxiety relating to the study showed up early on in the process as leaders needed the assurance that they and their organisations would be safeguarded in terms of anonymity and confidentiality.

Free-floating anxiety (Freud, 1949) manifested throughout the conversations, and more specifically when the focus shifted to a personal level. Self-reflection created a deeper exploration of the lived experience, and anxiety increased, indicating the vulnerability of leaders in taking up the role.

Paranoid anxiety (Czander, 1993) manifested for some leaders, specifically when they explored previous experiences where their trust had been betrayed or they had been hurt by others. Transference from these prior experiences into their current roles was evident as they attempted to reduce the paranoid anxiety they felt. This form of anxiety also manifested in ensuring that they were not rejected or excluded by those they led. The following comment substantiates this: “... *need to remain in the circle to avoid being seen as the enemy, where there is no trust and they try to work against you ...*”.

Performance anxiety (Nicholson & Torrisi, 2006) manifested when leaders were asked how they believed others perceived their performance. This type of anxiety appeared to be directly linked to perceived competence or incompetence and the fear of not having control over it. This type of anxiety was also evident in the need displayed to “perform well” in the interview itself. Most of the leaders asked how well they had interviewed in relation to others and had attempted to talk of the “right” things about leadership.

The following individual defences were utilised to deal with anxiety (Stapley, 2006; Vansina & Vansina-Cobbaert, 2008):

- *Regression*. When faced with the pressure to perform, the leaders had used regression as a defence, falling back into old habits of accomplishing tasks, because these ways of working had served them well in the past. The consequence of this was that dependence

was created and they were drawn into an operational focus primarily where a strategic focus may have been required.

- *Intellectualisation*. This was used to depersonalise the role by working with the concept of leadership outside of themselves, which was evident in the use of words such as the following: “*leadership thing; it; we; there; a leader; a captain*”, as well as theories and analogies about leadership. The following statement is further evidence of this: “... *a leader needs to walk the talk and they need to be part of the business ... they need to be seen, they need to be prepared to be in the trenches with the people ...*”.
- *Rationalisation and identification*. These were used as individual defences in dealing with the difficult decisions that had to be made on the organisation’s behalf. This was evident in the following statement: “... *So it’s very unethical right now. But is it really unethical? No. We’ve got a (organisation) to save. I feel we can do a little more better without having so much pressure, but they see it as (short pause) the pressure is going to bring the results.*” The leaders also rationalised their perceived performance referring to organisational performance management systems rather than their own personal performance criteria. Inputs such as performance ratings, feedback from others and being given additional tasks beyond their scope or skill became significant factors for perceptions of good performance.
- *Displacement*. This occurred when participants suppressed their anger towards their respective organisations for the inner conflict they experienced owing to a clash of personal values and organisational expectations. This anger was sometimes directed towards their followers and at other times towards their peers.

The following social defences were utilised in dealing with anxiety (Czander, 1993; Kets de Vries & Engellau, 2004; Menzies, 1975; Stapley, 2006):

- *Projective identification*. Organisations projected onto leaders their inadequacy to deal with change and uncertainty. The leaders identified with this projection as they internalised the role of change agent by taking the responsibility of enabling followers to adapt to change. They described this change-enabling experience as challenging, painful and difficult.
- *Splitting*. This was used to deal with role conflict where more than one role was fulfilled. The split between good and bad roles was a defence used to deal with the anxiety such demands elicited. A split between junior and senior followers was also adopted, with seniors being seen to be good as they enable leaders to get their jobs done, while

juniors were seen to be bad as they constantly required guidance and attention, drawing participants into operational work.

Leadership was also split between good and bad, based on what followers and the participants themselves idealised in impactful leaders they had experienced over time. The split between strategic and operational focus also manifested, as leaders struggled to manage the boundaries between the two organisational requirements.

Participants used the social defence of splitting management and leadership in concept and practice in dealing with role conflict. This resulted in a split between managerialism and heroic leadership, where leadership was idealised and management devalued in some instances, and the converse in other instances (Krantz & Gilmore, 2009).

- *Introjection*. The leaders strongly introjected the needs of others, which included, inter alia, the need for direction, security, comfort or affirmation. This will be further discussed under identity as it influenced how they identified with the role.

The following basic assumption modes were at play in taking up the role of leadership (Bion, 1961; Lawrence et al., 1996; Turquet, 1974):

- *Dependence (baD)*. Dependence manifested as helplessness or inadequacy for followers (Kets de Vries, 2009). Leaders were manipulated out of their roles into taking up a parental role, bringing stability and control where needed or rescuing others from the anxiety created by uncertainty or pressure (Koortzen & Cilliers, 2002). Dependence also manifested in leaders themselves as they looked to the facilitator for direction or guidance in dealing with the challenges they faced.
- *Fight/Flight (baF/F.)* Fight played out in response to leaders fulfilling their change agent roles. A case in point was where leaders were deauthorised in their roles because followers became aggressive or passive aggressive in response to the leadership being exercised (Kets de Vries, 2004). Flight manifested for leaders themselves where they were faced with threatening situations of feeling unsafe or vulnerable (Kets de Vries, 2004). Rationalisation and intellectualisation were used as forms of flight (Koortzen & Cilliers, 2002) to deal with the anxiety at hand. In some instances, leaders went into physical form of flight by removing themselves from the environment that posed a threat, for example, resigning from a specific role, asking for a break in the interview or even dismissing the researcher by bringing the interview to an end. In other instances, they made use of humour to deal with anxiety or talked about business to avoid the topic at hand when it became too anxiety provoking.

- *One-ness (baO)*. Oneness manifested in dispersing the role of leadership and referring to the leadership experience from a collective stance (Morgan-Jones, 2010). The use of words such as “we”, “co-create”, “shared leadership”, “joint responsibility” and “great team” were evidence of this. Another statement was as follows: “if the rules are set and have been co-created ... everybody bought into it ... then you need to pull in and if you don’t pull together then that person needs to be addressed ...”.
- *Me-ness (baM)*. There was not as strong evidence for this basic assumption compared to the basic assumptions already discussed. Me-ness speaks to withdrawal into the inner world of self, (Fraher, 2004) as individuals appear to be only conscious of their own personal boundaries (Vansina & Vansina-Cobbaert, 2008). In the few instances where this basic assumption did become evident, leaders felt threatened in terms of their own continued existence in the organisation. They resorted to making decisions that had a detrimental impact on those they led. This need for individual sustainability manifested as self-preservation.
- *Pairing (baP)*. No evidence emerged to support this basic assumption manifesting in the leaders’ shared experience. Pairing usually manifests as the group splitting up when anxiety is experienced and as ganging up against the perceived aggressor (Koortzen & Cilliers, 2002). Leaders are usually on the receiving end of this “ganging up” because they are perceived as authority figures. Hence they shared their experience of being on this receiving end. This was evident as paranoid anxiety and transference manifested for some leaders in instances where their trust was betrayed or they felt hurt by those they led.

6.11.1.1 Working hypothesis

Anxiety is inherent in the role of leader because leaders function on the periphery of the boundary between an internal world and an external world, against a backdrop of change and turbulence. This plays out at two levels – the organisation and the self. From an organisational perspective, the internal environment relates to achieving the primary task of the organisation and the external environment relates to the demands of the economic setting the organisation exists within. From a self-perspective, the internal world relates to interpretations and introjections the individual leader experiences, while the external world relates to the projections and consequent interaction that occurs between the leader and others. In taking up the role, leaders respond unconsciously through individual and social defences. Individual defences include regression, intellectualisation, rationalisation and displacement. Social defences include projective identification, splitting and introjection.

6.11.2 Theme 2: Leadership identity

Theme 2 indicated how leadership identity was constantly being explored and negotiated in interaction with others (Stapley, 2006). Leadership behaviour was a reflection of organisational branding, climate and culture (Cilliers & Terblanche, 2010). Many leaders introjected the impact they have on shaping the organisational culture through their behaviour. One leader described this impact as follows: “... *people watch you ... how you react in certain situations, what decisions you make, what do you tolerate ... And pushing the boundaries*”.

Because they were challenged to discover how best to commit to achieving the organisation’s purpose (Sievers & Beumer, 2009), extensive use was made of intellectualisation as a defence for how a leader *should* take up the role. They identified strongly with specific needs that were projected onto them. Examples of these needs included the need for direction, guidance, containment, protection, encouragement and stability. Their own personal leadership brand and philosophy were informed by the following: (1) what they observed and learnt over time from the leaders they experienced; and (2) the knowledge they gained through the study of the concept of leadership. By means of idealisation and mirroring (Dimitrov, 2008), specific characteristics became part of their leadership identity. In some instances, leaders identified with the aggressor (Kets de Vries, 2004) in the form of the leaders *they* reported to. They mirrored their leaders’ behaviour and expressed concern that they were becoming like them and treating their followers in the same way as they were being treated.

When faced with pressure from varying organisational demands, leaders found it difficult to articulate their leadership identity. Their identity was constantly being negotiated and renegotiated in interaction with others (Stapley, 2006). They regressed into old ways of working that may have served them well in the past, but did not enable them to be effective in their current roles. This was particularly the case with leaders whose current roles required a major shift from an operational to strategic focus. The following statements testify to this: “*I’m comfortable with what I know ...*” and “*... I need to reinvent myself ... it feels to me as if my core competency is becoming irrelevant ... I need to figure out what I need to be and to build some of that ...*”.

Most leaders experienced an identity crisis relating to authentic leadership, which was evident in an intellectualisation of how they attempted to live out authenticity in their roles. There was a constant differentiation between staying true to oneself and becoming what the organisation required in order to get the job done. This was evident from the conflict of personal and organisational values, specifically where guilt manifested in satisfying

organisational needs at the expense of the people. The following comments substantiate this: *“You do what you need to do ... you’re an actress at the work environment ... it’s a show and you’ve got to help people ... and do it authentically ...”*; *“be the real you and the rest will take care of itself ...”* and *“if you can sleep at night without there being a pain in your gut then you’ve done the best you can ...”*; *“The perceived view versus the real me ...”*.

From a TA perspective, various life scripts unconsciously shaped leaders’ sense of personal possibility and form in terms of who they needed to be and what they could or could not do (Cornell, 2015). For example, one leader utilised the following life script, “I trust you until you prove me wrong”. This was evident in the following words: *“You’re an adult; you need to take accountability and responsibility of your actions ... I’m not there to tell you what to do and how to do it ...”*. Another leader adopted the life script, “Control what I can, so that what I can’t control is manageable”, which manifested as a regulating parent ego state in how she took up her role.

Various splits (Stapley, 2006) manifested, which added to the complexity of their leadership identity. Some leaders split leadership and management in how they took up the role, exercising a choice between the two instead of focusing on both, because they served different purposes. Similarly, strategic and operational focus was also split in understanding what takes priority in delivering on organisational objectives. There was also a clear split between what they deemed to be good and bad leadership behaviour. This occurred through transference from individuals’ experience with leaders they had encountered in various roles over time (Roberts & Brunning, 2007).

There was a strong identification with the need to add value, indicating self-worth to be a key aspect of their leadership identity. Most leaders demonstrated the desire to make a significant contribution to their organisations and to the growth of those who followed.

6.11.2.1 Working hypothesis

Leaders experience an identity crisis as they work with the challenge of articulating their leadership identity in a constantly changing environment. There appears to be an ongoing struggle between staying true to oneself and becoming what the organisation requires in order to get the job done. This speaks to the dynamic nature of the construction of leadership identity as leaders are faced with this ongoing struggle of claiming identity and the granting thereof. In working with the complexity this presents, leaders split off parts of their identity in various ways. A split between leadership and management occurs, when they exercise a choice between the two instead of incorporating aspects of both in taking up the role. The split between strategic and operational focus manifests as a result of

organisational demands where leaders feel pressured to become involved in day-to-day operations rather than remain strategically focused. The resulting dynamic is that dependence is created and reinforced to deal with these demands. Leaders also become acutely aware of and mirror what they deem to be good and bad leadership behaviour.

6.11.3 Theme 3: Boundaries

Theme 3 indicated how leaders classified and categorised the world they were experiencing as they made meaning of this changing world (Stapley, 2006). Spatial boundaries included organisational objectives, geographical location, internal and external environment, and functional levels at which leaders functioned. Temporal boundaries that were put in place included separation of work and life. An example was the use of self-care practices to re-energise away from the work setting, which took the form of family time or spiritual upliftment. Another example was a leader who physically detached himself by leaving his laptop at the office after working hours as he strived for work-life balance. These practices talked to the need to withdraw in order to remain grounded, re-energise and at times protect oneself during times of vulnerability.

A psychological boundary (Stapley, 2006) utilised was that of self-identity where the focus was on personal values, principles and actions to differentiate self from others and from the role. A case in point is one leader who compartmentalised working with others into categories she termed “*interpersonal*” and “*intrapersonal*”. She used the words often in describing her engagement as a leader. Another leader referred to “*people, client needs and regulatory environment*” as task boundaries of what was required of him as a leader.

Boundaries between leaders and followers were of a psychological nature, as both parties defined where each one began and ended in the leader-follower relationship and negotiated engagement accordingly.

Leadership by default is a boundary-keeping role that sits on the periphery between the organisation and the external environment (Obholzer & Miller, 2004). Leaders thus felt the pressure that related demands placed on them in the organisation-external environment interaction. In their meaning-making experience there also was the boundary between the world of external interaction and the world of internal interpretation (Stapley, 2006). Leaders experienced conflict between these two worlds as a result of organisational demands, causing them to stick to their boundaries as self-preservation manifested. For example, one leader found himself “*connecting upwards*” at the expense of connecting with the people, leaving him with a sense of guilt over this. Another leader shared the following: “... a

realisation that if I don't do that I'll get axed or pushed out, because it was my brief – go and do it ...”.

Task boundaries relate to knowing what the work content entails. Anxiety about what to do and according to which standard is contained in structures such as job descriptions and departmental structures (Koortzen & Cilliers, 2002). Most leaders fulfilled split roles with overlapping task boundaries, which created significant anxiety in terms of competing requirements of what to focus on and when. One individual shared the following: “... *I'm always putting fires out ... I'm so busy running around in circles trying to keep everybody happy ...*”. Another participant who fulfilled split roles found it quite challenging to differentiate which role he was functioning in and when.

6.11.3.1 Working Hypothesis

The fulfilling of split roles with overlapping boundaries creates competing requirements of what leaders need to focus on and when, in the organisation-external environment interaction. Manifesting conflict from these demands results in self-preservation as leaders attempt to cope with conflict and experience a self-identity crisis.

6.11.4 Theme 4: Authority

Theme 4 showed how leaders were authorised in taking up their roles. They experienced a marked difference between formal authority and power. Authority implies having the sole right to do anything within the terms of one's authority, while power is the capacity to influence the behaviour of others in such a way that they would do something they would otherwise not have done (Stapley, 2006). He (2006) further identifies two sources of authority, namely managerial and leadership authority. The former is delegated to a leader by the organisation, while the latter is derived from the recognition of followers that the leader has the capacity to fulfil this role. Leaders differentiated between earning power through their engagement with others and the authority bestowed upon them by the organisation in fulfilment of their respective roles. The following comments testify to this: “... *you only have as much power as the person below you gives you ... you might have a title but it means nothing if you're unable to lead those teams giving you power ...*”.

While authority is contained within a said role, by contrast, power can be projected onto the role (Czander, 1993). Hence an individual fulfilling a role may be perceived as having power because of the nature of the role. In the case of the role as leader, followers may have attributed certain power to the individual, responding to the role and not the person. Leaders and followers were embedded in a shared context of relatedness to the organisation and its

tasks, resulting in them mutually authorising each other to function in their specific roles (Krantz, 2006). Leader-follower relationships were inherently characterised by status and related authority. Elements such as projection, projective identification, transference, mirroring and counter-transference came into play during anxiety-provoking interaction in these relationships (Dimitrov, 2008; Kets de Vries, 2001; Vansina & Vansina-Cobbaert, 2008).

Authorisation came from various sources in relation to leaders' roles. These included what was bestowed from above (organisational system and direct reporting lines), the side (peers), below (followers) and self-authorisation (Cilliers & Terblanche, 2010). Hirschhorn (1997) refers to personal authority as self-authorisation, describing it as the emotional appreciation individuals bring into their role, which allows them to be more psychologically present. There was strong evidence of self-authorisation in that it showed up in terms of how leaders owned the role and the impact thereof on others. Some of them used self-authorisation as a defence against the projection of perceived incompetence by exercising their personal authority to take on the challenge and make a success of the role, despite challenges or resistance. The following statement substantiates this: *"... you're going to fall, you're going to get hurt, you're going to get cut, but when your brain learns balance then you just (snaps fingers) get on that bike and you just ride ..."*.

Deauthorisation occurred for some leaders. One individual who had senior people reporting to him felt deauthorised in managing his business unit as these individuals appeared to have significant formal authority and power that was reinforced by the organisational system. The following statement testifies to this: *"I sometimes feel that they know more than me ... I'm not a good public speaker so I don't formulate the words to convey my thinking ..."*. In other instances, leaders were "selected" to be change leaders, but felt deauthorised by the organisation in achieving the outcomes expected in bringing about change. The basic assumption mode of fight manifested as resistance or shifting of blame in others, when they took up this role. The following statement is a case in point: *"... I'm fighting for a cause. I'm wanting to move the organisation forward ... people spend lots of energy trying to discredit the information ... it's draining, tiring and at times disheartening ..."*. The manifestation of performance anxiety also resulted in some leaders becoming deauthorised. Self-doubt and projective identification with perceived incompetence played a role in allowing some of them to feel this way. One individual believed that his career and future in the organisation were significantly influenced by what others thought of him. This is reflected in the following words: *"for me it's important for the perception around me to be good ... The perception of what I can do must be as close to the reality of it ..."*.

6.11.4.1 Working hypothesis

Authorisation is a given, but power is bestowed upon leaders according to perceived effectiveness in their roles. Self-authorisation is a driving force behind how leaders own the role and the impact this has on others. Where incompetence is projected onto leaders, self-authorisation is used as a defence to take on the challenge and make a success of the role. In the absence of exercising self-authorisation, leaders become deauthorised as they identify with projected perceived incompetence.

6.11.5 Theme 5: Role

Role is where the individual and organisation intersect (Roberts & Jarrett, 2006). It is not merely given by the organisation, but is also taken by individuals when they make it a personal experience, bringing their knowledge, skills, beliefs and understanding of what is required of them into the role (Roberts & Jarrett, 2006). Role dynamics differentiate between three roles, namely normative, existential and phenomenal. The focus here is on the boundary surrounding work and position between leader, follower and organisation (Cilliers & Terblanche, 2010). Theme 5 speaks to the ambiguity between the three roles and how it resulted in manifested anxiety.

From a normative perspective, leaders had a good understanding of the content of their role as leader and its impact on the achievement of business objectives. They were able to engage the subject of leadership quite effectively because they had held formal leadership roles over a significant period of time. Three individuals functioned at an executive level that required a highly strategic focus. Another two fulfilled roles in top management, which required a strategic focus with some operational focus. The remaining three leaders fulfilled middle management roles, where a strong operational focus was expected, with some strategic focus.

At an existential level, leaders described taking up the role as highly pressurising, filled with uncertainty and eliciting conflict relating to expectations. Many of them experienced anxiety from fulfilling split roles as a result of overlapping organisational demands and demonstrated an awareness of its impact on them and those they led (Czander, 1993).

Since leaders functioned on the periphery of managing the boundaries between the internal (team, department or organisation) and the external (environment), many of them introjected the role of leadership to be the following: (1) provide direction; (2) provide containment in times of uncertainty; (3) put controls in place when stability was required; and (4) protect and safeguard people from harm during difficult times.

Most leaders experienced role conflict because their personal values clashed with the organisational expectations. Strategic versus operational focus also created conflict in knowing where to focus and when. Most of them experienced a split in role, which created competing boundaries and authorisation dynamics (Menzies, 1970; Stapley, 2006). Role conflict was further enhanced by a struggle with identity, as leaders were faced with the challenge of discovering who they should be in relation to the role – that is, discovering how best to commit to achieving the organisation’s purpose (Sievers & Beumer, 2009).

Many leaders dealt with the anxiety evoked by role conflict by depersonalising the role. They made use of intellectualisation as a defence by working with the concept of leadership outside of themselves (Koortzen & Cilliers, 2002). They explored the concept by way of models, theories or analogies of leadership that they had learnt and applied over time.

At a phenomenal level, leaders experienced projections from the organisational system. Despite being aware of the normative requirements of their roles, organisational demands seduced them into taking on specific roles on behalf of their respective organisations (Kahn, 2014). For example, some leaders demonstrated a valence for “fixing” or “rescuing” teams in need and were used to fulfil that purpose in instances where the organisation needed to establish control or stabilise an environment. Others had a valence for being competitive or being a knowledge anchor and were kept in roles in which they served this purpose. In some instances, fulfilling this organisational need restricted them from pursuing other opportunities for their personal growth and development. Performance was perceived to be good where business was achieved at all costs, while ignoring the impact it might have had on the people.

As the role connects the individual to the organisational system and the organisational system to the individual (Borwick, 2006), both conscious and unconscious leadership requirements are projected onto leaders, shaping the role they fulfil. The need was projected onto them to restore control and stability in the midst of change or uncertainty. At the same time, the need to enable change was also projected onto them. This resulted in some leaders introjecting a parent-to-child ego state, manifesting as nurturing, caring, regulating, protecting or controlling (Berne, 1977). Dependence was created because people did not take ownership and became immobilised awaiting the leader’s intervention (Kets de Vries, 2009). They became deauthorised because the leader was forced to take control of getting things done, resulting in a reinforcing cycle of this dynamic. Other leaders introjected an adult-to-adult ego state, which manifested as rational thinking (Berne, 1977). Empowerment was created as they held followers responsible for their own performance by establishing

parameters within which they could be authorised in their roles to exercise shared leadership. They did, however, still own ultimate accountability for organisational objectives.

From a relatedness perspective, because the organisation is always in the mind of individual and the group (Shapiro & Carr, 1991), so too leadership could also be in the mind of the individual or group. People have implicit theories of what they think leadership should look like, based on previous experience of “good” and “bad” leadership and what they therefore expect from their leaders. These perceptions connected followers in how they then behaved towards leaders and what they required of them. The following statement substantiates this: *“I need to consistently deliver on what other people think I’m able to do ... the fear of disappointing the people that look up to me as being the captain of the ship because one stupid mistake can sink the whole way of thinking, the whole of doing ...”*.

Klein et al. (2009) refer to the co-creation of leadership, which is the result of two sets of forces. These forces include deep unconscious conflicts within leaders themselves but outside their awareness, and human interactions that combine to bring about this co-creation (Klein et al, 2009). The roles of leaders and those of their followers emerged through the manifestation of basic assumptions as per Bion’s theory. There was a resulting identity crisis between how leaders thought they should take up the role and what followers required or projected onto them. Some of them were idealised for being good leaders and often felt the pressure to live up to the expectations that came with this idealisation. At times they also experienced guilt for not “taking care” of the people as they believed they should have. One individual shared the following: *“... I took all that stuff and put it in an excel template because I thought I was such a wonderful leader ... (inhales deeply) and (giggles) because we all do ... I ring fenced it; it was so many views of me ... there was a common thread of being competitive, achiever, you know ... I sat down and I thought, is this really the perception?”*

6.11.5.1 Working hypothesis

Role conflict is the result of fulfilling multiple roles as a leader, where expectations are not singular and lack clarity in the midst of constant change and uncertainty. The combination of deep unconscious conflicts within leaders, and their consequent interaction with others results in the co-creation of leadership. Role identity crisis results from the interplay between leaders’ perceptions of what is expected in role and the followers’ needs and motives. This manifests as certain projections which leaders may strongly identify with, including providing direction, fixing, rescuing or protecting followers. Leadership is in the mind and is shaped by one’s implicit theories and perceptions of what “good” leadership should look like. This connects followers in their consequent behaviour and expectations towards leaders.

6.11.6 Theme 6: Task

Theme 6 describes leaders' varied experiences in their understanding of the tasks they needed to perform. Some had a clear understanding of what was expected of them. Others, however, seemed to experience confusion in terms of task boundaries. Overlapping boundaries created complexity for some leaders as they fulfilled dual roles.

For example, one individual fulfilled her own role as a regional manager and was also responsible for acting in the role of regional executive whilst the organisation recruited for the vacancy. Another had to fulfil a departmental head role while he was also the head of his specific business unit. Yet another individual fulfilled a highly strategic role of managing director, but also had to meet the requirements of vacant executive roles until successors could be sourced.

These multiple roles created significant anxiety relating to boundaries, tasks and authorisation (Cilliers & Terblanche, 2010). It left leaders with peers reporting *to* them in one context and working *alongside* them in the other context. The result was competing boundaries in terms of what to focus on and when. Confusion was also created for followers in terms of what the said leader's actual role entailed and the boundaries that governed it. In other words, followers were left wondering which hat the leader was wearing and what that might require of them as followers. Contained anxiety resulted in off-task or anti-task behaviour (Cilliers & Terblanche, 2010). For example, where leaders had the primary task of focusing on strategically taking up the role, they were drawn into operational work. In instances where dual roles were fulfilled, the primary task kept changing according to organisational demands, placing participants in significant anxiety, making task quite dynamic in nature (Shongwe, 2014).

6.11.6.1 Working hypothesis

Overlapping task boundaries create complexity and related anxiety for leaders. Task remains quite dynamic in nature as a result of competing boundaries in terms of what to focus on and when. Consequent confusion is created for followers in knowing what leaders expect from them in achieving organisational objectives.

6.11.7 Theme 7: Containment

Containment refers to the capacity of one individual to act as a container of emotions of another individual (Diamond & Allcorn, 2009). A constantly changing organisation cannot offer sufficient containment of anxiety, and in order to cope with this discomfort, the need for containment from something or someone is created and projected onto leaders (De Klerk,

2012). Theme 7 describes how leaders provided containment for followers in times of uncertainty and pressure. This containment took the form of protection, stability and providing direction. Leaders played a vital role in containing the anxiety of those who followed to enable the organisation to focus on the primary task at hand by providing a holding environment for the processing of experiences (Huffington et al., 2004a). Leaders presented themselves as agents of change, and with this came the need to create such a holding space for those who required it.

Attachment theory refers to the enduring tie that one individual has with another who fulfils needs of safety or comfort (Obegi & Berant, 2009). Attachment anxiety involves feelings and behaviours that arise in the context of close relationships. Leader-led relationships could be likened to parent-child relationships with attachment components, where follower needs and motives shape the expectations of the leader-follower relationship (Hansbrough, 2012).

Attachment security needs were projected onto leaders because they were seen to be authority figures, much like children look to parents for these security needs. Leaders internalised this need and provided containment where they believed it was necessary. Words such as “*safety net*”, “*conduit*” and “*buffer*”, “*being at the forefront*” and “*taking the pains*” were used to describe providing this containment. One individual described it as follows: “... *extracting the essence and then making that very practical for people ... creates focus and safety and direction ...*”; “*When something goes wrong I cover my people ... I see myself as the conduit that that must absorb the pressures ...*” and “... *create that perspective, the safety, the focus. The world is crumbling around us. But let’s just focus and get this done ...*”. Leaders also acted as filters in terms of sharing information and its consequent impact on followers. This created a heavy burden to carry on behalf of others and manifested as free-floating or performance anxiety.

6.11.7.1 Working hypothesis

Containment in the face of uncertainty is projected onto leaders as the need emerges for the creation of a holding space where experiences can be processed. Through this containment, leaders enable followers to anchor themselves during times of change as projected attachment security needs such as safety and protection are dealt with.

6.11.8 Theme 8: Valence

Theme 8 describes valence as a means by which participants were used for specific purposes in their respective organisations. It is an unconscious predisposition for an individual to repeatedly choose to behave in particular ways when placed in provoking

contexts (Kahn, 2014). Individuals tend to take up similar roles across different group contexts, where, for example, they may be described as the “protector” or “rescuer” and they consistently repeat this behaviour, meaning they have valence for this role-based behaviour. It is about the purpose the individual serves for the organisation. Leaders fulfilled various organisational purposes. Some of them fulfilled the role of fixer or rescuer. Others were placed in specific places to restore order, control or stability. Still others were called upon to be change agents.

Certain organisational expectations were projected onto leaders because this would serve the organisation best. Where leaders had a valence for the specific organisational requirement(s), they were seduced into fulfilling these expectations. In some instances the implication was that the organisation then restricted leaders’ opportunities for growth and progression by keeping them in the role where they best suited the organisation’s purpose. Some leaders split their experience of this, feeling demotivated and trapped in the current role, while at the same time rationalising the value they presented to the organisation and the good performance they seemed to be delivering.

The following statements are evidence of this: *“The organisation owns you ... they will make you do things that are unethical ...”; “... the more ruthless you are perceived and effective ... you are going to keep going up ... and I don’t want to go up! Because it’s going to change me ...”; and “That’s a reality for any leader that you sometimes need to go where the business needs you to be ...”.*

Conscious and unconscious demands shaped the role of leadership, guiding leaders in how they took up the role, what they introjected on behalf of others and the emotional standards they gravitated towards (Morgan-Jones, 2010). From an object relations perspective, some leaders represented specific “objects” in their organisations (Czander, 1993). For instance, three individuals represented the “older white male”, and with that the preconceived ideas that seemed to be typically equated with this representation, including experience, knowledge, leadership, control or stability. Another individual represented “change” to the organisation because it projected ownership thereof onto him. It offered great resistance when he tried to implement actions to bring about required change. Other leaders represented a “saviour” or “rescuer” as followers manifested basic assumption mode of dependence and waited to be led along. A few leaders represented the “fixer”, and were often used to effect improvement where teams were failing, morale was low and business performance was poor. One leader demonstrated a strong valence for mediating in resolving conflict between others. He often found himself in situations where he took up this role as a leader and it served the organisation well.

6.11.8.1 Working hypothesis

Leaders are placed in the role they are best geared for, which implies an organisational belief in their capability and performance. Individual valence shapes their role of leadership, creating a predisposition for what they introject on behalf of others and the emotional standards they gravitate towards. Anxiety mobilises behaviour, and leaders are experienced not as they are, but as others need them to be.

6.11.9 Theme 9: Perceived performance

Performance anxiety manifested for leaders to varying degrees (Nicholson & Torrisi, 2006). No single leader could confidently state that he or she was performing well. They tended to use rationalisation to justify what they thought must be good performance (Stapley, 2006). Most of them were critical about perceived performance from a self-assessment perspective, while it seemed the organisation assessed them as performing well. This difference in perceptions appeared to be as a result of a strong introjection (Dimitrov, 2008) of guilt for good business performance at the expense of the people's interests and well-being. One individual mentioned that the organisation's expectation to "*make money at all costs*" conflicted with his personal need to create opportunities for followers to develop their full potential.

The trend seemed to be that leaders who made money and ensured good operational functioning were perceived to perform well. Most leaders were aware of the gap this created in terms of compromising the strategic impact this had in their respective organisations in achieving these requirements.

Paranoid anxiety also manifested as many leaders felt that they were constantly being scrutinised in terms of performance, value-add and contribution (Czander, 1993). An apparent consequence was that self-preservation could easily manifest, as leaders felt threatened in terms of their continued existence in the organisation. This created dissonance between what they said and did (Kets de Vries, 2013). This anxiety manifested in the research interviews as well, where many leaders needed to know how they compared to others in "performing" in the interviews.

6.11.9.1 Working hypothesis

Leaders experience performance anxiety linked to perceived competence and performance. Paranoia sets in when leaders are continuously scrutinised in their value-add and contribution to the organisation. The result is that self-preservation manifests and dissonance is created between what leaders say and do.

6.12 RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

The tentative statement from a meta-position, is that leaders take up a role that is constantly evolving to adapt to the changing business and leadership landscape of the 21st century. The exploration into the systems psychodynamic functioning of leaders in this era revealed leadership to be a boundary-keeping role that is inherently anxiety provoking. While leaders function on the periphery of the internal and external environments, they are also managing the boundary between their internal world of experience and interpretation and the external world of interpersonal interaction.

At a conscious level, it is a process of co-creation, where leadership is shared, practised and distributed to foster collaboration. The unintended consequence is that at an unconscious level, it has implications for clarity of roles, boundaries, authorisation, tasks and related role dynamics. This was more so relevant where leaders fulfilled multiple roles with various accountabilities. The result was incongruence being experienced by the leader-in-role between the normative, existential and phenomenal aspects of the leadership role. It was found that leaders' response to this incongruence manifested as individual and social defences. Leaders' first attachment was to intellectualise as they made use of intellectualisation as a defence. Other defences that played out include regression, rationalisation, displacement, projective identification and introjection.

From a social constructionist perspective the lived leadership experience elicited an identity crisis as leaders were faced with the challenge of constantly renegotiating their leadership identity in a dynamic, changing environment. A splitting between managing and leading manifested as a defence in response to this constant renegotiation. From a relatedness perspective, leaders and followers are held together and influenced by leadership-in-the-mind, which is informed by their respective implicit theories of good and bad leadership. Transference in the form of mirroring and idealisation and countertransference manifested, reiterating the significance of earlier life experiences and the dynamics of interpersonal interaction in leadership.

Exercising leadership amidst today's complexity sees leaders soldiering on in an attempt to control outcomes rather than provide a container to enable desired outcomes by creating a space where followers can anchor themselves during turbulent times. It was found that when faced with such complexity leaders reverted to crisis mode, stepping out of their level of work and regressing into what was known and familiar in terms of competence. The impact was that they were seduced into adopting parent-child functioning, creating dependency on them to rescue or save others and triggering fight/flight basic assumption functioning among followers.

Performance anxiety also featured strongly in the managing of perceptions relating to performance, despite it not featuring as significantly in the literature review. The organisational perspective was that the individual was performing well in relation to meeting the organisational needs. The individual's personal perception of performance differed, however, based on the alignment between organisational expectations and upholding his or her personal values in remaining authentic in the role as leader. Leadership identity is intertwined with personal identity as leaders grapple with the conflict between remaining authentic and fulfilling organisational requirements at all costs. Self-authorization became a vital driver in leaders taking up the role and the impact of this on others. Virtuous betrayal emerged where leaders felt the pressure to betray those they led in the service of the organisational primary task, manifesting as self-preservation and dissonance between what leaders said and did.

Organisational and follower needs such as containment, security, direction, stability and control are projected onto leaders. The interplay between individual valence and being placed in roles they are best geared for, saw leaders being seduced into identifying with said projections in fulfilling the required organisational role.

6.13 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, the findings of the research were discussed. The qualitative analysis of individual cases resulted in a cross-case analysis and integration of the data. Interpretation of the data revealed nine themes relating to the BART framework and other related behavioural constructs. A discussion of each theme led to respective working hypotheses, which in turn, were integrated into the primary research hypothesis for the study.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the conclusions drawn, based on the research aims of the study, with attention being focused on the limitations and recommendations for practice in organisations and for possible future research.

7.2 CONCLUSIONS

In this section, conclusions are drawn in terms of the research aims formulated in chapter 1.

The general aim of the study was to explore, describe and analyse the lived leadership role experience of 21st century leaders from a systems psychodynamic perspective.

The literature aims were as follows:

- To conceptualise the 21st century world of work; the characteristics of organisations that exist in this world of work; and the phenomenon of leadership as it has evolved during this era
- To conceptualise the systems psychodynamic perspective in the context of this study
- To conceptualise the leadership role from the systems psychodynamic perspective in order to study the role on the basis of this theoretical framework

The empirical research aims were as follows:

- To explore and understand the lived experience of a group of leaders appointed in formal leadership roles with the aim of presenting working hypotheses that could be integrated into a research hypothesis for the study
- To formulate recommendations for (a) organisations towards obtaining greater insight into the challenges leaders are faced with in taking up the role; (2) consulting psychologists towards gaining a deeper understanding of leaders lived experience as it plays out above and below the surface; and (3) future research in the field of leadership.

Conclusions will first be discussed in relation to the literature and empirical aims, and then followed by conclusions pertaining to the general aim. The thinking behind this is that the specific aims culminate in a holistic picture under the general aim.

7.2.1 Literature aim 1

Literature aim 1 was formulated to conceptualise the 21st century world of work; the characteristics of organisations that exist in this world of work; and the phenomenon of leadership as it has evolved during this era. This aim was achieved in chapter 2. It was concluded that a paradigm shift has occurred in terms of how organisations are viewed in the 21st century. In this world of work, organisations are viewed as living systems that are continuously evolving in response to the changing landscape of this century. This landscape is characterised as the explosion of the knowledge era, with a change in the meaning of work; a prominent focus on governance and corporate citizenship; new organisational forms; and a changing customer profile. Organisations need to become increasingly adaptive, and those that fail to do so risk their future sustainability.

This changing landscape calls for a more holistic, collaborative outlook on leadership and places the emphasis on relationships, context and transformation (Kets de Vries, 2010). There is a shift from leaders controlling for desired outcomes to leaders enabling for desired outcomes. This constantly emerging world of work creates tremendous pressure for leaders in taking up the role effectively.

The view of leadership has shifted away from leader-as-entity to leadership as a socially constructed process. In this co-creation process, pressure from the organisation and individual expectations could result in role anxiety and conflict as leaders attempt to meet the demands placed upon them. This speaks to dynamics playing out below and above the surface for a leader. It was concluded that it is imperative for consulting psychologists to study leadership as a complex and emergent dynamic in organisations. They need to focus on what leaders experience against the backdrop of the demands they are faced with and in the context they are working in.

7.2.2 Literature aim 2

Literature aim 2 was formulated to conceptualise the systems psychodynamic perspective in the context of this study. This aim was achieved in chapter 3 through an exploration of the systems psychodynamic literature. The systems psychodynamic framework looks beyond the rational and economic view of work, seeing organisations as living systems that are both conscious and unconscious (Struwig & Cilliers, 2012) and are in interaction with their environments. As an interdisciplinary field with roots in psychoanalysis, it considers the unconscious processes that occur in the microsystem (individual), mesosystem (group) and macrosystem (organisation). The researcher concluded that it served the study well as a means to explore in depth the complexity of human behaviour. It described the various

defence mechanisms that manifest when individuals are faced with anxiety. These include individual, social and system domain defences.

Basic assumptions functioning also manifests in human interaction, and exploring this provided insight into the two levels at which groups interact, the primary task level, which is above the surface, and the basic assumption group functioning level, which occurs below the surface. This interplay shapes what groups or followers require of leadership. Attachment theory and TA were also included because they speak to projected needs that leaders may identify with in fulfilling their roles. This created the setting in which leadership is exercised and set the scene for further exploration of the leadership role from this perspective in the final literature aim.

7.2.3 Literature aim 3

Literature aim 3 was formulated to conceptualise the leadership role from the systems psychodynamic perspective in order to study the role from this theoretical framework. This aim was achieved in chapter 4, where the concept of leadership from the systems psychodynamic perspective was broadened. It was concluded that this perspective on leadership provided a theoretical framework in the form of the BART model and related behavioural constructs, which enabled the researcher to understand leadership functioning and related concepts at a deeper level. The leadership role was analysed with specific focus on the normative, existential and phenomenal components of taking up the role. Anxiety and defence mechanisms in relation to the leader-in-role, group functioning, valence, containment, relatedness, transference and countertransference were explored.

Chapter 4 concluded with an integrated theoretical view of the literature review conducted in the study. Shared leadership came to the fore as a result of the shift in the 21st century from leadership being vested in a specific individual to the co-created process of distributed leadership. A social defence that has emerged from dealing with the complexity of today's turbulent conditions is the splitting of management and leadership, where the one element is idealised and the other devalued in order to neutralise the anxieties that are evoked for leaders. Leadership works at the edge of certainty and uncertainty. This highlighted the importance of the leadership of complexity, where leaders create a holding environment for those they lead to become grounded. The need for containment is further amplified by followers' attachment security needs. The co-creation of leadership takes place as leaders and followers are embedded in a shared context of relatedness to the organisation and its tasks. They mutually authorise each other to function in their roles. The lived experience of leaders occurs in a dynamic, emerging state and not a static, controlled state.

Consulting psychologists need to have a sound understanding of how these dynamics play out in leaders' lives and its possible influence on their effectiveness. This will enable them to coach leaders in relation to managing these dynamics and becoming consciously aware of what manifests in role in the work environment.

7.2.4 Empirical aim 1

The purpose of empirical aim 1 was to explore and understand the lived experience of a group of leaders appointed in formal leadership roles with the aim of presenting working hypotheses that could be integrated into a research hypothesis for the study.

This empirical aim was achieved in chapters 5 and 6. Chapter 5 discussed the qualitative empirical research specifying the research design requirement and its application. The proposed research design was able to extract rich, meaningful data. The phenomenological hermeneutic nature of the research was capable of uncovering the unconscious, below-the-surface dynamics of the leadership experience.

The findings were presented in chapter 6, commencing with an individual case-by-case discussion, resulting in a cross-case integration, followed by themes. Working hypotheses were formulated for each theme, which culminated in a research hypothesis for the study.

It was concluded from the cross-case integration that leaders were able to engage the concept of leadership from the perspective of their normative roles. They had a fairly sound understanding of what was expected of them in terms of the day-to-day tasks, demands, knowledge and competence required to take up the role, and all the elements that lie above the surface. The level at which leaders functioned ranged from executive, strategic level through to middle management, operational level. They had also been exposed to leadership development interventions that had shaped their leadership style and philosophy.

Leaders experienced their existential roles as highly pressurising, filled with uncertainty and eliciting conflict relating to expectations. Leaders felt called upon to provide direction and containment in uncertain times, to restore stability and to safeguard their people during these times. Functioning in split roles created role conflict as they continuously needed to redefine their leadership identity. Part of this leadership identity challenge was the clash between their personal values and organisational demands. Individual defences were utilised to deal with this role conflict. They experienced intense performance anxiety in meeting the needs projected onto them.

From a phenomenal role perspective, organisations had specific ways of "using" individual leaders. Individual leaders, in turn, had specific valence for some of these "uses", and were

seduced into taking on specific roles on behalf of their respective organisations. Many leaders experienced intrapersonal conflict in terms of what they believed versus what the organisation expected of them. In instances where they felt pressured, they regressed into old ways of working that may have served them well in the past, but may not have done the same in their current roles. Some leaders represented specific objects to their organisations such as “older white male”, “change enabler”, “saviour”, “fixer” or “rescuer”, and with this emerged certain projections. Some leaders felt the pressure of being idealised as good leaders as they had to live up to projected expectations. Others experienced guilt for placing organisational needs before the needs of their people. All leaders identified with the projection of containment, acting as a buffer or filter to safeguard their people. They experienced this organisational need as a heavy burden to bear on behalf of others and felt weighed down in the role of leadership.

From the role analysis of individual cases, it was concluded that most leaders experienced varying degrees of incongruence between their normative, existential and phenomenal roles. This was attributed to split roles and competing expectations being placed upon them. Pressure, uncertainty and conflict characterised their leadership experience. Various defence mechanisms were utilised to deal with the manifesting role anxiety of being a leader, which ranged from free-floating anxiety through to performance anxiety and at times paranoid anxiety.

In terms of manifesting themes that emerged, working hypotheses were extracted for the following themes: anxiety, leadership identity, boundaries, authority, role, task, containment, valence and perceived performance.

The leader experiences inherent role anxiety that manifests at two levels, namely organisation and self. From the organisational perspective, the internal primary task of the organisation competes with the external economic demands. From the self-perspective, the internal world of interpretation and introjections interacts with the external world of projections. Leaders’ unconscious response to this is through individual and social defences.

A leadership identity crisis is experienced as leaders attempt to reconcile their need to remain authentic in meeting the organisation’s requirements. Leaders split off parts of their identity in dealing with the complexity and anxiety this presents. A critical split manifests between leadership and management, where a choice is made between the two elements, instead of incorporating both into their identity.

Split roles create overlapping boundaries. Leaders experience being pulled in different directions by these competing requirements. Self-preservation manifests as a defence to cope with this conflict.

Leaders feel authorised through the power that is bestowed upon them by those they lead. Self-authorisation is used as defence to counter perceived incompetence by consciously taking on the challenge to be successful and effective in role.

The leadership role is defined by a combination of unconscious conflicts within leaders themselves and their consequent interaction with others. The interplay between leaders' perceived expectations in role and followers' needs and motives co-creates the process of leadership. Leadership in the mind, that is, implicit theories of what "good" leadership should look like, connects followers unconsciously in their consequent behaviours and requirements of leaders.

As a result of competing boundaries, task remains dynamic in nature, as leaders are faced with the challenge of what to focus on and when. Consequent confusion is also created for followers in knowing what leaders expect of them in their respective roles.

The need for containment is projected onto leaders because a holding space is required, which would enable followers to anchor themselves during times of uncertainty and change. Attachment security needs of safeguarding and protection are projected onto leaders.

Anxiety mobilises behaviour and leaders are experienced not as they are, but as others need them to be. A predisposition is created for what leaders introject on behalf of others and the emotional standards they gravitate towards. This relates to their valence to take on specific roles on behalf of their respective organisations.

Performance anxiety manifests for leaders as a result of projected perceived competence. Paranoia kicks in under constant scrutiny regarding their value-add, which results in self-preservation. This creates dissonance between what leaders say and do.

7.2.5 Empirical aim 2

The purpose of empirical aim 2 was to formulate recommendations for the following: (a) organisations towards obtaining greater insight into the challenges leaders are faced with; (b) consulting psychologists towards gaining a deeper understanding of leaders' lived experience as it plays out above and below the surface; and (3) future research in the field of leadership.

See section 7.4 for this discussion.

7.2.6 General aim

The general aim of the study was to explore, describe and analyse the lived leadership role experience of 21st century leaders from a systems psychodynamic perspective. In general, it was concluded that the study was successful in describing the in-depth systems psychodynamic experience of leaders in this era. It was able to reveal the hidden patterns and dynamics at play below the surface in taking up the role of leadership. The efforts to ensure the trustworthiness of the study should make it possible to transfer the applicability of the findings to other sectors of business.

On the basis of the conclusions drawn, the study should make an academic contribution to understanding the experience of being a leader in today's world of work. It should contribute to existing knowledge on leadership functioning, specifically in relation to what takes place at an unconscious level. Existing research appears to focus primarily on leaders' impact on others – that is, individuals, groups, context and organisation, but not as in depth on what leaders themselves experience unconsciously in role and the consequent impact of this experience.

As explained in chapter 4, the aim of this study was to explore the lived experience of leaders by focusing on what they contain on behalf of others, manifestations of defences against anxiety and the uses they serve in organisations. It was concluded from the study that leaders function on the periphery of two levels. They facilitate the boundaries between the internal and external environments, providing direction and containing uncertainty while enabling change. While this occurs, at an intrapersonal level, leaders are faced with their own anxieties, fears and uncertainties.

It was concluded that the lived leadership experience elicits an identity crisis as leaders are faced with the challenge of constantly renegotiating their leadership identity in a dynamic, changing environment. Various defences play out in response to anxiety-provoking contexts. Leadership identity is intertwined with personal identity as leaders grapple with the conflict between remaining authentic and fulfilling organisational requirements at all costs. The interplay between individual valence and being placed in roles they are best geared for, sees leaders being seduced into identifying with said projections in fulfilling the required role. This, in turn, influences perceived performance.

The leadership experience appears to mirror the way in which organisations deal with change. Leaders become the container of organisational anxiety during these uncertain, turbulent times. Consulting psychologists working in organisations with changing

environments need to take cognisance of the intrapersonal experience of leaders and its impact.

7.3 LIMITATIONS

This section focuses on limitations of the research study. The limitations in terms of the literature review are presented first, followed by the limitations pertaining to the empirical research.

7.3.1 Limitations of the literature review

Leadership as a phenomenon has been studied over the past 100 years, resulting in a significant amount of literature and theory. This posed a challenge for the researcher in determining what to include in the literature review for this study. In an effort to deal with this challenge, she decided to extract a high-level overview of early leadership theories that are fundamental to the field of leadership research. This was then followed by a more detailed review of leadership theory in the past 17 years, commencing with the 21st century. The researcher's attempt to extract what would be of relevance to the study was subjective in nature, and may have had an influence on what was applied theoretically in the study.

Working from the systems psychodynamic paradigm had the potential to exclude behavioural perspectives held by other paradigms or schools of thought on the topic being researched. Given the fact that leadership is a well-researched phenomenon, the potential impact of this limitation on the research was recognised.

7.3.2 Limitations of the empirical research

The use of working hypotheses as a research tool represented some limitations in the empirical research in this study. According to Amado (1995), a working hypothesis as a research tool requires that the assumptions should be verified. It is therefore possible that all the hypotheses that emerged from this study are not absolute truths, implying that they are open to exploration in future research. This makes them relevant until proven differently. Hence the possibility exists for future related research to yield different hypotheses.

The research strategy employed in this study comprised eight case studies limited to the corporate sector. This influenced the conclusions drawn, which would need to be further explored in other business sectors to determine whether the same themes and hypotheses emerge across leadership roles in different sectors.

The use of the researcher as the instrument of research could have posed a limitation. It should be considered that her experience in the form of transference, countertransference

and bias could have influenced the analysis and interpretation of results. However, it should be noted that heightened self-awareness, managing her own inner conflict issues and being mindful of her response to the research experience, were ways in which she attempted to counter the subjectivity. This was achieved by way of reflective journaling and debriefing with the supervisor.

It is also necessary to understand that although the participants comprised a mixed group in terms of race, gender and job levels, the study did not focus on differentiating between their experiences based on these differences.

7.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The second empirical aim was to formulate recommendations for (a) organisations towards obtaining greater insight into the challenges leaders are faced with; (b) consulting psychologists towards gaining a deeper understanding of leaders' lived experience as it plays out above and below the surface; and (c) future research in the field of leadership.

7.4.1 Recommendations for organisations

Organisations need to become aware of what their leaders experience in role, specifically what poses challenges in taking up the role effectively. Against the backdrop of the 21st century, leaders and organisations alike are constantly redefining themselves in order to remain sustainable through change. Organisations behave in non-linear ways, are always in a dynamic state of flux as they respond to the complexity they are faced with and can be influenced but not controlled (Taylor, 2015). This is mirrored in leaders' experience of exercising leadership under these conditions.

Leaders are enablers of change in organisations and would be better equipped to handle the challenges these dynamics present if support mechanisms were put in place to enable them to manage themselves more effectively in role. Such support mechanisms could include leadership development interventions that focus on the above-the-surface (normative role) and below-the-surface (existential and phenomenal roles) aspects of taking up the role. While such interventions are pitched at a group level, coaching programmes would also make a significant contribution at an individual level to support leaders in enhancing their experience and consequent functioning in role.

7.4.2 Recommendations for consulting psychologists

Consulting psychologists play a key role in enabling both organisations and leaders to manage the complexity they face in today's era, and utilising it to the advantage of the

organisation for the future. They need to know and apply the systems psychodynamic perspective in understanding what leaders experience, and how this manifests in their behaviour and that of others.

Through individual coaching and facilitation of organisational development interventions aimed at leadership development, they could assist leaders to achieve self-efficacy in role by making them consciously aware of what occurs both below and above the surface in exercising leadership.

The hypotheses presented in this study provide a conceptual framework that could also be applied from an individual coaching perspective. Group coaching could be of value in creating a community-based platform to share and learn from each other's experiences. Both levels of coaching, individual and group, provide a holding space to contain the anxiety linked to taking up the leadership role and could serve as a means to anchor leaders during difficult times of change.

7.4.3 Recommendations for future research

Further research is essential to explore the systems psychodynamic lived experience of leaders to enrich the existing body of knowledge on leadership from this perspective.

It is recommended that similar studies be conducted in other sectors of business. As discussed in the section on limitations, further exploration could determine whether the same themes and hypotheses emerge across leadership roles in different sectors.

It is further recommended that groupings according to race, gender and other South African diversity factors also be explored with the aim of comparing the hypotheses that emerge in relation to those concluded in this study.

The working hypotheses could also be applied as a conceptual framework in a coaching context over a specified period of time with a sample of leaders. This study conducted interviews that yielded once-off results relating to the hypotheses. Coaching is a longer-term process that could assess the hypotheses over time in order to determine their possible influence on leadership as leaders apply derived insights in their day-to-day experience.

7.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This final chapter focused on the conclusions drawn from the literature aims, together with a discussion of the empirical aims and the general aim of the study. The limitations of the study were then discussed, followed by recommendations for possible future research and organisational practice.

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