A LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATION VALUE CHAIN MODEL

by

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DECLARATION

With this statement, I hereby declare that the thesis submitted for the degree Philosophiae Doctor (Communication Science) at the University of the Free State is my own independent work. I further declare that it has not been previously submitted by me for a degree at any other university.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

CHAPTER 4: CONTEXTUALISING EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATION

CHAPTER 5: LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATION: AN EVOLUTIONARY CONCEPT ANALYSIS

CHAPTER 6: PHENOMENOLOGICAL RESEARCH RESULTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BSC   Balanced scorecard

CAS   Complex adaptive systems

CC   Communication climate

CCO   Chief Communications Officer

CEO   Chief Executive Officer

CIPD   Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development

CLT   Complexity leadership theory

CMMC   Communication & Mass Media Complete

CSR   Corporate Social Responsibility

DC   Discursive constructionism

EI   Emotional intelligence

ELT   Experiential learning theory

FRLT   Full range leadership theory

GM   General manager

GRQ   Grand research question

GST   General systems theory

HR   Human resources

IC   Integrated communication

ICM   Integrated communication management

IFTs   Implicit follower theories

ILT   Implicit Leadership Theory

IMC   Integrated marketing communication

IQ   Intelligence quotient

IT	Information technology
KLCM	Ketchum Leadership Communications Monitor
KM	Knowledge management
KMC	Knowledge management capability
LCVC	Leadership communication value chain
LMX	Leader-member exchange
LOA	Learning-oriented assessment
LOI	Learning orientation index
LPC	Least preferred co-worker
LVC	Leadership value chain
NCA	National Communication Association
NDLTD	Networked Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations
OC	Organisational climate
PR	Public relations
PRISA	Public Relations Institute of Southern Africa
RE	Respectful engagement
Ro	Research objective
ROI	Return on investment
SLT	Situational leadership theory
TBL	Triple Bottom Line
VDL	Vertical dyad linkage

CHAPTER 1
ORIENTATION AND BACKGROUND

1.1   INTRODUCTION

The leadership of an organisation is responsible for establishing the purpose and direction of the organisation. It is therefore essential that organisational leadership consists of capable communicators as this can play a significant role in the value-creation process of the organisation. This realisation that leadership and communication are critical for improving organisational performance has led to an increased focus on leadership communication. Research has proven that leadership is a key factor in determining organisational success (Aldoory & Toth 2004; Bass & Avolio 1997), and it has long been determined that the essence of leadership is its behavioural influence (Yukl & Van Fleet 1992:148). Similarly, communication as the cornerstone of high-quality relationships in an organisation is essential to improving business performance (Brown & Moshavi 2005). A leader's ability to influence results may be a matter of merely speaking and behaving differently (Collinson 2005).

However, analysts of leadership communication have throughout the years been troubled by the peripheral status of leadership communication within the organisational sciences (Fairhurst 2001 in Barge & Fairhurst 2008:227). The linguistic turn in social theory led to the acknowledgement of the constitutive role of language, discourse, and communication in society and its institutions. As a result, leadership communication has begun to emerge as an epiphenomenon promising unwarranted growth in the field, not just around communication, but discourse and relational stances as well (Fairhurst & Connaughton 2014; Cooren 2007; Fairhurst 2007; Uhl-Bien 2006 in Barge & Fairhurst 2008). It is therefore unfortunate that when leadership is discussed, the focus is mostly on what the term "leadership" means and on an elaboration of the contention that consensus on a definition has yet to be reached (Medina 2011:71). Also, when the intimate connection between leadership and communication is considered, it is alarming that the concept of communication is taken so much for granted in the literature on leadership (Cartwright 2014:7). This might be ascribed to the intangible nature of communication.

According to Low and Kalafut (2002:1), value-creation processes in organisations have increasingly started to focus on the role of intangibles as more and more institutional investors are starting to take intangibles into account when making investment decisions. Malmelin (2007:300-301) underlines the importance of communication as an intangible organisational asset and supports the closer integration of the various dimensions of strategic communication in order to generate value in the market place. A leader's communication represents one of these dimensions.

Value creation in the organisation originates within the value chain. The value chain of an organisation describes the activities within and around an organisation, and relates them to an analysis of the competitive strength of the organisation (Recklies 2001:1). Organisations therefore have to determine how to change business inputs into business outputs in such a way that they have a greater value than the original cost of those outputs. In addressing the issue of the co-creation of value in the organisation, Porter and Kramer (2011:52) propose that the purpose of the corporation must be redefined as creating "shared value", which involves not only the goal to obtain profit but the creation of economic value in a way that also creates value for society. The way in which leaders create and add value to organisations is currently receiving much attention (Kaiser & Overfield 2010:164-165). It is important that knowledge about and the utilisation of the value chain translate into tangible benefits for the organisation (Berndt 2003:1). Organisations and their leadership are required to optimise their output at a time when resources are dwindling. Leaders are required to apply special skills and more complex and adaptive thinking abilities (Petrie 2014:5) in order for organisations to obtain a competitive advantage. The role of integrated communication (IC) in the creation of value for the organisation is also increasingly being recognised as this creates the opportunity for organisational leaders to support communication. Introducing these communication approaches to value creation in the organisation requires a new responsible, integrative perspective on the role of strategic communication, and in particular the communication used by leaders (De Beer 2014:136).

1.1.1 Relationship between leadership and communication

In this study, leadership communication is considered on two levels. First of all, communication is viewed as a process of expression and interpretation dependent on the exercise of reciprocal influence between leaders and followers that includes proximal

outcomes (such as employee commitments) that contribute to the development and achievement of organisational goals (Tourish & Jackson 2008:219). Secondly, this type of communication should take place within an IC context. Communication, in all its multifaceted forms, is therefore at the heart of the leadership process (Tourish & Jackson 2008). It is also acknowledged that organisational leadership is inherently bounded by system characteristics and dynamics; that is, leadership is contextually defined and caused. These dynamic aspects form the crux of this study and necessitate further exploration.

The relationship between leadership and communication has come to the attention of professionals across the globe (Ketchum 2013; 2014). Not only individual leaders are affected by this realisation, but brands and corporations as well (Cartwright 2014:6). Communication, as a fundamental component of every human being, is critical for social systems, relationships, physical and psychological health, and human survival. Communication is the unique aspect that sets humans apart from other species and is the foundation of all social, interpersonal, and relational constructs (Pearce & Cronen 1980). According to Scales (2013), communication is more often than not taken for granted as it is such a fundamental part of being human.

In this study – contrary to the view that is usually adopted in the majority of the literature on leadership, where communication is regarded as an essential component or aspect of the leadership relationship, a prime leadership skill (Ashman & Lawler 2008), or one of the most important tools in a leader's toolkit (Tourish & Jackson 2008) – leadership is equated to communication. Bateson already perceived this in 1972 when he stated that everything a leader does is communicative as it sends a message both about content and the relationship. Communication can therefore be seen as the face of leadership. This view is also held by Men (2014:258), who states that "[l]eadership is communication and the quality of leadership in any organisation is enhanced or limited by its leadership communication" (see also Section 5.1).

Communication is conceptualised as the interdependent and interactive systemic process whereby meaning is exchanged in the form of verbal, nonverbal, and metacommunications (Macik-Frey 2007:1). Fairhurst (2007) and Fairhurst and Sarr (1996) argue that leadership should be viewed as a discursive phenomenon which emerges through the process of the management of meaning of organisational events. This description of communication makes it more reasonable to define leadership as simply a unique form of this exchange of meaning

(Macik-Frey 2007:1). The stance taken in this study is that without communication there can be no leadership, as leadership is inherently a communicative relationship of influence and power between leaders and followers. A number of scholars support this view and are increasingly recognising the importance of communication in the leadership relationship (Fairhurst & Connaughton 2014:8; Clifton 2012:150; Fairhurst 2008; Fairhurst & Uhl-Bien 2012).

1.1.2   Leadership communication

Research conducted in 2014 by the Ketchum Leadership Communications Monitor (KLCM) indicated that leadership communication has in recent years been recognised as critical in business for accelerating change and improving organisational performance, particularly regarding aligning and motivating employees. The strong correlation between employee commitment and satisfaction is supported by the recent findings of research conducted by the KLCM. The KLCM research reports of 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, and 2016 explored the public sentiment towards the quality of their leadership and the effectiveness of the leaders' communication. The 2015 KLCM report refers to the demise of the CEO-as-celebrity leadership style and highlights a greater-than-ever opportunity for "leadership by all" – a collaborative and communicative culture that empowers employees at every level. This research crucially involved KLCM to venture into what Rod Cartwright, Partner and Director of Global Corporate and Public Affairs Practice Ketchum, called "the unexpectedly virgin territory we'd found born of the interplay between leadership and communication" (Cartwright 2014).

The 2014 study revealed that just over one in five of a leader's colleagues respected their leadership and that just over one in ten thought that leaders took appropriate measures when a problem was encountered. It was also established that female leaders outperformed male leaders and that the future of leadership communication is more "feminine" – regardless of the leader's gender. The feminine communication archetype referred to here is taking over from the "macho" predecessor approach to communication and centre around transparency, collaboration, genuine dialogue, clear values, and the alignment of words and deeds (Cartwright 2014). Employees expect open, honest, and regular communication in order to stay motivated and productive (Du Frene & Lehman 2014). Benefits of effective communication in times of change include higher employee satisfaction and engagement,

4

lower turnover, and stronger long-term commitment. Solid internal relationships also strengthen ethics-related outcomes such as fraud reduction and reputation management (Du Frene & Lehman 2014).

The emerging opportunity for the communications profession to assist in addressing is the enormous and enduring crisis of leadership that was revealed by the 2014 KLCM report (Cartwright 2014). The importance of strategic investments in leaders and leadership can therefore not be contested (Lawson 2014). The curricula of business schools also emphasise the development of the leadership skills of all potential managers (Dubrin 2007). Unfortunately, the focus on communication is still very limited, and in order to view leadership as a function or activity (Heifetz, Linsky & Grashow 2009), training programmes must be structured for collective and relational leadership and the fact that employees are inextricably linked to the success of their leader must be recognised. The above is emphasised by a comprehensive study by Seemiller and Murray (2013), in which they examined the learning outcomes of 475 academic programmes within 72 academic accrediting organisations in regard to leadership development. The purpose of the research was to establish what the essence of these leadership student development programmes entailed. According to Seemiller and Murray (2013), in addition to the prevalence of an overall need for leadership development across academic programmes, their research findings shed light on the truly interdisciplinary nature of the need for leadership development. The findings demonstrated that leadership competencies are needed in many fields, not all of them obvious. Oral communication, evaluation, and writing were the most prevalent competencies that emerged as in need of serious attention. However, higher-level strategic communication competencies are even more important. The importance of communication was highlighted in the research and requires the serious attention of leaders as well as those involved in their training. Organisations across the globe are continually benefitting from increasing a leader's ability to communicate more effectively with followers and being able to connect each individual's effort to achieving business objectives (Rathgeber 2009:2-3).

When literature on leadership is researched, however, references to leadership communication are found lacking. A search of *The Leadership Quarterly* discloses a total of nine articles that either directly or indirectly address communication in the journal's 19-year history up to 2008 (Tourish & Jackson 2008). Further investigation by the researcher of the

period 2009 to 2016 yielded four articles related to leadership communication. While some of these articles deal at length with phenomena in which communication is a critical variable, such as the rhetoric of US presidents when addressing issues of social change (Seyranian & Bligh 2008), these are the exception rather than the rule. Most address communication superficially, or as one of many factors contributing to the development of trust (Burke, Sims, Lazzara & Salas 2007).

The Journal of Business Communication, one of the key journals in the field, has been in existence since 1963. Since its conception, it has published no more than 40 papers which address leadership issues, which is less than one for each year of its existence. Leadership communication issues are not addressed at all. In the literature it is evident that the fields of leadership and communication largely existed apart from each other. In considering the literature and referring to the two abovementioned important literature sources, one directly linked to leadership and the other to communication, the findings are disappointing – as Bryman (2004:754) pointed out more than a decade ago. There has been little improvement in the situation since then. Another important aspect in this study is the prominence of the human element in leadership communication.

1.1.3 People as competitive advantage

The term "competitive advantage" refers to "the attributes and resources of an organisation that allows it to outperform others in the same industry or product market" (Chaharbaghi & Lynch 1999:45). A competitive advantage can basically be described as an advantageous position from which the organisation can compete and involves a success factor(s) that is sustainable and substantial enough to differentiate the organisation in the market from its competitors (Walker 1992). As the complexity of the world and the accessibility of traditional sources of competitive advantage increase, the success of organisations becomes progressively more dependent on the dynamics, knowledge, talents, and energy of people (Soliman & Spooner 2000). A contemporary focus in academic and managerial literature is on the utilisation of the organisation's human resources (HR) as a competitive advantage (Drucker 2002; Gratton 2000; Heil, Bennis & Stephens 2000; O'Reilly & Pfeffer 2000). Employees make significant contributions to the overall success of an organisation. According to Puth (2002:16), one of the most important changes organisations and leaders have had to adapt to, and which many have failed to come to terms with, is a clear shift in

focus from a task-oriented approach to leadership to a people-oriented approach. Research indicates that organisational performance markedly improves when communication is permitted to flow uninterrupted and employees are empowered, provided incentives, and given the necessary resources to perform at optimal level (Ahmed, Shields, White & Wilbert 2009).

Despite the growing interest in the utilisation of employees as a competitive advantage (Drucker 2002; Schuler, Jackson & Storey 2001; Gratton 2000; Hamel 2000), and an increasing body of evidence indicating the importance of utilising people as a competitive advantage, most organisations today still persist in their use of conventional approaches to strategy. Some of the biggest criticisms against the traditional approaches include that they ignore human factors, thereby not acknowledging the role of employees and other stakeholders. This lack of attention to the human element, also referred to as the micro-emotional component of the organisation, requires serious attention (Rosseel 2008) as organisations are constituted by the people working in them. The essence of a people-oriented approach to organisational leadership is a willingness to allow and make provision for full role development and the individual fulfilment of each individual in the organisation (Puth 2002:21).

A growing body of evidence demonstrates that effective internal communication plays a vital role in developing positive employee attitudes (Men 2014). Factors such as job satisfaction are enhanced (Gray & Laidlaw 2004) and employees who identify strongly with their organisation are more likely to show a supportive attitude towards identification with the organisation (Smidts, Pruyn & Van Riel 2001), trust and organisational commitment improve (Jo & Shim 2005), and positive employee-organisation relationships develop. These attitudes in turn increase productivity, improve performance, and enhance external relations (Berger 2008). Leadership should therefore focus on social interactions and behavioural change within organisational life (Crevani, Lindgren & Packendorff 2010). This places the focus on the everyday practice of leadership, including its moral, emotional, and relational aspects, rather than rational, objective, and technical aspects (Carroll, Levy & Richmond 2008 in Raelin 2011:196).

As has been indicated by Fairhurst and Connaughton (2014), Clifton (2012), Fairhurst and Uhl-Bien (2012), Fairhurst and Grant (2010), Fairhurst and Uhl-Bien (2012), and Fairhurst (2007), among others, leadership should be viewed as a communicative phenomenon that

is socially constructed, discursive, and relational. The view taken here is that leaders should be able to utilise the abilities of their followers to ensure their best performance on a personal and organisational level. Consequently, an alternative approach to strategising is offered. This alternative is based on the humanistic/existential movement in psychology where the focus is on the three central elements of strategy, namely processes (here referring to communication), leadership, and effectiveness, and it is demonstrated by how principles central to this movement can be used to attain and sustain a competitive advantage, based on people – the organisation's most valuable asset (Burger 2005). The above can only be achieved within an organisational context that is conducive to success. As such, the important role of IC, which is imperative to create such an environment, will now be discussed.

1.1.4 An integrated communication (IC) context

Globalised markets necessitate organisations to adopt a stakeholder-based approach to communication management. In order to meet stakeholders' needs, organisations are required to create and nourish long-term relationships between the organisation and its stakeholders. IC is fundamental in relationship building between these components in order to ensure that the organisation is viewed as a cohesive whole (Niemann 2005). IC strives to build relationships with all stakeholders, both internal and external, from the inside out (Van der Waldt 2015:121). According to Duncan and Moriarty (1997), IC is driven by strategic consistency, purposeful interactivity, mission marketing, and zero-based planning. On the grounds of this, Duncan (2002:8) defines IC as "a cross-functional process for creating and nourishing profitable relationships with customers and other stakeholders by strategically controlling or influencing all messages sent to these groups and encouraging data-driven, purposeful dialogue with them". Van der Waldt (2015:121) concludes that strategic IC blends the full spectrum of communication disciplines and should assist management to preserve an organisation's corporate reputation. This underlines the importance of an IC approach to establish a context supportive of effective leadership communication.

1.1.5 The leadership value chain (LVC)

As was previously stated, (see Section 1.1), contemporary organisations are continually tasked with finding new ways of creating better value for their customers and other

stakeholders. According to Porter (1980), the way to achieve improved value is through strategic management of the organisation. Therefore, in an effort to improve the understanding of stakeholder value creation as key to obtaining better value or superior business performance, Porter proposed the value chain (Porter 1985; 1991; 1996; 1998). The value chain concept is a system of people, organisations, and activities that is needed to create, process, and deliver a product or service from supplier to customer (Urbig 2003:2). A value chain analyses and describes a company's source of competitive advantage, and it displays total company value (Ilyas, Banwet & Shankar 2006:59). Strategic leaders and executives who have overall responsibility for an organisation, and therefore affect organisational outcomes, are no longer asked to focus solely on maximising shareholder wealth but are expected to meet an increasing array of stakeholder expectations, from sustainability initiatives to socially driven demands from customers. Therefore, focusing on the triple bottom line (TBL) – the financial (profit), social (people), and environmental (planet) – aspects of a business has become a prerequisite for business success (Carter & Greer 2013). This focus on the TBL was reinforced by a 2011 survey of millennials by Deloitte, in which 92% of respondents stated that a firm's success should be measured by more than profit. Carter and Greer (2013) also suggest that the emphasis on TBL performance will increase as stakeholders make stronger demands on strategic leaders to make changes in organisations (Carter & Greer 2013). To date, most research on how strategic leaders affect organisational performance is based on a financial perspective rather than value creation in multiple arenas. Little available research could be found on how the behaviour, communication, values, experience, and personalities of strategic leaders affect their business choices, actions, and behaviours (Carter & Greer 2013). The field of organisational strategy is dominated by case studies of "high-performing" businesses. Their business strategies are put under the microscope so that others can try to emulate their success. The assessment of the merit of a particular strategy requires the ability to measure "high" performance. In recent years a dramatic shift has been detected in the way this is done (Hubbard 2009:178). The focus has moved from shareholder value generation to stakeholder-centric behaviour. Hubbard (2009) explains this as a move from shareholder theory to stakeholder theory. There are several ways to think about the theory of the firm and each has different implications for reporting organisational performance. According to Owen (2006) and Brown and Fraser (2006), the key ways are shareholder theory and stakeholder theory. In the 1980s, the firm was viewed as belonging to the shareholders, therefore shareholder theory, which uses shareholder return to measure overall business

performance, dominated organisational performance measurement systems (Porter 1980). Since the early 1990s, a more stakeholder-based view has gradually come to prevail. The business is seen as having responsibilities to a wider set of groups than simply shareholders, such as employees and their representatives, customers, suppliers, governments, industry bodies, and local communities – among others (Brown & Fraser 2006; Steurer 2006 in Hubbard 2013:178; Post, Preston & Sachs 2002). Stakeholder theory assesses organisational performance against the expectations of a variety of stakeholder groups that have particular interests in the effects of the organisation's activities. Its perspective of organisational performance incorporates shareholder value but recognises that shareholders are just one group of stakeholders, and only relevant to those organisations that issue shares.

Leaders are key organisational decision makers and are responsible for determining the acquisition, development, and deployment of organisational resources, the conversion of these resources into valuable products and services, and the delivery of value to organisational stakeholders. Leaders are therefore potent sources of sustained competitive advantage (Rowe 2001; Avolio 1999). Leadership as a key factor in determining organisational success has been extensively studied in management, business, and marketing. Mumford (2011:1) states that during his time as editor of *The Leadership Quarterly* (2004 to 2010), he noticed a dramatic growth of interest in leadership and leadership research. Although many well-documented examples of research indicating the correlation between leadership and organisational effectiveness exist, it has still not been discovered, however, exactly how leaders make a difference and add value to an organisation (Cartwright 2014; Joyce, Nohria & Roberson 2003; Barrick, Day, Lord & Alexander 1991). With this in mind, Robert Kaiser developed the Leadership Value Chain (LVC) model (2005), which was later articulated and refined by Kaiser and Overfield (2010). The LVC is essentially a framework that links the characteristics of individual leaders to their leadership style; leadership style to impact on unit processes; unit processes to unit results; and unit results to effectiveness across a broad range of firm-level performance measures (Kaiser 2005; Kaiser & Overfield 2010). The development of the LVC is guided by the view of leadership as articulated by Robert Hogan (Hogan, Curphy & Hogan 1994; Hogan & Kaiser 2005). According to this view, leadership is an evolved solution to the adaptive problem of collective effort (Hogan & Kaiser 2005). The goal of the LVC is to identify the

sequence and classes of variables that transform a particular input (individual leaders) into valued output (organisational effectiveness).

An investigation of value chains in general (Ravenhill 2014; Elms & Low 2013; Cohen 2011; Porter 1985), and the LVC specifically, indicated that communication is not recognised as essential for organisational success. As was stated previously in this study (see Section 1.1.1), communication is seen as the face of leadership, and as one of the most important activities of an organisation (Harris & Nelson 2008). Communication is also unanimously recognised as "the key to organisational excellence and efficiency" (Grunig 1992) as the members of an organisation, regardless of their position in the organisational hierarchy, spend most of their time communicating in one way or another (Muscalu, Todericiu & Fraticiu 2013). Experts on organisational management and leadership are also adamant about the fact that effective communication is the foundation of organisational effectiveness and adds value in any organisation, and therefore it is unfortunate that communication is not acknowledged in the LVC. This omission of communication in this very important organisational management instrument requires further investigation. (The LVC is discussed in detail in Chapter 4.)

The importance of communication in an organisation was established in the previous section. It serves as context for the next section, in which the problem statement and research questions are introduced.

1.2   PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The fact that communication is not sufficiently acknowledged in the leadership process is a problem. This study therefore focuses on the role of communication in the leadership process. Within an organisational context, the ability of a leader to inspire followers to perform and strive towards goal achievement depends on the quality of the relationships that the leader is able to establish with followers (Danserau, Graen & Haga 1975). The establishment of these relationships is only possible within a context where the social exchange process between the leader and follower evolves through repeated patterns of common trust, interdependency, shared vision, respect, loyalty, and reciprocal influence (Graen 2003:2). This type of exchange should take place within an IC context, where consistent and unified messages are continuously sent out and where a context accommodating to effective communication is established.

The point of departure in this study is the LVC (Kaiser & Overfield 2010:165) as this model reflects the link between leaders and organisational effectiveness. The need for the LVC was identified because, although many well-documented examples of research indicating the correlation between leadership and organisational effectiveness exist, it is still unclear exactly how leaders make a difference to the organisation's bottom line (Joyce *et al.* 2003).

Leadership effectiveness, on the one hand, is seen as critical within large organisations (Madden 2011); on the other hand, there is growing recognition of the crucial role of communication in the establishment of collaborative relationships (Densten 2005). It was therefore disconcerting to discover that communication was not taken into account in the LVC model. Furthermore, it has been determined that other leadership models follow a similar pattern. It can therefore be concurred with Tourish and Jackson (2008), who stated that the quest to find a useful means of linking communication efforts to an organisation's bottom line can be likened to the legendary search for the Holy Grail.

The problem statement outlined above translates into the grand research question (GRQ) being investigated:

1.2.1 Grand research question (GRQ)

HOW CAN COMMUNICATION BE INTEGRATED INTO A LEADERSHIP VALUE CHAIN (LVC) MODEL?

1.2.2 General research questions

A number of research questions arise as a result of the GRQ:

- Why is the LVC important in an organisational context? (Contextual question)
- Why is an integrated approach to organisational communication needed? (Contextual question)
- What does leadership communication entail? (Conceptual question)
- How should leadership communication be conducted in an organisation? (Normative question)
- What can be recommended to improve leadership communication in an organisation? (Theoretical research question)

1.3 THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this research is fivefold. Firstly, this study reflects on the importance of the LVC within an organisational context. The different organisational domains that are impacted by leadership in this value chain are considered. Secondly, this research aims to highlight the importance of practising leadership communication within an IC context. The move toward an IC approach is increasingly recognised as essential for business success. Thirdly, an evolutionary concept analysis of leadership communication is conducted to establish the essence of leadership communication. Fourthly, employee perspectives on leadership communication are explored to further understanding of the complex nature of the concept. Finally, the ultimate purpose of this study is to illustrate ways in which communication can be integrated into an LVC model in order to contribute to the organisational bottom line. For leadership to advance the organisational functioning and strategic management of the organisation, it is imperative that communication forms part of the LVC. Leaders provide the vision and direction of an organisation. The effect that the value chain concept has on the organisation is the guidance that it provides in the generation of strategy. All strategy is thus developed in the light of the value proposition. Communication cannot be separated from this process as communication processes and organisational implementation are inextricably linked processes (De Lange 2014).

Based on the direction of this study described in the above section, the goal and objectives of the study are identified in the next section.

1.4 RESEARCH GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

This study is guided by the following research objectives (Ro) as they emanated from the problem statement and research questions discussed in the previous sections:

1.4.1 Primary research objective (Ro)

The goal of this study is to develop a leadership communication value chain (LCVC) model.

1.4.2 Secondary research objectives (Ro)

Ro1: To describe the LVC model and its different leadership domains (contextual research question).

Ro2: To discuss strategic IC as an approach to communication in an effective organisational context (contextual research question).

Ro3: To analyse the conceptual foundation of leadership communication (conceptual research question).

Ro4: To examine employee perspectives on leadership communication (normative question).

Ro5: To supply guidelines for how leadership communication can be applied in an integrated organisational communication context (theoretical research question).

1.4.3 Guiding arguments

A guiding argument assists in providing coherence and focus to a study (Wohlpart 2007). Below, five guiding arguments related to this study are identified.

1.4.3.1 *Leadership and communication are interdependent*

Leaders capable of communicating effectively with followers are essential to improving business performance as communication is the cornerstone of high-quality relationships in organisations (Brown & Moshavi 2005). The establishment of relationships of trust and reciprocal communication is essential for the success of the organisation and will ultimately contribute positively to the organisational bottom line. Communication should be viewed as an inherent part, and the face of leadership, and not as a technique or tool that leaders use to convey a message. Authors such as Men (2014:258) go as far as to state that "[l]eadership is communication and the quality of leadership in any organisation is enhanced or limited by its leadership communication".

1.4.3.2 *Effective leadership communication is necessary for an organisation to succeed*

Leadership matters have a substantial influence on organisational success. As was stated earlier, research has documented a link between leaders and organisational effectiveness.

1.4.3.3 *Because leaders are important to organisational success, the LVC model is significant in determining organisational performance*

The LVC is a framework based on value chain logic whereby Kaiser and Overfield (2010) attempted to identify the sequence and classes of variables that transform a particular input (individual leaders) into a valued output (organisational effectiveness). The LVC establishes and identifies the sequence and class of variables that transform individual leaders into organisational effectiveness.

1.4.3.4 *Communication must form an essential part of the LVC*

The LVC explains what the elements are that determine the value of leadership. Although communication is referred to as an important aspect, it is not acknowledged as one of the elements of the LVC. It is argued that communication is the essence of leadership, and therefore communication should be incorporated into the LVC.

1.4.3.5 *IC provides the context for effective implementation of leadership communication*

The strategic integration of communication in an organisation is about coordinating strategic efforts to ensure clear, consistent, and competitive messages through synergy and a unified approach (Barker & Angelopulo 2013). In the stakeholder era that organisations are functioning in, the need for integration to properly coordinate communication in the organisation should be an integral part of every efficient and results-driven organisation. The focus of IC is on the strategic intent of the organisation and the establishment of relationships of trust, loyalty, integrity, and credibility.

1.5 CONCEPTUALISATION AND META-THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework of a research project is the underlying basis upon which every decision made in the research process is founded (Mertens 1998). It relates to the philosophical foundation on which the research is based and forms the link between the theoretical aspects and the practical components of the investigation undertaken.

The meta-theoretical framework of this study is introduced in Table 1.1. This framework will be discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

Table 1.1: Meta-theoretical framework of the study

GRQ	How can communication be integrated into an LVC model?	
Grand theory	Systems Thinking Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS) Theory	
Worldview	Existentialism	
Philosophical assumptions paradigm	This study is approached from an interpretivist epistemology and constructionist ontology	
Academic discipline	Strategic Communication	
Theoretical domains / Academic fields	Leadership Communication	IC

The discussion that follows provides a brief overview of the theoretical conceptualisation provided in Table 1.1.

1.5.1 Systems theory as grand theory

Systems theory is considered in many quarters to be the dominant perspective in current thinking about organisations and their management (Stacey, Griffin & Shaw 2000). The grand theory of this study is that of systems theory driven by systems thinking.

Scholars such as Daneke (1999) and Roberts, Ross, Kleiner, Smith and Senge (1994) all seem to agree that systems concepts can be traced back to the ancient Greeks. To these authors the term "system" is descended from the Greek "sunistanai", which can be translated as "to cause to stand together". Modern systems theory has its origins in biology and is based in part on the idea that an organisation can be compared with an organism as both are considered to be self-contained entities that strive for equilibrium with their environment (Jahansoozi 2006:71). In other words, organisms function and continue to exist because there is dynamic and organised interaction among the parts of the organism (Wood 2004).

The General Systems Theory (GST) perspective on organisations holds that an organisation is a complex set of interdependent parts that interact to adapt to a constantly changing environment in order to achieve the organisation's goals (Littlejohn 2002). GST also holds that all systems consist of a sub-system and a supra-system. The organisation therefore functions within a greater system, namely the environment, which is recognised here as the supra-system, and consists of a sub-system of organisational functions (Niemann-Struweg

2015). Organisational systems are considered cybernetic systems as they are characterised by environmental elements that freely enter and leave them. Katz and Kahn (1978) introduced the notion of open systems to organisational contexts. These authors postulate that organisations are not merely "closed systems" able to control the environments they function in, in an attempt to achieve their goals without input from the environment. Rather, organisations are "open systems" that interact with an external environment that contain other organisations and stakeholders (Miller 2006). Three main systems perspectives that are specifically applicable to a business context are recognised; namely the mechanistic, the organismic, and the adaptive (Boulding 1956).

For the communication scholar, the openness of a system is of critical concern (Kreps 1990) as this implies interaction. Communication is both a systems component and a boundary spanner. Boundary spanning occurs through environmental scanning. Environmental scanning brings information to the organisation, while external communication sends information into the organisational environment. Von Bertalanffy (1950) published a paper on the theory of open systems in physics and biology, which linked the concepts of "holism" and feedback to systems theory. Communication activities can therefore be viewed as a feedback function (Witmer 2006:364). In recent years, more and more organisations have started to view the organisation's communication with internal and external stakeholders as the underlying basis of the organisation itself (Niemann-Struweg 2015). Myers and Myers (1982:42 in Mulder & Niemann-Struweg 2015) state that organisational communication is the "central binding force that permits coordination among people and thus allows for organised behaviour". As systems theory emphasises interaction and feedback in relationships within a society (Blumberg 2008:21), it is especially applicable in the context of this study that focuses on how leadership communication can create and nurture relationships and be utilised to add value to the organisational bottom line. Particularly relevant to the concept of IC is the approach taken by Littlejohn and Foss (2005:40), who view systems theory as a multidisciplinary approach to knowledge, because the principles of a system indicate how objects or entities in many different fields resemble each other. The classic modern view of organisations and organised relationships is that they are complex systems (Elkjaer 2003). Leadership is viewed in this thesis as a complex and dynamic process that emerges when interaction between people occurs, therefore the CAS view is adopted.

1.5.1.1 Complex adaptive systems (CAS) theory

Given the complexity of the modern world and harsh organisational contexts, traditional views of leadership and organisations are becoming less and less useful (Lichtenstein *et al.* 2006). In this thesis it will be pointed out that the assumptions of GST, the framework used for much of the prior research into leadership research, will no longer suffice. Organisations have evolved from bureaucracies with clear boundaries and internal areas of authority to a new form in which internal and external boundaries are fluid and flexible (Ilinitch, D'Aveni & Lewin 1996).

Since the early 2000s complexity science concepts have had a growing influence on the understanding of emergent social phenomena (Schwandt & Szabla 2013). In order to establish how organisational designs affect processes of adaptation, there has of late been a shift in the research literature from a static to a more dynamic perspective (Siggelkow & Levinthal 2003). In contrast with previously offered systems perspectives, the CAS view seeks to explain the process of emergence of new properties and the spontaneous creation of order and change.

According to Dooley (1997) and Kaufmann (1995), among others, CAS theory originated in the natural sciences and articulates how interacting agents such as organisms adapt and co-evolve over time in spontaneous ways. Based on these descriptions, the CAS theory may be considered a sub-discipline of complexity theory, as complexity theory began as an instrument used for understanding non-linear dynamics in the natural sciences that were not well understood under the "Cartesian" or "Newtonian" view of science (Wallis 2006). Scholars that view organisations as CAS adopt complexity theory principles to allow them to define CAS. The CAS theory specifies emergence mechanisms and characteristics that make CAS react quickly and creatively to changing necessities (Alaa & Fitzgerald 2013). According to Plsek and Greenhalgh (2001:625), "[a] complex, adaptive system is a collection of individual agents with freedom to act in ways that are not always totally predictable, and whose actions are interconnected so that one agent's actions changes the context for other agents".

A complex systems perspective introduces a type new leadership "logic" to leadership theory and research by understanding leadership in terms of an emergent event rather than a person. A complexity view, according to Lichtenstein, Uhl-Bien and Marion (2006), suggests

a form of "distributed" leadership that does not lie in a person, but rather in an interactive dynamic within which any particular person will participate as a leader or a follower at different times and for different purposes. This particular view is also held by authors such as Brown and Gioia (2002) and Gronn (2002). This grand theory is applied within the worldview of existentialism.

1.5.2 An existential worldview of leadership communication

In this study, emphasis is placed on understanding leadership communication from an existentialist perspective as this entails a constructive interpersonal relationship between the "leader" and the "follower". Ashman and Lawler (2008) and Lawler (2005) opine that both existentialism and constructionism developed to a greater or lesser extent from phenomenology. Both existential thinking and social constructionism value the individual, subjective, relational experience and perspective in developing our understanding of the world. This approach offers a line of thinking that differs from the orthodox approach to leadership (Ford & Lawler 2007:413) (see Section 2.3.3). Fusco, O'Riordan and Palmer (2015:61) state that the idea of taking an existential approach to business and leadership is a relatively new phenomenon. However, scholars such as Vevere (2014), Gibbs (2010), Kempster (2009), Ashman and Lawler (2008), Ford and Lawler (2007), Lawler (2007; 2005), and Burger (2005) posit that leadership and communication should be approached from an existential perspective. As explained by Ashman and Lawler (2008:253), leadership, however defined, is communication and existential philosophy can assist in examining the interdependency or relationship between leadership and communication. These same authors state that communication as understood from an existentialist perspective precludes the notion of relationship that invokes "leader" and "follower". Fairhurst and Connaughton (2014), Fairhurst and Uhl-Bien (2012), Fairhurst and Grant (2010), Fairhurst and Cooren (2009), Barge and Fairhurst (2008), and Fairhurst (2009; 2008; 2007), among others, all describe leadership from a social constructionist perspective as first and foremost being relational in nature and as communicative, discursive, and interactive.

Contrary to the traditional approaches to leadership, where a rationalist perspective attempted to explain the essence of leadership by paying attention to the composite qualities/behaviours/competencies, which together constitute "leadership" (Kempster 2009), more recent leadership research shows leadership less as fixed typologies but more as a

process of experiences that forms the basis of knowledge that is itself shaped through social interaction (Kempster 2009). However, all the dimensions of existentialism in their purist form are not relevant to this study. It is necessary to differentiate between two types of existentialism as described by Gier (1976), namely "strict" or "monological" existentialism on the one hand and "dialogical" existentialism on the other. Gier (1976) explains that themes contained in the material described by the use of the adjective "strict" are those most closely associated with common perceptions of existentialism as a philosophy. In this study, the approach taken by proponents of "dialogical" existentialism is adopted. This is also the view adopted by Ashman and Lawler (2008:254), which considers communication as being about encounters and relationships as much as it is about the sharing of meaning. The relationship between the leader and follower is therefore characterised by openness, dialogue, interaction, and two-way communication. The existential worldview is discussed in Chapter 2 (see Section 2.3.1).

1.5.3   Research paradigm

Human beings are guided by "highly abstract principles" (Bateson 1972:320) that combine beliefs about ontology, epistemology, and methodology (Guba 1990:18). These beliefs shape how the qualitative researcher sees the world and acts in it. The researcher is "bound within a net of epistemological and ontological premises which – regardless of ultimate truth or falsity – become partially self-validating" (Bateson 1972:314). According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005:22), the net that contains the researcher's epistemological, ontological, and methodological perspectives may be termed a paradigm or an interpretive framework. These frameworks or paradigms determine how members of research communities view both the phenomena their particular community studies and the research methodology that should be employed to study those phenomena. Whether the researcher is conscious of the fact or not, depending on their different worldviews about the nature of knowledge and the reality, every researcher works from some theoretical orientation or paradigm (Tuli 2010). The selection of research methodology in a given study depends on the paradigm that guides the research activity, and, more specifically, the beliefs about the nature of reality and humanity (ontology), the theory of knowledge that informs the research (epistemology), and how the knowledge may be gained (methodology) (Popkewitz, Tabachnick & Zeigner 1979 in Tuli 2010). This chosen paradigm helps to clarify their theoretical frameworks (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2000). An interpretivist or constructionist paradigm portrays the world as

socially constructed, complex, and ever changing. Two broad epistemological positions exist, namely positivism and interpretivism (Tuli 2010). This study is approached from an interpretivist epistemology and constructionist ontology.

1.5.4   Strategic communication as an academic discipline

The emerging paradigm of strategic communication examines the shifts from modern to postmodern organisational practice and the relevance of an array of viewpoints within the intentional, persuasive communication practices of large organisations (Overton-De Klerk & Verwey 2013:370). Strategic communication involves a process of co-creation by organisational stakeholders that may include dialogue, negotiation, and dissent. Strategic communication concentrates on the core drivers of organisational success and expands the traditional set of institutionalised communication measures in order to manage meaning in all kinds of interactions with internal and external stakeholders (Zerfass & Huck 2007:107). To be strategic, an organisation should build on planning by being strategic in coordinating communication actions and focusing on how these are presented based on the needs of all internal and external stakeholders as obtained through environmental scanning (Barker 2013). Strategic communication is about how an organisation functions to advance its mission by intentional, persuasive means of communication; not only via marketing, corporate, and other institutionalised forms of public communication but via all of the organisation's communication actions, including leadership communication. What this in fact means is that communication is no longer a function or a role in the organisation, but through its enactment it reflexively shapes the organisation itself (Zerfass & Huck 2007). Strategic communication examines organisational communication from an integrated, multi-disciplinary perspective by extending ideas and issues grounded in various traditional communication disciplines that were developed as speciality functions during the 20th century. With the onset of the 21st century, however, organisations' need to compete for the attention, support, and allegiance of a wide range of internal and external stakeholders necessitated that a more holistic approach to examining organisational phenomena was instituted in order for these disciplines to function in a postmodern environment (Hallahan, Holzhausen, Van Ruler, Verĉiĉ & Sriramesh 2007).

In the context described above, leadership communication is crucial to the success of any organisation. Leadership communication is rooted in concrete actions and established social relations and thus enables detailed discussions and joint perceptions (Zerfass & Huck 2007).

It is therefore unfortunate that most leaders find it hard to understand that effective communication is strategic (in other words, there is a plan of action), "leader driven", and that it seeks to build an understanding among employees about the vision and direction of the organisation (Hallahan *et al.* 2007). IC recognises that purposeful influence and relationships are the fundamental goals of communications by organisations. To be relevant today, communication theory and research must focus on how communications contribute to an organisation's purpose for being and add value to the organisational bottom line (Hallahan *et al.* 2007:10).

1.5.5 Theoretical domains related to this study and their descriptive subdomains

Two main theoretical domains that fall within the scope of this study are leadership communication and IC. Each of these and their related descriptive sub-domains are briefly discussed below.

1.5.5.1 Theoretical Domain 1: Leadership communication

In this study, leadership communication is viewed as a key factor in determining organisational success as communication between management and employees is the vital basis of organisational communication. The realisation by many scholars that organisations are discursive constructions (Fairhurst & Putnam 2004) also leads to leadership being viewed as a discursive construction and an alternative to the long-standing individualistic approach that is characteristic of leadership psychology (Fairhurst 2007; Collinson 2005; Grint 2005). Leadership is viewed as a lived experience and social activity in which persons-in-conversation, action, meaning, and context are dynamically interrelated. As such, the systemic constructionist approach is particularly suited to this study.

Barrett (2006) posits that leaders influence their target groups through leadership communication, which, according to this author, is the controlled, purposeful transfer of meaning used to guide, direct, motivate, and inspire others to do what is required of them. Barrett (2006) identifies three different levels in leadership communication, namely the core level, the managerial level, and the corporate level. These levels are described in this study as the individual level, the team/unit or group level, and the organisational level (see Section 4.6.5). These different sub-divisions are classified under two broad and overarching levels, namely the strategic level and the operational level. Expanded knowledge of strategy and

operations will assist managers and leaders in understanding how these two concepts can work in parallel with each other to drive better business performance. Leadership communication is discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

1.5.5.2   Theoretical Domain 2: IC

IC implementation is driven by the long-term strategic plan, often referred to as the strategic intent of an organisation. This implies that the organisational mission should drive all the communication objectives, business objectives, and operations of the organisation (Niemann-Struweg 2015). According to Gronstedt (2000:8), the integration of communication in an organisation should be encouraged from a managerial level. Communication integration refers to a total coordination of all organisational communication in order to obtain maximum message impact in a target group (Kliatchko 2008). IC focuses on communication with all stakeholders in a two-way process and it involves all organisational communication (Niemann-Struweg & Grobler 2007). Scholars such as Niemann and Crystal (2002) postulate that IC works best when it starts at the top, and is supported by proper infrastructure that makes it possible to apply IC processes.

According to Holtzhausen (2008 in Smith 2013), the interpersonal and interactive nature of integration calls for a focus on internal strategic communication where the components of centralised control toward goal attainment are considered. Holtzhausen (2008:3) further states that when strategic communication is viewed as an "emergent strategy", value is placed on the "contribution of employees at every level of the organisation". Through integration, communication becomes a business approach that is integrated in support of the general health and wealth of the organisation (Niemann 2005). Organisations realise that the adoption of a unified message is of the essence to ensure credibility and cohesion when messages are distributed to different contact points (Niemann-Struweg & Grobler 2011). IC is a stakeholder-centric and data-driven method of communicating with stakeholders and therefore organisations need to apply this concept in organisational functioning (Niemann 2005:107). IC is also linked to a strong reputation and, ultimately, a productive organisation with a healthy TBL (Niemann-Struweg 2015:9).

1.6   RESEARCH DESIGN

The term "research design" refers to the entire process of research, from conceptualising a problem to writing research questions, on to data collection, analysis, interpretation, and report writing (Bogdan & Taylor 1975 in Creswell 2007:249). The essence of the research design is to determine the paradigm and methods to be employed in order to best solve the research problem at hand (Levy 2000). All research is based on some underlying philosophical assumptions about what constitutes "valid" research and which research method(s) would be appropriate for the development of knowledge in a given study (Thomas 2010:291).

1.6.1   Phases of the research

The research in this study is divided into five phases, which are as follows: Phase I is the exploration phase during which the meta-analytical question and secondary objectives are addressed. This phase consists of two sections; the first entails a literature review of the LVC, which is followed by a literature review of IC as the most effective form of organisational communication. The rationale of this phase is to explore the context in which leadership communication takes place.

Phase II of the research focuses on the conceptual research questions and addresses the secondary objective. This entails an evolutionary concept analysis of leadership communication. The aim of this analysis is to discover the conceptual foundation of the leadership communication phenomenon.

During Phase III, the data gathered during the first two phases are synthesised to develop an LVC that will incorporate communication from an IC perspective.

Phase IV, the empirical phase, consists of in-depth interviews with respondents who are regularly exposed to leadership communication. This phase addresses the normative research question and secondary Ro 4. The aim of this phase is to explore the respondents' experiences of the leadership communication phenomenon in order to illuminate knowledge gained during the first two phases of the research and supplement the information in the conceptual model designed in Phase III.

The final stage, Phase V, uses the insights gained from the empirical research and merges it with the model created in Phase III to propose a framework and guidelines for integrating communication into an LVC model in order to develop an LCVC model.

Table 1.2 presents a summary of the phases in relation to the chapters.

Table 1.2: Summary of research phases related to chapters

Phase	Chapter	Title of chapter
Phase I(a): Literature review on the LVC	Chapter 4	Contextualising effective leadership communication
Phase 1(b): Literature review on IC	Chapter 4	
Phase II: A conceptual analysis of leadership communication	Chapter 5	An evolutionary concept analysis of leadership communication
Phase III: The development of a <u>conceptual</u> LVC model that incorporates communication	Chapter 5	An evolutionary concept analysis of leadership communication
Phase IV: Empirical research phase (in-depth interviews)	Chapter 6	Research results and discussion
Phase V: Synthesis of the data from the previous four phases to <u>propose</u> an LCVC model from an IC perspective	Chapter 7	Conclusions, recommendations, and critical reflection

1.6.2   Philosophical foundation

Philosophical foundations signify "a basic set of beliefs that guide actions taken in connection with a disciplined inquiry" (Guba 1990:17). The philosophical assumptions of a study present a framework for assisting the researcher in making a decision on which research methods to apply (Denzin & Lincoln 2011). As this study is underpinned by an interpretivist epistemology and constructionist ontology, it is assumed here that meaning is

embedded in the participants' experiences and that this meaning is mediated through the researcher's own perceptions (Merriman 1998).

1.6.3 Research paradigm

This study is approached from a qualitative paradigm and is therefore exploratory, descriptive, and contextual in nature as it attempts to explore and describe leadership communication from within an IC context. The term "qualitative methodology" refers in its broadest sense to research that produces descriptive data – people's own written or spoken words and observable behaviour. Qualitative researchers are concerned with the meanings people attach to things in their lives. Understanding people from their own frames of reference and experiencing reality as they experience it are central to the qualitative perspective and also the perspective adopted in this study. The researcher emphasised participant experiences and attempted to identify with the people in the study in order to understand their experiences (Taylor & Bogdan 1998:7). A qualitative researcher's goal is to attain an insider's view of the group under study. Characteristic of qualitative research methodology, the people in this study were treated as research participants and not as objects. The participants were allowed to make meaning of their own realities and come to appreciate their own construction of knowledge through practice (Cohen *et al.* 2000).

1.6.4 Research strategy

In Phase I, the research strategy that is employed is a literature review. In Phase II, an evolutionary concept analysis of leadership communication is conducted. Evolutionary conceptual analysis, as described by Rodgers (2000), is based on the philosophical position that concepts are dynamic and evolve over time. The most important attainment of concept analysis is the identification of the attributes of a concept. These attributes represent the real definition of the concept being analysed.

As stated previously, the data obtained from Phases I and II are synthesised in Phase III to develop an LVC that incorporates communication. Phase IV comprises a phenomenological research strategy; in which the meaning of lived experiences of the concept of leadership communication as perceived by several individuals were described. Phenomenologists focus on describing what all the participants have in common as they experience a phenomenon. The basic purpose of phenomenology is to reduce individual experiences with

a phenomenon to a description of the universal essence (Van Manen 1990:177). Hermeneutic phenomenology is the preferred method in this study.

The final phase, Phase V, uses the insights obtained from Phases I and II and merges them with the data obtained from the empirical research in order to develop an LVC that incorporates communication.

1.7   DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Key terms that lie at the core of the study are defined in Table 1.3. These terms were used in Chapter 1 and are expanded on later in the study.

Table 1.3: Key terms and related definitions

Term	Definition
The LVC	The LVC is essentially a framework that links characteristics of individual leaders to their leadership style; leadership style to impact on unit processes; unit processes to unit results; and unit results to effectiveness across a broad range of firm-level performance measures (Kaiser 2005; Kaiser & Overfield 2010).
Leadership communication	Fairhurst (2007) and Fairhurst and Sarr (1996) argue that leadership should be viewed as a discursive phenomenon which emerges through the process of the management of meaning of organisational events.
Strategic communication	Strategic communication is communication that is aligned with the business' overall strategy, which enhances the strategic position of the business (Argenti, Howell & Beck 2005).
IC	IC is "a cross-functional process for creating and nourishing profitable relationships with customers and other stakeholders by strategically controlling or influencing all messages sent to these groups and encouraging data-driven, purposeful dialogue with them" (Duncan 2001:8)

1.8 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The delimitations of this study can be explained as follows:

- Firstly, the research was limited to members of the Free State Public Relations Institute of Southern Africa (PRISA) Chapter who are sensitive to communication and are employed in the services industry in Bloemfontein, South Africa.
- Secondly, leadership in the African context is a topic that has been receiving increased attention. However, little literature could be found that addresses leadership communication in the African context, therefore this study was approached using leadership communication literature written from the Western and American perspectives.
- A third delimitation is the fact that only two of the participants in the in-depth interviews represented black cultures of South Africa, thus making it difficult to obtain the perspective of different racial groups on the subject.

1.9 RESEARCH ETHICS

In accordance with ethical regulations, an application was submitted for ethical clearance of the research project. Ethical clearance was granted and the following ethical clearance number was allocated: UFS-HSD2016/1459.

According to Denscombe (2010:331-335), three key principles underlie codes of research ethics. These principles are as follows:

- *Participants' interests should be protected* – Researchers have a duty to consider in advance the likely consequences of participation and take measures to safeguard the interests of those involved in the investigation. This includes physical harm, psychological harm, or harm arising from the disclosure of information collected during the research.
- *Participation should be voluntary and based on informed consent* – Participation in a research project must always be voluntary and participants should have sufficient information about the research in order to be able to arrive at a reasoned judgement about whether or not they want to participate in the research. The consent should preferably be obtained in writing.

- *Researchers should operate in an open and honest manner with respect to the investigation* – Scientific integrity, openness about what is being done, and telling the truth about the nature of the investigation are of the essence.

Babbie and Mouton (2001:470) supports the above and emphasises voluntary participation, no harm to participants, anonymity and confidentiality, as well as analysis and reporting as important considerations. These aspects are explained in relation to the study in Table 1.4.

Table 1.4: Ethical considerations (Adapted from Babbie & Mouton 2001:470-475)

Aspect	Consideration
Voluntary participation	The researcher was sensitive towards participants who refused participation or those who participated but refused to reveal information about certain aspects of the workplace.
No harm to participants	The nature of the study was such that no harm to participants was foreseen.
Anonymity	Special arrangements were made with the contact person of the organisation to ensure that participant anonymity was ensured.
Confidentiality	The researcher ensured that any information provided by the respondents was kept strictly confidential.
Analysis and reporting	The researcher was aware of and reported limitations and failures experienced during the research.
Therapist in case of emotional distress	In the case of any person participating in the study feeling any emotional distress, the services of a trauma therapist were arranged beforehand and contact details supplied to participants.

To conclude the chapter, the demarcation of the chapters is presented in the following section.

1.10   DEMARCATION OF CHAPTERS

Table 1.5 outlines the demarcation of the chapters in this study.

Table 1.5: Demarcation of chapters

Chapter	Title	Description
Chapter 1	Orientation and background	Chapter 1 discusses the research problem that the study investigates, as well as the primary and secondary research objectives. Key terms are defined and the conceptual framework and meta-theoretical approach to the study are outlined. Delimitations are introduced.
Chapter 2	Theoretical foundation	Chapter 2 provides an overview of the worldviews, paradigm, academic field, as well as the sub-domains and theories related to this study.
Chapter 3	Research methodology	Chapter 3 introduces the meta-theory of the empirical research of Phase IV of this study. The research strategy, sampling design, and research method are discussed.
Chapter 4	Contextualising effective leadership communication	The LVC and IC are discussed in Chapter 4 as the context within which effective leadership communication should take place.
Chapter 5	Leadership communication: An evolutionary concept analysis	Rodgers' (2000) evolutionary concept analysis method is used to explore the concept of leadership communication in depth. Attributes, antecedents, and consequences of leadership communication are identified.
Chapter 6	Results and discussion	A discussion of the results of the empirical data is provided in Chapter 6.
Chapter 7	Conclusions and recommendations	Guidelines for effective leadership communication and an LCVC model are presented in this chapter. Chapter 7 provides a critical reflection on the study. The conclusions drawn and recommendations made are discussed. Limitations of the study are identified, and suggestions for future research are proposed.

CHAPTER 2
THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

2.1   INTRODUCTION

The theoretical framework of a research project relates to the philosophical foundation on which the research is based and forms the link between the theoretical aspects and the practical components of the research that will be undertaken. "The theoretical framework therefore has implications for every decision made in the research process" (Mertens 1998:3). This chapter also includes the ontology and epistemology as important elements of scientific enquiry in this study.

In this chapter, the meta-theoretical and theoretical conceptualisation of this study as outlined in Table 1.1 in Chapter 1 is extended. The theoretical foundation of this study is embedded in the systems theory as it applies to organisations, more specifically complex adaptive system theory. Leadership communication is studied from an existential worldview, while an interpretive epistemology and social constructionist ontology are adopted as the philosophical foundation of the study. Figure 2.1 provides a bird's-eye view of the philosophical foundation of this study, and the way it links to the research methodology.
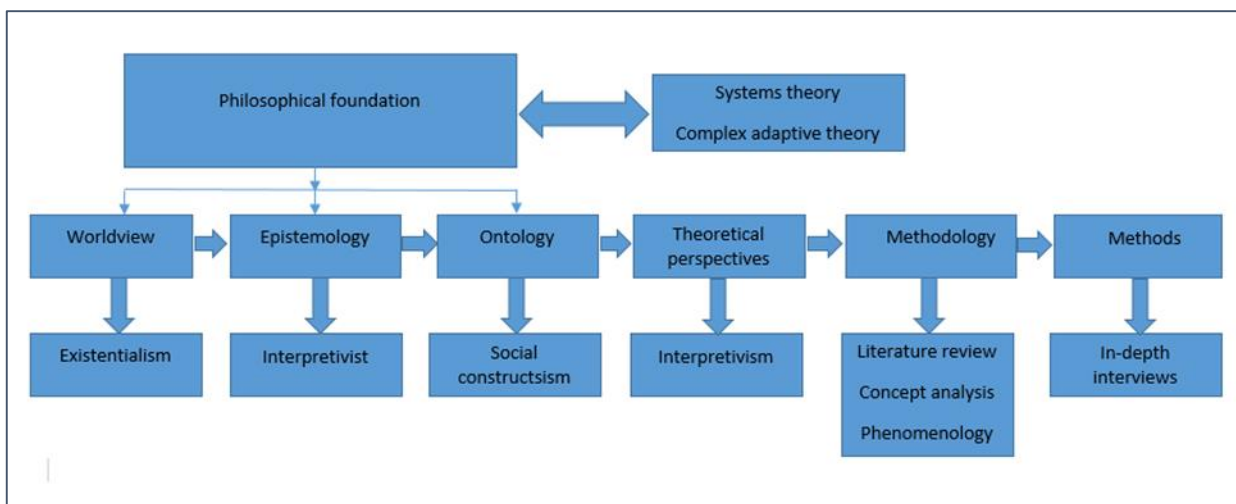
Figure 2.1: Philosophical foundation of the study

From the constructionist perspective, leadership occurs when people construct meaning in action. The constructionist perspective understands leadership by focusing on the way in which meaning is created, sustained, and changed in order to provide an understanding of leadership as a social process. The academic discipline that forms the basis of the study is strategic communication and a strategic integrated approach to leadership communication is proposed. The overarching academic discipline of leadership communication, supported by the theoretical domain of strategic IC, is the point of departure in this study and which is contextualised within the parameters of the LVC.

2.2   SYSTEMS THEORY AS GRAND THEORY

The grand theory of this study is systems theory, more specifically CAS theory. Systems theory is an interdisciplinary theory about every system in nature, in society, and in many scientific domains, and can be regarded as a framework with which we can investigate phenomena from a holistic approach (Capra 1997). The systems way of thinking has biological and technical origins. According to Capra (1997), systems thinking was pioneered by organismic biologists and enriched by Gestalt psychologists and ecologists. The systems theory, because of its broad world perspective, is the most general approach to communication theory.

In the discussion that follows, the link between complexity theory and leadership is indicated by suggesting how leadership within a CAS (one type of dynamic system under CT) might influence or shape the CAS. In order to achieve this, it is important to start with an elaboration on GST and the properties of open systems, as these properties are the basis for much of the existing organisational and leadership research and therefore comprise a relevant frame of reference (Schneider & Somers 2006).

2.2.1   Systems thinking

Systems thinking, according to Checkland (1993:3), is thinking about the world through the concept of "system". It involves thinking in terms of processes rather than structures, relationships rather than components, and interconnections rather than separation.

Ackoff (1981:15) defines a system as a set of two or more elements that satisfy the condition of the behaviour of each element that has an effect on the behaviour of the whole. The

behaviour of the elements and their effects on the whole are interdependent and therefore subgroups of the elements are formed. In turn, all elements have an effect on the behaviour of the whole, but none has an individual/independent effect on it.

A distinctive characteristic of systems theories is that they developed simultaneously across various disciplines. Scholars working from a systems theory perspective built on the knowledge and concepts developed within other disciplines (Miller 2006). From a communication perspective, the focus in systems theory is on the interactions and on the relationships between parts in order to understand an entity's organisation, functioning, and outcomes (Miller 2006). Systems theory provides a comprehensive, multidimensional, and descriptive perspective to organisational behaviour as well as communication. Communication occurs at various levels of the system, within the system, and with its environment (Miller 2006).

2.2.2 General systems theory (GST)

Founded in the 1950s by biologist Ludwig von Bertalanffy, the GST was a new approach to organisation which asserted that an organisation as a living organism is dependent on its environment for the resources that supports its life. An organisation was regarded as a complex set of interdependent parts that interact to adapt to a constantly changing environment in order to achieve its goals. All the system parts are dependent on one another and any change in one of the components affects other system components. Systems theory is therefore concerned with problems of relationships, of structures, and of interdependence, rather than with the constant attributes of objects (Katz & Kahn 1966). According to the systemic perspective, the breaking up of a phenomenon into elementary parts and subsequent reformation or rearrangement of these parts will not lead to a full understanding of the phenomenon. Only when a global vision is applied to underline the functioning of the phenomenon can a full understanding of the phenomenon be reached. What this implies is that the phenomenon has to be observed from a higher level: a holistic perspective (Von Bertalanffy 1968). According to Boulding (1956:200), some systems phenomena were thought to be "of almost universal significance for all disciplines". These phenomena include populations – or aggregations of individuals in interdependent relationships – and the interaction of these individuals with their environment, governed by the principle of equilibrium or homeostasis. Based on the complexity of the system, systems were

categorised into a hierarchy of nine levels. Those at the open-system or greater levels of complexity (levels four and five) were thought to be regulated by the principle of self-maintenance, which is achieved through energy flows across permeable systems boundaries. Social organisations were considered to be complex, exceeded only by transcendental systems not yet imagined (Boulding 1956 in Schneider & Somers 2006).

Communication enables the various parts of the system to coordinate their activities. Although an organisation as an organism has much in common with the machine metaphor, it allows for a wider perspective to communication, including the meaning of community. When organisations interact with one another, they inevitably become communities and adopt rituals. While the process model of communication focuses on transmitting messages, the key points of the ritual model are participation, connecting, and sharing (Carey 1989).

Kast and Rosenzweig (1972) created the following summary (see Table 2.1) of those characteristics of systems which, according to them, seem to have wide acceptance.

Table 2.1: Key concepts of the GST

Concept	Explanation of concept
Subsystems or components	A system by definition is composed of interrelated parts or elements. This is true for all systems – mechanical, biological, and social. Every system has at least two elements, and these elements are interconnected.
Holism, synergism, organicism, and gestalt	The whole is not just the sum of its parts; the system itself can be explained only as a totality. Holism is the opposite of elementarism, which views the total as the sum of its individual parts.
Open systems view	Systems can be considered in two ways: (1) closed or (2) open. Open systems exchange information, energy, or material with their environments. Biological and social systems are inherently open systems; mechanical systems may be open or closed. The concepts of open and closed systems are difficult to defend in the absolute. We prefer to think of open-closed as a dimension; that is, systems are relatively open or relatively closed.
Input-transformation-output model	The open system can be viewed as a transformation model. In a dynamic relationship with its environment, it receives various inputs, transforms these inputs in some way, and exports outputs.

Concept	Explanation of concept
System boundaries	It follows that systems have boundaries that separate them from their environments. The concept of boundaries helps us understand the distinction between open and closed systems. The relatively closed system has rigid impenetrable boundaries; whereas the open system has permeable boundaries between itself and a broader supra-system. Boundaries are relatively easily defined in physical and biological systems, but are very difficult to delineate in social systems, such as organisations.
Negative entropy	Closed, physical systems are subject to the force of entropy which increases until the entire system eventually fails. The tendency toward maximum entropy is a movement to disorder, complete lack of resource transformation, and death. In a closed system, the change in entropy must always be positive; however, in open biological or social systems, entropy can be arrested and may even be transformed into negative entropy – a process or more complete organisation and ability to transform resources – because the system imports resources from its environment.
Steady state, dynamic equilibrium, and homeostasis	The concept of steady state is closely related to that of negative entropy. A closed system eventually must attain an equilibrium state with maximum entropy – death or disorganisation. However, an open system may attain a state where the system remains in dynamic equilibrium through the continuous inflow of materials, energy, and information.
Feedback	The concept of feedback is important in understanding how a system maintains a steady state. Information concerning the outputs or the process of the system is fed back as inputs into the system, perhaps leading to changes in the transformation process and/or future outputs. Feedback can be both positive and negative, although the field of cybernetics is based on negative feedback. Negative feedback is informational input which indicates that the system is deviating from a prescribed course and should readjust to a new steady state.
Hierarchy	A basic concept in systems thinking is that of hierarchical relationships between systems. A system is composed of sub-systems of a lower order and is also part of a supra-system. The components of the system therefore has a hierarchy.
Internal elaboration	Closed systems move toward entropy and disorganisation. In contrast, open systems appear to move in the direction of greater differentiation, elaboration, and a higher level of organisation.
Multiple goal-seeking	Biological and social systems appear to have multiple goals or purposes. Social organisations seek multiple goals, if for no other reason than they are composed of individuals and subunits with different values and objectives.

Concept	Explanation of concept
Equifinality of open systems	In mechanistic systems there is a direct cause-and-effect relationship between the initial conditions and the final state. Biological and social systems operate differently. Equifinality suggests that certain results may be achieved with different initial conditions and in different ways. This view suggests that social organisations can accomplish their objectives with diverse inputs and with varying internal activities (conversion processes).

Source: Kast & Rosenzweig (1972:450)

The work of Von Bertalanffy (1972) was influential in cybernetics, computer sciences, evolutionary theory, social learning, and social network theory. The influence of this work was greatly responsible for the shift in point of view from looking at systems as closed, predictable, and mechanistic entities to perceiving them as open and being able to receive feedback from their environment.

Another particularly important contribution was by Katz and Kahn (1978), who clearly explained the application of GST to organisation theory. These authors described the emphasis of GST on relationships, structure, and interdependence. Katz and Kahn (1978) also explained how open systems tended towards both equilibrium or homeostasis and growth by importing energy for homeostasis. Irrespective of this, systems tend to import more energy than is necessary. Accordingly, GST implies an openness of social systems but also implies boundaries and stable patterns of relationships within the boundaries.

Katz and Kahn (1978) compared the properties of open systems and CAS. These can be summarised as follows:

Table 2.2: Comparison of properties of open and complex systems

Properties of open systems		Properties of complex systems	
(1) Importation of energy	Energy imported from environment.	(1) Importation of energy	Energy imported from environment.
(2) Throughput	Inputs converted through use of energy.	(2) Throughput	Inputs converted through use of energy.
(3) Output	Produced output is exported into the	(3) Output	Produced output is exported into the environment.

Properties of open systems		Properties of complex systems	
(4) Cyclicality	System events are structured by cycles.	(4) Chaos	CAS are poised systems that function at the edge of chaos for optimal buffering and adaptability.
(5) Negative entropy	The transformation cycle is a cycle of entropy, leading to disorganisation or death. To survive, negative entropy is acquired by strong energy	(5) Emergence	Some activity occurs that is not induced by the environment but instead results from interdependence of system components.
(6) Information input, negative feedback, and the coding process	Inputs consist of information and signals about the environment and system functioning, as well as materials that are transformed. Negative feedback allows for necessary correction. Information must be coded appropriately to be meaningful.	(6) Information input, negative feedback, and the coding process.	The interactions of system agents or elements with one another are need-based, bottom-up, and emergent, and are associated with the presence of catalysts and feedback mechanisms.
(7) Steady-state and dynamic homeostasis	The basic principle is the preservation of the character of the system. In countering entropy, systems move toward growth and expansion, as they tend to import more energy than is necessary.	(7) Adaptation	The basic principles are preservation and adaptation of the character of the system.
(8) Differentiation	There is a movement toward greater differentiation, specialisation, and elaboration.	(8) Differentiation	N (the number of sub-units) blends with the intra-system variables K and P and the inter-system variable C to achieve a poised system.

Properties of open systems		Properties of complex systems	
(9) Integration and coordination	Greater integration and coordination are necessary to counter the tendency toward greater differentiation.	(9) Integration and coordination	The intra-system variables K and P blend with N and the inter-system variable C to achieve a poised system.
(10) Equifinality	The same final state can be reached from differing conditions and a variety of paths.	(10) Path dependence	Unique final states may be reached due to sensitivity to initial conditions.

Source: Adapted from Katz & Kahn (1978)

2.2.3   Systems theory and strategic communication

When referring to communication management in organisations, systems theory is one of the predominant approaches in use (Gregory 2000:266). The pluralistic and often competing goals of myriad constituents, the uncertainty of business conditions, and the growing demand for accountability from stakeholders have increased the complexity of systems that leaders have to manage. There is a constant call for new models of leadership in the context of leading in an increasingly uncertain and complex environment. Systems theory provides a way to help leaders respond to these growing organisational complexities and move leadership from a traditional bureaucratic approach to a more adaptive and relational approach (Davis, Dent & Wharff 2015). The organisational environment has a significant impact on how the communication in the organisation is managed (Grunig 1992). Systems theory is a cornerstone in social construction. What this suggests is that everything is a construction of social relations and interactions with one another.

According to Grunig (1992), the strategic management of communication is significantly impacted by the organisational environment and the most common application of this mentioned principle emanates from the systems theory.

Three main business perspectives that can be applied to the business context can be identified. These are the mechanistic, the organismic, and the adaptive systems approaches (Meintjies 2012). In this study the adaptive perspective is adopted as the organisation is conceptualised as a complex adaptive system. As the organisation is viewed as a constantly

adapting and changing entity, the view of Alaa (2009) seems to be applicable here. This author opines that CAS theory in the managerial context has led to a totally new way of perceiving the organisation in which the perception of the organisation as being mechanistic is replaced by a view that understands and views the organisation as a self-organising, autonomous entity. The research for this study is conducted at organisations in Bloemfontein that are in the service industry. CAS theory specifies emergence mechanisms and characteristics that make a complex system react quickly and creatively in a dynamic business context (Alaa & Fitzgerald 2013).

2.2.4 CAS theory

The term "complex adaptive system" was first used in 1968 by the systems-orientated social thinker, Walter Buckley (Schwandt & Goldstein 2008). CAS can be described as being comprised of agents that learn, and that relate to one another and the environment in nonlinear ways. Unlike a system governed by a propensity to return to equilibrium after being disturbed, and in doing so losing structure as entropy increased, Buckley's CAS built up structure as they adapted in the face of new internal and external interactions (Schwandt & Goldstein 2008:86). According to Osborn and Hunt (2007:320), a complex adaptive system is "an identifiable collection of interacting elements characterised by dynamic, non-linear (non-proportional) interactions where small changes in one element can have large results and vice versa".

CAS theory may be considered a sub-discipline of CT. Holland (1995) defines CAS as systems composed of interacting agents which undergo constant change, both autonomously and in interaction with their environment. These heterogeneous agents exhibit various agent behaviours that can be defined in terms of simple rules where they adapt and evolve through their interactions and by changing their rules through learning as experience accumulates. The behaviour of a complex adaptive system is therefore typically unpredictable, yet exhibits various forms of order and regulation (Alaa & Fitzgerald 2013). Alaa and Fitzgerald (2013) cite Kaufman (1993) by stating that complexity principles emphasise that emergence of properties and creation of new orders are not explicable from a purely reductionist viewpoint but that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. The focus is on the interaction of sub-systems to form a system, rather than an understanding of the parts or entities of which the whole is composed (Kaufman 1993). Organisations should

therefore not be seen as parts adding to a whole, but rather as a corporation in which the interactions between its employees are of primary importance, where forms of behaviour are determined by the tendency to achieve a certain goal (Stacey *et al.* 2000).

In the simplest terms, CT moves away from linear, mechanistic views of the world, where simple cause-and-effect solutions are sought to explain physical and social phenomena, to a perspective of the world that is non-linear and organic, characterised by uncertainty and unpredictability (Regine & Lewin 2000). While classical science seeks order and stability, complexity theorists see nature as too dynamic, unstable, unpredictable, and complexly stable to be described with such simple models (Prigogine 1997 in Marion & Uhl-Bien 2001). A key result of this pattern of interaction is self-organisation. CAS have the ability to organise themselves in relatively stable patterns of relationships that are not governed by hierarchical intent. A second result of these interactions refers to the emergent properties of these types of systems. Complexity science seeks to explain the process of the emergence of new properties and the spontaneous creation of order after change (Dooley 1997). The complexity paradigm uses systemic inquiry to build fuzzy, multivalent, multilevel, and multidisciplinary representations of reality. Systems can be understood by looking for patterns within their complexity – patterns that describe potential evolutions of the system. Descriptions are indeterminate, complimentary, and observer-dependent. Systems transition naturally between equilibrium points through environmental adaptation and self-organisation; control and order are emergent rather than hierarchical (Dooley, Johnson & Bush 1995; Lewin 1992; Waldrop 1992 in Dooley 1997:76).

2.2.5   CAS and its influence on leadership

Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) and Gardner and Avolio (1998), among others, believe that with the advent of the "new leadership theories", which include, for example, transformational, transactional, charismatic, and authentic leadership, a paradigm shift in the field of leadership was affected. While existing approaches to leadership still remain heavily based on the belief that leadership is interpersonal influence (Graen & Uhl-Bien 1995; Gardner & Avolio 1998), Marion and Uhl-Bien (2001) argue that the referred-to paradigm shift has potential for addressing problems faced in leadership research. CT encourages that organisations be seen as CAS that are composed of a diversity of agents who interact with

one another, mutually affect one another, and by doing so are able to generate novel behaviour for the system as a whole (Regine & Lewin 2000).

Marion and Uhl-Bien (2001) explain how CT applies to the study and practice of leadership. These authors argue that from a CT point of view, effective leadership entails the leader having the ability to capitalise on interactive dynamics among and within organisational groups. Leadership effectiveness therefore depends on the ability to foster interactive conditions which will enable a productive future. Instead of providing answers, leaders are required to provide direction and create the conditions in which organisational members can reach their full potential and the followers' behaviours can create or produce structure and innovation so that the organisation prospers. These types of interactive behaviours can only be accomplished through communication. It is essential that leaders are able to foster conditions that enable productive, but largely unspecified, future states. Leaders need to understand patterns of complexity and learn to manipulate the situations of complexity more than their results.

According to Marion (2008:3), complexity leadership theory (CLT) is "the study of the dynamic behaviours of complexly interacting, interdependent, and adaptive agents under conditions of internal and external pressure". What is important here is the acknowledgement of the importance of interaction of an individual(s) with other individuals. Complexity leadership explores leadership by focusing on the dynamics of relationships. Uhl-Bien, Marion and McKelvey (2007) argue that, according to CLT, leadership cannot merely be understood in terms of traits or behaviours of one or more individuals, but should be viewed as an interplay between and among many different and interacting forces. In the complexity realm, both chaos and order are embraced. CLT "focuses on identifying and exploring the strategies and behaviours that foster organisational and subunit creativity, learning, and adaptability when appropriate CAS dynamics are enabled within contexts of hierarchical coordination" (Uhl-Bien *et al.* 2007:299).

When dealing with CT, the distinct difference between leaders and leadership should be highlighted. Schreiber and Carley (2007:231) define leaders as "collective change agents" who are a "competitive source of adaptive response and learning". For these authors, leaders are individuals or groups that influence the direction of an organisation. In contrast, leadership denotes not only a position of authority, but also "an emergent, interactive dynamic – a complex interplay from which a collective impetus for action and change

emerges when heterogeneous agents interact in networks in ways that produce new patterns of behaviour or new modes of operating".

Uhl-Bien *et al.* (2007) cite Drucker (1998:162) by stating:

> "As we advance deeper in the knowledge economy, the basic assumptions underlining much of what is taught and practiced in the name of management are hopelessly out of date. Most of our assumptions about business, technology and organisation are at least 50 years old. They have outlived their time."

In a similar vein, Manville and Ober (2003:48) opine that we are currently functioning in a knowledge economy, "but our managerial and governance systems are stuck in the Industrial Era. It's time for a whole new model".

The CLT and CAS are therefore identified as important theories in this study.

2.3   WORLDVIEW

The worldview related to a study may be regarded as the foundation of a research project. In this study, leadership communication is approached from an existentialist worldview within the context of CAS theory discussed in the previous section. A brief explanation of existential thinking is followed by a discussion of existential communication and existential leadership. The view adopted here is in agreement with contemporary thinking about leadership communication and in line with authors such as Fusco *et al.* (2015), Vevere (2014), Gibbs (2010), Lawler and Ashman (2012), Ashman and Lawler (2008), Ford and Lawler (2007), and Lawler (2007; 2005) – among others.

As explained in Chapter 1 (see Section 1.5.2), a distinction is made between two types of existentialism (Gier 1976). Gier (1976) proposes what he calls a new typology that can assist in categorising various existentialist writers according to certain criteria and suggests that the literature divides itself into two types: "strict or "monological existentialism on the one hand, and "dialogical" existentialism on the other. As previously explained (see Section 1.5.2), when using the term "strict" existentialism, what is referred to are those themes found in existential material that are most closely associated with common perceptions of existentialism as a philosophy (Gier 1976).

The term "dialogical" is taken from Buber's "dialogue" philosophy, which Gier (1976) found to be the antithesis of the "monological" emphasis that is embodied in the classical literature on existentialism and especially the work of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, and some of Dostoevsky's heroes. The proposed typology would then classify these 19th-century figures plus the early Sartre (until 1947). Although the status of the later Sartre is still a controversial issue, Gier (1976) considered Sartre as having passed from an existentialism of the strict variety (epitomised in *Existentialism is a Humanism*), through a middle stage of *The Critique of Dialectical Reason*, to be a doctrinaire Marxism with a strong Maoist influence, and Camus as strict existentialists. Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Buber, Marcel, and Jaspers, on the other hand, are seen as "dialogical" existentialists.

2.3.1 Existentialism

A number of writers such as Jaspers, Heidegger, Husserl, Camus, De Beauvoir, Merleau-Ponty, and Sartre (Lawlor 2003; Wicks 2003 in Lawler 2005:216; MacDonald 2000; Solomon 1972; Blackham 1961) have made important contributions to existentialism throughout the years. Flew 1984: 2-3) explains existentialism as:

> "A philosophical trend or attitude, as distinct from a particular dogma or system. Its origins are attributed to Kierkegaard (Danish philosopher, 1813-1855). It became influential in continental Europe in the second quarter of the 20th century, through the writings of Heidegger, Jaspers, Marcel, and Sartre. Existentialism is generally opposed to rationalist and empiricist doctrines that assume that the universe is a determined, ordered system intelligible to the contemplative observer who can discover the natural laws that govern all beings and the role of reason as the power guiding human activity."

Some basic characteristics belonging to this style of philosophising can be summarised as follows: Firstly, the most obvious characteristic is the fact that this style of philosophising originates from man, rather than from nature. It is a philosophy of the subject rather than of the object and for the existentialist, the subject is the existent in the whole range of his existing. He is not only a thinking subject, but an initiator of action and a centre of feeling. It is this whole spectrum of existence, known directly and concretely in the very act of existing, that the existentialist tries to express (MacQuarrie 1972:2).

"In the existentialist view the problem of being must take precedence over that of knowledge in philosophical investigations. Being cannot be made a subject of objective enquiry; it is revealed to the individual by reflection on his own unique concrete existence in time and space. Existence is basic: it is the fact of the individual's presence and participation in a changing and potentially dangerous world. Each self-aware individual understands his own existence in terms of his experience of himself and of his situation. The self of which he is aware is a thinking being which has beliefs, hopes, fears, desires, the need to find a purpose, and a will that can determine his actions. The problem of existence can have no significance if viewed impartially or in abstraction; it can only be seen in terms of the impact that experiences make on a particular existent. No individual has a predetermined place or function within a rational system and no-one can deduce his supposed duty through reasoning; everyone is compelled to assume the responsibility of making choices. Man is in a condition of anxiety arising from the realisation of his necessary freedom of choice, of his ignorance of the future, of his awareness of manifold possibilities, and of the finiteness of an existence that was preceded by and must terminate in nothingness.

Existentialist thinkers distinguish between 'authentic' and 'inauthentic' forms of existence. Some make the distinction on the basis of the individual's endeavour to transcend a particular situation, the alternative being a denial of liberty and abandonment to a form of anonymity as a creature of circumstances. Others deny the possibility of transcending one's own point of view and claim that moral life is an illusion: authenticity is the preservation of an individual personal identity which is in danger of being eroded by deceptions, under the influence and demands of society. Yet others regard the recognition of other free individuals and communication with them as a criterion of authentic existence" (Flew 1984: 4-5).

Lawler (2005:216) states that existentialism is seen primarily as an eclectic philosophy or a set of attitudes that developed predominately from a phenomenological foundation. Existential thinking is used to inform practice and debate in a variety of areas beyond philosophy and Lawler cites the following authors and their areas of interest: mental health (Jones 2001), nursing (Todres & Wheeler 2001), education (White 2001), business ethics (Agarwal & Malloy 2000), organisational behaviour (Kelly & Kelly 1998), organisation theory

(Burrell & Morgan 1979), and research (Holloway & Wheeler 1996). Characterised by a tendency to emphasise existence, existentialism is not concerned with abstract concepts at all and defines itself as a return to absolute truth. In existentialism, existence is viewed as an act, not as a condition (Sahin 2014). Lawler (2005) argues that existentialism deals with a number of themes which individually may not be exclusive to existentialism. These themes can be identified in the writings of later existentialist authors such as Hegel, Kierkegaard, Schopenhauer, and even Nietzsche. Hegel's thinking on the process of "becoming" and developing, rather than existing as a defined self, is influential in Sartre's thinking (1989/2003; MacDonald 2000), as is the thinking of other 20th-century French philosophers such as Bergson (1944), whose approach has a greater social aspect, considering the process of becoming oneself in the context of social interaction between individuals.

Existentialists claim that human beings need to be understood not only as seen by the natural sciences, including psychology, but a further set of categories need to be considered. This further set of categories, governed by the norm of *authenticity*, is necessary to grasp human existence (*Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* 2004). An important epistemological issue common to existentialists is a dichotomy between two ways of relating to the world – a way of knowing, on one hand, and a different way, variously identified as existing, relating, or *being* (Burgess 1999). Known as an "individualistic" philosophy, it is important to consider that for the existentialist, being an individual in mass society is an achievement rather than a starting point (Flynn 2006). While different existentialists treat the subject in their own way, the underlying theme is that the pull in modern society is away from individualism and towards conformity. Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Sartre all view this notion in a negative light. In this sense, becoming an individual is a task to be undertaken and sustained but perhaps never permanently achieved. A reason suggested by Flynn (2006:24-25) might be that the time-bound nature of the human condition requires that existing as individuals is always dynamic and in progress, never static and complete. Furthermore, it depends on the circumstances that the individual finds himself/herself in and it may also involve considerable risk.

While leadership literature often refers to the many descriptions of leadership and how difficult it is to reach a consensus on a definition, the existential perspective might assist in elucidating this problem. Existentialist thinking allows an examination of individual meaning and interpretation of relationships, events, and experiences of "being in the world" of

leadership. Todres and Wheeler (2001:2 in Lawler 2005:222-223) explain that exploration of human experience from this perspective requires being grounded in the real world, to incorporate reflexivity and an acknowledgement of the positional knowledge of individuals in the research project, research must be "humanised", and "reflect the language of experience".

In recognition of the struggle for authentic existence at the boundary of the self, existentialists expand their queries into the nature of being by questioning what happens in situations of dyadic and public communication (Chasi 2001).

2.3.2   Existentialist themes related to this study

In the ensuing section, existentialist themes that relate to this study are discussed. These themes are referred to by Ashman and Lawler (2008) as five facets of leadership communication and include being-in-the-world, the other, inter-subjectivity, dialogue, and indirect communication. Flynn (2006) also refers to a number of relatively consistent existentialist themes that have been recognised through discourse on existentialism. From those identified by Flynn (2006), the themes of humanism and freedom are added here as they are regarded relative to the study.

2.3.2.1   Being-in-the-world

Many positions of existentialism are grounded in the concept of human being that stresses specific relations for self-realisation. Gibbs (2010:4) cites Sartre (1988; 1985; 1965; 1943), Barrett (1958), Flynn (2006), Heidegger (1966; 1962), and Kierkegaard (1962; 1941) in describing themes identified in the area of *humanism* or *being-in-the-world* as referring to the pursuit of meaningful existence in the face of external pressures. This human being stresses specific relations for self-realisation. The human experience is viewed as an ongoing search for meaning. This way of being-in-the-world has an influence on one's freedom, engagement, and true personality. Heidegger's works assists us in applying the construct of being-in-the-world to leadership. Heidegger (1962 in Maranhao 1990) states that leaders cannot detach themselves from the world; leaders have to acknowledge the existence of followers as entities with whom they are actively engaged on a daily basis. Gadamer (1989 in Medina 2005:81) links communication to leadership. According to this

author, what is of importance is that there is true conversation between participants, which is characterised by dialogical openness of participants:

> "[...] it is characteristic of every true conversation that each participant open himself/herself up to the other person, truly accepts his/her point of view as worthy of consideration and gets inside the other to such an extent that he/she understands not a particular individual, but what he/she says."

Gadamer (1989 in How 1995:19) further states that when conducting a conversation, it is required that one does not try to argue the other person down, but that one really considers the weight of their opinion. One must always be willing to learn from the other person in a conversation and ought to be more loyal to the truth of the conversation than one's own view of it (Palmer 2001:10). This can be related to the study as leadership is viewed as a social construction where meaning-making is shared.

Polt (1999 in Lawler & Ashman 2012:329) states that we can never transcend the world that we occupy. We exist in a context, variable over time, and can never separate from it. Polt (1999 cited by Ashman & Lawler 2008:258) states that what this context refers to is that people have a place in a meaningful whole where they deal with other people and things. The particular content of this context will vary from person to person, and from culture to culture, but it can be surmised that people's relation to the world is not disinterested but consists of active engagement. People are not, and can never be, radically detached from the world.

Being-in-the-world is an important concept in the analysis of leadership as the actions of leaders are always situated and grounded in a day-to-day milieu. When leadership is seen as being-in-the-world, the individual contexts as described above can be taken into account. Using the intersubjective view allows us to see leadership as alive and uncertain and, of specific importance to this study, leaders are viewed as being interpersonally engaged in the world. Leadership is therefore seen as a dynamic process of self-creation, and self-realisation in which the engagement with the world develops and explores the potential of both the leaders and the followers, as well as the relationship itself.

2.3.2.2 Humanism and freedom

Freedom, or the reference to the reflective self, standing outside of our lives, is another existentialist theme associated with this study. According to Kuhn (1974 in Zager 2014), the individual, being in the world, is always in a situation which demands a unique, personal response to be freely chosen amidst an infinite range of possible ways of existing. The notion that existence precedes essence leads to the understanding that the nature of human freedom undergoes a radical renewal in the face of the concrete historical situation in which we find ourselves and exist daily. Killinger (1961:313) states that, peculiarly enough, existentialism may just be the philosophy of our time as the whole world is being confronted by the possibility, if not the fact, of political enslavement, and when human freedom and dignity in all areas are being seriously threatened by the forces of depersonalisation, spoken and unspoken. It is Killinger's (1961:313) opinion that we urgently need to be reminded that there is a kind of freedom, albeit a freedom with dread, that cannot, on one hand, be abrogated even by a prison camp, but that can, on the other hand, be lost by attrition in suburban living patterns, complacent religion, or the tedium of a nine-to-five job.

2.3.2.3 Authenticity

Authentic existence and being true to the self is an important ethical consideration in existentialism. Existentialist themes such as authenticity and ontology in leadership scholarship have emerged in a growing body of literature. Avolio and Gardner (2005), Ilies, Morgeson and Nahrgang (2005), and Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, Luthans and May (2004) all wrote extensively on authenticity in leadership. Flynn (2006) states that for the existentialists, ethical considerations are paramount. Whether considering Kierkegaard or Nietzsche, Heidegger or Jaspers, Sartre or De Beauvoir, Marcel or Camus, each in his/her own way was concerned with the "moral fact". As stated appropriately by Sartre (in Flynn 2006:64), the moral of the story is that there is always a moral to the story. As individuals we are challenged to own up to our self-defining choices; to make them our own and consequently to become ourselves by acknowledging what we are. It is a matter of living the truth about ourselves, about our condition as human beings. The inauthentic person, in Sartre's view, is living a lie (Flynn 2006). When asking what the truth about our condition is, and how we are to live it, it is clear that a factual component is involved. This reference to the factual basis of authenticity directs us back to the question of humanism: What is the

human being? What, if anything, distinguishes us from the rest of nature? Heidegger spoke of *Eigentlich*, which, translated from German, means "real". This is where the word "authenticity" was derived from (Flynn 2006).

Authenticity in leadership is a topic that has received much attention in recent years. In this study, leadership is viewed as a communicative process that is inseparable from the world and that happens through action and interaction, through deeds and dialogue. Authentic leadership communication, firstly, requires one to be your own person and develop your unique communication style: authentic in every regard. Taylor (1991 in Ford and Lawler 2007) argues that if we are to become "authentic" in relationships – either through self-fulfilment or self-realisation – it is important that we recognise our "dialogical" selves.

2.3.2.4 *Intersubjectivity*

Truth as subjective, truth from whatever source, ultimately received inwardly, is what is referred to here. Bugental (1992:156 in Klugman 1997) states:

> "We need to […] recognise the subjective for what it truly is: the central fact of human life. By acknowledging it, we can begin to explore it and to learn how to live out its potentials more fully and effectively."

Intersubjectivity, according to Applebaum (2012), can be described as a relationship between me and another. Sidnell (2010:12) describes it as the joint or shared understanding between persons. Applebaum (2012) states that, in Husserl's terms, the peculiarity of the intersubjectivity can be found in the fact that, in this relationship, the Other is not alien to me, but is "within me" in a way that his/her "otherness" can be investigated, beginning with the way in which that "otherness" is imminent in my ego. The Other's otherness is present to me in person. A phenomenological theory of intersubjectivity, founded on the recognition of the imminence of "otherness", offers a solution to the problem of the transcendence of objectivity. Questions such as how the Other can be present in my lived world, or how the world can be an objective world although we are different living subjects, and how we can live in a society of shared values are of concern here (Applebaum 2012).

These questions can be answered through the use of the phenomenological method. Husserl framed these questions as belonging to a "'sociological' transcendental philosophy" (Husserl 1968:539) or a "transcendental sociology" (Husserl 1966:220 in Applebaum 2012).

Husserl's phenomenological investigations of the lived experience of a subject frame the subject as a *transcendental intersubjective* unit. In contrast to the word *transcendence*, *transcendental* refers to the essential nature of the subject. We can inquire into this nature beginning with *world* as it is imminent in a subject's experience.

Husserl (1997) states that when a phenomenological analysis of others is undertaken, it leads us to experience the world as intersubjective and not as locked within or behind one's subjectivity alone. Husserl (1977 in Cox 2006:29) emphasises the concept of empathy. It is only through the process of empathy that one can enter into the cognitions of others and establish an intersubjective transcendental consciousness. Empathy as a form of communication involves both listening to and understanding a person (Du Toit, Grobler & Schenk 1998). According to Thompson (2001), whereas Husserl begins with the individual's relationship with oneself and goes from there to "others", Heidegger begins with our relationship with others and then sets out to investigate how to determine or reclaim our relationship with ourselves. Thompson (2005:8) explains this by stating that we dwell within a common public "totality of surroundings" that constitute us as individuals in a world from which we derive all our perceptions, sensibilities, and experiences.

This leads to the discussion of the Self and the Other.

2.3.2.5   The Self and the Other (other people)

Language, according to Sartre (1956:486), forms part of the human condition. It is synonymous with the recognition of the Other's existence. The notion of human behaviour, as socially mediated, has philosophical roots in Hegel's (1931) self-other formulation. Baxter (1982:10) explains that

> "[t]o perceive the qualities of the world around us and abstract them into a whole that confronts us as a living presence, which is not the Self, locates the nature of the Other. The realms of Self and Other are coextensive, their influence is dialectical; each can only exist in the presence of the Other".

In such relationships, the subjective I has power, acts, and – very importantly – needs inventive creativity. In inauthentic relationships, the I and/or the Other is objective; that is, passive, acted upon, and incapable of creativity (Jaspers 1970 in Smith 1992). Kepnes (1992:110) adds to the above, stating that "the self is recognised and confirmed only by and

through the other, to ask the question of individual identity is to ask the question of relationship with others".

According to Ashman and Lawler (2008:259), in the workplace, the strong temptation to objectify other people in the same way a piece of equipment is objectified, often surfaces. Others in the workplace become "something for me to use to meet my own ends" and such a perception is often found in the treatment of employees. In existential philosophy, however, it is stressed that the Other is quite unlike a tool or a piece of technology, but another person that possesses a conscience just like that of the leader. This implies that the Other has his/her own free will that encroaches on the freedom of the individual.

While the subjectivity of the Other is accepted by all existentialist thinkers, the nature of the influence that the Other has on an individual's consciousness is contested. Existential thinkers such as Nietzsche, Sartre, and Heidegger are all somewhat pessimistic about the effect that others have on an individual character, whereas the views of Jaspers and Buber are unequivocally positive. For Jaspers and Buber, the Other is crucial in enabling us to be all that we can. The leader and his/her followers are therefore mutually engaged and the workforce is not a passive group waiting to be engaged by a visionary leader (Ashman & Lawler 2008). This view relates strongly to the relational approach to leadership that is adopted in this study.

2.3.2.5.1   The person and the community

"One of the misconceptions to clarify about existentialism is the claim that it is too individualistic" (DuBose 2010:309 in Baniwal 2013) and does not give importance to the community or social institutions. There is some truth in this statement, as it can be accepted to an extent that some existentialists are against collectivism; like Kierkegaard who posits "the single one" against "the crowd", but Heidegger and Sartre do try to move towards others through their conceptualisation of "being-for-others" and "being-with-others" (Baniwal 2013:21). However, there is a profound conceptualisation of community in some existentialists like Buber and Marcel. Many existential thinkers advocate the interpersonal approach "but the best known of all is the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber" (MacQuarrie 1972:58). Buber's ontology of the "realm of the between" or the "interhuman" and conceptualisation of "dialogue" are totally immune to this critique. Buber's affinity to the community through the Jewish thought of Hasidism is so much that it is appropriate to say

51

that "Buber filtered Kierkegaard's existentialism through the teachings of Hasidism" (Diamond 1960:11 in Baniwal 2013:21).

Buber (1965:72 in Baniwal 2013) proposes the "interhuman" as "a separate category of our existence" and describes the interhuman as the realm between men rather than a social realm. Any realm can be the realm of the interhuman if for a person "the other happens as the particular other" (Buber 1965:74 in Baniwal 2013). Baniwal (2013:21) explains that it is when one becomes aware of the Other in such a way that a relation is established and they regard each other as partners rather than using each other as objects that the realm of the interhuman appears. It is the sphere in which a person is confronted by the Other in a mutual relation. Buber (1965:75 in Baniwal 2013) called the unfolding of the sphere of the interhuman "the dialogical". Buber (1965:75 in Baniwal 2013) makes it clear at the outset that "it is basically erroneous to try to understand the interhuman phenomena as psychological". The meaning of the conversation cannot be found either in one or the other partner, nor in both together or in their dialogue, but in the "between".

The existential emphasis is on the person in the world, and this makes the situation of every person in a historical context important. Baniwal (2013:21) cites Buber (2002:98) by stating that

> "each child is born with a given disposition of 'world-historical' origin; that is, inherited from the riches of the whole human race. Furthermore, he is born into a given situation of 'world historical' origin, that is, produced from the riches of the world's events".

This implies that the subject of Buber is not an "individual", separate from the world and other human beings, but a "person" who is affected by the world and in turn affects the world. This person is in relation with others and is thereby defined by others. For Buber, "the self is 'social' by nature; its very 'essence' is interpersonal" (Herberg 1956:15 in Baniwal 2013:21).

2.3.2.6 Dialogue

Despite it being Jaspers who defined existential communication, the work of Buber in *I and Thou* (1958; first published in 1923) is the existentialist work most often cited in the field of communication theory. A central theme in this work that makes it relevant to dialogical

communication is the fact that an individual can establish a direct relationship with God by understanding human experience through a communicative dialogue with other beings (Smith 1958:5 in Ashman & Lawler 2008:261).

Buber and Jaspers emphasise that dialectical reciprocity can lead to an authentic sense of self and others. These authors establish an authentic dialogic rhetoric of response (I-Thou), as distinguished from a monologic rhetoric of isolation (I-It) (Berry 1985 in Smith 1992). For Buber, communication in I-Thou relationships is characterised as immediate, confrontational, risky, direct, exclusive, creative, responsible, unfolding, and confirming. For Jaspers, "[i]t involves complete openness, unqualified renunciation of the use of power and advantage, and concerns the other's self-realisation as fully as one's own" (Wallraff 1970:135 in Smith 1992).

Buber (in Ferguson, Wright & Packer 1988:11) states that "dialogue does not mean mutual relativisation of convictions, but the acceptance of the other as a person". Buber, according to Bergman (1991:226), views dialogue as a special kind of communication that he labels as the I-Thou relationship. The words "I" and "Thou" do not exist separately. When I-Thou is spoken, what exists is a relationship, namely I-Thou, which logically and experientially precedes both I and Thou.

The I-Thou encounter is one of dialogue, mutual respect, openness, and give and take. The primary word I-Thou "establishes relation" (Freire in Du Toit *et al.* 1998:113). The above correlates with what is referred to in Chapter 5 of this study, where the attributes and antecedents (see Sections 5.8 and 5.9) of effective leadership communication are discussed. When dialogue is applied to leadership, the establishment of relationships is possible.

2.3.2.7   Indirect communication

Pattison (1992:93,85) opines that in indirect communication, the recipient of the message is left to judge for himself/herself the truth of the message as the communicator vanishes behind the communication. The message invites a response and an interpretation which no one but the recipient can provide. Indirect communication honours, affirms, and, in the process of communication itself, ensures and nurtures the freedom of the recipient of the message more precisely, as well as the mutual freedom of all the participants in the process.

Ashman and Lawler (2008) cites Weston (1994:141) when explaining that Kierkegaard argues that ability and understanding cannot be given to the Other; it can be communicated only indirectly so that the Other can discover it for himself/herself. The view held by Ashman and Lawler (2008:265) that the interpretation of the communicative relationship has important consequences for our comprehension of the interaction between leaders and followers is applicable here. It suggests that communication between leader and follower is likely to fail where it is simply directive and the subordinate sees themselves as passive. The ideal way of communication would be one where all parties are equally active in their pursuit of understanding, but that runs counter to the normally prescribed roles and power relationship between leader and follower. As stated in Chapters 1 and 5, the communication used by a leader is not merely viewed as a tool or technique used by the leader, but an inherent part of the leadership process.

Kierkegaard (in Pattison 1992:71, 93) is of the opinion that "truly to be a teacher is to be a learner". The onset of the lesson is where the teacher learns from the learner, which enables the teacher to grasp what the learner has understood. This process is the key to indirect communication. The dialectics of freedom is the process by which the self comes to be and affirms itself in its own true being.

2.3.3   Existentialism and constructionism

Ashman and Lawler (2008) and Lawler (2005) opine that both existentialism and constructionism developed to a greater or lesser extent from phenomenology. Both existential thinking and social constructionism value the individual, subjective, relational experience and perspective in developing our understanding of the world. This approach offers a line of thinking that differs from the orthodox approach to leadership (Ford & Lawler 2007:413). The rationalist approaches to leadership, where the purpose is to search for the essence of leadership – to identify the composite qualities/behaviours/competencies, which together constitute "leadership" – seek to define what leadership is in universal terms. Despite the informative nature of this process, it has not brought forth a set of universal principles applicable across contexts, as different approaches such as the contingency approaches, CT, chaos theory, and many more bear testament (Darwin, Burkhardt & Porter 2002; Stacey 2003 in Ford & Lawler 2007). The view taken in this study is similar to that of Ford and Lawler (2007), who state that it is believed that existentialist and social

constructionist perspectives offer the potential for significant contributions to the study and understanding of leadership (Ford & Lawler 2007:411).

Leadership is viewed here as a dynamic process and not as something that is "done" by one person to another person or other people. See for example authors such as Collinson (2005), Pye (2005), and Hunt and Dodge (2001 in Ford & Lawler 2007). These authors affirm that leadership is also not viewed as occurring with a formal appointment to "lead" other people, as is assumed with management. Leadership is regarded as an emergent process in groups and organisations, rather than being an individualised phenomenon (Barker 2001 in Ford & Lawler 2007:411-412). Ford and Lawler opine that the subjective voice is missing from the standard leadership literature. Pye (2005:10) concurs by stating that there is a need for a social constructionist approach to leadership as this will grant the actors the ability or power to define meaning in the leadership relationship. Berger and Luckman (1966) define the social constructionist approach as one in which people are active interpreters of their own social worlds, such that reality is said to be a social construction, built out of meanings that are social in origin and in persistence.

Currently, existentialism is mostly characterised as outdated and modernist and not much attention is paid to existentialist approaches. Ford and Lawler (2007:413) state, however, that there are themes within existential thinking which do deserve attention and which are reflected in more recent literature (Martinot 2006; Levy 2001). Of importance here is the intersubjective dynamics of relationships in leadership.

The viewpoints of the existentialist philosophers and social constructionist theorists are explained in Table 2.3:

Table 2.3: Viewpoints of existentialist and social constructionist theorists

Existentialist perspective	Social constructionist perspective
The Self is a "being" – not a static being, but one whose constant project is "becoming" through his/her actions in the world (Holstein & Gubrium 2000).	The Self is a social construction, possibly a construction of multiple selves that we bring together and occupy as we both take up and resist the varied challenges of our everyday lives (Holstein & Gubrium 2000).

The Self is a present and conscious being, able to experience the moment and free to choose his/her actions, to will whom to become.	The individual is able to reflect on the "selves" that develop through "being". In other words, the Self is aware. "[…] reality is a construction of the person who is viewing or experiencing reality at any given moment" (Klugman 1997:304).

Perceived in combination, existentialism provides the perspective of consciousness of the present and of future intentions to act, while constructionism provides reflection and awareness of influential factors both past and present (Ford & Lawler 2007). The perspectives discussed above can be linked to leadership through a number of themes from existentialism, such as that existence precedes essence, freedom of choice, and consciousness and "being" and its different aspects. In leadership, constructionism can add value by developing awareness of the factors that influence and frame relationships. Social constructionist approaches, according to Burr (1995), posit four key assumptions. These are: a critical, subjectivist, and partial stance towards taken-for-granted knowledge; the historic and cultural specificity of how we see and categorise the world; the fact that knowledge is co-constructed through daily social interactions between people; and that this knowledge and social action change over time to produce numerous possible social constructions over time (Ford & Lawler 2007).

2.3.4   Existential communication

While communication as vital existence, consciousness in general, and *Geist* are objective forms of human interactions which can be described and explained by the sciences, the highest and most valuable form of communication cannot be researched by the sciences and not adequately described in objectifying language. This is the type of communication that Jaspers called "existential communication" (Salamun 2006:5). This type of communication can be explained only by philosophy and is to be experienced in one's own life. Existential communication constitutes an intimate, personal relationship between two human beings like friends, lovers, spouses, parent and child, or teacher and student (Salamun 2006).

Communication "that is expressive of (the quality of) the participants' existence" is existential communication, according to Jansen (1991:58). In existential communication, the quality of

the existence of the human being is the main concern (Lowe 1995). Existential communication is focused on "each and every individual person's responsibility for making his or her life meaningful" (Jansen & Steinberg 1991:104). This can be done by "seeking mutually meaningful communication with fellow human beings" (Jansen & Steinberg 1991:104).

Smith (1972), in his essay "The Medieval Subjugation and Existential Elevation of Rhetoric", states that in following rhetoric from its Aristotelian conception to the acceptance of both medieval scholars – where communication was divisive and logically based in order to maintain aristocratic power – and 20th-century existentialists, a shift in the perceived utility of the communicative act itself can be perceived. The existential movement is perceived as using language in order to earnestly prod at subjective truth through intra- and interpersonal communicative engagement. This is done in order to make sense of the world beyond or without reason. The distinction between the rationally minded logical argumentation as used in medieval times, and an existential approach where an openness to making appeals to the irrational, here points to the unique linguistic utility characteristic of such a creative subject as rhetoric.

A brief discussion of existential thinkers seen as dominant in relation to this study, such as Soren Kierkegaard, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Martin Heidegger, Martin Buber, and Jean-Paul Sartre, will follow.

2.3.4.1 Soren Kierkegaard

Vevere (2014) states that to write about Kierkegaard's conception of communication can be quite challenging as most of his ideas about this can be found in his unpublished lectures on the dialectics of ethical and ethical-religious communication and in a very limited number of journal entries. Vevere (2014:123) further states that the theme of communication, however, runs through Kierkegaard's works quite regularly. More precisely, it can be said that communication is viewed as sharing of information, where the crucial role is assigned to the process itself (communication of ability versus communication of knowledge) (Burgess 1999). Kierkegaard had long discussions on communication and had specific interest in the use of irony (Bergman 1991), as well as the use of parables (Cates 2009).

2.3.4.2 Maurice Merleau-Ponty

Lanigan (1972:51 in Zager 2014:18) writes:

> "Within Merleau-Ponty's philosophy there is an implicit methodology of knowing existence that is equally applicable to a theory of perception and a theory of communication. This unitary base, for what is essentially a psychology and existential 'rhetoric' is a theory of semiology that incorporates the principles of perception to formulate meaningful structures and simultaneously provides the meaning inherent in the structure."

2.3.4.3 Martin Buber

Buber explained the nature of true relationships in *I and Thou* (1970) by distinguishing between two basic attitudes towards the world: the I-It relationship and the I-Thou relationship. The I-It relation is the objective attitude of experiencing a thing or a person; relating to a thing or an object that one observes and recognises in its functions, causalities, and utilities. Buber calls this relation the monological principle of encountering the world. The I-It is a necessary attitude toward the others and the world, but it is not a relationship that constitutes true selfhood. Full humanity can be realised only by opening oneself to the I-Thou relationship, which is direct, mutual, and dialogical, in which one's whole being is involved. The Thou in the dialogical relation is described by Buber as being wholly present. However, it is the fate of humanity that this relation has limited duration: every Thou must become an It again. Only God is an exception that never becomes an It; he is the Eternal Thou (Salamun 1999a).

Buber presented several important concepts in *I and Thou* (1970; 1922) and *Between Man and Man* (Buber 1954). The concept of I stands not alone but only in relation to a You, a Thou, or an It. The I is not self-contained but actuates in relationship to an object or person (Hess 1987). The I-It includes all human relationships in which experience is categorised and thereby known. Within the I-Thou relationship, a person neither labels nor categorises but simply encounters the Other with their whole being (Salamun 1999b). It would be tempting to think of the I-Thou as providing more basic knowledge than the I-It but this notion is rejected by Buber, who postulates that knowledge requires categorisation, and therefore the I-Thou cannot be a kind of knowledge. The distinction drawn between I and Thou is

explained by Buber as two movements within human life, namely distance and relation. In the first movement – distance – we set ourselves against the world and recognise that things are different from ourselves; in the second movement – relation – we enter into personal relationship with things. According to Buber (1970), the two movements are logically, rather than chronologically, related. When priority is given, distance is deemed most important since relating to something presupposes a previous distancing from the object to which one is related.

According to Buber there is also more than one kind of knowing. There is knowledge when a person knows something as a sensible object; one knows the tree as a green and leafy object. This is referred to as knowledge through distance. There is, however, another way of knowing, and this is by knowing something through a personal encounter. This is referred to as knowledge through relation. This, too, is a powerful knowing (Salamun 1999).

2.3.5 Existential communication and leadership

Through visionary thinking it is possible to develop a vision of leadership that broadens the horizons of leadership for a new millennium. One of the ways in which this can be achieved is by paying attention to existential theory where thinkers such as Buber (1957), Frankl (1959), May (1960), Tillich (1952), and Yalom (1980), all cited in Lloyd and Atella (2000), come to mind. This collection of thought suggests a leader with a more positive view of human possibilities and a more comprehensive understanding of human nature (Lloyd & Atella 2000). In positive leadership, the four aspects of emotional, cognitive, spiritual, and physical aspects of the human being are present for both leaders personally and in their vision of those who are led (Lloyd & Atella 2000:156). Leadership research has in recent years shown leadership as a process of experiences that forms the basis of knowledge that is self-shaped through social interaction (Kempster 2009). This notion may point to transcendent possibilities which are strongly linked to existentialist notions of becoming (Kierkegaard 1941).

Both leadership and existentialist thought are concerned with the paths of human existence and their movement through life (Gibbs 2010). Since leadership is concerned with the human being's influence on other human beings, the connection between human existence and leadership seems strong (Ashman & Lawler 2008; Lawler 2007, 2005).

Existential communication has great significance for leadership communication. When adopting an existentialist worldview, a constructive interpersonal relationship between "leader" and "follower" is signified, which can assist in indicating how existentialist philosophy can be used in an examination of the interdependency between leadership and followers. According to Ashman and Lawler (2008), leadership is communication. This implies that leadership is viewed as one aspect of communication and that communication does not necessarily need to involve leadership. The existentialist point of view of communication that is taken in this study views communication as being about encounters and relationships as much as it is about the transmission of information (Ashman & Lawler 2008). These authors continue that both leadership and existentialist ideas seem to defy attempts to diagnose or codify. A connection can be recognised between the two areas on the basis of this.

According to Gehrsberg (2008), existentialism can be seen as an intellectual enterprise that concentrates on the difficulties that face human beings who experience being by communicating in-the-world. It posits the necessity of how we have to communicate with others, the problems that ensue from this will-to-communication, and a unique method by which we communicate with others authentically.

In the next section, the research paradigm, which is seen as corresponding closely with the existentialist worldview, is discussed.

2.4   RESEARCH PROCESS

According to Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999), the research process has three major dimensions: ontology, epistemology, and methodology. The research process or paradigm is an all-encompassing system of interrelated practice and thinking that define the nature of enquiry along these three dimensions. Research paradigms are sets of basic principles that provide frameworks for the research process (Guba & Lincoln 1994). According to Carolyn (2014), fundamental philosophical systems of science distinguish approaches to research paradigms. The field of science can be viewed through sociological processes that have occurred through history (; Popper 1968 in Carolyn 2014). As the adopted approach for this study, the interpretivist paradigm will now be discussed.

2.4.1 Interpretivist paradigm

In order to gain insight into the intra-organisational leadership communication of certain organisations in the services industry in Bloemfontein, this study was conceptualised within the interpretive paradigm. Interpretivism focuses on discovering and understanding what the organisational experiences of members concerning the communication received from their respective leadership structures are, and how these experiences are interpreted by these members (Duncan & Moriarty 1998). The focus in interpretivism is on meaning and understanding. The interpretivist model of human beings carries with it the notion of choice, free will, and individualism. Human beings are seen as active agents capable of monitoring their own behaviour and they are able to use their speech to comment on their performance and plan ahead. Human beings are also purposive, active, and involved with life experiences (Cohen & Manion 1985). Du Plessis, Jooste and Strydom (2001:11) argue that the interpretive perspective is directed at understanding and explaining human behaviour and typically would concentrate on understanding people's experiences. Interpretivists contend that human beings are not like matter. Human beings have consciousness that enables them to think and feel, and give them a sense of awareness (Haralambos 1985). Haralambos (1985) further states that human beings do not react mechanically to an external stimulus, but function by making sense of a stimulus before deciding on an appropriate action.

The interpretive perspective, therefore, is interested in discovering and understanding what the organisational experiences of organisational members are, as well as understanding how they interpret these experiences (Duncan & Moriarty 1998:3; Neher 1997:336). This corresponds with existentialist notions in which there is a concern with the paths of human existence and their movement through life (Gibbs 2011). Neumann (2000:71) defines the interpretive perspective as the "systematic analysis of socially meaningful action through the direct detailed observation of people in natural settings in order to arrive at understandings and interpretations of how people create and maintain their social worlds".

Interpretivist approaches see a direct relationship between communication processes and who individuals are as human beings. This means that rather than viewing communication as merely a conduit of vehicles for expressing already formed ideas about an objective world, interpretivism sees communication as actually constituting that world (Miller 2004). It can therefore not be assumed that there is an objective truth "out there" that has to be discovered but that realities are created by human beings as they interact with one another.

As such, the interpretive discourse claims a close connection between communication and social reality, and this has made a profound impact on organisational communication (Miller 2004). This also highlights the relevance of the interpretive paradigm to this study.

Within the interpretivist paradigm, a number of approaches have been identified (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson 2008). Constructionism, and more specifically social constructionism, is the approach within the chosen paradigm that fits this study best.

2.4.2   Social constructionism

Social constructionism has roots in symbolic interactionism (Mead 1934) and phenomenology (Schutz 1970) and really took hold with Berger and Luckman's *The Social Construction of Reality* (1966). In social constructionist terms, realities that are taken for granted by us as individuals are produced from interactions between and among social agents (Hacking 1999). Social constructionists do not view reality as some objectifiable truth that is waiting to be uncovered through positivistic scientific inquiry but believe that multiple realities exist and that these realities all compete for truth and legitimacy (Astley 1985). Material or otherwise, these realties are constructed through social processes in which meanings are negotiated, consensus formed, and contestation is possible. This is further emphasised by the view of Giddens (1979; 1984), who states that the social constructionist view shows us how meanings that are produced and reproduced on a continuous basis create structures that are stable and yet open to change as interactions evolve over time. As Gioia (2003:189) argues, we act as if these structures are real, "but none of that changes the fact that they are (intersubjectively) produced enterprises".

Patton (2002) describes social constructionism as an epistemology with a primary emphasis on interaction and discourse as the means through which the self and the world are articulated, understood, and created. According to Pearce (1995:89), social constructionism is a perspective that brings to the fore social processes "simultaneously playful and serious, by which reality is both revealed and concealed, and created and destroyed by our activities". It offers an alternative to the Western intellectual tradition where the researcher "earnestly seeks certainty in a representation of reality by means of propositions (Pearce 1995:89).

The views considered above are summarised by Burr (2003; 1995). In attempting to define social constructionism, this author notes that we might loosely distinguish as social constructionist any approach that has as its foundation one or more of the following four key assumptions: (1) a critical stance toward taken-for-granted knowledge; (2) knowledge is historically and culturally specific; (3) knowledge is sustained by social processes; and (4) knowledge and social action go hand in hand. A social constructionist "sees the self and identity as being created and sustained through our social, historical, cultural, and temporal relations" (Burr 2003:86).

Given its emphasis on social interaction, it comes as no surprise that social constructionism recognises the fundamental role of language and communication (Barge & Little 2002; Barge 2001; Cronen, 2001). This recognition has contributed to the linguistic turn and more recently the turn to discourse theory (Alvesson & Kärreman 2000).

Most social constructionists adhere to the belief that language does not mirror reality; rather it constitutes it. Seen in this light, communication becomes more than a simple transmission; it is a medium by which the negotiation and construction of meaning takes place (Jian, Schmisseur & Fairhurst 2008; Deetz 1992). With the ascendancy of the constructionist approach, there has been a greater focus on communicative issues in recent years.

Scholars such as Clifton (2012), Fairhurst (2007), and Cunliffe (2001) are increasingly contesting the value of grand theories of leadership in favour of a social constructionist or "discursive" approach to leadership. Social constructionism views leadership as co-constructed, a product of socio-historical and collective meaning-making, and negotiated on a continuous basis through a complex interplay among leadership actors. This process takes place irrespective of whether they are designated or emergent leaders, managers, and/or followers (Vine, Holmes, Marra, Pfeifer & Jackson 2008 in Fairhurst & Grant 2010; Collinson 2006; Grint 2005). As a result of the rapid growth of the literature on social constructionism, the language of social constructionism is often used indiscriminately as too many studies offer up broad, non-specific definitions, underspecified constructs, and a bewildering array of methods, approaches, and perspectives (Fairhurst & Grant 2010). This in turn has an influence on how people analyse and talk about leadership when using a social constructionist lens and has resulted in views that vary considerably (Fairhurst & Grant 2010). Fairhurst and Grant (2010:173) suggest the development of a guide to the field; a means of identifying and understanding the differences in emphases in this body of work.

The constructionist approach emphasises the centrality of language in constituting leadership practices. Currently, there is an extensive body of literature on social constructionism. The perspective adopted in this literature introduces a viewpoint that is more social and cultural; one that does not relegate communication to a simple input or output status. This perspective also challenges the individual and cognitive lens of leadership psychology (Fairhurst 2007).

A constructionist perspective sees the Self as self-in-connection, created through interaction, with no inherent core or status independent of that which is forged through that interrelationship (Dachler & Hosking 1995). The social constructionist approach to leadership shifts the focus of attention away from "being a leader" to "doing leadership" (Baxter 2014). In the constructionist approach, leadership (and those defined as leaders or followers) emerges in process as co-constructions that help advance organising tasks (Hosking 1988).

Leadership happens in context; it does not exist prior to the relationship: "leaders must constantly enact their relationship with their followers" and they "must repeatedly perform leadership in communication and through discourse" (Fairhurst 2007:5). Drath (2001) argues that leadership is viewed as relational because it emerges in the context of a specific form of interaction that occurs at a certain time and place. Leadership is therefore not something that the leader possesses; it is something achieved in community and owned by the group (Foldy, Goldman & Ospina 2008; Ospina & Sorenson 2006). Uhl-Bien (2006:655) defines relational leadership as "a social influence process through which emergent coordination (evolving social order) and change (new values, attitudes, approaches, behaviours, and ideologies) are constructed and produced". This is also the perspective adopted in this study.

2.4.2.1   Theoretical bases of socially constructed leadership

As indicated in the previous discussion, the theoretical foundation to this study of leadership is social constructionist in nature. A socially constructed perspective would embrace notions such as relationships, interdependency, and reciprocity – indeed, those same processes that create and shape leadership (Fairhurst 2009; 2007). In order to understand leadership as a social act, it is necessary to understand the contextually relevant factors that influence people within the organisational space. Our perceptions of reality are influenced by our

perspectives and their accompanying models of reality. These models of reality are socially constructed; that is, they evolve via interaction between the Self and society. Meaning-making in a very real sense is about negotiating the order of social reality, and as leadership is a social phenomenon, it is important to understand the forces within this negotiation (Fairhurst 2009; 2007).

Social constructionist leadership approaches usually exhibit two interrelated characteristics. Firstly, they abstain from using a leader-centric approach in which the leader's personality, style, and/or behaviour are the primary (read "only") determining influences on followers' thoughts and actions. When leaders are the primary symbolising agents, followers willingly surrender their right to make meanings by virtue of their employment contract with the organisation (Smircich & Morgan 1982 in Fairhurst & Grant 2010; Fairhurst 2001). Most constructionist leadership approaches, however, place a premium on the ability of followers to also "make sense of and evaluate their organisational experiences" (Meindl 1995:332 in Fairhurst & Grant 2010). It should be remembered that the lay theories, discourses, and sensemaking of leadership actors are not just anecdotal afterthoughts, but the very essence of analysis. Secondly, emphasis is given to leadership as a co-constructed reality, in particular the processes and outcomes of interaction between and among social actors. Communicative practices – talk, discourse, and other symbolic media – as are required by the given context are integral to the processes by which the social construction of leadership is brought about (Fairhurst & Grant 2010). This is what leads to the resistance towards theories where leadership is to be found in a leader's personal qualities (trait theories), situational features (Hersey and Blanchard's 1969) situational theory of leadership), or some combination thereof (contingency theories, such as when a crisis and strong leader coincide) (Grint 2005; 2000). Social constructionists are more likely to endorse a view of leadership where leadership attributes and perceived behaviour are considered (Calder 1977 in Fairhurst & Grant 2010; Meindl, 1995). This is because "what counts as a 'situation' and what counts as the 'appropriate' way of leading in that situation are interpretive and contestable" (Fairhurst & Grant 2010:175).

According to Fairhurst and Grant (2010), the place of relational leadership in the framework varies because people have used the term in different ways. For example, in the definition supplied by these authors relational leadership is described as a process where role-based and reciprocal interrelating occur between workers and managers to negotiate the work that

is to be done. In contrast, Uhl-Bien (2006:655) defines relational leadership as "a social influence process through which emergent coordination (i.e. evolving social order) and change (e.g. new values, attitudes, approaches, behaviours, and ideologies) are constructed and produced". In the first definition, the leader is viewed as an independent individual who inter-relates across different hierarchical positions. The second definition, however, locates leadership in a jointly constructed but disembodied process, and not in individuals. Uhl-Bien (2006) proposes relational leadership theory as an approach that can encompass both individuated and connected perspectives by explaining both the emergence of leadership relationships (drawing on traditional individuated views that focus on the nature of the relationship, such as leader-member exchange) and the relational dynamics of organising (including various constructionist views of leadership). In fact, the term "relational" has been used to refer to quite distinct understandings of leadership, each with different ontological and epistemological assumptions that result in quite distinct approaches to conducting research (Uhl-Bien & Ospina 2014).

Figure 2.2 summarises the content provided in this chapter and embeds it into the research methodology discussed in the next chapter. The highlighted elements in the figure indicate the components present in this study.
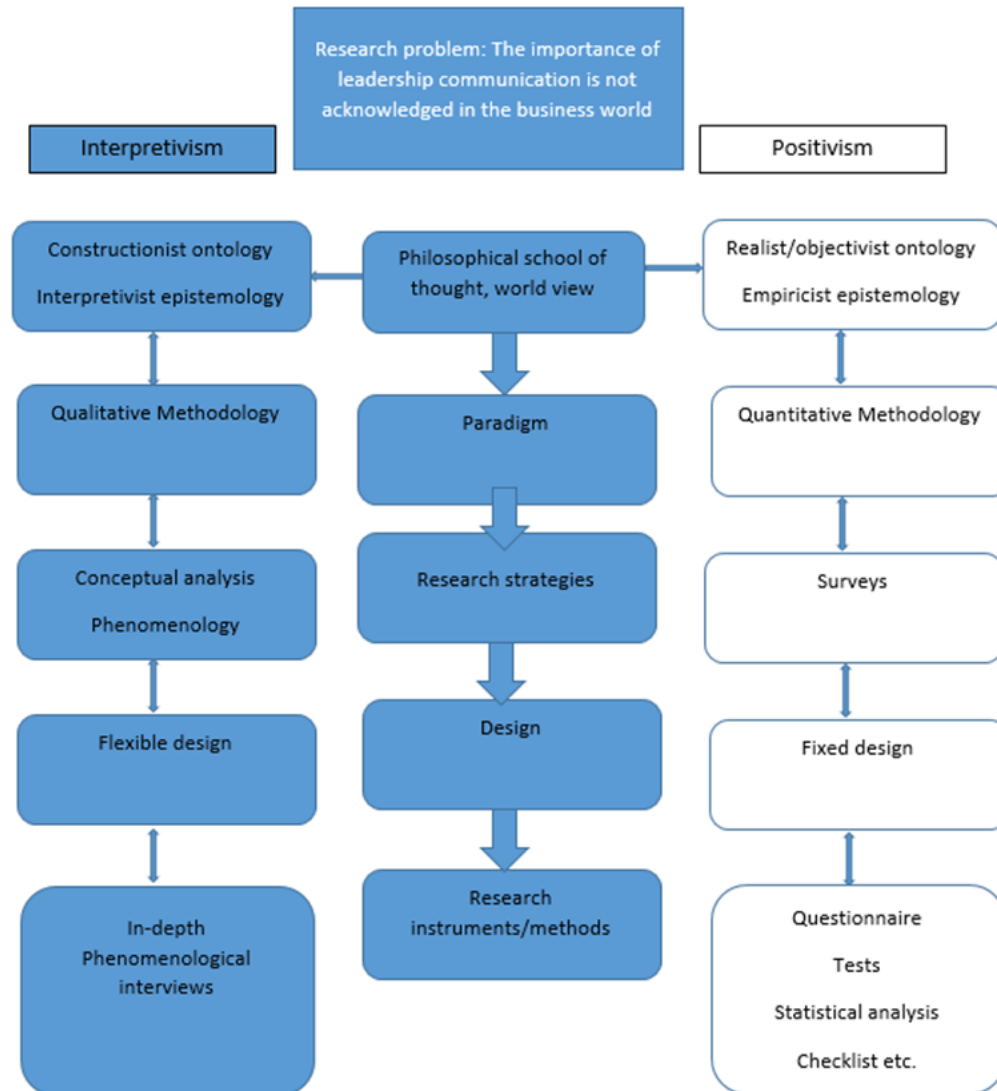
Figure 2.2: Foundation of research

2.5   SUMMARY

In this chapter, information about the theoretical foundation upon which this study was based was supplied. The theoretical foundation is embedded in the systems theory, and more specifically CAS theory as it applies to organisations. Key concepts of the GST were discussed and a comparison was drawn between the properties of open and complex systems. Leadership communication was approached from an existential worldview and therefore existential thinking as well as existential communication and existential leadership

were discussed. A number of existential themes that can be related to the study were also highlighted. This study adopted an interpretive epistemology and social constructionist ontology as the philosophical foundation of the study. The focus in interpretivism is on meaning and understanding and human beings are seen as active agents capable of monitoring their own behaviour. From the constructionist perspective, meaning is constructed in action and leadership is understood by focusing on the way meaning is created, sustained, and changed in order to provide an understanding of leadership as a social process.

The research methodology and design are discussed in depth in Chapter 3. The epistemology and theoretical perspectives discussed in this chapter will serve as foundation for the research methodology chosen for this study.

CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1   INTRODUCTION

Leadership effectiveness is critical within large organisations, and leader communication ranks as the top critical driver of organisational results (Madden 2011). In this study, leadership and communication are viewed as being interrelated and communication is seen as the face of leadership. Therefore, leadership is regarded as a social construct that is relational, and that emerges from a meaning-making process in a particular context. The attention is directed away from the individual leader to the experience of the communication that is utilised by the leader. The research procedure is outlined in this chapter. First of all, the focus of the study is reconfirmed and thereafter the research design is discussed. Basic to the design of the research are four fundamental questions that must be resolved with respect to the data, namely: What data are needed? How will the data be secured? Where are the data located? How will the data be interpreted? (Leedy 1997:115). The discussion on the research methodology will address these questions. In Figure 3.1 Maxwell (2009:218) provides a synopsis of the content that should be covered in a research methodology chapter and includes all the contextual factors that could influence a research design. This design was employed in this study.
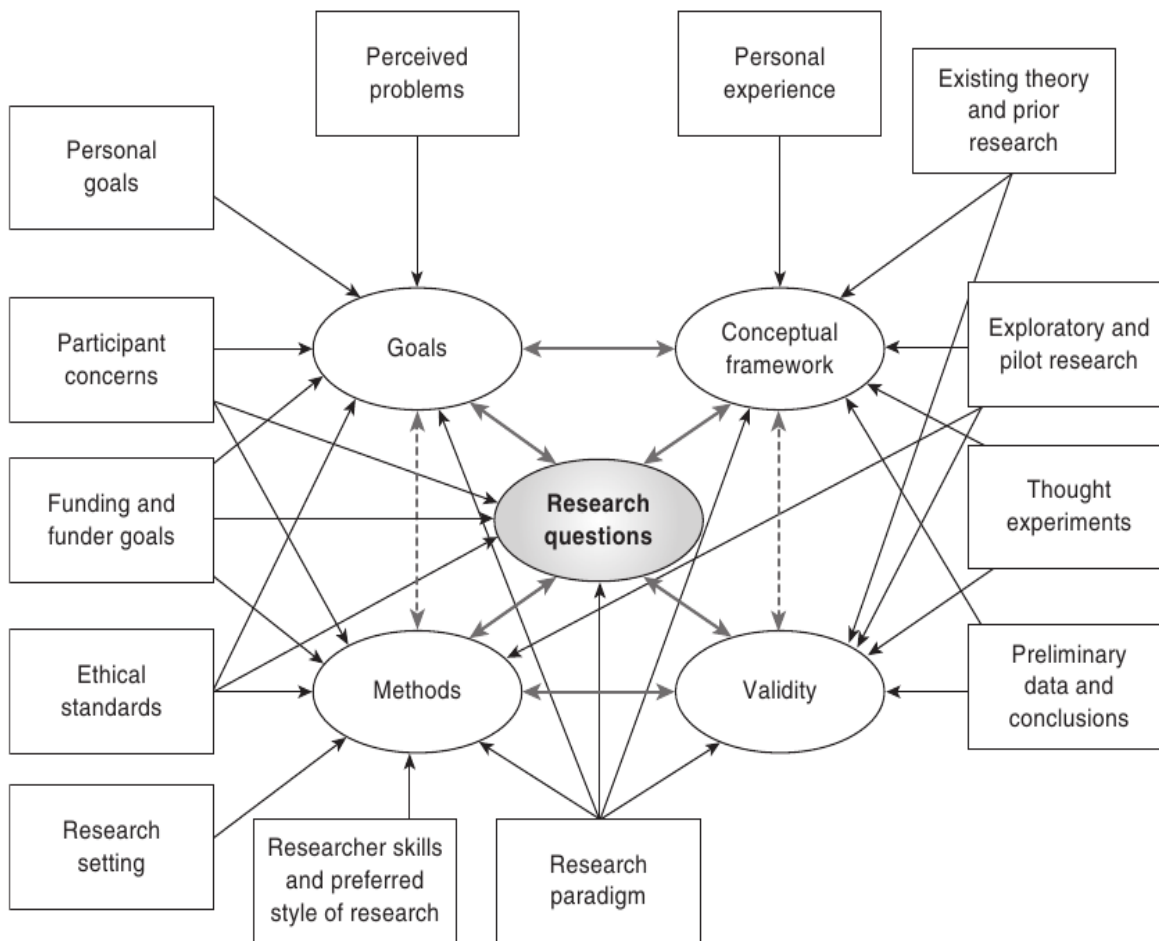
Figure 3.1: Contextual factors that influence a research design (Maxwell 2009:218)

For Maxwell (2009:216), it is important that the different parts of a research design form an integrated and interacting whole; with each component closely tied to several others, rather than being linked in a linear or cyclic sequence.

While there are many models that could be applicable to a certain study, this model is deemed specifically useful for this study as it explicitly identifies as components of design the key issues about which decisions need to be made, and emphasises the interactive nature of design decisions in qualitative and applied research and the multiple connections among design components (Maxwell 2009).

3.2 GOAL AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

As mentioned in Chapter 1 (see Section 1.4), the goal of this study is to **develop an LVC model that incorporates communication**. In order to obtain this goal, this study is guided by the following Ro that emanated from the problem statement and research questions (see Section 1.2) discussed in the previous sections:

- **Ro1:** To describe the LVC model and its different leadership domains. (Contextual research question)
- **Ro2:** To discuss strategic IC as an approach to communication in an effective organisational context. (Contextual research question)
- **Ro3:** To analyse the conceptual foundation of leadership communication. (Conceptual research question)
- **Ro4:** To examine employee perspectives on leadership communication. (Normative question)
- **Ro5:** To supply guidelines for how leadership communication can be applied in an integrated organisational communication context. (Theoretical research question).

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Mouton (1996:175), the research design serves to "plan, structure, and execute" the research in order to maximise the "validity of the findings". The research design directs the study, from the underlying philosophical assumptions, to research data collection. Simply put, Babbie and Mouton (2001:74) describe the research design as a plan or blueprint of how the researcher intends to conduct the research. The first aspect to address in the design is the type of research that will be conducted.

Sandin and Simolin (2006:2) distinguish between three types of research: exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory. Exploratory research is applied when a problem is complex and little knowledge exists to address that area of study (Patton 2002:27). According to Garbers (1996:287), the purpose of a descriptive study is to describe the characteristics of that which exists as accurately and clearly as possible.

Examples of descriptive research would include:

- an in-depth description of a specific individual or group;
- a description of the frequency with which a certain characteristic occurs in a sample; and
- correlational studies, which demonstrate the relationships between variables.

Descriptive research takes up the bulk of online surveying. It is pre-planned and structured in design so that information collected can be statistically inferred on a population. In other words, descriptive research is research that explores and explains an individual, a group, or a situation. It is mostly quantitative in nature.

Explanatory research studies look for explanations of the nature of certain relationships and are sometimes also referred to as analytical research. An explanatory study can be undertaken as predictive research or as evaluation research and is very structured in nature (Du Plooy 2009). The purpose of explanatory studies is to demonstrate causality between variables or events. This implies that correlational studies are taken a step further and the direction of a relationship is also indicated (Garbers 1996:287).

3.3.1 An exploratory study

This study will attempt to advance an LVC model that incorporates communication as a component within an integrated organisational context.

Babbie and Mouton (2001) opine that a large proportion of social research has as its aim the exploration of a topic in order to gain a basic familiarity with the topic. Four important aspects that explain the reasons for the selection of an exploratory study will now be discussed. These include, firstly, a discussion on when exploratory studies are typically done; secondly, a discussion of the research considerations for an exploratory study; thirdly, when an exploratory study is essentially applied; and, finally, a discussion of the main shortcomings of exploratory research.

Exploratory studies are most typically conducted for three purposes: firstly to satisfy the researcher's curiosity and desire for better understanding; secondly, to test the feasibility of undertaking a more extensive study; and lastly, to develop methods to be employed in subsequent studies (Babbie 2007:88). Especially the third purpose is applicable to this study

as leadership communication is not currently part of existing LVCs and therefore further research in this area is deemed necessary. The second point of interest refers to research considerations and it is important here to take note of the research design considerations associated with exploratory research. Miller and Brewer (2003:302) suggested that when applying exploratory research, it is important to follow an open and flexible research strategy, and use methods such as literature reviews, interviews, case studies, and informants, which may lead to insight and comprehension. According to Babbie (2007:89), exploratory studies are valuable in social science research and essential whenever a researcher is breaking new ground, as these types of studies almost always yield new insights into a topic of research. Finally, the main shortcomings of exploratory research, according to Babbie (2007:89), is that although exploratory research methods can hint at answers and suggest which research methods would be able to provide answers, these types of studies very often do not provide satisfactory answers to research questions.

Exploratory research can be strengthened by using techniques such as member checking to confirm or verify results obtained during a research undertaking.

3.3.2   Phases of the research

As indicated in Chapter 1 (see Section 1.6.1), this study consists of five phases, with the ultimate aim of developing an LVC model that incorporates communication. Phase I was the exploration phase. During this phase the meta-analytical research question and Ro2 and Ro3 were addressed (see Section 1.4). This phase consisted of two sections, first of all a literature review on the LVC was conducted (Ro1), followed by the second section, which entailed a literature review of strategic IC as the most effective form of organisational communication (Ro2). The rationale for this phase was to explore the context in which the proposed LVC, with communication incorporated, will be employed.

Phase II of the research focused on the conceptual research question and Ro3. An evolutionary conceptual analysis of leadership communication was conducted during this phase. The aim of this analysis was to discover the conceptual foundation and roots of the leadership communication phenomenon.

During Phase III the data gathered during the first two phases were synthesised to develop an LVC that incorporates communication from a strategic IC perspective. Phase III formed

the first part of addressing the goal of the study, namely to develop an LVC model that incorporates communication.

In Phase IV, the empirical phase, in-depth interviews were conducted with respondents who are regularly exposed to leadership communication. This phase addressed the normative research question and secondary objective 4. The aim of this phase was to explore these respondents' experiences of the leadership communication phenomenon in order to enlighten knowledge gained during the first two phases.

Finally, during the fifth phase of the research, the insights gained from the empirical research were merged with the data from the first two phases to propose a framework and guidelines for integrating communication into an LVC model. Table 3.1 provides a summary of the phases in relation to the chapters.

Table 3.1: Summary of the phases in relationship to the chapters of the study

Phases	Chapter
Phase I(a): Literature review on the LVC **Phase 1(b):** Literature review on strategic	Chapter 4: Contextualising leadership communication
Phase II: A conceptual analysis of leadership communication	Chapter 5: A conceptual analysis of leadership communication
Phase III: The development of a theoretical LVC that incorporates communication	Chapter 5: A conceptual analysis of leadership communication
Phase IV: Empirical research phase (in-depth interviews)	Chapter 6: Phenomenological research results
Phase V: Synthesise the data from the previous four phases to propose an LCVC model from a strategic IC perspective	Chapter 7: Conclusions, recommendations, and critical reflection

The remainder of this chapter explains the research methodology that was followed to achieve the main aim of the research, starting with the research paradigm.

3.4   RESEARCH PARADIGM

A good research undertaking starts with the selection of the chosen topic, identifying a problem area of interest, as well as identifying the paradigm (Mason 1996). A paradigm is a

fundamental model, scheme, or a frame of reference that researchers use to organise their observations, views, or reasoning (Babbie 2007:341). According to Groenewald (2004:6), a paradigm is the patterning of the thinking of a person; it is a principal example among examples, an exemplar or model to follow according to which actions are taken. For the purpose of this study, a qualitative research design was employed in all five research phases.

A qualitative research paradigm can be described as allowing the researcher an "insider perspective on social action" (Babbie & Mouton 2001:270; Du Plooy 2001:29; Denzin & Lincoln 1994:2). Qualitative research is naturalistic; it attempts to study the everyday life of different groups of people and communities in their natural setting. Denzin and Lincoln (2003) argue that qualitative research adopts an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. Qualitative research refers to inductive, holistic, emic, subjective, and process-oriented methods used to understand, interpret, describe, and develop a theory on a phenomena or setting. It is a systematic, subjective approach used to describe life experiences and give them meaning (Burns & Grove 2003:356;). Qualitative researchers attempt to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meaning that people ascribe to them as is articulated in the following definition by Merriam (2009:13): "Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world."

Leedy and Ormrod (2001) opine that qualitative research is less structured in description because it formulates and builds new theories. Babbie and Mouton (2001:270-271) refer to the term "Verstehen", stating that in a qualitative research approach, rather than attempting to explain behaviour, the focus is on attempting to describe and understand certain behaviour. Understanding phenomena within a particular context contributes particularly to understanding; this refers to the "thick" descriptions found in qualitative research. Qualitative research is subjective and founded on how individuals interpret experiences (Denzin & Lincoln 2005). "By focusing on participants' personal meanings, qualitative research 'gives voice' to people who have been historically silenced and marginalised" (Brantlinger, Jimenez, Klingner, Pugach & Richardson 2005:201).

Henning (2004:6) explains that a thick description describes a phenomenon coherently and provides facts, empirical data, and an interpretation of the information within the framework of (i) other empirical information of the study and (ii) a theoretical demarcation of the

75

parameters of the study. Furthermore, the qualitative researcher perceives concepts and constructs as meaningful words that can be analysed to provide an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon.

Qualitative research is characterised by its aims, which relate to understanding some aspects of social life, and its methods which (in general) generate words, rather than numbers, as data for analysis. Qualitative methods therefore aim to answer questions about the "what", "how", or "why" of a phenomenon, rather than the "how many" or "how much", which are answered by quantitative methods (Bricki & Green 2007).

The qualitative approach is based on the intensive study of as many features as possible of one phenomenon or a small number of phenomena (Miller & Brewer 2003:193). Qualitative research is suitable for studying phenomena that are best understood in their natural environment, not in artificial settings (Babbie & Mouton 2001:270). According to Baker (1999:8), qualitative research is often conducted to investigate certain important concerns to be found in some parts of the human view. Qualitative research is therefore viewed as context specific and data attained from such studies may be transferred and applied to related contexts for comparative purposes (Niemann 2005). Meaning is achieved not by looking at particular features of many instances of a phenomenon, but rather by looking at all aspects of the same phenomenon to identify interrelationships and establish how they come together to form a whole (Henning 2004:10). Lee (1999:40) points out that a defining characteristic of qualitative research is centred on the participants' point of view, their unique perceptions, assumptions, presumptions, and connections to their social world, and on understanding how these actions are organised and structured by the participants themselves. Qualitative research is a holistic approach that involves discovery and can be described as an unfolding mould that occurs in natural settings and that enables the researcher to develop a level of detail from high involvement in the actual experiences (Creswell 1994).

Since this study aims to answer a research question rather than attempting to make generalisations to some theoretical population, the method of reasoning is inductive. This means that it began with an observation and not with a preconceived conclusion (Leedy 1989:80). Neuman (1997:47) explains that when the researcher uses an inductive approach, he/she begins with detailed observations of the world and moves toward abstract

generalisations and ideas. Concepts are refined, empirical generalisations developed, and preliminary relationships identified as the researcher observes.

3.4.1 Appropriateness of using a qualitative research paradigm in this study

In order to determine the appropriateness of the selection of qualitative research methodologies as applied to the five phases of this study, it is necessary to identify the advantages and disadvantages of qualitative research methodology. These are depicted in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Advantages associated with qualitative research

Advantages associated with qualitative research	Authors
• Collects information without formal structured instruments. • Flexible and unstructured collection methods.	Polit & Hungler (1999:239) Brink & Wood (1998:5)
• Analyses narrative information in an organised but intuitive fashion. • Words, rather than numerical data, are used as the basis for analysing. • Uses concepts in the form of themes, motifs, and categories. • In this study, explication of data led to the emergence of themes and categories that assisted the researcher in intuitively unravelling the developing construct.	Polit & Hungler (1999:239) Brink & Wood (1998:246) Burns & Grove (2003:257) Brink & Wood (1998:246) Burns & Grove (2003:257)
• Focuses on understanding the entirety of the phenomenon rather than on specific concepts only. • Literature sources on leadership communication had to be read and re-read in order for the researcher to capture the holistic nature of the concept.	Polit & Hungler (1999:239)
• Is ideographic: aims to understand the meaning that people attach to everyday life. • Has few preconceived ideas and stresses the importance of people's interpretation of events and circumstances rather than the researcher's interpretation. • Literature from various sources, together with the input from participants, were incorporated in the research.	Brink & Wood(1998:246) Polit & Hungler (1999:239)

Advantages associated with qualitative research	Authors
• Uses a holistic unit of analysis, concentrating on the relationship between elements. • Does not try to control the context of the research but rather attempts to capture it in its entirety. • Allows the researcher to view behaviour in natural surroundings without the artificiality that is characteristic of experimental survey research.	Brink & Wood (1998:246) Burns & Grove (2003:257) Polit, Beck & Hungler (2001:207) Du Plooy (2001:33) Dillon, Madden & Firtle (1992:130)
• Qualitative research methods are reflexive and allow a researcher to practice new ideas of concern. As this method is adaptable and accepts the practice of new ideas that might appear during the course of the data analysis, this is especially important in this study as new emerging ideas can be adapted to provide more meaningful results.	Wimmer & Dominick (1983:49) Du Plooy (2001:33)
• Qualitative research can intensify a researcher's depth of understanding of the occurrence under investigation. The chief strength of this method is therefore the depth of understanding it permits. • In this study, an increase in in-depth knowledge of leadership communication will assist the researcher in forwarding an LVC model that incorporates communication.	Dillon, Madden & Firtle (1993:130) Babbie (2007) Wimmer & Dominick (1983:49)

However, this type of research paradigm also has a number of disadvantages or weaknesses, as summarised below (see Table 3.3).

Table 3.3: Disadvantages of qualitative research methods

Disadvantages of qualitative research	Authors
Qualitative research samples are generally small, which often prevents the researcher from being able to generalise the data beyond the sample selected for the specific study. As a result, qualitative research is regularly conducted preliminarily to quantitative research so that concepts can be enlightened and operationalised, especially if quantification or generalisation is the intent of the research.	Dillon *et al.* (1993:131) Wimmer & Dominick (1983:49)
Reliability of data may be compromised in qualitative research as single observers are describing unique events. Loss of objectivity may occur since the researcher is in such close contact with the respondents.	Du Plooy (2001:32)
If qualitative research is not properly planned, the project may not produce data of any worth. Qualitative researchers therefore have to make particular provision to focus on the key issues in the research project.	Dillon *et al.* (1993:130)

Maxwell (2008:220-221) identifies five particular intellectual goals for which qualitative studies are especially useful:

- Understanding the meaning for participants in the study. Qualitative researchers are interested in how participants in a study make sense of events and behaviours and how these understandings influence their behaviour (Maxwell 2004 in Maxwell 2008). This focus on meaning is central to what is known as the "interpretive" approach to social science (Bredo & Feinberg 1982 in Maxwell 2008).

- Understanding the particular context within which the participants act and the influence the context has on their actions. Typical to qualitative research, a relatively small number of individuals or situations are studied, which helps to preserve the individuality of each of the analyses.

- Qualitative research can be used for identifying unanticipated phenomena and influences and for generating new, "grounded" theories about the latter. This exploratory role of qualitative research is one of its strengths.

- Understanding the processes by which events and actions take place. While not unconcerned with outcomes, a major strength of qualitative studies is their ability to determine the processes that lead to these outcomes – processes that experimental and survey research are poor at identifying (Maxwell 2004 in Maxwell 2008).

- Developing causal explanations. While deriving causal explanations from a qualitative study is not an easy task, qualitative research is not different from quantitative research in this respect and the traditional view that qualitative research cannot identify causal relationships is based on a restrictive and philosophically outdated concept of causality.

Creswell (2009) emphasises the following important characteristics of qualitative research and states that this list of characteristics captures both traditional perspectives on qualitative research as well as the newer participatory and reflexive perspectives. These include:

- *Natural setting.* Qualitative data are usually collected in the field at the site where participants experience the issue or problem under investigation. Participants are seen acting and behaving in their own contexts. Researchers have face-to-face interaction over time in the natural setting of the participants. In-depth interviews were conducted for this study. These interviews were conducted in settings where the interviewees could feel relaxed and feel free to talk openly about their experiences regarding the leadership communication experienced by them.

- *Researcher as key instrument.* Data are collected by the researchers themselves through the examination of documents, observing behaviour, or interviewing participants.

- *Multiple sources of data.* Qualitative researchers typically gather multiple forms of data through methods such as interviews, observations, and documents, rather than relying on a single data source. All the data are reviewed and organised into categories or themes that cut across all the data sources.

- *Inductive data analysis.* Qualitative researchers build their patterns, categories, and themes from the bottom up by organising data into increasingly more abstract units of information.

- *Participants' meanings.* During the entire research process, the researcher keeps a focus on learning the meaning that the participants' hold about the problem or issue

under investigation, not the meaning that the researcher brings to the research or that writers express in the literature.

- *Emergent design.* The research process for qualitative researchers is emergent. The initial research plan cannot be described too tightly and some phases of the process may change or shift after the researcher enters the field and begins to collect data.

- *Theoretical lens.* Qualitative researchers often use a lens to view their studies, such as the concept of culture, central to ethnography, or gendered, racial, or class differences.

- *Interpretive.* Qualitative research is a form of interpretive inquiry in which researchers make an interpretation of what they see, hear, and understand. Their interpretations cannot be separated from their own backgrounds, history, contexts, and prior understandings.

- *Holistic account.* Qualitative researchers try to develop a complex picture of the problem or issue under study. This involves reporting multiple perspectives, and identifying the many factors involved in a situation, and generally sketching the larger picture that emerges.

3.4.2 Advantages of qualitative research for this study

Qualitative researchers typically gather multiple sources of data. In this study, data were derived from literature reviews, an evolutionary concept analysis of leadership communication, and in-depth interviews (Maxwell 2009). Qualitative research is a means to understanding human emotions such as rejection, powerlessness, and anger. As this study uses phenomenology as research strategy, it helps to explain the emotions and feelings that people at the receiving end of leadership communication experience in their own words. Qualitative research also focuses on understanding the whole, which is consistent with understanding an experience in depth (Brink & Wood 1998:246; Burns & Grove 2003:374). Interviews with participants were recorded and transcribed by the researcher. While interviews were in progress, the researcher also made notes of nonverbal cues that could be observed. This was done to ensure that the researcher could focus on the meaning that participants ascribed to different communicative situations in which they found themselves. The research was conducted in the services industry and participants from different organisations in the services industry were interviewed in order to ensure that different perspectives were considered. Different situational factors were also considered.

Against the background of the discussion in the previous section, it was concluded that a qualitative research paradigm would best suit the purposes of this study. The research paradigm determines the research strategies that would be appropriate to the study. This aspect will be discussed in the next section.

3.5   RESEARCH STRATEGIES

Du Plooy (2001:81) describes the research strategy as a plan of how a research project should be conducted. This includes specifying who or what is involved, and where and when it takes place. The research strategy therefore indicates which "direction" is taken, while the research design indicates what needs to be done while heading in that specific direction (Schoonraad 2003:30). Mouton (1996:37) states that the research strategy is partly derived from the methodological paradigm (qualitative or quantitative) and fits the research question. According to Mutchnick and Berg (1996:7), a research strategy can be defined as a set of guidelines and instructions to be followed in addressing the research problem. The main function of a research strategy is to enable the researcher to anticipate what the appropriate research decision should be in order to maximise the validity of the eventual results (Mouton 1996:x).

The research strategy or strategies must be appropriate for the questions the researcher wants to answer (Robson 1993:38). As there are different philosophical perspectives that can inform qualitative research, there are also a number of qualitative research strategies that can be employed. The research strategy influences the way the researcher collects and analyses data, and implies different skills, assumptions, and research practices. The research strategies in qualitative research include, among others, case study research, literature review, action research, ethnography, phenomenology, historiography, grounded theory, conceptual analysis, and content analysis (Leedy & Ormrod 2001; Mouton 2001: Denzin & Lincoln 1994).

In this study, a number of strategies were employed in the research design. As suggested earlier, this study was conducted in five phases. Different strategies were employed to address the various research questions and objectives of each phase (see Figure 1.2 in Chapter 1).

3.5.1 Phase I: Literature review

In Phase I, a literature review was used to explore the context in which leadership communication is practised. Because of the dual nature of the context in this study (LVC, and integrated organisational communication) the first phase consisted of two different stages. Literature reviews were employed in both stages.

The literature review can be a research method in its own right. The literature review enables the researcher to show that he/she is both aware of and can interpret existing literature or what is already known and where he/she will eventually be able to point out gaps or contradictions in existing knowledge (Stevenson & Sum 2002:10). This study employed a systematic review. When reviewing literature systematically, the researcher works in an ordered or methodical way. A systematic review is a review with a clear stated purpose, a research question, and a defined research approach which also states inclusion and exclusion criteria that produces a qualitative appraisal of articles (Stevenson & Sum 2002). Petticrew and Roberts (2006:2) define it as "a method of making sense of large bodies of information as a means to contributing to questions about what works and what does not".

3.5.2 Phase II: Evolutionary concept analysis

In Phase II, an evolutionary concept analysis of leadership communication was conducted using Rodgers' (2000; 1989) evolutionary concept analysis approach. The procedures followed in a concept analysis are deemed suitable for incorporation into the qualitative paradigm and include exploratory and descriptive designs that consist of several steps (Rodgers 2000; Walker & Avant 1995). Concept clarification is an important step in developing useful and useable knowledge in a particular field and also assists in advancing the classification or characterisation of phenomena, as well as the assessment of a concept's strength and weaknesses (Tofthagen & Fagerstrom 2010).

Rodgers' evolutionary concept analysis is an inductive method of analysis (Tofthagen & Fagerstrom 2010).According to Rodgers (2000), concepts develop over time and are influenced by the context in which they are used. This means that concepts are constantly undergoing dynamic development which is responsible for redefining how the analysis of a concept's context, surrogate and related terms, antecedents, attributes, and consequences will occur. A concept analysis therefore merely indicates a direction for further research and

does not provide a definite conclusion. The steps involved in the analysis applied in this phase entailed:

- identification of the concept of interest;
- identification of surrogate terms and relevant uses for the concept;
- identification and selection of an appropriate realm/setting for data collection;
- collecting data with a focus on concept attributes and the contextual basis of the concept, including interdisciplinary, socio-cultural, and temporal;
- analysing data regarding the above characteristics of the concepts;
- if available, identification of an exemplar of the concept; and
- identification of implications of analysis and future development of the concept.

The concept of leadership communication was analysed in three stages. In the ensuing section, the process followed during the execution of the concept analysis of leadership communication is described according to the abovementioned three phases.

Stage 1: The initial phase

During this phase, the choice of concept for analysis (leadership communication), the concept's context (organisational context, on different organisational levels), collection of data for analysis of the concept, and choice of texts were included.

- *Choice of concepts for analysis.* The concept chosen for analysis should, according to Rodgers (2000), serve a purpose or human goal in an actual case or praxis, contribute to solving problems, and provide an adequate characteristic of the phenomenon. The term used by Rodgers (2000) to indicate the above, is "significance". This study proposes an LVC model that incorporates communication. Leadership communication is therefore of significance in the advancement of such a model and the concept of analysis in the evolutionary concept analysis.
- *The context of a concept.* The way in which concept is understood differs from discipline to discipline. As such, a different connotation is made to the meaning and use of the concept of leadership communication when used in an organisational context than when used in the political arena, for example. Rodgers (2000) refers to this socialisation within a discipline as "enculturation". The context of a concept can consist of a cultural or social group that uses the concept or how the concept is

used within a discipline, during a certain period of time, or within a certain theoretical tradition (Rodgers 2000). Figure 3.3 depicts the different phases of Rodgers' (2000) evolutionary concept analysis.
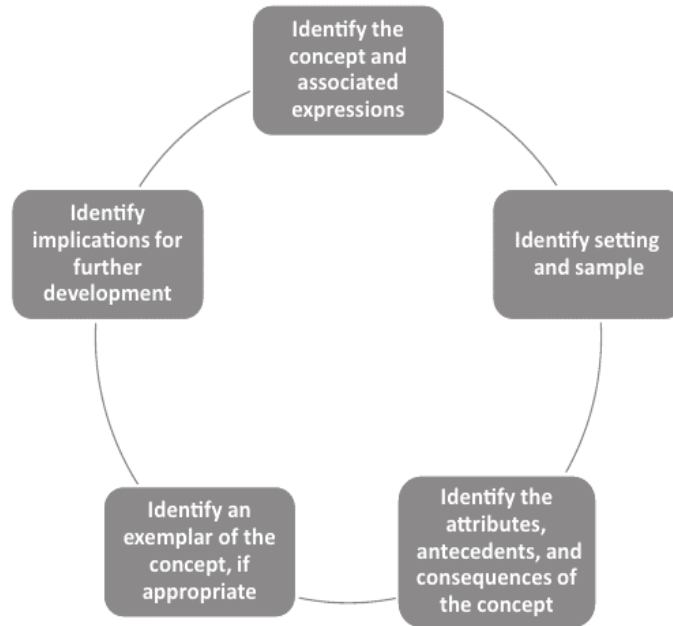
Figure 3.3: Phases of Rodgers' (2000; 1989) evolutionary concept analysis

- *Collection of material for concept analysis*. It is important that researchers do not allow their prior or existing understanding of the concept to influence the systematic concept analysis. While various sources such as artistic expressions, dance, music, and sculptures, for example, may be used for data collection, the most common source of data is printed media, especially professional literature (Rodgers 2000). Rodgers (2000; 1989) states that an appropriate setting and sample should be identified. In a literature-based analysis, as is used in this study, the setting refers to the time period to be examined and the disciplines or types of literature to be included. A comprehensive search was performed in the following multidisciplinary electronic databases: EBSCOhost, JSTOR, and Taylor and Francis. Wiley Online Library, a natural sciences site, was also employed. EBSCOhost includes the following data base sites: Academic Search Complete, Business Source Complete, Communication and Mass Media Complete, Humanities source, PsycInfo, PschArticles, and PsychExtra. During the data-gathering phase, 23 academic referencing books were also employed.

In this study, academic literature from a sample of 1 313 English-language theoretical and research-based articles from the abovementioned academic research sites were initially studied. Literature for this concept analysis was drawn mainly from three disciplines, namely communication, mass media and business management, and psychology.

Keywords were used to help narrow the search and to search literature published in the English language. The articles found were screened by scanning the article and reading the abstract to determine relevancy. Literature cited by relevant articles was also reviewed for applicability to the analysis, which uncovered several articles not found during the initial search. After reviewing each article for relevancy, articles were grouped by discipline.

Consistent with the evolutionary method, no date ranges were set in the search so as to readily explore the concept in a historical context. Databases used included the following:

- Academic Search Complete, one of the most comprehensive scholarly, multidisciplinary full-text databases with more than 8 500 full-text periodicals, including 7 300 peer-reviewed journals and a total of 13 200 publications, including monographs, reports, and conference proceeding that go back as far as 1887.
- Business Source Complete, one of the world's most definitive scholarly business databases, providing the leading collection of bibliographic and full-text content and going back as far as 1886 and supplying searchable cited references for more than 1 300 journals.
- The Humanities Source was also searched. It is a database designed to meet the needs of students, researchers, and educators interested in all aspects of the humanities. It has more than 1 400 journals, with citations to over 3.5 million articles, including book reviews.
- Communication & Mass Media Complete (CMMC) is a database that provides the most robust quality research solutions in areas related to communication and mass media and incorporates the content of CommSearch (formerly produced by the National Communication Association) and Mass Media Articles Index (formerly produced by Penn State), along with numerous other journals in communication, mass media, and other closely related fields of study to create a research reference resource of unprecedented scope and depth encompassing the breadth of the communication discipline. CMMC offers cover-to-cover ("core") indexing and

abstracts for more than 670 journals and selected ("priority") coverage of nearly 200 more, for a combined coverage of more than 770 titles. Furthermore, this database includes full text for over 450 journals.

Stage 2: The core analysis phase

During this stage, the concept's antecedents, attributes, and consequences were explored. Rodgers (2000) states that relevant articles should firstly be read in their entirety and thereafter with a focus on the concept's context, surrogate and related terms, antecedents, attributes, examples, and consequences. Tofthagen and Fagerstrom (2010) state that specific questions will be applicable to each phase, and supply the following example of questions that may be used during the core phase (see Table 3.4).

Table 3.4: Examples of questions to be used during the core analysis phase

Surrogate terms	Do other words say the same as the chosen concept? Do other words have something in common with the concept?
Antecedents	Which events or phenomena have been associated with the concept in the past?
Attributes	What are the concept's characteristics?
Consequences	What happens after or as a result of the concept?

Source: Tofthagen & Fagerstrom (2010:24)

The questions indicated in Table 3.4 assist researchers in identifying patterns that are repeated throughout the text. Following each phase, the findings from each study are recorded separately (Rodgers 2000). Findings are then compared, with similarities and dissimilarities within the disciplines and changes to the concept over time being sought. Researchers should seek that which is common to the concept to further consensus during analysis (Rodgers 2000).

The described procedure allows researchers to uncover patterns in the data analysis and allows main themes to emerge from the data. A researcher knows that the data are saturated when the data become repetitive and the supplementary data indicate a totality in and between phases' antecedents, attributes, and consequences. A model can then reveal the connection between the concept's various stages. This analysis assist researchers in

reaching a consensus regarding a concept's antecedents, attributes, and consequences even if information is derived from different disciplines (Doyle 2008).

With regards to the concept's surrogate and related terms, Rodgers (2000) explains that surrogate terms are words that express a concept's ideas through words other than the concept that a researcher has chosen in his/her study. Related terms are words that have something in common with the concept yet do not possess the same characteristics.

To conclude the concept's antecedents, attributes, and consequences – concept analysis is a continuous process where a researcher organises and reorganise data until a descriptive pattern of themes throughout the texts is reached. Antecedents are events or phenomena that have previously been related to the concept. Attributes are clusters of characteristics that make it possible to identify situations that can be categorised under the concept (Rodgers 2000). Consequences are the result of the use of the concept in a practical situation.

Stage 3: The further analysis phase

Questions for further analysis were presented during this stage. In this final phase, the method's ability to indicate the direction that further research should take was revealed (Tofthagen & Fagerstrom 2010). According to Rodgers (2000; 1989), several of the most important aspects of concept analysis do not promote a final conclusion on what the concept is, but instead asks questions and presents hypotheses for further research. The intention in this phase was to provide suggestions regarding the direction that the further development of leadership communication within the LVC should take. Furthermore, the development of knowledge of leadership communication from a strategic IC perspective was highlighted.

3.5.2.1   *Appropriateness of applying evolutionary concept analysis*

Concept analysis is an activity that is a part of terminology work where concepts belonging to a whole and their relationships are clarified and described (Suonuuti 1999 in Nuopponen 2010). In this study, Rodgers' (2000) method of concept analysis was employed as this method focuses on the fact that concepts are not static but fluid entities (Rodgers & Knafl 2000). This evolutionary concept analysis method emphasises the importance of viewing concepts in terms of the "sociocultural and disciplinary contexts of the time" (Rodgers &

Knafl 2000:84). Leadership communication has undergone a significant transformation over the past century and therefore the evolutionary concept analysis method was deemed as most appropriate for this study.

3.5.3 Phase III: Synthesises of data

During the third phase of this research, the data from Phases I and II were combined and integrated to depict the relevance of communication within the context of the LVC. The preliminary model developed during this phase will be enlightened by the phenomenological data gathered during Phase IV.

3.5.4 Phase IV: Phenomenology

Phenomenology seeks to elucidate the nature of phenomena that constitute human existence. The phenomenological movement was initiated by Husserl (1859-1938) as a radical new way of practising philosophy. In later years, theorists such as Heidegger (1889-1976) adapted the phenomenological process and moved away from a philosophical discipline with the focus on consciousness and essences of phenomena, towards elaborating existential and hermeneutic (interpretive) dimensions (Finlay 2009).

The goal of qualitative phenomenological research is to describe the lived experiences, perceptions, and interpretations of participants to a study (Marshall & Rossman 2006; Simon & Francis 2006). Finlay (2009) states that, applied to research, phenomenology is the study of phenomena: their nature and meanings. The focus is on the way things appear through experience or consciousness, where the phenomenological researcher attempts to provide a rich textured description of lived experience.

This study investigates the lived experiences of employees regarding the communication received from their direct supervisors and leadership. Van Manen (1990:177) states that the basic purpose of phenomenology is to reduce individual experiences with a phenomenon to a description of the universal essence, or, stated differently, a "grasp of the very nature of the thing". According to Simon and Francis (2006:48), phenomenology is distinguished from other types of research as this design is "dedicated to describing the structures of experience as they present themselves to consciousness, without resource to theory, deduction, or assumptions from other disciplines such as natural sciences". The phenomenological

research method is interpretive and practical, as it builds from the lived experiences of human beings (Marshall & Rossman 2006).

What is referred to by Van Manen (1990:136) as the "object" of human experience, the phenomenon of interest in this study, is the leadership communication received by members of the Free State chapter of PRISA who are employed in different sectors of the services industry in Bloemfontein, Free State province. Data were collected from employees at the receiving end of the leadership communication and the researcher then attempted to develop a composite description of the essence of the experience of all individuals involved.

In this study, a phenomenological research design under the umbrella label of interpretive constructionism was selected to offer a framework of rational inquiry to assess leadership communication. Phenomenology is firmly located within a broad interpretive paradigm (Merriam 2009; Creswell 2007) and, as already stated, draws heavily on the writings of the German mathematician Edmund Husserl and scholars such as Heidegger, Sartre, and Merleau-Ponty (Creswell 2007). According to Patton (2002:105), "by phenomenology Husserl meant the study of how people describe things and experience them through their senses. His basic philosophical assumption was that we only know what we experience by attending to perceptions and meanings." The phenomenon of interest in this study, or, as referred to by Van Manen (1990:136), the "object" of human experience is leadership communication, specifically the communication received by employees from their direct supervisors or people in leadership positions in various services sector industries in Bloemfontein. Data will be collected from employees at the receiving end of the leadership communication and the researcher will then attempt to develop a composite description of the essence of the experience for all of the individuals involved.

Description is a key element in phenomenological research. Husserl (1970) states that pure phenomenological research essentially seeks to describe rather than explain, and to start from a perspective that is free from hypotheses or preconceptions. Groenewald (2004) concurs, stating that the aim of the researcher is to describe as accurately as possible the phenomenon, and to refrain from any pre-given framework and remaining true to facts. The purpose of phenomenology is therefore to illuminate the specific, to identify phenomena through how they are perceived by the actors in the situation. According to Lester (1999), in the human sphere this normally translates into the gathering of "deep" information and perceptions through inductive qualitative methods such as interviews, discussions, and

90

participant observation, and representing it from the perspective of the research participant(s).

Scholars distinguish between three different types of phenomenological research designs:

- Transcendental phenomenology
- Hermeneutic phenomenology
- Existential phenomenology

Transcendental phenomenology is the original form of phenomenological philosophy as conceptualised and envisaged by Edmund Husserl (1859-1938). This school believes that experience needs to be transmitted in order to discover reality (Kafle 2013). Reduction, otherwise described as suspending personal prejudices while attempting to reach the core or essence of a phenomenon through a state of pure consciousness, plays an important part in Husserlian phenomenology. The basic premise of this phenomenological school is to discover and describe a "lived world" and it believes that it is possible to suspend personal opinion; it is possible to arrive to a single, essential, and descriptive presentation of a phenomenon (Kafle 2013:186).

Hermeneutic phenomenology departs sharply from the transcendental school. Developed from the writings of Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), hermeneutic phenomenology rejects the idea of suspending personal opinions and is focused on the interpretive narration of a description. Hermeneutic phenomenologists believe that reduction is impossible and accept endless interpretations. Important for these scholars is the ability to get beneath the subjective experience and find the genuine objective nature of things as realised by an individual. Hermeneutic phenomenology is focused on the subjective experience of individuals and groups (Kafle 2013). It attempts to unveil the world as experienced by the subject through their lifeworld stories. According to this school, interpretations are all we have and description itself is an interpretive process (Kafle 2013:186).

Existential phenomenology was first conceived by Blaise Pascal (1623-1662) with his rejection of Cartesian rationalism. Pascal saw human being as an essential paradox; a contradiction between mind and body. Existential phenomenologists all share the view that philosophy should not be conducted from a detached, objective, disinterested, disengaged point of view. Warthal (2006 in Kafle 2013) opines that these scholars believe that only

individuals who are engaged with this world in the right kind of way are able to perceive certain phenomena. Included in existential phenomenology are descriptions of the meaning of being (Heidegger), and the role of the lived-body in perception (Merleau-Ponty).

What distinguishes this school from other schools of phenomenology is the rejection of Husserl's belief of the possibility of complete reduction. It is firmly believed here that it should be attempted to concentrate on re-achieving a direct and primitive contact with the world. Existential phenomenology therefore emphasises the description of everyday experience as it is perceived by the consciousness of individuals (Kafle 2013).

3.5.4.1 *Hermeneutical phenomenological research design*

The hermeneutical phenomenological research design was deemed most appropriate for this study. Hermeneutical phenomenology is viewed as interpretive (rather than purely descriptive as in transcendental phenomenology). This orientation is evident in the work of Heidegger, who argues that all description is always already interpretation. Every form of human awareness is interpretive. Especially in Heidegger's later work he increasingly introduces poetry and art as expressive works for interpreting the nature of truth, language, thinking, dwelling, and being (Kafle 2013; Creswell 2007; Van Manen 1990).

A phenomenological study describes the meaning experienced by several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon (Creswell 2007). Berglund (2007) adds to the above by stating that the goal of phenomenological studies is to study the meaning of phenomena and human experiences in specific situations, and to attempt to capture and communicate these meanings while focusing on what all participants have in common as they experience the phenomenon. This study therefore investigated the lived experiences of employees in different sectors of the services industry in Bloemfontein regarding the communication received from their direct supervisors and leadership.

As already explained in 3.5.4 above, description is a key element in phenomenological research. In this study, employees were required to describe as accurately as possible their experience of the communication received from their leadership and direct line-managers. Husserl (1970) states that pure phenomenological research seeks essentially to describe rather than explain, and to start from a perspective that is free from hypotheses or preconceptions.

Van Manen (1990:4) describes hermeneutical phenomenological research as focused towards lived experience (phenomenology) and interpreting of "texts" of life (hermeneutics). This author further states that phenomenology research entails a dynamic interplay among six research activities. Firstly, a researcher turns to a phenomenon, or "abiding concern", which seriously interests them, and then reflects on essential themes that constitute the nature of this lived experience (Van Manen 1990:31). The researcher writes a description of the phenomenon, maintaining a strong relation to the topic of enquiry and balancing the parts of the writing to the whole. In this study, this was done by means of the conceptual analysis of leadership communication (see Chapter 5).

Like phenomenology, hermeneutic phenomenology is concerned with the lifeworld of human experience as it is lived. According to Wilson and Hutchinson (1991), the focus is on illuminating details and seemingly trivial aspects within experience that may be taken for granted in our lives, with the goal of creating meaning and achieving a sense of understanding. Hermeneutic phenomenology asserts that all research is value-laden, since researchers bring their biases, prejudices, and assumptions to the research and these affect findings (Lincoln & Guba 1985).

3.5.4.2   *Appropriateness of applying phenomenology*

A phenomenological research design was deemed appropriate for this study since phenomenology is centred on exploring participants' experiences and perspectives of a central phenomenon (Creswell 2007). Phenomenologists are of the opinion that the researcher cannot be detached from his/her own presumptions and that the researcher should not pretend otherwise (Hammersley 2000). Considering the leader-follower relationship as a lived experience (Glomb & Welsh 2005), the use of phenomenology as a research method was deemed appropriate to the intent of this study. The purpose of phenomenology is to reveal implicit meaning within exact structures . This study explored general or universal meanings gained by participants from experiences in their workplace environment.

As phenomenology offers a number of concepts which can be helpful in illuminating aspects of leadership communication, such as the notions of the "lifeworld", the distinction between "sides", "aspects", and "identity", as well as the distinction between "wholes", "pieces", and "moments", it is particularly suited as research method in this study. The idea of the

"lifeworld" suggests that in order to understand leadership communication as a lived experience, it is important to study it as a phenomenon that arises from constructed social realities, and the meanings it has for those engaged in it, within the particular worlds in which it operates (Ladkin 2010:7). According to the phenomenological view, every "thing" has different "sides" and at any one point in time we can only view one of them with the others implied (Ladkin 2010:8). Within the "lifeworld", the way things are used and the meanings they hold for the humans who interact with them are vital aspects of their nature. The key sources of data, within this process of inquiry, are thus the views and experiences of the participants (Goulding 2005). What this implies is that the participant's view is taken as fact.

3.5.5   Phase V: Refining the proposed LCVC model

In the final phase, (Phase V), the model developed in Phase III is merged with the data obtained from the empirical research in order to refine the conceptual LCVC model.

3.6   DATA-COLLECTION METHODS

The research strategy chosen in each phase of this study determined the technique of data collection. The data collection was dictated by and directed towards developing a new LCVC model.

The data-collection methods are discussed according to the phases, and ultimately the research strategy employed during each phase of the research.

3.6.1   Phase I: Literature review

The *literature of science* is a permanent record of research facilitating communication among scientists. Significant research literature on the topic constitutes the data that were used in the literature reviews of Phases I and II. The literature that was reviewed in this phase related to the LVC and integrated organisational communication.

3.6.2   Phase II: Evolutionary conceptual analysis

The data that were used in the evolutionary conceptual analysis was described in Section 3.5.2.

3.6.3 Phase III: Synthesises of data

The data employed during this phase consisted of the data gathered during Phases I and II of the research.

3.6.4 Phase IV: Phenomenology

The method used to collect the data during Phase IV was *in-depth phenomenological interviews*. Neuman (2000:506) describes the in-depth interview as a joint venture between the researcher and the interviewee. During this phase, an interview guide was developed based on the format of a phenomenological interview described above. According to Kensit (2000 in Groenewald 2004:11), the researcher must allow the data to emerge: "Doing phenomenology means capturing rich descriptions of phenomena and their settings." Welman and Kruger (1999:196) opine that the questions in this specific type of interview should be directed to the participant's experiences, feelings, beliefs, and convictions about the theme in question. For this reason, the research questions that were put to participants comprised the following:

- Experiences – How do you experience the leadership communication in your organisation?
- Feelings – How does your leader's communication make you feel?
- Beliefs – How should an effective leader communicate?
- Convictions – What is the contribution that leadership communication can make in your organisation?

According to Bentz and Shapiro (1998:96), data should be obtained about how participants "think and feel in the most direct ways". The researcher should focus on "what goes on within" the participant and get the participant to "describe the lived experience in a language as free from the constructs of the intellect and society as possible" (Groenewald 2004:12). This is known as "bracketing" in phenomenology. Edie (1987) cites Jones (1975) who suggests that our understanding of bracketing should be extended beyond a mere suspension of belief to a cultivation of doubt in order to assist one's self to the work at hand.

The process of phenomenological reduction or bracketing was developed by Husserl (Klein & Westcott 1994). Bracketing is a process of suspending one's judgement or bracketing particular beliefs about the phenomena in order to see them clearly.

Data capturing is another important area in conducting phenomenological interviews. A fundamental principle in phenomenological research is that participants describe the phenomenon in their own terms. They must provide a description of a human experience as it is experienced by themselves (Bentz & Shapiro 1998 in Groenewald 2004). Memoing is therefore an important data source to use in phenomenology. According to Miles and Huberman (1984), it includes fieldnotes that record what the researcher hears, sees, experiences, and think in the course of collecting and reflecting on the process. Groenewald (2004) reiterates the importance of maintaining a balance between descriptive notes and reflective notes such as impressions, feelings, etc.

3.6.5   Phase V: Constructing a new LCVC model

The data that were used during this phase entailed all the data gathered in the previous four phases.

3.7   UNIT OF ANALYSIS AND SAMPLING PLAN

The unit of analysis refers to the object, phenomenon, entity, process, or event that a researcher will investigate (Babbie & Mouton 2001:51). The sampling plan includes the population being studied.

3.7.1   Sampling design for Phases I to III

In Phases I to III, the existing body of scientific knowledge on the LVC, strategic integrated organisational communication, and leadership communication form the basic units of analysis. The data for the literature reviews consisted of primary publications (i.e. specialised handbooks and articles from scholarly journals, both printed and electronic). The researcher concentrated on the chosen topics and the objectives set for the different reviews. As already explained above, a comprehensive search was performed in the following multidisciplinary electronic databases: EBSCOhost, JSTOR, and Taylor and

Francis. Wiley Online Library, a natural sciences site, was also employed. A total of 23 academic books were also employed.

The data gathered in Phases I to III were supplemented by in-depth interviews (during Phase IV) with people directly exposed to leadership communication within different organisations in the services industry in Bloemfontein.

3.7.2   Sampling design for Phase IV

As stated previously, the sampling plan includes the unit of analysis, the population being studied, the method for selecting the sample, and the sample size. After a unit of analysis has been selected, the population of interest needs to be defined. According to Babbie (2007) and Tudd, Smith and Kidder (1999), a study population can be described as the aggregation of elements that conform to some designated set of specifications and from which the sample is actually selected (Babbie 2007; Tudd *et al.* 1999). Denscombe (2010) explains that in the context of surveys and sampling, the term "population" refers to all the items in the category that are researched, namely the research population.

During Phase IV, the unit of analysis consisted of employees exposed to leadership communication. The population of this sampling design were members of the Free State chapter of PRISA, who are employees of organisations in the services industry in Bloemfontein. They are individuals on the receiving end of communication from leadership.

Hycner (1999:156) explains that "the phenomenon dictates the method (not vice versa), including even the type of participants". The sample was drawn by means of non-probability and purposive sampling. Welman and Kruger (1999) view purposive sampling as the most important type of non-probability sampling when attempting to identify participants. The inclusion criteria, first of all, specified that the participants were selected on grounds of their membership of the PRISA Free State chapter. Secondly, only members of the PRISA Free State chapter who were employed in organisations in the services industry were considered for the sample.

As stated, a non-probability sample was drawn. When researchers find it difficult to operate on the principle of random selection, or find it difficult or undesirable to choose their sample on pure chance, they make use of a non-probability sampling method. Leedy (1997:204) explains that, in non-probability sampling, the researcher has no way of forecasting,

estimating, or guaranteeing that each element in the population will be represented in the sample. A non-probability sample implies that some people have a greater, yet unknown, chance than others of selection for a particular research project (Babbie 2007). In non-probability sampling there is an assumption that there is an even distribution of characteristics within the population.

Different types of non-probability sampling techniques exist. For the purpose of this study, a purposive sample, also referred to as a convenience or judgemental sample, was utilised. According to Babbie (2007), purposive sampling is a type of non-probability sampling in which the units to be observed are selected on the basis of the researcher's judgement about which ones will be the most useful or representative. According to Denscombe (2010), purposive sampling operates on the principle that the best information can be obtained by focusing on a relatively small number of instances that were deliberately selected on the basis of their known attributes. With purposive sampling, the sample is handpicked on the basis of its relevance to the issue being investigated, as well as privileged knowledge or experience about the topic.

Within a qualitative study, rules do not exist for sample sizes of statistical significance as is the case with quantitative studies (; Ten Have 2004; Patton 2002). For a phenomenological study, a suitable number of participants vary according to the topic being examined (Goulding 2005). In this study (Phase IV), a theoretical sample was drawn. Charmaz (2006:189) declares that when a researcher engages in theoretical sampling, he/she seeks information to illuminate and define the boundaries and relevance of categories. Theoretical sampling is defined by Glazer and Strauss (1982:329 in Charmaz 2006) based on what they call "saturation of categories". According to these authors, data are collected as long, and only as long, as they are adding to the development of a particular category. When nothing new emerges from the data, then the category is deemed saturated. Charmaz (2006:189) refers to this as theoretical saturation. After applying the criteria of theoretical saturation, the sample size for Phase IV was 12 (participants). The sampling plan for Phase IV is summarised in Table 3.5

Table 3.5: The sampling plan used in Phase IV

Unit of analysis	Individuals exposed to leadership communication.
Target population	Members of the Free State chapter of PRISA working in organisations in the services industries in Bloemfontein, and receiving communication from leadership.
Sources from which data were collected	Participants selected from the unit of analysis.
Method for selecting participants	A non-probability, purposive sampling technique was used. The participants were selected based on their knowledge of and sensitivity towards strategic organisational communication. All members of PRISA are employed in communication related jobs. They are therefore knowledgeable about and sensitive towards the use of communication.
Number of participants	A theoretical sample was used. Participants were interviewed until no new information was obtained and the identified themes were saturated. The final number of participants during the fourth stage of this research was 12.

3.8   EXPLICATION OF THE DATA

In phenomenological studies, the heading "data analysis" is avoided as "analysis" has a dangerous connotation for phenomenology (Groenewald 2004:17). Groenewald (2004:17) opines that the term "analysis" usually means a "breaking into parts" and therefore often means a loss of the whole phenomenon. Explication, on the other hand, implies illumination, exposition, explanation, or revelation. In other words, the investigation of the constituents of a phenomenon while keeping the context of the whole (Hycner 1999:161). Groenewald (2004) suggests that explication implies a way of transforming the data through interpretation.

"[U]nlike other methodologies, phenomenology cannot be reduced to a 'cookbook' set of instructions. It is more an approach, an attitude, an investigative posture with a certain set of goals" (Keen 1975). This view is also emphasised by Giorgi (1971 in Hycner 1985) when stating that any research method must arise out of attempting to be responsive to the phenomenon.

Groenewald (2004) uses a simplified version of Hycner's (1999; 1985) explication process that consists of the following five steps:

- Bracketing and the phenomenological reduction.
- Delineating units of general meaning.
- Clustering of units of relevant meaning to form themes.
- Summarising each interview, validating it, and where necessary, modifying it.
- Extracting/identifying general and unique themes for all the interviews and making a composite summary.

This study used an adapted version of Groenewald's (2004) five-step explication process to explicate the data. Extracted units of relevance were added and the process was concluded by supplying the rough data for validation. The steps applied therefore included:

- bracketing and phenomenological reduction;
- delineating units of general meaning;
- extracted units of relevant meaning;
- clustering units of relevant meaning to form themes;
- integrating and summarising interview data to extract/identify general and unique themes and making a composite summary; and
- validating.

3.8.1 Bracketing and phenomenological reduction

Keen (1975:38) states:

> "The phenomenological reduction is a conscious, effortful, opening of ourselves to the phenomenon *as a phenomenon.* We want not to see this event as an example of this or that theory that we have, we want to see it as a phenomenon in its own right, with its own meaning and structure. Anybody can hear words that were spoken; to listen for the meaning as they eventually emerged from the event as a whole is to have adopted an attitude of openness to the phenomenon in its inherent meaningfulness. It is to have 'bracketed' our response to separate parts of the conversation and to have let the event emerge as a meaningful whole. It means suspending (bracketing) as much as possible the researcher's meanings and

interpretations and entering into the world of the unique individual who was interviewed. It means using the matrices of that person's worldview in order to understand the meaning of what that person is saying, rather than what the researcher expects that person to say."

It has to be kept in mind that the above does not imply that the phenomenologist can totally be without any suppositions. Merleau-Ponty (1962:xiv) emphasises that complete and absolute phenomenological reduction is impossible.

When listening to the recordings of interviews and reading the transcripts, Hycner (1985) proposes that, firstly, the research data, namely the recordings and the transcripts, should be approached with an openness to whatever meanings emerges. This is an essential step in following the phenomenological reduction necessary to elicit the units of general meaning.

Questions by the researcher are "directed to the participant's experiences, feelings, beliefs, and convictions about the theme in question". In this study, bracketing entailed asking the participants to share their experience of the leadership communication that they receive from their leadership. Data were obtained on how the participants "think and feel in the most direct ways" (Bentz & Shapiro 1998:96). The participants were required to describe their lived experience of leadership communication in a language as free from the constructs of the intellect and society as possible (Groenewald 2004). The above section describes one form of bracketing, but a second form of bracketing exists, which, according to Miller and Crabtree (1992:24 in Groenewald 2004:13), is about the researcher that "must 'bracket' his/her own preconceptions and enter into the individual's lifeworld and use the self as an experiencing interpreter". This freedom from suppositions is called the epoch by Husserl. Epoch is a Greek word meaning to "stay away from" or "abstain" (Moustakas 1994:85).

3.8.2 Delineating units of general meaning

According to Hycner (1985:282), at this point, the interview has been transcribed, the researcher has bracketed his/her presuppositions as much as possible, attempting to stay as true to the data as possible, and gotten a sense of the whole of the interview as a context. Following the above, the researcher perused every word, phrase, sentence, and paragraph and also noted significant non-verbal communication in the transcripts.

This was done with as much openness as possible. It was also an attempt at crystallising what each of the respondents said, while still using as much as possible of the literal words of the participant. As indicated by Hycner (1998), the researcher tries to stay as close as possible to the literal data and the result is called a unit of general meaning. Hycner (1985) defines a unit of general meaning as those words, phrases, and/or non-verbal or para-linguistic communications that express a unique and coherent meaning; irrespective of the research question.

3.8.3   Delineating units of meaning relevant to the research question

During this critical phase, statements that are seen to illuminate the researched phenomenon are extracted or isolated (Groenewald 2004; Hycner 1999;). The researcher addresses the research question in order to determine whether what the participant had said responds to and illuminates the research question. If it does, then it is noted as a unit of relevant meaning. Statements that are clearly irrelevant to the phenomenon being studied and that do not correspond to the research question are not recorded (Hycner 1985). The list of units of relevant meaning extracted from the interview is carefully scrutinised and the clearly redundant units eliminated (Moustakas 1994 in Groenewald 2004). According to Hycner (1985), it is important that the researcher considers the literal content, the number (significance) of times a meaning was mentioned, and also how (non-verbal or para-linguistic cues) it was stated.

3.8.4   Clustering of units of meaning to form themes

To remain true to the phenomenon, it is important that the researcher once again brackets his/her presuppositions. The list of relevant units of meaning is now rigorously scrutinised in an attempt to elicit the essence of meaning of units within the holistic context (Groenewald 2004). Once again, what is called "creative insight" by Colaizzi (in Hycner 1999:150-151) is the judgement skill here required by the researcher.

Units of meaning are grouped together to from clusters of themes (Creswell 1998). Significant topics, referred to as units of significance, are also identified (Sadala & Adorno 2001 in Groenewald 2004). Overlap may occur in the clusters. Groenewald (2004) explains that the researcher has to go back and forth between the recorded interviews and the list of non-redundant units of meaning to derive clusters of appropriate meaning. By interrogating

the meaning of the various clusters, central themes are determined "which [express] the essence of these clusters" (Hycner 1999:153 in Groenewald 2004).

3.8.5 Summarising each interview, validating it, and, where necessary, modifying it

To obtain a holistic context, the researcher now makes a summary that incorporates all the themes elicited from the data. Hycner (1999:154) proposes that the researcher now returns to each participant in order to determine if the essence of the interview has been correctly reported. He refers to this as a "validity check". If modification is done, or necessary, it will be because of the results of this validity check.

3.8.6 Extracting/identifying general and unique themes for all the interviews and making a composite summary

Hycner (1999:154) states that when the process described in the first four points above has been completed for all the interviews, the researcher must look "for the themes common to most or all of the interviews as well as the individual variations".

Minority voices are important counterpoints to bring out regarding the phenomenon under investigation (Groenewald 2004).

Finally, the researcher writes a composite summary that reflects the context from which the themes emerged (Hycner 1999). Groenewald (2004) cites Sadala and Adorno (2001:289) when stating that at this point the researcher "transforms participants' everyday expressions into expressions appropriate to scientific discourse supporting the research".

3.8.7 Validation

In qualitative research, respondent validation is used by researchers to improve the accuracy, credibility, validity, and transferability of a study (Lincoln & Guba 1985). According to Tanggaart (2008), different sub-categories of respondent validation exist; among which narrative accuracy checks, interpretive validity, descriptive validity, theoretical validity, and evaluative validity. In respondent validation, the interpretation and report (or portion thereof) is given to members of the sample (respondents) in order to check the authenticity of the work. The comments of these individuals serve as a check of the viability of the interpretation.

Respondent validation can be done during or at the conclusion of the study, or both during and at the end of the study. Respondent validation completed after a study is done by sharing all of the findings with the participants involved. This allows respondents to critically analyse the findings and comment on them. Respondents either affirm that the summaries reflect their views, feelings, and experiences, or that they do not reflect these. The overall goal of this process is to provide findings that are authentic and original (Byrne 2001).

Respondent validation provides the respondents with the opportunity to correct errors and challenge what are perceived as wrong interpretations. This step in the research also provides respondents the opportunity to volunteer additional information or to assess the adequacy of the data and preliminary results, as well as to confirm particular aspects of the data. Another advantage of respondent validation is the fact that it lessens the risk of participants reporting at a later stage that the researcher misunderstood their contributions or claiming investigative error (Cohen & Crabtree 2006). This is a very important aspect in a study that renders sensitive data,.

In this study, respondent validation was employed to check the authenticity of the results. The guidelines derived from the data were presented to the respondents of the study in a conceptual LCVC model to determine whether they agreed, were neutral to, or disagreed with the guidelines presented/included in the model.

3.9   VALIDITY AND TRUTHFULNESS

Ulin, Robinson and Tolley (2004) state that qualitative methodologies are inductive; that is, oriented toward discovery and process, have high validity, are less concerned with generalisability, and are more concerned with a deeper understanding of the research problem in its unique context.

In this study, two fields of validity were addressed according to guidelines suggested by De Vos (2002:168), namely internal validity and external validity. Internal validity is also referred to as credibility, and examines whether the findings and the conclusion are trustworthy, and whether they can be seen as credible by the research participants and other researchers (Miles & Huberman 1994:277-280) and/or the readers (Creswell 2009:190).

Liu (1996:11) suggests a number of procedures that can be followed to verify internal validity. The procedures followed in this study included the following:

- Triangulation, where multiple research strategies and multiple data-collection methods were used.
- Informant verification was conducted. Each participant was given a copy of the data explication to confirm whether it reflected their opinions truthfully.
- Explicitly clarifying the researcher's bias. The researcher has been exposed to leadership communication as an employee of different organisations.

Procedures for verifying the external validity of this research, as pointed out by Liu (1996:11), were employed. These procedures included the following:

- Methodological triangulation was used.
- Multiple methods of collecting the data were used.
- The researcher's peers reviewed the proposed model. International conferences (EUROMED 2014 & 2016) and national conferences (PRISA 2015 & 2017) served as platforms to test developing concepts during the research process.

The credibility of the study was enhanced in the following ways:

- Sufficient understanding and thorough review of the current literature to conceptualise and frame the findings.
- Appropriate, well-recognised research methods were applied to collect the primary data.
- The use of an interview guide with probing questions and listening techniques when conducting the in-depth interviews with the participants.
- A conscious effort to meet participants in advance, when they were most comfortable, and when it was most convenient for them to share the information. This assisted in minimising the participants' reluctance to share; and thereby increased access to their knowledge and opinions.
- Debriefing sessions between the researcher and her supervisor were employed to increase the credibility of the research by reducing the bias of a single researcher.

The truth-value of qualitative research is often a topic for debate. The phenomenological research design, however, contributes toward truth. Through a conscious process of

bracketing, the researcher was sensitive towards understanding the perspectives of the participants interviewed; in other words, the focus was on "the insider perspective" (Mouton & Marais 1990:70). Furthermore, audio recordings were made of each interview and bracketing was applied once again during the transcription of the interviews to contribute to the truth.

Ultimately, all research is tested by certain criteria that must be built into the research design. The following standards, suggested by Leedy (1997:98-99), were employed in this study:

- Universality: The research design was described in meticulous detail to ensure that any other competent researcher can repeat the study.
- Replication: The research is repeatable. Another competent researcher will be able to take the research problem and, by collecting data under the same circumstances and within the same parameters, achieve comparable results to those of this study.
- Control: This study was conducted within an area closed off by specified demarcations.
- Measurement: Comparative judgement was employed in this study. Factors and themes were arranged in hierarchy of importance and similar procedures were followed throughout the research.

Reliability is an examination of the stability or consistency of responses. To increase the consistency and reliability of a project, all procedures should be documented, and, if possible, a detailed protocol must be set up. According to Creswell (2009:191), other reliability procedures include:

- checking transcripts for obvious mistakes;
- ensuring there is no drift in definitions of codes or applications of them during the coding process;
- coordinating and documenting communication meetings if working with a team; and
- cross-checking codes with different researchers by comparing results that are independently derived.

3.10   RESEARCH SETTING

The focus of this qualitative study is to understand the meaning participants attribute to their experiences of the communication received from their leadership. The participants' perspectives are the ones we seek to investigate and understand, not those of the researcher (Creswell 2013:47; Merriam 2009:14).

In qualitative research, data are usually collected at the site where the participants experience the phenomenon (Creswell 2013:45; Willis 2007:211). As participants in this study were required to address the communication that they have received from their leadership, the interviews were not conducted at their workplace, but at a venue where respondents could feel safe and not intimidated and could share their experiences openly.

3.11   SUMMARY

This chapter discussed and justified the research design employed in this study and explained the different research strategies that were applied within the research design. The goal and objectives of the study were also reiterated. This study was approached from a qualitative research paradigm and is exploratory in nature. It unfolded in five phases, each of which was discussed in detail. The appropriateness of using qualitative research, as well as the advantages and disadvantages of qualitative research, were indicated.

A number of research strategies were employed within the research design of this study. As previously mentioned, this study unfolded in five phases. Phase I comprised a literature review of the LVC, as well as a literature review of IC. During Phase II, an evolutionary concept analysis of leadership communication was undertaken. Phase III comprised the synthesis of the data retrieved during the first two phases in order to develop a conceptual LCVC model. In Phase IV, the empirical research was conducted. A hermeneutic phenomenological research strategy was employed and an adapted version of Groenewald's (2004) phenomenological research design was applied. Each of the steps in the phenomenological research process was discussed in detail. The unit of analysis and sampling plan applied in the different phases of the research were indicated and the explication of data explained in detail. Finally, during Phase V, the conceptual LCVC model developed during Phase III was refined as the data from the empirical research were merged

with the data from the literature review. Respondent validation was used to verify the data gathered and subsequently an LCVC model was developed.

CHAPTER 4
CONTEXTUALISING EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATION

4.1   INTRODUCTION

The goal of any organisation is to sustain its existence by continually finding ways of improving performance and delivering excellent services to its stakeholders (Arslan & Staub 2013). Improved performance results in better value creation for stakeholders, while improved stakeholder value results in organisations gaining a competitive advantage over their industry rivals (Urbig 2003). Contemporary organisations are continually tasked with finding new ways of creating better value for their customers and other stakeholders. Flint (2008) argues that value management in an organisation begins with understanding that value is based on customer perceptions and is not inherent in any product, service, or system. Business activities that take advantage of satisfying the needs of the stakeholders more efficiently and effectively than competitors have been identified as major drivers of superior business performance (Trondsen 2012:459). However, dynamic and fragmented markets filled with disruptive new technologies have placed a premium on organisations' abilities to continuously find ways to create stakeholder value propositions (Kalakota & Robinson 2001; Woodruff 1997).

The importance of systematically managing a company's communication with its stakeholders – those constituencies that contribute to the company's wealth-creating capacity and activities (Post *et al.* 2002:19) – has been widely acknowledged in recent years (Van Riel & Fombrun 2007; Cornelissen 2004; Grunig, Grunig & Dozier 2002). Integration, or the phenomenon by which organisations strategically coordinate communication for impact and efficiency (Kerr, Schultz, Patti & Kim 2008), is a well-recognised concept in strategic communication management (Smith 2013:65-66). It therefore comes as no surprise that IC has recently been considered as one of the most influential marketing management frameworks of our time (Schultz & Patti 2009:75).

Organisations today are increasingly concerned with maintaining strong permanent relationships with all of their stakeholders. According to Gronstedt (2000), IC strategies are built on the notion that both the internal as well as the external communication of an organisation should interact in order to result in clear, transparent, and trustworthy messages. Both internal and external communication are indispensable when attempting to gain a competitive advantage over business rivals or when attempting to build profitable partnerships with stakeholders (Burnett & Moriarty 1998).

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the contextual research questions and explain the LVC model as a structure within which leadership communication should be incorporated. Furthermore, an integrated approach to communication is argued to be the quintessential environment to accommodate effective leadership communication.

The nature and role of value chains in general will be reflected on briefly in this chapter. Thereafter the LVC model will be discussed at length as this model serves as the point of departure for this study. Following this discussion, the role of IC as the context within which leadership communication should be practised is discussed.

4.2   BACKGROUND ON ORGANISATIONAL MEASUREMENT FRAMEWORKS

First suggested by Porter (1985), the value chain describes the full range of activities required to bring a product or service from conception through different phases of production (involving a combination of physical transformation and the input of various producer services) to delivery to final consumers and final disposal after use (Kaplinsky & Morris 2004:4). The value chain therefore depicts how customer value accumulates along a chain of activities that lead to an end product or service. Walters and Lancaster (2000:160) define the value chain as a "tool that is used to disaggregate a business into strategically relevant activities". Value chains have become an important way of examining the activities of organisations and are widely used in different industries in the business world (Kaplinsky & Morris 2004). Value chains are important as they enable organisations to determine their significant activities while also determining their ability to create customer value through their activities (Niemann & Bennett 2002:14).

In addition to focusing on maximising shareholder wealth, strategic leaders and executives have in recent years been tasked with meeting an array of stakeholder expectations.

These include a range of aspects ranging from sustainability initiatives to socially driven demands from customers. To date, most research on how strategic leaders affect organisational performance has been based on a financial perspective rather than value creation in multiple arenas (Carter & Greer 2013). Little available research could be found on how the behaviour, communication, values, experience, and personalities of strategic leaders affect their business choices, actions, and behaviours (Carter & Greer 2013).

Case studies of "high-performing" firms permeate the field of organisational strategy, and the business strategies of these firms are researched in order to assist other organisations to attempt to emulate their success. The assessment of the merit of a particular strategy requires the ability to measure "high" performance. The last two decades have seen a dramatic shift in the way this is done (Hubbard 2009:178). The focus has moved from shareholder value generation to stakeholder-centric behaviour. Hubbard (2009) explains this as a move from shareholder theory to stakeholder theory. There are several ways to think about the theory of the firm and each has different implications for reporting organisational performance. According to Owen (2006) and Brown and Fraser (2006), the key ways are shareholder theory and stakeholder theory. In the 1980s, the firm was viewed as belonging to the shareholders; therefore shareholder theory, which uses shareholder return to measure overall firm performance, dominated organisational performance measurement systems (Porter 1980). Since the early 1990s, a more stakeholder-based view has gradually come to prevail. The firm is seen as having responsibilities to a wider set of groups than simply shareholders, such as employees and their representatives, customers, suppliers, governments, industry bodies, and local communities – among others (Steurer 2006 in Hubbard 2009:178; Brown & Fraser 2006; Post *et al.* 2002). Stakeholder theory assesses organisational performance against the expectations of a variety of stakeholder groups that have particular interests in the effects of the organisation's activities. Its perspective of organisational performance incorporates shareholder value, but recognises that shareholders are just one group of stakeholders, and only relevant to those organisations that issue shares.

Kaplan and Norton (1992) developed a performance measurement system based on stakeholder theory. This system, the balanced scorecard (BSC) performance measurement system, is gradually becoming the dominant internal process for measuring performance in most large organisations, according to Hubbard (2009:179). The BSC incorporates financial,

customer/market, short-term efficiency, and long-term learning and development factors. Although BSCs are common, they are primarily a system for measuring external and internal economic value. The original BSC model does not incorporate employee, supplier, or community perspectives on firm performance (Mooraj, Oyon & Hostettler 1999).

Subsequently, as a measurement system for firm sustainability, the TBL assesses a firm's performance by taking into account the 3Ps, namely profit (financial), people (social), and planet (environmental). The TBL can briefly be described as an organisation's corporate communication with stakeholders that describes the company's approach to managing the economic, environmental, and social dimensions of its activities. Focusing on the TBL, the financial (profit), social (people), and environmental (planet) aspects of a business has become a prerequisite for business success (Carter & Greer 2013). This focus on the TBL was reinforced by a 2011 survey of millennials by Deloitte, in which 92% of the respondents stated that a firm's success should be measured by more than profit. Carter and Greer (2013) also suggest that the TBL will become ever more prominent as stakeholders make stronger demands on strategic leaders to adapt their organisations to rapidly changing environments.

Good leadership is without a doubt an important factor for ensuring organisational success in the new global economy and research has proven that there is a link between leadership and organisational effectiveness (Kaiser & Overfield 2010; Hogan & Kaiser 2005). Complex, challenging, and unpredictable business environments have, however, made the task of leaders increasingly problematic. Challenging business environments demand that people and organisations change fundamentally and on a continuous basis, which makes it virtually impossible for an individual leader to accomplish the work of leadership (Drath 2003). While little convincing needs to be done regarding the relationship between good leadership and improved organisational performance, and as many studies have shown that changes in leadership are followed by changes in company performance (Joyce *et al.* 2003; Barrick *et al.* 1991), leadership scholars and HR leaders alike are still unsure exactly how leadership impacts the fate of firms (Kaiser & Overfield 2010; Kaiser 2005).

According to Carter and Greer (2013), ample evidence has been found that leadership styles and values play an important role in organisational outcomes and corporate culture. Several leadership styles can be found among strategic leaders, according to Carter (2011 in Carter

& Greer 2013). These include the more established styles such as transactional, transformational, and charismatic approaches, as well as evolving styles such as authentic, servant, and responsible approaches. Carter and Greer (2013) found that when the performance of more strategic leaders is evaluated by TBL measures, there is evidence of greater use of transformational, charismatic, and authentic approaches. It was also established that strategic leaders tend to consider a broad range of stakeholders in their decision making. This broader approach does not mean that leaders do not focus on the TBL, as Greer and Carter (2013) found no evidence that there was diminished emphasis on financial performance with the addition of expanded measures of performance. It is important to note that the values of strategic leaders often pervade the company culture to affect outcomes. Top managers that emphasise the TBL often change and shape the values and culture of the entire organisation (Carter & Greer 2013).

4.3 PORTER'S VALUE CHAIN MODEL

Organisations are struggling to survive and competition in the marketplace is stronger than ever before. Competitive strategy is the search for a favourable competitive position in an industry – the fundamental arena in which competition occurs. Competitive strategy aims to establish a profitable and sustainable position against the forces that determine industry competition (Porter 1985:1). With this insight in mind, Porter (1985) developed the value chain framework. The value chain framework has made its way to the forefront of management thought as a powerful instrument for strategic planning. Its ultimate goal is to maximise value creation while minimising costs (Walters & Rainbird 2006). The value chain has been used extensively in business over the years and is still utilised in many different forms in various industries. Its function is to divide an organisation into the discrete activities it performs in designing, producing, marketing, and distributing its product. Since its introduction, the value chain has been widely used and taught to business students, applied by practitioners, and cited by academics. The term "value chain" was initially used in Michael Porter's influential book, *Competitive Advantage: Creating and Sustaining Superior Performance* (1985). According to Sheehan and Gamble (2010:224), it is clear that despite the value chain's age, the value chain concept is still widely used by managers and consultants in a variety of functional areas and industries. A search by Sheehan and Gamble (2010) of the term "value chain" in the "citation and document text" of practitioner articles located in the ABI/Inform Global database resulted in 10 300 hits. When the search was

narrowed down by these researchers to just the "abstract" text of the same practitioner articles, it resulted in 1 548 hits, the majority (1 204) of which occurred since the turn of the century (January 2000 – October 2008). These "abstract" hits occurred in diverse management fields, such as strategic management, management accounting, entrepreneurship, information systems, operation and production management, logistics, marketing, economic development, and healthcare administration. Sheehan and Gamble (2010:226) further state that concepts from the value chain are also widely applied in academic research, as evidenced by the fact that Porter's 1985 book is the second most frequently cited work in the *Strategic Management Journal* during the period 1987 to 2000 (Ramos-Rodriguez & Ruiz-Navarro 2004 in Sheehan & Gamble 2010).

As was indicated above, the value chain has a broad focus and researchers from diverse disciplines such as sociology, business management, geography, economics, political science, and environmentalism, as well as combinations thereof, have used the value chain approach over the last 30 years to study industrial organisation. Hence, many methods for value chain analysis have evolved in recent years (Faße, Grote & Winter 2009:1). A value chain approach should be viewed as an extension to an industry or supply chain analysis. The value chain firstly expands the scope of analysis. The network concept includes internal as well as external stakeholders and activities. This feature enables the scope to be easily scaled horizontally or vertically. Secondly, the approach considers both the tangible and intangible activities that link firms and places along the chain. Lastly, a value chain approach seeks to tie these elements together when conducting an analysis (Frederick 2010:21). The distinctive feature of the value chain approach, however, is its all-encompassing perspective. It seeks to simultaneously emphasise internal and external, individual, and systematic factors at multiple levels of analysis (Campbell 2008).

Changes in sectors and industries have brought new challenges to corporations. These changes have also been important driving forces for the dynamics in strategy at the corporate level (Porter 1985). Only by using the value chain to break the firm into the activities it performs, such as manufacturing, logistics, hiring, training, purchasing, and marketing, does it become possible to rigorously analyse where it may decrease its costs and/or increase its customers' willingness to buy. It is therefore a useful tool for diagnosing and enhancing competitive advantage. The value chain framework is also a powerful

analytical tool for the strategic planning of a company and to build the organisational model, which ensures an effective leadership model (Stonehouse & Snowdon 2007:257).

Throughout the value chain processes, various stakeholders in the value chain add varying levels of value to the product or service. The current challenging and competitive environments require businesses to do more than position a fixed set of activities along the old industrial model, the value chain. Successful companies today are those who do not just add value, but reinvent it. The key strategic task is to reconfigure roles and relationships among a constellation of actors (suppliers, partners, customers, etc.) in order to mobilise the creation of value by new combinations of players. What is different about this new logic of value is that it breaks down the distinction between products and services and combines them into activity-based "offerings" from which customers can create value for themselves. However, due to the growing complexity of potential offerings, the relationships necessary to create these offerings grow more complex. As a result, a company's strategic task becomes the continuous reconfiguration and integration of its competencies and customers (Normann & Ramirez 2000:185).

4.4   BUSINESS VALUE CHAIN MANAGEMENT

In the current global and dynamic markets, companies, irrespective of their size, are constantly confronted with the challenges of managing their business value chains (Blanchard 2008). Effective business value chains indicate innovative capability and influence timely product delivery and cost-effective operations (Huang, Hung, Lin & Tang 2009; Hoehn 2003). Not only have the abovementioned changes brought new challenges to corporations, but they have also been important driving forces for the dynamics in strategy at corporate level. Value chain analysis is a strategic tool used to measure the importance of the customer's perceived value. This allows companies to determine the strategic advantages and disadvantages of their activities and value-creating processes in the market-place. Value chain analysis therefore becomes essential for assessing competitive advantage (San Miguel 1996:1). Corporate leaders able to think strategically and adjust to the demands of the global marketplace are therefore a critical factor in the success of organisations (Ricks 1999).

Companies that are aware of the strategic importance of individual activities within their value chains thrive by concentrating on the particular activities that allow them to capture

maximum value for their customers and themselves (San Miguel 1996:5). It is very important to understand that the activities in the value chain are not a collection of independent activities, but a system of interdependent components (Porter 1991; Porter 1985). As value activities are related by linkages within the value chain, careful management of linkages can be a powerful source of competitive advantage (Porter & Miller 1985).

As a result of a lack of comprehensive models of the processes and intervening factors that explain the link between individual leaders and organisational performance, Kaiser (2005) developed the LVC. The point of the LVC is to identify the sequence of key variables and considerations that relate individual leadership to organisational effectiveness. The LVC is based on value chain logic (Porter 1985) and attempts to identify the sequence and classes of key variables that transform a particular input (individual leaders) into a valued output (organisational effectiveness) (Kaiser & Overfield 2010; Kaiser 2005). This concept serves as the point of departure in this study.

As this study's aim is to investigate the important role of communication in the leadership process, as well as the way in which leadership communication could contribute to value creation in a company, the ensuing section provides a discussion of the LVC and its different domains. The LVC is viewed as an instrument for the strategic management and measurement of improved leadership in organisations.

4.5   ADDING LEADERSHIP TO THE VALUE CHAIN

A large number of existing studies on leadership suggest that the role of leadership is critically important for an organisation to achieve a high level of performance (Peterson, Smith, Martorana & Owens 2003; Boal & Hooijberg 2000; Peterson, Katz & Kahn 1978). Leadership behaviours are crucial not only to the maintenance of the organisation, but also to individual, relational, and task outcomes that are indispensable for present and future success (Stigall 2005). According to Kaiser and Overfield (2010), knowledge of the fact that leadership plays a decisive role in organisational effectiveness is of no use if it is still unknown how this difference is made. This gives rise to the third argument of this study, namely that the LVC model adds value to the organisational bottom line.

In an attempt to answer this question, Kaiser and Overfield (2010) conducted a search in the business press and the professional literature for research-based models or frameworks

that could indicate how leaders made a difference. While several models could be found, each of these models could only complete part of the picture and these authors found that despite the many existing models, not one could be found that could provide a complete picture of or satisfying answer to how leaders go about to affect organisational performance.

Evolving organisational contexts, increases in temporary and contingent employment, globalisation, and the use of technology have placed greater emphasis on employees' "interpersonal skills and the ability to collaborate" in teams (Barley & Kunda 2001:77). As a result, communication ranks high among the skills that employers seek. Employers expect employees to be effective communicators and rate employees for their communicative performances in oral communication skills (The Conference Board 2009). Contemporary organisations are more and more concerned with maintaining a permanent bond between themselves and their stakeholders. IC strategies are based on the idea that both internal and external communication of an organisation should interact in order to result in transparent, trustworthy, and clear messages (Gronstedt 2000). Communication is indispensable for the organisation to be profitable and to obtain competitive advantage and profitable partnerships.

As key organisational decision makers, leaders determine the acquisition, development, and deployment of organisational resources, the conversion of these resources into valuable products and services, and the delivery of value to organisational stakeholders. Leaders are therefore potent sources of sustained competitive advantage (Rowe 2001; Avolio 1999). The necessity and importance of effective leadership become more evident every day. With effective leadership, employee wellbeing and performance are enhanced, and, consequently, organisations thrive and prosper. Leadership is therefore a critical determinant of organisational effectiveness (Bloom & Van Reenen 2007; Hogan & Kaiser 2005; Khurana & Nohria 2000).

Although many well-documented examples of research indicating the correlation between leadership and organisational effectiveness exist, it is still unclear exactly how these leaders make a difference (Joyce *et al.* 2003; Barrick *et al.* 1991). Discussions on leadership also mostly rest on an assumption of what the term means. With this in mind, Kaiser developed the LVC in 2005, which was again articulated by Kaiser and Overfield (2010). The LVC is essentially a framework that links characteristics of individual leaders to their leadership

style; leadership style to impact on unit processes; unit processes to unit results; and unit results to effectiveness across a broad range of firm-level performance measures (Kaiser & Overfield 2010; Kaiser 2005). The thinking behind the LVC is guided by the view of leadership as articulated by Robert Hogan (Hogan & Kaiser 2005; Hogan *et al.* 1994). According to this view, on the basis of an analysis of human origins, leadership is an evolved solution to the adaptive problem of collective effort (Hogan & Kaiser 2005).

In an effort to describe the thinking behind the LVC, Kaiser (2005:3) defined leadership as fundamentally concerning influencing individuals to transcend their selfish short-term interests and to contribute to the long-term performance of the group. The essence of leadership is therefore building a team and guiding it to outperform its rivals (Kaiser 2005:3).

According to Kaiser (2005) and Kaiser and Overfield (2010), losing sight of the fact that leadership is not about individuals called leaders but rather about the team that the leader is responsible for is a serious misconception. Evaluation of leadership effectiveness should therefore also concern team performance. Despite this seeming to be an obvious assumption, a review of the literature indicated that, in practice, this assumption is largely ignored and that the majority of measures of leadership effectiveness proved to have nothing to do with team or group performance and reflected evaluations of the individual leader. The point, according to Kaiser (2005) and Kaiser and Overfield (2010), is that even professional researchers often err when measuring value-added leadership by focusing on the leader as unit of analysis. If the purpose of leadership is to unite people in pursuit of a common goal; the question to be asked is how the team is doing at reaching that goal. The necessity of communication in this process cannot be denied and therefore it is unfortunate that communication – as one of the most important components of leadership and, as such, the face of leadership – does not feature at all in the LVC. The fact that the value capital produced by an organisation can increase and decrease depending on what the organisation says or does, is a clear indication that communication can play a significant role in the value-creation process of the organisation. Integrating the corporate communication process into the strategic management/leadership, governance, and value-creation processes therefore poses an opportunity for communication professionals to illustrate how communication can contribute to the creation of value for organisations, and as such be of benefit to business and to society (De Beer 2014).

The development of the LVC by Kaiser (2005) was further prompted by two specific needs encountered by Kaiser. The research and development team of his company needed novel and innovative ways of thinking about criteria for validating new leadership and assessment tools and development interventions. They also needed an answer to the complex question of how leaders added value to organisations. Kaiser (2005) found that despite the countless articles and books written about the subject of leadership, no comprehensive framework could be found in the scholarly and practitioner literature explaining or clarifying how leaders actually made a difference or impacted their specific organisations. In a research project for one of his clients, where the actions and behaviours displayed by managers that boosted and depressed the engagement of their employees had to be identified and investigated, he subsequently discovered that various organisational stakeholders were not on the same page and seemed to be talking past one another. Depending on the division, or task related to their work, Kaiser (2005) found the following, which serves as an example of the divided interest: The HR department was interested in behaviours, while senior leaders emphasised engagement scores, and middle management wanted to establish if the engagement was related to the bottom line of the organisation. It was clear to Kaiser that a common mental model was needed (Kaiser 2005:3). This led to the early version of the LVC as a way to call attention to these distinct components and how they fit together. With the team under investigation on the same page, the design, communication, and interpretation of the study could be done more effectively (Kaiser 2005), and this resulted in the LVC (Kaiser & Overfield 2010; Kaiser 2005). The LVC is based on the value chain (Porter 1985). The goal of the LVC is to identify the sequence and classes of variables that transform a particular input (individual leaders) into valued output (organisational effectiveness). Understanding the value of leadership is important but a great amount of development in this specific field is still needed. It is also a complex problem. Kaiser's (2005) goal was to cut through the difficulty of the task by distinguishing, amid all of the many different components or aspects that *could* be considered, what the essential aspects are that ought to be considered to determine the value of leadership. Kaiser (2005) and Kaiser and Overfield (2010) also suggest how the LVC framework should be applied in thinking strategically about key leadership decisions and investments. The fact that communication should be included in the LVC is also relevant at this point.

4.6   KEY COMPONENTS OF THE LVC

The label *value chain* is an important part of the LVC framework as it highlights that the LVC framework is intended to classify specific types of variables and then show how their interrelationships transform inputs into valued outputs. Each of the different domains of the LVC, with their sub-categories, will now be discussed in order to enhance understanding of the categories, as well as the relationships between them. The main domains of the LVC are: leader characteristics, leadership style, unit process, unit results, and organisational effectiveness. Each of the different categories will now be explained in order to create better understanding of their necessity, as well as their purpose and value in the leadership process. As only one LVC framework was identified in the literature, the discussion in this section is based primarily on the perspective of Kaiser (2005) and Kaiser and Overfield (2010). Figure 4.1 provides a visual illustration of the LVC.
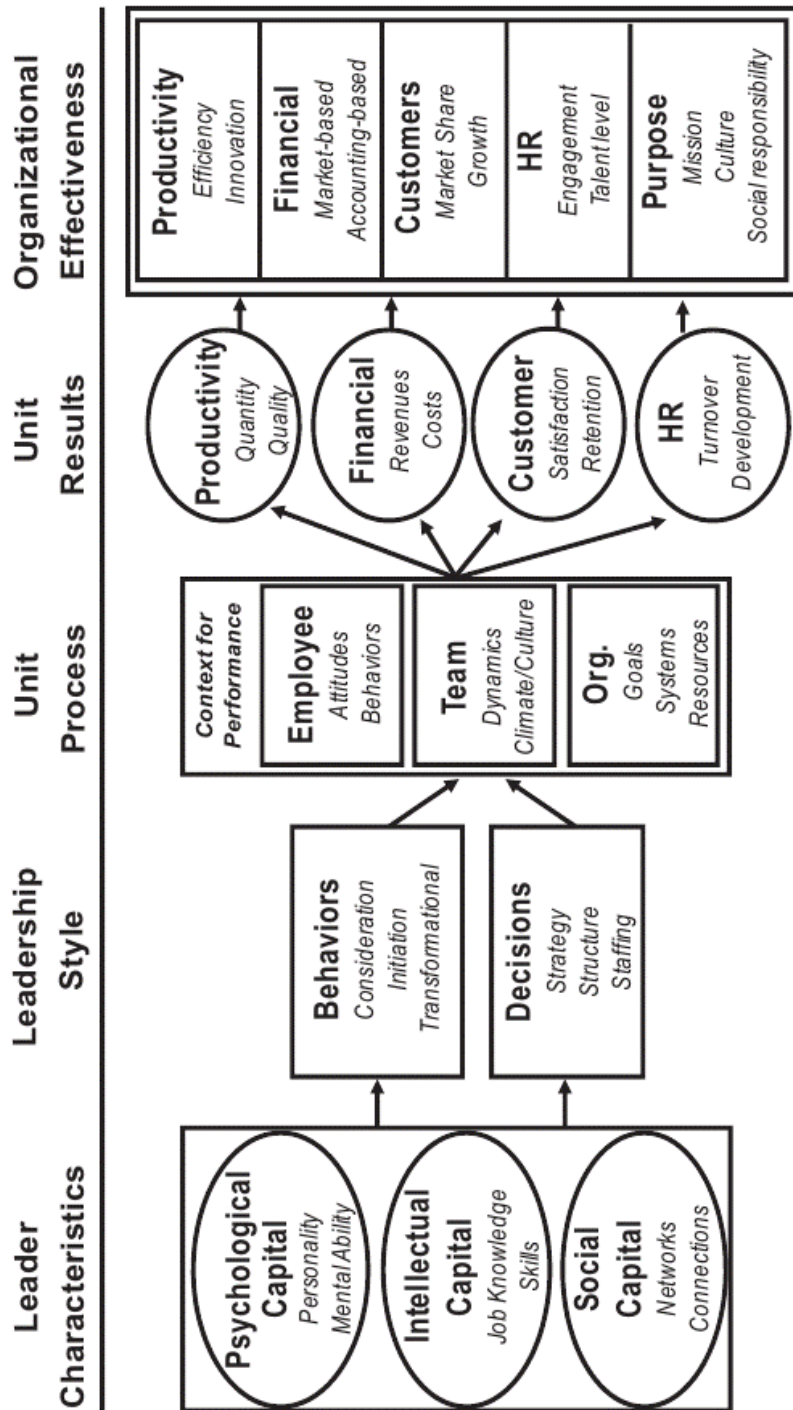
Figure 4.1: The LVC (Kaiser & Overfield 2010)

4.6.1 Leader characteristics

The first domain referred to in the LVC is leader characteristics. A leader's characteristics are what make him/her unique. Aspects such as leaders' personalities, abilities, knowledge, skills, and relationships are addressed here. These individual differences represent who leaders are and have implications for how they lead (Kaiser & Overfield 2010:167). Kaiser and Overfield (2010) based their classification of leader characteristics on by Boudreau and Ramstad (1997) in which these individual characteristics are divided according to various types of capital. The terms "psychological capital", "intellectual capital", and "social capital" are used. Kaiser and Overfield (2010) posit that these terms are often used inconsistently. A reason for this may be because they are relatively new.

4.6.1.1 Psychological/Human capital

Psychological capital refers to inherent and enduring personal characteristics such as personality and mental abilities. Research on personality assessment, using the Big Five or five-factor model, yielded results that indicated that good leaders seem emotionally stable, (confident, calm under stress), extroverted (energetic, assertive, outgoing), conscientious (self-controlled, organised, hard-working), open (creative, visionary, flexible), and only somewhat agreeable (considerate, but also tough minded). Advances in personality research have also shown that counterproductive dispositions and values can further illuminate the understanding of effective and ineffective leadership. "Dark-side" dispositions have been conceptualised as counterproductive, extreme versions of the Big Five that undermine leadership effectiveness because they disrupt relationships and corrupt judgement (Kaiser & Overfield 2010).

Kaiser and Overfield (2010:169) cite Hofstede (1980) and Rokeach (1968), who regard *values* as another aspect of a leader's personality. Values are deeply held beliefs about what is important and desirable and therefore motivate particular behaviour patterns and choices. Corporate values are intended to set the tempo for leadership. The mission should capture why the company exists, and the values should tell people how to behave. What a person believes affects what they feel and how they behave. Values are supposed to help define what to believe in an attempt to create an accepted norm for behaviour. Most corporate values fall short of the intended goal (Shyti 2014). Several studies show how

122

leader values predict what they will reward, sanction, and ignore, as well as the kinds of goals, strategies, and processes they will select. It can even be established what types of information they will and will not attend to (Finklestein, Hambrick & Canella 2009 in Kaiser & Overfield 2010). Leaders whose values are congruent with the values implicit in the organisational culture are more committed and productive, according to Schein (1992), and therefore it can be assumed that values also have implications for organisational fit. Psychological capital can be explained at the hand of the following:

- *Mental ability (IQ)* is a relatively easily quantifiable variable as many well-developed and easily administered cognitive tests are available (Kaiser & Overfield 2010). Research by Judge, Ilies and Colbert (2004) as cited in Kaiser and Overfield (2010), in which a meta-analysis of 151 studies was conducted, reported a correlation between general mental ability, or IQ and leadership.

- *Emotional intelligence (EI)* is a divisive topic for many individuals interested in the subject of leadership (Walker, Cole & Humphrey 2011). Leadership is one of the applied constructs that EI is most often associated with and has become increasingly popular as a measure for identifying potentially effective leaders. It is also regarded as a tool for developing effective leadership skills. Barsade and Gibson (2007) argue that an "affective revolution" has taken hold of the leadership literature, with the EI of leaders increasingly seen as a critical issue in the domain (Brown & Moshavi 2005; Ashkanasy & Daus 2002; George 2000). EI is unfortunately more difficult to measure than IQ as most available tests are little more than repackaged personality scales that do not represent it as a truly distinct mental ability (Mayer, Salovey & Caruso 2008, as cited in Kaiser & Overfield 2010). It is also unfortunate that little empirical research exists that substantiates the efficacy of EI in the area of leadership (Batool 2013). Daus and Ashkanasy (2005 in Kaiser & Overfield 2010) have found, however, that there are some measures that do represent EI and that the components of these measurement instruments are able to measure EI as a true mental ability that is sufficiently distinct from IQ and personality and can make a unique contribution to the prediction of job performance.

According to Lombardo and Eichinger (2000) and McCall (1998), both cited in Kaiser and Overfield (2010), *learning orientation* is considered as another important key individual

difference variable in leadership, and it was found that two-thirds of companies consider learning orientation when identifying high-potential candidates (Silzer & Church 2009 in Kaiser & Overfield 2010). Research suggests that learning orientation is an internal mindset that motivates individuals to develop their own competence. As the individual's inner driving force, learning orientation prompts the individual to seek out challenges, and then looking forward to learn from the challenges. These individuals believe that personal growth and the acquirement of new knowledge and skills will help to upgrade their creativity (Huang & Farh 2009). Thus, learning-orientated employees will think of new ways and new approaches and apply these to solve problems encountered at work. Research unfortunately indicates here that there seems to be a lack of good assessment measures for learning. However, compelling psychological literature on learning and motivations to learn is available and it seems promising that this work can be expanded on to develop practically useful assessment tools (Kaiser & Overfield 2010:169). Currently, the learning orientation index (LOI) and the framework for learning-oriented assessment (LOA) and experiential learning theory (ELT) are instruments that are widely used (Carless 2007).

4.6.1.2 *Intellectual capital*

The second sub-category referred to is *intellectual capital*, which refers to job knowledge and skills acquired through education and experience. The majority of leadership development occurs in the work environment through experiencing different situations as managers face new work challenges (McCall, Lombardo & Morrison 1988 in Kaiser & Overfield 2010:170). Research by the Centre for Creative Leadership (Sessa, Kaiser, Taylor & Campbell 1998) underscored the importance of intellectual capital. Unfortunately, factors such as job knowledge and functional skills are difficult to measure, and well-validated, standard assessment tools for use with leaders are hard to find. Two methods are referred to here. Firstly, a promising approach that was developed for the selection of high-level military personnel consisting of a battery of problem-solving tasks that tap into the creative problem-solving skills, contextual awareness skills, and social judgement skills (Zaccaro, Mumford, Connelly, Marks & Gilbert 2000 in Kaiser & Overfield 2010) has proven to be efficient. Secondly, a method that also seems promising is the biodata method. This method uses a measure of the variety of developmental assignments combined with learning orientation to predict leadership competencies (Dragoni, Tesluk, Russell & Oh 2009 in Kaiser & Overfield 2010).

4.6.1.3   *Social capital*

According to Kaiser and Overfield (2010), currently available measures of *social capital* are less developed and require more conceptual and empirical research in order to assist in better quantifying social relationships. At the moment, there is an explosion of research on the topic of social capital, especially on social networking analysis, and it is hoped that this research will yield sorely needed measures of social capital. Work in this field was pioneered by Hirschman (1958) and Adelman and Morris (1967). Two main perspectives can be identified; the first perspective focuses on how individuals access and use resources embedded in social networks to gain returns in instrumental actions, or preserve gains in expressive actions. At this relational level, social capital can be equated to human capital in that it is assumed that such investments can be made by individuals with expected return, or some benefit or profit to the individual. Representative works can be found in Lin and Bian (1991), Volker and Flap (1996), and Burt (1997; 1998). The other perspective has its focus on social capital at the group level and involves how certain groups develop and maintain more or less social capital as a collective asset and how this can enhance group members' life chances. Contributions regarding this perspective was made by Coleman (1990) and Putnam (2000), among others.

It is essential for managers to utilise social networks for staffing new teams, as was found by a study on 20 General Electric executives. Chief executive officers whose new work teams included three of more members that the executive officer had worked with before on average generated a 15.7% higher annualised return compared to similar firms in their market. Companies whose teams included fewer members that the chief executive officers had worked with previously generated an average of 16.6% lower annualised returns (Groysberg, McLean & Nohria 2006 in Kaiser & Overfield 2010:170).

The second LVC domain, namely leadership style, will be discussed in the next section. It is important to keep in mind that psychological, intellectual, and social capital variables may be the best measure for leadership potential. These characteristics are transportable and are with the individual wherever he/she goes. These transportable characteristics can be used to forecast likely performance in a larger role or gauge the bench strength of an employee body. Finally, "because these characteristics represent who leaders are, they are useful for understanding how leaders lead" (Kaiser & Overfield 2010:170).

4.6.2   Leadership style

An interdisciplinary view of leadership is taken in the LVC. Kaiser and Overfield (2010) refer to Kaiser and Hogan (2007) and Kaiser, Hogan and Craig (2008) when considering leadership style. Two key aspects are highlighted here: firstly, *behaviours* – the actions leaders take, and secondly, *decisions* – the choices leaders make. Psychological studies of leadership have mostly focused on behavioural aspects, whereas management research's emphasis is on decision making in such domains as strategy, structure, systems, and other management-related aspects (Yukl 2010 in Kaiser & Overfield 2010;). It is important to note that the behavioural and the decision-making aspects of leadership style are complementary; they serve unique influence functions. Direct influence is a face-to-face, interpersonal matter involving social behaviour (leaders clarifying performance expectations; leaders making emotional appeal to motivate employees). Indirect influence is a relatively impersonal process of guiding people through key decisions that shape their work environment (setting the direction, structuring roles, and implementing systems and establishing formal policy) (Zaccaro & Horn 2003 in Kaiser & Overfield 2010; Kaiser & Hogan 2007). Both these types of influences are important to leading a team. The different forms of influence is represented in the LVC by distinguishing direct influence as concerning behaviours that directly motivate employees and galvanise teams, versus behaviours that demoralise employees and weaken teams, which are portrayed as making decisions about strategy, structure, and staffing that have an indirect influence on employees by providing guidance and constraints in the work environment (Kaiser & Overfield 2010).

4.6.2.1   Behaviours

In the literature, the behavioural view of leadership style is the predominant view. Most research measures are based on this view and the ubiquitous 360-degree feedback surveys. When considering the essential role that judgement plays in the leadership process, Kaiser and Overfield (2010) opine that the decision-making aspect of leadership deserves greater attention.

4.6.2.2 Decisions

Kaiser and Overfield (2010) cite Nutt (1999), who indicates that as many as half of all management decisions fail. Furthermore, it is indicated by Prince (2005), Bertrand and Schoar (2003), and Miller and Toulouse (1986) (all cited by Kaiser & Overfield 2010), that certain preferences exhibited by leaders are a function of the leader's personality and experience and it has been proven by research in the management sciences that leaders have a fairly consistent preference for certain kinds of strategic decisions, structural decisions, and fiscal policy. This disparity poses a difficulty in measuring leadership style. Measures of leader behaviour are commonplace. Measures of preferred decisions are less common and less developed. An unbalanced assessment strategy that only measures the behavioural aspect of leadership is inherently limited (Kaiser & Overfield 2010:171). Another difficulty in measuring leadership style is that it is routinely done with co-worker ratings. The problem is that ratings do not measure behaviours – ratings measure perceptions of behaviour and are therefore susceptible to all kinds of perceptual biases and rater errors (Murphy & Cleveland 1995). Relying on ratings can be problematic as ratings are influenced by likeability and this can largely influence the outcome of ratings, since how much the person is liked by the rater largely influences the rating. Kaiser and Overfield (2010:172) argue that leadership style may well be the weakest link in the LVC. Their final concern about measuring leadership style, and especially with ratings, is that it reflects how leaders are seen in their current role. Performance ratings say little about potential and likely performance in a different role (Silzer & Church 2009 in Kaiser & Overfield 2010). Succession planning efforts that are exclusively reliant on assessments of current performance are ill-advised. Current and historical performance should be considered, but should then be considered in the context of how role requirements may differ in the next job. Assessments of how one leads are important for understanding the performance of the team for which one is responsible.

4.6.3 Team or unit process

The behaviour and decision-making aspects of leadership style affect organisational performance through a leader's effect on the team or organisational unit. Leaders accomplish tasks through other people by influencing people, teams, and organisational features. Kaiser and Overfield (2010) refer to this as the proximal effect of leadership.

Conceptualising the effect of leadership on team or unit processes at multiple levels of analysis is extremely important. Three distinct levels, namely the individual employee, the team, and the organisation itself are highlighted here. It has been documented in meta-analysis how initiation, consideration, transformational, and transactional leader behaviours have a direct influence on individual employees' attitudes, motivation, and performance (Judge, Piccolo & Illies 2004 in Kaiser & Overfield 2010; Judge & Piccolo 2004). Studies have also shown that leader behaviours affect team dynamics, norms, and climate (Taggar & Ellis 2007; Burke *et al.* 2006 in Kaiser & Overfield 2010). This influence is exerted through the facilitation of communication and coordination, through resolving conflict and building trust, rewarding and sanctioning certain behaviours, role modelling, and building shared mental models through group learning. Kaiser and Overfield (2010:172) further state that leader decisions also directly influence employees and teams by defining organisational features such as goals, systems, and routines for processing work, which roles employees should be used in, and how resources should be allocated (Finklestein *et al.* 2009; Zaccaro & Horn 2003). Employees' choices and actions are guided and constrained by these expressions of strategy, structure, and staffing and the organisation is shaped in the process (Kaiser & Hogan 2007). Unit process measurement becomes increasingly more complex from the employee to the team to the organisational levels. This is summarised in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: The effect of leadership on different organisational levels

Unit process level	Factors and behaviours to consider	Measuring instrument
Employee level	Attitudes. Motivational factors (job satisfaction). Trust in management. Engagement. Job performance. Citizenship. Counter-productivity.	**Surveys** that ask employees to describe individual experience. Attitude scales.
Team level	**Team dynamics** (how the team functions as a group. Cooperation. Communication patterns. Cohesion.	**Surveys** that ask employees to describe the team or group as a whole.

Unit process level	Factors and behaviours to consider	Measuring instrument
	Conflict. Group confidence. **Unit climate** The environment surrounding the team What it feels like for members to be part of the team.	**Surveys** that examine factors such as stress, psychological safety, customer service orientation, and support for innovation.
Organisational level	**Unit results** Employee level. Team level. Organisational level. Difficult to measure leader's effect on organisation. A leader's effect across these three levels can be seen as creating a context for performance across these three levels. The leader's role is to set the stage for group performance (Hackman 2002) and this results in two outcomes: (1) Internal focus – emphasis on activities within team or unit; (2) Contexts can be conducive to performance. This helps explain why the team achieves what it does = unit outcomes.	The development of measures that are standardised to measure phenomena at this level has progressed very slowly. The mechanisms through which leadership style drives unit results operate at the employee, team, and organisational level. A possible solution is to ask senior leaders – who presumably have an adequate frame of reference and basis for judging – to evaluate the unit's strategy, structure, and staffing vis-à-vis what the larger organisation needs from this particular team or unit.

Source: Adapted from Kaiser and Overfield (2010:172-173)

4.6.4   Team or unit outcomes

The results obtained by an organisation may well be the best measure of leader effectiveness. Leadership performance is associated with results and not attributes. The explicit measurement of leadership performance, however, according to Kaiser and Overfield (2010), occurs infrequently and is not often reflected in the evaluation of managers. While there are different arguments as to what influences results, these authors argue that

the influence of a leader can be seen in an organisation and therefore changes in leadership are followed by changes in organisational performance. This is also the point of view of Day and Lord (1988), who opine that leaders affect results and that unit results are the primary contribution of individual leaders that have an influence on the performance of the institution as a whole and therefore represent tangible value.

According to Kaiser and Overfield (2010:174), several distinct kinds of unit performance indices exist. Unfortunately, none of these provides a complete picture, but consider a range of financial and non-financial metrics collectively to provide a balanced view. The previously referred to BSC proposed by Kaplan and Norton (1996), which has been adopted and adapted by many Fortune 500 companies, includes four general categories, namely productivity, financial, customer, and HR. These four categories of unit performance are summarised below.

4.6.4.1   *Productivity measures of unit performance*

These measures concern the efficiency of internal processes and are reflected in the quantity and quality of goods and/or services.

4.6.4.2   *Financial results*

Included in this category are revenues, costs, or the ratio of revenue to costs (profitability).

4.6.4.3   *Customer-orientated measures of unit performance*

These measures are becoming increasingly important. Aspects considered here are customer satisfaction, retention, and growth.

4.6.4.4   *Human resource-based measures of unit performance*

This refers to the safety/accident rates of a company, rate of voluntary turnover of staff, and learning and development. In the modern era of scarce talent, it is important to index the extent to which leaders develop their subordinates into future leaders.

Kaiser and Overfield (2010) refer to Harter, Schmidt and Hayes (2002), who state that research has proven that leadership style and unit processes have an influence on the

results obtained by a unit. According to Bloom and Van Reenen (2007 cited by Kaiser & Overfield 2010), leader choices about basic management practices such as operations (process improvements and internal communication), targets (goals, rigour, and transparency of setting goals), monitoring (tracking and following up on performance), and incentives (linking pay and performance) also predict a broad range of performance metrics.

Kaiser and Overfield (2010) argue that two aspects of unit-level results deserve to be emphasised. Firstly, the comparison of results across units requires that measures should be placed on a common scale. For example, straight measures of unit revenues cannot provide an even comparison between leaders of units that are of different sizes. Techniques such as the computation of the ratio of revenue per employee, or revenue as a percentage of budget, should be employed. Secondly, it is important that measures that are used should be grounded in the nature of the organisation, its industry, and strategic orientation. For example, in a highly commoditised industry, emphasis on cost may be more relevant than revenues (Kaiser & Overfield 2010). The abovementioned four categories account for the majority of measures reported in organisational research literature when unit performance is measured. These are also the metrics used by best-practice organisations in the monitoring or their unit performance. This is in line with what the term "balanced scorecard" refers to when suggesting that it is imperative that a broad range of measures are employed in measurement (Kaiser & Overfield 2010).

4.6.5   Organisational effectiveness

The effectiveness of an institution as a whole, in other words the effectiveness at organisational level, is what ensures the enduring value of an organisation. Kaiser and Overfield (2010:175) postulate that although the performance of individual business units contributes to organisational effectiveness, the larger concept of the unit as a whole is what ultimately matters. Unit performance and organisational performance, however, involve similar content, and, in the LVC, organisational effectiveness is represented with the same four general categories that are used at the unit level, although using alternative measuring techniques within each. A fifth category is considered in the LVC framework, namely the organisation's purpose, or its reason for being.

The categories as depicted by Kaiser and Overfield (2010) are briefly summarised in the following sections.

4.6.5.1   Productivity

Productivity entails the capacity of internal processes to turn inputs (capital, people, and/or materials) into outputs (goods and services) (Katz & Kahn 1978). Indicators include quantity and quality, among others, and are derived from those at the unit level. Rate of innovation is also included here. It is important to keep in mind that the focus should not be internal only, but that the fact that organisations compete against one another should also be considered (Kaiser *et al.* 2008). This suggests that these internal metrics should be compared to external standards such as industry benchmarks or the performance of competitors (Kaiser & Overfield 2010).

4.6.5.2   Financial indicators

Measurements require the consideration of two basic classes: market based and accounting based. Market-based measures are concerned superior to accounting-based measures as they are less subject to manipulation. Market-based measures represent perceptions of current and potential wealth creation and are deemed forward-looking, while accounting-based measures reflect a historical perspective by showing how the organisation has performed over time.

4.6.5.3   Customer service indices

Effectiveness metrics here include customer satisfaction, retention, and growth, together with market share that is often applied at organisational level.

4.6.5.4   Human resource-based measures

Human resource-based measures reflect the talent management capacity of the organisation. Aggregate indices here include rate of turnover, morale, and bench strength (number and quality of future leaders identified in the organisation). Customer and human resource-based measures are crucial in sustaining the current levels of productivity and financial performance.

4.6.5.5   *Progress of organisation's purpose*

Ambiguous and difficult to measure, these measures are essentially an idiographic and existential construct as the reason for the organisation's existence is usually defined by key organisational stakeholders that do not necessarily require reference to external standards. According to Collins and Porras (1997 in Kaiser & Overfield 2010), the purpose of the organisation is usually codified in its mission statement. Mission statements usually refer to intangible, value-laden aspirations that are hard to quantify precisely. What the organisation sets out to do is, however, observed in progress towards the organisational mission, and achieving this provides a larger sense of meaning for employees, customers, and even society.

Closely associated with the purpose and mission of the organisation are the organisation's core values, which are represented in the organisation's culture. The culture of an organisation is a function of senior leadership, who must ensure that the culture is in line with the organisation's core values and that the correct behaviours are modelled, endorsed, and enforced. Finally, social responsibility, and what an organisation does for the community, is a reflection of its purpose as well. According to Kaiser and Overfield (2010), there is a symbiotic relationship between an organisation and communities, and the health of the one affects the health of the other. From the above, it can be concluded that communication should form an essential part of the LVC.

4.7   LIMITATIONS OF THE LVC

Limitations of the LVC framework that were identified include the following:

- The unit results and organisational effectiveness measures pertain to for-profit organisations.
- The framework may not represent every variable relevant to leadership and value.
- The model is not a dynamic theoretical model of how leaders cause organisational performance. Rather, it is simply an articulation of the major classes and sequence of variables relating to leaders and organisational performance.

It should also be considered that leadership and organisational performance are complex phenomena that involve dynamic human systems that allow for multiple sources of causality over time (Kaiser & Overfield 2010).

4.8   APPLICATION CONTEXTS OF THE LVC

Leadership takes place in a particular context and therefore the LVC framework (see Figure 4.1) is embedded in multiple layers of context. What Kaiser and Overfield (2010:177) find surprising is the fact that an integrative and generally accepted taxonomy of key conceptual factors is absent and propose that there is a need for a systematic integration of research on how contextual factors moderate the effects of leadership. These authors refer to Porter and McLaughlin (2006), who identified seven distinct aspects of context that have been studied in prior literature. The seven aspects include:

- culture/climate (norms, values);
- goals/purpose (strategy);
- people/composition (demographics, capabilities);
- processes (types of tasks, governance, policies);
- state or condition (stability or crisis);
- structure (organisational level, degree of centralisation); and
- time (point in history, stage in life cycle).

In order to apply the components of the LVC, and make them relevant to an organisation, it is crucial that contextual factors are considered. Most factors associated with desirable leadership are internationally accepted. However, depending on how leader behaviours are expressed, cultural differences can influence how these behaviours are regarded (House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman & Gupta 2004). The effectiveness of various leader behaviours varies dramatically as a function of level (Kaiser *et al.* 2010 and Freedman 1998 cited in Kaiser & Overfield 2010).

4.8.1   IC as context

According to Einwiller and Boenigk (2012), communication scholars and professionals have for many years been struggling to present a valid measure for the outflow level that can demonstrate how strategic communication contributes to the strategic and financial

performance of companies. This would imply a measure that reflects economic measures such as revenue, relative market success in the industry, or return on investment (ROI). Such measures for effectiveness on the lower levels of value creation, namely the outcome level, do exist in the form of indices of brand awareness and image (Keller 2003), reputation (Fombrun, Gardberg & Sever 2000), customer satisfaction (Fornell, Rust & Dekimpe 2010; Anderson & Sullivan 1993), or employee satisfaction (Cranny, Smith & Stone 1992). Similarly, ways to gauge the output of strategic communication includes indices of media output (Mathes & Zerfaß 2010 in Einwiller & Boenigk 2012.) or website statistics. In the multistep process of value creation, output and outcome are necessary prerequisites to bring about outflow; thus, demonstrated effectiveness on lower levels, particularly the outcome level, is used as an indication of the impact of the communication on the total corporate value (Einwiller & Boenigk 2012:338-339).

A number of trends within organisations, such as rapidly changing environments and markets and globalisation, have increased the need for an integrated approach to communication (Duncan 2002). Globalisation and rapidly changing markets require businesses worldwide to be adaptable and therefore the traditional approaches to communication where a "one-size-fits-all" approach was at the order of the day are no longer sufficient to address the needs of organisations' heterogeneous stakeholder groups (Pollach, Johansen, Nielsen & Thomsen 2012). Organisations cannot continue to use marketing and communication approaches that were developed in the last millennium, as globalisation, e-commerce, instant communications, and especially new social media, have made old ideas redundant (Christensen, Torp & Firat 2005:162).

The pursuit of integration is rooted in the marketing literature and in both the elements of the marketing mix (price, product, place, promotion – known as the 4Ps) and the elements of the communication mix within each of the 4Ps. The need to operate in a customer-centric mode is the central concept of marketing and this is only possible if each specialised function within the organisation makes a valuable contribution to the communication system as a whole (Van Riel & Fombrun 2007).

Kitchen and Schultz (2000) explain that all the communication activities of today's business corporations need to be integrated in order for the business to survive and prosper in a globalised world. For IC messages to have maximum impact, it is important that the

organisation integrates employees, customers, and other stakeholders with corporate learning, brand positioning, and an overarching idea.

According to Falconi (2009:4), the effective governing of stakeholder relationships is the new "global frontier" for communication management. Organisations are operating in a stakeholder era in which the needs of stakeholders can only be met when organisations build long-term relationships with their various stakeholders (Niemann 2005). This can only be achieved when organisations and their leadership understand the strategic significance of IC within the organisational communication context. IC involves synchronising an organisation's internal and external messages across all communication channels to build a consistent and favourable reputation with stakeholders (Pollach *et al.* 2012:206; Christensen *et al.* 2008:423).

4.8.2   Defining IC

Different theorists have different perspectives regarding what constitutes IC. According to Reinolds and Tropp (2012:2) and Nowak and Phelps (1994:49), IC can broadly be broken down into four major strands which these authors refer to as "one sight, one look" communications, integrated advertising/marketing communications, ICs, and, lastly, the stakeholder-oriented view.

Kliatchko (2008:140) defines IC as "an audience-driven business process of strategically managing stakeholders, content, channels, and results of brand communication programmes." This definition notes that stakeholders must be the central focus to all business planning and decision-making processes. This involves ensuring that the content of messages and the channels used are relevant to them. Additionally, it includes feedback mechanisms to evaluate, adjust, and measure the effectiveness of IC programmes.

According to Mulder (2008:273), IC is a dynamic, holistic approach to marketing and communication activities, entrenched in all strategic levels of an organisation. It manages and fuses every point of contact between the organisation and its stakeholders and supports an integrated branding strategy to build positive, lifetime relationships through data-driven techniques, by stakeholder-conscious employees who ultimately give an organisation a competitive advantage and build brand equity. Niemann (2005:65) argues that when described in brief, IC refers to unity of effort. "Unity of effort" does not, however, merely

indicate the sending of consistent messages to all stakeholders by an organisation, but incorporates unity of purpose for the organisation, unity of organisational processes, unity of organisational goal, and unity of action within the organisation. Niemann (2005:108) further states that integration ultimately refers to everything that the organisation does and does not do. Consequently, integration is an organisational-wide pursuit, and not a quick-fix solution to communication problems. This makes it necessary that IC be recognised from an organisational viewpoint.

In a similar vein, Christensen and Cornelissen (2011:387) describe IC as the practice of aligning messages, processes, and behaviours in order to communicate consistently with a view to building a favourable reputation and long-term stakeholder relationships. This clearly indicates that IC is both a tactical tool as well as a strategic function (Niemann 2005). IC practitioners therefore need to be part of organisations' strategic planning processes to help define their contributions to society as well as to examine their relationships with all stakeholders (Orlitzky 2011:10; De Sousa, Wanderley, Gomez & Farache 2010:296).

In light of the above, IC is considered a strategic communication process "that recognises the added value in a programme that integrates a variety of strategic disciplines … to provide … maximum communication impact" (Kerr *et al.* 2008:515 in Smith 2013). Furthermore, IC is a complex phenomenon that evolved from integrated marketing communication (IMC). According to Niemann-Struweg and Grobler (2011), although IC retained some of the characteristics of IMC, it is defined as a separate but interlinked discipline. To fully understand IC as it is practised today, it is necessary to be aware of the characteristics of IMC as the predecessor of IC. To provide this background, the characteristics of IMC will be briefly referred to below.

Gayeski and Woodward (1996) maintain that IC is the application of analysis, communication, and evaluation techniques to create and manage integrated, multifaceted interventions (combining information, instruction, collaboration, business process design, feedback, and incentive schemes to improve human performance in the workplace) in order to achieve an organisation's mission, vision, and goals. IMC developed due to the rise of technology; information technology (IT), including the Internet; and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) (Ekhlassi, Maghsoodi & Mehrmanesh 2012; Kitchen, Kim & Schulz 2008). IMC is a comprehensive approach to internal and external organisational communication and combines the power of all the marketing and marketing communication

techniques to deliver consistent communication messages to the organisation's different stakeholders (Mulder 2015). Starting with an analysis of the needs and priorities of stakeholders, and then continuing to tailor marketing and communication programmes to address those needs and priorities, the most basic description or function of IMC would be the management of all organisational communications responsible for building positive relationships with all stakeholders (O'Guinn, Allen & Semeniki 2003 in Mulder 2015). At the heart of IMC is the recognition of the importance of creating dialogue and long-term relationships through trust, as well as the communication of a consistent message to stakeholders.

According to Young (2010), IMC and IC enable a company to enhance its brand presence, as well as to communicate the corporate values to all stakeholders groups with great impact. IMC, the cross-functional process of creating and maintaining relationships with different stakeholder groups by controlling and influencing the marketing messages sent to these groups, is further defined by Duncan (2002:8) as a process where customer relationships are managed to drive brand value (Duncan 2002:8). Schultz, Tannenbaum and Lauterborn (1993:10) add to the above, stating that IMC is a concept of marketing communications planning that recognises the added value of a comprehensive plan that evaluates the strategic roles of a variety of communication disciplines to provide clarity, consistency, and maximum communications impact.

Bruhn (2008:100) emphasises the fact that research has been conducted to investigate and discuss the phenomenon of IMC, and states that research in IMC should develop and discuss new approaches to analyses planning and coordination of the integrated task of communication. Kitchen (2011:5) agrees that the integration of messages is complete, but the journey towards integration of messages from the perspective of the customer has scarcely begun.

The integration of the communications function among only the advertising, public relations, promotions, direct marketing, and personal selling fields is not complete. Integration implies that communication be regarded as an essential element of the management process in totality. Recognising the crucial importance of IMC, it further developed into a new strategic level, namely IC (Mulder 2015). Integration, or the phenomenon by which organisations strategically coordinate communication for impact and efficiency (Kerr *et al.* 2008), is a well-recognised concept in strategic communication.

The concept of IC has been in use since 1997 and became more common since 2000. IC is considered a strategic communication process "that recognises the added value in a programme that integrates a variety of strategic disciplines … to provide … maximum communication impact" (Kerr *et al.* 2008:515).

Einwiller and Boenigk (2012:339) refer to IC as IC management (ICM) and define it as

> "a management process of analysis, planning, organising, executing, and evaluating the communication of a company with its varied external and internal stakeholders, based on communication objectives that are aligned with corporate strategy and applying instruments that are aligned in terms of content, form, and timing".

The ultimate goal of IC, according to these authors, is to contribute to total company value by considering stakeholder needs and wants and building stakeholder-company relationships.

According to Tancs (2014), in the current stakeholder era, organisations attempting to create steadfast relationships with the different stakeholders first need to define their mission statement. By defining the mission statement, a company will be able to determine what the institution's core values are and what the company aims to achieve. Furthermore, it will also assist the company in defining the different stakeholder groups and determine the expectations that each of these groups have of the company.

IC is defined by Gayeski and Woodward (1996:3) as the

> "application of analysis, communication and evaluation techniques to create and manage integrated, multifaceted interventions combining information, instruction, collaboration, business process design, feedback, and incentive systems to improve human performance in the workplace in order to achieve organisations' desired missions and visions".

This definition clearly indicates the importance of communication in every aspect or function of the organisation. It also emphasises that success can only be attained when the importance of the inclusive and holistic management of all communication within the organisational context is realised.

As the integration of communication moves outside the boundaries of the typical concept of communication, it is postulated by Barker and Du Plessis (2002) that the integration of five main levels should be taken into account. They state that communication activities, relationships with various stakeholders, functions, organisational structure, and the internal and external environments should all be taken into account.

Duncan (2002) defines IC as a cross-functional process that creates and nourishes profitable relationships with stakeholders by strategically controlling or influencing all messages sent to them. Duncan (2002) therefore views IC as a strategic management process meant to build up profitable, long-term relationships with an organisation's stakeholders.

IC is the strategic management process of organisationally controlling or influencing all messages and encouraging purposeful, data-driven dialogue to create and nourish long-term, profitable relationships with stakeholders (Niemann-Struweg & Grobler 2011:5). Hanekom (2006:242) emphasises the need for coordination, harmonisation, and integration of all forms of internal and external communication in any organisation. IC can therefore be seen as the key process that influences the behaviour, attitudes, opinions, and perceptions of all stakeholders. Furthermore, IC can be thought of as the bringing together of different forms of internal and external communications into some unity or shared whole, within which differences are allowed to coexist to the extent that they do not challenge the identity of the integrating unit (Christensen & Cheney 2015:1).

For the sake of this study, the following working definition is deemed appropriate for describing what IC fundamentally entails and what its function in the organisation is:

> *IC is a cross-functional and strategically managed process in which data-driven and purposeful dialogue is used to communicate and reflect the core organisational values and to align all organisational messages, processes, and behaviours. IC brings together organisational messages in a shared whole in order to ensure consistent communication with internal and external stakeholders, with the purpose of building long-term, profitable relationships with them and to enhance the organisational reputation.*

4.8.3 Basic principles of IC

As communication underlies the foundation of the organisation itself, it is important to note that IC should be an organisation-wide endeavour implemented on a strategic level (Niemann 2005). Mulder (2015) states that a strong sense of cooperation, collaboration, and connection is necessary for IC to function. Successful implementation of IC in an organisation requires a thorough understanding of the IC concept. The defining characteristics of IC are discussed in the ensuing section.

4.8.3.1 Cross-functional planning

Cross-functional planning refers to the efforts that a company makes to ensure that the core values are communicated on a consistent basis by managing stakeholder interaction and evaluating the consistency and impact of all the communication efforts (Galbraith, Downey & Kates 2002). From a structural point of view, this implies that the organisation should create flatter organisational hierarchies to prevent departmental silos obstructing stakeholder relations (Gronstedt 2000:115). The cross-functionality of processes in an organisation is required so that all the departments in the organisation are able to cooperate with one another in the planning and monitoring of relationships with stakeholders and the brand (Niemann-Struweg 2015).

While it is not always possible for a company to manage all touch points with stakeholders, it is important that it uses cross-functional planning to ensure that all controlled contact points communicate the same set of values (Roll 2006). A cross-functional process integrates managers from different departments who are working on the same project in order to plan and manage the messages the organisation sends to – and receives from – its stakeholders. According to Niemann (2005), a cross-functional planning podium for IC enhances message consistency in stakeholder interactions. Cross-functional planning is also concerned with the company's effort to ensure that the core values are communicated on a consistent basis. It is therefore essential that the company manages stakeholder interaction and assesses the consistency and impact of all the communication efforts (Galbraith *et al.* 2002).

4.8.3.2   Purposeful dialogue

Kitchen and Schultz (2000:7) state that all organisations have to build real relationships with real stakeholders. These authors explain further that

> "[r]eferring to 'real' implies that the relationships are not outbound, based on spin, rhetoric and one-way communication – as was the case in the Industrial Age – but based on a correct understanding of the dynamics of served markets and constituencies throughout the world in which the organisation is competing" (Kitchen & Schultz 2007:7).

It is therefore very important to ensure interactivity between the organisation and its stakeholders. This interactivity should involve two-way symmetrical, purposeful interactions. From the point of view of the stakeholder, interactivity entails accessibility, recognition, responsiveness, and accountability. From the organisational perspective, it refers to the ability to listen as well as speak and then the modification of behaviour as a result of feedback (Niemann-Struweg 2015). To ensure successful interaction, it is imperative that stakeholder groups are well defined and that feedback is given continuously to all involved parties (Barker & Angelopulo 2006).

Interactivity means that the organisation must place equal emphasis on the receiving as well as the sending of messages. According to Niemann-Struweg (2015:221), the interactivity dimension of IC proposes that the media can be used both to send messages efficiently and to receive and capture messages from stakeholders in order to create long-term purposeful dialogue which should be mutually beneficial for the stakeholders and the organisation.

4.8.3.3   Core value communication

According to Shin (2013:9), a company can only reach true integration when all the communication efforts of the company focus on communicating the corporate values in a way that reaches all stakeholder groups with impact. The core values that drive the organisation must be seen as part of the corporate culture (Cohen 2009) and all organisational sections should have a clear understanding of these values (Quirke 2008). The different organisational sections should also use this knowledge to improve the overall image of the company and establish the value they add to the company (Quirke 2008).

Organisations that use IC to communicate their core values enable stakeholders to believe the promises the organisation makes, as these promises reflect on the past and present experiences that these stakeholders have with the specific organisation. Repeated communication of these core values increases the trust that stakeholders have with regards to the organisation (Aggarwal 2008). Organisations that successfully communicate their core values to stakeholders to the extent that different stakeholder groups associate themselves with the core values of the organisation, will have succeeded in creating long-term relationships with their stakeholders. When this is achieved, the organisation is enabled to follow a stakeholder-focused approach when communicating with the relevant stakeholder groups.

4.8.3.4   Stakeholder centricity

Symbolised by stakeholder integration, the 21st-century marketplace is regarded as the stakeholder era built around a two-way symmetrical approach to interactivity (Niemann 2005). Organisations are required to build real and lasting relationships with all of their stakeholders, based on a correct understanding of the dynamics of served markets and constituencies (Kitchen & Schultz 2000). Organisations should identify who their stakeholder groups are and also what their value to the company is (Olsen 2005).

Reed *et al.* (2009:1935-1936) explain that IC offers strategies to allow for interactive communication with a diverse range of stakeholders, as opposed to traditional one-way communication methods. Through IC, stakeholders and organisations can develop mutually beneficial relationships based on collaboration and cooperation that enable them to develop strategic and responsive strategies (Reed *et al.* 2009:1935-1936). Stakeholder groups have certain expectations from a company, above and beyond the products and/or services the company offers. By making use of IC, the organisation will be able to manage and create long-term relationships with all stakeholders.

4.8.3.5   Strategic consistency

Message consistency means that all communication is strategically aligned (Kitchen & Schultz 2009). Strategic consistency is the coordination of all the messages that create or cue brand messages, positions, and reputations in the minds of all stakeholders. Strategic consistency should be inherent in all efforts in the organisation to ensure ultimate "unity of

effort" (Niemann-Struweg 2015). According to Barker and Angelopulo (2006:56), strategic consistency involves harmonising the messages and the images of an organisation. This occurs when all messages project one clear, consistent, and coherent image. The alignment of messages needs to occur at every contact point between the organisation and stakeholders (Cornelissen, Van Bekkum & Van Ruler 2006:9).

4.8.3.6 Long-term stakeholder relationships

According to Meintjies (2012), stakeholder engagement is not just about communicating with stakeholders. It involves collaboration, learning, and innovation, and therefore organisations need to prepare themselves through identifying ways of engagement that work or facilitate understanding, learning, and improvement and also build the capacity to do so. Sloan (2009) opines that corporate leaders are increasingly realising the rising expectation in regards to continuous stakeholder engagement. There is a shift toward building and maintaining stakeholder relationships through bottom-up grassroots participation, connectivity, and dialogue (Stroh 2007:134) Long-term value creation in the company can only be achieved through relationships with key stakeholders, which are achieved through cooperative planning and design efforts (Hilman & Keim 2001:128). When different internal and external stakeholder groups feel that their input is taken seriously by the company, they develop a sense of belonging and become more loyal to the company. Organisations that ensure that the proper communication channels are in place and that allow and encourage stakeholders to engage with the company on different levels will be able to build long-term relationships with their stakeholders (Gregory & Willis 2013).

4.8.3.7 Holistic approach

Holtzhausen (2008:4851) stresses the need for "a holistic approach to communication" and argues that the communication function should be integrated into a single organisational function. In complex organisations, this is no easy feat as communication functions are often scattered across divisions and departments. In a strategic communication approach, it is important that all these communicators work in a team, which is difficult when they have different reporting structures and strictly defined roles (Holtzhausen 2008:4581).

4.8.4 Advantages of implementing IC and the important role of IC in internal communications

The rapidly changing and increasingly connected modern society has made employees one of the most important strategic constituencies of organisations (Kim & Rhee 2011). Effective internal communication is essential to utilise this constituency group to contribute positively to the organisation.

Internal communication has been recognised as the foundation of the modern organisation (Kennan & Hazleton 2006), and can be viewed as the flow of information, the exchange of information, and the transmission of meaning within an organisation (Katz & Kahn 1978). It is a central organisational process by which employees share information, create relationships, make meaning, and construct organisational culture and values (Berger 2008). According to Berger (2008:2), internal communication is one of the most dominant and important activities in an organisation as it "helps individuals and groups coordinate activities to achieve goals and is vital in socialisation, decision-making, problem-solving, and change-management processes". Effective internal communication in organisations is linked to higher levels of performance and service delivery as it generates communication capital (Malmelin 2007) and social capital (Lee 2009), which are based in organisational relationships. Leaders play an important role in internal communication.

In order to fully utilise the benefits of internal communication and knowledge sharing, an integrated view of internal communication is needed. Integrated internal communications are seen as composed of all the academic disciplines or domains, as identified by Miller (1996 in Kalla 2005), meeting at the cross-section between communication and organisational life, namely business, organisational, management/leadership, and corporate communication. Included here are the formal tasks performed by corporate communication, as well as informal communication that takes place inside the organisation.

Integrated internal communication is an encompassing term for the different domains of IC within the organisation, namely the marketing, management/leadership, and corporate communication and it is recognised that both theoretical and practical components guide the actions of corporate communication experts, managers or leaders, and all employees in their formal and informal communication tasks (Kalla 2005). This view takes a holistic approach and has important implications for knowledge sharing in organisations. One of the

obstacles of organisational success can be information deficit; that is, the insufficient horizontal and vertical spread of information. Integrated organisational communication is a planned, conscious process that delivers information to those affected in accordance with the strategic objectives of the organisation. IC is comprehensive, consistent, and targeted information exchange that uses channels in the most efficient way (Kalla 2005).

IC is a strategy created to build the most important asset of a company, namely its relationships with stakeholders (LePla & Parker 1999:13). However, the focus of IC is not only on stakeholder acquisition, but also on the retention of these stakeholders (Smith & Taylor 2002). Allowing the company to engage in two-way communication with each stakeholder group on a more personal basis is one of the main benefits of IC (Smith & Taylor 2002).

According to McManus (2007:95), IC allows the company to follow an approach where the value of each stakeholder is determined before a more personal communication platform can be created to meet the demands of each individual group.

4.8.5   Factors preventing IC implementation

Ang (2014:4) explains that although IC provides a broad spectrum of advantages for a company, the implementation of this strategy often leads to internal conflict and disparity. A prime consideration for most companies is whether or not IC should be implemented because the implementation of a new strategy often leads to internal conflict between management and staff. The corporate culture is usually embedded in the company structure and changing it is very hard. Staff members who are resistant and not willing to adapt and change can have a very negative impact on the implementation of IC. It can also bring implementation to a standstill (Percy 2014). It is of utmost importance that staff members participate in the implementation as IC requires all functions within a company to contribute to the development and implementation of the IC strategy (Percy 2014). When the actions of staff members are not aligned with the core values of the company, it might lead to distrust and cynicism from external stakeholders as well (Gage 2008:59).

Companies wishing to implement IC should ensure that their core values are communicated to all internal and external stakeholders groups (Keinert 2008). One of the main concerns is the perception that marketing communication is a form of support to IC, instead of viewing

it as one of the managing functions of IC (Grunig & Grunig 2013:61). Another concern is the lack of knowledge that leaders have concerning IC and the implementation thereof.

4.9   SUMMARY

This chapter addressed secondary Ro 1 and 2. The chapter commenced with a brief discussion of the value chain as the framework on which the LVC is based. This was followed by an in-depth discussion of the LVC as the framework whose purpose it is to identify the sequence and classes of variables that assist leaders in successfully leading an organisation. Thereafter the different spheres of the LVC were discussed. A description of IC as the application context of the LCVC was also supplied. The advantages of implementing an IC approach to communication, as well as the conceptual foundation of IC, were discussed. The chapter concluded with a discussion of the advantages of implementing IC in the organisation and then also touched on the factors that hinder the implementation of IC in organisations.

The second phase of the research, namely the conceptual analysis of leadership communication, is presented and deliberated on in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATION: AN EVOLUTIONARY CONCEPT ANALYSIS

5.1   INTRODUCTION

Scholars are increasingly recognising the importance of communication in the leadership relationship (Fairhurst & Connaughton 2014; Clifton 2012). The ability to facilitate effective communication is also seen as critical at every level of leadership (Sriram 2014). Within an overwhelming majority of the literature on leadership, however, communication is regarded as only an "aspect" of the leadership relationship, a prime leadership skill (Karimova 2014; Connaughton, Shuffler & Goodwin 2011; Ashman & Lawler 2008:253; Macik-Frey 2007; Stigall 2005), or described as one of the most important tools in a leader's toolkit (Tourish & Jackson 2008).

The view adopted in this study posits that the mere acknowledgement of communication as an important component of the leadership process will not suffice. Leaders and followers live in a relational world in which leadership is co-created in systems of interconnected relationships and richly interactive contexts (IBM Global CEO Study 2010). It is asserted here that communication should be viewed as the face of leadership and as an inextricable part of leadership, and not as a loose-standing component that can be separated from the leader or leadership. Furthermore, in this thesis leadership is viewed as a socially constructed interactional phenomenon through which certain individuals attempt to frame, define, or otherwise influence the reality of other individuals (Smircich & Morgan 1982).

Given the emphasis on social interaction, Fairhurst and Grant (2010) argue that it is not surprising that social constructionism recognises the fundamental role of language and communication (Barge 2001; Cronen 2001 in Fairhurst & Grant 2010) in the leadership process. It was this recognition that gave rise to the linguistic turn in social theory; a very important development that greatly impacted leadership and organisational studies. The linguistic turn led to language being regarded as constitutive of, rather than reflective of, social reality. Emphasis is placed on the constitutive role of language, discourse, and communication in society and their institutions and this "linguistic turn" has greatly impacted

leadership studies and other social studies conducted in Europe and Australasia (Aritz & Walker 2012). Moreover, the linguistic turn has led to the growth in popularity of social constructionism as an approach to study, which is justified on account of its recognition of the central role that discourse plays in the construction of organisational realities (Fairhurst & Grant 2010). As this study is approached from an interpretivist epistemology and social constructionist ontology, it is posited here that leadership needs to be studied as a social practice, not as an attribute possessed by individuals. Leadership involves a dynamic relationship performed through communication, and ought to be conceptualised and studied from that perspective (Uhl-Bien 2006).

The current demand is for a more ethical, people-centred, and communicative leadership approach where the formation of stakeholder relationships, transparency, and the ability to build open, authentic relations with stakeholders are the requirements for leaders to be able to ethically tackle the issues they are confronted with (Raelin 2011:196). As such, leadership around the world is fast changing and new leadership models are continuously emerging. While the current times of change have been accompanied by many opportunities for organisations, taking advantage of these opportunities requires quality and versatile leadership, an assertive and creative attitude, and serious changes to the status quo in organisational development (Thornton 2009).

This chapter addresses the conceptual research question, namely: What does leadership communication entail? The phases of evolutionary concept analysis methodology, as proposed by Rodgers (2000) and discussed in Chapter 3 (see Section 3.5.2) will be employed for the purpose of this conceptual analysis on leadership communication. The philosophical perspective of this method views concepts as context dependent, dynamic, and constantly evolving. The method is inductively focused and is a means of identifying a consensus or "state of the art" of the "concept" (Rodgers 2000:97). The purpose of this method is not to arrive at a conclusion or definitive definition of the concept, but rather to describe the current use of the concept so that further development of the concept of leadership communication may take place. Guiding arguments 1 and 2 direct the discussion in this chapter.

5.2   BACKGROUND

Globalisation, volatile organisational environments, and the effect of the economic downturn, together with technological advances and hyper-entrepreneurialism, are forcing scholars and practitioners in the industry to reconsider the "rational organisation" and its views of leadership (Fairhurst & Connaughton 2014:8) and to replace it with a more relational, communicative, and people-centred approach (Fairhurst 2008). Conventional leadership theories have adopted the paradigms of control and transmission, implying that leaders were traditionally viewed as occupying the top position in a hierarchy, holding the control, and transmitting the vision and objectives of a company. The challenging organisational contexts being referred to above also necessitate that corporations rely more and more on leadership to achieve competitive advantage. This, however, is a feat not easily accomplished as today's businesses are complex entities subjected to constant change. Universalising conceptualisations are therefore problematic as no one management or leadership approach will be sufficient to meet the resulting challenges (Eisenberg & Goodall 2007 in Hall 2007). One fundamental principle of success does, however, remain constant and that is the need for communication. Communication is key in relationships and coexistence in environments where results are expected. Mobilising groups for action and providing guidance and distributing tasks are some of the typical actions of an intra- and intergroup interaction process that is possible because of language and communication (Vieira, Dos Santos, De Miranda & Kubo 2014). Communication-based leadership research has significantly challenged some of the managerially focused, universalist presumptions of traditional leadership research (Fairhurst 2001). According to Hall (2007:197), particularly the work of Fairhurst and Sarr (1996) emphasises leader talk in organisations and its role in constructing collaborative, context-driven meaning for organisational members. Fairhurst and Sarr (1996) construct the leadership role as creating and managing meaning in the organisation, which influences the reality experienced in that specific organisation. With this, these authors placed communication at the core of leadership.

Research has also shown time and again that communication is critical for accelerating change and improving organisational performance, particularly regarding aligning and motivating employees. It is therefore not surprising that employers rank communication skills among the top three most valued applied skills that leaders should possess. It is unfortunate, however, that employers rate new graduates at all levels as largely deficient and ineffective

in terms of to their communication abilities (The Conference Board 2009). A question to be considered here would then be whether leaders have the ability and knowledge to leverage the power of communication to drive business outcomes.

As was stated earlier, the importance of leadership communication has been acknowledged by many managers and leaders in recent years. A poll by KLCM (2013) of 6 000 respondents in 12 markets found that 66% of respondents view transparent communication as a very important characteristic of effective leadership. The rest of the necessary characteristics comprising the top five include action-oriented behaviours such as leading by example, handling issues and crises calmly, making tough decisions, and admitting mistakes.

KLCM (2013) states in no uncertain terms that at a time when citizens around the world continue to bemoan a crisis of leadership in both business and politics, what they crave more than anything else is transparency. According to Rod Cartwright, head of corporate practice at KLCM, people globally are craving leaders who are honest about future challenges, clear in how to deal with them, collaborative in finding solutions, and practical in their actions. It has already been established in most of the literature that leadership matters, and this point is once again substantiated by the findings of the 2013 KLCM report.

The 2013 KLCM research further indicated that a company's leadership behaviour has a direct impact on the bottom line, and poor leadership communication hits the bottom line far harder than good leadership communication helps with enhancing it. In 2012, research indicated that consumers' feelings toward and perceptions of a company's leadership have implications for employment recommendations, product/service recommendations, benefit of doubt in time of crisis, and stock recommendations. In 2013, 60% of survey respondents said they stopped buying or bought less from a company due to poor leadership behaviour. The Holmes report of 20 March 2013 refers to the KLCM 2012 survey that found a significant (40%) correlation between positive perceptions of a leader's communication and their company's key business drivers, while 50% of perceptions of a leader's overall effectiveness were tied to their communication proficiency. Cartwright (2013 in KLCM 2013) states that as a result, it is important for companies to understand how leadership and leadership behaviours can affect consumers' actions, and ultimately a company's bottom line. Based on these findings, Cartwright (2013 in KLCM 2013) believes that the latest study confirms the formula he and his team developed in response to the initial survey conducted in 2012. The research clearly indicated that credible leadership requires open communication plus

decisive action plus personal presence. Cartwright is of the opinion that true leadership is impotent if it is not properly communicated, and flawed if it is not informed by communications imperatives. He therefore deducts, as was also shown in the 2012 KLCM study, that effective leadership and effective communication are inextricably linked. The abovementioned once again supports the first argument in this study, namely that leadership *is* communication.

Leaders capable of communicating effectively with followers are essential to improving business performance as communication is the cornerstone of high-quality relationships in an organisation (Brown & Moshavi 2005). The establishment of relationships of trust and reciprocal communication is essential for the success of the organisation and will ultimately contribute positively to the organisational bottom line. Communication should be viewed as an inherent part and the face of leadership and not as a technique or tool that leaders use to convey a message.

The 2014 KLCM report explored the perceptions of 6 509 members of the public who were surveyed in 13 countries across five continents regarding effective leadership, effective communication, and the intrinsic link between the two. This research indicated clearly that a global leadership "crisis" stubbornly persists, as consumers continue to be disillusioned with their leaders. Leaders in government, community service, trade/labour unions, and the not-for-profit sector were approached. The surveys indicated that only 22% of those surveyed felt that leaders were demonstrating effective leadership. This percentage is even less than the previous year and it was indicated that still fewer are optimistic about seeing any improvement in leadership after 2014. This research established that open, transparent communication is absolutely critical to effective leadership and is the top-ranking attribute, with 74% viewing effective communication as very important to great leadership. It is alarming that only 29% of respondents felt that leaders communicate effectively.

KLCM (2014) found a growing hunger for a model of leadership characterised by openness, transparency, respect, and clear values — coupled with a willingness to admit mistakes, a determination to find solutions, and a commitment to match words with deeds. The world's leaders, whether in business, government, community service, or the not-for-profit sector, have not yet caught up with what the world is seeking from its leaders. In fact, they fall well short of expectations. The result of this is a huge disparity between what is expected of leaders and their actual leadership performance, which has led to enormous disaffection

with leadership of every kind. This focuses renewed attention on the second argument of this study, namely that effective leadership communication is necessary for an organisation to succeed.

Aritz and Walker (2012:268) opine that "language replaces consciousness as the site of experience production and communication replaces psychology as the focus of attention for understanding organisational life". This observation has far-reaching consequences for the way organisations and their leadership should be understood and researched. It is obvious from the above that the communication landscape has in recent years undergone monumental changes, and navigating these changes and recognising their effect on the management and leadership of an organisation are a vital challenge for communicators. Furthermore, all of the abovementioned must take place within an environment that is open to change and organisational processes, and subject to the vagaries of emergent events (Quinn & Baltes 2007).

Leaders are responsible for forging an organisation's personality, crafting its identity, and infusing it with a unique culture (Nair 2013:14). What leaders say and what leaders say they do often provide critical insights into interpersonal, group, and organisational issues (Bligh & Kohles 2014:143). The clear movement by leadership studies during the past few years away from a strong focus on, most notably, transformational leadership toward a stronger emphasis on a dynamic, collective, shared, relational, situated, dialectic, and global perspective where especially the interaction between leader and follower are key elements (Denis, Langley & Rouleau 2010; Avolio, Walumbwa & Weber 2009) seems to be what leadership in the future would encompass.

5.3   DATA SOURCES

For this analysis, a sample of 1 313 English-language theoretical and research-based articles were used. This literature was drawn mainly from three disciplines, namely communication and mass media, business and management, and psychology. The following databases were used:

- Academic Search Complete is one of the most comprehensive scholarly, multidisciplinary full-text databases, with more than 8 500 full-text periodicals,

including 7 300 peer-reviewed journals and a total of 13 200 publications, including monographs, reports, and conference proceedings that go back as far as 1887.

- Business Source Complete is one of the world's definitive scholarly business databases, provides a collection of bibliographic and full-text content and goes back as far as 1886 and supplies searchable cited references for more than 1 300 journals.

- The Humanities Source is a database designed to meet the needs of students, researchers, and educators interested in all aspects of the humanities and includes more than 1 400 journals, with citations to over 3.5 million articles, including book reviews.

- CMMC is a database that provides the most robust quality research solutions in areas related to communication and mass media and incorporates the content of CommSearch (formerly produced by the NCA) and Mass Media Articles Index (formerly produced by Penn State), along with numerous other journals in communication, mass media, and other closely related fields of study to create a research reference resource of scope and depth to encompass the breadth of the communication discipline. CMMC offers cover-to-cover ("core") indexing and abstracts for more than 670 journals and selected ("priority") coverage of nearly 200 more, for a combined coverage of more than 770 titles. Furthermore, this database includes full text for over 450 journals.

In addition to the academic articles, 23 academic referencing books were used to gather information for the study.

5.4 SURROGATE TERMS

According to Rodgers (2000), surrogate terms are synonyms to the concept being analysed. In the leadership literature, growing attention to leadership discourse, communication, and relational stances to leadership by a select group of scholars, many from the communications field (Cooren 2007; Collinson 2005; Barge 2014; Alvesson & Sveningsson 2003; Fairhurst 2001, 2007), can clearly be recognised. Connaughton *et al.* (2011) cite Witherspoon (1997:3) when referring to leadership as "the focus of group processes; the effect of personality; the art of inducing compliance; the experience of influence; a form of persuasion, and an effect of interaction". This focus on communication and the relational aspects of leadership can be ascribed to the already referred to linguistic turn in social theory

that has led to language being regarded as constitutive of, rather than reflective of, social reality (Aritz & Walker 2012). In the literature, authors referring to leadership communication often use terms such as communicative leadership, discursive leadership, relational leadership, dialogical leadership, and rhetorical leadership as synonyms for leadership communication. These terms will be briefly explained in the following sections.

5.4.1 Communicative leadership

Communicative leadership views communication as the core of leadership. A key aspect of leadership effectiveness is communication (Morgeson, DeRue & Karam 2010), and the centrality of communication in leading effectively is increasingly being recognised by scholars in the academe and in practice (Barling, Christie & Hoption 2010; Fairhurst 2001).

5.4.2 Discursive leadership

From a discursive perspective, leadership is defined as a process of meaning management attribution given by followers or observers; process-focused rather than leader-focused; and as shifting and distributed among several organisational members (Torres & Fyke 2013; Clifton 2012; Fairhurst 2011).

5.4.3 Relational leadership

Uhl-Bien (2006:662) describes leadership and its practice as socially constructed through relational (social) processes. This author refers to it as

> "the influential acts of organising that contribute to the structuring of interactions and relationships. In these processes, interdependencies are organised in ways which, to a greater or lesser degree, promote values and interests of the social order; definitions of social order are negotiated, found acceptable, implemented, and renegotiated".

Leadership is therefore seen as being constituted and the focus is on studying social processes, rather than on the leader's actions and behaviours (Hall 2013).

5.4.4 Dialogical leadership

The dialogical perspective questions conventional leadership approaches, which are based on the paradigms of control and transmission. The dialogical model for communication states that none of the actors involved in communication can have dominating and permanent control over the message-creation process in communication. Instead, there is a co-creation of the "message" by all the actors involved or engaged in the communication process, rather than a mere transmission of the message (Karimova 2014).

5.4.5 Rhetorical leadership

Leadership, according to the rhetorical stance, is an action imbedded in rhetoric. A rhetorical perspective assumes that humans are symbol-using creatures, predominately through language, and that these symbols allow humans to define and make sense of their reality while providing the tools to build connections with other human beings. A rhetorical perspective views language as more than its function to label and define ideas, but by the way humans co-exist (Eske-Ballard 2013).

5.5 SIMILAR OR RELATED TERMS

Concepts that are similar to, yet different from, the concept of leadership communication are known as related terms (Rodgers 2000). The following sections explore these terms, namely leader/leadership and manager / management / managerial communication.

5.5.1 Leader/Leadership

The term "leader" is often used when referring to a single individual, and "leadership" when the focus is on the collective actions of leaders in a defined organisation. According to Osborn, Hunt and Jauch (2002:798), leadership is the collective influence of leaders in and around the system, whereas Kort (2008:424) considers that taking a formal position of leadership indicates only that one is expected to act or has responsibilities to act in the ways that leaders do.

Referring to an authority figure, the words "lead" and "leader" have a much longer history than that of leadership, which is a relatively recent addition to the English language and only came into use in the late 19th century. The term "leadership" focuses on a much more

complex concept that reaches beyond the single leader (Brungardt 1998). Leadership in organisations is an inherently multilevel phenomenon (Yammarino, Dionne, Chun & Dansereau 2005; Dansereau, Alutto & Yammarino 1984). Organisational effectiveness hinges on coordinated leadership being enacted by leaders residing within multiple hierarchical levels, whose leadership shapes crucial individual-, team-, unit-, and organisational-level outcomes (DeChurch, Hiller, Murase, Doty & Salas 2010).

A leader has to implement a personal as well as an organisational agenda. The personal agenda consists of the goal(s) close to the leader's heart. The organisational agenda establishes the framework within which all work is done. Employees must know what must be done, when it must be done, and their part in making it happen. A good leader must be able to state the agenda in a few sentences that everyone can grasp. Moreover, a leader needs to have a pragmatic and understandable operating philosophy. The framework of an operating philosophy is created from learning, innovating, and deciding. "A leader may not recognise the personal characteristics that cause people to follow him or her, but the followers respond to those characteristics" (Crosby 1997).

Leadership is a particular type of authority relationship. Authority comes from the power that one holds over followers or subordinates. In certain cases, authority comes from the position that one holds in an organisation, as described in the constitution or by-laws of the organisation, and other times it is willingly given to the power holder by the followers. The power gained from others arises from being viewed as special in some way. Admiration, respect, charisma, expertise, and other personal characteristics can all add to perceptions of personal power or authority. Power and authority gained from the position that one holds are termed "position power", and that which is earned and gained in the minds of people is called "personal power" (Patterson 2010:15).

"Leadership is the accomplishment of a goal through the direction of human assistants. The man who successfully marshals his human collaborators to achieve particular ends is a leader", according to Prentice (2005:151). Rost (1993:102) defines leadership as "a power and value-laden relationship between leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes and goals". All forms of leadership must use power. However, power need not be coercive, dictatorial, or punitive to be effective. Instead, power can also be used in a non-coercive manner to orchestrate, mobilise, direct, and guide members of an institution or organisation in the pursuit of a goal or series of objectives (Thomas 2011).

Peters and Waterman (1982:255) state that "[t]he real role of leadership is to manage the values of an organisation". All leadership is value laden, and all leadership, whether good or bad, is moral leadership. Leadership is a process of influence that involves an ongoing transaction between a leader and followers (Hollander 1978). Leadership, however, does not exclusively reside in the leader. Rather, it is a dynamic relationship between leaders and followers alike. Leadership always occurs within the context of others and can therefore always be viewed as plural.

It is important to note that there is a distinct difference between the concept "leader" and the concept "leadership". Leaders constitute "collective change agents" who are the "competitive source of adaptive response and learning." They are individuals or groups that influence the direction of a system or organisation. Leadership, however, cannot merely be regarded as a position of authority, but also as an "emergent, interactive dynamic – a complex interplay from which a collective impetus for action and change emerges when heterogeneous agents interact in networks in ways that produce new patterns of behaviour or new modes of operating" (Uhl-Bien, Marion & McKelvey 2008:187). Leadership is thus fundamentally the process of influencing the creation, destruction, transformation, and distribution of information throughout the system, and enabling action in response to this information. It is a complex process existing in a complex environment (Livingston & Lusin 2009).

5.5.2 Manager / Management / Managerial communication

A manager's job is a complex and detailed endeavour. Managers must be able to meet the demands of a vast array of stakeholders and therefore need multifaceted skills and competencies that enable them to successfully direct and coordinate the work of others (Patterson 2010). A proper balance of analytical and intuitive decision-making styles and task and people behaviours are required to solve organisational problems and get the best out of employees. Goal setting and strategy formulation and execution, as well as attending to the professional and personal needs of employees, are necessary (Patterson 2010).

Management or managerial communication has as its purpose the facilitation of the orderly operations of an organisation. It furthermore promotes an understanding of the organisation's mission, vision, and goals; and supply information needed in day-to-day operations, including customer and vendor transactions and customer and staff training (Hallahan *et al.* 2007). Managers at the technical core of the organisation are obliged to

develop good working relations with their employees by providing a comfortable work environment and swiftly resolving issues that could hinder performance (Ahmed, Shields, White & Wilbert 2010).

Managerial communication is "the downward, horizontal, or upward exchange of information and transmission of meaning through informal or formal channels that enables managers to achieve their goals" (Bell & Martin 2008:130). Managerial communication assists in the smooth exchange of information and feedback within the organisation in order to help with the attainment of organisational goals.

For a considerable time, the controversy regarding management versus leadership, and finding the best way of conceptualising leadership and management with respect to one another, have been prominent and recurring problems in the study of organisational behaviour (Bedeian & Hunt 2006; Yukl & Lepsinger 2005 cited in Simonet & Tett 2012; Alvesson & Sveningsson 2003; Yukl 2002; Kotter 1990). One of the reasons for this, according to Simonet and Tett (2012), is the fact that the roles have been defined in narrow ways, which makes it difficult to understand how they jointly affect organisational performance and how they can be integrated. While many writers have emphasised the uniqueness of leaders, imbuing them with extraordinary characteristics, managers, by comparison, are typically viewed in mundane and stereotypically negative terms (Alvesson & Sveningsson 2003; Yukl 2002 cited in Simonet & Tett 2012). Apart from the above generalisations, there is little consensus on how a comparison should be made (Simonet & Tett 2012:199).

Over the past 40 years, five major perspectives have come to the forefront from prominent sources that deal with the leadership-management comparison. The first perspective holds that leaders and managers are essentially polar opposites in terms of key values, temperament, and developmental processes (Zaleznik 1977). Managers embody order, stability, and efficiency, and leaders are marked by flexibility, innovation, and adaptation. A second approach held by scholars such as Yukl and Lepsinger (2005), Kotter (1993), Gardner (1986), and Bennis and Nanaus (1985) (all cited in Simonet & Tett 2012), portray leadership and management as two distinct, often complementary, processes that jointly influence organisational strategy. Thirdly, leadership has been described as essentially equivalent to management in form, process, and function (Alvesson & Sveningsson 2003; Drucker 1954 in Simonet & Tett 2012; Barnard 1938). According to Simonet and Tett (2012),

two further hierarchical perspectives can be identified, in which management is either subsumed within the broader leadership mantle, for example as transactional leadership (Bass 1985), or the other way around (Bedeian & Hunt 2006).

5.6   THE EVOLUTION OF LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATION

One of the fundamental questions asked by scholars and business leaders today revolves around how leaders should be prepared to compete in the hypercompetitive, complex, and global environment of the 21st century. The need to develop leaders who are capable of ensuring organisational survival in the current multifaceted and multicultural global marketplace is ever growing. Gaining insight and understanding into what makes a good leader requires comparing past strategies for developing leaders with the espoused formula for success today (Heames & Harvey 2006). The leader-follower phenomenon is one of the most intriguing expressions of human behaviour. Philosophers, political scientists, and psychologists have produced extensive literature on leaders and leadership, and yet, despite the vast amounts of literature available, there is no consensus on why and under what circumstances some become leaders and others remain followers (Henman n.d.:1). In this section, literature about organisational communication, management, and leadership will be addressed from different timeframes during the development of organisational leadership. As no leadership communication theories could be found, theories closely related to leadership communication will be discussed. The basic schools of communication, namely communication as a process, communication as a meaning (interpretive, semiotic), and communication as (a creator of) community (ritual) will also be considered.

It is important to note here that categorising a theory into a specific timeframe or age does not suggest that these generations of theory can be categorised as mutually exclusive to a specific era. None of the "generations" is mutually exclusive or totally time bound (Van Maurik 2001:203). Although it is true that the progression of thinking tends to follow a sequential path, it is quite possible for elements of one generation to crop up much later in the writings of someone who would not normally think of himself or herself as being of that school or timeframe. Consequently, it can be said that each generation has added something to the overall debate on leadership, management, and communication theory, and that this debate continues today (Van Maurik 2001). As leadership communication has its roots in the managerial sciences and organisational sciences, this discussion

commences with a discussion of theories from the classical management period and then continues to discuss the human relations and HR theories of organisational management. This is approximately the period from 1880 to 1975. The discussion provides a history of the theories from which leadership theory developed and further describes the earliest leadership theories and their evolution until the leadership theories that are currently in vogue. The theories associated with a specific leadership period will be briefly discussed. The discussion will throughout, and where possible, refer to the type of communication associated with the specific timeframe, approach, or theory. Theories developed by prominent scholars and theories related to communication are included in the discussion.

5.6.1 Management theories

The term "leadership communication" was originally not used in leadership theory as it is used today. The "ages" of scholarly fields are notoriously hard to pinpoint and, according to Miller (2006), most would agree that organisational communication, which was the initial focus area, has been around for at least 60 years or more. As stated earlier, this discussion will commence with theories from the management period as these are the management and organisational theories from which leadership theories evolved.

5.6.1.1 *Classical management theory (1880s – 1920s)*

Classical management theory consists of a group of similar ideas on the management of organisations that evolved in the late 19th century and early 20th century. The classical school evolved as a result of the Industrial Revolution in response to the growth of large organisations. Classical organisation theory has three branches: the scientific management approach, Weber's bureaucratic approach, and administrative theory (George 1948). Predominant characteristics associated with all three branches are the economic rationality of management and organisation, bureaucracy, and centralisation (Sridhar 2011). Communication during this period is predominantly work related and the content, channel, and style of communication are written and formal. This led to a top-down management and communication style, where authorities were highly respected and superior to subordinates (Miller 2006:9, 16, 17). This early "autocratic period" of management is characterised by the use of strategies like "fear of punishment" and "fear of God", absolute authority, coercion, and force (Sridhar 2011).

The primary contributions of the classical school of management include (i) application of science to the practice of management, (ii) development of the basic management functions, and (iii) articulation and application of specific principles of management (Sridhar 2011). The discussion here focuses briefly on three prominent classical management writers, namely Henry Fayol, Frederick W. Taylor, and Max Weber, with references to contributions of other classical theorists also being made. Ultimately, the focus is on the communication that was used during the specific period.

The earliest references to internal communication in an organisational context was by Hugo Munsterberg in 1913, who passingly mentioned the necessity of communications in his book, *Psychology and Industrial Efficiency* (Hay 1974:7). The scientific management approach is based on the concept of planning of work to achieve efficiency, standardisation, specialisation, and simplification. The belief was that increased productivity was possible through mutual trust between management and workers.

The administrative approach was founded by Henri Fayol. It was also in the work of Henry Fayol where the first significant reference to communication within organisations was found. Although trained as an engineer, Fayol realised that managing a company that is geographically dispersed and had 10 000 employees required skills other than those he had studied. He viewed management as more than devising systems and methods for increasing throughput (as it had been for scientific management). For Fayol, management involved all the activities associated with producing, distributing, and selling a product. He was of the opinion that a manager needed to be able to formulate plans, organise a plant and equipment, deal with people, and much more. Engineering schools had never taught such skills (Pearson 1945 in Wren & Bedeian 2009). From his experiences as a manager, Fayol began to develop his own ideas about managing. Foreshadowing modern thinking on work groups, Fayol organised miners into self-selected teams. This increased work cohesiveness and, in turn, reduced employee turnover (Wren & Bedeian 2009). Fayol also distinguished between the elements of management and the principles of management. It was Fayol's belief that a manager's job could be divided into five fundamental elements of management, all essential to being a successful manager; namely planning, organising, command, control, and coordination. Fayol did not include communication as one of his "elements" of management; however, with the possible exception of the planning element, it is difficult to

perform any of the elements without communication and therefore communication can be seen as implicit in Fayol's theory (Miller 2006:7).

Along with Frederick Taylor, Fayol is generally credited with making some of the greatest contributions to the development of management as a science. In his 1916 book, *Administration Industrielle et Generale*, he proposed his famous precept of horizontal communication, which recognised the merit of direct lateral communication between two separate hierarchical levels, rather than strict compliance to the more lengthy route through the chain of command (Pietri 1974:3-4). According to Hay (1974:7), the concept of the "gang plank" was implemented to counter possible communication delays caused by the unity of command principle as it allowed communications to cross lines of authority, but only when agreed upon by all parties and only if superiors were kept informed at all times. The gang plank permitted swift, sure, lateral communications without overloading circuits and preserving the unity of command principle. With this book, Fayol became as firmly entrenched in French management thinking as Taylor had become in the United States (Wren & Bedeian 2009).

Taylor made a clear distinction between managers who think and workers who labour. Organisations were run like machines and tasks typically did not allow for flexibility, creativity, or originality. This suggests that this perspective does not account for work motivations, relationships, and turbulence in organisations. Scientific management in practice generally tends to weaken the competitive power of the individual worker and lacks the elements necessary for the actual voicing of the workers' ideas and complaints and for the democratic adjustment of grievances (U.S. Commission on Industrial Relations 1912:136).

Many sources see Dale Carnegie as responsible for the first popular treatment of communication to come to the attention of the businessman. His writings and courses first achieved nationwide popularity in the early 1920s, and although many professionals in the field of communication tended to downgrade Carnegie's approaches to the study of communication, he could well have been the first to link communication proficiency with success as a manager (Hay 1974:7).

Mary Parker Follett was another famous management pioneer to stress the importance of communication to organisations and managers. In a conference series in 1925 titled

163

"Scientific Foundations of Business Administration", she presented a paper on "The giving of orders" (Pietri 1974). Here she argued that orders given by managers should seek to unite and integrate disassociated paths and that when an order is given in a disagreeable manner, the receiver becomes sullen or defensive and his behaviour set to act in a manner contrary to an organisation's goals. According to her, this is because the receiver feels his/her self-respect being attacked. She referred to her "Law of the Situation", which implied that when orders are simply part of the situation, it is not a case of receiving or giving of orders because parties accept the rules of the situation. She explained further that under such conditions, orders would become depersonalised and there would be no overbearing authority on the one hand, nor "*laissez-aller*" on the other. Other important contributions included her emphasis on the importance of two-way communication and, very importantly, the fact that she was also a strong advocate of "integrative" communication. Integrative communication's purpose, according to Follet, is to unite individuals within their organisations (Pietri 1974).

Together with Henri Fayol and Lydal Urwick, Luther Gulick believed that adherence to a core set of management principles would help organisations achieve optimum performance in working toward their goals (Meier & Bohte 2000). Gulick's (1930) contribution to the field of communication was his notion that leadership had seven functional areas, which included directing and reporting, and both of these included communication (Puth 2002).

Sociologist Max Weber is seen as the father of the bureaucratic approach. The bureaucratic approach as described from an organisational context refers to certain dominant characteristics such as a hierarchy or authority, a system of rules, and the division of labour. Many of the elements of Fayol's theory are also found in Weber's theory of bureaucracy. Weber, in addition, identifies three types of legitimate authority in organisations. These are traditional authority (acceptance of those in authority arose from tradition and custom), charismatic authority (acceptance arises from loyalty to, and confidence in, the personal qualities of the ruler), and rational-legal authority (acceptance arises out of the office or position of the person in authority, as bounded by the rules and procedures of the organisation) (Miller 2006). The form that is found in most organisations today is the rational-legal authority form, and it is to this form that Weber ascribed the term "bureaucracy". It is no coincidence that Weber's writings were at a time of the major industrial revolutions and the growth of large complex organisations out of cottage industries and/or entrepreneurial businesses (Juholin 2006:3).

Furthermore, Weber also ascribed the following characteristics to an organisation: specialisation and division of labour, rules and procedures, hierarchy of authority, formal communication, detailed job descriptions, employment based on expertise, and impersonal environment. For Weber, bureaucracy should be synonymous with order, consistency, reason, and reliability, and these traits can only be obtained by an organisation if a specific set of rules exists and impersonality is emphasised (Miller 2006).

To summarise, it can be said that during the classical period, communication was regarded as a linear one-way process, usually top-down and controlled by the management. In a goal-oriented institution, communication was conducted by managing the channels, and by defining the direction of the communication. Miller (2006) opines that the interpretation of effective leadership and communication in classical management has influenced the way leadership is practised and perceived in today's business environment. Communication in classical organisations relied on principles of standardisation, specialisation, and predictability. The communication processes in these organisations took on particular characteristics as part of these machinelike organisations.

This view was based on Shannon's and Weaver's *A Mathematical Theory of Communication* (1949), the information theoretical version of a one-way communication model. Communication was regarded as a process of transmitting messages, and the premise was that information creates order instead of disorder. The roles of the sender and the receiver were explicit and separate from each other and, when communication missed or the feedback did not occur, the explanation was noise (Juholin 2006:3-4).

During the Classical period, the content of communication used was mostly task related and very narrowly focused. Social communication in the workplace was strongly discouraged as it was viewed as counterproductive to organisational functioning. The direction of communication was vertical (downward) through the organisational hierarchy and in the form of orders, rules, and directives. This implies that the communication mostly included instructions to the workforce. Very little feedback from employees was allowed or listened to. The communication channel/mode used included mostly written communication as a strong value was placed on performance. The communication style used was highly formal and sterile (Miller 2006:17).

5.6.1.2 The human relations theories (1930-1960)

The human relations theories and the HR theories that will now be discussed are also referred to as the behavioural theories. Much of the work on the idea of the human relations period was done by a business professor at the University of California at Berkley, named Raymond E. Miles, who in an article in the *Harvard Business Review* made the readers aware of the importance of the worker and stated that workers should not be viewed as bundles of skills and aptitudes, but from a holistic point of view (Miles 1965). Human relations theory, which is usually put under the metaphor of an "organism", was a step towards a more humane perspective on organising. It stressed the importance of the individual and social relations in organisational life. Addressing the social needs of employees through employee-directed leadership and participative work practices was of the essence during this time (Van Tonder 2004). Thus, the behavioural theories' focus was on the leaders' behaviours and actions (Den Hartog & Koopman 2011).

The Hawthorne studies are viewed as responsible for the transgression from the classical theory period to the human relations theories. The Hawthorne studies were led by Elton Mayo in an attempt to discover aspects of the task environment that would maximise worker output and hence improve organisational efficiency. Four major phases marked the Hawthorne studies, namely the illumination studies, the relay assembly test room studies, the interview programme, and the bank wiring room studies. Unfortunately, the scientific value of the studies, and the explanations offered by Mayo and his colleagues, have come under considerable fire in the past half-century. Irrespective of the fact that the Hawthorne studies may have lacked scientific value and interpretive rigour, the social impact of the investigation cannot be underestimated. These studies served as a springboard; moving organisational theories from the classical theories to the human relations theories (Miller 2006). These studies are worth mentioning as they also began to highlight the role of communication, especially informal and group communication, in organisational functioning.

The emphasis of the early human relations movement to leadership theory was on open superior-subordinate communication and stemmed from an assumption about the need for uniform goals among organisational members. Employees were encouraged specifically to discuss emotional problems and to achieve emotional relief by airing grievances and frustrations to counsellors (Eisenberg & Witten 1987:418). Great emphasis was placed on ways to motivate employees; "The motivational effect of social needs and the importance of

the social environment was recognised, and a link between satisfaction and productivity was advanced" (McKenna 2000:11). The idea that employee behaviour is a result of the style of management was advocated, and employees were valued and seen as assets who could contribute to organisational goals. This resulted in a radical change in the communication style and direction flow of communication (Miller 2006:47). Increased contact between superiors and employees led to the belief that employees would identify with the goals of the company. Early human relations practitioners therefore stressed frequent downward communication from superiors to increase integration and to show a sincere interest in the employee (Bendix 1974 in Eisenberg & Witten 1987:419).

Barnard's book, *The Functions of the Executive* (1938), is regarded as one of the pioneering milestones in organisational communication. The importance of communication is emphasised throughout the entire book. Barnard, a man seen as being far ahead of his time as a management theorist, was credited with a classic statement on the nature and importance of managerial communications when he said, "The first executive function is to develop and maintain a system of communications." Barnard was also well known for his theory of authority, which was viewed primarily from a communication standpoint. Some of his precepts of a system of authority are, firstly, that channels of communication should be definitely known. Furthermore, clearly established lines of authority should be developed through practice and habit and this should be done by making official appointments well known, and by using organisational charts. A second precept was that formal channels of communication should exist for everyone in an organisation. He was of the opinion that every employee had to report to someone and therefore was subordinate to someone. Thirdly, the complete line of communication should usually be used. This "no-bypassing" rule is necessary to avoid conflicting communication if any jumping of the line was allowed. Fourthly, he stressed that the competence of people who served as communication centres, for example officers, supervisory heads, and managers, had to be adequate. The fifth precept he emphasised referred to the fact that communication had to be authenticated. This implied that the person communicating had to be known as occupying the position of ability that was concerned. Lastly, he indicated that communication, which flows from the top of the organisation downward through each level, would be slower and less accurate the greater the number of levels of authority in an organisation was (Pietri 1974:5).

According to Hay (1974:7), Barnard contended that a manager can only communicate with a limited number of people and that the factor of "acceptance" must be considered. He stated that the authority of the sender alone would not produce acceptance and gave four conditions which must exist for the communication to have acceptance: (1) the communication must be understandable, (2) it must be consistent with the purpose of the organisation, (3) it must be compatible with personal interest, and (4) the receiver must be mentally and physically able to comply with the communication (Hay 1974:8). During the 1930s and 1940s, the practice of internal organisational communication was getting started, and the Hawthorne studies were important for their recognition of the informal communications and the grapevine, as well as providing an impetus for an interviewing programme for employees (Hay 1974).

For communication scholars, the importance of the human relations approach to management theory lies in the fact that it was the first time that two-way communication was encouraged in organisations. Communication between a worker and a manager was seen as a dialogue, instead of the unidirectional communication from the manager targeted at the worker. Communication was also viewed as a tool that can be used by management to "buy" cooperation from subordinates (Dubin 1958). Miller (2006:42) states that during this period, the communication content was still focused on task-related communication, but it was accompanied by communication that attempted to maintain the quality of human relationships within the organisation as well. Miller (2006:42) refers to this type of communication as "maintenance communication", which included task as well as social communication. The direction of communication was not restricted to a vertical flow, but communication was vertical as well as horizontal. The mode/channel of communication used was mostly face-to-face communication as the importance of a social presence was realised. During this period, a relatively informal communication style was used. This was done in an attempt to break down the status differential between managers and employees as a means of satisfying social needs. There was also less reliance on titles and other formal means of communication.

Other noteworthy contributors to this field were Kurt Lewin, Abraham Maslow (who developed the hierarchy of needs theory), Herzberg (motivation-hygiene theory), and McGregor (Theory X and Theory Y). These theories will be discussed later in this chapter (see Section 5.6.2.1.2).

5.6.1.3   The human resource theories (1960-1975)

Contributions made by the classical theorists, but more specifically the human relations approaches, are recognised by the HR approach to organising. This approach adopts the viewpoint that individuals in organisations have feelings that must be considered and also recognises that individual labour is an important ingredient for meeting organisational goals. What human resource theorists add to the mix is an emphasis on the cognitive contributions employees make with their thoughts and ideas (Miller 2006).

Robert Blake and Jane Mouton developed one of the founding theories of the human resource approaches, namely the Managerial Grid (now called the Leadership Grid). Developed as an instrument for training managers in leadership styles that would enhance organisational efficiency and effectiveness, and that would stimulate the satisfaction and creativity of individual workers (Blake & McCanse 1991; Blake & Mouton 1964), their assumption was that leaders would be most effective when they exhibit both concern for people and concern for production. They therefore combined the interests of classical management (concern for production) and human relations (concern for people). Likert, another theorist who made important contributions to this field, theorised that there are a number of forms that an organisation can take and that these various forms are more or less effective in satisfying organisational and individual goals. He highlighted four organisational forms, labelled System I, System II, System III, and System IV, which move from the worst that scientific and classical management has to offer (System I) to an organisational type that values and encourages the contributions of all organisational members (System IV). Likert is of the opinion that a human resource organisation (System IV) is more than just managerial attitudes. Rather, he advocates structural principles that enhance the participation of individuals and the performance of the organisation. Likert also emphasised the mutual responsibility of managers and employees to create "supportive relationships" through open communication (Likert 1967).

Other prominent theorists in this era included scholars like Katz and Kahn (1966:224), who opined that "[c]ommunication is a social process of the broadest functioning of any group, organisation, or society". According to Katz and Kahn (1966), in order to function, all managers must communicate with some degree of effectiveness. They are further of the opinion that the exchange of information and the transmission of meaning are the very essence of an organisation (Puth 2002). Even though management-related problems are

related to some communication issues, getting a handle on those issues becomes problematic even for experienced managers, and when considering communication, it is important to recognise that communication may reveal problems as well as eliminate them (Katz & Kahn 1966:224). Scholars in this era who also emphasised the role of communication were Keith Davis (1972), who stated that the only way that leadership can be achieved in an organisation is through the process of communication, and Henry Mintzberg (1973), who opined that managerial positions consisted of ten working jobs, and that communication and interpersonal relations are found in three of the roles.

Organisational leadership theories became more prominent from the human resource period onward; therefore the discussion will now focus on the development of leadership theories that followed the first management theories period.

5.6.2   Leadership theories

The construct of leadership has been studied extensively, across cultures, decades, various contexts, and theoretical domains. In recent years there has been a proliferation of leadership theories, with just as many differing opinions about the subject (Northouse 2013; Yukl 2010). The existing plethora of available perspectives, approaches, concepts, and theories have all been advanced over the last 100 plus years in an attempt to explain in whole, or in part, the leadership construct (Bass 1990). Currently, hardly any of the existing leadership theories seem to be a complete answer to the challenges of 21st-century leadership (Latham 2014). New contexts, techniques, technology, conceptualisations, and concerns make leadership a constantly evolving concept, and while abstract principles remain consistent, the more practical and operational aspects vary substantially. A key issue in leadership research is that there has been no convergence toward a reasonable number of logical and clear leadership theories. Existing knowledge about leadership consists of narrow definitions of leader effectiveness, which are mostly disconnected from their context. This makes the application of leadership to practice very difficult (Latham 2014). Furthermore, organisations are constantly exposed to new developments; and especially communication patterns have been fundamentally different in the last 25 years (Van Wart 2013).

In an examination of the leadership literature, the researcher sought to identify prominent leadership theories, more specifically those related to organisations. This proved to be a

daunting task since a lack of general agreement and understanding about the nature of leadership could clearly be perceived. It was also clear that of all the hazy and perplexing areas in the social sciences, leadership theory undoubtedly contends for the top position (Richmond & Allison 2003). As stated by Jago (1982), unlike sciences such as physics, chemistry, and biology, where well-accepted laws can be used to help with classification, behaviour in organisations remains an imprecise, inexact exploration into the causes and consequences of complex human actions. Despite the mentioned situation, a large volume of quality research has been conducted in the field of leadership inquiry. The problem appears to be a lack of general agreement and understanding of the phenomenon as researchers approach the topic from many different angles, often with entirely different understandings and assumptions about what leadership is (Northouse 2013; Yukl 2010). The diverse spectrum of scholarly perspectives is further complicated in that leadership theories of the same name do not necessarily exhibit theoretical uniformity across sources (Richmond & Allison 2003:35). Leadership theory can therefore best be understood as encompassing a variety of conceptions to leadership (Richmond & Allison 2003:34). There is no agreed consensus among leadership scholars on the classification of the different leadership theories. Certain major themes/trends can, however, be identified.

Leadership is now also being explored as a team attribute and as a process embedded in and emerging from a system, culture, or organisation, and, most recently, the role of subordinates or followers and the relational and communicative aspects of leadership have started to receive attention. Considering the above, Hernandez, Eberly, Avolio and Johnson (2011) propose that in order to more clearly and comprehensively classify leadership theories, leaders, followers, collectives, and context should be taken into account across diverse theoretical perspectives.

A distinction is made between theories of leadership, which attempt to explain factors involved either in the emergence of leadership or in the nature of leadership and its consequences, and models of leadership, which show the interplay among the variables that are conceived to be involved; they are replicas or reconstructions of realities. Both theories and models can be useful in defining research problems for the social scientist and in improving prediction and control in the development and application of leadership (Bass 1990). Leadership theories are generally grouped into four major categories; namely the essentialist, relational, critical, and constructionist theories. These four main categories are

further divided into sub-theories grouped according to the research approaches (Yukl 1998) and include, for example, the trait, behavioural, motivational, contingency/situational, charismatic, transactional, and transformational theories (Bass 1990). Essentialists maintain that reality (social and natural) exists apart from our perceptions of that reality and that individuals perceive the world rather than construct it (Rosenblum & Travis 2003:33). Conversely, constructionists believe that humans construct reality and give it meaning through their social, political, legal, and other interactions (Crotty 1998). Critical theory, as the name implies, is a criticism, or critique, of society, organisations, and social constructions. In current society, it takes as central theme the issues of power and power abuse in organisations and society as a whole (Shockley-Zalabak 2006).

In order to advance an LVC model that incorporates communication, a review of the dominant leadership theories (as reviewed chronologically in the literature) was performed in this study. In the ensuing discussion, the leadership theories were classified into four main categories. The first period is referred to as the early leadership theories and consists of the traits theory, behaviour theory, and contingency and situational theories. The second period referred to here is known as the social exchange theories, where the leader-member exchange (LMX) theory and the implicit leadership theories (ILTs) are discussed. This is followed by a third period, the New Leadership period, which emerged during the 1980s and included both transformational and charismatic theories; and finally, the fourth period, comprising post-charismatic and post-transformational theories, which emerged in reaction to the new leadership theories.

The diversity and multiplicity of leadership theories make it impossible to describe the whole range of theories and therefore only major leadership theories that are still in use and theories that are of significance to this study will be discussed. Although these theories do not view communication as constitutive of leadership, as is asserted with the position taken in this thesis, a summary of the most prominent leadership theories, as well as theories that are connected to the study, will be provided. Where possible, their link/connection to leadership communication will be indicated.

5.6.2.1   *Period 1: The early leadership theories*

The scientific study of leadership originated in the work of one of the founding fathers of sociology, Max Weber (1864-1920). Weber set questions of authority, status, and legitimacy

in the context of religion, politics, and the military. Devoting great attention to the unresolved tension between leaders and bureaucracies, he grew convinced that an inexorable trend towards rationalisation in every sphere of society made the role of leaders both more problematic and more important (Heilbrunn 1994). For almost 80 years – through different theories and studies of leadership, the attention shifted from traits to styles to situations – the emphasis remained on the leader, and not leadership.

5.6.2.1.1   The trait theories of leadership

The early eras, covering the bulk of leadership research from the late 1800s up through the mid- to late-1960s, comprised unidimensional theories of leadership. Great Man theory, trait theory, and behaviour theories of leadership attempted to specify some sets of characteristics that exemplified effective leaders (Simonet & Tett 2012). As clearly documented by and Northouse (2013) and Yukl (2002), traits of individuals with formal leadership roles were emphasised in the early 1900s and leaders were typically considered those with formal positions of authority. The focus here was on the relationship between the leader and his or her subordinates, in terms of predicting outcomes such as performance. The early trait approach theories were called "Great Man" theories because they focused on identifying the innate qualities and characteristics possessed by great social, political, and military leaders. The question here was whether great leaders were born or made, and whether effective leaders possessed specific traits such as intelligence, charisma, or physical strength (Zehndorfer 2014:5).

Stogdill (1948) published a review of 124 studies and surveys that had appeared in print between 1904 and 1947. The aim of these studies was to examine traits and personal factors related to leadership. Stogdill's review uncovered a number of inconsistent findings. Despite the fact that leaders could vary greatly in age, personality, and physical appearance, it was also concluded that the relationship between a given trait and leadership prowess varied significantly between different studies (Hackman & Johnson 2000). According to Stogdill (1974), leader characteristics identified by the researchers in these studies included traits such as the leader being adaptable to situations, alert to social environments, ambitious and achievement oriented, assertive, cooperative, decisive, dependable, dominant (desire to influence others), energetic (high activity level), persistent, self-confident, tolerant of stress, and willing to assume responsibility. Other qualities of effective leaders included the ability

to take initiative, social dominance, and persistence. No common list of specific traits could be established and a number of inconsistencies were uncovered as well. It was concluded that a person does not become a leader by virtue of the position or of some combination of traits, but the pattern of personal characteristics of the leader must bear some relevant relationship to the characteristics, activities, and goals of the "followers" (Stogdill 1974). As a result, Stogdill (1974) concluded that a set of certain personality traits could not ensure that someone would become a leader. Despite many research studies on the trait theories, the notion that certain traits guarantee leadership effectiveness has never satisfactorily been supported (Hackman & Johnson 2000).

In 1860, Herbert Spencer, an English philosopher, disputed the Great Man theory by affirming that these heroes are simply the product of their time and their actions are the results of social conditions. The trait theories fell out of favour when research failed to support the notion of a specific set of personality traits or behaviours that clearly and consistently characterised leaders. Theories from this perspective are largely products of top-down bureaucratic paradigms and suitable for an economy focused on physical production. They are not, however, well suited for a more knowledge-based economy (Uhl-Bien *et al.* 2008). Theories of this period were also criticised for focusing exclusively on the leader and not taking into consideration the role of the situation and the followers (Chemers 1997). This would suggest that the type of communication used here would be mostly top-down and instructive.

Trait theories started to enjoy renewed emphasis in the 1970s as researchers began to focus on visionary and charismatic leadership. In the 1980s, researchers linked leadership to the "Big Five" personality factors as interest in EI as a trait gained favour in the 1990s (Northouse 2013). However, although this notion may serve sufficiently for case studies, it was refuted effectively and relatively easily and was therefore deemed unusable as a scientific theory. Glendon, Clarke and McKenna (2006) postulate that because the trait approaches to leadership theory imply that the presence of certain personality characteristics present in a leader will enable the leader to be effective across different situations, these theories present a reductionist and simplistic view of leadership.

As stated previously, a universal list of required characteristics has also not yet been identified (Yukl 2010). This approach would then also suggest that it is not possible to train

or develop leaders to become leaders as the traits are considered innate and relatively stable over time (Northouse 2013).

Communication during this period would resemble the communication used during the classical management and human relations periods. This would be mostly formal, top-down, and instructional as the focus was mostly on the individual leader.

5.6.2.1.2 Behavioural theories

Behavioural theories include both the work of the scientific management scholars and motivational theorists. In the late 1930s to the early 1950s there was a shift in focus towards identifying the types of leader behaviours that good leaders exhibited. What leaders did and how they acted became important (Den Hartog & Koopman 2001). Theorists of this period posit that specific behaviours associated with effective leadership can be identified. Two behaviours that were thoroughly researched are initiating structure and consideration. These dimensions of leadership behaviour are positively linked to many valued organisational outcomes such as subordinate performance, group and organisational performance, subordinate job attitudes, and turnover (Judge, Piccolo & Ilies 2004).

Behaviour theorists are of the opinion that leadership can be acquired through learning the specific behaviours associated with a good leader. This includes the leader's style of leadership. Behavioural studies began to consider leaders in the context of the organisation (Horner 1997). The Hawthorne studies conducted by Elton Mayo between 1929 and 1932 are mostly seen as the onset of the behavioural theory studies. It was concluded in these studies that when supervisors paid intensive attention to employees, the attention positively affected motivation, and as a result, productivity (Zehndorfer 2014).

Other ground-breaking studies by researchers among the behavioural theorists included the Ohio State University studies conducted in the early 1950s, which sought to identify independent dimensions of leader behaviour (Blake & McCanse 1991). Researchers at Ohio State University identified two types of leadership behaviours, namely consideration and initiating structure (Fleishman & Harris 1962). It was established that leaders who exhibited a considerate leadership style tended to focus on building good relationships with subordinates, were attentive to their needs and feelings, and practised two-way communication with subordinates. Leaders exhibiting initiating structure behaviours tended

to focus on planning, communicating, allocating tasks, and expected tasks to be completed to deadlines and to certain standards (Lekka & Healey 2012).

Concurrent with the Ohio State University studies, the University of Michigan studies were conducted in the 1940s and 1950s, and sought to identify the behavioural characteristics of leaders related to performance effectiveness. This research identified two types of leadership behaviours, namely employee orientation and production orientation. Leaders who fitted the employee orientation of leadership were attentive to employees and considerate of their needs. This orientation overlapped with the considerate leadership orientation identified in the Ohio State University research. Production-orientation leadership behaviours, on the other hand, share much in common with an initiating structure leadership style as the focus is on behaviours targeted towards getting work done (Northouse 2013).

In the late 1950s, Douglas McGregor attempted to determine how attitudes and behaviours influenced organisational management. He identified two basic approaches to supervision, namely Theory X management and Theory Y management. These approaches were both based on a set of assumptions about human nature. Both Theory X and Theory Y represent basic approaches for dealing with followers. Theory X managers believe that the average person has an inherent dislike for work and will avoid engaging in productive activities whenever possible. Managers must coerce, control, direct, and threaten workers in order to ensure performance. This would imply that unless coerced by someone, or made to produce, people will not perform their duties in an organisation. Task supervision with little or no concern for the individual is emphasised here (Hackman & Johnson 2000). Theory Y, on the other hand, is based on the assumption that work is as natural as play or rest and not viewed as inherently unpleasant, but rather as a source of satisfaction. This implies that followers will fulfil the needs of the organisation as they are motivated to do so. Threats and punishment are not deemed necessary as members act responsibly and are productive without direct supervision (Hackman & Johnson 2000).

An important contribution that was first referred to as the Managerial Grid and later renamed the Leadership Grid in 1991 was developed by Robert Blake and Jane Mouton. It was developed as a tool for training managers in leadership styles that would enhance organisational efficiency and effectiveness and stimulate the satisfaction and creativity of individual workers (Blake & McCanse 1991; Blake & Mouton 1964). The basic assumption adopted here was that leaders would be most effective when they exhibit concern for people

and concern for production, thus combining the interests of classical management (concern for production) and human relations (concern for people) (Miller 2003 cited in Miller 2006). In their narrative review of the leader behaviour literature, Fleishman and colleagues (1991) identified 65 distinct classifications of leader behaviour, and subsequent reviews have further highlighted a proliferation of leader behaviour types and theories (Avolio *et al.* 2003). A consistent theme in the literature is the classification of behaviours into four categories: task-oriented behaviours, relational-oriented behaviours, change-oriented behaviours, and passive leadership. Blake and Mouton's Managerial Grid concentrates on how a manager can combine the values of the human relations school and the classical school into a leadership style that will maximise the potential of HR within the organisation (Miller 2006:53)

The communication implications of this theory were that the content of the communication included both task and social elements, while the direction of the communication was vertical and horizontal. Furthermore, the preferred channel was often face to face and the style of communication was mostly informal (Miller 2003:57 cited in Miller 2006).

The behavioural theories were valuable in the sense that they shifted the focus of leadership research towards an understanding of what leaders did. It also showed the impact of the leaders' actions and assisted in describing leadership behaviour as task or relationship orientated (Northouse 2010). Limitations include, firstly, the fact that empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of these theories tends to be inconclusive (Yukl 1994). Another limitation identified is the suggestion by these approaches that most effective leaders are both task and relationship oriented. This implies a high concern for both production, as well as their employees' needs. It has been argued, however, that this cannot be proven as follower and situational factors can also have an influence (Northouse 2013).

5.6.2.1.3   Contingency leadership theories

The contingency and situational theories led the way for a move away from exclusively "leader-centric" approaches and started focusing on the study of leadership as a process (Zehndorfer 2014). Contingency and situational theories of leadership assumed that the leader was in a formal role of authority. The situational approach to leadership theory suggests that a leader must adapt to the development level of subordinates, while the contingency theories emphasise the match between the leader's style and specific situational variables. Although these studies began to examine situational variables, they

still remain closely focused on the styles of individual leaders and how those styles needed to adapt to different contextual factors (Gaines 2007).

The contingency era introduced the first leadership theories to present a more integrated approach to understanding leadership. Marked at its beginning by the work of Fred Fiedler's theory of contingency leadership (1967), contingency theories represented a major paradigm shift in the field of leadership research (Chemers 1997). Several contingency approaches to leadership theory developed during the 1960s. The contingency approach assumes that there is no universally appropriate leadership style, or "one best way" (Yukl 2002). According to the contingency theories, a leader's effectiveness is based on whether the leader's motivational orientation or style (either task or relationship orientated) matches with his situational control (Zehndorfer 2014). Contingency theories of leadership essentially posit that effective leadership is contingent or dependent on a combination of factors, including the behaviour, personality, and influence of the leader relative to the followers, and the moderating elements of the situation. In general, these theories suggest that the nature of the situation determines which leadership style will be most effective, and that the fit between the leader's style and the situation determines the leader's effectiveness. Contingency theorists assume that the leader is able to accurately assess the key aspects of the situation and the followers (Chemers 1997).

Unlike other contingency theories, which assume that the leader is flexible enough to adapt his or her style to the needs of the followers and situation, Fiedler's (1964; 1967) least preferred co-worker (LPC) theory was a forerunner of this era and emphasised the need for leaders to be placed in situations that were most suited to them. Fiedler's LPC theory, proposed in 1967, was the first comprehensive contingency theory of leadership. According to this theory, leaders are less flexible in their behaviour and leadership effectiveness is determined by selecting the right leader for a given type of situation, or by changing the situation to match the leader's style. This theory predicts that a leader's effectiveness is based on whether the leader's motivational orientation or style (either task or relationship oriented) is "in match" with his situational control (the level to which he or she is able to control the team, as measured by the quality of the leader-follower relationship, the level of task structure created, and the nature and strength of his or her position power) (Zehndorfer 2014:109). Group performance is the result of the combination of the leader's characteristics and the leader's degree of control over the situation (Langton & Robbins 2007:394).

Fiedler therefore acknowledged that elements of context determined the leadership style (Krumm 2001). Fiedler's work outlines three "contingency dimensions" that serve to define the situation the leader faces: The leader-follower relations, the task structure, and the position of power (Langton & Robbins 2007:394). Fiedler's model has been the subject of extensive research. While the evidence suggests strong support for the model in laboratory settings, field research has yielded only mixed support (Chemers 1997).

Fiedler's work was followed by two other major contingency approaches, namely path-goal theory (House & Mitchell 1974; House 1971) and normative decision theory (Vroom & Yetton 1973). The path-goal theory formulated by House (1971) focuses on how leaders can motivate subordinates to accomplish designated goals. The goal of the path-goal leadership theory is to enhance employee performance and employee satisfaction by focusing on employee motivation (Northouse 2013). In contrast to the contingency approaches, House's (1971) path-goal theory focused less on the situation or leader behaviour and more on providing the enabling conditions that would lead to subordinate success. The path-goal theory is a situational theory that is also partially an exchange theory of leadership, such as the LMX theory (Yukl 2010) and draws on the expectancy theory of motivation (Vroom 1964 in Yukl 2010).

The normative decision theory (Vroom & Yetton 1973) originally dealt with decisions that affect a whole group, and was later expanded (Vroom & Jago 1974) to include decisions involving individual subordinates. The basic premise of this model is that the process that a leader uses to make decisions will be more or less effective depending on the situation, the need for decision acceptance, and the quality of decision required (Hughes, Ginnett & Curphy 1999).

5.6.2.1.4   Situational theories of leadership

Situational leadership theories place emphasis on the leader in the context or the situation in which he or she leads (McKenna 2000:366). Situational theorists argued that great leaders emerged as a result of place, circumstance, and time (Bass 1990). The premise of the theory is that different situations demand different kinds of leadership. According to Bass (1990:43), "[t]he theories of McGregor, Argyris, Likert, Blake and Mouton, Maslow and Hersey and Blanchard were concerned with development of the individual within an effective and cohesive organisation". In summary, it can be said that situational theories tended to

focus more on the behaviours that the leader should adopt, given situational factors, while the approach taken by contingency theorists included contingent factors about leader capability and other variables within the situation.

Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard developed the situational approach to leadership in 1969. This theory was originally introduced as the "life cycle theory of leadership" and was renamed to the "situational leadership theory" (SLT) during the 1970s. The fundamental underpinning of SLT is that there is no single "best" style of leadership and that leadership has a directive and supportive dimension that has application in different situations. The SLT stipulates the need to match the style of the leader (either task or relationship oriented) to the psychological and job maturity level of the employee (Yukl & Van Fleet 1992). In the situational approach to leadership, the leader must ascertain the situation and adapt his or her leadership style to fit the prescribed task, understanding that the approach may not necessarily work in a different scenario. Effective leadership here is task relevant, and the most successful leaders are those that adapt their leadership style to the maturity of the individual or group they are attempting to lead or influence. Effective leadership varies, not only with the person or group that is being influenced, but it also depends on the task, job, or function that needs to be accomplished (Taylor 2007). Taylor (2007:33) asserts that "directive behaviour in an organisational context involves one-way communication between leaders and employees, as leaders focus on what should be done, how it should be done, and who should do it". Conversely, the supportive behaviours are behaviours "to which a leader is likely to maintain personal relationships between himself and the members of his group (followers) by opening up channels of communication, delegating responsibility, and giving subordinates an opportunity to use their potential" (Hersey & Blanchard 1981:35).

Hersey and Blanchard (1982) argue that a leader's task behaviour and relationship are dependent on subordinate maturity and will significantly influence leader effectiveness. Thus, Hersey and Blanchard's SLT (1984) holds that an effective leader adapts his/her leadership style to subordinates' capacity to accomplish tasks (Langton & Robbins 2007), or, as posited by Hackman and Johnson (2000), the maturity level of followers plays an important role in the leader's selection of appropriate leadership behaviour. These authors further state that follower maturity consists of two major components, namely job maturity, which refers to demonstrated task-related abilities, skills, and knowledge, and psychological maturity, which relates to feelings of confidence, willingness, and motivation. Maturity levels

can also fluctuate as an employee moves from one task or situation to another. Several adaptations and refinements have been made to this theory over the years.

5.6.2.2   Period 2: Social exchange theories

Whereas early leadership studies showed neat, linear progress (from traits to styles and behaviours to situational and contingency approaches), the field diverged into various perspectives simultaneously after that (Gaines 2007). The social exchange perspective took a somewhat different approach to leadership research and these theories developed at about the same time as the contingency theories. The focus of the research was, however, on the dyadic relationship between leaders and followers (Hernandez *et al.* 2011). One of the first scholars to approach leadership from a social exchange perspective was Jacobs (1970). He asserted that leadership could only be understood when followers are viewed as proactive partners in the interaction. Social exchange theories are therefore often used by organisational researchers to explain workplace relationships (Wayne, Shore & Liden 1997), and the exchange of tangible and intangible resources among individuals or other social entities such as an organisation (Cropanzo, Rupp, Mohler & Schminke 2001 in Loi, Mao & Ngo 2009). The LMX theory is deemed to be the most influential of the social exchange theories and is discussed below.

Another group of theories that are categorised here for the sake of this study are the ILTs. As with LMX theory, these theories are also concerned with the process of leadership.

5.6.2.2.1   Leader-member exchange (LMX) theory

LMX theory is a relationship-based exchange theory of leadership. LMX theory, also known as the vertical dyad linkage (VDL) theory, was developed by George Graen and his colleagues in 1975 (Graen 1976; Dansereau *et al.* 1975; Graen & Cashman 1975). This approach marks a separation from many earlier leadership theories which were almost exclusively leader centric. In this theory, the relationship (or exchange) between leader and subordinate is positioned as central to the understanding of how the leadership process works (Zehndorfer 2014). Graen and Graen (2006) explain it by stating that leadership goes beyond the leader to examine the process of leadership. LMX concerns the emotional and resource-based exchanges in the supervisor-subordinate dyad (Liden, Sparrowe & Wayne 1997) and places the quality of the dyadic leader-follower relationship at the heart of effective

leadership (Northouse 2013; Chemers 2000). A reciprocal exchange process exists between the two involved parties and the greater the perceived value of the tangible and intangible benefits exchanged, the higher the quality of LMX (Liden *et al.* 1997). LMX proposes that the quality of the relationship between the leader and the subordinate influences performance and related outcomes (for both the leader and the subordinate).

LMX posits that the effectiveness of a leader is contingent on the quality of the relationship (exchange) that exists between a leader and his/her followers. A leader therefore does not merely act as a source of influence for followers, but followers are able to exert a reciprocal effect on the leader if the quality of the relationship is good enough (Zehndorfer 2014). Graen (1976) started with the assumption that organisational members accomplish their tasks through roles that they adopt. These roles were developed by the individuals through interaction with others in the organisation (Miller 2003 cited in Miller 2006). Original studies of LMX assert that managers develop differentiated relationships with direct reports within their organisations. The theory is most appropriate for understanding how a leader manages a team of individuals.

Since its conception, the theory has undergone many refinements, and what began as an alternative to average leadership style (or VDL) (Dansereau *et al.* 1975) has progressed to a prescription for generating more effective leadership through the development and maintenance of mature leadership relationships (Graen & Uhl-Bien 1991 in Graen & Uhl-Bien 1995).

The strength of LMX theory is its emphasis on the role of both the leader and the subordinate and its recognition of leadership as a dynamic interactive process. However, although there is broad support for LMX theory, there is currently little understanding of the wider context within which dyadic relationships take place. As LMX theory focuses upon each individual dyad, the theory does not take into account the influence of the group or organisational context (Ilies, Nahrgang & Morgeson 2007). The relational character of this type of leadership would suggest that communication would start to play a more important role in the leadership process. Two-way symmetrical communication, where feedback and listening are part of the leadership process and where communication is acknowledged as the vehicle by which the exchanges are created, is associated with this type of leadership theory.

It is important to note that LMX has important overlaps with ILT. According to Shondrick, Dinh and Lord (2010) and Epitropaki and Martin (2005), LMX and ILT overlap as the congruence of followers' ILTs and leaders' implicit follower theories (IFTs), which describe the assumptions about the traits and behaviours that characterise followers and seem to influence the quality of the relationship.

5.6.2.2.2   Implicit leadership theories (ILTs)

Most research into leadership conducted prior to the development of the ILTs rarely considered the perspective of followers, but rather focused on studying leadership from the leader's perspective. Follower-centred leadership research demonstrated, however, that the follower's perspective adds significantly to understanding leadership and to the formation of leadership (Junker & Van Dick 2014; Shamir 2007). Scholars such as Lord and Maher (1993), Phillips and Lord (1986) and Lord, Foti and De Vader (1984) contributed significantly to this field. ILTs focus on the social context of leadership and specifically on the traits and behaviours that people expect of leaders. ILTs present followers', or raters', subjective views of leaders (Eden & Leviatan 1975). ILTs were introduced by Eden and Leviatan (1975) and Calder (1977). Scientifically, the construct of ILTs (or naïve theories) originates from the attribution theory (Heider 1944 in Verlage & Rowold 2012) and from the theory of personal constructs (Kelly 1995 in Verlage & Rowold 2012). Both the attribution theory and the theory of personal constructs focus on the subjective perception of everyday life. Schyns and Schilling (2011) postulate that the theoretical foundation of the ILTs was developed by Lord and his colleagues, which was based on Rosch's (1978) cognitive categorisation theory. The basic premise of categorisation theory holds that perceivers (followers) classify stimulus persons (their supervisors) by comparing them with prototypes of a category (effective leader). The central assumption of the ILTs is that the knowledge structures that are held by followers are important when perceptions of leaders are formed or when behavioural ratings of leaders are supplied by their followers (Shondrick *et al.* 2010). This means that when meeting or observing a leader, certain images are activated in the mind of the observer (follower), and the behaviour of the leader is interpreted in line with these images.

ILTs are described as an automatic and cognitive categorisation process that individuals may or may not consciously use in order to interpret leadership behaviours (Weiss & Adler 1981). This promoted the idea that by becoming more aware of the socially constructed

nature of things, leaders can be more effective in influencing others' expectations (Cheney, Christensen, Zorn & Ganesh 2011).

In the categorisation theory developed by Lord (Lord *et al.* 1984), ILTs are categorised at hierarchical levels. At the superordinate level, a differentiation is made between the characteristics of leaders versus the characteristics of non-leaders. At the basic level, distinctions are made between different types of leaders (political, religious, organisational), and at the subordinate level a further specification of the leader prototype (leaders of a certain political party, leaders of a specific religious denomination) is made (Schyns, Kiefer, Kerschreiter & Tymon 2011).

Schilling (2001 in Verlage & Rowold 2012) categorises ILTs as being a subcategory of implicit theories which refer to leaders and the process of leadership. Two functions of the theories surface here. Firstly, the ILTs function as a categorisation process, which indicates whether a person is perceived as a leader or not as determined by the perception of the observed person's traits (House & Aditya 1997). Secondly, the leadership process itself is observed. According to Kenney, Blascovich and Shaver (1994 in Verlage & Rowold 2012), in this context ILTs are patterns of explanation in regard to causes and effects of leadership behaviour and results.

Phillips and Lord (1986:34) postulate that ILTs "help to organise perceptions, permit reasonable prediction, and may even specify appropriate behavioural reactions to others". This indicates that these theories act as cognitive simplifications in everyday contexts. Important in the context of this study is the fact that ILTs are part of the dyadic leadership process: the better the behaviour shown by a leader fits to the ILTs of the followers, the more they evaluate their leader's efficacy in his/her favour, and, according to Schyns and Hansbrough (2008) and Epitropaki and Martin (2004 in Verlage & Rowold 2012), a higher quality of LMX can be observed.

5.6.2.3   *Period 3: New leadership theories or neocharismatic theories of leadership (1975-present)*

A number of approaches are categorised as new leadership theories or neocharismatic leadership theories. These theories have revolutionised the way that leadership phenomena are understood. Neocharismatic leadership theories deal with the process of change and,

consequently, the transformation of followers (Van Seters & Field 1990). The neocharismatic approach can be divided into several approaches (Yukl 2006). The emotional appeal of leaders and the extraordinary commitment of followers are the focus here. The new leadership theories recognise leaders' relationships with followers and do not merely focus on the behaviour of leaders. A variety of new leadership theories have emerged and these include, among others, the authentic, character-based, social exchange, transactional, transformational, charismatic, aesthetic, ethical, servant, visionary, and spiritual leadership theories (Bryman 1996). A common thread that runs throughout these theories is the emphasis on morals and values, and the treatment of followers. In an organisational context, these theories address how superiors might inspire their subordinates to become active contributors to their firms that go beyond basic job requirements. Some of these models also emphasise ethical issues in the appropriate use of leader power and how values are important in understanding leader behaviour (Spector 2014). The field of new leadership theories has grown and advanced from theory that focuses on understanding general leadership processes as they occur over indeterminate amounts of time, to a phenomenon that evolves over different time spans depending on the hierarchical level at which the leaders are investigated (Kaiser *et al.* 2008). Three elements that were identified as essential to the construct of leadership effectiveness, namely task focus, people focus, and development focus, were identified by Dinh *et al.* (2014).

Defending the "newer genre" of leadership theories are scholars such as Sean T. Hannah, John J. Sumanth, Paul Lester, and Fabrice Cavarretta; stating that these theories emerged because of the inability of the other leadership paradigms to explain extraordinary accomplishments and performance beyond expectations. These authors propose that contemporary leadership theories fill gaps in the literature by expanding into areas of emotions, inspiration, and morality. They answer critics of these theories on the following five issues: (i) normative theories are detached from real leadership situations, (ii) a humanistic approach ignores demands of getting tasks done, (iii) inclusion of morality in leadership is inappropriate, (iv) emphasising the feelings and needs of followers conflicts with organisational goals, and (v) scales used to assess leadership are confounded with feelings about the leader (Spector 2014:35).

New leadership theories that are currently in use and those that have relevance to this study will now be discussed.

5.6.2.3.1   Transactional leadership theory

First described by Weber (1947), Burns (1978), and Bass (1981), transactional leadership theory focuses on the basic management processes of controlling, organising, and short-term planning. Also known as managerial leadership, transactional leadership theory focuses on the role of supervision, organisation, group performance, and aspects such as leaders' and followers' changing views of one another (Kenney *et al.* 1994). Transactional theories of leadership focus on the specific interactions between leaders and followers (Heifetz 1994; Sorrentino & Field 1986; Graen & Cashman 1975; Burns 1978), and it is suggested by Bass (1985) that transactional leadership involves motivating and directing followers through appealing to their self-interest.

According to Sims (2009), when rewards are offered to others in return for compliance, it can be referred to as transactional leadership. Transactional leaders approach followers with a goal of exchanging one thing for another (Burns 1978). Transactional leadership is therefore a process between leaders and followers that results in the exchange of valued things (Burns 1978:19). Burns (1978:20) adds that such an exchange is focused on self-interest, and may be economic, political, or psychological.

Transactional leadership is task orientated and can be effective when meeting deadlines, or in emergencies (Bach & Ellis 2011). The focus in transactional leadership is on ways to manage the status quo and on maintaining the day-to-day operations of a business (Avolio, Waldman & Yammarino 1991). Transactional leadership focuses on management tasks and will not identify shared values of a team (Burke *et al.* 2007). It does not focus on identifying the organisation's directional focus and how employees can work toward those goals, increasing their productivity in alignment with these goals, and by doing so increasing organisational profitability (Avolio *et al.* 1991). Transactional leadership can be categorised into three types: contingent reward, where rewards are offered if certain criteria are met; active management by exception, where leaders aim to intervene in followers' behaviours before they become problematic; and passive management by exception, where leaders do not intervene until followers' behaviour become problematic (Horwitz *et al.* 2008).

In contrast to transformational leadership behaviours that facilitate feedback and learning in a context of change, transactional behaviours refresh and refine current organisational learning stored in the company's culture, structure, strategy, procedures, and systems

(Waldman, Ramirez, House & Puranam 2001). For the sake of efficiency, transactional leaders foster rule-based ways of doing things (Bass 1998). Spahr (2016) adds to the above by stating that transactional leadership depends on self-motivated people who work well in a structured, directed environment. Transactional leadership focuses on results, conforms to the existing structure of an organisation, and measures success according to that organisation's system of rewards and penalties. Furthermore, transactional leaders have formal authority and positions of responsibility in an organisation and are responsible for maintaining routine by managing individual performance and facilitating group performance. Groups often expect leaders to conform to the followers' leader-role expectations and to secure rewards for the group. Fulfilment of such expectations is "reciprocated in the form of status, esteem, and heightened influence" (Hollander & Julian 1969:390).

Transactional leaders are leaders who work with the assumption that performance is enhanced by a clear chain of command, direction, and monitoring employees. The leader sets the goals and gives direction and the followers are expected to obey. Leaders become involved only when standards are not met or when a problem becomes severe (Eagly, Johannes-Schmidt & Van Engen 2003 in Vetter 2013; Northouse 2007). Transactional leaders are attentive and monitor their followers' work to find mistakes. Transactional dimensions share lower leadership efficacy than transformational leadership dimensions. Theoretically, the most effective transactional dimension is contingent reward, which describes a more or less implicit contract between leader and follower (for example – in exchange for the work done by the follower, the leader promises a reward). Active management-by-exception is the label of leadership behaviour which is shown by leaders who interfere only to prevent the failure of their followers or to avert deviations from designated standards. In contrast, passive management by exception describes leaders who intervene after mistakes have occurred to limit possible damage (Rowold 2005).

5.6.2.3.2   Transformational leadership theory

Up until the 1970s, supervision was deemed the means to create improvements to the performance in the workplace. However, in the 1970s and 1980s, the study of leadership shifted its focus and an increasing number of studies started to conceptualise leadership as a process or relationship (Gaines 2007). This led to the development of the theories of charismatic and transformational leadership. What was initially developed by political

scientist James McGregor Burns (1978) as transforming leadership, was developed further by Bass (1996; 1985) and named transformational leadership. Burns' (1978) notion of transforming leadership described people as elevating one another beyond individual goals and self-interest toward a shared commitment and merging of interests. Burns (1978:30) defined leadership as "not merely a property or activity of leaders but as a relationship between leaders and a multitude of followers in a great merging of motivations and purposes of both". This definition clearly indicates that this conception is centred on leadership as a collaborative relational process that cannot occur without communication. Although the terms "transforming" and "transformational leadership" seem nearly identical, an important distinction can be perceived. Burns' (1978) ideas with the earlier theory focused more on social reform by moral elevation of followers' values and needs, and was focused on the political arena, while Bass' transformational leadership is focused on attaining practical organisational objectives (Yukl 2010 in Goertzen 2014).

Burns (1978) was the first scholar to distinguish conceptually between transactional and transformational leadership (Yukl 1998). With transactional leadership, the actions of single managers appear to create extraordinarily high levels of employee commitment, effort, and a willingness to take risks in support of the organisation or its mission (Behling & McFillen 1996). In his work, *Leadership*, Burns linked the roles of leadership and followership by defining leaders as those individuals who attempted to find followers' interests and needs in order to reach the goals of both leaders and followers. According to Burns' original thinking, transformational leadership is characterised by the reciprocal learning relationship that produces the paradoxical idea that leaders lead best when being led (Preskill & Brookfield 2009). Pearce *et al.* (2003:281) describe transformational leaders as those who engage in behaviours that transmit a sense of mission, delegate authority, coach and teach, and emphasise problem solving and the use of reasoning.

This view can in part be ascribed to the framing of leadership as a managerial concern, exercised to attain maximum work productivity from organisational employees. The leadership literature on transformational leadership theory (Burns 1978; Bass 1985) is rooted in the cognitive-behavioural tradition that rarely centres the communicative (inter)actions at play. This is in contrast with the latest developments in leadership theory, where agency in collective bodies rather than singular heroes is proposed (Mitra 2013).

Bass (1985:20), building on the work of Burns, defines a transformational leader as someone who "motivates us to do more than we originally expected to do". To accomplish this, any one of three interrelated ways can be applied. Firstly, a transformational leader may raise the level of awareness and consciousness of followers, and the significance of goals and methods of achieving those goals. A second option is to get followers to transcend their own self-interest for a greater cause, and finally, a transformational leader may alter the need level of followers (according to a hierarchy of needs) or expand their "portfolio of needs and wants" (Bass 1985:20). Transformational leaders convey a strong sense of purpose and collective mission and motivate employees by communicating an inspirational vision and high performance expectations. This form of leadership creates an emotional attachment between leaders and followers (Men 2014). According to Yukl (2006), transformational leaders elicit strong emotions from followers. Burns' conception of transformational leadership can be viewed both as a micro-level influence process between individuals, as well as a macro-level process of mobilising power to change social systems and reform institutions as they act as their role models and this causes followers to identify strongly with them (Yukl 1994). Empirical studies conducted in several countries across the globe and across organisational contexts have concluded that the dimensions of transformational leadership are characterised by a high efficacy of the leader, follower satisfaction, and intensive activity of the leader (Rowold & Heinitz 2007 in Bass & Riggio 2006; Judge & Piccolo 2004; Smith, Matkin & Fritz 2004; House & Aditya 1997).

In an investigation of theories and research on transformational leadership since Burns' (1978) work, Yukl (1994) identified 11 guidelines for leaders seeking to transform their organisations. These are to (1) develop a clear and appealing vision, (2) develop a strategy for attaining the vision, (3) articulate and promote the vision, (4) act confident and optimistic, (5) express confidence in followers, (6) use early success in small steps to build confidence, (7) celebrate success, (8) use dramatic, symbolic actions to emphasise key values, (9) lead by example, (10) create, modify, or eliminate cultural forms, and (11) use rites of transition to help people through change.

In transformational leadership, four main components that are instrumental in follower attainment are identified. Avolio, Bass and Jung (1999) and Bass (1985) refer to these components of transformational leadership as the four I's:

- **Idealised influence**. This implies that leaders behave in such a way that they serve as charismatic role models for their followers – someone that their followers want to emulate (Bass & Avolio 1994). Idealised influence (attributed) refers to the degree to which followers attribute positive traits (charisma) to their leader. Idealised influence (behaviour) represents a set of leadership behaviours which are based on high ethical standards in combination with a distinct achievement motive (Bass 1985).

- **Inspirational motivation**. Here the followers' need to have meaning in their work is addressed by the leader. Leaders motivate their followers and inspire those around them by giving meaning to their followers' work. Inspirational motivation describes leader behaviour which is based on an optimistic and enthusiastic way of communicating a vision to followers. The job to be done should not be felt as an obligation but as a challenge. This also includes the articulation of a desirable vision for the future (Avolio *et al.* 1999).

- **Intellectual stimulation**. Leaders stimulate followers by encouraging them to be creative and to question old beliefs and assumptions or the status quo. Intellectual stimulation describes what the leader does or provides to instil creativity and innovation in their followers (Bass & Avolio 1994). This also refers to the leadership behaviour a leader shows to involve followers in decision-making processes. The leader particularly emphasises innovation and creativity in this behaviour mode. If followers make mistakes during the creative process of solving problems, they are not criticised in front of their colleagues (Bass & Riggio 2006).

- **Individualised consideration**. Leaders attend to each individual follower's needs through two-way communication, as identified in the full range leadership model. Individualised consideration means promoting the followers' career development and meeting their individual needs. The leader acts as a coach and mentor to the followers and focuses on their need for growth as a leader themselves (Bass & Avolio 1994).

These four dimensions of transformational leadership are empirically distinguishable and can be studied in isolation. Transformational leaders may use any of the four dimensions to a greater or lesser extent, depending on their ability, preferences, or the requirements of the situation. The different dimensions can therefore be associated with different organisational outcomes (Boies, Fiset & Gill 2015).

Jin (2010:174) describes transformational leadership as integrating "empathy, compassion, sensitivity, relationship building, and innovation". Transformational leaders are sincerely concerned about the wellbeing of their employees, foster a climate of trust, nurture confidence in their followers, and encourage individual development. Transformational leaders often closely interact with their followers to better understand and address their needs.

From the above discussion it is clear that communication is an important part of transformational leadership. Leadership as a social process and the communicative enactment of transformation depend on the leadership relations at hand. Mitra (2013) argues that the communicative naming of particular identities, processes, and concepts by leaders and change participants enacts transformation. These three domains – identities, processes, and concepts – are interconnected in change processes and are "co-named" by leaders or participants in ongoing communicative sequences of acting/re-acting, attuned to discursive flows and material conditions that shape various contexts. Different combinations of such actions/re-actions subsequently inform the attributed behaviours of transformational leadership, such as idealised influence and inspirational motivation, so that the leadership "transformations" perspective both extends and probes deeper into the "first-order" process of transformational leadership. An effective transformational leader is thought to have the distinct ability to communicate well, to express and be understood (Creasy 2012). To amplify support, transformational leaders underscore the qualities, attributes, and strengths of their employees via inspirational communication. Such leaders also recognise and praise the contributions of their employees in the form of personal recognition (Whitford & Moss 2009).

Macik-Frey (2007) cite Barbuto and Burbach (2006), Gardner and Stough (2002), and Sivanathan and Fekken (2002) by referring to the many studies that have shown positive relationships between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership. Transformational leaders are perceived as emphatic communicators who are approachable. With transactional leadership, the actions of single managers appear to create

extraordinarily high levels of employee commitment, effort, and a willingness to take risks in support of the organisation or its mission (Behling & McFillen 1996).

A combination of the prior two discussed theories is known as the full range leadership theory (FRLT). The full range leadership model describes the distribution of leadership behaviours, ranging from completely inactive (*laissez-faire*) to transactional behaviours to transformational behaviours (Barbuto 2005).

5.6.2.3.3 Charismatic leadership theory

Charisma is a Greek word meaning "gift" (Conger & Kanungo 1987), or as indicated by Weber, Henderson & Parsons (1964), "the gift of grace". Originating from Weber's (1947) early work on the potential implications of charismatic leadership for organisations, charismatic leadership theories emphasise the behaviours that allow such leaders to have exceptional influence over their followers (Yukl 1999). Weber, Henderson & Parsons (1964) described these leaders as self-appointed or -ordained and self-styled leaders who are followed by individuals who are in distress and believe they have to follow this leader because he/she is extraordinarily qualified. According to Weber, Henderson & Parsons (1964), charismatic leaders have a definite mission. The role and actions required of these leaders are seen as their destiny. It is therefore expected from followers to acknowledge this destiny. The authority of genuine charisma is derived from the duty of the followers to accept this. House (1977) was the first to present an integrated theoretical framework and testable proposition to explain the behaviour of charismatic leaders. The psychological impact of charismatic leaders on followers was also investigated by this scholar. Most importantly was the fact that House (1977) provided a theoretical explanation regarding the means by which charismatic leaders influence followers. House (1977) argues that charismatic leaders possess the ability or the necessary persuasive skills to greatly influence followers and developed a theory of charismatic leadership based on sociological theories of charisma. In his theory of charismatic leadership, House (1977) proposes that charismatic leaders may be distinguished from non-charismatic leaders based on their personal characteristics and their leadership behaviours. He describes charismatic leaders as being likely to be more self-confident, dominant, and having a high need for influence.

Several motivational processes are activated by these types of leader behaviour. The ability of the charismatic leader to link the vision with valued aspects of the followers' self-concepts

allows charismatic leaders to increase the intrinsic valence of the effort related to achieving the vision and the intrinsic valence of goal accomplishment. Charismatic leaders are also able to increase self-efficacy and collective efficacy among their followers (Shamir, House & Arthur 1993). The leader behaviour of charismatic leaders results in three processes of psychological attachment. Firstly, followers may personally identify with the leader and want to emulate the leaders' behaviours or values. Secondly, followers may socially identify with their workgroup as a result of an increase in salience of the collective identity in followers' self-concepts; and finally, followers may internalise values of either the leader or the workgroup.

The conclusion reached by Shamir *et al.* (1993) was that the result of these three motivational processes enables followers to demonstrate personal commitment to the leader and the mission, a willingness to make sacrifices, and an increased level of organisational citizenship behaviour. Judge and Piccolo (2004) state that the bulk of leadership research has focused on transformational and charismatic leadership and that the transformational leadership theories, in contrast to the rational transactional paradigm, recognise the affective and emotional needs and responses of followers. The emphasis in the transformational and charismatic theories is placed on the emotional, inspirational, and symbolic aspects of leadership influence (Conger & Kanungo 1998). Bono and Ilies (2006) cite Kirkpatrick and Locke (1996) and House and Shamir (1993) who found that attempts to integrate the multiple theories of transformational and charismatic leadership reveal many commonalities between them of which vision and a charismatic communication style are two more prominently mentioned ones.

5.6.2.3.4   Ethical leadership theory

Distressing ethical scandals in the business sector have led to a call for more ethical organisational leadership as organisations are expected to increase their efforts in demonstrating ethical governance and leadership and in taking responsibility for their actions (Eisenbeiss 2012). Unfortunately, the body of knowledge on ethical leadership is still relatively small (Den Hartog & De Hoogh 2009). Brown, Treviño and Harrison (2005:120) define ethical leadership as "the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision making". The theory

holds that leaders influence followers' ethical decisions and actions through social learning processes, communicating the importance of ethical standards, social exchange processes, and using performance management systems to make employees accountable for their conduct (Brown & Treviño 2006). Two dimensions of the ethical leader emerge from the above definition, namely the moral person and the moral leader. The moral person is described by Brown *et al.* (2005) and Treviño *et al.* (2003) as an honest, trustworthy, fair, and principled decision maker who shows concern for people and behaves ethically both in his/her personal and professional life. The moral manager or leader, on the other hand, represents the proactive efforts of the manager to influence ethical behaviour on the part of employees. These proactive efforts include communicating an ethics and values message, intentionally role modelling ethical behaviour, using the reward system to hold employees accountable for ethical conduct, and disciplining those who do not follow standards (Brown *et al.* 2005; Treviño *et al.* 2003). Ethical leadership, as conceptualised by Brown *et al.* (2005), highlight three key building blocks of the concept, namely being an ethical example, treating people fairly, and actively managing morality. According to Steinbauer, Renn, Taylor and Njoroge (2014), ethical leadership does affect follower behaviour in a positive way. These authors refer to Mayer, Kuenzi and Greenbaum (2009; 2011), who proved in their research that an ethical climate in an organisation mediated the relationship between ethical leadership and follower misconduct.

Palazzo, Krings and Hoffrage (2012:324) conceptualise the interplay of psychological and sociological forces on three different levels, namely "the individual sensemaking, the decision-making situation, and the ideological context". According to Storsletten and Jakobsen (2015), leadership theory and ethical leadership theory are best explained by using the perspective of Kierkegaard's modes of existence as staring point. The modes of existence identified by Kierkegaard are the aesthetic, ethical, and religious modes. These authors hold that Kierkegaard's three modes of existence give a relevant explanation for development of leadership theory. For this discussion on ethical leadership, the ethical mode of existence and its link to ethical leadership, as described by Kierkegaard, will receive attention. Copleston (1985) adds to the above, stating that in the ethical sphere, life is serious. A person functioning from the ethical perspective takes his/her place within social institutions and accepts the obligations which flow from them. Determined moral standards and obligations are accepted and duties and responsibilities are of great importance. Certain norms and values, which are regarded as relevant to the person and other people as well,

are acknowledged. Fundamental categories for the ethical are "good and evil" and "duty", and these categories are regarded as having a shared meaning by all who use them (Gardner 2002:55). For the ethical person, making choices can be problematic and serious as decisions on how to apply their ethical codes to various concrete situations can be challenging (Jones 1975).

While a partial overlap between transformational and ethical leadership exists, important differences can be perceived between the two concepts. Ethical leaders emphasise moral management and aim to influence others' behaviour by explicitly setting ethical standards and keeping employees accountable for these standards using rewards and discipline (Brown *et al.* 2005) – a dimension that is not present in transformational leadership. Contrary to transformational leadership, ethical leadership does not refer to visionary or intellectually stimulating leadership (Brown *et al.* 2005), which are closely associated with transformational leadership. Ethical leadership is a construct that can be applied at different levels in the organisational hierarchy.

5.6.2.3.5   Authentic leadership theory

Authentic leadership has been theorised as relating to trust in management, which in turn has an impact on firm performance (Luthans & Avolio 2003). Surfacing after the bursting of the "dot-com bubble", which is associated with the collapse of Enron and its auditor Arthur Andersen due to fraudulent accounting, and the exposure of the fraudulent dealings of large companies such as WorldCom, Adelphia, and Tyco (Argenti 2013), the concept of authentic leadership developed because of the crisis of confidence in contemporary corporate leadership (Avolio & Gardner 2005). Currently, there is unfortunately still only limited information available on how leadership authenticity influences leader relationships with followers (Spitzmuller & Ilies 2010).

The term "authenticity", as proposed by Avolio and Gardner (2005:320), refers to owning one's personal experiences – be they thoughts, emotions, needs, wants, preferences, or beliefs – which are processes captured by the injunction to "know oneself" and "further implies that one acts in accord with the true self, expressing oneself in ways that are consistent with inner thought and feelings" (Harter 2002:382 in Avolio & Gardner 2005:320). Erickson (1995 in Avolio & Gardner 2005) warns that authenticity is often confused with sincerity. Sincerity, however, refers to the extent to which one's outward expression of

feelings and thoughts are aligned with the reality experienced by the self. Sincerity therefore involves oneself and another person besides oneself. While a person's sincerity can be evaluated according to the extent to which the self is represented accurately and honestly to others, rather than the extent to which one is true to the self, authenticity refers to "one's relationship with oneself" (Erickson 1995:124 as cited by Avolio & Gardner 2005). Critical to understanding the construct of authenticity is the recognition of the self-referential nature of the construct. Authenticity, or the authentic self, is considered as "existing wholly by the laws of its own being" (Erickson 1995:125 in Avolio & Gardner 2005).

The principle of "to thine own self be true" has become a central tenet of authentic leadership theory (Clapp-Smith, Vogelgesang & Avey 2009). Avolio *et al.* (2004) posit that authentic leadership theory was initially proposed by Luthans and Avolio (2003) and then further developed by Gardner *et al.* (2005) and Avolio and Luthans (2006). Luthans and Avolio (2003) integrated the fields of positive organisational behaviour, and transformational and moral/ethical leadership into a broader framework of authentic leadership which can be described as a process by which leaders are deeply aware of their own and others' values or moral perspectives, knowledge, and strengths; aware of the context in which they operate; and are hopeful, optimistic, resilient, and high in moral character (Avolio *et al.* 2004). Authentic leadership has started to gain legitimacy in its own right. Luthans and Avolio (2003) propose that collaboration between the three mentioned approaches through authentic leadership will lead to a paradigm shift in the way in which organisations and societies should be led in order to survive and gain competitive advantage (Özkan & Ceylan 2012). At the heart of authentic leadership is the concept of ethicality. Authentic leadership assumes a key role in defining leaders' ethical behaviour in the workplace. For authentic leaders, excellence of character or virtue takes centre stage (Ilies *et al.* 2005).

Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing and Peterson (2008:89) suggest that authentic leadership is a "higher-order, multidimensional construct, comprised of self-awareness, balanced processing, relational transparency, and internalisation of a moral/ethical perspective". Authentic leadership is also viewed by Ilies *et al.* (2005) and May, Gilson and Harter (2004) as the root concept and basis for any positive forms of leadership. Authentic leaders are not only concerned with their personal authenticity, but also how that authenticity can be conveyed to others in order to influence followers to work toward common goals and objectives. Authentic leaders are aware of the effect of their actions on those around them,

they are open and transparent about the internal and external processes and influences of the organisations they operate in, and assist followers in developing a better sense of what the organisational challenges and goals are.

Shamir and Eilam (2005:x) introduced the construct of authentic followership to assist them in defining authentic leadership and subsequently to describe the authentic follower as "followers who follow leaders for authentic reasons and have an authentic relationship with the leader". The construct of authentic followership is viewed by Gardner *et al.* (2005) as mirroring the developmental processes of authentic leadership and being characterised by the fact that followers have heightened levels of self-awareness and self-regulation. This in turn leads to positive follower development and outcomes. Authentic followers therefore are viewed as displaying internalised regulatory processes, balanced processing of information, relational transparency, and authentic behaviour. As such, it parallels the characteristics of authentic leaders (Gardner *et al.* 2005).

Authentic leadership theory includes an in-depth focus on leader and follower self-awareness and regulation, positive psychological capital, and the moderating role of a positive organisational climate (Adler & Kwon 2002). This feature is not a prime consideration in other leadership theories. Authentic leadership is viewed as the essence of all positive and holistic approaches to leadership and a root concept for positive leadership behaviours. Authentic leadership occurs when the true self of a person is enacted in the person's leadership role (Leroy, Anseel, Gardner & Sels 2015). In the workplace, authentic leadership is recognised by leaders enacting their true selves and this type of leadership manifests in behaviours such as leaders being honest with themselves (by admitting personal mistakes), being sincere with others (telling others the hard truth), and behaving in a way that reflects one's personal values (Walumba *et al.* 2008). According to Avolio and Gardner (2005:329), authentic leadership "can incorporate transformational, charismatic, servant, spiritual, or other forms of positive leadership". Authentic leadership theory is closely related to the concept of authentic functioning, which applies to the organisational roles of leader and followers (Avolio & Gardner 2005; Gardner *et al.* 2005). This implies that both leader and followers can differ in the extent to which they allow their true selves to come into play at work (Gardner, Fisher & Hunt 2009).

Authentic leadership reflects a context-specific (work-related) and role-specific (leader) manifestation of authentic functioning and as such, Luthans and Avolio (2003:243) define authentic leadership as:

> "[a] process that draws from both positive psychological capabilities and a highly developed organisational context, which results in both greater self-awareness and self-regulated positive behaviour on the part of the leaders and employees, fostering positive self-development. The authentic leaders are confident, hopeful, optimistic, resilient, transparent, moral/ethical, future-orientated, and give priority to developing employees to be leaders."

Three main components of authentic leadership surface from the definition given above: self-awareness, self-regulation, and self-development. Ilies *et al.* (2005), on the other hand, propose a four-component model of authentic leadership which includes the components self-awareness, unbiased processing, authentic behaviour/acting, and authentic relational orientation. In this study, Walumbwa *et al.*'s (2008:94) definition of authentic leadership is especially applicable:

> "A pattern of leader behaviour that draws upon and promotes both positive psychological capacities and a positive ethical climate, to foster greater self-awareness, an internalised moral perspective, balanced processing of information, and relational transparency on the part of leader working with followers, fostering positive self-development."

5.6.2.3.6 Servant leadership theory

Changing times are altering existing views of leadership behaviour. Companies are linking long-term stakeholder relationships to long-term profits, and leadership focused on ethical behaviour and a concern for society are what organisations are looking for (Peterson, Galvin & Lange 2012). Alternative approaches to traditional leadership perspectives are coming to the forefront and one such an approach is the theory of servant leadership. Servant leaders are described as being sharply different from the person who is leader-first. In fact, the leader-first and the servant-first are two extremes types, according to Greenleaf (1970:15), who states that the difference between the two concepts manifests itself in the care taken by the servant-first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are served.

According to Van Dierendonck (2011), Robert Greenleaf (1904-1990), in his seminal work *The Servant as Leader*, first published in 1970, was the first to coin the term "servant leadership". Greenleaf (1977:7 in Van Dierendonck 2011) opines that

> "[t]he Servant-Leader is servant first [….] It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead [….] The best test, and difficult to administer is this: Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, and more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society? Will they benefit, or at least not further be harmed?"

Servant leaders function as stewards who are entrusted with the responsibility of the holistic development of their followers. According to Greenleaf (1977), a servant leader is able to guide others toward achieving a goal by eliciting trust. Beck (2014) cites Greenleaf (1970) as describing the servant leader as someone distinctly different from one who is a leader first. A servant leader ensures that other people's highest priority needs are served, and, according to Luthans and Avolio (2003), the servant leader is motivated by the need to serve, and not as perceived in most leaders, the need for power. It is important to note here that approaching leadership from a need to serve does not imply that the power is now situated in the hands of the follower. What it implies is that the leader now has the responsibility to increase the autonomy and responsibility of followers by encouraging them to think for themselves (Bowie 2000). Servant leadership can be recognised by what Greenleaf (1970) describes as a unique leadership philosophy motivated by a need to serve others over an aspiration to lead others (in Beck 2014).

Greenleaf (1977) suggests that servant leaders ascend to a higher plane of motivation by focusing on the needs of their followers. Servant leadership is shown as being follower centric, and Ehrhart (2004) proposes seven distinct indicators of servant leadership style: (a) forming relationships with subordinates, (b) empowering subordinates, (c) helping subordinates grow and succeed, (d) behaving ethically, (e) having conceptual skills, (f) putting subordinates first, and (g) creating value for those outside of the organisation. Leadership has been defined as "the unit-level cognition about how unit members as a whole are treated by the leader" (Ehrhart 2004:68). Considering this definition and the servant leader behaviours outlined above, a servant leader is defined as one who recognises and acts on his or her moral responsibility not only to the success of the organisation, but also

to the success of his or her subordinates and other organisational stakeholders (Ehrhart 2004). Spears (1998) identified ten major attributes of servant leadership based on Greenleaf's work. The ten attributes discussed below are by no means exhaustive but constitute the ones that concurrently surface in the literature as important. These include:

- Listening – driven by a deep commitment to listening intently to others, the servant leader seeks to identify the will of the group and helps to clarify that will by listening receptively to what is being said or by determining what is left unsaid. Listening also encompasses hearing one's own inner voice. Listening coupled with periods of reflection is essential to the growth of the servant leader and the organisation (Spears 2010).

- Empathy – The servant leader strives to understand and empathise with others and understands that people need to be understood and empathised with. Even when not accepting the person's conduct, the servant leader still does not reject the person. Emphatic listening is also of the essence (Spears 2010).

- Healing – The healing of relationships is an important source of transformation in integration. The ability to heal one's self and one's relationship with others are important to the servant leader. Servant leaders recognise that they have an opportunity to help make whole those with whom they come in contact (Spears 2010).

- Awareness – General awareness, and especially self-awareness, strengthens the servant leader. While awareness assists in grasping issues involving ethics, power, and values, it also lends itself to being able to view most situations from a more integrated, holistic point of view.

- Persuasion – Servant leaders rely on persuasion rather than their positional authority when making decisions in the organisation. Instead of coercing compliance, the servant leader seeks to convince others (Spears 2010:28).

- Conceptualisation – Servant leaders seek to nurture their abilities to dream great dreams. In organisations, conceptualisations are usually a key role of boards of trustees or directors. As they are often consumed by workloads and day-to day activities, servant leaders are called to seek a delicate balance between conceptual thinking and a day-to-day operational approach (Spears 2010:28).

- Foresight – Foresight is a characteristic that allows the servant leader to understand the lessons from the past, the realities of the present, and the likely consequence of a decision for the future. It is also deeply rooted in the intuitive mind (Spears 2010:28).

- Stewardship – Servant leadership, like stewardship, assumes first and foremost a commitment to serving the needs of others (Spears 2010:29).

- Commitment to the growth of people – Servant leaders believe that people have an intrinsic value beyond their tangible contributions as workers and are deeply committed to the growth of employees and colleagues (Spears 2010).

- Building community – Servant leaders seek to identify some means for building community among those who work within a given institution (Spears 2010).

Spears (1998) did, however, indicate that these characteristics could not be regarded as exhaustive. According to Russell and Stone (2002), subsequent writers on the subject of servant leadership have identified other attributes that are consistent with Greenleaf's writings. At least 20 attributes could be identified and these are listed in predominately broad categories in Table 5.1. Russell and Stone (2002) state that nine of the identified attributes are classified as functional attributes, based on their repetitive prominence in the existing literature. The attributes are listed along with references to the primary authors associated with them.

Functional attributes are the operative qualities, characteristics, and distinctive features belonging to leaders and observed through specific leader behaviours in the workplace. The functional attributes are the effective characteristics of servant leadership. The functional attributes are interrelated and reciprocally influence one another in certain instances. They are, however, distinct, identifiable characteristics that actuate leadership (Russell & Stone 2002).

Table 5.1: Attributes of servant leadership

Attributes of servant leadership No. 1-9 Functional attributes	Author(s) associated with identifying the attribute
1 .Vision	Covey 1996; De Pree 1997; Fairholm 1998; Ford 1991; Greenleaf 1977; Malphurs 1996; Melrose 1995; Miller 1995; Neuschel 1998
2. Honesty	Covey 1996; Fairholm 1998; Kouzes & Posner 1993; Nair 1994; Pollard 1996; Rinehart 1998; Winston 1999
3. Integrity	Covey 1996; Fairholm 1998; Kouzes & Posner 1993; Nair 1994; Pollard 1996; Rinehart 1998; Winston 1999
4. Trust	Covey 1996; De Pree 1997; Fairholm 1998; Ford 1991; Greenleaf 1977; Kouzes & Posner 1993; Melrose 1995; Miller 1995; Neuschel 1998
5. Service	Covey 1996; De Pree 1997; Fairholm 1998; Ford 1991; Greenleaf 1977; Kouzes & Posner 1993; Nair 1994; Neuschel 1998; Pollard 1996; Rinehart 1998
6. Modelling	Covey 1996; Briner & Pritchard 1998; De Pree 1997; Kouzes & Posner 1993; Malphurs 1996; Miller 1995; Pollard 1996
7. Pioneering	Covey 1996; Greenleaf 1980; Kouzes & Posner 1993; Melrose 1997; Miller 1995; Nair 1994; Neuschel 1998
8. Appreciation of others	Autry 2001; Covey 1990; Greenleaf 1977; Kouzes & Posner 1993; Pollard 1996; Winston 1999
9. Empowerment	Covey 1996; De Pree 1989; Fairholm 1998; Ford 1991; Kouzes & Posner 1993; Pollard 1996; Rinehart 1998; Melrose 1997; Rinehart 1998
The accompanying attributes of servant leadership	Author(s) associated with identifying the attribute
10. Communication	Melrose 1995; Neuschel 1998; Nix 1997
11. Credibility	Kouzes & Posner 1993; McKenna 1989; Neuschel 1998
12. Competence	De Pree 1997; Fairholm 1998; Greenleaf 1977

13. Stewardship	De Pree 1997; Fairholm 1998; Gaston 1987; Nix 1997; Spears 1998
14. Visibility	Cedar 1987; Kouzes & Posner 1993; Melrose 1995
15. Influence	Covey 1990; Greenleaf 1977; Kouzes & Posner 1995; Malphurs 1996
16. Persuasion	Covey 1990; De Pree 1997; Greenleaf 1980
17. Listening	Greenleaf 1977; Kouzes & Posner 1993; Neuschel 1998; Roberts 1987
18. Encouragement	Nix 1997; Pollard 1996; Spears 1998
19. Teaching	Fairholm 1998; Ford 1991; Neuschel 1998; Pollard 1996; Rinehart 1998
20. Delegation	Covey 1990; Fairholm 1998; Melrose 1997; Neuschel 1998; Pollard 1996

Source: Russell & Stone (2002)

Developing followers to their fullest potential as a person, an employee, a member of the community, and ultimately, a servant leader themselves is the end result rather than a means by which to meet an organisational goal (Greenleaf 1977; Page & Wong 2000; Ehrhart 2004; Liden, Wayne, Zhao & Henderson 2008).

Transformational, authentic, and servant leadership all recognise the importance of a positive moral perspective and a focus on the follower's development. Servant leadership as a construct is different whereby the servant leader's behaviour moves beyond transforming leadership and developing the followers; rather it has the objective of aligning the leaders' and the followers' motives (Barbuto & Wheeler 2006).

5.6.2.4   *Period 4: Post-charismatic and post-transformational theories*

According to Hernandez *et al.* (2011), over the past two decades, more nuanced, complex, and distinct approaches to leadership have emerged in the literature. As with many of the preceding theories, there is a variation among different scholars' classifications of these theories. According to Uhl-Bien *et al.* (2007:298), contemporary organisations are functioning in what many scholars refer to as the Knowledge Era. This era is characterised by a new competitive landscape driven by globalisation, technology, deregulation, and democratisation (Halal & Taylor 1999).

This category of leadership theories consists of a large number of theories that have developed in reaction to the new leadership theories, or factors affecting leadership in organisations, such as the economic crisis of the early 2000s. Since the early 1990s, a vast number of leadership theories have been developed. In the discussion that follows, the focus is on post-charismatic and post-transformational theories. The first theory that will be explored that is relevant to this particular study is the CLT.

5.6.2.4.1 Complexity leadership theory (CLT)

As stated in the introduction, whilst most of the research on leadership has been quantitative and rooted in social psychology, leadership research has recently seen the emergence of discursive approaches which seek to complement concepts of leadership derived from social psychology and to show the discursive resources by which the management of meaning is achieved (Clifton 2012; Nielsen 2009; Fairhurst 2007, 2008, 2009; Clifton 2006). The field of leadership is in the midst of a paradigm shift, and the relational leadership stream is becoming increasingly important (Fairhurst & Uhl-Bien 2012; Hunt & Dodge 2001). According to Uhl-Bien and Marion (2011), existing models of leadership will no longer suffice, and are giving way to new conceptualisations of leadership and organising. Predominant leadership theories such as the transformational leadership theory and LMX theory are reaching maturity. The evolvement of theories into a phase of maturity is described by Hunt and Dodge (2000) as consolidation/accommodation in the evolution of concepts.

Volatile organisational circumstances produce situations where leaders require a high level of adaptability as leaders are thrown into situations in which they do not even know that there are existing problems. This is not something that is unique to a select group of organisations only, but is a phenomenon that is shared by leadership and organisations across the globe (Cunliffe & Eriksen 2011).

CLT recognises the dynamic interactions that take place within organisations as they change, create innovation, and evolve with a focus on complex relationships and network interaction rather than controlling, standardising, and autocracy (Uhl-Bien & Marion 2008).

Introduced by Marion and Uhl-Bien (2001), complexity leadership is based on the application of CT to the study of organisational behaviour and the practice of leadership. In the 1990s,

researchers drew from CT studies in physics, chemistry, biology, and computer science to cultivate novel insights about their fields. Such research was initially focused on the social sciences in general (Marion 1999; Goldstein 1995; Nowak, May & Sigmund 1995), but it was applied to organisational processes soon after this (Anderson 1999; McKelvey 1997). CLT is characterised by emergent leadership, facilitation, adaptation, and uncertainty. According to Uhl-Bien and Marion (2008), further characteristics include recognition of interrelationships, emergence, and fostering innovation. According to Marion (2008:3), "CT is the study of the dynamic behaviours of complexly interacting, interdependent, and adaptive agents under conditions of internal and external pressure".

CLT has made a significant contribution towards the understanding of leadership as a complex process. According to Drath (2001) and Meyer, Gaba and Colwell (2005), CLT investigates the role of leadership in accelerating the processes in organisations by which interdependent actions among individuals combine into a collective effort. It is a framework for leadership that enables the learning, creative, and adaptive capacity of CAS in knowledge-producing organisational units.

CLT is based on a whole systems view. The whole systems view is far removed from the more traditional approaches to systems theory that focus on variables and component parts. The focus in this theory, according to Lichtenstein *et al.* (2006:2-3) is on:

- expanding the locus of leadership from the isolated, role-based actions of individuals to the innovative, contextual interactions that occur across an entire social system;
- extending current theory and practice by focusing on micro-strategic leadership actions across all organisational levels and across organisational boundaries;
- increasing the relevance and accuracy of leadership theory by exploring how leadership outcomes are based on complex interactions, rather than independent variables;
- highlighting the relational foundations of change in emerging organisational fields, through the idea that leadership occurs in the "spaces between" agents;
- providing a new and rich foundation for explaining the constructive process of collective action as well as the influential "behaviours" of collective actors; and
- connecting to innovative methodologies that can enrich our understanding of how leadership is enacted and received in complex environments.

CLT seeks to take advantage of the dynamic capabilities of CAS by focusing on, identifying, and exploring the strategies and behaviours that foster organisational and subunit creativity, learning, and adaptability when appropriate CAS dynamics are enabled within contexts of hierarchical coordination (bureaucracy) (Uhl-Bien *et al.* 2007).

In CLT, three broad types of leadership can be recognised, namely leadership grounded in traditional, bureaucratic notions of hierarchy, and alignment and control (administrative leadership); secondly, leadership that structures and enables conditions such that CAS are able to optimally address creative problem solving, adaptability, and learning (referring to what is called enabling leadership); and thirdly, as a generative dynamic that underlies emergent change activities (adaptive leadership) (Uhl-Bien *et al.* 2007).

While the characteristics of CLT include the recognition of interrelationships by leaders, leadership emergence, and the fostering of innovation in the organisation (Uhl-Bien & Marion 2008), what CLT has however failed to adequately do is to incorporate the impact of actors' characteristics and behaviours on leadership phenomena.

CLT contends that leadership consists of three separate but intertwined leadership functions, namely administrative, adaptive, and enabling (Uhl-Bien *et al.* 2007).

- **Administrative leadership**. Administrative leadership includes official managerial functions such as organisational structuring, vision generation, organisational strategy development, and resource acquisition. It is a "top-down" function based on authority and position (Uhl-Bien *et al.* 2008:200). It has a structured nature which enables a channel/route through which decisions and strategies can flow and be implemented. The main purpose of administrative leadership is organisational efficiency (Schreiber & Carley 2008).

- **Adaptive leadership**. Adaptive leadership involves a dynamic and collective process that leads to change in an organisation. The cooperative or competitive interactions of organisational members result in the creation and storage of distributed knowledge (Gronn 2002). The networks in which these interactions occur are referred to as CAS (Hazy 2008 in Livingston & Lusin 2009). CAS are fuelled by the existence of differentials known as adaptive tension. In order to ensure that the appropriate amount of tension is generated in order to promote adaptive evolution,

but without disturbing the organisational order, balance must be maintained in the system. Livingston and Lusin (2009) cite Lewin (1999), who refers to the point of balance between the extremes of adaptive tension as the edge of chaos.

- **Enabling leadership**. The creation of beneficial conditions that promote and stimulate emergent collective action can be referred to as enabling leadership. Enabling leadership is composed of two primary roles. First, "it fosters conditions that enable the emergence of complexity dynamics, or adaptive leadership within an organisation" (Marion & Uhl-Bien 2007:152). Secondly, it is responsible for combining the dissonance of administrative leadership and adaptive leadership into a harmonious system. Uhl-Bien (2008:205-206) explains: "Enabling leadership manages the entanglement between administrative and adaptive leadership; this includes (1) managing the organisational conditions in which adaptive leadership exists, and (2) helping disseminate innovative products of adaptive leadership upward and through the formal managerial system."

5.6.2.4.2   Contextual leadership theory

The contextual theory of leadership was developed by Osborn *et al.* (2002). This theory was built on Katz and Kahn's (1978) open systems theory and Jacques' (1989) distinctions among the top, middle, and bottom of systems (stratified systems theory). Drawing on CT, these authors characterised the context as ranging from stable to chaotic. Leadership is viewed as an emerging social construction embedded in a unique organisation (Osborn *et al.* 2002). Linking leadership to organisation theory, Osborn *et al.* (2002) examined four different leadership contexts:

- Stability
- Crisis-functioning
- Dynamic equilibrium
- Edge of chaos

Osborn *et al.* (2002) analysed and discussed different levels of leadership that were deemed as most relevant or central to each of these specific contexts at the hand of patterning of attention and network leadership. These authors suggest that "in the edge of chaos context,

order, cohesion, and viability may emerge from the middle and bottom." They suggest that the focus should not only be on top management and the choices they make, but the whole system and its leadership should be considered at the edge of chaos (Osborn *et al.* 2002:823). The complexity sciences' view of leadership focuses not only on the individual influence of the leaders, but the collective leadership influence which is necessary for the management of complex dynamic systems and interconnectivity that extends to the environment.

5.6.2.4.3   Relational leadership theories

Relational leadership is a relatively new term in the leadership literature, and, according to Uhl-Bien (2006), the meaning thereof is still open to interpretation. Social exchange and transactional theories are viewed as theories that take a relational approach to leadership. The social exchange leadership theories (Jacobs 1970 in Gaines 2007; Hollander 1979), including LMX theory (Danserau *et al.* 1975), initiated a change in the focus of leadership theories by moving more toward the leader-follower relationship. Despite this change, the emphasis in leadership studies still largely focus on the leader. Denis, Langley and Sergi (2012) view current theories which seek to move beyond the "heroic" or "romantic" view of unitary leadership. These authors refer to this as "leadership in the plural" and identify four streams of this type of leadership, namely sharing leadership for team effectiveness (mutual leadership in the context of groups), pooling leadership capacities at the top to direct orders (which aligns with notions of collective leadership), spreading leadership within and across levels over time (which is associated with notions of distributed leadership), and producing leadership through interaction (often referred to as relational leadership).

Uhl-Bien (2006) also views relational leadership as an overarching framework for the study of leadership. According to Uhl-Bien (2006:655), relational leadership is "a social process through which emergent coordination (social order) and change (new values, attitudes, approaches, behaviours, and ideologies) are constructed and produced". Uhl-Bien's (2006) definition implies that leadership is a phenomenon that occurs on different organisational levels and in dynamic relationships and is constructed and produced. Relational leadership theories, according to Gaines (2007), are based on the leader gaining compliance by influencing followers and negotiating with followers about rewards and consequences in exchange for their performance. Gaines (2007) further argues that the person in the

leadership role must have some kind of institutional authority, whether it is position, power, or some other type of power, to impose consequences in order to reinforce or control the behaviour of followers.

Having written extensively about relational leadership, Uhl-Bien (2006) explains that despite the claim that the term "relational leadership" is a relatively new in the leadership literature, the concept of relation-oriented behaviour is not so new in leadership studies (Uhl-Bien 2006:654). Hunt and Dodge (2000:448) define the relational perspective as follows:

> "We consider the relational perspective and [the approaches within it] […] to be at the forefront of emerging leadership thrusts [….] The relational focus is one that moves beyond unidirectional or even reciprocal leader/follower relationships to one that recognises leadership wherever it occurs; it is not restricted to a single or even a small set of formal or informal leaders; and in its strongest form, functions as a dynamic system embedding leadership, environmental, and organisational aspects."

Drath (2001) presented a relational model of leadership that is built around three knowledge principles of leadership: (1) personal dominance, (2) interpersonal influence, and (3) relational dialogue. Each principle is understood in accordance with different operating assumptions and approaches related to leadership. These leadership functions include setting direction, creating and maintaining commitment, and facing adaptive challenges. A specific style will be chosen depending on the context.

According to Drath (2001:13), personal dominance assumes that "[l]eadership is something that a person possesses. Leadership is an expression of this personally possessed quality or characteristic. Leaders lead because followers are convinced of the truth of their leadership". This principle creates high levels of dependency on and responsibility of the person in the role of leader. It is a more directive style of leading.

Drath (2001) explains interpersonal influence as a leadership role occupied by the person with the most influence. Certain individuals can acquire certain qualities and characteristics that enable them to be effective in such a role. Leadership actively involves followers in the process of negotiating influence. The leadership is distinguished by the leader influencing the followers more than the followers are able to influence the leader.

There is a shift in sensemaking between the first and the second principle. In the second principle it is assumed that followers actively choose to follow and act with the leader, which enables multiple perspectives, more creativity and innovation, and shared commitment.

The second and third principles of leadership described by Drath (2001) are based on the idea of leadership as a reciprocal process of shared sensemaking. This idea of shared sensemaking is also put forth by scholars like Weick (2001) and Smircich and Morgan (1982). The third principle, as described by Drath (2001), namely relational dialogue, is related to the act of shaping meaning. Drath (2001:151) calls forth the third principle by arguing that "when there is shared work among people who make sense of that work and the world from differing worldviews, how can those people accomplish the leadership tasks while holding those differing worldviews as equally warrantable?"

In order to substantiate this argument, relational dialogue assumes that leadership is a property of a social system, and that individual people do not possess leadership; rather, leadership occurs when individuals take part in collaborative forms of thought and action. Drath (2001:15) further states that if there is an individual leader, the actions that person takes are an aspect of participation in the process of leadership.

An important aspect emphasised by Drath (2001) was the fact that as the context in which the leadership takes places becomes more complex, an increase in the need for relational dialogue becomes clear. Drath (2001) suggests four strategies for bringing forth the third principle: firstly, the cultivation of sensemaking processes; secondly, the exploration of narrative models of understanding; thirdly, the development of capacity for dialogue; and finally, increasing interpersonal responsibility for leadership.

Four assumptions concerning interpersonal communication behaviour underlie relational theory. According to Watt (2013), Littlejohn (1999:252) suggests that relationships are "connected through communication" and that the "nature of the relationship is defined by the communication between its members". A third assumption made by Littlejohn (1999:252 in Watt 2013) relates to the fact that relationships are usually defined implicitly and not explicitly. Finally, it is the view of Littlejohn (1999:253 in Watt 2013) that these mentioned assumptions have as effect relationships that are dynamic and subject to change. During relational interaction, the communicator regards not only himself or herself, but also the other and the relationship (Burgoon, Buller, Hale & De Turck 1984 in Watt 2013). Relational

theory further implies that all interaction among people involves content and relationship messages, and according to Burgoon and Hale (1984), relational messages are also frequently related via nonverbal channels.

In conclusion, it can be said that rather than focusing on a leader's actions, traits, and behaviours, relational leadership theory (RLT) primarily focuses on the study of social processes in which leadership is constituted. These processes are open, contested, and negotiated, and what counts for leadership is constantly being remade (Hall 2013). The focus is therefore on how organisational members as participants interactively define and negotiate leadership as a process of organising. According to Hall (2013:3), in such a process leadership becomes a quality or a phenomenon of organisations (organising) rather than of individuals; leadership is studied "wherever it occurs" rather than simply being what "leaders do"; leadership is contextualised, and is critically shaped by the local-cultural-historical processes that characterise its organisational context.

5.6.2.4.4   Constructionist leadership theories

Ospina and Uhl-Bien (2012) contrast modernist "entity perspectives" with postmodernist "constructionist perspectives". The approaches associated with the modernist entity perspectives tend to privilege the individual, especially the individual leader, as the principal agent practising leadership, and, ontologically, sees reality as something "out there" capable of discovery. Constructionist approaches privilege collective dimensions and see leadership and its practice as social constructed, emergent, and fluid; realities, including what makes for effective leadership, are socially constructed and contextualised, rather than fixed and universal (Ospina & Uhl-Bien 2012; Hall 2013). Grint (1997) refers to the social constructionist perspective as the constitutive perspective. According to this author, leadership is a consequence of various accounts and interpretations, rather than a consequence of objective or rational analysis. Grint (2000) argues that leaders actively shape our understanding of the environment, challenges or difficulties, goals, competition, and strategy. Leadership is essentially a social phenomenon that requires the leader to construct an imaginary community that followers want to be part of (Grint 2000). Ford and Lawler (2007) add to the above and state that social construction of leadership is about understanding how relationships are described by and understood by the people who are involved in them, using their own language and conversation. From the above it is clear that

the social constructionist approach to leadership holds that leadership is a property of observers rather than of leaders. This implies that leadership should not be regarded as merely an innate characteristic of individuals (Fairhurst & Grant 2010).

According to Fairhurst and Grant (2010), social constructionist leadership approaches commonly exhibit two interrelated characteristics. First, they eschew a leader-centric approach in which the leader's personality, style, and/or behaviour are the primary (read: only) determining influences on followers' thoughts and actions. The second emphasis is given to leadership as co-constructed reality; in particular, the processes and outcomes of interaction between and among social actors. Fairhurst (2009) adds to the above by stating that communicative practices – talk, discourse, and other symbolic media – as is required by the context at a specific time, are integral to the processes by which social construction of leadership is brought about.

The previous section discussed theories related to the evolution of leadership communication. The ensuing discussion explores definitions of leadership communication.

5.7   LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATION DEFINED

While definitions of leadership abound, definitions of leadership communication are challenging to find. In recent years, however, leadership communication has started to receive increased attention from scholars around the world. According to Crainer and Dearlove (2008:41), leadership communication is largely ignored by pedagogues, communicators, and indeed leaders, despite the fact that more and more scholars are realising that the heart of leadership is not the esoteric world of strategising, but something much more mundane, namely communication. Leadership occurs through the process of interaction and communication (Fairhurst & Connaughton 2014), therefore it is difficult to understand why the subject of leadership communication is still addressed so poorly today.

As was previously stated, when literature on leadership communication is explored, definitions of leadership communication are surprisingly scarce. A search of CREDO – a referencing site, supplying definitions and searching 3 399 856 full-text entries in 726 academic/scholarly referencing sources – failed to yield even one definition of the term "leadership communication". The database Academic Search Complete, one of the most comprehensive scholarly, multi-disciplinary full-text databases with more than 8500 full-text

periodicals, including 7300 peer-reviewed journals and a total of 13200 publications, including monographs, reports, conference proceeding that go back as far as 1887, did not yield a definition of leadership communication either. Continuing the search, the database Business Source Complete, one of the world's definitive scholarly business databases, providing the leading collection of bibliographic and full text content and going back as far as 1886 and supplying searchable cited references for more than 1300 journals also did not yield a definition of leadership communication. The Humanities Source was consequently searched. This database is designed to meet the needs of students, researchers and educators interested in all aspects of the humanities and includes more than 1400 journals, with citations to over 3.5 million articles, including book reviews. This search was unsuccessful as well. Finally, Communication & Mass Media Complete (CMMC), a database that provides the most robust, quality research solution in areas related to communication and mass media and incorporates the content of (formerly produced by the National Communication Association) and Mass Media Articles Index along with numerous other journals in communication, mass media, and other closely-related fields of study to create a research and reference resource of unprecedented scope and depth encompassing the breadth of the communication discipline. CMMC offers cover-to-cover ("core") indexing and abstracts for more than 570 journals, and selected ("priority") coverage of nearly 200 more, for a combined coverage of more than 770 titles. Furthermore, this database includes full text for over 450 journals. No results were found for leadership communication in the abovementioned search sites. It is alarming that not even this source yielded any definition of leadership communication.

This appears to be a problem encountered by other leadership communication researchers as well. While doing research for his doctoral thesis, Phillips (2000), in his search for definitions of leadership communication found that to his amazement, he could not find a single definition of leadership communication and concluded that leadership communication was not defined. He then inquired from several speech professors who taught leadership communication at the time if they knew of a theory of leadership communication that could define it, or whether they could define the concept for him. They could not (Phillips 2000:11). Phillips (2000) then turned to Boyd Clarke, the CEO of the well-known Tom Peters Company in America, which stated on their website that Clark had been studying leadership communication for 12 years, and asked for his definition of leadership communication. Clarke's reply was based on "thousands of examples of leader communications" and a

review of much of the other research conducted on the subject. He then defined it as follows: "We define leadership communication as communication with the intent to inspire, enable, and/or encourage others". Phillips found this to be a pitifully inadequate description. Clarke (1999) also stated that effective leaders communicate on three distinct channels – factual, emotional, and symbolic – and by using these three channels, they reach diverse audiences more effectively (Clarke 1999).

It was therefore concluded that in the literature, very few authors refer to their descriptions of leadership communication as definitions of the concept. Authors such as Barrett (2008) and Harrison and Muhlberg (2014) have supplied definitions, while others such as Donnelly, Ivanicevich and Gibson (1985) and Zaccaro and Klimoski (2001) include communication as one of the important aspects or techniques in their definition of leadership. Until recently, communication was regarded as one of the techniques in a leader's toolkit, or as a component of the leadership process. It seems it was assumed that defining leadership automatically implicated the inclusion of (leadership) communication as well. This inclusion of communication as one of the techniques, tools, or characteristics of leadership might be the reason why definitions of the concept of leadership communication are so hard to find. As was explained in Chapter 1, in this thesis, leadership is seen as communication, and in recent years more and more scholars have started realising the important integration of communication into the leadership process.

According to Barrett (2008:5),

> "[l]eadership communication is the controlled, purposeful transfer of meaning by which leaders influence a single person, a group, an organisation, or a community. Leadership communication uses the full range of communication skills and resources to overcome interferences and to create and deliver messages that guide, direct, motivate or inspire others to action".

Another definition of leadership communication that was found is DeChurch *et al.*'s (2010) definition. These authors describe leadership communication as involving strategy, engagement, and execution. Furthermore, without communication there can be no leadership and the Chief Communications Officer (CCO) enables the leadership communication process through three interrelated phases: strategic focus of vision (strategy), building productive teams (engagement), and achieving outcomes (execution).

Unfortunately too many organisations and their leadership still lack an understanding of the important role of communication in the leadership process (DeChurch *et al.* 2010).

Hackman and Johnson (1991:11) consider communication as a point of departure when they state that "leadership is human (symbolic) communication which modifies the attitudes and behaviours of others in order to meet group goals and needs".

A communicative leader is one who engages employees in dialogue, actively shares and seeks feedback, practises participative decision making, and is perceived as open and involved (Johansson, Miller & Hamrin 2011:6).

A number of authors opine that leadership is a social strategy for securing action in service of interests claimed by or for a community (Kouzes & Posner 1995; Heifetz 1994; Rost 1991; Gardner 1990; Burns 1978). It is not a position that one holds. It is not a trait or characteristic that one possesses. It is not a perception or attribution. Leadership is a social practice constituted through language and communication behaviour (Gaines 2007:12). Wilhelm (1996:226) states that the ability to communicate is at the core of effective leadership and that all forms of communication must be mastered by the effective leader.

A search of *The Leadership Quarterly* disclosed a total of nine articles that either directly or indirectly address communication in the journal's 19-year history up to 2008 (Tourish & Jackson 2008). Further investigation of the period 2009 – 2016 yielded only five articles with references to communication. While some of these articles deal at length with a phenomenon in which communication is a critical variable, such as the rhetoric of US presidents when addressing issues of social change (Seyranian & Bligh 2008), these are the exception rather than the rule. Most articles address communication tangentially; for example, as one of many factors contributing to the development of trust (Burke *et al.* 2007). This lack of mutual contemplation extends beyond academic conferences and scholarly journals. For example, an important text on transformational leadership (Bass & Riggio 2006) devotes roughly one sentence to communication, in which it is characterised as a key competence when conveying a vision. What this "competence" consists of is left unexplained.

As stated in Chapter 1 (see Section 1.1.2), *The Journal of Business Communication*, one of the key journals in the field, has since its inception in 1963 published no more than 40 papers which address leadership issues, rather less than one for each year of its existence.

Communication has often been emphasised in research findings as being the number one concern for organisations (KLCM 2014; 2013). In the literature, however, it is evident that the field of leadership and the field of communication have kept largely apart. In considering the literature and referring to two important sources, namely the *Leadership Quarterly* and *The Journal of Business Communication* (the one directly linked to leadership and the other to communication), the findings are disappointing, as Bryman (2004:754) points out. Clifton (2012:148) concurs, stating that "[d]espite the recent interest in discursive approaches to leadership, relatively little research actually provides fine-grained analyses of how leadership is dialogically achieved in interaction."

In this thesis, leadership is equated to communication and therefore descriptions of leadership communication – including descriptions where leadership (communication) is viewed as the management of meaning (Fairhurst 2007), relational, dyadic, discursive, communicative, or containing any concepts related to communication and the leadership process, or using a communicative lens – together with definitions of leadership, are applicable to this study because of their acknowledgement of communication. Descriptions of the use of communication in the leadership process will also be considered in order to arrive at a working description of leadership communication.

More recent definitions of leadership include references to communication and the dyadic and relational nature thereof, as well as references to the social construction of the phenomenon.

5.7.1 Definitions of leadership

Leadership definitions by Donnelly *et al.* (1985), Tannenbaum, Weschler and Massarik (1961), Gardner (1990), Horner (1997), Yukl (2006), Culen and Yammarino (2014), Bennis (1989), and Reitz (2011) all highlight aspects of leadership such as the influence of leaders on followers through communication towards the attainment of some goal or goals, or the accomplishment of group purpose by inspiring people and imparting a vision, ideas, and direction. Most definitions of leadership include the premise that it is essential for a leader to have the ability to create visions for the future and accompanying this, Hoyle (1995) and Covey (2005 in Russel & Stone 2006) believe the following three characteristics should be part of a leader, namely communicating with clear and visionary ideas, having the capacity to care for others, and a commitment to persist.

A very elaborate integrative definition of leadership was coined by Winston and Patterson (2006:7-8). This definition is utilised in this study as it encompasses most of the definitions of leadership. According to Winston and Patterson (2006:7),

> "[a] leader is one or more people who selects, equips, trains, and influences one or more follower(s) who have diverse gifts, abilities, and skills and focuses the follower(s) to the organisation's mission and objectives, causing the follower(s) to willingly and enthusiastically expend spiritual, emotional, and physical energy in a concerted coordinated effort to achieve the organisational mission and objectives. The leader achieves this influence by humbly conveying a prophetic vision of the future in clear terms that resonates with the follower(s) beliefs and values in such a way that the follower(s) can understand and interpret the future into present-time action steps. In this process, the leader presents the prophetic vision in contrast to the present status of the organisation and through the use of critical thinking skills, insight, intuition, and the use of both persuasive rhetoric and interpersonal communication, including both active listening and positive discourse, facilitates and draws forth the opinions and beliefs of the followers such that the followers move through ambiguity toward clarity of understanding and shared insight that results in influencing the follower(s) to see and accept the future state of the organisation as a desirable condition worth committing personal and corporate resources toward its achievement. The leader achieves this using ethical means and seeks the greater good of the follower(s) in the process of action steps such that the follower(s) is/are better off (including the personal development of the follower as well as emotional and physical healing of the follower) as a result of the interaction with the leader. The leader achieves this same state for his/her own self as a leader, as he/she seeks personal growth, renewal, regeneration, and increased stamina – mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual – through the leader-follower interactions".

In the first part of the definition supplied above, important elements of the leadership process that are also referred to in definitions by other scholars are highlighted. These include the emphasis on three main elements included in most definitions of leadership, namely group, influence, and goal, as also identified by Bryman (1992). Bryman (1992) refers to a consensus among scholars on the complexity of leadership and the fact that the phenomenon is becoming more and more complex over time. The ability of a leader or

leadership to convey a clear vision that brings about circumstances other than the ones that the organisation currently finds itself in, and the importance of communication in the leadership process, conclude the first part of Winston and Patterson's (2006) definition discussed here.

In relation to the above definition, Donnelly *et al.* (1985) acknowledge the importance of communication in the leadership process, and define leadership as an attempt at influencing the activities of followers, through the communication process, towards the attainment of some goal or goals, while Weirich and Koontz (2005) see leadership as the art or process of influencing people so that they willingly and enthusiastically strive towards the achievement of group goals.

In a similar vein, Gardner (1990:1) defines leadership as the "process of persuasion or example by which an individual (or leadership team) induces a group to pursue objectives held by the leader or shared by the leader and his or her followers". Gardner (1990:11-12) asserts further that leaders do a number of things. They envision goals, affirm values, motivate followers, manage, build community, explain, serve as symbols, and represent and renew their constituents. Gardner (1990:18) argues that "the task of explaining is so important that some who do it exceptionally well play a leadership role even though they are not leaders in the conventional sense".

Together with the abovementioned, Hersey and Blanchard (1988) state the fact that these activities occur within a given situation. Hersey and Blanchard (1988) concur with the definition by stating that leadership is the process of influencing the activities of an individual or a group toward goal achievement in a given situation. According to Bass (1990), leadership is an interaction between two or more members of a group that often involves a structuring or restructuring of the situation and the perceptions and expectations of members.

In the second part of Winston and Patterson's (2006:8) integrative definition, they highlight that

> "the leader recognises the diversity of the follower(s) and achieves unity of common values and directions without destroying the uniqueness of the person. The leader accomplishes this through innovative flexible means of education, training, support, and protection that provide each follower with what the follower needs within the

reason and scope of the organisation's resources and accommodations relative to the value of accomplishing the organisation's objectives and the growth of the follower. The leader, in this process of leading, enables the follower(s) to be innovative as well as self-directed within the scope of individual-follower assignments and allows the follower(s) to learn from his/her/their own, as well as others' successes, mistakes, and failures along the process of completing the organisation's objectives.

The leader accomplishes this by building credibility and trust with the followers' values, attitudes, and behaviours towards risk, failure, and success. In doing this, the leader builds the followers' sense of self-worth and self-efficacy such that both the leader and the followers are willing and ready to take calculated risks in making decisions to meet the organisation's goals/objectives and through repeated process steps of risk taking and decision making, the leader and followers together change the organisation to best accomplish the organisation's objectives. The leader recognises the impact and importance of audiences outside of the organisation's system and presents the organisation to outside audiences in such a manner that the audiences have a clear impression of the organisation's purpose and goals and can clearly see the purpose and goals lived out in the life of the leader. In so doing, the leader examines the fit of the organisation relative to the outside environment and shapes both the organisation and the environment to the extent of the leader's capability to ensure the fit between the organisation and the outside environment. The leader, through each leader-follower-audience interaction, demonstrates his/her commitment to the value of (a) humility, (b) concern for others, (c) controlled discipline, (d) seeking what is right and good for the organisation and showing mercy in beliefs and actions with all people, (f) focusing on the purpose of the organisation and on the wellbeing of the followers, and (g) creating and sustaining peace in the organisation – not a lack of conflict but a place where peace grows. These values are the seven Beatitudes found in Matthew 5 and are the base of the virtuous theory of servant leadership (Winston & Patterson 2006:7-8).

Zaccaro and Klimoski (2001) support the above and highlight important defining elements of leadership. These include the attainment of proximal outcomes (such as employee commitment) that contribute to the development and achievement of organisational purpose; the identification of organisational leadership figures by their application of non-routine influence on organisational life; the fact that this leader influence is grounded in cognitive,

social, and political processes; and, very importantly, the recognition that organisational leadership is inherently bound by system characteristics and dynamics – that is, leadership is contextually defined and caused.

Another definition considered here because of its relevance to the study is Batten's (1989) definition, which adds another dimension and touches on the importance of the human factor. Batten (1989) defines leadership as the development of a clear and complete system of expectations in order to identify, evoke, and use the strengths of all resources in the organisation; the most important of which is people.

From the definition of Winston and Patterson (2006) it can be surmised that the leader and his/her followers enter into a relationship in order to accomplish certain set goals. According to Leithwood and Duke (1998), Rost (1991), and Lunenburg and Ornstein (1991), the majority of definitions of leadership contain the notion that leadership is a relationship process between an individual or a group of people exerting influence over other people, all of whom are members of a mutual group or organisation.

Leadership in organisations is an inherently multilevel phenomenon (Yamarino *et al.* 2005; Danserau *et al.* 1984). Organisational effectiveness hinges on the coordinated leadership being enacted from leaders residing within multiple hierarchical levels, whose leadership shapes crucial individual, team, unit, and organisational outcomes. Despite this reality, research on leadership often seems disconnected (Zaccaro & Klimoski 2001).

5.7.2   Arriving at a descriptive definition of leadership communication

Authors such as Fairhurst and Connaughton (2014), Fairhurst and Uhl-Bien (2012), Clifton (2012), Hall (2013; 2007), Fairhurst (2008), Fairhurst (2007), and Fairhurst and Putnam (2004), among others, have started to emphasise the important role of communication in the leadership process and also highlight the relational character of leadership. As such, these authors have started to acknowledge communication in their definitions of leadership.

In *Leading Minds*, a historical analysis of 11 great leaders – including Martin Luther King, Jr, Margaret Thatcher, and Mahatma Gandhi – Gardner (1995:8-9) defines leaders as "persons who by word and/or personal example, markedly influence the behaviours, thoughts and/or feelings of a significant number of their fellow human beings". This author clearly states that linguistic intelligence – "the capacity and inclination to use words well" – is indicative of a

future leader (Gardner 1995:34). This view is supported by Hackman and Johnson (1996:ix), who point out that "leading is communicating", and Fairholm (1998:82), who states that "communication is the nerve system of the organisation" and that leaders intending to impact the culture of an organisation must do so through communication. Communication is seen as a combination of intelligence and the ability to be articulate and therefore, according to Bennis and Townsend (1995), the ability to communicate is required in order to be a leader.

Bennis (1995) states that effective leaders are those who are able to put words to the formless longings and deeply felt needs of others and by doing so are able to create communities out of words. The above description by Bennis (1995) touches on a basic goal of corporate life, namely communities of individuals and groups that, because of shared values, hold stakes in the business leaders' success (Harrison & Muhlberg 2014). Harrison and Muhlberg (2014) further state that despite the fact that community creation involves more than words, Bennis (1995) highlights an essential reality and that is that the source and sustenance of connectability is communication (Harrison & Muhlberg 2014).

Against this background, Robinson's (2001:93) definition of leadership is of interest. This author states that "leadership is exercised when ideas expressed in talk or action/s is recognised by others as capable of progressing tasks or problems which are important to them". Fairhurst (2008) supplies four reasons why this definition is important. Firstly, leadership is a process of influence and meaning management among actors that advances a task or goal; leadership is thus grounded in task accomplishment (Robinson 2001). Secondly, leadership is an attribution by followers and observers, suggestive of an "eye of the beholder"-like quality (Meindl 1995; 1993). Thirdly, the focus is on leadership processes, not leader communication alone, ideally, countering any tendency to valorise leaders (Yukl 1999). Finally, leadership as influence and meaning management need not be performed only by one person appointed to a given role. It may shift and distribute itself among several actors (Gronn 2002) – hence, the preference for the term "leadership actors" which includes those who adopt a follower stance (Fairhurst 2008:510-511).

Leadership communication involves strategy, engagement, and execution.

Differently stated, to develop communication skills is to develop leadership skills. Leadership is a social process and involves a relationship or relationships between individuals. Communication, both verbal and non-verbal, is the vehicle that leaders use to create

meaning at the content (task) and affective (relational or interpersonal) levels (Hackman & Johnson 2009; Madlock 2008; Conrad & Poole 2005; Barge & Hirokawa 1989). In line with the approach followed in this thesis, Spence (2009) cites Penley & Hawkins (1985) and Penley, Alexander, Jernigan and Henwood (1991) in stating that virtually all actions of a leader can be construed as communication behaviours. It has been proven by research that effective leaders tend to be those individuals that are more skilled in communication (Riggio, Riggio, Salinas & Cole 2003; Penley *et al.* 1991; Penley & Hawkins 1985). Leaders who demonstrate greater communication competence are rated as more effective leaders by subordinates, and their subordinates show higher job satisfaction (Madlock 2008; Riggio *et al.* 2003). The higher up one moves in the organisational stratum, the more time is spent on communication and the greater the skills that are required (Riggio *et al.* 2014; Hackman & Johnson 2009).

Krisco's (1997:2) view is that "no matter what the method of communication – memos, discussions or phone calls – to lead effectively you must be clear and confident in what you say". Batten's (1989:59) view is: "I have concluded that the total effectiveness of leaders rises or falls in direct proportion to their face-to-face communication skills – their interpersonal insights and actions" and he further describes communication as shared meaning and shared understanding (Batten 1989:60). Ford (2006) states that language and discourse should be considered the source of a phenomenon such as leadership, rather than assuming that these types of human experiences exist in an innate state. This concurs with taking a rhetorical perspective, where it is stated that language creates leadership. A rhetorical perspective assumes that humans are symbol-using creatures, predominately through language, and that these symbols allow humans to define and make sense of their reality while providing tools to build connections with other human beings (Burke 1989:70).

Leadership effectiveness is constituted by various communicative processes, behaviours and outcomes and a variety of definitions of social constructionism, multiple constructs, and an array of perspectives, approaches, and methods (Fairhurst & Grant 2010:171) are discussed in the literature.

According to Witherspoon (1997:3), leadership constitutes "the focus of group processes; the effect of personality; the art of inducing compliance; the exercise of influence; a form of persuasion; and an effect on interaction". A constructionist perspective presumes that our understanding of leadership is socially constructed over time as individuals interact with one

another, rather than being something embodied in individuals or possessed by them. This perspective is not entirely new in the leadership literature. Organisational scholars like Pfeffer (1977), Smircich and Morgan (1982), Smircich (1983), and Tierney (1997; 1987) have pursued the idea that leadership emerges from the constructions and actions of people in organisations. According to this perspective, leadership becomes a reality when one or more individuals in a social system succeed in framing and defining how the demands of the group will be taken up, and who will address the need for direction in collective action. Through a process of attribution, people agree to assign one another different roles and functions, including the role of leader, to help move the work forward, or to satisfy other social needs (Meindl 1995, 1985; Hunt 1984).

When defining leadership, researchers typically aspire to say something of relevance across quite diverse settings, and frequently attempt to discover the success formula for effective leadership. The diversity of relations, situations, and cultural contexts in which superior-subordinate interactions take place means that a coherent definition with universal aspirations may tell us very little in terms of the richness and complexity of the phenomena it supposedly refers to, related to specific organisational, cultural (and other) contexts in which expectations and acts of leadership play out (Alvesson 2011:151). It can therefore not be claimed that leadership as a general term and object of study stands in a clear relationship to a domain of social reality and that it is possible to conceptualise it in a uniform manner. Understanding leadership calls for careful consideration of the social context in which processes of leadership take place. Leadership does not just imply that a leader acts and a group of followers respond mechanically, but is a complex social process in which the meanings and interpretations of what is said and done are crucial. It is a social process closely related to culture – at organisational levels and other levels. This context then includes the societal, occupational, and organisational, which all frame specific leader-follower interactions (Alvesson 2011:152). What is defined as "leadership" calls for not just a theoretical definition, but also close consideration of what a particular group means by "leadership" and how it relates to "leaders" and "leadership". For different groups, "leadership" has different meanings and value (Alvesson 2011:152).

Bass (1990) further states that leadership occurs when one group member modifies the motivation or competencies of others in the group. Any member of the group can exhibit some degree of leadership.

Despite the fact that people are changing jobs with greater frequency than ever before, and much of face-to-face communication is replaced by remote communication, relationships and effective communication remain cornerstones of both wellbeing and effective leadership. Most of the leadership literature within the long and rich research history of organisational sciences has been written from a predominantly psychological perspective in which leaders are portrayed as single individuals, different from the body that they are leading (Carter 2011). In recent years, however, there has been an increasing interest in leadership communication, discourse, and the relational character of leadership by a select group of scholars, many from the communication field (Uhl-Bien 2006 as cited by Fairhurst 2008; Fairhurst 2007, 2001; Cooren 2007; Alvesson & Sveningsson 2003; Cunliffe 2001; Grint 2000). This realisation can be viewed as a ripple effect pertaining to the linguistic turn within the organisational sciences, as recognised by Alvesson and Kärreman (2000 in Fairhurst 2008).

When understanding leadership as a social construct, it is seen as something of which the meaning is created through dialogue among groups of people in a particular context. To view leadership as a social construct, it is important to also consider the idea that leadership is relational (Drath 2001), and to highlight its social and collective nature, to stress the importance of studying leadership in context, and also to pay attention to how groups struggle with meaning-making (Ospina & Schall 2001).

Barge (2014) refers to this approach as a systemic constructionist approach to leadership and refers to the following definition to explain his stance of viewing leadership as a "co-created, performative, contextual, and attributional process where the ideas articulated in talk or action are recognised by others as progressing tasks that are important to them" (Barge & Fairhurst 2008:232).

According to Barge (2014:71), individuals wishing to take on a leadership position need to be able to articulate the moral-aesthetic commitments or values that inform their practice.

Leadership is a language game and in this thesis it is productively viewed as a discursive performance in which an effective leader successfully integrates the achievement of transactional objectives with more relational aspects of workplace interaction (Schnurr 2005). It is furthermore fundamental to improving groups, organisations, and society, thereby enhancing the fundamental importance of the interactive process of leadership.

224

Leaders and followers develop an effective approach to collective goals that ensures an increased understanding of the leadership process and the communication involved in it, as well as the improvement of the skills of all participants (Hackman & Johnson 2009). This approach enhances the skills of all participants and fosters more effective collaboration (Hackman & Johnson 2009). The discourse of effective leadership takes particular account of a person's communication behaviour as a crucial component of achieving desired outcomes. The emerging leader is expected to demonstrate specific competencies in order to succeed in the marketplace and must be able to create strategic partnerships with individuals from different cultures and in different contexts.

5.7.3 Working description of leadership communication

Based on the central concepts identified in the discussions of leadership and leadership communication, a working description of leadership communication could be formulated. The working description entails the following:

> *Leadership communication can be posited as the purposeful sharing of meaning by a leader to shape organisational outcomes effectively. It is a socially constructed process, inherently bound by systems characteristics. Leadership communication sits at the intersection of the strategic and operational levels of an organisation. The strategic level is concerned with the integration of interactions in an organisation and the operational level is focused on understanding the characteristics necessary for individual effort to combine in ways that produce synergistic outcomes. Communication, in all its multifaceted forms, is at the heart of this context-specific process.*

5.8 DEFINING ATTRIBUTES OF LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATION

Defining attributes describes the characteristics of a phenomenon and enables the researcher to establish what the concept at hand is and what it is not. Characteristics of a concept, including features and specifications of a concept that have been permanently associated with the concept, help identify the clarity, breadth, and depth of that concept (Walker & Avant 1988). Recurring themes in the data were clustered to form defining attributes of leadership communication. These attributes will be discussed in the next sections.

5.8.1   Leadership communication is communicative

A review of the literature in which the cognitive aspects of leadership were acknowledged, but where communication was situated at the centre of the leadership process, was executed by Fairhurst and Connaughton (2014). During this process, these scholars discovered a number of communicative lenses which led them to believe that when taken collectively, the reviewed perspectives indicate communication to be central, defining, and constitutive of leadership. The review included literature that reached across different research paradigms (for example, postpositivist, social constructionist, critical and postmodern, to name a few), investigated different disciplines (for example, management, communication, psychology, sociology), and researched different countries and cultures. An aspect that also clearly surfaced was the fact that the long-accepted perspective in the literature that prioritises the cognitive over the social was now being reversed, and that communication value commitments were now prioritised over the cognitive, indicating that leadership communication was transmissional and meaning centred (Fairhurst & Connaughton 2014).

Communicative leadership refers to the way a leader communicates with his or her employees and, according to Kramer and Krespy (2011), the general assumption is that communicative leaders are better communicators than other leaders and managers, and that they have profound influence on employee attitudes, wellbeing, and organisational outcomes. Research has also indicated that individuals' use of communication behaviours, as perceived by their work group, predicts their emergence as leaders (Schultz 1980).

Johansson *et al.* (2011:2) state that "a communicative leader is one who engages employees in dialogue, actively shares and seeks feedback, practices participative decision making, and is perceived as open and involved." These authors further state that communicative leaders are those who are able to create improved organisational performance on individual, unit, and organisational levels by creating employee role clarity, commitment, and engagement, as well as team cohesion and confidence (Johansson *et al.* 2011). Communicative leaders are able to utilise networks or lines that the organisation uses to convey information. The flow of communication in the organisation can be downward, as is used by leaders to communicate instructions and training, give information (company policy, trends, and planning), providing rationale for directions and policies, and evaluating work performance; or upward, where feedback is provided for upper management regarding

organisational activities; and lateral, which is communication that occurs in an organisation between employees at the same hierarchical level or between different departments. This type of communication tends to focus on problem solving, information sharing, and conflict resolution (Barker & Angelopulo 2006:74-75).

Communication networks signify the existence of specific patterns by which messages are communicated between individuals (Neher 1997). In order for communication to be successful, there should be a flow of communication in both directions in order to establish dialogue and understanding. Communication in leadership processes is seen here as enacted by both leaders and employees who actively participate in dynamic interaction (Kramer & Crespy 2011).

Research by Johansson *et al.* (2011:3) identified eight principles of communicative leadership. According to these principles, communicative leaders:

- coach and enable employees to be self-managing;
- provide structures that facilitate the work;
- articulate clear expectations for quality, productivity, and professionalism;
- are approachable, respectful, and express concern for employees;
- actively engage in problem solving, follow up on feedback, and advocate for unit results;
- convey direction and assist others in achieving their goals;
- actively engage in framing messages and events; and
- enable and support sensemaking.

Habernas (1984 in Eriksen 2001:22) states that leadership communication that coordinates action through argumentation is the key to an analysis of communicative leadership, where collective deliberation and decision making take place and where it is the power of the argument that is decisive. Here, discussion is aimed at reaching agreement in the pursuit of initiatives and the implementation of plans. Eriksen (2001) points out that it is important to understand that communicative leadership does not merely designate the ability to reach one's goals through linguistic means. Such a perspective is more typical of strategic leadership. The concept of communicative leadership includes the ability to test the reasonableness of objectives in light of collective expectations. Leaders who are able to generate agreement and who act on the basis of consensus, which has been legitimately

achieved, by supplying sufficient time and information, and who are prepared to deliberate to come to an agreed-upon conclusion can be viewed as communicative leaders. In this way, leadership is a way of "meaning-making" through moral practical arguing, where the validity of the argument depends on its generality or universality (Eriksen 2001). When leadership communication is communicative, it is also meaning centred.

5.8.2   Leadership communication is meaning centred

Meaning is one of the most essential components of human communication. Particularly since the 1980s, a more meaning-centred view of communication has dominated organisational communication research (Mumby 2007; Deetz 1996, 1995). Unfortunately, it took the rise of postmodernism, post-structuralism, and the often referred to "linguistic turn" in social theory for many organisational scholars with communication interests to appreciate that language constitutes reality (Alvesson & Kärreman 2000). A language focus emphasises authorship and the formative power of language; an understanding of the dynamics of co-construction (including discursive struggles over meaning); and the role of the socio-historical in sourcing ways of thinking and talking (Shotter 1993 in Fairhurst & Connaughton 2014:10; Deetz 1992). Meaning can best be managed through framing (Hughes 1997:25).

Organisations are complex entities that are difficult to understand and manage. Leaders and managers therefore need theories that can group a great deal of different pieces of information into patterns or concepts which can show them what is important and what can safely be ignored. Such theories can be referred to as frames. Frames are schemata, maps, images, or metaphors that provide different perspectives. Frames can also be regarded as tools for action, being both windows on the world as well as lenses that bring the world into focus. These frames allow certain information to pass through easily, while other information is filtered out (Bolman & Deal 1991). According to Manning (1992), frames provide a way of organising our experiences and, by doing this, show/lead us to define the situations in which we find ourselves. In his book, *The Charismatic Leader: Behind the Mystique of Exceptional Leadership*, Conger (1989:85) provides the following definition of frames: "Frames are symbolic structures that we use to make sense of our personal and social experiences – the perspective from which we interpret experience. And in a larger sense, they also provide a map for action". Fairhurst (2007) concurs and describes framing as the ability of a leader to

construct the reality of a subject or situation. Framing is further defined by Fairhurst and Sarr (1996:ix) as a "quality of communication that causes others to accept one meaning over another". These authors assert that to hold the frame of a subject is to choose one particular meaning (or set of meanings) over another. When sharing our frames with others (the process of framing), we manage meaning because we assert that our interpretations should be taken as real over other possible interpretations (Fairhurst & Sarr 1996:3).

Smircich and Morgan (1982:263) opine that "through words and images, symbolic actions and gestures, leaders can structure attention and evoke patterns of meaning that give them considerable control over the situation being managed". Entman (1993:52-53) adds to the above by stating that frames have at least four locations in the communication process, namely the communicator, the text, the receiver, and the culture. Conscious or unconscious framing judgements are made in deciding what to say. These judgements are guided by frames (schemata) that organise belief systems. In the text, frames are contained, which are manifested by the presence or absence of certain keywords, stock phrases, stereotype images, sources of information, and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgements. The frames that guide the receiver's thinking and conclusion may or may not reflect the frames in the text and the framing intention of the communicator. The culture is the stock of commonly evoked frames; in fact, culture might be defined as the empirically demonstrable set of common frames exhibited in the discourse and thinking of most people in a social grouping. From this perspective, leadership is not a zero-sum occurrence; rather, it is in constant flow as talk progresses. Consequently, leadership is not the property of any one person; it can be distributed and it is open to challenge. It is, however, most likely that those who have access to more powerful discursive resources with which to influence the process of the negotiation of meaning are the most likely to emerge as leaders (Clifton 2012).

From a social constructionist perspective of organisations, rather than being epiphenomena of pre-existing structures, such routine interactions talk the organisation into being. Organisations therefore do not have a prediscursive existence. They are discursively created through the negotiation of meaning that is attributed to past, present, and future events. This intersubjective reality is then conceptually fixed, labelled, and refined as if it were a prediscursive essentialist entity which comes into being as "the organisation".

Effective framers, according to Fairhurst and Sarr (1996), know the perspective of their audience and seriously consider the question of whom they are framing the meaning for. They also carefully note the specific situation of the people they are framing for. Fairhurst and Sarr (1996) define three components of framing, namely language, thought, and forethought. These authors view thought as the internal framing that a person/leader has to do before he/she is able to frame for others, while forethought prepares a person for on-the-spot framing (Fairhurst & Sarr 1996). Framing effectiveness is affected by the framer's ability to read context.

5.8.3 Leadership communication is dialogical

"Communication as dialogue is seen as a creative process, allowing the development of potential of all those involved in leader relations, and as such it moves beyond relative fixity of roles" (Ashman & Lawler 2008:266). Andriof (2001:228) describes dialogue as a conversation, where information is exchanged and knowledge acquired. As already noted in the early 1980s by Grunig and Hunt (1984:48), dialogue should involve two-way communication as two-way communication enables the co-creation of a shared understanding of collaboration. According to Theunissen and Rahman (2010), theories and understandings of dialogue abound, but there exists in the literature a key, and largely philosophical, understanding of dialogue found in Buber's notion of the I-Thou relationship, preferred here over an I-It relationship. This form of dialogue entails a meeting between people where control and focus on a predetermined outcome are momentarily set aside in favour of a rare but meaningful encounter between human beings. Dialogue in this context can be referred to as the basis of and the result of relationship building. The focus in this type of communication is also not so much on achieving equilibrium, but more on the people involved. Theunissen and Rahman (2010:2) further state that in this sense, dialogue requires the suspension of control, a willingness to engage in dialogue, a commitment to process, and engaging with participants as human beings and not just as representatives of interest groups.

Three dominant positions on dialogue that evolved in the latter part of the 20th century were highlighted by Deetz and Simpson (2004). These authors refer to these perspectives as liberal humanism, critical hermeneutic, and postmodern. Although all these perspectives

may be focused on dialogue, each of these perspectives has different goals and conceptions of communication and all take different approaches to dialogue.

Dialogue can contribute to quality relationships between leaders and followers by building high-quality contact between leaders and followers that is open, creative, meaningful, and that can lead to ethical organisational learning and change (Heath 2007; Deetz & Simpson 2004). Dialogue is also increasingly being referred to as a relational approach to leadership by scholars such as Fairhurst (2009; 2007) and Uhl-Bien (2006). The philosophy of dialogical relationships provides a useful theoretical basis for gaining deeper insights into organisational communication processes and contributes to a critical approach to leadership theory (Karimova 2014). Dialogue is, however, described as a murky and contested concept with a wide array of interpretations (Deetz & Simpson 2004) and most leaders are not clear about the path to forming dialogic relationships (Anderson & Cissna 2008).

Duffy and O'Rourke (2015) cite Bohm (1996), Isaacs (1993), and Senge (2006) when referring to dialogue as a type of interactive talk, aimed at establishing common understanding of underlying assumptions and perceptions. According to these authors, this is in contrast with discussion, which refers to the analysis of a topic and the subsequent assertion of a particular way to react (Bohm 1996 and Senge 2006 cited in Duffy & O'Rourke 2015). Dialogue is concerned with conversation between people and its objective is not an analysis of a certain issue or an attempt to win an argument or exchange opinions. Bohm (1996 cited in Duffy & O'Rourke 2015) holds that dialogue requires that opinions are considered, that all involved persons' opinions should be listened to and suspended in trying to find out what they all mean.

In order to address the question of what dialogue implies, Bakhtin (2003:291) describes dialogical relationships as interaction between various voices, or between various "consciousnesses".

Inherent within dialogic philosophy is an emphasis on dialogue as an ongoing social process of meaning-making that occurs between people as subjects. As stated above, Bakhtin's view of language extends beyond the written or spoken word alone to embrace the way reality is perceived in "the form of still latent, unmuttered future work" (Bakhtin 1984:90). Included here is a consideration of tone, sound, and body language as it is interpreted in dialogue.

Buber was a Jewish philosopher whose theory equated dialogue with ethical communication, and he theorised about the importance of human relationship dialogue in his "I-Thou" perspective (Stewart 2009:62). Buber, in *I and Thou* (1958), explains that the ontological basis for human existence lies in the dialogue between self and others and the primary relations of I-Thou and I-It are the relational stances from which we engage the world. According to Buber (1958), an "I" is never in isolation but always exists and is shaped by its relation to an It or a Thou. Buber (1958:3) further argues that "primary words do not signify things, but they intimate relations. Primary words do not describe something that might exist independently of them, but being spoken they bring about existence".

5.8.4   Leadership communication is discursive

From a discursive perspective, leadership is defined as a process of meaning management that is process focused, rather than leader focused and as shifting and distributed among several organisational members (Fairhurst 2011). It is also attributed by followers or observers. In this study, leadership is viewed as a discursive performance in which an effective leader successfully integrates the achievement of transactional objectives with more relational aspects of workplace interaction. Communication is therefore an important aspect in the construction of workplace identities, which include leader and group identities (Holmes, Schnurr & Marra 2007). Clifton (2012) describes discursive leadership as a language game in which meaning is managed and that emerges through decision making as decision-talk frames and that defines the issue that a projection of future action (the decision) sets out to resolve. In this language game, rights to assess and therefore to define the organisational landscape are negotiated in talk and the person or persons who have the most influence in this process emerge as leaders. Fairhurst (2011) states that by switching from the individual focus and concentrating on social and cultural systems, discursive leadership is able to study concepts related to subjectivity, cultures, and identities as it relates to meaning.

Fairhurst and Putnam (2004) indicate that in their view, "discourse" and "communication" are not synonyms. As stated by Alvesson and Kärreman (2000) and Potter and Wetherell (1987) (both cited in Fairhurst & Putnam 2004), discourse is a medium for social interaction and can be seen as the study of interaction processes and of language in use. Communication, as a distinct form of discourse, is a related but broader construct that

encompasses research residing outside discourse studies and include, for example, network analysis, information processing, and message flow. Therefore, a language emphasis distinguishes the discursive from the more general communicative approach (Fairhurst & Putnam 2004).

According to Alvesson and Kärreman (2000:1126), organisational discourse research is conceptually and methodologically diverse. There is a wide array of ways of using the term "discourse" in social science and organisation studies (Alvesson & Kärreman 2000:1126) and this often complicates understanding of what is actually implied when referring to discourse. Many texts also fail to explicate what is meant when the term "discourse" is used. Several authors have mentioned how difficult it is to define discourse (Bargiela-Chiappini 2011, Mumby 2011; Fairhurst 2008), and, as stated by Alvesson and Kärreman (2011), one of the major problems with discourse is the notorious vagueness, slipperiness, and incoherence in the use of discourse. Many scholars (Phillips & Oswick 2012; Grant, Iedema & Oswick 2009; Fairhurst & Putman 2001) have indicated that discursive approaches can differ quite significantly from one another, even when approaching them from within a broad social constructionist epistemology. The multiplicity of meaning around discourse demonstrates the versatility and potential for creative theorisation and empirical work; similarly, it may also lead to confusion, compromise theoretical and methodological rigour, and create obstacles for healthy dialogue, meta-analysis, and ultimately the accumulation and application of knowledge engendered from these studies (Jian *et al.* 2008).

In a survey of journals linked to organisational settings, Jian *et al.* (2008) explored the meanings of the terms "discourse" and "communication" and their relationship(s) in organisational context. These authors noted, firstly, that the linguistic turn in the social sciences was the cause of profound changes in organisation studies. According to Jian *et al.* (2008), the rise of discourse study partly anchors this paradigmatic shift from an almost exclusive emphasis on positivistic research towards multi-paradigm work inclusive of interpretive, critical, and dialogical approaches. This is substantiated by scholars such as Fairhurst (2007), Mumby and Clair (1997), and Deetz (1996).

In order to explicate the "doing" of leadership and to capture the turn-by-turn discursive resources that are deployed to manage meaning, a discursive constructionist approach provides the ideal research tool (Potter & Hepburn 2008). Discursive constructionism (DC) remains indifferent to the existence of any external prediscursive reality and concerns itself

with the way in which "factual" descriptions are constructed in talk, and how they are organised so as to be sufficiently robust to counter alternative versions (Edwards & Potter 2005:243). From this perspective, meaning is not "out there" in some prediscursive fashion, but has to be managed as people talk it. From a constructionist perspective,

> "[d]iscourse is the fundamental medium for action. It is the medium through which versions of the world are constructed and made urgent or reworked as trivial and irrelevant. For social scientists working with DC the study of discourse becomes the central way of studying mind, social processes, organisations, and events as they are continually made live in human affairs" (Potter & Hepburn 2008:275).

As leadership can be defined as the management of meaning, DC provides an ideal tool for analysing how meaning is constructed in talk and it thus enables researchers to locate who has the most influence in the management of meaning; in other words, who the leader(s) is/are. Furthermore, it also enables the researcher to locate the discursive resources by which the management of meaning, and leadership, is achieved (Clifton 2012:151).

As such, discursive leadership offers an optimal resource to view the communicative practices involved in the management of meaning and communicative construction of reality (Torres & Fyke 2013). It is therefore assumed that leadership is co-constructed in social interaction processes to enable them to work together in meaningful ways in order to reach desired outcomes (Day 2001).

5.8.5   Leadership communication is dyadic

Leaders engage followers through interpersonal exchanges or dyads. At the dyadic level of leadership, the importance of one-to-one relationships between a leader and each of his or her followers are acknowledged. Each of these dyadic interpersonal relationships is unique and not dependent on other relationships in the group or team (Yammarino, Dansereau & Kennedy 2001). While it is possible for an individual leader to facilitate followers able to facilitate creative production in themselves and those around themselves, it is rare as one individual does not usually have the skill set necessary for such facilitation (Hunter & Cushenbery 2011; O'Connor 1998). Although triads and further extensions are also possible, these are less likely.

When a leader gets engaged in private, individual, honest, revealing, and (potentially) trust-building conversations with individual team members, it is referred to as the dyadic discovery process. This process is employed by the leader in a purposeful and systematic way to uncover and more fully understand each team member's perspective, vulnerabilities, and confidence related to the team and its activities and performance (Roussin 2008).

5.8.6 Leadership communication is interactional

A social constructionist epistemology has been used by many researchers as a base from which to examine concepts, practices, perceptions, constructs, and behaviours (Zacko-Smith 2007) in organisations. Furthermore, certain researchers combine social constructionism and fine-grained analysis of talk to explain how meaning is managed on a turn-by-turn basis and how leadership emerges (Clifton 2006).

Sjostrand, Sandberg and Tyrstrup (2001 in Zacko-Smith 2007) explain that leadership is primarily interactional and that small talk serves to structure organisational reality and influences leadership perceptions among employees.

Interpersonal communication is an interaction between individuals and allows people to explore and discover the nature of this communicative interaction and assist them in deciding how to perceive it. When adopting a discursive perspective, it is presumed that every time a leader speaks, he or she is negotiating what it means to be a leader by using a range of discursive strategies. These strategies include politeness, humour, and authoritative language to accomplish leadership goals (Clifton 2012). Through the way that leaders speak and interact with colleagues, they are continuously negotiating and managing their professional identities, profiles, and relationships (Holmes & Stubbe 2003).

5.8.7 Leadership communication is interpersonal

Interpersonal communication forms the basis of an individual's personal and professional growth. It is also the primary basis for building relationships with others (Wood 2004:11). Interpersonal communication is communication that takes place between two individuals who have established a relationship (De Vito 1995:7). A leader's ability to communicate interpersonally is widely recognised as crucial to professional success. Most leaders spend the vast majority of their work day in some kind of interpersonal communication situation

(Puth 2002). Interpersonal communication, one of the core elements of leadership (De Vries, Bakker-Pieper & Oostenveld 2010), is critical for achieving organisational goals and objectives (Henderson, Liden, Glibbowski & Chaudry 2006).

The interpersonal communication process enables individuals to negotiate definitions for their relationships as they share the roles of the sender and receiver and become connected through the mutual activity of creating meaning (Trenholm & Jensen 1992:33).

The focus is therefore on the communicative activities that transpire in personal relationships. A distinction can be made between interpersonal aspects of leadership, which revolve around communicative activities in interpersonal relationships, and the managerial aspects of leadership, which revolve around non-interpersonal activities, such as organising, planning, decision making, problem solving, and controlling (De Vries *et al.* 2010). Elements of effective interpersonal communications include trust in leadership, the perception of accuracy in the message, the desire to follow and interact, as well as the willingness of management to act on feedback. In a positive environment, leaders deeply convey their vision and are perceived as genuine in their beliefs (Gardner & Winder 1999) (see Section 5.10).

Proponents of interpersonal communication theory describe it as a dynamic process of interacting and creating relationships between people, who systematically engage in transactions and electively construct and manage meaning in their relationships (Maubane 2007). In interpersonal communication, human relationships emerge from patterns of behaviour between individuals.

Interpersonal communication can thus be explained as a transactional process, an interaction, and a creation of meaning (Verderber & Verderber 1995:7; Rodgers 1989:70).

5.8.8   Leadership communication is transactional

When individuals communicate, they become connected in a unit of social intercourse, called a transaction, whereby the sender creates a transactional stimulus and the receiver produces a transactional response (Frost, Vos & Dreyer 1993). Transactional leadership communication should not be viewed as merely a two-way interaction process as the parties involved in this process have influence on each other and this leads to the formation of a relationship during the communication. It is important to note that every message in

transactional leadership communication is content bound, and Rothwell (2004) opines that it has a relationship dimension in which the message defines and redefines the association between the involved individuals.

Communication is transactional in the sense that it is delivered by one party, received by another, interpreted, and acted upon (Hersey, Blanchard & Johnson 2008). This implies that the people in conversation are simultaneously senders and receivers and may influence each other's interaction. Transactional communication is an ongoing and continuously changing process. It can be viewed as an exchange of something of value and a transaction between communicators. Each person reacts based on his or her own culture, education, self-esteem, attitudes, and background, which colour the interpretation of the communication. The sending and receiving of messages can be simultaneous in transaction communication, and the communicator's fields of experience is fluid; changing as communication takes place (National Communication Association (NCA) n.d.; lms.oum.edu.my).

According to Bass (1999; 1985), transactional leadership communication ensures that expectations are met, which is the foundation on which transformational leaders build to motivate their followers to perform beyond expectations.

5.8.9   Leadership communication is a relational process

Leadership communication is neither leader nor follower centric. Leadership situations are multifaceted and the important role of followers in the leadership process is often emphasised in leadership theory and research. Many theorists agree that leadership is a process that is constructed by leaders and followers (Ospina & Sorensen 2006; Drath 2001; Meindl 1955; all cited in Carsten & Uhl-Bien 2012).

Relational leadership has been defined from two different perspectives by Uhl-Bien (2006) and Uhl-Bien and Ospina (2012) as people use the term in different ways. Uhl-Bien and Ospina (2012) view relational leadership as a process that is role based (leaders and employees). This process includes reciprocal interrelating between these parties in order to negotiate the work that must be done. Here it is implied that leadership occurs between independent individuals who interrelate between different hierarchical positions (Uhl-Bien & Ospina 2012). Uhl-Bien (2006:655), on the other hand, defines relational leadership as "a

social influence process through which emergent coordination (evolving social order) and change (new values, attitudes, approaches, behaviours, and ideologies) are constructed and produced". This implies that leadership is a jointly constructed process that is disembodied and does not occur only in certain individuals (Uhl-Bien & Ospina 2012). In order to include both individuated and connected perspectives, Uhl-Bien (2006) proposed RLT as an approach to assist in explaining both the emergence of leadership relationships as is perceived in LMX theories, as well as the relational dynamics of organising, which includes various constructionist views of leadership.

A review by Cunliffe and Eriksen (2011) of leadership studies that explicitly take a relational approach indicated three main emerging themes in which leadership is emphasised as a social process (Cunliffe & Eriksen 2011). Each of these themes, however, differs in terms of what these social processes entail. The three themes identified by Cunliffe and Eriksen (2011) include: *Relationships between network elements* – in which the relationship between leaders and organisational processes are explored and leaders are positioned in different networks in different ways; the second theme identified refers to *The social construction of leadership*, where the focus is on the micro processes of organising, and how leaders coordinate action and socially construct identities, culture, and strategy through language (Hosking 2007 in Cunliffe & Eriksen 2011). The third theme, namely *Post-heroic leadership*, the collective social practices of people, positions leadership as non-hierarchical, distributed throughout the organisation as a relational practice of collaboration, empathy, trust, empowerment, and something that collaborating actors "do" within social interactions and networks of influence to construct realities (Fletcher & Kaeufer 2003 in Cunliffe & Eriksen 2011). Cunliffe and Eriksen (2011:1430) further state that the abovementioned three themes offer a number of insights into leadership when viewed from a relational perspective. They highlight that leaders need to be concerned with identifying relationships between network elements and must also understand relational mechanisms. Furthermore, they need to think and be aware of how they use language in networked interactions, and be cognisant of the macro and micro processes involved in socially constructing collective activities.

Traditional approaches to leadership have recently come under criticism for a number of reasons (Carroll *et al.* 2008; Lawler 2005). For one, it is argued by Rost (1993:5) that the focus on the periphery and content aspects of leadership (the scientific traits, contingencies, techniques, and knowledge about organisations and human behaviour; among others) is not

sufficient in informing an understanding of "the essential nature of leadership as a relationship". Leadership as a long-term relationship raises both leaders and followers to higher levels of motivation and morality and encourages followers to assume leadership roles. Uhl-Bien (2006:664) further asserts that these processes are "relational" in the sense that they concern the processes of "being in relation to others in a larger social system".

Relational leadership is viewed as a postmodernist "constructionist perspective", where collective dimensions are privileged, while seeing leadership and its practice as socially constructed, emergent, and fluid realities (Ospina & Uhl-Bien 2012). RLT has been defined as "an overarching framework for the study of leadership as a social influence process through which emergent coordination (evolving social order) and change (new approaches, values, attitudes, behaviours, ideologies) are constructed and produced" (Uhl-Bien 2006).

The core assumption when taking a relational stance is that leadership is co-constructed in social interaction processes. Taking a relational orientation means recognising that organisational phenomena exist in interdependent relationships and intersubjective meaning: "[K]nowing occurs between two subjects or phenomena simultaneously, therefore we must attend to the multiple meanings and perspectives that continuously emerge" (Bradbury & Lichtenstein 2000:552). From this perspective, knowing is always a process of relating; relating is a constructive, ongoing process of meaning-making – an actively relational process of creating (common) understanding on the basis of language; meaning can never be finalised, nor has it any ultimate origin, it is always a process of making; and meanings are limited by socio-cultural contexts (Dachler & Hosking 1995 in Uhl-Bien 2006). A relational view recognises leadership as a phenomenon generated in the interactions among people acting in context (Fairhurst 2007). In the organisational context, internal communication between leaders and followers is a multifaceted phenomenon that takes place inside the organisation and that is a structural and constitutive component of the organisation (Cooren, Kuhn, Cornelissen & Clark 2011). Internal communication comprises both the set of communication initiatives that are planned and carried out inside the organisation, and the set of interactions which occur among organisational members. These initiatives and interactions are meant to orient the organisation as well as its members toward their development and success (Invernizzi & Biraghi 2012).

According to Gittell and Douglass (2012), relational leadership can be seen as a pattern of reciprocal interrelating between employees and leaders in an attempt to make sense of a

situation and determine what is to be done, and how to do it. The different parties learn from one another; the employees contribute the more focused or specialised in-depth knowledge associated with their roles, while the leaders or managers contribute the broader, less focused knowledge associated with their roles. Together they create a more integrated, holistic understanding of the situation. This process of reciprocal interrelating involves communicating through relationships of shared goals, shared knowledge, and mutual respect.

The need for fostering relationships, interaction, and emotional connections is of the essence. A study by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) (2012) placed great emphasis on leader-employee relationship, communication, personal interactions, and the management of feelings. It was also suggested in this report that leaders' communicative competencies impacted on the level of wellbeing of their employees.

Watt (2013) concurs, stating that as a social and relational process, it is understood that effective leadership is a function of a leader's relational competency. This is based on the interaction of knowledge, sensitivity, skills, and values. It is through a pattern of initiation, development, maintenance, and ongoing change in people's relationships that the quality and effectiveness of their leadership is defined. Their interactions define the quality of their relationships as they interact with those around them, thereby creating and reinforcing the relational expectations of everyone involved. Watt (2013) states that leadership communication is relational when an understanding of the other person is sought, not assuming to know what the other person's motivation is, and not assigning our own values to others, but instead making an effort to learn about them, their values, and what is important to them. Keeping promises and commitments is also important in the establishment of quality functioning relationships.

5.8.10 Leadership communication is a rhetorical process

Leadership communication as a rhetorical process assumes that humans are symbol-using creatures, predominately through language, and that these symbols allow humans to make sense of reality while providing techniques to build connections with other human beings.

Much of the leadership literature in communication studies looks at specific rhetorical tasks that leaders might want to accomplish: communicating empathy (Shogan 2009) or a vision

(Wendt & Fairhurst 1994), decision making (Eid & Fyfe 2009), listening (Stillion Southard & Wolvin 2009), or influencing behaviour or attitude (Nicholson 2010).

Burke (1989:70 in Eske-Ballard 2013) describes man as "the symbol-using (symbol-making, symbol-misusing) animal". With this definition of man, Burke places symbolic production at the centre of human existence, yet acknowledges the ambiguity that is inherent in using symbols, namely "symbol misusing". This implies that a social reality is co-created and it provides not only meaning and understanding of the world, but is also the thread that ties all human beings together. The function of language is therefore more than to label and define ideas, but it is the way in which humans co-exist (Eske-Ballard 2013). Ford, Harding and Learmonth (2008) argue that language asserts how a role like "leader" comes to be, but a rhetorical perspective adds that communication is the substance that allows humans to act collectively in human processes.

5.8.11 Leadership communication is socially constructed

Historically, leadership studies were dominated by (post)positivistic perspectives rooted in industrial and organisational psychology and was therefore studied from an "individual/competency" approach to leadership (Allirol & Leienbach 2015). Irrespective of the focus (traits, skills, style, or situation), leadership has been addressed as a phenomenon owned by the leader instead of being viewed as a reciprocal relationship between a leader and a follower (Alvesson & Sveningsson 2011). This implies that most prior leadership theories assumed that leadership was a quality of leaders (trait theory), a response to environments (situational theory), or a combination of both (contingency theory), and therefore leadership has always been viewed as something knowable and definite (Billsberry 2009). What social constructionism indicated was that the leadership field had either completely left out the follower from the leadership process, or depicted the follower as a passive recipient to leadership (Allirol & Leienbach 2015). This was due partly because of problems in defining and measuring leadership, but also in recognition of the value offered by alternatives to the functionalism that underpins mainstream leadership theory and research. As such, alternative lines of enquiry have begun to develop that question the ontological and epistemological assumptions that leadership researchers have long taken for granted (Bresnen 1995:498). The more discursive and social constructionist leadership

perspectives view communication as a primary factor in understanding the ways in which meaning is negotiated through social interactions (Fairhurst 2007).

This study adopts a social constructionist perspective. Leadership is therefore viewed as a social construct of which the meaning is created through dialogue among groups of people in a particular context (Ospina & Schall 2001). Taking a constructionist approach illustrates the value of learning about leadership by focusing on interactional processes (Zacko-Smith 2007). Language is the mechanism that storytellers use to generate interest and convey ideas. From a social constructionist perspective, language is the primary mechanism in the construction of reality (Zacko-Smith 2007).

Fairhurst (2007) points out that organisational and business communication scholars from all over Australasia and Europe are calling for a more socially constructed agenda for leadership studies. Such an agenda would contest a researcher-imposed view of leadership that favours lay actors' constructions of leadership, in favour of a view that is more social and cultural and that does not relegate communication to a simple input or output status. This type of approach also challenges the individual and cognitive lens of social psychology as mentioned above (Fairhurst & Grant 2010).

Drawing on social constructionist approaches, it is argued in this study that it is important to study leadership "not as an isolated event performed by a unique actor", but "as an emerging social construction embedded in a unique organisation […] a contextual leadership" (Osborn *et al.* 2002:832).

Schrodinger (1958:52) states that "every man's world is and always remains a construct of his mind and cannot be proved to have any other existence". Any approach that has as its foundation one or more of the following four key assumptions can be distinguished as social constructionism (Burr 2003:3). Firstly, an approach based on a critical stance toward taken-for-granted knowledge; secondly, when assuming that knowledge is historically and culturally specific; thirdly, the notion that knowledge is sustained by social processes; and lastly, the assumption that knowledge and social action go together. Burr (2003:86) further states that a social constructionist "sees the self and identity as being created and sustained through our social, historical, cultural, and temporal relations".

In this thesis, the importance of the cognitive dimension of leadership is acknowledged, but there is a call for greater acknowledgement of the social constructionist and communicative

dimensions of leadership as well. The ability to represent and interpret the social world is necessary in order for human social functioning to transpire (Durkin 1996 in Watt 2013). Interaction with other people enables leaders to do this and it is also the connection between intra- and inter-level aspects of leadership (Watt 2013). A socially constructed approach to leadership entails more than just placing leadership assessments in the eye of the beholder. Grint (1997:6) opines that people are not free from social influence and this allows for the "truth" of someone's leadership to emerge over time; truth emerges from a competition between various accounts and interpretations that all carry different weights. Some are more dominant than others and become the accepted view, regardless of the "reality" of the person or situation. Our beliefs are then often based on the accounts of others from whom we (re)constitute our version of events, which implies that the true essence of the leader or situation might not be known by us.

5.8.12 Leadership communication is strategic

The term "strategic" was first used in organisation theory in the 1950s (Hatch 1997). Used mostly as strategic planning, the original purpose was that of controlling the organisational environment and maintaining the organisation's autonomy. It was therefore used to describe how organisations competed in the marketplace to obtain competitive advantage and gain market share (Pfeffer & Salancik 1978). Strategic communication and strategic leadership communication are emerging areas of study in the communication and management social sciences (Thomas & Stephens 2015). Various professional fields are involved in the development, dissemination, and assessment of communications on behalf of organisations and causes. These disciplines include, among others, fields such as management, marketing, advertising, and public relations. Lately, the field of leadership has also started to feature more and more. Although their specific activities can be conceptualised in various ways – from coordinating administrative functions to product promotion and relationship building – all these disciplines involve the organisation, and ways of communicating purposefully to advance its mission. This is also the aim and the essence of strategic communication (Hallahan *et al.* 2007).

Crossan, Vera and Nanjad (2008) opine that existing views of strategic leadership is too focused on planning and control and should rather focus on aspects such as being more flexible; on organisational learning and on improvisation (Vera & Crossan 2003; Bettis & Hitt

1995). Organisational leadership is continuously required to interpret their external context, derive an organisational direction amid the complex environment, and communicate a vision to stakeholders (Daft & Weick 1984). Organisations vie for the attention, admiration, affinity, alignment, and allegiance of all types of stakeholders. These stakeholders may include customers, employees, investors, donors, government officials, special interest groups, and the public at large. Organisational leaders are therefore required to make strategic decisions about the nature and level of resources they are prepared to devote to such efforts (Hallahan *et al.* 2007) in order to enhance success.

The mentioned environment requires that companies and their leadership move away from a tactical, short-term approach to communication. Instead, key constituents should receive communication that is aligned with a company's overall strategy. The need for effective strategic leadership practices that assist organisations in enhancing their performances within competing and turbulent environments cannot be stressed enough. Contemporary organisational environments are filled with threats and opportunities (Ireland & Hitt 2005), and the establishment and implementation of good communication and information strategies within the organisation is therefore of the essence. Kunsch (2003 in Dias & Andrade 2015) opines that a new organisational communication mix is required in order to incorporate, in an integrated manner, new communication tools and best practices. Leadership communication should be viewed and practised as a "philosophy that drives the convergence of different areas and enables synergetic action" (Kunsch 2003:150 in Dias & Andrade 2015). It is noted here that management researchers have made notable progress with investigating strategic leader language – specifically language used to convey a strategic vision (Fairhurst 2009; Larwood, Falbe, Miesing & Kriger 1995).

Supervisory theories of leadership are mostly about leadership "in" organisations, while strategic theories of leadership are concerned with leadership "of" organisations (Hunt 1991). According to Selznick (1984:5), strategic leadership theories are "marked by a concern for the evolution of the organisation as a whole, including its changing aims and capabilities".

Strategic leadership communication shapes meaning, builds trust, creates reputation, and manages symbolic relationships with internal and external stakeholders in order to support organisational growth and secure the right to operate (Zerfass & Huck 2007).

When leadership communication is strategic, it communicates strategic decisions; creates and communicates a vision of the future; develops key competencies and capabilities; develops organisational structures, processes, and controls; manages multiple constituencies; selects and develops the next generation of leaders; sustains an effective organisational culture; and infuses ethical value systems into the organisation's culture (Boal & Hooiberg 2000).

5.8.13 Leadership communication is continuous, frequent, timely, and accurate

Employees who receive accurate, timely, and adequate communications are found to be more motivated during events such as mergers or change interventions. It can also assist in lessening turnover intentions (Shaw 2005). Competent communicators must also employ communicative resources such as language, gestures, and voice (Stohl 1984), and must share and respond to information in a timely manner, actively listen to other points of view, and communicate clearly and succinctly (Shaw 2005). Gray and Laidlaw (2004) concur, stating that employees exposed to timely and adequate feedback, and who are kept informed of changes, are most likely to deliver favourable organisational outcomes. Bowen and Ostroff (2004:208) add to the above when stating that in order to function effectively in a social context and make accurate attributions about a situation, an employee must have adequate and unambiguous information.

A review of the research literature by Gray and Laidlaw (2004) indicates that in order to establish the impact of communication, organisational communication has been examined from several perspectives over the years. Clampitt (1991) and Jablin, Putnam, Roberts and Porter (1987), among others, investigated the interaction of communication variables by using the *process perspective*. The *perception perspective* emphasises the "exchange of information and transmission of meaning throughout the organisation" (Dessler 1980:197). The perception perspective also accounts for perceptions and attitudes (Tourish & Hargie 2000; Downs & Hazen 1977; Clampitt & Downs 1993). Finally, the *critical incidents approach*, which examines the communication practices that characterise current work practices, was investigated by Hunt, Tourish and Hargie (2000).

Historically, employees as stakeholders have been neglected in favour of external publics (Chong 2007). Leadership's lack of attention to internal communication with employees may well have been the result of the emphasis that organisations have traditionally placed on

external publics. The internal communication of leaders with their employees enhances a number of important factors that greatly influence the organisational bottom line. Thomas, Zolin and Hartman (2009:302) indicate that "when employees perceive they are getting information from their supervisors and co-workers that is timely, accurate, and relevant, they are more likely to feel less vulnerable and more able to rely on their co-workers and supervisors".

When the communication received by employees is clear, sufficient, and consistent, it is easier for them to relate to what the organisation expects of them (Nishii & Wright 2008).

5.8.14 Authentic and transparent communication

The actions of authentic leaders are based on their values and convictions. An authentic communicator will practise what he/she preaches. The communication of the authentic leader is therefore characterised by high levels of transparency and integrity (Lloyd-Hughes n.d.).

When followers perceive communication as open, clear, and unambiguous, it heightens their trust in leadership. Credibility is enhanced when a leader is consistent in word and deed. Followers listen to the message and then look for "the walk". Trust is generated by true feelings of good communication among participants, including leaders. It therefore requires authenticity, which also requires genuine and effective communication. Two-way communication that is authentic and open is essential in an organisational setting if success is to be obtained (Zeffane, Tipu & Ryan 2011).

The unprecedented public demand for visibility and openness in the business world requires business enterprises to develop a strategic communication system that fully embraces symmetry, transparency, and authenticity.

Employees make significant contributions to the overall success of an organisation. According to Ahmed *et al.* (2010), research shows that organisational performance markedly improves when communication is permitted to flow uninterrupted and employees are empowered, provided incentives, and given the necessary resources to perform at an optimal level. It is essential for leadership dealing with the technical core of an organisation to develop good working relationships with employees and as such provide them with a

comfortable working environment. The use of clear transparent and open communication by leadership is essential if this is to be achieved.

The quality of a leader's communication is of extreme importance. Bowen and Ostroff (2004:208) state that "in order to function effectively in a social context and make accurate attributions about a situation, an employee must have adequate and unambiguous information". Leaders wishing to have the desired effect on employees need to be effective communicators that use communication effectively. This entails that the content of the message, as well as the comprehension of the message and the acceptance thereof should receive attention (Chaiken, Wood & Eagerly 1996).

5.9   ANTECEDENTS OF LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATION

Antecedents are those events or conditions that lead to the occurrence of a concept (Rodgers 2000). Antecedents are thus events that happened before the concept's occurrence (Rodgers & Knafl 2000). Aneshensel (2013:288) describes an antecedent as a variable that should be identified prior to the identification of the focal dependent variable, with the aim of understanding the origin of the dependent variable. The identified antecedents of leadership communication therefore refer to those conditions that have to be in place in order to ensure positive and optimal organisational outcomes, as the outcomes occur as a result of the antecedents (Rodgers & Knafl 2000). A number of antecedents were identified and are elaborated on in the ensuing discussion.

It is also important to note that in this study, an integrated approach to organisational communication is suggested. Extant organisational and leadership communication literature has clearly indicated that a strategic integrated approach to communication is required in order to enhance organisational effectiveness and to add value to the organisational bottom line (Shimp & Andrews 2013; Meintjies 2012; Kotler & Pfoertsch 2011; Mulder 2008; Niemann 2005). It is therefore assumed here that when a strategic IC approach to leadership communication is adopted, the antecedents of leadership communication would include and overlap with those associated with an IC approach. These principles include, among others, a holistic approach to communication (no silos, cross-functional functioning), stakeholder-conscious functioning, a stakeholder-centric approach, strategic consistency, and contact synergy. These principles are discussed in detail in the IC chapter (see Section 4.8.3).

The antecedents related to leadership communication are discussed in the following section. They are presented in no particular order.

5.9.1 A culture of ethical and caring behaviour

Leaders should approach communication from a humane orientation and treat others with dignity and respect and not see them as a means to an end. Recognising the rights of others and communicating concern for their wellbeing, as well as showing compassion towards them and their situation, are important aspects of ethical leadership communication (Eisenbeiss 2012). Perceptions of ethical leadership relate to a variety of desirable work outcomes, among which commitment and citizenship (Mitonga-Monga & Cilliers 2016).

Ethical leadership communication reflects a power motivation that is socialised rather than one that is personalised (McClelland 1987). Ethical leaders send clear messages about ethical values and hold subordinates accountable for their actions (Treviño *et al.* 2003). Studies have proven that ethical communication from leadership has a beneficial impact on the organisation as it reduces unethical practices and harmful follower behaviours (Walumba & Schaubroeck 2009; Mayer *et al.* 2009).

Northouse (2001) suggests five principles of ethical leadership that contribute to positive organisational outcomes as these behaviours have an influence on the communication used by leaders. This author states that when communicating, the ethical leader should use communication that is transparent, fair, respectful towards followers, that manifests honesty, and that builds community.

Ethical leaders are value driven and when behaviour and communication are value driven it has an influence on the self-concept and beliefs of followers. This in turn influences the motivation, attitudes, and behaviours of followers (Shamir *et al.* 1993). Value-driven leaders engage in communication processes that amplify certain values and identities, and they suggest linkages between behaviours they expect from their followers, the amplified values and identities, and their vision of a better future (Shamir *et al.* 1993). Kalshoven, Den Hartog and De Hoog (2011) argue that the communication and outward rewarding of ethical values and behaviours are important elements of ethical leadership and assist followers in internalising the values and identifying with the values of the company.

As innovation and employee wellbeing are given high priority at present, authentic leadership rooted in ethical and caring behaviour has become of great importance (Van Dierendonck 2011:1228-1229). Kanungo and Mendonca (1996) argue that in the organisational literature, the moral dimension of leadership has primarily been addressed through transformational and charismatic leadership. Transformational leadership has been associated with many positive outcomes such as workers' satisfaction with work and with the leader, organisational commitment, citizenship behaviour, and job performance (Yukl 2002).

Servant leadership is also closely related to caring behaviour. The servant-leader exhibits a natural tendency to serve others. Zohar (1997:146) opines that as emerging leadership paradigm for the 21st century, "servant leadership is the essence of quantum thinking and quantum leadership". Servant leadership characteristics often occur naturally within many individuals. It constitutes a move away from the more traditional autocratic and hierarchical models of leadership toward servant leadership as a way of being in a relationship with others. This type of leadership behaviour seeks to involve others in decision-making processes, is strongly based in ethical and caring behaviour, and enhances the growth of employees while improving the caring and quality of organisational life.

5.9.2 Respectful employee engagement

Respectful engagement (RE) is a key form of positive interrelating that refers to interrelating that conveys a sense of presence and worth and communicates positive regard (Rogers 1957). Respect, according to Rawls (1971 in Carmeli, Dutton & Hardin 2015), is a foundational condition of human connections, representing an affirmation of human existence and dignity. Respect is also not automatic, but depends on one person granting presence, dignity, and affirmation to another (Mead 1934). According to Carmeli *et al.* (2015), RE implies that respect occurs interpersonally through particular forms of interaction and focuses on interpersonal interactions that confer a sense of value and worth. Acts of respectful engagement include conveying presence, communicating affirmation, effective listening, and supportive communication (Dutton 2003). RE has shown that interrelating at work can be based on less instrumental and more humanising forms of interpersonal connection that emphasise the importance of being accepted as a person of worth and value.

According to Bennis (2007), the field of communication, the study of leadership, as well as leadership itself, will increasingly become collaborative in nature as the complex problems that leaders are faced with in modern organisations can only be solved by many fine minds working together. The acknowledgement of leadership as a key factor for engaged employees and flourishing organisations (Macik-Frey, Quick & Cooper 2009; Luthans 2002), and the increased recognition of the vital role that leadership communication plays in the success of an organisation, can no longer be ignored.

5.9.3   Knowledge of enabling conditions

In order for leadership communication to be effective, it is essential that leaders acquire a deep knowledge of a wider spectrum of communicative abilities. It is also important to view communication more broadly and see it as a function that cuts through and involves the whole organisation. Four important areas of knowledge that are necessary to assist with organisational functioning and value creation were identified by Malmelin (2007). These processes can also be viewed as antecedents in the leadership communication process and include communication through processes, communication through structures, communication through social interaction, and communication to and from the environment.

Hamrefors (2010:144) concurs with the above and states that in order for a manager or leader to influence the communicative ability of the organisation, a deep knowledge of a wider spectrum of communicative abilities is required. Processes responsible for communicating the coordinating logic present in the organisation are important factors for consideration. Imperfect processes encourage passivity and also do not provide incentives for improvement of these processes, while excellence in processes encourages further refinement by those involved in them.

Hamrefors (2010:144) identified the following four important aspects:

- Processes – responsible for communicating the coordinating logic present in the organisation. Processes that are imperfect encourage passivity and also do not provide incentives for improvement of these processes. Excellence in processes encourages further refinement by those involved in them.
- Structure – lack of transparency in structure makes it impossible for people to perceive it as a whole. This in turn will affect the perception of the organisational

mission. High structural transparency, on the other hand, assists stakeholders to make sense of the organisational mission.

- Social interaction – interaction is impaired and communicative ability affected negatively where power games, technical imprisonment, or other impairing activities form part of the interaction. If types of interaction facilitate knowledge transfer and perspective-making, a more effective and efficient communicative ability will be generated.

- Organisation-wide relationships – the communicative ability is affected by the way the organisation gains influence over and understanding of other actors and the organisational environment.

Traditional organisational thinking considers organisational structures and systems as core elements necessary for successful organisational functioning (Robbins 1990). Structures and systems refer to an identifiable, bounded set of methodologically interrelated elements or principles with some intended purpose (Hoogervorst, Van der Flier & Koopman 2004). Various structures and systems which are in effect regulating mechanisms can be identified in an organisation (a communication structure, a work and task structure, and an information management system). Structures and systems form the formal system of control that embodies knowledge and principles for governance, and represent the embedded system of management in the organisation. Organisational goals need to be imbedded in these systems and structures or they will most likely not be realised. Structures and systems should therefore be in line with the organisational vision, mission, values, and goals (Hoogervorst *et al.* 2004). This can only occur if communication is clear and efficient.

Systems should be in place that accommodate symmetrical communication. The symmetrical approach to communication is a communication worldview and practice is characterised by an emphasis on "trust, credibility, openness, relationships, reciprocity, network symmetry, horizontal communication, feedback, adequacy of information, employee-centred style, tolerance for disagreement, and negotiation" (Grunig 1992:558). According to Grunig (2006), the purpose of a symmetrical model focuses on how individuals, organisations, and publics use communication to adjust their ideas and behaviours; rather than trying to control or manipulate the behaviour and thoughts of the other party.

Dutta, Narasimhan and Rajiv (2005) claim that capabilities refer to how a company deploys resources in order to generate value and achieve organisational objectives. Knowledge

management capability (KMC) represents the ability to mobilise and deploy knowledge resources in combination with other resources and capabilities for enabling knowledge management (KM) activities, and it has a positive effect on competitive advantage and organisational effectiveness (Gupta & Govindarajan 2000).

Successful KM must connect many organisational components, including technology, human resource practices, organisational structure, and culture, to ensure that the right knowledge is brought to the right people (Gurteen 1998). KM is a cross-functional and multifaceted discipline that should be holistically approached and is the foundation of organisational advantage (Nahapiet & Ghoshal 1998). The relationship between the three major contributing factors to KM, namely enablers, processes, and organisational performance, is very important (O'Dell & Grayson 1999).

In order to promote organisational functioning, leaders must understand the relationship between knowledge enablers and organisational performance. To this end, Holsapple and Singh (2001) propose a knowledge chain model that suggests that leadership should establish enabling conditions for achieving organisational outcomes through KM activities such as acquisition, generation, internalisation and externalisation. It means that knowledge enablers such as leadership, for example, affect organisational outcome through knowledge processes. It can be surmised here that leaders who do not have the proper communication skills and abilities will not be able to successfully execute this function.

5.9.4   Goal alignment

Work and organisational life are inextricably intertwined with the perpetual search for meaning (Thompson 2000). Work life is a key element in people's search for ultimate meaning (Mitroff 2003) and failure to satisfy the need for meaningful work is often the root cause of organisational dysfunctions and ineffectiveness. According to Clifton (2012), language becomes synonymous with managing meaning in both organisational and non-organisational settings. However, in organisational settings, leadership is regarded as influencing the process of managing meaning so that certain organisational meanings are privileged over others (Fairhurst 2008; Hosking 1988). The view adopted by relational leadership theorists holds that leadership is a phenomenon that is generated in the interactions among people acting in a context (Fairhurst 2007). In order to allow employees to work together towards goals and find meaning in their work and reach desired outcomes,

leadership is viewed as being co-constructed in a social interaction process (Day 2001). Leaders are tasked with motivating employees to perform at a level that achieves organisational objectives (Hargie, Tourish & Wilson 2002).

When line managers do not communicate and implement organisational procedures consistently, a misalignment between the goals of the organisation and what employees think is expected of them occurs. The quality of a leader's communication to employees is therefore an important skill-related variable that may affect the relationship between the manager and employee perceptions about organisational goals (Den Hartog, Boon, Verburg & Croon 2013).

5.9.5   Sustainable engagement

Employee engagement has been receiving increased attention in the academic literature and in organisations in recent years as it has been linked to many organisational outcomes, including those that increase productivity, profitability, employee retention, and customer satisfaction (Coffman & Gonzalez-Molina 2002; Buckingham & Coffman 1999). The Towers Watson Global Workforce Study of 2014 highlights the importance of employee engagement. The study found that the decisions of employees of all ages concerning whether to stay with a company or not were greatly influenced by the trust and confidence they had in the leadership of their company. The study established that 60% of employees were found to lack the elements required to be highly engaged. Towers Watson (2014:3) found three measurable elements essential to sustainable engagement:

- Traditional engagement – employees' willingness to expend discretionary effort on their job.
- Enablement – having the tools, resources, and support (typically through direct line supervisors) to do their job effectively.
- Energy – having a work environment that actively supports physical, emotional, and interpersonal wellbeing.

Given the low levels of highly engaged workers, it is essential for companies to understand the factors that drive sustainable engagement, and first among these is leadership. For many years, leadership has been recognised as being essential to traditional engagement, and currently, in the global marketplace, leadership is a driver of not only sustainable

engagement, but also of the components thereof (Towers Watson Global Workforce Study 2014).

Internal communication between leaders/managers and employees that is a two-way process and involves the exchange or sharing of information promotes employee engagement. Saks (2006:602) describes employee engagement as "the degree to which an individual is attentive and absorbed in the performance of their roles". According to Lowenstein (2006), prior studies have found that leaders' and managers' communication with their employees motivate their subordinates to provide superior service to customers. Employers now realise that by focusing on employee engagement, a more productive and efficient workforce can be created. No initiative undertaken by leadership can be successful without wilful involvement and engagement of employees (Markos & Sridevi 2010). Perri's Global Workforce Study (2003) defined employee engagement as "employees' willingness and ability to help their company succeed, largely by providing discretionary effort on a sustainable basis". An engaged employee can be described as one who is fully involved in his/her work and enthusiastic about reaching work objectives (Seijts & Crim 2006 in Kontakos 2009). Engaged employees advocate the organisation to co-workers, and they are willing to give extra time, effort, and initiative to contribute to the success of the organisation. Engaged employees also have an intense desire to be a member of the organisation (Rath & Conchie 2009).

As a key driver in any successful organisation, effective communication is essential to employee engagement (Kontakos 2009). As is the case in any organisation, support for employee engagement must come from the top and be highly visible to all employees. Being responsible for creating an organisation's mission, vision, and objectives, the leadership team must uphold and communicate these ideals throughout the organisation. Employee engagement is a direct reflection of how employees feel about their relationship with their direct line manager. The quality of this relationship is the most critical factor in determining whether or not an employee chooses to stay or leave a certain position (Kontakos 2009). Research has demonstrated that employee engagement leads to various organisational outcomes, such as organisational growth, profits, and productivity (Harter *et al.* 2002), organisational citizenship behaviour, intelligence retention, and customer satisfaction (Saks & Rotman 2006; Kahn 1990). Baldev and Anupama (2010) found that situational factors

such as communication, management, career opportunity, and job content are critical determinants of employee engagement.

According to KLCM (2010), it is imperative that organisations are aware of the factors that drive employee engagement. Some of the factors that have been proposed by professionals include leadership, communication, supervisor relationship, and work environment (KLCM 2010), and all of these can be connected back to efficient and effective leadership communication. As Parsley (2006:10 cited in KLCM 2010) pointed out, "effective communications create engaged employees, creating loyal customers, who in turn create bigger profits".

Consideration as one of the major identified leadership components (together with initiating structure) implies that the leader is being friendly and using communication that is supportive, concerned, open, and consultative towards employees. When leaders exhibit a high level of consideration, there is a high perception among employees that set goals are achievable, and subsequently rewards are attainable.

The flow of smooth information without barriers is a critical element of effective leadership communication. When information is shared freely and timeously, organisations were found to be high-performing and well-respected (Ahmed *et al.* 2010).

5.9.6   Context and recipient sensitive

Hamrefors' (2010) study concluded that the totality of an organisation adds up to its communicative ability and that the communication abilities traditionally defined as important only constituted a minor part of those factors constituting total communicative ability.

Osborn *et al.* (2002:773) opine that leadership and its effectiveness is largely dependent on the context, and that changing the context also changes the leadership, as leadership is embedded within the environment, structure, and technology of organisations. Alvesson and Sveningsson (2012) add to the above by stating that research has failed to explore the contextual level of leadership in depth. For many decades, scholars of leaders have viewed context as key to leadership (Lord & Dinh 2012; John 2006). However, it is only in recent years that empirical research has started to consider the role of context (Liden & Antonakis 2009). Traditionally, context has been viewed as a situation that has an influence on the kind of leadership that will be appropriate or effective. The relationship between leadership

and context can be referred to as recursive, which implies that leadership is produced by, but also produces, the context to which it refers (Endrissat & Von Arx 2013:279). Considering the organisational context within which leader and follower communication takes place is crucial, since leaders' and followers' activities are always embedded in a certain context (Allirol & Leienbach 2015; Osborn *et al.* 2002). Leadership should therefore be regarded and developed more collectively and contextually (Zaccaro & Horn 2003; Osborn *et al.* 2002). According to Clarke (1991:145), the "ability of an actor to set the conditions for the interaction, influence who is present and excluded, manipulate resources, and veto proposed action" within a given situation is an aspect that requires serious consideration and investigation within a socially constructed leadership paradigm.

Structure theory suggests that social context shapes people's constructions of reality (Giddens 1984); the leader is therefore inseparable from the context and the effectiveness of leadership is dependent on the context. In examining leadership contextually, the mission, core tasks, structure, and management of the organisation are integrated (Hujala, Heikkam & Halttunen 2011 in Hujala 2013).

In order to communicate successfully and be a relational leader, it is important for the leader to create a context in which growth-fostering, high-quality connections can occur, where social interaction is of such a quality that mutual learning can take place. To achieve this, relational skills are required, as well as EI with qualities such as self-awareness, empathy, vulnerability, and openness to learn from others regardless of their position of authority (Fletcher 2004).

The social constructionist approach, which is the approach followed in this study, has, however, shown that context is not merely a given situation, but is actively created; in other words, context is situated (Grint 2005).

From the above discussion it is clear that leadership cannot be understood without considering the specific contexts in which it takes place, as leadership is influenced by micro- and macro-level occurrences such as national politics, the economy of a country, and culture, and can therefore not be studied as being context free.

5.9.7 Leadership style

Leadership style literature may be characterised by referring to two main phases, according to De Vries *et al.* (2010). The first phase consists of approximately 30 years of studying leader consideration and initiating structure from 1953 until the mid-1980s. Following this, the second period of studying charismatic-transformational leadership was from the mid-1980s until currently. Leadership communication studies have considered this shift in focus. In a review of the relations between interpersonal communication behaviours and leadership consideration and initiating structure, Penley and Hawkins (1985) conclude that consideration, or human-oriented leadership, is mainly communicative, while initiating structure- or task-oriented leadership is much less inclined to be communicative.

Transformational leadership – arguably the most researched leadership concept to date – is closely related to desired outcomes for individuals, as proven in research by Judge and Piccolo (2004), among others, as well as teams (Casimir, Waldman, Bartran & Yang 2006; Judge & Piccolo 2004; Bass, Avolio, Jung & Berson 2003). It is, however, hard to find research indicating findings at individual as well as group level in the same study. Also very scarce to find are studies that indicate the direct relations between transformational leadership and performance at multiple levels, as well as multiple level mediators.

5.9.8 Cultural sensitivity

Leadership in a global enterprise requires leaders who are sophisticated in international management skills and skilled with working with people from different countries and cultures (Adler 1991).

Cultural differences in an organisation can prevent a leader from being an effective communicator. An effective leader/competent communicator will be able to recognise cultural barriers and promote a sensitivity towards cultural differences and attempt to act on them as cultural barriers stand in the way of achieving shared experience and mutual understanding (Moseley 2009).

In her book, *The Culture Map*, Meyer (2014) states that in the age of globalisation, it is more important than ever, especially for leaders, to be able to acknowledge and understand cultural differences. She further states that leaders have always needed to understand human nature and personality differences, but now there is a requirement for 21st-century

257

leaders to be prepared to understand a wider, richer array of work styles than ever before and to be able to determine which aspects of an interaction are simply a result of personality and which are a result of differences in cultural perspective. This is not easily accomplished. Despite the fact that it is a very complex subject to address, there is also a reluctance to talk about cultural differences as there is generally a fear of saying something that is viewed as "politically incorrect".

Having a proper knowledge of different cultures and their way of functioning can contribute positively to how communication between a leader and subordinates are shared and understood.

5.9.9 Positive organisational culture

Holtzhausen (2015:87) defines organisational culture as the norms, values, behaviour, and attitudes that are shared by a group of employees and shape the employees' sense of what is acceptable and valid within the organisation, as well as how the employees should feel about themselves and the organisation as a collective whole. These norms, values, behaviour, and attitudes provide a sense of purpose and are slow to change; new employees to the organisation learn them through various internalisation processes.

The combination of effective organisational leadership and appropriate communication with the workforce leads to a core culture that allows diversity but at the same time fosters a common set of key assumptions, norms, and values around which competent subcultures can align (Sutcliffe 2013; Schein 2010). Effective leadership communication and a core common culture that includes a shared organisational identity, as well as assumptions about mission, strategy, and goals, are the building blocks of a successful organisation (Sutcliffe 2013). The core values of an organisation begin with its leadership. According to Jandt (2004), organisational culture includes a set of values, goals, and priorities that are encouraged through the policies and procedures of an organisation. When strong, unified behaviour, values, and beliefs have been developed, a strong organisational culture emerges, which is necessary if programmes in the organisation are to be implemented successfully.

According to Puth (2002), the relationship between organisational leadership and corporate culture is virtually direct and clearly very influential. It is also important to know that true

leadership is a matter of how to be, rather than how to do it as followers emulate what leaders are rather than what they do. How leaders communicate to followers will therefore have a direct influence on the communication in the organisation and will affect the organisational climate.

5.9.10 Organisational climate and communication climate

Organisational climate is a reflection of the way people perceive and describe the characteristics of their environment (Allen 2003:63). Without a positive climate there is little hope for achieving excellence in an organisation (Harris & Nelson 2008:87-88). Climates in organisations can range from nurturing to stultifying. A survey of 250 employees of a large service organisation by Guzley (1992) revealed that employees were more likely to commit to their organisation when they perceived a favourable organisational climate (OC) and communication climate (CC). Factors such as organisational information clarity, for example clear goals, and employees' participation in the organisation, for example voice and two-way communication, were significant predictors of employees' commitment levels (Guzley 1992).

CC is of paramount importance in an organisation as it contributes to the effectiveness and success of an organisation (Nordin, Sivapalan, Bhattacharyya, Ahmad & Abdullah 2014).

The climate in an organisation is a subjective reaction to organisational members' perception of communicative events. This subjective reaction is shared to a great extent either by individual groups or the entire organisation (Shockley-Zalabak 1991:70). Shockley-Zalabak (1991:70) cites Redding (1972) when proposing that the collective beliefs that become the CC are associated with five communication factors: (1) supportiveness; (2) participative decision making; (3) trust, confidence, and credibility; (4) openness and candour; and (5) high performance goals.

Goodell (1992:323, in Pascoe and More 2004) states that it is logical that the environment that people experience in their organisations influences at least some part of their behaviour. The CC of an organisation refers to the extent and type of communication patterns that emerge within that organisation; these patterns are partially a function of the perceptions managers and employees have of the organisation as a whole (Monge & Eisenberg 1987). Verwey and Du Plooy-Cilliers (2003:135) distinguish between two types of CC; namely

defensive and supportive. Defensive CCs are typical of autocratic organisations that are more closed and rigid and focus on problem solving and conflict, as well as the formulation of rules, policies, and systems in which members are forced to complete certain actions, while supportive CCs are characterised by trust openness, increased participation, and loyalty.

5.9.11 Emotional intelligence (EI)

Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee (2002:5-7) state that since the beginning of human existence, people have always looked at leaders for assurance and clarity when facing uncertainty or threat, or when there is a certain task that has to be accomplished. These authors further state that the leader of a group has always acted as an emotional guide to the group. In modern organisations this role, referring to the emotional side of the leader, has largely been invisible and has not been seen as important for the success of the organisation. Studies have demonstrated, however, that leaders who consistently outperform their peers not only have the technical skills required, but more importantly, have mastered most of the aspects of EI (Batool 2013). EI is defined by Salovey and Mayer (1990:189) as "the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions". Mayer and Salovey (1990) state that EI does not refer to a single characteristic or ability, but to a composite of distinct emotional reasoning abilities; namely perceiving, understanding, and regulating emotions.

According to Pinos, Twigg and Olsen (2006), an individual that possesses high EI is aware of his own and others' feelings, and is able to communicate both positive and negative emotions and internal experiences when appropriate and have an impact on other people's moods. In the context of this study, it is also important to note that although technical skills and core competencies are essential for sustainable competitive advantage, the ability to outperform other organisations largely depends on how employees manage their relationships with others (Pinos *et al.* 2006). Scholars such as Pool and Cotton (2006) opine that in the organisations of today it is important for a leader to understand the effects of his/her own, as well as employees' moods and emotions, therefore it is vital to take the EI of the leader into account. A leader that possesses high levels of EI will have a much better understanding of people and their surroundings. It has been proven that EI helps

organisations as a whole to commit to strategy, build relationships inside and outside the organisation that offer competitive advantage, promote innovation and risk taking, provide a platform to shared learning, maintain balance between the human side and the financial side of the company's agenda, and develop open communication and trust building among leaders and followers (Nordstrom 2010).

5.9.12 Sensemaking

Viewing leadership as a discursive process results in leadership being considered as sensemaking (Pye 2005). This approach is more appealing in current turbulent organisational conditions, as leadership that assists employees to make sense of a situation, predicament, or environment is preferred over the individual leader that makes rational calculations, develops strategies, and executes these strategies (Hall 2013). When managers/leaders are able to provide employees with accurate and useful task and organisational information, it aids employees' sensemaking and reduces uncertainty (Kernan & Hanges 2002).

Leaders are expected to generate a point of reference, against which a feeling of organisation and direction can emerge (Smircich & Morgan 1982). At certain times, however, situations may arise in the organisation in which followers feel that they do not know what the next step or action should be. Often at these times, the leader is also not sure what the next course of action should be. However, what the leader does know at this point is that the plan or map at their disposal is not sufficient to assist them in fixing the situation. In such a case, the leader has to instil confidence in people and get them to move in a general direction. The leader must also ensure that they look closely at cues created by their actions so that they learn where they were and get some better idea of where they are and where they want to be. To accomplish this, the leader makes use of sensemaking – making the situation sensible (Weick 1995).

Existing research has shown that the ability to shape and direct stakeholder sensemaking through discursive practices – both in the form of talk-in-interaction and written text – is a key leadership skill (Iszatt-White 2009; Fairhurst 2007). Thus, sensemaking (the ability to make sense) and sensegiving (the ability to shape the way others make sense) are key topics for the field of leadership (Gioia & Chittipeddi 1991). Leaders are known to play a key role in "framing" (Fairhurst 2011; Fairhurst & Sarr 1996) complex and ambiguous situations

and events in order for others to make sense of them (Gioia *et al.* 2010:41). How a situation is framed is important because it influences how people think, feel, and act towards that situation. Effective framers, according to Fairhurst and Sarr (1996), know the perspective of their audience and seriously consider the question of whom they are framing the meaning for.

5.9.13 Communication competence

Specifically in reference to the relationship between communication competence and leadership, Holladay and Coombs (1993) argue that leadership is enacted through communication in that effective communication shapes the followers' perceptions of a leader.

It is also stated by Barge (1994:21) that "leadership is enacted through communication". This assumption implies that communication is the principal means that leaders use to achieve goals. In order to be an effective leader, it is necessary to also be an effective communicator. Leaders must therefore set the standards for communication. They need to be role models for the types of communication they expect in the organisation (Barrett 2011:17).

"Communication competence has also been conceptualised to encompass the elements of knowledge, motivation, skill, behaviour, and effectiveness" (Spitzberg 1983), such that Spitzberg and Cupach (1981:1) argued that "competent interaction can be viewed as a form of interpersonal influence, in which an individual is faced with the task of fulfilling communicative functions and goals (effectiveness) while maintaining conversational and interpersonal norms (appropriateness)". From this perspective, the more a manager or leader is motivated to interact with employees; is knowledgeable in communication skills that facilitate openness, negotiation, and teamwork; is skilled at using these techniques; and is sensitive to the communication context, the more communicatively competent the manager is perceived to be. According to Shockley-Zalabak (2012:230), "nowhere is communication competency more important than when individuals attempt to lead and establish vision and direction in organisations".

A competent communicator has the ability to convey information to and receive information from others effectively. Essential components such as attentive listening and clarity in writing

or speaking form part of the basis for becoming a competent communicator. Flauto (1999) states that the principal means that leaders use to achieve goals is through communication. Successful organisational functioning is therefore dependent on the communication competencies of the leader. Viewed as a relational and collaborative process, Heiftez (1998) describes leadership as a problem-solving process.

Communication competence has also been conceptualised to encompass the elements of knowledge, motivation, skill, behaviour, and effectiveness (Spitzberg 1983). Some important characteristics of competent communicators are the ability to do the following:

- **Utilise a two-way communication approach that includes feedback and continuous dialogue** – A two-way communication approach enables leaders to be effective listeners, as well as giving effective explanations (Robinson & Hayday 2009).
- **Coach** – An important concept addressed by McCarthy and Ahrens (2011) is the concept of coaching. These authors state that when leaders coach, they promote reflection and learning and encourage employees to take ownership of, develop, and engage in the organisation. McCarthy and Ahrens (2011) further state that communicative competence does not just mean listening, but authentic listening; or just asking questions, but asking the right questions. This can only be accomplished by skilled communicators.
- **Listen and negotiate** – Cushman and Craig (1976) argue that communicator competence involves the ability of individuals to display competencies in areas such as listening and negotiating. Competent communicators must be able to employ communicative resources such as language gestures and voice (Stohl 1984) and in order for supervisors to be perceived as competent communicators, they must share and respond to information in a timely manner (Madlock 2010). "Active listening" is listening for the full meaning of what is being transmitted and observing. It includes "listening" to the nonverbal cues contained in the message without making premature judgements or interpretations" (Miller 2012:4).
- **Utilise KM** – Senior leaders of an organisation are in need of skills to design and monitor the management of knowledge and the management of information systems that transmit it. Knowledge sharing is an important component of KM.

- **Abstain from negative communication behaviours** – Madlock and Kennedy-Lightsey (2010) suggest that negative communicative behaviours have a greater impact on subordinates' organisational commitment and job and communication satisfaction than positive communicative behaviours. Leaders should therefore not only be able to execute the correct communication behaviours, but also avoid negative and disruptive behaviour at all costs.

5.10   OUTCOMES OF LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATION

Consequences or outcomes are described by Walker and Avant (2005) as events that occur as a result of the concept under investigation. The following section addresses the benefits that leadership communication holds for the organisation. With the increasing recognition of the importance of intangible assets, there is also a need for a set of widely accepted metrics by which corporate leaders and the investment community can account for the non-financial factors that affect value creation in contemporary organisations. Although not always recognised as such, intangibles have always been a driver of corporate performance. Institutional investors are also increasingly taking intangibles into account in their analyss and earnings estimates. As a result, managers are more open to adopting non-traditional methodologies of measurement (Kalafut & Low 2001 in De Beer 2014). There is also lately a recognition of the increasingly important role that communication competencies play in an organisation's value-creation process.

5.10.1 Higher organisational productivity and efficiency

Leaders play an important role in inspiring subordinates to maximise efficiency and enhance productivity. Ahmed *et al.* (2010) argue that the spirit of teamwork among employees correlates with the inspirational leadership role of management. The ability to practise effective communication is a leadership attribute that facilitates managers into becoming prospective leaders of their organisations.

Clampitt and Downs (1993) conducted a study on two organisations and found that employees perceived communication to have an above-average impact on productivity. The employees experienced that their productivity was positively influenced on all eight of the communication satisfaction dimensions, which included supervisory communication, co-worker communication, organisational integration, corporate information, CC, feedback,

media quality, and subordinate communication. According to Clampitt and Downs (1993), the communication of supervisors proved to be more highly valued by employees than the communication they had with co-workers, in meetings, or via memos.

Positive employee attitudes increase productivity, improve performance, and enhance external relations (Berger 2008 in Men 2014). Positive working relationships allow leaders to swiftly resolve issues that arise and that could possibly hinder performance. At the individual level, poor communication can result in increased uncertainty about situations, the self, others, or relationships, which in turn lead to increased occupational stress and burnout (Ray 1983).

5.10.2 Positive employee identification, loyalty, attitudes, and behaviours

Prior research indicates that interpersonal interactions involving the exchange of information and affect between co-workers and between employees and their supervisors can have significant effects on the employees' psychological job outcomes, including job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and burnout (Postmes, Tanis & De Wit 2001). Positive associations were also found between two-way symmetrical communication outcomes such as loyalty and organisational identification. Communication is critical for business and for the relationships that are formed (Hackman & Johnson 1991). Increasing contact between leadership and subordinates allows employees to identify with the company's goals, which improves morale and increases productivity (Bambacas & Patrickson 2008).

Effective leadership communication is deemed to coincide with favourable work attitudes in employees, such as job satisfaction (Butler, Cantrell & Flick 1999; Podsakoff, MacKenzie & Bommer 1996) and organisational commitment (Walumba & Lawler 2003). These improvements in motivation and attitudes result in the escalation of performance, citizenship behaviour, and creativity of followers (Whitford & Moss 2009).

From the relational point of view, which is the stance adopted in this study, leading ethically refers to a continuous process of negotiated meaning-making between social actors (Fairhurst & Uhl-Bien 2012). This is linked to a social constructionist approach to ethical leadership that is well positioned to explore the power dynamics in the processes of co-construction (Nicholson & Carroll 2013). Communication between people is built on trust. The leadership of an organisation should be able to create an atmosphere of trust within the

company. Without trust, communication is hampered (De Vries 1997). Employees can only trust their leader when they have no doubt that what he or she is communicating to them in words or actions is the truth (Moreno 2010).

5.10.3 Organisational effectiveness

Hamrefors (2010:141) describes how communicators may contribute to the effectiveness of organisations by specifically participating in leadership. In a study conducted by Hamrefors (2010), it was established that communicators needed to develop certain knowledge and skills in order to contribute to organisational effectiveness. A leader's behaviour accounts for at least 25% of why people feel productive, motivated, energised, effective, and committed to their work (Kouzes & Posner 2010). Despite these findings, and others indicating that effective communication is one of the most important attributes of a successful manager/leader or supervisor (KLCM 2014; 2013), research often reports employees stating that they are being subjected to poor communication by their supervisors, which hinders them in doing their best work (KLCM 2014, 2013; Goleman 1998).

5.10.4 Group cohesion and task cohesion

According to Loughhead, Colman and Carron (2001), there are several reasons why a leader should strive to instil cohesion into a collaborative work group. Research by these authors proved that leader behaviour, which enhanced the feeling of cohesion between a certain group of individuals, led to better attendance of activities and better participation within that group of individuals. When leading a team, a leader is required to align individual goals with a shared mission, manage resources, establish a positive climate of trust and support, and to coordinate information transfer and task completion (Zaccaro, Rittman & Marks 2001).

Zaccaro *et al.* (2001:466) argue that task cohesion leads to strong member commitment. In task-cohesive groups, members care about the success of other group members because their own goal attainment is often inextricably bound to collective achievement. They will exert strong effort on behalf of the group and their fellow members to facilitate group success. When faced with adversity or possible failure, members of task-cohesive groups will persist at the task. Thus, the need for collective effort and commitment provides the

basis for both the value of group membership to the individual and the group's strength of integration.

Meta-analytic work found that transformational leadership is related to individual task performance (Wang, Oh, Courtright & Colbert 2011; Judge & Piccolo 2004), as well as creative performance (Wang *et al.* 2011). Team perceptions of supervisory transformational leadership yield positive relationships with team outcomes. According to Bass *et al.* (2003), unit performance can be positively predicted by team perceptions of supervisors' transformational and contingent reward leadership.

5.10.5 Leader-member relationship quality

Watt (2013) opines that relational competency is a process based on effective communication. Effective leaders are those who facilitate consensus concerning the current status, as well as the desired future of the organisation along with how decisions will affect individuals in the organisation. This can only be achieved by leaders sharing knowledge, displaying sensitivity to those around them, and also clearly stating their values. Therefore it is essential that they possess communication competency in order to establish and communicate their vision and build solid and lasting relationships with members. Relational leadership competency is a process based on effective communication.

Gerstner and Day (1997) state that empirical research has indicated that the quality of LMX is consistently related to work outcomes pertinent to LMX dyads, as well as organisationally relevant criteria such as organisational commitment and turnover intentions. Loi *et al.* (2009) argue that the quality of LMX shapes employees' perceptions of their exchange relationships with the organisation and this in turn indicate the employees' reciprocations toward the organisation. Liden, Bauer and Erdogan (2004 in Loi *et al.* 2009) suggest that the socialisation process of new employees and their initiation in the organisation are influenced by LMX. As interactions between supervisors and subordinates tend to be direct and frequent, supervisors play a key role in providing valuable information to an organisation's newcomers. Through their daily interactions, supervisors assist these members in the process of organisational assimilation. Other functions include assisting employees with the fulfilment of their obligations toward the organisation (Shore & Tetrick 1994) and therefore supervisors/leaders can be seen as important agents that represent the organisation in

managing employment relationships with employees (Coyle-Shapiro & Shore 2007; Wong, Ngo & Wong 2003 in Shore, Tetrick, Lynch & Barksdale 2006).

5.10.6 Employee satisfaction, productivity, and job satisfaction

Scholarship on communication has indicated that the communication competency of the manager/leader plays a significant role in the satisfaction of employees. The way in which leaders communicate sets the climate for communication in the organisation (Barret 2011). Cetin, Karabay and Efe (2012) describe communication competence as the fundamental dynamics affecting the job satisfaction of employees, and therefore also the performance of the organisation. Gray and Laidlaw (2004) cite Petit, Goris and Vaught (1997), who established that there is a high correlation between communication satisfaction and overall job satisfaction. The importance of communication satisfaction, which plays an important role in highlighting key issues for employees, is therefore of the essence as employees play a central role in the determination of organisational effectiveness and success. In the relationship management literature, satisfaction refers to the degree to which parties in a given relationship are satisfied with one another (Men 2014). Effective use of interpersonal communication by leaders can increase job satisfaction and organisational commitment, which can lead to the retention of professionals (Homburg, Klarmann & Staritz 2012). Generally, as employees experience more positive communication relationships, they also experience more positive job outcomes such as job satisfaction (Madlock 2008) and when employees are more content and satisfied, they are more likely to commit to a long-term relationship with the organisation (Men 214).

According to Rollinson (2005), employee satisfaction is a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from an employee's appraisal of his or her company environment or company experience. Employee satisfaction is closely related to job satisfaction and the intention to leave or stay with the organisation (Robinson 2006). There is convincing evidence that where job satisfaction is high, labour turnover is reduced (Tett & Meyer 1993). Job satisfaction is therefore probably one of those experiences of work that make it less likely that an employee will think about leaving, even if there are available opportunities.

Employee satisfaction is also closely related to employees' needs and work expectations. Individual motivation, levels of satisfaction, and work performance are determined by the comparative strength of needs and expectations of various biographical groups and the

extent to which they are met (Robinson 2006). Employees' needs and expectations can be related to certain aspects of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation and relational motivation. Extrinsic motivation relates to valued outcomes, which are external and provided by others, such as compensation, promotion, opportunities for learning and growth, and praise and recognition. Intrinsic motivation is related to valued outcomes or benefits that come from the individual himself or herself, such as feelings of satisfaction, wellbeing, quality of work life, supervisor support, competence, self-esteem, accomplishment, respect, fair treatment, and being informed (Robinson 2006; Buchanan & Huczynski 2004). Relational motivation relates to aspects such as social relationships and friendships, affiliation, and group functioning (Robinson 2006). Research by Döckel, Basson and Coetzee (2006) indicates extrinsic and intrinsic factors such as compensation, supervisor support, and work/life balance policies as significant factors in retaining high-technology employees.

Effective leadership communication has been found to improve employee motivation, productivity, and satisfaction (Seltzer & Bass 1990). According to Boies *et al.* (2015), inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation as dimensions of transformational leadership are particularly relevant to predicting team outcomes (task performance and creativity). Specifically, inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation have been narrowly connected to team outcomes as both these dimensions can easily be translated into behavioural aspects, and therefore be trained. Similar arguments are raised by Deinert, Homan, Boer, Voelpel and Gutermann (2015) and Qu, Janssen and Shi (2015). Transformational leadership is therefore focused on higher-level achievement, and three important communicative behaviours of transformational leaders are highlighted here. These levels were developed by Bass (1985) after he had conducted extensive research on transformational leadership. Firstly, the leader must raise the level of consciousness about the importance of the value of designated outcomes and ways of reaching these outcomes. Secondly, the leader must strive to motivate followers to transcend personal self-interests for the sake of the group or the organisation; and thirdly, the leader must raise followers' need level on Maslow's hierarchy, ultimately until the follower reaches self-actualisation.

5.10.7 Culture of innovativeness

The number of scholars (Fairhurst & Connaughton 2014; Fairhurst 2008; Kirkpatrick & Locke 1996) who have started to recognise communication as being central to leadership is fast

growing. Several authors have also emphasised the vital role that leaders play in the success or failure of organisations (Lawson 2014; Kaiser & Overfield 2010). Nielsen, MacFarlane and Moore (2012) opine that good leadership communication enhances employee wellbeing and performance, which will consequently lead to organisations thriving and prospering. It has been proven in research time and again that leadership is a critical determinant of organisational effectiveness. As Lawson (2014) points out, when organisational failures are investigated, the collapse can usually be ascribed to a leader's miscalculations and an overall lack of collective leadership. Accounts of success stories, on the other hand, usually emphasise timely innovations attributable to individual leaders' collective acts of leadership, and the leader's relations (Lawson 2014).

5.10.8 Freedom of expression

Open communication between employees and leadership provides the opportunity for employees to discuss and share their ideas and concerns. This relieves stress and promotes motivation (Mayfield & Mayfield 2007) among the workforce. Authors such as Clifton (2012), Fairhurst (2007), and Uhl-Bien (2006) all claim that effective communicators demonstrate a range of diverse competencies, such as relational skills, which take into account the interpersonal aspects of communication and allows the free flow of communication between employees and leaders. This enables employees to express themselves and also to feel free to make contributions without fear of being reprimanded.

Leaders who use a symmetrical communication approach, which is based on the principle of employee empowerment and participation in decision making, ensure that dialogue is encouraged and mutual understanding is promoted between the leader/organisation and employees. Symmetrical internal communication is based on the principles of employee empowerment and participation in decision making and is often associated with a participative organisational culture (Meintjies 2012).

5.10.9 Employee collaboration

Mutual respect between leaders and followers serves as an emotional connection that heightens each party's attentiveness to the needs and insights of the other and in turn triggers cognitive connections in the form of shared goals and shared knowledge. This allows groups of people to work together in meaningful ways in order to produce leadership

outcomes (Day 2001). Pavitt (1999) notes that managers need to be collaborative in their ways of communication in order to create a two-way channel so that employees can internalise the vision created as a team. Communication is required for the leader, as well as the organisation, to be efficient and effective.

Bakar and McCann (2016) state that servant leadership lends itself to the fostering and maximising of collaboration among work group members in a manner that is consistent with cultural norms. Leaders who display personal integrity in their dealings with the work group can promote normative communication activities and create a supportive CC in the work group.

According to Salacuse (2007), as a result of the changing work environments in which employees are more educated and intelligent than past generations, leaders are now required to lead by negotiation. Specifically, Salacuse (2007) notes that in order for leaders to persuade people to follow their vision, they need to communicate effectively by appealing to the interests of the followers in order to sell their vision.

5.10.10 Organisational commitment

Organisational commitment refers to the relative strength of an employee's psychological attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organisation, as well as to employees' belief in and willingness to work according to the objectives and values of the organisation. This also includes their contributions to the organisation beyond what is required from them by the organisation (Coetzee, Mitonga-Monga & Swart 2014; Meyer & Allen 1997). *Affective commitment* is the individual's orientation towards the organisation in terms of loyalty, identification, and involvement. Mitonga-Monga and Cilliers (2016) cite Demirtas and Akdogan (2014) in stating that such individuals are psychologically and emotionally dedicated and they experience meaning in their work and congruence between their own and the organisation's goals.

Coetzee *et al.* (2014) explain that *continuance commitment* refers to the individual's arguments to stay, based on the high cost associated with leaving the organisation and the perceived loss of sunken costs. Finally, Coetzee *et al.* (2014) refer to *normative commitment* that occurs when the individual feels obligated to stay with the organisation as a result of pressure from others or the belief that it is the morally correct thing to do.

271

In an extensive study conducted by Bouckenooghe, Zafar and Raja (2015), it was proven that ethical leadership had a positive effect on followers' in-role job performance. This effect is, however, explained by them through the role of psychological capital and follower-leader congruence. It also provides evidence of mediation.

Jaramillo, Grisaffe, Chonko and Roberts (2009) and Page and Wong (2000) opine that leaders who develop trusting relationships with employees and facilitate their success, create higher organisational commitment. Effective leadership communication creates a positive work environment in which employees develop feelings of attachment and loyalty to the organisation (Liden *et al.* 2008). Research indicates that communication is vital for organisational success, irrespective of the situation faced (Wadman 2010), and that leaders can influence employees' reactions through effective communication (Homburg *et al.* 2012). According to Carroll (2006:1), research by the Great Place to Work Institute found that employees enjoy working in an environment where they "trust the people they work for, have pride in what they do, and enjoy the people they work with". Such positive work environments are typically characterised by open communication. Carroll (2006), a business ethics scholar, argues that ethical organisations take care of their employees, and work to build trust through positive communication efforts. These companies also demonstrate respect for employees and act with integrity in all employee relations. This behaviour leads employees to trust their managers to the extent that they demonstrate honesty, transparency, genuine caring, support, and a willingness to listen. Gardner and Winder (1999) state that leaders who effectively communicate, further develop trust between themselves and their followers.

5.10.11 Improved turnover

Leadership usually involves the dynamic interaction among multiple individuals (Friedrich, Vessey, Schuelke, Ruark & Mumford 2009) and this process includes negotiations as an integral part of many interpersonal and organisational interactions. Despite the pervasive nature of negotiation in social interactions, individuals frequently fail to obtain outcomes that are beneficial to both parties. This failure is most likely to occur when negotiators try to improve their individual outcomes at the expense of their opponents' outcomes; that is, to claim value. When negotiators find solutions that address the most important needs and interests of both parties, they create value for the organisation. Value creation is possible

when there are differences in negotiators' preferences; including in the value that they assign to the items under negotiation (Lax & Sebenius 1986). Better understanding this value-creation process is important because in many, if not all, complex negotiations, the ability to identify and implement beneficial outcomes is the key to enduring agreements. Successful value creation requires that negotiators both advance individual needs via deal-making and managing the underlying relationship (Olekalns & Brett 2009 in Olekalns & Smith 2013; Lax & Sebenius 2006).

It has been proven that ethical leadership helps reduce business costs (Thomas, Schermerhorn & Dienhart 2004). Roussin (2008) found that team leaders can increase trust, psychological safety, and performance in a team by employing a dyadic discovery process. Dyadic discovery also assists team leaders in establishing the risk perceptions of individual members and then react with specific messages, behaviours, and attitudes in order to build the members' trust in the leader, the situation, and other team members. Dyadic discovery may also lead to increased team performance and work behaviours because of increased trust and psychological safety. Leaders may also use the process for justifying changes being made to a team.

5.10.12 Processes of sensegiving

Whereas sensemaking is the process by which individuals seek to make sense of unfamiliar events and circumstances, sensegiving is the "process of attempting to influence the sensemaking and meaning construction of others toward a preferred redefinition of organisational reality" (Gioia & Chittipeddi 1991:442). Sensegiving is therefore a discursive process by which a leader attempts to structure and explain unfamiliar events for another person in a way that strategically influences the meaning of the situation. Sensegiving is a leader's attempt to communicate that an existing interpretive schema for the organisation is no longer appropriate (Gioia & Chittipeddi 1991). According to Fairhurst (2007), sensegiving is dependent primarily on controlling the context, defining the situation, and interpreting uncertainty.

5.10.13 An environment of trust

Several studies have concluded that communication affects trust formation (Thomas *et al.* 2009; Webster & Wong 2008; Massey & Kyriazis 2007). Ruppel and Harrington (2000) found

that there is a significant positive correlation between communication and employee trust, and a study by Ball, Coelho and Machas (2004), which attempted to explain the role of communication and trust in customer loyalty, concluded that communication is an antecedent of trust. Effective communication between management/leadership and employees, where attention is paid to the frequency and quality of communication, is very conducive to creating an atmosphere of trust (De Ridder 2006). Especially the quality of the information is more important than the frequency of information when creating trust (Kottila & Ronni 2008).

The quality of the dyadic relationship between a leader and another individual affects the individual's performance (Dansereau *et al.* 1975). Alignment between the goals of an individual and the higher-level objectives of the organisation is important to ensure organisational success (Matthews 2006). Relational authenticity on the part of leader involves striving for achieving openness and truthfulness in their relationship with their followers and associates. A key outcome of such openness and truthfulness is high levels of trust (Ilies *et al.* 2005).

5.10.14 An environment that supports mutual respect

Communicative leadership thus leads to improved organisational outcomes on individual, unit, and organisational levels (Johansson *et al.* 2011). Communication competence has been conceptualised to encompass the elements of knowledge, motivation, skill, behaviour, and effectiveness (Spitzberg 1983). Communicative competent leaders are able to forge positive relationships with a multiple array of stakeholders.

5.10.15 Improved susceptibility to change

Effective use of interpersonal communication by leaders can increase job satisfaction and organisational commitment, which can lead to retention of professionals (Homburg *et al.* 2012).

Effective internal communication has been proven to play a vital role in developing positive employee attitudes such as job satisfaction (Gray & Laidlaw 2004), identification with the organisation (Smidts *et al.* 2001), trust and organisational commitment (Jo & Shim 2005), and positive employee-organisation relationships (Men 2014). Dialogue can contribute to

quality relationships between leaders and followers by building high-quality contact between leaders and followers that are open, creative, and meaningful, and which can lead to ethical organisational learning and change (Heath 2007; Deetz & Simpson 2004).

5.10.16 Positive organisational culture and climate

Communication is often acknowledged as of crucial importance in the process of developing, shaping, maintaining, reinforcing, and enacting an organisation's culture (Hofstede 2001, 1997; Schein 1992, 1985). It has also been proven that workplace culture is created and negotiated through the interaction of organisational members (Miller 1999). As leaders are responsible for shaping and reinforcing their organisation's core values, they also shape the culture of the organisation (Neuhauser, Bender & Stromberg 2000.)

Schein (1990:111) defines organisational culture as follows:

> "For any given group or organisation that has a substantial history, organisational culture is (a) a pattern of basic assumptions, (b) invented, discovered, or developed by a given group, (c) as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, (d) that has worked well enough to be considered valid and therefore, (e) is to be taught to new members as that (f) correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems."

A benefit of the relational view of leadership is that it elevates attention to processes and contexts in leadership studies which are often criticised for overemphasising individual leaders, their attributes, and their impact on followers (Gronn 2009 in Uhl-Bien and Ospina 2014:542; Contractor, DeChurch, Carson, Carter & Keegan 2012; Denis *et al.* 2012). A second advantage is that it validates the importance of leadership that is oriented to enhancing relationships among individuals in organisations (Cunliffe & Eriksen 2011). A socially constructed perspective would embrace notions such as relationships, interdependency, and reciprocity; indeed, those same processes that create the organisational culture and shape leadership (Moir 2009).

Organisational culture and climate are distinct albeit overlapping constructs (Reichers & Schneider 1990) and both these constructs focus on the meaning-making process that individuals use to make sense of their work environment, which is learned through social interactions with others (Schneider, Ehrhart & Macey 2013). An organisation's climate

manifests when employees collectively share perceptions of the nature of the work environment (James, James & Ashe 1990). Organisational climate can be defined as the shared perception of the work environment and includes procedures, policies, and practices that guide the expected, supported, and rewarded behaviours of the people in the organisation (Reichers & Schneider 1990).

5.10.17 Emotional wellbeing of employees

Ryan and Deci (2002:142) define wellbeing as "optimal psychological functioning and experience". When follower wellbeing is being examined, the term "wellbeing" is used to reflect psychological health, to assess general health, and positive (positive emotions) and negative (negative emotions) aspects of personal wellbeing. According to Ashford and Humphrey (1995), the work environment is intrinsically emotional and value laden and cognition and rationale cannot be separated from emotion. Zineldin and Hyttner (2012) refer to the growing understanding of how emotions are deeply rooted in every aspect of organisational life. These authors cite Fox and Calkins (2003) when explaining emotion as a psychological state of specific duration accompanied by behaviour that is the result of cognitive appraisal or evaluation regarding change in the environment.

The growing emphasis on emotion in the workplace has been likened to an affective revolution (Barsade, Brief & Spataro 2003 in Macik-Frey 2007). Lately, a substantial body of research addressing the determinants of employee wellbeing at work is available; and the quality of leadership behaviours consistently predicts employees' health and wellbeing (Kelloway, Weigand, McKee & Das 2013). However, less consideration is given to leaders' own wellbeing. This is an important omission – given that leaders' own wellbeing can play an important role in the quality of their leadership behaviours (Byrne *et al.* 2013).

5.10.18 Positive influence on organisational image and reputation

Fombrun *et al.* (2000:243) define reputation as a collective assessment of a company's ability to provide valued outcomes to a representative group or stakeholders. Gotsi and Wilson (2001) emphasise the role of communication in creating and maintaining organisational reputation, as organisational reputation is the stakeholders' view of the company that has developed over time as a result of the stakeholders' direct experiences with the company and with communication from the company. Three clusters of meaning for

organisational reputation was identified by Barnett, Jermier and Lafferty (2006); namely reputation as a state of awareness, reputation as an assessment, and reputation as an asset. The importance of employees as communication assets should never be underestimated, especially in today's new media landscape (Men 2012; 2011). How employees perceive the organisation influences what they say publicly and their opinions consequently become the basis for how stakeholders perceive the reputation. It is well known that what employees say, whether in a formal or informal situation, is often perceived as more credible and authentic than messages from their management or the PR team (Kim & Rhee 2011). Family and friends can also serve as third-party endorsers for the organisation (Stacks 2010).

When leadership communication is effective and employees can identify with the company and its vision, mission, goals, and values, it can fuel loyalty, motivation, and engagement, which in turn generate superior work performance and overall organisational effectiveness (Fombrun & Van Riel 2004). It is therefore clear from the above that management competence and the quality of the leadership and the quality of the communication used by them are factors that drive stakeholders' perception of organisational reputation (Men & Stacks 2013).

Based on the literature review conducted during Phase I of this study, and the conceptual analysis of leadership communication performed in Phase II, a conceptual model was created through the synthesis of the data. This model is presented in Figure 5.1.

LEADERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS

Psychological Capital

Personality/Emotional intelligence & maturity/IQ

Intellectual Capital

Job Knowledge / skills

Social Capital

Networks / Connections/Interpersonal communication skills/Communication

LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATION ATTRIBUTES

Authentic / Transparent / Honest / Professional / Diplomatic

Communicative

Continuous/frequent/timely/

Accurate / adequate

Dialogical

Discursive

Dyadic

Interactional

Interpersonal

Meaning centered

Relational process

Rhetorical process

Socially constructed

Strategic

Transactional

Integrated

Inclusive

ANTECEDENTS OF LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATION

Communication competence

Context and recipient sensitive

Culture of ethical and caring behaviour

Cultural sensitivity

Ethical and caring behavior

Emotional intelligence

Goal alignment

Knowledge of enabling conditions

Leadership style

Organisational climate/ Communication climate

Positive organizational culture

Respectful employee engagement

Sense making

Sustainable engagement

Understanding and insight

Structure

LEVELS / PROCESSES OF LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATION

LEVELS

STRATEGIC / OPERATIONAL

PROCESSES

INDIVIDUAL

TEAM / GROUP

ORGANISATIONAL

CONCEQUENCES OF EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP COMMUNCATION

Higher organizational productivity, efficiency, innovation and effectiveness

Positive employee identification, loyalty, attitudes and behavior

Culture of innovativeness

Freedom of expression

Group and task cohesion

Employee collaboration

Employee satisfaction and job satisfaction

Leader/member relationship quality

Organisational commitment

Improved turnover

Process of sense giving

An environment of trust and mutual respect

Improved susceptibility to change

Positive organizational culture and climate

Motivate employees

Promote employee well-ness and morale

Improve service delivery

ORGANISATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Productivity

Efficiency / Innovation

Financial (Profit)

Market-based / Accounting-based

Stakeholders (People)

Market share / Growth

HR

Engagement / Talent level

Purpose (Planet)

Mission / Culture / Social responsibility

Figure 5.1: The conceptual leadership communication value chain model

278

5.11   SUMMARY

An evolutionary concept analysis of leadership communication was conducted in this chapter. This was done using the steps in the evolutionary concept analysis as prescribed by Rodgers (2000). Firstly, a background of leadership communication was provided and surrogate terms and relevant uses of the concept were identified. The following step was the establishment of the appropriate realm for data collection, which was followed by a description of the historical evolution of the concept. During this phase, relevant theories identified as being significant in the development of leadership communication were discussed. Following this phase, definitions of leadership communication were scrutinised and from these definitions a working description of leadership communication was developed. During the process of data analysis, concept attributes, antecedents, and outcomes surfaced as attention was paid to establishing the contextual basis of the concept.

The next chapter reports the findings from the empirical research that was undertaken for this study.

CHAPTER 6

PHENOMENOLOGICAL RESEARCH RESULTS

6.1   INTRODUCTION

The background and orientation to this study were provided in Chapter 1. This was followed by a discussion of the theoretical foundation on which the study is built in Chapter 2, and the research methodology in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 addressed the contextual research question to provide the context within which leadership communication takes place. The conceptual research question was addressed in Chapter 5 and comprised an evolutionary concept analysis of leadership communication (see Section 1.2).

The aim of this chapter is to respond to the normative research question as posed in Chapter 1 (see Section 1.2), namely how should leadership communication be conducted in an organisation? In order to obtain the answer to this question, the responses received from the participants are discussed. As was explained in Chapter 3, the explanation of the data was done by using an adapted version of Groenewald's (2004) steps for the explication of phenomenological research data.

6.2   DEMOGRAPHIC DESCRIPTION OF RESPONDENTS

In-depth phenomenological interviews were conducted with the 12 participants to the study. The participants were all working in the services industry in Bloemfontein (for example, the essential services industry, healthcare industry, and hospitality industry) and are at the receiving end of leadership communication. In this new era, leadership effectiveness is seen as critical within large organisations (Madden 2011) and there is growing recognition of the crucial role of communication in the establishment of collaborative relationships (Densten 2005). Services have become increasingly important as the driving force in the economies of countries (Ellram, Tate & Billington 2004). The growth of the services sector in recent times has been phenomenal, with services displacing manufacturing as the main driver of industrialised Western economies (Wolfl 2005). Superior service is a multidimensional construct that includes aspects such as corporate goals, organisational strategies, policies and procedures, work systems, job design, and a variety of supporting elements.

Among these mentioned elements is the human dimension because the services sector relies largely on people for the delivery of appropriate standards of service (Lahap, Said, Rose, Sumarjan & Mohi 2014). Effective service delivery ensures that the standard of execution of service meets the customer's expectations. Service delivery is therefore a continuous, cyclic process for developing and delivering user-focused services. Service delivery takes place at an interface of human relations; and for service to be delivered effectively, the rules of human relations must be followed by all concerned (Joseph 2016). Key components of service delivery include the building and maintaining of relationships between the organisation and internal and external stakeholders; the management of expectations to ensure professional, realistic, reachable, and agreeable expectations for all the organisation's services; resolving and handling complaints; the delivery of services within an agreed timeframe; and attempting to continuously improve the service on different levels and functions (Joseph 2016). The need for effective communication in this industry is evident when the above components are taken into account.

The personal in-depth interviews lasted between 45 minutes and an hour. Three males and nine females participated in the interviews.

6.2.1 Ethnic groups

The cultural division of the 12 respondents who participated in this study were representative of two coloured and 10 white respondents.

6.2.2 Compliance to ethical requirements

To comply with ethical considerations, all participants signed consent forms. A complete overview of the ethical principles applied in this study was provided in Chapter 1 (see Section 1.9). All interviews were recorded and transcribed by the researcher. The in-depth interviews were conducted in English as this was the predominant language of the participants, but Afrikaans-speaking respondents were allowed to provide answers in Afrikaans where deemed necessary. Interviews were conducted in a venue chosen by the participants where they felt comfortable and free to talk (see Section 3.10).

6.3 INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The research questions used during Phase IV were discussed in Chapter 3. True to phenomenological research, the respondents were asked to describe their lived experience of the phenomenon in question, with the researcher being as non-directive as possible. The focus was on allowing the participants to describe the lived experience in a language that is as free from the constructs of the intellect and society as possible.

As stated in Chapter 3 (see Section 3.6.4), the interview questions that were posed to participants were as follows:

- Experiences – How do you experience the leadership communication in your organisation?
- Feelings – How does your leader's communication make you feel?
- Beliefs – How should an effective leader communicate?
- Convictions – What contribution can leadership communication make in your organisation?

6.4 METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

An adapted version of Groenewald's (2004) five steps was discussed in Chapter 3 (see Section 3.8). The steps that were applied in the explication of phenomenological data entailed:

- bracketing and phenomenological reduction;
- delineating units of general meaning;
- extracting units of relevant meaning;
- clustering units of relevant meaning to form themes;
- integrating and summarising interview data to extract/identify general and unique themes and making a composite summary; and
- validating.

After the interviews had been transcribed, the next step was the bracketing and phenomenological reduction of the data, as was described in detail in Chapter 3 (see Section 3.8.1). As described by Hycner (1999 in Groenewald 2004), bracketing here refers to a purposeful opening of the researcher to the phenomenon in its own right and with its own

meaning. The researcher therefore suspended or "bracketed" out her own personal views or preconceptions (Miller & Crabree 1992 in Groenewald 2004) regarding the phenomenon as far as possible. To assist with this, the researcher repeatedly listened to the audio recording of each interview in order to become familiar with the words of the interviewees and to develop a sense of the whole in order to focus on the unique experiences of the research participants.

In the section below, an excerpt of the procedure that was followed in the explication of data is included to enhance an understanding of the process. This procedure was followed for all four research questions. The example describes the first four steps in the explication of data as applied in this study. The example below refers to research question 1, interview 1, and pertains to interviewee 1's experience of the phenomenon in question.

Interview question: *How do you experience the leadership communication in your organisation?*

EXAMPLE

INTERVIEW 1 (Essential services, service provider)

Respondent's position: Strategic communications practitioner

Context

This service provider has a provincial general manager (GM) who is in charge of all the organisational levels in the Free State. The respondent indicated that she, as strategic communications practitioner, does not report directly to this GM, but to the Corporate Affairs Division at their head office, which also has a GM. She has daily contact with the provincial leadership, but does not report to them.

Interview recordings were transcribed and each line of the spoken sentences numbered. After the interviews had been transcribed, the researcher continued with delineating units of general meaning. The blocked section below is an example of this step. During this rigorous process, every word, phrase, sentence, and paragraph were scrutinised and statements were extracted from the data that were seen to illuminate the participants' views on the research phenomenon in question. Many judgement calls had to be made during this process and the researcher had to consciously bracket her own presuppositions in an

attempt to avoid inappropriate subjective judgements. In this section, the essence of what the participant had said was extracted and as many of the literal words of the participant as possible were used. The result of this process is called a general unit of meaning. As stated above, the numbers at the beginning of each line refer to the line numbers of the answers supplied by the respondents. This is reflected in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1: Delineating units of general meaning

9-11 On provincial level there are strategies, but the communication does not come from management. We as communication practitioners are there to help leaders communicate, not to communicate on their behalf, but we communicate on their behalf.
12 The leadership communication is very condescending.
12 Leadership communication is filtered from above.
12-13 Leadership communication is not directly with each person.
14 Divisional managers are expected to speak to their people.
14 Communication is one-way.
15-16 We have created internal campaigns to try and change this.
17-19 Idea of campaigns to give ground-level staff the opportunity to give input to leadership as the people on ground level have first-hand experience of aspects that need to be dealt with.
20 I can perhaps say that there is a shift, but there is still a long way to go.
21-22 An e-mail account was created, with the permission of the leader, named "talk to me" to allow staff from the lowest levels up to talk directly to the leader.
23 At the time of implementation, the leader refused to proceed with this initiative without supplying any reasons.
27 I experience it as top-down, condescending, and instructive.
28 Closed-door policy.
28 Communication is hierarchical.
28-29 Communication is filtered through the different levels of the organisation.
28-29 When senior leadership communicates directly with us, it is usually very negative; then we have done something wrong.
30 Therefore, communication is not open and warm.

In order to establish what the extracted units of relevant meaning are, the researcher applied the research question to the extracted units of general meaning. This was done to determine whether what the participant had said responded to the research question being addressed. The example below includes only those statements that were found to address the research question directly. Statements that are clearly irrelevant were not recorded. Delineating units of meaning relevant to the research question supplied the researcher with the extracted units of relevant meaning. This is indicated in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2: Extracted units of relevant meaning

9-11 We communicate on their behalf.
12 The leadership communication is very condescending.
12 Leadership communication is filtered from above.
12-13 Leadership communication is not directly with each person.
14 Communication is one-way.
27 I experience it as top-down, condescending, and instructive.
28 Closed-door policy.
28 Communication is hierarchical.
28-29 Communication is filtered through the different levels of the organisation.
28-29 When senior leadership communicates directly with us, it is usually very negative; then we have done something wrong.
30 Therefore, communication is not open and warm.

Once the units of general meaning had been extracted, the researcher once again bracketed her presuppositions and tried to stay as true to the phenomenon as possible. The researcher then tried to determine if there were any units of relevant meaning that naturally cluster together. In other words, the researcher tried to identify a common theme that united several units of relevant meaning together naturally, as indicated in Table 6.3.

Table 6.3: Clustering of units of meaning to form themes

Units of relevant meaning	Themes
9-11 We communicate on their behalf.	Lack of communication
12 Leadership communication is filtered from above. 12 The leadership communication is very condescending. 12 Leadership communication is filtered from above. 12-13 Leadership communication is not directly with each person. 14 Communication is one-way. 27 I experience it as top-down, condescending, and instructive. 28 Communication is hierarchical. 28-29 Communication is filtered through the different levels of the organisation.	One-way/Top-down communication One-way communication Top-down Non-relational Style of communication Non-relational Top-down Non-relational Style of communication
27 The leadership communication is very condescending. 30 Communication is not open and warm.	Communication is non-relational Communication is non-relational
28-29 When senior leadership communicates directly with us, it is usually very negative; then we have done something wrong.	Communication is negative

In the discussion to follow, all the explicated themes will be elaborated upon and supported by respondent responses.

6.5 THEMES AND SUB-THEMES EXPLICATED FROM DATA

In the discussion that follows, responses to each of the four research questions will be addressed. The discussion commences with the feedback related to research question 1. The themes are presented in no particular order.

6.5.1 Interview findings regarding research question 1

How do you experience the leadership communication of your organisation?

With regards to the above question, the following themes with related sub-themes surfaced from the data. Themes will be presented as headings and, where identified, sub-themes will be highlighted in the text.

6.5.1.1 Lack of communication

Organisations and their leadership are increasingly acknowledging the importance of communication in organisational success. Communication is viewed by many as the lifeblood of an organisation and without it, organisational functioning will be hampered. Especially in recent years the role of leadership communication has also become very prominent.

In the literature (see Section 5.2), it is clearly stated that communication is critical for accelerating change and improving organisational performance, particularly regarding motivating and aligning employees (The Conference Board 2009). Chapter 1 (see Section 1.1) emphasised that leadership is responsible for establishing the culture, purpose, and direction of the organisation and that it is essential that organisational leadership consists of skilled communicators (Aldoory & Toth 2004; Bass & Avolio 1997).

It is therefore disconcerting that all the participants indicated that they experienced a lack of communication in either their departments or their organisations, or both, as a whole. Responses included statements such as:

*… but the communication does not come from management. We as communication practitioners are there to help leaders to communicate, not to communicate on their behalf; but we communicate on their behalf.

In our department, the communication is exceptionally pathetic. No communication takes place.

Other respondents stated:

They hardly ever share information, and when things change, you are not aware of it. You function by trial and error.

I don't think everything that we need to know gets communicated to us. I think it is left to the discretion of the leader to decide what gets communicated to whom, and if the leader does not have good discernment skills, then the necessary information does not get communicated.

The responses from the rest of the respondents emphasised the above and indicated that the respondents felt uninformed and that necessary information was not always shared with them. It was stated that too little communication and sometimes no communication at all was the order of the day.

6.5.1.2   One-way communication

The literature indicates the importance of utilising systems and networks in the organisation (see Section 5.8.1). Communicative leaders are able to utilise networks or lines that the organisation uses to convey information. The flow of communication in organisation can be downward, as is used by leaders to communicate instructions and training, give information (company policy, trends, and planning), providing rationale for directions and policies, and evaluating work performance; or upward, where feedback is provided for upper management regarding organisational activities; and lateral, which is communication that occurs in an organisation between employees at the same hierarchical level or between different departments. This type of communication tends to focus on problem solving, information sharing, and conflict resolution (Barker & Angelopulo 2006:74-75). Communication networks signify the existence of specific patterns by which messages are communicated between individuals (Neher 1997). In order for communication to be successful, there should be a flow of communication in both directions in order to establish dialogue and understanding.

The responses from all the respondents indicated that what is suggested above is not the norm for functioning in the organisations where the respondents are employed. Eight of the respondents indicated that their direct managers **did not pay any attention to feedback** from them, as was indicated by the following responses:

I can give you an example. About two months ago, the lady that is the head of this specific division in Johannesburg instructed us to come up with suggestions as to what we think would make our work easier. I spent a lot of time and put a document together and sent it to her. Until now, I have still not heard a word from her. So you hear what I am telling you? The communication is not a two-way street.

We can never give feedback, and when we are allowed to, it is just to make us keep quiet. They don't listen, and you never hear anything about it again.

Communication is only one way.

The communication does not travel both ways.

Communication is hierarchical.

Communication is top-down and not regular and we are often not informed about important things that we should be aware of. This has serious implications for the quality of the service we deliver.

Then you do it and send it to them and then you don't get feedback. You don't hear if what you have done was right or wrong or whatever!

It is clear from the above responses that feedback from leadership was absent and that staff members were also not given the opportunity to provide input/feedback. Furthermore, the communication approach used was mostly a top-down approach, which made staff members perceive it as autocratic in nature. Hardly any opportunity for bottom-up communication and feedback exists.

6.5.1.3   Unsupportive

Organisations today are increasingly concerned with maintaining strong, permanent relationships with all their stakeholders. Especially employees are being recognised as important stakeholders who contribute greatly to the success of an organisation.

Chapter 5 (see Section 5.2) indicated that leadership and communication literature have in recent years emphasised the fact that there is a clear movement away from the strong focus on transformational leadership towards a stronger emphasis on a dynamic, shared, relational, situated, dialectic, and global perspective where the interaction between leaders and followers is of the essence. The important role of followers in the multifaceted leadership process is emphasised, and leadership is described as a relational process of reciprocal interrelating (see Section 5.8.9) (Uhl-Bien & Ospina 2012; Uhl-Bien 2006). Concurring with this, Gittell and Douglas (2012) state that this process of interrelating is an attempt between leaders and followers to make sense of a situation and determine what must be done, and how to do it. According to Uhl-Bien (2006:655), relational leadership is "a social process through which emergent coordination (social order) and change (new values, attitudes, approaches, behaviours, and ideologies) are constructed and produced" (see Section 5.6.2.4.3).

Although positive feedback regarding the leadership communication was received from two of the respondents, the majority of the responses reflected a negative experience:

*I experience the communication as top-down, condescending, and instructive, and it makes it very difficult for me to approach him.

Other disgruntled respondents stated:

*They just say: "You will!", "You must!", and "What is going on here?" You receive instructions. That is not communication. There is no relationship or understanding. You also don't get feedback and you don't receive answers back from them.

*I experience this as fighting or attacking communication that you receive the whole time. "You have done this again, why?", "Why is it like this?", "Why are your overheads so high?", "You've bought the wrong stock!" There is no relationship or understanding.

The responses clearly indicate that the participants did not experience the communication behaviour of leaders as supportive. As a matter of fact, leadership communication was experienced as **cold and detached**.

*I perceive what we can call a closed-door policy. They are not available to us. They also make sure that we know it. They are aloof and distant.

*Communication is not open and warm.

**There is no relationship, only instructions, and they don't take any time or make any effort to try and understand what your situation or circumstances are.*

*They must not be scared to ask questions.

These respondents all indicated that communication between them and their leadership was not perceived as supportive and was mostly condescending, strained, and instructive. The above responses from the different respondents serve as testimony to this.

6.5.1.4   Lack of interpersonal communication skills

As indicated in Chapter 5 (see Section 5.9.3), social interaction in an organisation greatly affects organisational functioning. Interaction is impaired and communicative ability affected negatively where power games, technical imprisonment, or other impairing activities form part of the interaction. If types of interaction facilitate knowledge transfer and perspective making, a more effective and efficient communicative ability will be generated (Hamrefors 2010).

It is further stated (see Section 5.8.5) that leaders engage followers through interpersonal exchanges or dyads. At the dyadic level of leadership, the importance is on one-to-one relationships between a leader and each of his/her followers. When a leader becomes engaged in private, individual, honest, revealing, and (potentially) trust-building conversations with individual team members, it is referred to as the dyadic discovery process (Roussin 2008). This process is employed by the leader in a purposeful and systematic way to uncover and fully understand each team member's perspective, vulnerabilities, and confidence related to the team and its activities and performance (Roussin 2008).

The respondents were in agreement about the fact that leaders in the larger organisation were experienced as lacking interpersonal skills, as can be seen in the following statement by a respondent:

**A relationship of trust is absolutely essential. However, when those leaders interact with the staff personally, the staff members often perceive them as indifferent, clinical, cold, and distant.*

Interpersonal communication is described as communication that takes place between two or more individuals who have established a relationship (De Vito 1995:7). Wood (2002) explains that interpersonal communication forms the basis for an individual's personal and professional growth and is the primary basis for building relationship connections with others (see Section 5.8.7). From the data it is evident that interpersonal interaction is not satisfactory and can greatly be improved on. The interpersonal communication described by a number of the participants led to much unhappiness and uncertainty, which resulted in negative feelings and behaviour. More than two-thirds of the participants' responses indicated that their leaders did not exhibit proficient interpersonal communication skills. One area of concern was a **lack of sensitivity to non-verbal cues**.

The responses included statements such as:

When the line manager comes to speak to us, she would stand with her back towards us and just talk to two of the six of us. The rest of us do not know what is going on. It influences our jobs.

Our leader does not have the interpersonal skills or the communication skills necessary for the job that she has to perform.

I think there is definitely a gap in the communication skills.

The respondents referred to the fact that they perceive most managers or leaders as not being competent communicators. One of the respondents stated that their department had serious problems with the interpersonal and communication skills of their leader.

The communication is negative and she is not a competent communicator. She is only able to speak one language and is not fluent at all in English or any other language. The leader does not have the know-how or training for this position that she is in and this affects the way in which she communicates with employees. She is unable to communicate effectively with her direct leaders – in other words, upwards – and her communication with staff members that she leads is condescending.

She does not have the communicative ability to communicate with such a diverse workforce.

Another respondent stated:

There are definitely silos between different departments. Here and there, there are better communicators, but they are few.

In the positions that these people are in, they should actually know how to communicate, but they do not have the skill to do it. There is a very big void!

It is stated in Chapter 5 (see Section 5.8.3) that "[c]ommunication as dialogue is seen as a creative process, allowing the development of potential of all those involved in leader relations, and as such it moves beyond relative fixity of roles" (Ashman & Lawler 2008:266). Andriof (2001:228) describes dialogue as a conversation, where information is exchanged and knowledge acquired. As already noted in the early 1980s by Grunig and Hunt (1984:48), dialogue should involve two-way communication as two-way communication enables the co-creation of a shared understanding of collaboration. The abovementioned underlines the importance of a leader's ability to facilitate proper **dialogue**. Unfortunately, responses regarding this indicated the opposite:

These are not people that you can enter into a conversation with and tell them that the way in which they send you information does not work for you.

The communication is not a two-way street.

You can't actually say, "Listen here, I need help", or "I am battling with this", or "That makes it very difficult for me".

It is obvious that lack of interpersonal communication skills negatively affects employees on several levels. Not only does it impair their ability to perform their jobs to the best of their ability, but it has an influence on organisational relationships and organisational functioning as a whole.

6.5.1.5 *Inadequate interdepartmental communication*

It is evident from participant responses that communication between departments is regarded as a serious problem in the organisations in which the participants are involved. All the respondents were in agreement about this point.

293

Some statements from respondents that support this claim include the following:

It feels to me as if they all sit on one floor in one building with offices next to each other, but they don't talk to one another because you will receive a question from Procurement about something, and then the Finance department will ask you the exact same thing and before you know it, someone else from there wants to know the exact same thing. So you have to explain yourself three times. Can't they just talk to one another?

There is absolutely no communication between the different departments. There is also no collaboration.

There are definitely silos between different departments.

It is very hard to communicate like this because you feel as if you are on an island.

Research by Loughhead *et al.* (2001) (see Section 5.10.4) indicates that behaviour that enhanced the feeling of cohesion between a certain group of individuals led to better attendance of activities and better participation within that group of individuals. When leading a team, a leader is required to align individual goals with a shared mission, managing resources, establishing a positive climate of trust and support, and coordinating information transfer and task completion (Zaccaro *et al.* 2001).

The respondents indicated that the fact that different departments did not communicate led to a feeling of isolation, frustration, and often to a repetition of tasks. It also resulted in a **lack of team spirit** and a **lack of feeling of belonging**. Furthermore, a lot of time was also wasted as a result of this and ultimately it affected the organisational bottom line. It is also clear from the above that the absence of communication between departments led to misunderstanding and inefficiency. The following responses are an indication of this:

There should be a good and continuous flow of information between departments and it does not exist. The one does not know what the other is doing and they are actually dependent on one another for optimal functioning.

I think each one is so focused on his own things that they don't realise that the people next to them can give input or need support or whatever. So everyone just carries on and does their own thing.

There is no coherence and also no teamwork.

This makes your job so much more of a challenge. They don't understand because we communicate past one another.

The importance of effective internal communication is emphasised in the literature. In Chapter 1 (see Section 1.1.3), it was stated that effective internal communication plays an important role in developing positive employee attitudes (Men 2014) and that job satisfaction, trust, and employee identification and commitment are also enhanced (Gray & Laidlaw 2004) when there is cooperation in the workplace. Unfortunately, the respondents experienced the leadership communication as **demotivating**:

This (leadership communication) led to disgruntled and unhappy employees who were not motivated and did not respect the management structures.

This led to a department where there is a lot of distrust and malfunctioning divisions.

In order to ensure the best possible performance, it is essential that an atmosphere of cooperation and collaboration is established and this can only be done through communication.

It was stated in Chapter 4 (see Section 4.8) that IC has as its goal the integration of the communications function among all the different organisational functions and departments, and that this integration implies that communication be regarded as an essential element of the management process in totality (Mulder 2015). However, the responses indicated that very **little integration** of communication took place. The following statement illustrates the above:

There is no integration of communication in our workplace. Different departments do not always communicate with one another.

6.5.1.6   *Disregard for communication*

In Chapter 5 (see Section 5.10.1), the important role of leaders in inspiring subordinates to maximise efficiency and enhance productivity was referred to. Ahmed *et al.* (2010) state that the ability to practise effective communication is a leadership attribute that facilitates managers to become prospective leaders of their organisations.

Without communication there is no leadership, yet the literature makes many references to recent research that shows that, overwhelmingly, leaders do not realise the important role of communication. Chapter 5 (see Section 5.2) referred to the one fundamental principle of success that remains, which is communication. Communication is a key factor in relationships and coexistence in environments where results are respected. Mobilising groups for action, providing guidance, and distributing tasks and information are some of the typical actions of an intra- and intergroup interaction process that is possible because of language and communication (Vieira *et al.* 2014).

The respondents were adamant that their leadership did not understand the important role that communication plays in successful organisational functioning. It was clearly stated that communication was **not a priority**:

*… managers do not give information through to their staff. So, there are platforms, but they are not always utilised as they should be.

*They forget about the communication. They don't see it as important.

It was evident that the respondents perceived this as a serious problem, as was indicated by the following responses:

*If the necessary information is not communicated, ground-level staff cannot perform their duties properly. How do you empower people to deliver a service if communication is absent?

*Even information from HR is not always communicated properly. Mostly, staff members are not informed.

All 10 of the respondents indicated that in the broader organisation the importance of communication was not understood by leadership, that staff members mostly felt uninformed, and that this impaired their functioning.

6.5.1.7   *Communication is of poor quality*

The quality of a leader's communication is of extreme importance. Bowen and Ostroff (2004:208) state that "in order to function effectively in a social context and make accurate attributions about a situation, an employee must have adequate and unambiguous

information". Leaders wishing to have the desired effect on employees need to be effective communicators that use communication effectively. This entails that the content of the message, as well as the comprehension of the message and the acceptance thereof, should receive attention (Chaiken *et al.* 1996) (see Section 5.8.14).

The respondents indicated throughout that the quality of the communication they received was not good. Leaders' communication seemed to be **insufficient** and **unclear**. Their responses included the following:

*The communication is inadequate.

*Communication should be clear and understandable …. There must be clarity about something when it has been communicated to staff members.

*If detail is not communicated, you are powerless.

*She is unable to communicate effectively with her leadership – in other words, upwards – and her communication with the staff members that she leads is condescending.

It is evident from the answers received from the respondents that poor communication has a negative effect on their functioning and service delivery and therefore will have a negative impact on the organisational bottom line. It also leads to errors and affects the morale of staff members as they have to repeat certain tasks as a result of not being informed.

6.5.1.8   *Lack of or underutilisation of communication structures*

The literature is very clear about the fact that in order for leadership communication to be effective, it is essential that leaders acquire a deep knowledge of a wider spectrum of communicative abilities (Hamrefors 2010). It is also important to view communication more broadly and see it as a function that cuts through and involves the whole organisation. Four important areas of knowledge that is necessary to assist with organisational functioning and value creation were identified by Malmelin (2007). These processes were viewed as antecedents in the leadership communication process and include communication through processes, communication through structures, communication through social interaction, and communication to and from the environment (see Section 5.9.3).

Hamrefors (2010:144) explains that processes responsible for communicating the coordinating logic present in the organisation are important factors for consideration. Imperfect processes encourage passivity and also do not provide incentives for improvement of these processes, while excellence in processes encourages further refinement by those involved in them.

One respondent complained:

**They think it is self-explanatory, but if there is no communication structure telling people how information has to be filtered down to those on ground level. Then you are going to have problems, there will be gaps and the functioning will be affected.*

*The influence of this trial-and-error type of functioning has a very negative influence on one's work and morale because firstly, you now have to go and do everything over again. This is very time consuming. You also feel upset, thinking, "Couldn't they just have communicated this to me?"

The importance of communication structures that assist in the efficient and effective dissemination of information and communication with internal and external stakeholders was also echoed by the respondents. More than half of the respondents indicated that the existing structures in their organisations were not utilised by their leadership, or the structures were found lacking.

6.5.1.9   Unethical leadership communication

The literature suggests that communication in the organisation should be approached from a humane orientation and staff members should be treated with respect and dignity (see Section 5.9.1 in Chapter 5). Ethical leadership communication reflects a power motivation that is socialised rather than one that is personalised (McClelland 1987). Ethical leaders send clear messages about ethical values and hold subordinates accountable for their actions (Treviño *et al.* 2003). Northouse (2001) suggests five principles of ethical leadership that contribute to positive organisational outcomes as these behaviours have an influence on the communication used by leaders. This author states that when communicating, the ethical leader should use communication that is transparent, fair, respectful towards followers, that manifests honesty, and that builds community.

Half of the respondents reported having issues with the ethical behaviour of their leadership. From the responses it could be deduced that leadership communication is often **disrespectful** in nature. The responses included statements such as the following:

*She discusses staff members with their colleagues and would openly humiliate or degrade someone in a meeting, for example by making some untrue statement or rude comment about that person.

*Because she is not authentic, the communication from her side is never perceived as authentic by me, and therefore issues are seldom resolved and there is a lot of unhappiness in the department.

The respondents also reported leadership to be **dishonest** in their communication:

*Clients do not always understand what is going on. Leaders don't always tell the client exactly what is going on. We can see what is going on when we look at the statistics, but they put the clients, as we say, "under a dark light". This has very serious, life-changing implications for those people.

*We have to run around and correct things that have been said by them. They make promises and then clients expect things to happen exactly as they said and that is not always possible. This leads to a lot of stress for the staff members as the clients now insist that things happen as was promised to them.

Another respondent stated:

*None of the promises made to staff members ever came into realisation.

6.5.1.10 Lack of communication strategy

Traditional organisational thinking considers organisational structures and systems as core elements necessary for successful organisational functioning (Robbins 1990). Structures and systems refer to an identifiable, bounded set of methodologically interrelated elements or principles with some intended purpose (Hoogervorst *et al.* 2004). Various structures and systems that in effect regulate mechanisms can be identified in an organisation (a communication structure, a work and task structure, and an information management system). Structures and systems form the formal system of control that embodies knowledge

and principles for governance, and represent the embedded system of management in the organisation. Organisational goals need to be imbedded in these systems and structures or they will most likely not be realised. Structures and systems should therefore be in line with the organisational vision, mission, values, and goals (Hoogervorst *et al.* 2004). This can only occur if communication is clear and efficient.

In our department there is a communication strategy and structure, but in the organisation as a whole, I suppose there is a communication strategy, but we don't know what it is.

There is no communication strategy. It happens randomly!

We don't have such a communication structure or strategy or plan in our department. Therefore there are many shortcomings and we are definitely not functioning optimally as a department.

The majority of the respondents indicated that they were not aware of a communication strategy in their organisation, and if one existed, they did not think that it was applied.

6.5.2   Research findings pertaining to research question 2

The following discussion addresses responses to research question 2.

How does your leader's communication make you feel?

The themes with related sub-themes that surfaced from the data regarding the above question are addressed. Themes will be presented as headings and, where identified, sub-themes will be highlighted in the text.

In this section the respondents did not only reflect on the emotions that resulted from their exposure to the leadership communication, but also elaborated on the consequences thereof. As a result, the data in this section will be divided into emotions identified and the related consequences. Themes associated with this question included the following:

6.5.2.1   Emotions experienced by respondents

The literature indicates that sustainable engagement and respectful engagement are two very important outcomes of leadership communication. In Chapter 5 (see Section 5.9.2), the

important role of positive interrelating was emphasised as it conveys a sense of presence and worth and communicates positive regards (Rogers 1957). Acts of respectful engagement include conveying presence, communicating affirmation, effective listening, and supportive communication (Dutton 2003). In addition to this, sustainable employee engagement (see Section 5.9.5) are increasingly being recognised as important in positive organisational outcomes such as productivity, profitability, employee retention, and customer satisfaction (Coffman & Gonzalez-Molina 2002; Buckingham & Coffman 1999).

All the respondents were in agreement about the negative effect that poor leadership communication had on them. Feelings of frustration, inferiority, anger, despair, and unhappiness were amongst the reported responses. Emotions identified are highlighted in the quotes.

*I feel very _demoralised_.

*It leads to a lot of _frustration_ and feelings of _powerlessness_.

*It makes me feel very _frustrated_ and it causes a lot of _anger_ and _unhappiness_.

*It feels as if they don't trust me. So why have they appointed me in this position then? _How much do you trust me?_

*To me it feels as if I am in a power outage. I feel totally uninformed. This _upsets_ me. I feel _frustrated_.

*It really _frustrates_ and _angers_ me. It also makes me feel as if I am _not good enough_ for them.

*I often feel very _powerless_ and _irritated_.

*I feel very _negative_ and I also feel _less valued_.

*I feel very _irritated_ when I receive communication like this. I feel _indignant_ and _taken aback_!

*_Frustration_ and _unhappiness_ are what the consequences of this communication is.

*It makes you _negative_!

*I feel very _frustrated, upset,_ and even _angry_.

*_The unauthentic communication makes me feel very <u>unsafe</u> and <u>distrustful</u>. <u>Unhappy</u>! <u>Stressed</u>!_

*_Definitely feelings of <u>distrust</u>, and also very <u>disheartened</u>._

Responses like the ones supplied above were echoed by all the respondents.

6.5.2.2 Consequences resulting from emotions experienced

The strong correlation between employee commitment and satisfaction is supported by the recent findings of research done by KLCM. The KLCM research reports of 2012, 2013, and 2014 explored the public sentiment towards the quality of their leadership and the effectiveness of the leaders' communication (see Section 1.1.2). The Holmes report of 20 March 2013 refers to KLCM's 2012 survey that found a significant (40&) correlation between positive perceptions of a leader's communication and their company's key business drivers, while 50% of perceptions of a leader's overall effectiveness were tied to their communication proficiency. Cartwright (in KLCM 2013) states that as a result, it is important for companies to understand how leadership and leadership behaviours can affect consumers' actions, and ultimately a company's bottom line (see Section 5.2). The literature (see Section 5.10.10) indicated that effective leadership communication has been found to improve employee productivity and satisfaction (Seltzer & Bass 1990).

The following remark indicated that the respondent's functioning was impeded and therefore her quality of work was also affected. She reported:

*_The way my line manager communicates with us makes me <u>spiteful.</u> She does not talk to you directly. You hear something here and then something there, but you don't get the full story from her, because she only speaks to certain people. So I am frustrated and become spiteful._

Other respondents also referred to the influence on their performance by stating:

*_It also <u>hampers one's ability to function optimally</u>, so you feel frustrated. You <u>feel inferior</u>, as if <u>you are not good enough</u> to be communicated with. This <u>influences your value addition</u> to the company and the <u>image that you project</u>._

*It has an influence on your <u>attitude towards your work</u>. <u>It makes you negative</u>. You <u>don't want to support work initiatives.</u>

*It makes me feel as if the <u>road is not level</u>. There are <u>obstacles in the way</u>.

*I feel <u>rebellious</u>.

As stated in Chapter 5 (see Section 5.10.2), positive employee attitudes increase productivity, improve performance, and enhance external relations (Berger 2008 in Men 2014).

The literature (see Section 5.10.2) further states that prior research indicates that interpersonal interactions involving the exchange of information and affect between co-workers and between employees and their supervisors can have significant effects on the employees' psychological job outcomes, including job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and burnout (Postmes *et al.* 2001; Ray & Miller 1994). Positive associations were also found between two-way symmetrical communication outcomes such as loyalty and organisational identification. Communication is critical for business and for the relationships that are formed (Hackman & Johnson 1991). Increasing contact between leadership and subordinates allows employees to identify with the company's goals, which improves morale and increases productivity (Bambacas & Patrickson 2008).

The following responses highlight the consequences that result from emotions evoked by leadership communication.

*I feel that <u>I don't want to go to work</u> because it is so unpleasant there. My job is not a bad job; I like what I do, but the communication issues make it<u> unbearable</u> there.

*It has an <u>influence on your attitude</u> towards your work.

*It makes me <u>spiteful</u>.

*Feelings of <u>nervousness</u> and of <u>not being able to perform</u> that way one can and should perform.

As indicated by Day (2001) (see Section 5.9.14), mutual respect between leaders and followers serves as an emotional connection that heightens each party's attentiveness to the needs and insights of the other and, in turn, triggers cognitive connections in the form of

shared goals and shared knowledge. This allows groups of people to work together in meaningful ways in order to produce leadership outcomes. The data clearly indicated that this was not the case in the respondents' situations.

Most of the respondents felt that there was no relationship between them and their leadership. They also did not feel respected by their leaders. This made employees feel unsafe in the workplace, they felt that they were not in control, as well as feeling incompetent, functioning in isolation, and not belonging. This is indicated by the responses below:

I often feel _powerless_ and irritated. It feels as if there is _no structure_ or organisation and this makes me feel _out of control_. I also feel that there will _never be a team spirit or teamwork_ between different divisions.

It also makes one feel very _unsafe_ in the work environment because you feel that nothing and _nobody can be trusted_.

I feel as if I don't know what is going on and that makes me _uncertain of how to operate_.

It also feels as if I am _not being acknowledged_ as a person. Even ignored.

It is clear that the communication used by a leader can negatively impact employees at the receiving end thereof. From the responses provided it can be determined that when leadership communication is not effective, it can lead to low morale and negative feelings, as well as uncertainty and unhappiness. As employees are one of an organisation's most valuable assets, the importance of communicating effectively with them cannot be stressed enough.

6.5.3   Research findings pertaining to research question 3

How should an effective leader communicate?

The same procedure will be followed as with the preceding two questions. The following themes with related sub-themes surfaced from the data. Themes will be presented as headings and, where identified, sub-themes will be highlighted in the text.

6.5.3.1   By means of communicative communication

The attributes of leadership communication as described in Chapter 5 are, among others, dialogical, meaning centred, discursive, interactional, rhetorical, and interpersonal. After carefully considering the terms, it was surmised that although subtle differences between these terms exist, communicative leadership can be applied as an overarching term for most of the abovementioned. In the literature (see Section 5.8.1), a communicative leader is described by Johansson, Miller and Hamrin (2012) as one who engages employees in dialogue, actively shares and seeks feedback, practises participative decision making, and is perceived as open and involved. Eriksen (2001) describes it as different ways of coordinating actions in a cooperative and reciprocal manner. Communicative leadership does not merely designate the ability to reach one's goals through linguistic means, but also includes the ability to test the reasonableness of the objectives in the light of collective expectations. This implies that communicative leaders are able to generate agreements and then act on the basis of consensus that has been legitimately achieved among members (Eriksen 2001).

All the respondents indicated that they did not perceive the communication that they received from their broader organisational leadership as being communicative as the communication was mostly top-down and autocratic and there was not a lot of dialogue or interaction and openness between leaders and followers. Two respondents did, however, indicate that their direct line managers used communication that was communicative in nature and that displayed the characteristics mentioned above. As one of these two respondents indicated:

**I also feel leaders should use participative management and I connect communication with this because people get the opportunity to participate and give input.*

In the responses supplied, the following sub-themes were identified under the theme "communicative leadership". The respondents indicated that leaders should be **effective listeners**:

*Leaders should listen to the suggestions of staff members and take them seriously.

*Instructions are often given. That is not communication. It is not a two-way process of listening and understanding.

They must listen and give you a gap to speak.

Participants to the study indicated that they deemed **feedback** from their leadership as very important, but they also wanted to be given the opportunity to supply feedback in certain situations. More than three-quarters of the respondents indicated that leaders did not afford them the opportunity to supply feedback. This was deemed a serious problem. Another issue that was reported by the respondents was the fact that staff members did not receive feedback from leaders and were therefore not always informed of what was going on in the organisation. The fact that no attention was paid to feedback by management and that respondents felt that they were not heard or listened to had a serious impact on the respondents and their morale. The following statements by the respondents clearly illustrate the above:

The leader must allow them the opportunity to give feedback because the workforce wants to make suggestions and contribute to the organisation.

Although we are allowed to give feedback, the problem is that the person to whom you are giving feedback already has a preconceived idea and then they don't listen to what you are saying and behave as if what you are saying is not important. They don't actually listen to you.

The above quotes once again emphasise the importance of listening.

As mentioned above, the respondents also indicated that leadership should provide feedback:

I think that an effective leader must welcome input and should also encourage input. So, you have to encourage bottom-up communication, you must listen, and you must understand.

I call it participative management. You (the leader) get feedback and you consider their (employees) opinions and then you have a win-win situation. They however, do not do it that way.

Attention should be paid to the issue. That means feedback from the people that are at the receiving end of this poor leadership communication must be taken seriously.

Managers must, however, give us feedback. This unfortunately does not happen. We do not get feedback from our leadership. It does not exist. It is not a regular thing.

It is clear from the above responses that the employees place a very high value on receiving feedback from their leaders.

Another theme that was identified pertained to the fact that leadership communication should aim to be an **inclusive process** that involves followers. The respondents indicated that they wanted to be involved in the organisation's decision-making processes and other processes that involved them. The respondents stated the following:

**A leader, on the other hand, will make you part of the process. He will keep you informed, whether formally or informally.*

**It does not have to be a scheduled session or meeting. The communication will happen naturally and there won't be silos and there won't be separations between divisions.*

It is quiet there at the top and we don't know what is going on. Everybody is wondering. They don't inform you. They don't involve you. People are worried about their jobs.

I believe a leader should create an atmosphere where people feel free to go and speak to him/her.

As indicated in Chapter 5 (see Section 5.8.13), in order for followers to trust leadership, it is necessary that communication is open, clear, and unambiguous. It is also much easier for employees to relate to what the organisation expects from them when the communication received is clear, sufficient, and consistent (Nishii & Wright 2008).

Sjostrand *et al.* (2001 in Zacko-Smith 2007) explain that leadership is primarily interactional and that small talk serves to structure organisational reality and influence leadership perceptions among employees. Interpersonal communication is an interaction between individuals and allows people to explore and discover the nature of this communicative interaction and assist them in deciding in how to perceive it (see Section 5.8.6). Taking a constructionist approach illustrates the value of learning about leadership by focusing on interactional processes (Zacko-Smith 2007). Language is the mechanism that storytellers use to generate interest and convey ideas. From a social constructionist perspective,

language is the primary mechanism in the construction of reality (Zacko-Smith 2007) (see Section 5.8.11).

All the respondents were of the opinion that leadership communication should be **interactional**. The following responses clearly indicate this:

We have no insight into our leader's coming and goings. We don't know when he attends meetings with information that are applicable to our jobs. There is hardly any or no interaction.

I also feel that leaders should use participative management and I connect communication with this because people get the opportunity to participate and give their input.

The Saturday work example can be used here. You ask the people that are involved and ask them for suggestions and how you can make it work for everybody. That, I call participative management. You get feedback and you consider their opinions and then you have a win-win situation. There has to be interaction.

It is of no use if you say something once and then it is put away until next time, because next time there is a new problem. The issue must be addressed and spoken about as often as possible until it is solved.

Without interaction there can be no participative management, feedback, or the opportunity to build relationships.

The statements above emphasise the importance of interaction and its influence on trust between leaders and followers. Employees who do not get the opportunity to interact with their leaders on a regular basis will perceive them as distant and the establishment of relationships of trust will not be possible.

As was stated in the literature (see Section 5.8.2), leaders use words and images, as well as symbolic actions and gestures to structure attention and evoke patterns of meaning that give them considerable control over the situation being managed (Smircich & Morgan 1982). Meaning is best managed through framing (Hughes 1997). Fairhurst (2007) describes framing as the ability of the leader to construct the reality of a subject or situation. Fairhurst and Sarr (1996) state that when sharing our frames with others, we manage meaning because we assert that our interpretations should be taken as real over other possible

interpretations (see Section 5.8.2). From the above it is clear that leadership communication should be **meaning centred**.

Only two of the respondents indicated that their direct line managers were able to frame certain situations for them. They stated the positive effect this had on them and the way they performed their work. The rest of the respondents felt that they did not derive meaning from the way their leaders communicated with them.

The respondents stated the following:

*Top management uses very difficult phrases and talk about big ideas and we don't understand what they say. We don't understand what the golden thread of communication coming from them is.

*When the instruction was given, however, we were just told to park that way and nothing was explained to us. If you don't explain something to someone, they are going to be unhappy or resistant to it. If you tell them why and explain to them that it is to their benefit, it is more acceptable to them. So they have to explain these things to the staff members and they will be much more willing to change or to oblige.

Another respondent stated:

*I want to understand why I have to do something. They must not just tell me to do it. Often they don't explain. They just say do this or that. I don't like it!

The participants indicated that they feel resistant and unsure if what is being relayed to them does not make sense to them. It is therefore very important for a leader to ensure that the situation is framed; in other words, the recipient of the message must be able to derive meaning from it.

Chapter 5 (see Section 5.8.14) referred to Bowen and Ostroff (2004) stating that in order to function effectively in a social context and make accurate attributions about a situation, an employee must receive **frequent** and **adequate** communication.

*I would say that regular meetings are very important, as well as following up on things that were communicated.

*Regular meetings and listening are of the essence.

I would say that communication should take place on a regular basis and it must be transparent.

"Communication as dialogue is seen as a creative process, allowing the development of potential of all those involved in leader relations, and as such it moves beyond relative fixity of roles" (Ashman & Lawler 2008:266). Andriof (2001:228) describes dialogue as a conversation, where information is exchanged and knowledge acquired. As already noted in the early 1980s by Grunig and Hunt (1984:48), dialogue should involve two-way communication as two-way communication enables the co-creation of a shared understanding of collaboration (see Section 5.8.3).

It was noted that the responses received from the respondents indicated that **dialogue** is of the essence in the workplace. However, the respondents experienced the opposite of the abovementioned and felt that not enough attention was paid to dialogue and open conversations. Responses included statements such as the following:

The company is very hierarchical and if someone has a certain title, they expect you to address them on their title. Immediately they create distance between you and them. Then there can be no open communication. There can be no dialogue.

People don't feel free to speak to those at the top. They are aloof. Distant. That is not the path to two-way communication or dialogue. They give instructions, you obey.

When there is an issue, it must be addressed and spoken about as often as possible until it is solved. Information must not be left out, because that is where misconceptions begin.

Other views included:

I believe a leader should be open to communication from staff. An open-door policy. People must be able to go into his/her office and discuss things with them.

I feel a leader should create an atmosphere where people feel free to go and speak to him/her. They should be approachable and they have to ensure that there is two-way communication. Not just an e-mail with instructions.

It was clear from the responses that the respondents felt that their leaders did not realise the importance of face-to-face dialogue between them and staff members. All the

310

respondents indicated that face-to-face communication was considered by them as the preferred and most effective way of communication. The respondents indicated the following:

It must be face-to-face communication, whenever and wherever possible.

If you look at the bigger picture, the leadership above provincial level, I would say that there are definitely benefits to face-to-face communication for them. Any face-to-face communication has a lot of value.

The times we went with the GM when she visited each technical centre and spoke to the staff definitely had advantages. Staff members learn to know their leader this way.

Interpersonal interaction and face-to-face communication with competent communicators are once again indicated as the preferred methods of communication between leadership and employees. The respondents were convinced that poor communication negatively impacts the organisational bottom line.

6.5.3.2   In order to establish relationships

Without relationships, there can be no leadership. The leader in the contemporary organisation needs to be able to forge relationships with all stakeholders in order to be successful at his/her task.

The core assumption when taking a relational stance is that leadership is co-constructed in social interaction processes. A relational view recognises leadership as a phenomenon generated in the interactions among people acting in context (Fairhurst 2007). According to Gittell and Douglass (2012), relational leadership can be seen as a pattern of reciprocal interrelating between employees and leaders in an attempt to make sense of a situation and determine what must be done, and how to do it. The different parties learn from one another; the employees contribute the more focused or specialised in-depth knowledge associated with their roles, while the leaders or managers contribute the broader, less focused knowledge associated with their roles. Together they create a more integrated, holistic understanding of the situation. This process of reciprocal interrelating involves communicating through relationships of shared goals, shared knowledge, and mutual respect (see Section 5.8.9).

All the respondents referred to the importance of leadership being able to establish a relationship with followers on all the different organisational levels. It was also indicated that different aspects, such as shared values, trust, two-way dialogue, and information dissemination influenced the establishment and livelihood of these relationships. The following aspects surfaced from the data:

The leader must build a relationship with staff members. There should be a relationship of trust. Unfortunately it is not there. Not at all.

A leader will, because he has shared values with his followers, take them along or with, because of this deeper relationship that he has with his people. It will almost be a natural process.

The leader must be able to build relationships from the lowest level upwards.

Don't just say, "From now on it's going to happen this way!"

A leader will inform you of what is going on. I would like to say that there will be a relationship between a leader and his/her followers.

It was stated in Chapter 5 (see Section 5.8.7) that interpersonal communication forms the basis of an individual's personal and professional growth. It is also the primary basis for building relationship connections with others (Wood 2002:11). Proponents of interpersonal communication theory describe it as a dynamic process of interacting and creating relationships between people, who systematically engage in transactions and electively construct and manage meaning in their relationships (Maubane 2007). In interpersonal communication, human relationships emerge from patterns of behaviour between individuals.

The interpersonal communication process enables individuals to negotiate definitions for their relationships as they share the roles of the sender and receiver and become connected through the mutual activity of creating meaning (Trenholm & Jensen 1992:33).

The need for a leader to be able to establish relationships is recognised widely as a crucial aspect of the leadership process A leader should therefore possess effective **interpersonal communication skills**.

Don't pretend to listen and then ignore the input they have given and do your own thing anyway. People have different perspectives. It is important that a leader takes this into account. If the leader does not have the ability to develop good interpersonal relationships, people will not trust him/her and will not communicate openly.

More than half of the respondents indicated the need for leaders to be **diplomatic** and **tactful**, especially when sensitive information is conveyed. However, the respondents indicated that they did not perceive their leadership as sensitive to the needs of others or tactful when situations warranted it.

The statements by the following five respondents pay testament to this:

The leader that wants to be a good communicator must be able to give information clearly and timeously, and must also take people's feelings into account.

A leader must communicate honestly and must communicate in a diplomatic way. He must not use attacking and degrading communication and must listen to people.

Therefore, how you convey a message and the sensitivity that you do it with are very important. Often leaders are not sensitive in their communication at all.

A leader needs to be able to have good interpersonal relations with his/her staff members.

If the leader does not have the ability to develop good interpersonal relationships, people will not trust him/her and will not communicate openly.

It is important that leadership communication demonstrates **understanding** and **insight**. A lack of understanding from the side of leadership was reported, as can be seen in the following statements:

They don't truly try and understand.

Someone who understands where you are coming from, and then rather than just giving orders, will ask for your input.

They must have understanding of the work and the situation. Some people understand in pictures, others through figures. They must understand the situation and act accordingly.

As a leader, you have to come to know the people with whom you communicate and come to understand how to communicate with them best in order to reach them or get through to them.

In Chapter 5 (see Section 5.8.2), the importance of leaders having the ability to understand employees and the situations they face and also being able to frame situations accordingly was emphasised. Leaders are known to play a key role in "framing" (Fairhurst 2011; Fairhurst & Sarr 1996) complex and ambiguous situations and events so that others can make sense of them (Gioia *et al.* 2010:41). How a situation is "framed" is important because it influences how people think, feel, and act towards that situation. Effective framers, according to Fairhurst and Sarr (1996), know the perspective of their audience and seriously consider the question of whom they are framing the meaning for.

Osborn *et al.* (2002:773) opine that leadership and its effectiveness largely depend on the context, and that changing the context also changes the leadership, as leadership is embedded within the environment, structure, and technology of organisations. Traditionally, context has been viewed as a situation that has an influence on the kind of leadership that will be appropriate or effective. The relationship between leadership and context can be referred to as recursive; this implies that leadership is produced by, but also produces, the context to which it refers (Endrissat & Von Arx 2013:279). Considering the organisational context within which leader and follower communication takes place is crucial, since leaders' and followers' activities are always embedded in a certain context (Allirol & Leienbach 2015; Osborn *et al.* 2002).

The data indicated a need for leaders to be able to **adapt to the context** in which they are communicating and be **sensitive to the audience and recipient**. The respondents were of the opinion that most of the leaders they came in contact with were not able to attain this. The respondents said:

You must take the people's level of education into consideration. You cannot use these very high English words and jargon that are not part of their job when you speak to them. They will not know what you are talking about.

The leader must be able to adapt to his audience and it is here where I think emotional intelligence and maturity come in.

I think it is very important to function having knowledge of the bigger picture of the organisation. If you have deeper insight, you can better address questions from clients and also provide a better service.

Another aspect that seemed important regarding audience and context sensitivity is **EI**. Almost all the respondents mentioned this aspect.

I think that emotional intelligence and emotional maturity are very important aspects of a leader's personality. Leaders that are not emotionally mature will not be able to handle the communication in conflict situations or other difficult situations where intervention from senior personnel is required.

Emotional intelligence also very important. A leader that is not emotionally intelligent or emotionally mature will not be able to handle all situations. Usually they can also not handle critique and are immediately on the back foot thinking that someone is attacking them. I see that a lot. Such as person can also not read people and cannot adapt to situations and adapt the communication to suit the situation or the personality.

* A leader must be open for critique and must be able to see their blind spots.*

They must have knowledge and understanding of fellow human beings.

Must understand people. Emotional intelligence is important.

The leader must have insight and understanding of the specific circumstances in that department.

Must be emotionally mature in order to understand different personalities and also him-or herself. This will help him or her to communicate better with followers. Also, to be able to handle different situations better and respond appropriately in different communication situations.

A leader must have the emotional intelligence to, even when feeling threatened, handle a situation on merit and not let personal issues interfere.

In Chapter 5 (see Section 5.9.11) it was stated that scholars such as Pool and Cotton (2006) opine that in the organisations of today it is important for a leader to understand the effects of his or her own, as well as employees', moods and emotions, and therefore it is vital to

take the EI of the leader into account. A leader who possesses high levels of EI will have a much better understanding of people and their surroundings. It has been proven that EI helps organisations as a whole to commit to strategy; build relationships inside and outside the organisation, which offers competitive advantage; promote innovation and risk taking; provide a platform for shared learning; maintain balance between the human side and the financial side of the company's agenda; and develop open communication and trust building among leaders and followers (Nordstrom 2010).

A leader's behaviour accounts for at least 25% of why people feel productive, motivated, energised, effective, and committed to their work (Kouzes & Posner 2010). Despite these findings, and others indicating that effective communication is one of the most important attributes of a successful manager/leader or supervisor (KLCM 2014, 2013; DiMeglio 2007), research often reports employees stating that they are subjected to poor communication by their supervisors, which keeps them from doing their best work (KLCM 2014, 2013; Goleman 1998).

Specifically in reference to the relationship between communication competence and leadership, Holladay and Coombs (1993) argue that leadership is enacted through communication in that effective communication shapes the followers' perceptions of a leader.

The respondents were all in agreement that leaders should receive training in communication in order to enable them to become more **professional** communicators. They responded as follows:

Communication skills training are definitely necessary and essential. There are many skills that can be taught and I find that most leaders do not have communication skills.

They need communication training.

I think very few leaders and manager are trained to communicate. I believe it is a skill that can be acquired and that leaders should be trained in this skill. Most people just accept that if you are in a leadership position, you know how to communicate. Most leaders are, however, poor communicators. Leaders who can communicate well are much more respected, according to my opinion.

I think that most leaders have not even mastered the most basic communication skills.

A major problem. They don't handle the communication correctly.

Communication is definitely a skill that can be acquired. They have to be trained in communication skills.

They must be skilled in communication strategy development and also know how to use communication strategy.

Leaders that *do not know how to communicate have a negative influence on the workplace and on other people's morale.*

Training is important and if there are people in a certain department that complain about their leader's communication, their complaints must not be wiped off the table. Attention should be paid to the issue.

Communication competence has also been conceptualised as encompassing the elements of knowledge, motivation, skill, behaviour, and effectiveness (Spitzberg 1983). Therefore Spitzberg and Cupach (1981:1) argue that "[c]ompetent interaction can be viewed as a form of interpersonal influence, in which an individual is faced with the task of fulfilling communicative functions and goals (effectiveness) while maintaining conversational and interpersonal norms (appropriateness)". In other words, the leadership communication should be professional. As stated by respondents:

Lack of telephone etiquette by quite a large number of staff members is something that I also feel needs serious attention. The clients get a very negative impression if the person who is supposed to help the them speaks unclearly or rudely.

The leader must be professional when communicating.

Even something as basic as answering the telephone. Sometimes I just see that people do not even know how to answer the phone, or write an e-mail.

6.5.3.3   Authentic and ethical

The respondents were of opinion that management often did not deliver on promises, which led to a lot of unhappiness and distrust. It was obvious that respondents value authentic and ethical communication highly, as reported by the following respondents:

They are quick to promise things like saying we are going to look at additional compensation, a 13th check, or we are going to look at bonuses for people who do well in the company and then, nothing happened. Absolutely nothing came of it.

They said they were going to create a platform and look at additional recognition for staff members that did well. Nothing happened. Or that people who came up with new concepts and presented them to the CEO [Chief Executive Officer] would receive some kind of recognition. Nothing happened. That is two of the things they promised. I can give you many more examples, but what I am trying to tell you is that they say things and then they don't deliver on their promises. Leadership should just not randomly say stuff that they know is not going to happen. Or at least they should plan before they just communicate stuff.

The real issue is never really addressed. They give an answer, but it is more to shut us up. It is not to solve the problem.

A leader must communicate authentically.

The literature is clear about the fact that credibility is enhanced when a leader is consistent in word and deed. Followers listen to the message and then look for "the walk". Trust is generated by true feelings of good communication amongst participants, including leaders. It therefore requires authenticity, which also requires genuine and effective communication. Two-way communication that is authentic and open is essential in an organisational setting if success is to be obtained (Zeffane *et al.* 2011).

It was further stated in Chapter 5 (see Section 5.8.14) that the actions of authentic leaders are based on their values and convictions. An authentic communicator will practise what he or she preaches. The communication of the authentic leader is therefore characterised by high levels of transparency and integrity (Lloyd-Hughes n.d.).

The quality of a leader's communication is of extreme importance. Bowen and Ostroff (2004:208) are referred to in Chapter 5 (see Section 5.8.14) where they state that "in order to function effectively in a social context and make accurate attributions about a situation, an employee must have adequate and unambiguous information". Leaders wishing to have the desired effect on employees need to be effective communicators that use communication effectively. This entails that the content of the message, as well as the

comprehension of the message and the acceptance thereof, should receive attention (Chaiken *et al.* 1996).

The use of **transparent** and **honest** communication by leadership is essential if this is to be achieved. The responses corresponded with the above, as can be seen in the following:

*The leader must be transparent and authentic when communicating. The leader must also be consistent and fair.

*Honest and transparent communication is also very important. Some of the communication that we receive is transparent, but I think the higher you go up in the hierarchy, the less transparent it becomes. Here on ground level between us it is transparent, but higher up it becomes less and less clear.

**Authentic and honest communication is also extremely important. Dishonesty is from the devil. It leads to a lot of negative feelings in the workplace.*

*Communication should be honest and should focus on work.

*Open, transparent, and honest communication helps build relationships and then there is trust.

*Often sensitive information is also not conveyed nicely or properly to clients. They don't explain something clearly to the clients and they don't always tell them the truth.

Some respondents indicated that they perceived their leadership as non-transparent in their communication. The following statement emphasises this observation:

*The communication is filtered through to us. We don't always receive honest communication.

All the respondents deemed honest communication as very important and indicated that functioning is hampered when communication received is perceived as dishonest or not revealing the whole truth.

Furthermore, the respondents emphasised the importance of receiving **unambiguous** communication from their leaders. The following statements indicate that employees feel

319

that their functioning is affected when they do not receive information in a way that allows them to understand the bigger picture:

Information must also not be given in such a way as to lead to misconceptions.

We only receive bits and pieces of information. We are uninformed. We never have the fuller picture and that hampers our functioning.

The participants indicated that they want to contribute positively to the organisation they are working for. Leaders should ensure the establishment of relationships of trust by employing transparent, honest, open, unambiguous, and ethical communication. Employees are also more inclined to share information with leadership when they feel safe in their environment.

6.5.3.4   Strategically

Strategic leadership communication shapes meaning, builds trust, creates reputation, and manages symbolic relationships with internal and external stakeholders in order to support organisational growth and secure the right to operate (Zerfass & Huck 2007).

When leadership communication is strategic, it communicates strategic decisions; creates and communicates a vision of the future; develops key competencies and capabilities; develops organisational structures, processes, and controls; manages multiple constituencies; selects and develops the next generation of leaders; sustains an effective organisational culture; and infuses ethical value systems to the organisations' culture (Boal & Hooiberg 2000) (see Section 5.8.12).

The respondents were adamant about the fact that a communication strategy was essential. When the participants' responses were considered, these indicated that all the respondents were of opinion that their organisation did not communicate strategically.

It was stated that:

Leadership should not randomly just say stuff that they know is not going to happen. Or at least they should plan before they just communicate stuff.

There is no timeline connected to this so I can say communication is unplanned or not well thought through. We are still waiting for the things to happen, then the new promise comes and the process repeats itself. There is no structure.

I believe that there should be a structure or strategy and that communication should be integrated. Different departments should receive the same message.

There must be a communication strategy.

Structure is an important aspect of enabling conditions (Hamrefors 2010). According to Malmelin (2007) (see Section 5.9.3), in order for leadership communication to be effective, it is essential that leaders acquire a deep knowledge of a wider spectrum of communicative abilities. It is also important to view communication more broadly and see it as a function that cuts through and involves the whole organisation. This highlights the importance of an effective **communication structure**. The respondents stated:

I also think communication must not just take place randomly. There must be certain structures, and people in leadership positions must use these to communicate more effectively.

Good leadership communication is not only on the leader's level, but must be pulled through to the lowest level.

Communication should be transparent and authentic and should take place on group and individual level.

The leader must have the necessary skills to communicate with staff members on a one-on-one basis, but should also be able to communicate to groups and teams and not feel intimidated when staff members voice their opinions.

The need for a communication structure and inclusion of communication in the overall organisational strategy, as well as the need for a communication strategy, were mentioned repeatedly.

6.5.3.5   Integrated

The ultimate goal of IMC and IC is to contribute to the value of a company. Value creation has been conceived as a multistep process comprising output, outcome, and outflow levels of communication effectiveness (Argenti 2009; Watson & Noble 2005).

As was explained in Chapter 4 (see Section 4.8), IC involves synchronising an organisation's internal and external messages across all communication channels to build a consistent and

favourable reputation with stakeholders (Pollach *et al.* 2012:206; Christensen *et al.* 2008:423). Two of the respondents referred to the importance of having consistent messages to all stakeholders and integrating the communication:

Different departments should receive the same message.

The communication must be integrated.

It is important that all stakeholders receive a unified message. Communication integration in the organisation is important to ensure message consistency across the board. Communication should be integrated into all the organisational functions to establish a culture of collaboration to enhance teamwork and team spirit and counter silo functioning.

6.5.4 Research findings pertaining to research question 4

What is the contribution that leadership communication can make in your organisation?

The explication of the data revealed two main areas in which leadership communication can contribute to the effectiveness of the organisation. The identified areas are the impact on the individual and the impact on the organisation.

6.5.4.1 Impact on the organisation

The statements below refer to respondents' convictions regarding the contribution of effective leadership communication in an organisation. The respondents were of the opinion that effective leadership communication should ensure the following:

6.5.4.1.1   Increased productivity

A study by Clampitt and Downs (1993) found that employees perceived communication to have an above-average impact on productivity. Positive work relationships allow leaders to swiftly resolve issues that arise and that could possibly hinder performance. The respondents concurred with the above, stating that:

If I feel that my leaders care about me and show it in the way in which they communicate with me, I'm going to want to do my best,

The productivity and service delivery can be improved.

Good communication can also improve overall organisational functioning.

Productivity increases when employees feel valued and when there is a relationship of trust and openness between employees and leadership. In spaces where information is shared and feedback listened and adhered to, staff members will feel cared about and this can assist with improving the service delivery and productivity of the organisation.

6.5.4.1.2   Direction

As interactions between supervisors and subordinates tend to be direct and frequent, supervisors play a key role in providing valuable information to an organisation's staff and newcomers. Through their daily interactions, supervisors assist these members in the process of organisational assimilation. Other functions include assisting employees with the fulfilment of their obligations toward the organisation (Shore & Tetrick 1994) and therefore supervisors/leaders can be seen as important agents that represent the organisation in managing employment relationships with employees (Coyle-Shapiro & Shore 2007; Wong *et al.* 2003 in Shore *et al.* 2006).

Almost all the respondents indicated that effective leadership communication assisted them in knowing what was expected of them, feeling more in control of the situations they had to manage, and to feel safe in their environment:

Everybody is in the same boat and going in the same direction so organisational goals can be obtained, which means more success or productivity for the organisation.

If staff members know what the goals of the organisation are and told how to obtain them, it will have a positive influence on the whole organisation.

You are not in the dark; you actually know what is expected of you.

There is professionalism and a feeling of empowerment.

I think if they communicate with us in a proper way, people will know what is expected of them, and when they understand why they have to do certain things, they will be much more willing to cooperate.

Staff will know what is expected of them and will feel more in control of the situation.

Staff will know what is expected of them…..

6.5.4.1.3   Increased turnover

Roussin (2008) found that team leaders can increase trust, psychological safety, and performance in a team by employing a dyadic discovery process. Dyadic discovery also assists team leaders in establishing the risk perceptions of individual members and then reacting with specific messages, behaviours, and attitudes in order to build the members' trust in the leader, the situation, and the other team members. Dyadic discovery may also lead to increased team performance and work behaviours because of increased trust and psychological safety. Leaders may also use the process for justifying changes being made to a team.

The respondents indicated that effective leadership communication could ensure the following:

Also a willingness to work together, which will ultimately make it a better functioning department with higher output.

I'm going to want to do my best, my job as good as possible.

The productivity and service delivery can be improved.

Another respondent stated:

I think poor communication from the top influences the customer relations and service delivery.

Effective leadership communication allows employees to be innovative and encourages positive employee identification with the organisation, which in turn leads to organisational commitment and employees willing to go the extra mile for their organisation.

6.5.4.1.4   An environment of trust

It was stated in Chapter 5 (see Section 5.10.13) that communication between people is built on trust. The leadership of an organisation should be able to create an atmosphere of trust

within the company. Without trust, communication is hampered (De Vries 1997). Employees can only trust their leader when they have no doubt that what he or she is communicating to them in words or actions is the truth (Morenoi 2010).

This is indicated in the responses from the following two respondents:

It can help establish trust and this will make employees and other stakeholders more positive towards the organisation.

People feel safer, they feel more informed, they can deliver better service, and they are more trusting.

Another employee indicated that when communication is effective:

[t]here will be less stress and distrust and ultimately the organisation will be more profitable.

Where trusting relationships exist, employees feel free to express themselves and to approach leaders and address important issues. Employees also feel less stressed in the workplace. This can lead to improved collaboration and organisational effectiveness.

6.5.4.1.5   Positive influence on organisational image and reputation

When leadership communication is effective and employees can identify with the company and its vision, mission, goals, and values, it can fuel loyalty, motivation, and engagement, which in turn generate superior work performance and overall organisational effectiveness (Fombrun & Van Riel 2004). It is therefore clear from the above that management competence and the quality of the leadership and the quality of the communication used by them are factors that drive stakeholders' perception of organisational reputation (Men & Stacks 2013) (see Section 5.10.18).

It influences the image of the organisation and the reputation.

The communication of the organisation also contributes to the reputation of the organisation. Leaders who don't think what they say and just shoot from the hip also have a negative influence on the reputation of an organisation. It also has a huge influence on the PR [Public Relations] people who must always try and rectify the situation.

They are unwilling to go the extra mile and this influences the atmosphere in the institution and also the reputation.

The regular guy that says something when they are at a braai, they are the spokespersons for your company. You must communicate with you workforce in a way that they feel loyal and that they have value for your organisation.

The responses given emphasised once again how broadly an audience can be affected by the impact of positive communication from leadership and staff members. Positive identification with the organisation can impact all stakeholder groups and lead to third-party endorsements of the organisation.

6.5.4.1.6   Informed workforce

In chapter 5 (see Section 5.7.1) it is stated that leadership is a social process and involves a relationship or relationships between individuals. Communication, both verbal and non-verbal is the vehicle that leaders use to create meaning at the content (task) and affective (relational or interpersonal) levels (Hackman & Johnson 2009; Madlock 2008; Conrad & Poole 2005; Barge & Hirokawa 1989).

According to the respondents, when leaders do not communicate with them on a regular basis and important information is not provided to them, they often are not able to perform their responsibilities as required:

If staff members know what the goals of the organisation are and are told how to obtain them, it will have a positive influence on the whole organisation.

Informed staff members do not feel as if they are in a stream and are just taken with the tide. You feel informed and more competent and can deliver better service.

There is a better working climate in the department because people know what to do and what is expected of them.

Ground-level staff members that are uninformed cannot deliver the best service possible.

From the data it seems as if the respondents felt uncertain of themselves and were unable to deliver good service.

6.5.4.1.7   Positive impact on organisational climate

While only three respondents referred to the importance of a healthy organisational climate, the literature clearly indicates that the climate in an organisation can have a significant impact on the wellbeing of the organisation. The respondents stated:

If and when information that is given through can be trusted, it will lead to a positive atmosphere and a positive attitude amongst staff members.

There is a better working climate in the department because people know what to do and what is expected of them.

They are unwilling to go the extra mile and this influences the atmosphere in and the reputation of the institution.

Organisational climate is a reflexion of the way people perceive and come to describe the characteristics of their environment (Allen 2003:63). Without a positive climate, there is little hope for achieving excellence in an organisation (Harris & Nelson 2008:87-88).

Organisational climate directly impacts the effectiveness of the organisation. The fact that only two respondents referred directly to the organisational climate as an outcome of effective leadership communication is not indicative of the importance thereof. A number of aspects contribute to the creation of a positive organisational climate. Several of these aspects evolved from the data and are addressed in the following section.

6.5.4.2   Impact on the individual

Effective leadership communication creates a positive work environment in which employees develop feelings of attachment and loyalty to the organisation (Liden *et al.* 2008). Research indicates that communication is vital for organisational success, irrespective of the situation faced (Wadman 2010), and that leaders can influence employees' reactions through effective communication (Homburg *et al.* 2012). According to Carroll (2006:1), research by the Great Place to Work Institute found that employees enjoy working in an environment where they "trust the people they work for, have pride in what they do, and enjoy the people they work with". Such positive work environments are typically characterised by open communication. Carroll (2006) argues that ethical organisations take care of their employees and work to build trust through positive communication efforts.

These companies also demonstrate respect for employees and act with integrity in all employee relations. This behaviour leads employees to trust their managers to the extent that they demonstrate honesty, transparency, genuine caring, support, and a willingness to listen. Gardner and Winder (1999) state that leaders who effectively communicate, further develop trust between themselves and their followers (see Section 5.10.2).

6.5.4.2.1 Enhanced employee and job satisfaction

Ineffective leadership communication often leads to feelings of unhappiness among employees. This was clear from the respondents' replies:

At the moment there is a lot of unhappiness; people are not content.

Leaders who communicate with employees can make a large contribution to the organisation. The workforce will be happier and more trusting. They will also be better informed.

This has a negative influence on the service that staff members deliver.

Richard Branson says that you should put your employees first, because if they deliver better service, then automatically your customers will be better off.

As was stated in Chapter 5 (see Section 5.10.2), effective leadership communication is deemed to coincide with favourable work attitudes in employees, such as job satisfaction (Sparks & Schenk 2001; Butler *et al.* 1999; Podsakoff *et al.* 1996) and organisational commitment (Walumba & Lawler 2003). These improvements in motivation and attitudes result in the escalation of performance, citizenship behaviour, and the creativity of followers (Whitford & Moss 2009).

6.5.4.2.2 Motivated employees

Most of the respondents indicated that they were unhappy and not willing to do more than was expected of them as a result of the communication they received from their leadership. Statements included:

Staff members will be more motivated to perform at their best. This will lead to improved profitability for the organisation and also improved morale of the workforce.

Good communication can also improve overall organisational functioning.

[…] it will lead to a positive atmosphere and a positive attitude amongst staff members.

Effective leadership communication has been found to improve employee motivation, productivity, and satisfaction (Seltzer & Bass 1990) (see Section 5.10.6). In Chapter 5 (see Section 5.9.6) it was indicated that the flow of smooth information without barriers is a critical element of effective leadership communication. When information is shared freely and timeously, organisations were found to be well respected and performed better (Ahmed *et al.* 2010).

6.5.4.2.3   Promote employee wellness

In the literature (see Section 5.8.9), the need for fostering relationships, interaction, and emotional connections is highlighted. A study by the CIPD (2012) placed great emphasis on leader-employee relationships, communication, personal interactions, and the managing of feelings. It was also suggested in this report that leaders' communicative competencies impacted on the level of wellbeing of their employees. At the individual level, poor communication can result in increased uncertainty about situations, the self, others, or relationships, which in turn lead to increased occupational stress and burnout (Ray 1993).

Two respondents indicated that because of the poor communication received from leadership, much unhappiness was experienced. They stated as follows:

At the moment there is a lot of unhappiness; people are not content. This has a negative influence on the service that staff members deliver.

People are cross and unhappy.

Others indicated that they believed that improved leadership communication could lead to improved staff morale:

Better morale, and if people are committed, their productivity goes up.

6.5.4.2.4   Enhanced organisational commitment

Madlock and Kennedy-Lightsey (2010) suggest that negative communicative behaviours have a greater impact on subordinates' organisational commitment, job, and communication

satisfaction than positive communicative behaviours. Leaders should therefore not only be able to execute the correct communication behaviours, but also avoid negative and disruptive behaviour at all costs.

Some of the responses that emphasised this included the following:

More committed staff members.

They will feel prepared to walk the extra mile for the organisation because they would feel their leaders care about them.

It makes people willing to go the extra mile.

Staff will be more willing to go the extra mile.

The above statements concur with the literature in Chapter 5 (see Section 5.10.10) where it was stated that leaders who develop trusting relationships with employees and facilitate their success create higher organisational commitment (Jaramillo *et al.* 2009; Page & Wong 2000).

6.5.4.2.5   Improved efficiency

As was stated in the literature (see Section 5.10.1), leaders play an important role in inspiring subordinates to maximise efficiency and enhance productivity. Ahmed *et al.* (2010) argue that the spirit of teamwork among employees correlates with the inspirational leadership role of management. The ability to practise effective communication is a leadership attribute that facilitates managers to become prospective leaders of their organisations.

Almost all the respondents were of the opinion that poor leadership communication directly influenced efficiency and productivity. Statements included the following:

Also a willingness to work together, which will ultimately make it a better-functioning department with higher output.

Profitability will also increase. There will be better cooperation between departments and in the organisation as a whole.

There will be less stress and distrust and ultimately the organisation will be more profitable as workers will be more motivated.

6.5.4.2.6   Improved service delivery

Positive employee attitudes increase productivity, improve performance, and enhance external relations (Berger 2008 in Men 2014) (see Section 5.10.1). Eight of the 12 respondents were of this opinion and referred directly to the fact that overall organisational functioning and service delivery improved when organisational leaders communicated effectively with them. Statements included the following:

If I feel that my leaders care about me and show it in the way that they communicate with me, I'm going to want to do my best, my job as good as possible.

Richard Branson says that you should put your employees first, because if they deliver better service, then automatically your customers will be better off.

People feel safer, they feel more informed, they can deliver better service, and they are more trusting.

Good leadership communication will lead to a much more oiled machine. There will be better functioning, there will be better cooperation, and there will be a feeling of unity.

The productivity and service delivery can be improved.

Ground-level staff that is not informed cannot deliver the best service possible. So ultimately I think poor communication from the top influences the customer relations and the service delivery.

This has a negative influence on the service that staff members deliver.

6.5.4.2.7   Advanced cooperation and collaboration

It was stated in the literature (see Section 5.10.9) that managers need to be collaborative in their ways of communication in a way to create a two-way channel so that employees can internalise the vision created as a team. Communication is therefore required for the leader as well as the organisation to be efficient and effective (Pavitt 1999).

One of the respondents indicated that she perceived an unwillingness to cooperate by staff members as a result of poor communication from their leadership. She stated:

I think if they communicate with us in a proper way, people will know what is expected of them, and when they understand why they have to do certain things, they will be much more willing to cooperate. Now, however, it feels to me as if some staff members are spiteful.

In other words, if the communication is effective, there will be better cooperation between staff members. Other respondents indicated:

There will be better functioning, there will be better cooperation, and there will be a feeling of unity.

Also, a willingness to work together, which will ultimately make it a better-functioning department with higher output.

Staff will know what is expected of them and will also know how to assist others in their jobs.

When staff members know what is expected of them and what is going on in the organisation, respondents envisage that a sense of unity will develop, which would lead to improved functioning.

6.5.4.2.8   Better-quality LMX

Loi *et al.* (2009) state that the quality of LMX shapes employees' perceptions of their exchange relationships with the organisation and that these in turn indicate the employees' reciprocations toward the organisation (see Section 5.10.5). As interactions between supervisors and subordinates tend to be direct and frequent, the supervisors play a key role in providing valuable information to an organisation's newcomers. Through their daily interactions, supervisors assist these members in the process of organisational assimilation. Another function includes assisting employees with the fulfilment of their obligations to the organisation (Shore & Tetrick 1994) and therefore supervisors/leaders can be seen as important agents that represent the organisation in managing employment relationships with employees (Coyle-Shapiro & Shore 2007; *Wong et al.* 2003 in Shore *et al.* 2006).

The following five responses are an indication of this.

There will be stronger internal relationships and a much better working climate.

Timely and honest communication from leadership can improve relationships and also ensure that a situation does not get out of hand.

[…] they can deliver better service and they are more trusting.

Misunderstandings can be prevented and there will be a lot less negativity.

Everybody is in the same boat and going in the same direction so organisational goals can be obtained.

6.5.4.2.9   Foster loyalty

The following responses indicate that respondents felt that staff loyalty would improve with effective leadership communication:

Better morale, and if people are committed, their productivity will go up and be better and they will be more loyal to the organisation. They would feel prepared to walk the extra mile for the organisation because they would feel their leaders care about them.

You must communicate with you workforce in a way that they feel loyal and that they have value for your organisation.

Employee loyalty is essential for the organisation as employees are the first point of contact between the organisation and its external stakeholders. Loyal employees will be willing to go the extra mile for the organisation, which will ultimately improve productivity and service delivery.

6.5.4.2.10 Empower employees

As was seen in Chapter 5 (see Section 5.10.8), Spreitzer (2008) concluded that a supportive, trusting relationship with one's leader is an important contextual antecedent of employee empowerment. Leaders can supply information about strategic or operational goals that allow employees to see the value of their work and thus to enhance meaningfulness. They

may also allow followers greater participation and autonomy, which will enhance employees' feelings of self-determination and impact.

The respondents stated:

There is professionalism or a feeling of empowerment.

You are on the same page because everybody receives the same information and that makes it easier to reach your targets.

Staff will know what is expected of them and will feel more in control of the situation.

You can appoint a spokesperson and teach him/her to say the correct stuff, but the most important spokespersons are those on ground level that have first contact with your clients.

When employees are informed and know what is expected of them, it enables them to make positive contributions to the organisation as they will be able to be more productive and deliver better service.

6.5.4.2.11 Improved morale

Some respondents were of the opinion that poor leadership communication impacted employee morale negatively. They indicated the following:

Better morale, and if people are committed, their productivity will go up and be better and they will be more loyal to the organisation.

The happiness and morale of staff members will improve.

People are cross and unhappy.

6.5.4.2.12 Promote sensegiving

Sensegiving is described in the literature (see Section 5.10.12) as a discursive process by which a leader attempts to structure and explain unfamiliar events to another person in a way that strategically influences the meaning of the situation. Sensegiving is a leader's attempt to communicate that an existing interpretive schema for the organisation is no longer appropriate (Gioia & Chittipeddi 1991). Fairhurst (2007) explains that sensegiving primarily depends on controlling the context, defining the situation, and interpreting uncertainty.

The statements below emphasise what is stated in the literature. More than half of the respondents made the following types of statements:

Misunderstandings can be prevented and there will be a lot less negativity if they communicate properly with us.

If they communicate better, people will have the bigger picture. That golden thread of communication that starts at the departmental head and goes through to the lowest staff member in the department.

Better understanding of what is expected from staff members and improved relationships of trust. Not only between management and staff, but between different departments as well.

The value of good communication cannot be measured.

The above statements was echoed by the following respondent when stating:

You are not left in the dark and you actually know what is expected of you.

The literature indicates that sustainable engagement and respectful engagement are two very important outcomes of leadership communication. In Chapter 5 (see Section 5.9.2), the important role of positive interrelating was emphasised as it conveys a sense of presence and worth and communicates positive regards (Rogers 1957). Acts of respectful engagement include conveying presence, communicating affirmation, effective listening, and supportive communication (Dutton 2003). In addition to this, sustainable employee engagement (see Section 5.9.5) is increasingly being recognised as important in positive organisational outcomes.

6.6   SYNOPSIS OF RESULTS

Findings pertaining to the four research questions were discussed in this chapter. The ensuing section provides a summary of results.

From the respondents' answers to research question 1, namely *How do you experience the leadership communication of your organisation*, it was established that the respondents predominantly perceived the leadership communication in their organisations as being of a poor quality. The respondents also indicated that they experienced the communication received from their leadership as condescending, strained, and unsupportive. An overall

lack of and disregard for communication were reported. The respondents perceived that leaders did not view communication as a priority or an essential function necessary for the successful functioning of an organisation. It was also indicated that when communication did take place, it mostly took the form of one-way communication that was top-down and did not provide the opportunity for feedback from employees. Another important factor that surfaced was the perceived lack of interpersonal and interpersonal communication skills that was exhibited by leaders. This resulted in hampered dialogue and an apparent lack of sensitivity to non-verbal cues.

Organisational functioning was also shown to be affected as the respondents indicated that poor leadership communication negatively affected interdepartmental communication. Communication was not integrated and different departments functioned in silos, which led to demotivated employees and a lack of team spirit. A lack of communication structures was reported and where structures did exist, they were underutilised. Most employees indicated that their immediate departments lacked a communication strategy and that they were unsure of what the organisational communication strategy was. Finally, communication was experienced as being inauthentic and unethical, which negatively influenced the employees and the organisation as a whole.

The second research question addressed the emotions experienced by the respondents. The question put to respondents was: *How does your leader's communication make you feel?* When the data were examined, it became clear that respondents reflected on both the emotions experienced as a result of the leadership communication received, as well as the resulting consequences elicited by these emotions. The discussion was therefore addressed in two sections. The first section (Part A) referred to the emotions experienced by the respondents, and the second section (Part B) discussed the consequences resulting from these emotions. Three groups of consequences were identified: the negative behaviour of individuals, the negative impact on the productivity of individuals, and the negative impact on the work environment.

The respondents made it clear that a lack of communication, as well as poor or ineffective communication, led to an array of negative emotions in the workplace. It was stated that feelings of unhappiness, frustration, powerlessness, and anger were the order of the day. Some respondents indicated that they could not perform to the best of their ability because they regularly felt stressed, irritated, negative, demoralised, and disheartened. The manner

in which certain leaders addressed employees was very condescending. This resulted in some respondents feeling inferior and upset, while others reported feeling indignant and taken aback. The respondents who reported feelings of inferiority stated that they felt they were not good enough or important enough for leaders to address them. Other emotions included feeling unvalued, unsafe, and disheartened.

Pertaining to the first group of consequences, namely the negative behaviour of individuals, the respondents reported that negative emotions experienced evoked behaviours such as spitefulness by some of the respondents, while others felt rebellious and not willing to support work initiatives. The respondents also stated that they felt negative and one respondent experienced this situation so intensely that she felt she did not want to attend work any longer. Negative emotions also impacted the productivity of individuals. This second group of consequences indicated that feelings of nervousness and feeling hampered in one's functioning were regularly experienced. The respondents felt that they could not perform optimally as they were uncertain of how to do certain things, which made them feel powerless.

The third group identified pertained to the negative impact on the work environment. Here it became clear that this could affect the organisational bottom line, as value addition was seen to be impaired. Another important aspect that surfaced here was the influence on the organisation's image that was projected by employees. As brand ambassadors, ground-level employees are an organisation's first point of contact and when they portray a negative image, it can have serious implications for stakeholder relationships and organisational functioning as a whole. Without leadership communication that is efficient and integrated, the work environment has no structure. In this type of environment there can be no teamwork or collaboration between departments and therefore the establishment of a team spirit is impossible. A lack of trust and working conditions being perceived as unbearable caused the respondents to feel very unsafe in their work environment. It is clear that the TBL will be affected negatively by circumstances as described above. Value addition will be hampered as job satisfaction and employee satisfaction are affected and stakeholder relationships will be influenced negatively.

Four main themes with related sub-themes were identified from the data related to research question 3: *How should an effective leader communicate?* The first main theme identified relating to how a leader should communicate indicated that leaders should utilise

337

communicative communication in their interaction with employees. The respondents were of the opinion that good leadership communication entailed frequent communication that consisted of dialogue. The respondents also expect to be asked for, and allowed to supply, feedback to leadership, as well as receiving feedback when needed or requested. The importance of listening was also highlighted as employees want to contribute to decision making and other organisational processes. Leaders are expected to be effective listeners and communication should essentially be an interactional and inclusive process where adequate information is shared with all affected. Finally, the importance of dialogue between employees and employers was once again emphasised as an essential element in successful leadership communication.

The second main theme identified pertained to the ability of leaders to establish relationships with employees. It was clear that interpersonal communication skills were seen as very important by the respondents. Leaders are also expected to be diplomatic and tactful and be able to conduct themselves professionally. EI was highly commended as this would enable the leader to show insight and understanding of diverse situations, adapt his or her communication to suit a specific context, and be sensitive to the audience and recipients when communicating. The need for communication to be authentic and ethical was the third theme that was identified. It was stated that without transparent, honest, and unambiguous communication, a relationship of trust between leaders and followers can never be established, and without trusting relationships, successful leadership cannot take place. Lastly, the need for an integrated approach to communication and the necessity of a proper communication structure were indicated. If structures and a strategy are not in place, employees feel unsafe and uncertain of what is expected of them and how to operate. Without integration, departments will function in isolation and message consistency will not be obtained.

Research question 4 4 referred to the contribution that effective leadership communication can make in an organisation. The question stated: *What is the contribution that leadership communication can make in your organisation?*

The explication of the data revealed two main areas in which leadership communication could contribute to the effectiveness of organisations. The first area identified was the impact on the individual, and the second area was the impact on the organisation. Regarding the impact on the organisation, the respondents reported that they believed that effective

leadership communication would have a positive effect on organisational functioning. It was believed that where communication between leaders and their followers was effective, an environment of trust would be created. This would lead to better leader-member relationships, which would influence the organisational climate positively. Effective communication between a leader and subordinates will ensure an informed workforce that is provided with direction and this would ultimately lead to increased productivity and increased turnover. Concerning the impact on the individual, it was opined that leadership communication could contribute positively to the emotional wellbeing and the wellness of employees and can increase employee morale as employees will feel included and will also know what is going on in the organisation. Effective leadership communication fosters loyalty among employees and also leads to improved employee and job satisfaction as employees feel that they can make sense of their situation. Employees who received effective leadership communication were deemed to be more committed and motivated, their efficiency increased, and this ultimately led to improved service delivery. When employees know what is expected of them and regularly receive adequate information, they feel empowered and can serve stakeholders and the organisation more effectively.

The importance of effective leadership communication cannot be stressed enough, and from the data it is evident that where communication is found lacking or absent, it has serious consequences not only for organisational functioning and success, but it also negatively impacts the individuals exposed to it. Leaders wanting to be successful in their functioning therefore have to ensure that they pay serious attention to the communication utilised by them.

6.7   SUMMARY

This chapter provided insight into the way the respondents experienced the leadership communication they are exposed to. The empirical research data were explicated by using an adapted version of Groenewald's (2004) phenomenological research method. The steps in the explication process were described and each interview question was analysed according to these steps. An example of the explication process was provided early in the chapter. Important themes were identified from the data. The data revealed that many problems were experienced with the communication the participants received from their

leadership. The majority of the leaders referred to in this study were not proficient communicators and it became clear that communication is not a top priority for them.

CHAPTER 7
CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CRITICAL REFLECTION

7.1   INTRODUCTION

The main objective of this research was to develop an LCVC model from an IC perspective. This model will serve to indicate how leadership communication can enhance organisational effectiveness and add value to the organisational bottom line.

In the previous chapter, the insights obtained from the in-depth interviews, conducted with employees working in the services industry who are at the receiving end of leadership communication, were discussed. In this final chapter, the conclusions and recommendations of the study, as based on the research goal and objectives, and more specifically the research questions put forward, will be addressed. A critical reflection on the study in its totality will also be provided.

The chapter will commence with a brief reflection on the research goal and objectives of the study. The information contained in this study ultimately indicates the importance of leadership communication for effective organisational functioning and value addition. In this concluding chapter, remarks will be made on the research objectives. The conclusions will give rise to the recommendations, which will ultimately be presented in terms of a strategic intervention, namely a proposed LCVC model. The value of the study will be highlighted and the researcher will reiterate the reliability of the study and the limitations experienced. To conclude, suggestions for future research will be made.

In the following section, the goal of the study, and the objectives identified to reach the goal, will be reiterated to act as a framework for this final chapter. Thereafter, the conclusions drawn from the study, linked to each objective, will be presented.

7.2   REFLECTION ON THE GOAL AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The goal of this study was to develop an LCVC model from an IC perspective. Five objectives emanated from the problem statement (see Sections 1.4 and Section 3.2) and were identified to address the goal. They were:

Ro1: To describe the LVC model and its different leadership domains (linked to the contextual research question).

Ro2: To discuss IC as an approach to communication in an effective organisational context (linked to the contextual research question).

Ro3: To analyse the conceptual foundation of leadership communication (linked to the conceptual research question).

Ro4: To examine employee perspectives on leadership communication (linked to the normative question).

Ro5: To supply guidelines for how leadership communication can be applied in an integrated organisational communication context (linked to the theoretical research question).

Each of the research objectives will be addressed individually and conclusions and recommendations with regard to each of the objectives will be discussed individually. The recommendations will be presented in terms of a strategic intervention that can be employed.

7.3   CONCLUSIONS RELATED TO THE RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

In this section, the conclusions of the research, which refer to the constraints identified with regards to leadership communication practised in organisations, are presented.

7.3.1   Conclusions regarding Ro1

Ro1, which emanated from the contextual research question, sought to describe the LVC model and its different leadership domains. The reason why the LVC should be considered as important in an organisational context was the focus of this objective.

As contemporary organisations are managed from a market perspective, they need to be able to use every available resource to its full potential. This will allow them to survive in the harsh and rapidly evolving contexts in which they are functioning. The *need for competitive strategies* to assist them in attaining a profitable and sustainable position against the factors that determine industry competition cannot be emphasised enough. Considering this fact, Porter (1985) developed the value chain framework as a *powerful instrument for strategic planning*, with the goal of maximising value and minimising costs. It was concluded that the value chain has over the years been used with great success by leaders and managers in a wide variety of industries, and is still being used in organisational management in different forms today. The choice of the value chain as a point of departure when one wants to determine value-adding contributors in an organisation, was substantiated.

It was further concluded that leaders, as key organisational decision makers, determine the acquisition, development, and deployment of organisational resources, the conversion of these resources into valuable products and services, and the delivery of value to organisational stakeholders. Leaders can therefore be seen as potent *sources of sustained competitive advantage.*

Although many studies have indicated a correlation between leadership and organisational effectiveness, it is still unclear exactly how leaders contribute to the success of an organisation. Kaiser and Overfield (2010) attempted to solve this problem by developing the LVC since their search of existing literature failed to yield any comprehensive structure for assessing leadership outcomes. A criticism of existing leadership assessment techniques that was voiced by these authors refer to the fact that most assessment techniques focused mainly on the individual skills of the leaders and not on the performance of the collective for which the leader is responsible. A more effective measurement instrument was therefore deemed necessary; one in which the focus is on the group and organisational performance as well. With this in mind, the LVC was developed.

Based on the value chain, the LVC has as its purpose the identification of the sequence of key variables and considerations that relate individual leadership to organisational effectiveness. Differently stated, the primary use of the LVC is to identify and to indicate which factors should be considered to gain an understanding of the way individual leaders contribute to organisational effectiveness. The LVC framework connects the characteristics of individual leaders to their leadership style; leadership style to impact on unit processes; unit processes on unit results; and unit results to organisational effectiveness across a broad range of firm-level performance measures. The key components of the LVC comprise five main domains with their sub-domains and the concepts related to each of these sub-domains (see Chapter 4). It can be concluded that the LVC is a *valuable measuring instrument for determining the impact of leaders on organisational outcomes* but that there are still *certain areas of leadership that need to be addressed.* It was disconcerting to establish that leadership communication was not included as a component at any point in the LVC. This leads one to conclude that the majority of business leaders, and academic scholars alike, fail to *understand the important role that communication plays* in the leadership process.

As social constructionism was at the heart of this study, it was confirmed that the LVC provided an effective framework from which the LCVC could be developed.

7.3.2 Conclusions regarding Ro2

The aim of Ro2 was to discuss IC as an approach to communication to create an organisational context accommodating of effective leadership communication. The contextual research question that was addressed with this objective was why an integrated approach to organisational communication was needed.

IC is considered a strategic communication process that can be described as the practice of aligning messages, processes and behaviours in order to communicate consistently with external and internal stakeholders with the purpose of establishing favourable long-term relationships with them that will contribute positively to the organisational bottom line. The importance of and need for an integrated approach to organisational communication is indicated by the fact that it *contributes to the value of a company*. It is therefore necessary for leaders to grasp the importance of the strategic and systematic management of an organisation's communication with its internal and external stakeholders.

In the highly competitive markets in which organisations function, the success of a company can no longer be ensured by providing the best product or service in a certain industry. That is why an appropriate IC strategy is needed to *ensure the establishment of strong and trusting relationships with stakeholders* where the focus is not only on market share, but on customer share as well. However, for IC to be successful, it should be an organisation-wide endeavour implemented on a strategic level.

A dependable and reliable IC strategy can go a long way in ensuring that a company is able to act on each message sent to external and internal stakeholders and this, in turn, will have a *positive influence on the organisational reputation and image* and also make the company more *visible than competitors* in the same industry. This overview provides reasons to conclude that an integrated approach to organisational communication is beneficial to an organisation as it impacts an organisation's bottom line and adds value to it.

Based on the abovementioned, the researcher is convinced that IC provides the context for the effective implementation of leadership communication, as was argued throughout the study.

This conviction is validated by the number of similarities between effective leadership communication and IC. Table 7.1 endorses the validity of this finding.

Table 7.1: Shared principles between IC and leadership communication

Shared principles	Description
Holistic approach	Both leadership communication and IC should be approached from a holistic perspective to enhance their effectiveness.
Purposeful dialogue	The interactivity dimension of IC proposes that messages from stakeholders should be received and captured in order to create long-term purposeful dialogue, which should be mutually beneficial for the stakeholder and the organisation.
Cross-functional processes	The cross-functionality of processes in an organisation enables departments in organisations to cooperate with one another in the planning and monitoring of relationships with stakeholders.
Stakeholder centricity	Everybody in the organisation should focus on the needs of members of stakeholder groups.
Core value communication	A company can only reach true integration when all the communication efforts of the company have a focus on communicating the corporate values in a way that reaches all stakeholder groups with impact.
Strategic consistency	All communication activities in an organisation should consistently focus on the strategic intentions of the organisation. Message consistency should be driven by strategic intent of organisation.
Stakeholder focus	Stakeholders should be the focus in all decision-making processes in an organisation.
Sustainable success	Decisions made in an organisation should have long-term results and sustainable financial accountability at heart.
Stakeholder engagement	Stakeholder engagement involves collaboration, learning, and innovation and therefore organisations need to prepare themselves through identifying ways of engagement that work or facilitate understanding, learning, and improvement and also build long-term relationships.
Stakeholder-conscious employees	As the most important stakeholder group of an organisation, employees should be sensitised towards the needs of external stakeholder groups.

7.3.3   Conclusions regarding Ro3

The aim of Ro3 was to analyse the conceptual foundation of leadership communication. From the evolutionary concept analysis of leadership communication, it was concluded that leadership today should be approached from a *socially constructed* and *relational* point of view

345

where *meaning is co-created* by the leader and those with whom he or she is communicating. Leadership communication was found to be a very *unique and complex* form of communication that directly impacted the organisational bottom line and that is not easily applied in practice. The very *close* relationship and inseparable nature of leadership and leadership communication was also established.

From the historical evolution of the concept, it could be concluded that, contrary to in the past, leadership communication's focus is not merely on the influence of the individual leader but should also focus attention on the interaction with the individual, the group and team, and the organisation as a whole; emphasising the importance of considering the human element when communicating. It was further concluded that in order for leadership communication to be effective, it should be authentic, ethical, and communicative in nature. It is therefore imperative that it should be a transactional and people-centred endeavour that is dialogical and transparent. In other words, a communicative approach to leadership communication, where the establishment of relationships with all stakeholders is of the essence, should be followed and respected and clear values should be an integral part of the process.

The lack of leadership communication definitions in existing literature clearly indicates that this important phenomenon did not receive the attention it deserved. It is important for leaders and other communication specialists to take note and be aware of the implications that effective leadership communication can have for the organisation and the people working in it. Despite the realisation that no one management or leadership approach will be sufficient to meet existing challenges, it was concluded that *an agreed upon fundamental principle is the need for communication.*

Effective leadership communication is focused on a constructionist and relational approach where *meaning is co-created* and where *communicative leadership*, *dialogue, listening, and understanding* as well as *sensegiving is* of the essence. The need for leadership communication to be an integrated and strategic endeavour was also emphasised. Only when applied in this manner would the formation of *relationships of trust* and *mutual respect* between employees and other stakeholders and leaders be possible and would organisational functioning and value addition be enhanced. Furthermore, when leadership communication is effective, it *enhances organisational commitment* and *positively influences organisational culture and climate.*

When considering the attributes, antecedents, and consequences of this complex phenomenon, as were uncovered in the concept analysis in Chapter 5, it was concluded that paying attention to these aspects and applying them in practice could improve the quality of

leadership communication in organisations. This in turn will add value to organisations as it is clear from the findings that effective leadership communication positively influences the organisational bottom line.

7.3.4 Conclusions regarding Ro4

Ro4 entailed the examination of employee perspectives on leadership communication. This objective addressed the normative research question, namely *How should leadership communication be conducted in an organisation?*

To answer the normative research question, empirical data were gathered. This was done by referring to the responses obtained from each of the four research questions that were posed to the respondents. A number of interesting conclusions were drawn from employee perspectives on leadership communication. From the data it could clearly be established that many problems were experienced with the communication received from leadership in the different organisations where the respondents were employed. It also became evident that the majority of the leaders who were referred to in this study did not have the necessary communication skills to be proficient communicators and that communication was not a top priority for them. It seemed that the communication received from these leaders seriously impacted organisational functioning as it affected the morale and job satisfaction of the respondents, as well as their performance in the workplace. If attention is not paid to this, it could ultimately affect the organisational bottom line. The conclusions related to each interview question will now be discussed.

7.3.4.1 Conclusions regarding interview question 1

The first interview question tested the respondents' experiences of the leadership communication in their organisations. From the respondents' feedback it could be concluded that the communication received was perceived as problematic and that basic communication principles were found to be absent. It was further concluded that a general *lack of communication* existed and an *absence of communication* was also detected. Communication was mostly *one-way* and *no provision was made for feedback* from the respondents. *Top-down communication* seemed to be the norm. Communication received was also of *poor quality* and often *insufficient and unclear*. A *lack of interpersonal communication skills* compounded the problem as leaders exhibited *insensitivity to non-verbal cues* and were also *unable to establish meaningful relationships with employees*. Furthermore, communication was perceived as *unsupportive*, *condescending*, *cold*, *detached*, and *strained*. The

respondents did not always receive information necessary for the proper execution of their jobs, and indicated a total *disregard for communication* from some leaders.

A silo approach to communication could be detected as *interdepartmental communication* was reported to be *inadequate*. This resulted in little integration of work activities and was found to be very *demotivating* to respondents as certain tasks had to be repeated over and over again. This had a serious *effect on team spirit* as an absence of team spirit was reported.

A very important point that surfaced was the fact that communication was experienced as *unethical*, *disrespectful*, and *dishonest*, and this had serious implications for the establishment of relationships of trust between leaders and their followers. Where trust is absent, communication cannot be successful as leaders will be perceived as inaccessible and employees will not have the confidence to approach them about important organisational issues.

Finally, an overall *lack of or underutilisation of communication structures* had a serious impact on the communication. Without a proper communication structure and integration of messages, there will be *no message consistency* to internal and external stakeholders alike. Different departments will not know what is expected of them and messages to external stakeholders will also not be effective. It was also concluded that organisational structures did not always provide the necessary support as *a lack of communication strategy* led to the respondents not knowing whom to report to and what channels to follow when communicating.

From the information gathered through interview question 1 it can be construed that the experience of leadership communication amongst the respondents differed radically from what was discovered through the conceptual analysis of leadership communication to be positive outcomes of this phenomenon. In most instances the total opposite was experienced.

7.3.4.2   Conclusions regarding interview question 2

Interview question 2 set out to establish how the leaders' communication made the respondents feel.

An organisation exists through the interaction of the people who constitute it at any point in time. From the emotions reported by the respondents it became clear that the interaction between leaders and the respondents was *found lacking* and that *hardly any positive relationships existed*. Without a doubt, the leadership communication employed had a very *negative impact* on the respondents' *emotional wellbeing*. The feelings reported by the respondents led to the conclusion that the quality of the leadership communication influenced

employees negatively and that frustration, distrust, and unhappiness prevailed. It could also be concluded that the way some leaders communicated caused the respondents to feel inferior and powerless, which in turn led to disheartenment and the respondents feeling demoralised. The respondents also indicated that they *regularly felt stressed* and *unsafe* in the workplace, which affected their functioning. It can be concluded that this led the respondents to feeling *emotionally abused*, *not good enough*, and *disrespected*, as well as *unhappy* in their work environment, and had a serious impact on the respondents' performance and job satisfaction. Interview question 2 served to underline the importance of employing effective leadership communication in an organisation as this will also enhance employee wellness in the workplace. From the above it is clear that in terms of the respondents to this study, this was not the case.

7.3.4.3   Conclusions regarding interview question 3

Interview question 3 attempted to establish what the respondents believed was the proper way a leader should communicate in order to be an effective communicator.

The conclusions made regarding what the respondents regarded as effective leadership communication were divided into four main categories for the sake of clarity. Firstly, it could be concluded that leadership communication should be communicative, whereby communication is the central aspect of leadership and constitutive of leadership and where leaders would pay attention to important aspects such as dialogue, and effective listening and understanding when communicating with subordinates. The importance of supplying feedback on communication received from employees, as well as receiving feedback with an open mind and without a preconceived agenda, was stressed. Furthermore, it could be concluded that employees expected communication to be an inclusive process that is meaning centred and interactional, and where interpersonal exchanges between the different parties are of the essence. The necessity of frequent and adequate communication was also indicated.

In the second identified category, the importance of taking a relational approach to communication was emphasised. It could be concluded that the respondents viewed an effective communicator as having interpersonal communication skills and being able to communicate in a professional manner, as well as being diplomatic and tactful. It could also be concluded that EI was seen as one of the prerequisites for being an effective communicator as this would allow the leader to show insight and understanding when communicating and to enable the leader to adapt the communication to a specific context, be audience and recipient sensitive, and show insight and understanding when communicating.

Thirdly, authentic and ethical communication is viewed as very important as this would allow transparent, honest, and unambiguous communication that would lead to the establishment of trusting relationships.

A final and important factor is the need for communication to be used strategically. A communication structure and the inclusion of communication in the overall organisational strategy, as well as a communication strategy, are required. Communication should also be integrated into all the organisational functions in order to encourage the establishment of a culture of teamwork and team spirit, rather than silo functioning.

7.3.4.4   Conclusions regarding interview question 4

Emanating from the preceding discussions, it is concluded and acknowledged that leadership communication is a complex phenomenon. These complexities and realities are risks which cause constraints; preventing organisations from reaping the benefits that effective leadership communication can offer. However, it was also ascertained that with the necessary knowledge, sensitivity, and understanding of the core of the leadership communication phenomenon, its practice within an IC context could greatly benefit an organisation. Interview question 4 pertained to the respondents' opinions about the contribution that effective leadership communication could make to an organisation. The responses to interview question 4 were categorised into two parts. The first part pertained to the impact of leadership communication on the organisation, and the second part pertained to the influence that effective leadership communication could have on the individual.

Pertaining to the impact on the organisation, it was concluded that when communication from leadership was effective, it was expected that higher productivity and efficiency in the organisation would prevail and that organisational effectiveness would improve. The establishment of relationships of trust and respect would be possible and this would influence the organisational culture and climate in a positive way. Ultimately, this would positively impact the organisational reputation.

Regarding the impact on the individual, it was concluded that effective leadership communication would encourage and enhance positive employee identification with the organisation, as well as positively influencing employee and job satisfaction, which in turn would lead to organisational commitment. It was further concluded that improved leader-follower relationships would positively impact group and task cohesion, which would enhance collaboration between different parties. As the human element is such an important factor during change, it is expected that improved susceptibility to change would be established when conditions in the workplace are favourable.

Finally, effective leadership communication would also allow employees to feel free to express themselves, which would make employees feel empowered, and this could encourage a culture of innovativeness in the organisation that could have a positive effect on employee wellbeing and ultimately positively affect the organisational bottom line and add value to the organisation. From the data, two aspects that were not established during the concept analysis could be added to the conclusions made. In connection with the influence of effective leadership communication on the organisation, it could be concluded that effective communication from leaders provided employees with direction, assisted in having an informed workforce, and it was deemed to improve turnover. It could also be concluded that when leadership communication is effective, employee morale is improved and that all of the abovementioned aspects ultimately contribute to the emotional wellbeing of employees. Table 7.2 provides a synopsis of consequences derived from the conceptual analysis, which are supplemented with the data from the phenomenological interviews. Only two constructs were added, namely "to provide direction" and "a more informed workforce".

Table 7.2: Conclusions regarding Ro 4

Impact on organisation	Impact on individual
• Higher productivity and efficiency	• Positive employee identification
• Organisational effectiveness	• Group and task cohesion
• Environment of trust and respect	• Improved leader-follower relationships
• Positive organisational culture and climate	• Employee and job satisfaction
• Positive impact on organisational reputation	• Innovativeness
• Increased turnover	• Freedom of expression
• Provides direction	• Collaboration
• Informed workforce	• Organisational commitment
	• Improved susceptibility to change
	• Empowered employees
	• Emotional wellbeing of employees
	• Motivated employees
	• Promote employee wellness
	• Improved efficiency
	• Improved service delivery
	• Foster loyalty
	• Improved morale
	• Sensegiving

7.4   RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to illustrate ways in which communication can be integrated into a model in order to contribute to the organisational bottom line. Against the background of this study, it is important that an organisation acknowledges the prominent role of communication and specifically the impact that effective leadership communication can have. It is imperative that organisations that want to be successful and add value to the organisation follow an integrated approach to their communication. It is suggested that a communication-centred view of leadership, where communication is an integral part of the leadership process, should be adopted. To address these prerequisites, the following guidelines are recommended.

7.4.1   Guidelines to improve leadership communication

The following guidelines are suggested to advance the effectiveness of leadership communication. These guidelines entail that leadership communication should be:

1. Communicative, where communication is deemed central to leadership, defines the leadership, and is constitutive of leadership;
2. Meaning centred, in order to frame the situation and provide employees with a "map" or direction for action;
3. Dialogical, for establishing relationships through high-quality contact between leaders and followers that are open, creative, and meaningful and that can lead to ethical organisational learning and change;
4. Discursive, to allow for the co-construction of meaning through talk and through social interaction processes that allow leaders and followers to work together in meaningful ways to reach desired outcomes;
5. Dyadic, to ensure the formation of unique one-on-one relationships between a leader and each of his/her followers through interpersonal exchanges;
6. Interactional, as this assists in structuring organisational reality and influences leadership perceptions among employees;
7. Interpersonal, being able to allow for, and encourage the establishment of relationships, as well as enabling parties in a conversation where the definitions for their relationships are negotiated as they share the roles of sender and receiver and become connected through mutual meaning creation;
8. Transactional, to ensure an ongoing and continuously changing process in which sender and receiver roles are interchangeable and senders and receivers are able to influence each other's interaction;
9. A relational process, in which leadership is co-constructed in a social interaction process and is neither leader nor follower centric;

10. A rhetorical process, in which humans as symbol-using creatures use language to make sense of reality while providing techniques to build connections with other human beings;

11. Socially constructed, where meaning is created through dialogue among groups of people in a particular context;

12. Strategic, to ensure the shaping of meaning, building of trust, creation of reputation, and management of symbolic relationships with internal and external stakeholders through the communication of strategic decisions and the creation and communication of a vision of the future; develop key competencies and capabilities; develop organisational structures, processes, and controls; manage multiple constituencies; select and develop the next generation of leaders; sustain an effective organisational culture; and infuse ethical value systems into the organisation's culture;

13. Equated to sensemaking, as a process that is discursive and can assist in generating a point of reference against which a feeling of organisation and direction can emerge;

14. Based on communication competence, as leadership is enacted through communication, and only when the necessary knowledge and skills are present can this process be executed successfully;

15. Tactical, in other words, continuous, frequent, timely, and accurate; and

16. Authentic, where the actions of leaders are based on their values and convictions and where open and transparent behaviour prevail.

If the above are taken into consideration, the researcher is convinced that it would positively influence the communication between a leader and subordinates.

7.4.2 Guidelines to enhance a context conducive of effective leadership communication

In order for leadership communication to be successful, it should be practised from within a specific context. Guidelines to enhance such a context entail:

1. An integrated approach to communication should be followed;

2. A culture of ethical and caring behaviour, where others are treated with dignity and respect, should be encouraged;

3. An environment that supports respectful engagement, where interaction conveys a sense of value and worth to those being communicated with, should be strived for;

4. Enabling conditions, where processes, structure, social interaction, and organisation-wide relationships are of the essence, should be established;

5. It should be ensured that there is alignment between the goals of the individual and the higher-level objectives of the organisation;

6. Sustainable engagement should receive continuous attention;

7. There should be an awareness of and sensitivity to the context in which leadership communication takes place;

8. The leadership communication style should be considered;

9. There should be cultural sensitivity, and cultural barriers and differences should receive attention;

10. Network relationships should be deemed important and leaders should position themselves in networks in different ways;

11. A nurturing organisational culture should be fostered; and

12. The importance of the EI of leaders should be acknowledged.

A leadership communication value chain

LEVELS / PROCESSES OF LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATION

Levels
Strategic/
Operational

Processes
Individual
Team / Group
Organisational

ANTECEDENTS OF LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATION

Impact on organisation:
· Higher productivity and efficiency
· Organisational effectiveness
· Environment of trust and respect
· Positive organisational culture and climate
· Positive impact on organisational reputation
· Increase turnover
· Provides direction
· Informed workforce

Impact on individual:
·Positive employee identification
·Group and task cohesion
·Improved leader member relationships
·Employee and job satisfaction
·Innovativeness
·Freedom of expression
·Collaboration
·Organisational commitment
·Improved susceptibility to change
·Empowered employees
·Emotional well-being of employees
·Motivate employees
·Promote employee wellness
·Improve efficiency
·Improve service delivery
·Foster loyalty
·Improve morale
·Sense-giving

LEADERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS

Psychological Capital
Personality/
Mental ability

Intellectual Capital
Job Knowledge/
skills

Social Capital
Networks/
Connections

IC

LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATION ATTRIBUTES
· Transactional
· Relational process
· Rhetorical process
· Socially constructed
· Strategic
· Relational process
· Rhetorical process
· Socially constructed
· Strategic

CONCEQUENCES OF EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATION
· Higher organisational productivity, efficiency, innovation
· Positive employee identification, loyalty, attitudes and behavior
· Organisational effectiveness
· Culture of innovativeness
· Employees can express themselves
· Employee collaboration
· Employee satisfaction and job satisfaction
· Organisational commitment
· Improved turnover
· Sense giving
· Trust
· Mutual respect
· Change
· Positive organisational
· culture and climate

ORGANISATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Productivity
Efficiency / Innovation

Customers
Market share / Growth

Financial
Market-based /
Accounting-based

HR
Engagement /
Talent level

Purpose
Mission / Culture /
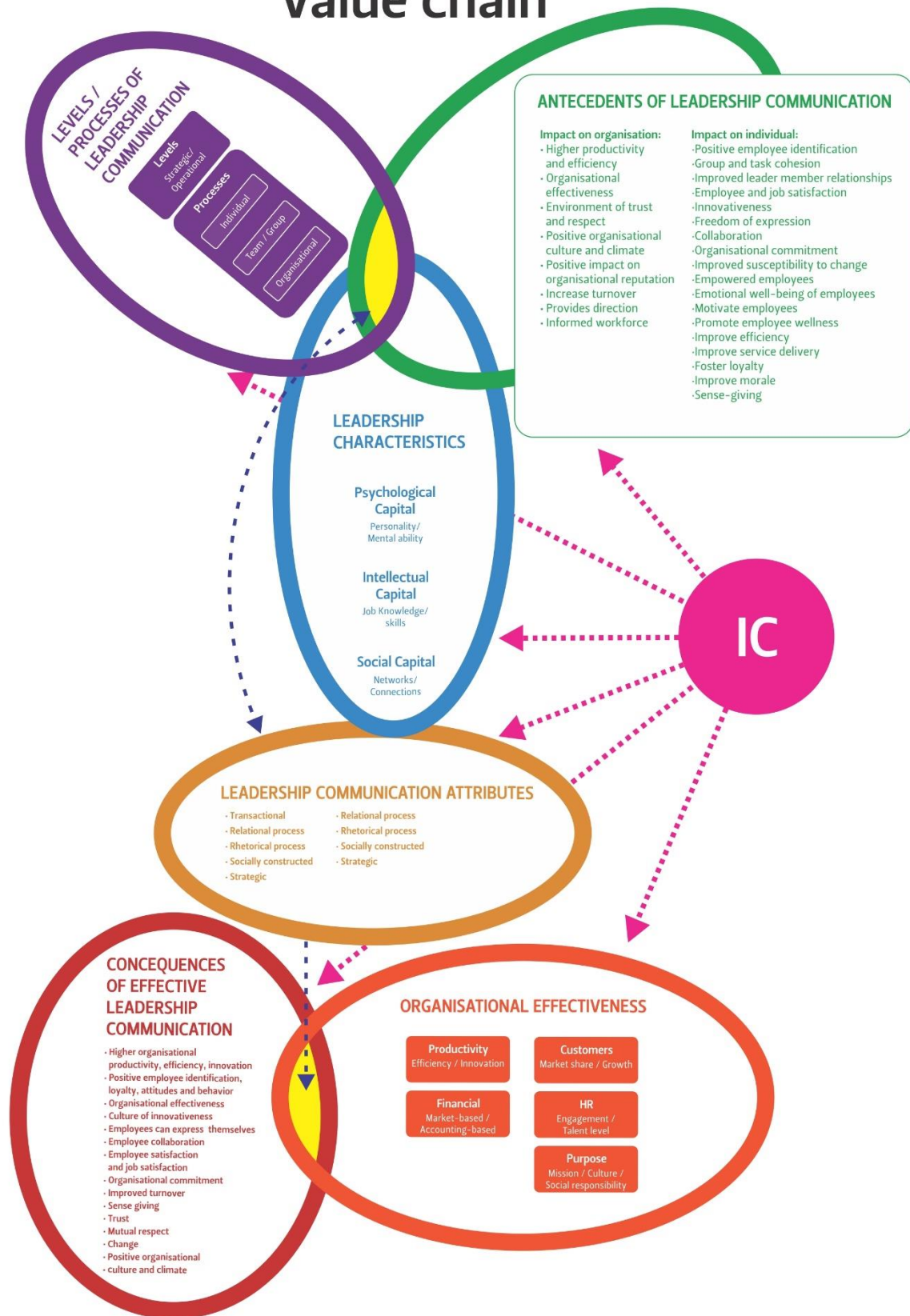Social responsibility

Figure 7.1: A leadership communication value chain model

355

7.5 AN LCVC MODEL FROM AN IC PERSPECTIVE

The stance taken in this study views leadership and communication as interrelated and communication is seen as the face of leadership. From the literature researched for the concept analysis of leadership communication that was undertaken in Chapter 5, it became apparent that organisations and their leadership are increasingly indicating a need for leaders who are effective communicators. The culmination of the exploration of the literature related to this study, the concept analysis of leadership communication, and the empirical research conducted in the first four phases of this research resulted in the development of an LCVC model from an IC perspective. The findings of this research aim to amplify the body of theory and lead to theory growth. Van Schoor (1979) suggests that when theory is constructed, it might be useful to construct a model to show the cohesion between the concepts of the theory. A model, according to Van Schoor (1979:35), is a graphic representation of the basic concepts assembled in logical cohesion relevant to a certain subject (LCVC).

The discussion that follows is the focal point of this research report. It summarises some of the main moments of this thesis, and comments on the theoretical research questions and goal of the study, namely to develop an LCVC model from an IC perspective.

In the ensuing section, an in-depth discussion of the different domains of the proposed LCVC model from an IC perspective and the accompanying variables of each of these domains will be provided. The proposed model (see Figure 7.1) consists of six domains, each with its accompanying variables and all embedded and operating from within an IC context. This context will be discussed in the next section.

7.5.1 An IC context

The point of departure in this study, motivated by the discussion of IC in Chapter 4 (see Section 4.8.1), was that leadership communication should be practised from within an organisational context where IC is the fundamental business philosophy. The significance of having an IC strategy in place has never been as important as in the current organisational environment where survival has become a constant struggle.

In the stakeholder era organisations are finding themselves in, purposeful dialogue can enhance the establishment of continuing, long-term stakeholder relationships. Despite the fact that companies are increasingly realising the importance of communication and are seeking integration as well as enhanced effectiveness (Hallahan *et al.* 2007), the proper implementation of IC can become a challenge. An IC approach to communication enhances strategic consistency, and is focused on portraying a unified and consistent message to all

organisational stakeholders. The value of IC lies in the competitive advantage that it can assist the organisation to obtain (Niemann & Grobler 2007) as the ultimate goal of IC is to contribute to the value of a company (Argenti 2009). As IC is an organisation-wide endeavour, therefore it is important that leaders have a thorough understanding of the concept of IC and what it entails as this will enable them to underwrite and support the strategic implementation thereof. Leaders are expected to use all available resources to enhance organisational value creation. As stated above, an IC approach can assist in adding value to the organisational bottom line by providing a competitive advantage.

Each of the different domains are depicted in the circles of the model.

7.5.2   Leadership characteristics

The first Domain being discussed is the domain of leader characteristics. A leader's characteristics are the distinguishing features that make him/her unique and that influences how he/she leads. Based on research by Boudreau and Ramstad (1997), Kaiser and Overfield (2010) divided the leader characteristics into three types of capital, namely psychological capital, intellectual capital, and social capital. This domain of the proposed model refers to **leader characteristics** and three variables are identified here. The first variable refers to a leader's ***psychological capital***, which is described as the leader's *personality* and *mental ability.* Mental ability, as related to this study, is understood as EI and emotional maturity, as well as the leader's IQ, while personality includes aspects such as the values that the person holds, as well as their beliefs, whether they are introverted or extroverted, and other personality characteristics as described in Chapter 4 (see Section 4.6.1). The second variable pertains to **intellectual capital** and refers to aspects such as *job knowledge* and *skills.* These attributes are acquired through education and experience and will assist the leader in acting in a certain way when confronted with a situation. Thirdly, **social capital** is addressed. This type of capital includes the ability to create *networks* and *connections through social skills.* What is referred to here is the leader's ability to establish relationships (human capital) and utilise social networks, not only in terms of staffing new teams, but also in forming relationships with stakeholders. A limited number of measures are available to measure social capital. Communication can and does play an important role in psychological, intellectual, and social capital. It is therefore evident that interpersonal communication skills, as well as communication competence, are essential aspects required to enhance the abovementioned leadership characteristics. The second domain, which pertains to leadership communication attributes, is presented in the following section.

357

7.5.3   Leadership communication attributes

This domain is specifically focused on the leader as individual. According to Becker and Correira (2005:325), a concept analysis creates a knowledge foundation of a certain concept. The attributes of leadership communication, as were discovered through the concept analysis, supply the characteristics of the phenomenon. In order for a leader to communicate effectively in any context, a number of guidelines are presented. These guidelines were introduced earlier in this discussion (see Section 7.4.1). These attributes determine the properties that constitute effective leadership communication. Communication is therefore at the centre of leadership and signifies the leader.

7.5.4   Antecedents of leadership communication

Concept antecedents are events, conditions, or precursors that are evident prior to the occurrence of a concept; in other words, antecedents are the aspects that need to be in place in order for leadership communication to be successful and add value the organisation. This domain therefore focuses on the organisational context and conditions required in order for leadership communication to be more successful. The antecedents identified in this study, which form part of this Domain of the model, are presented as guidelines (see Section 7.4.2).

7.5.5   Levels and processes of leadership communication

The Domain referring to the levels and processes of leadership communication aims to highlight the importance of recognising the different levels and processes in which leadership communication should take shape. As stated in the working description that applies in this study, leadership communication is performed at the strategic and operational levels of an organisation. The strategic level generally refers to *what* should be done and is concerned with the integration of interactions in an organisation. The operational level is focused on *how it should be done*, and underlines the characteristics necessary for individuals to work together in a cohesive and meaningful way. The processes relevant to leadership communication are socially constructed and bound by systems characteristics. The complex systems perspective adopted in this study is incorporated in this domain and could involve individual, team/group, and organisational processes. This domain reflects the complex and multidimensional nature of leadership communication. Communication, in all its multifaceted forms, is at the heart of this context-specific process.

7.5.6 Consequences of effective leadership communication

A discussion on leadership communication will not be complete without acknowledging the potential positive outcomes thereof. In this Domain   an overview of the probable consequences of effective leadership communication is provided. The impending results of effective leadership communication as indicated in the proposed model (see Figure 7.1) include:

- higher organisational productivity, efficacy, innovation, and effectiveness;
- positive employee identification, loyalty, attitudes, and behaviour;
- a culture of innovativeness;
- freedom of expression;
- group and task cohesion;
- employee collaboration;
- employee satisfaction and job satisfaction;
- leader/follower relationship quality;
- organisational commitment;
- improved turnover;
- process of sensegiving;
- an environment of trust and mutual respect;
- improved susceptibility to change;
- positive organisational culture and climate;
- motivated employees;
- promote employee wellness and morale;
- improved service delivery;
- provides direction; and
- informed workforce.

All the abovementioned positive value-adding outcomes could result from effective leadership communication.

7.5.7 Organisational effectiveness

The ultimate aim of this study was to incorporate communication into the LCVC model in order to enhance organisational effectiveness and to add value to the organisational bottom line. As stated in Chapter 1 (see Section 1.1.5), most research on how strategic leaders affect organisational performance is based on a financial perspective rather than value creation in multiple spheres. Focusing on the TBL has become essential for business success. The final

domain reflects five organisational spheres where the impact of effective leadership communication becomes visible and can be experienced. The five spheres include productivity, financial, customers, HR, and purpose. These spheres are aligned with the elements of the TBL as the financial sphere in the model represents the financial aspect of the TBL, which signifies profit; the stakeholder sphere is embodied by the people aspect; and the purpose sphere denotes the planet component. The final two domains focus on the consequences of effective leadership communication and the way it can enhance organisational effectiveness.

The value of the LCVC is to identify the sequence and classes of variables that transform a particular input (the communication of the individual leader) into valued output (organisational effectiveness). As indicated in the discussion above, the LCVC is a system of interdependent components that can become a powerful source of competitive advantage.

7.6   THE POTENTIAL VALUE OF THE STUDY

The proposed model serves as a framework to provide information to various parties involved in enhancing or adding value to organisational effectiveness. The information contained in the model could assist in the development of training instruments, as well as measurement instruments to assist HR professionals responsible for the recruitment and training of organisational staff, especially those in leadership positions.

The first domain focuses on the leader as individual and the characteristics required for enhancing his/her functioning as a leader. As was mentioned in Chapter 4 (see Section 4.6.1.3), ample measurement instruments are available to measure psychological capital and intellectual capital. Measurement instruments for social capital are, unfortunately, fewer and less developed. Measurement of social capital is important for three reasons:

- Measurement makes the concept of social capital more tangible.
- It increases investment in social capital.
- Measurement assists in developing more social capital.

In a performance-driven era, social capital will be relegated to second-tier status in the allocation of resources unless the value-adding contribution of social capital is evident. One of the main contributions of this study is therefore to provide information to industrial psychologists to develop an instrument to measure social capital.

Social capital is such a complex concept that it is not likely to be represented by any single measure or figure; however, the second domain will provide required sets of indicators to

develop an instrument that could potentially measure the social capital capability of a leader. There is considerable debate and controversy over the possibility, desirability, and practicability of measuring social capital; yet without a measure of the store of social capital, its characteristics and potential remain unknown (Durluf 2002).

Secondly, while there is ample literature available on the topic of leadership, and many discussions on the traits and attributes that a leader should possess, descriptions of leadership communication are much fewer. According to Rodgers (2000), defining attributes of a concept are those characteristics that constitute a real definition as opposed to a dictionary definition. Defining attributes, similar to signs and symptoms, are critical characteristics that help to differentiate one concept from another related concept and clarify its meaning (Walker & Avant 2005). The attributes of leadership communication, as identified in this study, help with defining the concept and giving clarity as to what the important elements of leadership communication are. It can be helpful in the development of training programmes in order to develop more effective leaders.

A third contribution is the development of the working description of leadership communication to fill the void that exists in the current leadership communication literature.

Finally, this study made an effort to narrow the space between the financially minded business world and the more people-oriented communication realm, and offers a model in which these two worlds are merged.

7.7   VERIFICATION EMPLOYED IN THIS STUDY

Verification is the process of checking, confirming, making sure, and being certain. In qualitative research, verification refers to the mechanisms used during the process of research to incrementally contribute to ensuring reliability and validity, and thus the rigour of the study (Morse, Barret, Mayan, Olson & Spiers 2002:9). Validity has to do with the truth value of observations; that is, whether the research instrument accurately reports the nature of the object (Davmon & Holloway 2002:89). Reliability has to do with the consistency of observations and whether the results can be reproduced consistently every time it is applied (Davmon & Holloway 2002:80; Lindlof & Taylor 2002:238). Davmon and Holloway (2002:92-95) are of the opinion that qualitative research validity can be demonstrated by showing relevance or authenticity and trustworthiness. Babbie and Mouton (2002:276) explain that qualitative studies need to focus on being objective through credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability.

361

Qualitative research is iterative, therefore the researcher moved back and forth between design and implementation to ensure congruence among question formulation, literature recruitment, data-collection strategies, and analysis. Data were systematically checked to maintain focus.

The researcher acknowledged the potential impact that she could have on the research findings and therefore bracketed her own presumptions as far as possible. The researcher remained open and used sensitivity throughout the process. Verification strategies that ensured both reliability and validity of data, such as ensuring methodological coherence, sampling sufficiency, developing a dynamic relationship between sampling, data collection, analysis, thinking theoretically, and theory development, were employed.

Congruence between the research question and the components of the method was ensured through methodological coherence. In other words, the question matched the method, which matched the data and the analytic procedures. An appropriate sample consisting of participants who had knowledge of the research topic in question, who are employed in the services industry in Bloemfontein, and who are exposed to leadership communication in their organisations, was used. Reliability and validity were attained by the iterative action between data and analysis.

The ideas that emerged from the data were reconfirmed in new data that were verified in data already collected. This theoretical thinking required macro-micro perspectives to build a solid foundation.

The LCVC model was developed by integrating the data from the concept analysis of leadership communication with the data from the interviews. The purpose of the model is twofold; the model serves as the outcome of the research process and as a template for comparison and further development of the theory.

Finally, respondent validation was conducted to increase the credibility and validity of the study and to correct errors that could have been perceived as wrong interpretations (Cohen & Crabtree 2006). The respondents evaluated the proposed framework in order to assess the accuracy of the researcher's interpretation, and to minimise one-sidedness. The proposed LCVC model was submitted to the respondents for validation and input. No alterations were made to the model during or after the validation process.

7.8   LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study was only conducted in the services industry and only in Bloemfontein in the Free State province. Other areas in the Republic of South Africa, as well as other industries, can be included in further studies.

In this study, no distinction was made between different genders and therefore male and female perceptions were not explored separately. Taking the new feminine approach that is suggested for leadership into account, it is acknowledged that this perspective needs further exploration.

Much attention is currently paid to the role of generational differences in the workplace. With this in mind, the different ways in which different generations perceive the workplace and the communication that they receive, as well as their expectations thereof, could be investigated. These were not explored in this study.

Little academic literature is available that addresses leadership communication from the African perspective. Too few respondents were available for the in-depth interviews to allow exploration of the African perspective on leadership communication.

Finally, it is important to note that no one model can supply a complete picture of leadership in its totality. The model proposed here focuses specifically on the role of communication in the leadership process and therefore included communication that is applied from an integrated perspective.

7.9   SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The role of generational differences in the workplace is becoming ever more prominent. When considering the changing business environment and the perceptions and expectations that different generations have of the workplace and the way they are communicated to, it is suggested that this aspect should be further investigated.

It is necessary, especially with the increased interest in decolonisation in South Africa, that an African perspective of leadership communication should receive urgent attention.

In the KLCM report of 2014 it is suggested that leadership communication of the future would be approached from a more feminine perspective. The way in which different genders perceive communication, as well as the way in which leaders from different genders communicate, could yield an interesting study.

Although ample measurement instruments are available to measure psychological capital and intellectual capital, measurement instruments for social capital are fewer and less developed. The information provided in this study could be used to promote the development of an instrument to measure social capital. Enquiry on this matter could be valuable.

7.10   CRITICAL REFLECTION ON THE STUDY

It is evident that leadership and the way leaders communicate with employees have an effect on all the different organisational spheres and affect the organisational bottom line. This realisation that leadership and communication are critical for improving organisational performance has led to an increased focus on leadership communication. This realisation that leadership and communication are critical for improving organisational performance has led to an increased focus on leadership communication. Hall (2007:197) emphasises leader talk in organisations and its role in constructing collaborative, context-driven meaning for organisational members. Research has proven that leadership is a key factor in determining organisational success (Aldoory & Toth 2004; Bass & Avolio 1997), and it has long been determined that the essence of leadership is its behavioural influence (Yukl & Van Fleet 1992). Similarly, communication as the cornerstone of high-quality relationships in an organisation is essential to improve business performance (Brown & Moshavi 2005). A leader's ability to influence results may be a matter of merely speaking and behaving differently (Collinson 2005). Fairhurst and Sarr (1996) constructed the leadership role as creating and managing meaning in the organisation that influences the reality experienced in that specific organisation.

Contrary to the traditional approaches to leadership, where a rationalist perspective attempted to explain the essence of leadership by paying attention to the composite qualities/behaviours/competencies, which together constitute "leadership", this study adopted an existential approach to leadership communication (Kempster 2009).

These authors have placed communication at the core of leadership. Leaders today are required to be relational in their approach to leadership and the importance of leaders being effective communicators cannot be emphasised enough. Discussions on the topic of leadership communication in business literature are unfortunately rare, which highlights the fact that the field of organisational communication has had limited engagement with the world of leadership. Current organisational thinking requires the leadership process to be one where meaning is co-created and constituted by the actors involved in the leadership process. This implies that leadership should be **an interactional process**. Therefore, the grand theory of this study is based on the GST and the systems thinking perspective where interaction and

dialogue are of the essence. Specifically CAS theory is of importance as this introduces a new type of leadership logic to leadership theory and understanding. In this view, leadership is understood as an emergent process rather than a person and the interrelationships between leaders and their environments are stressed.

An existential worldview was adopted in this study as this highly values the relationship between leader and follower. In an existentialist worldview, the problem of being must take precedence over that of knowledge in philosophical investigations. Existential communication indicates a special relationship, as well as interdependency between a leader and his/her followers. This relationship is characterised by openness and dialogue and corresponds with the philosophical foundation of the study in which an interpretivist epistemology and constructionist ontology were adopted. The interpretivist and constructionist paradigm, which portrays the world as socially constructed, complex, and ever changing, was thus the most appropriate paradigm to apply in this study.

Interpretivism as a perspective is interested in discovering and understanding what the organisational experiences of organisational members are, as well as understanding how they interpret these experiences. Interpretivists claim a close connection between communication and social reality, which has profoundly impacted organisational communication. This perspective is enhanced by constructionism, which is a dynamic social process with a primary emphasis on interaction and discourse as the means through which the self and the world are articulated. Social constructionism also realises the fundamental role of language and communication and views leadership as co-constructed and negotiated on a continuing basis. The importance of co-creation of meaning in open relationships where two-way communication is employed is therefore of the essence. These aspects featured prominently in this study.

Research has indicated that leadership across the world is in need of improvement. Leaders are held accountable for the success of their organisations and it is also clear from the literature that not much attention is paid to leadership communication, while serious problems with leadership communication are indicated. The integrated approach to communication, where different aspects of communication are combined in one strategy, is also regarded as essential for effective leadership communication. While literature on leadership is rife, much less literature is available on leadership communication, which indicates that the role of communication in the leadership process is often not acknowledged and that communication is taken for granted.

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