THE INFLUENCE OF INFORMAL GROUP'S ON MANAGEMENT IN SELECTED ORGANISATIONS.

by

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the performance of duties. The groups can also dominate and dictate terms to others and are a potential for conflict in the organisation.

The researcher recommends that management or leadership in organisations should be proactive by pre-empting and identifying possible informal groups and deal with them by formulating and creating structures and systems to regulate, manage, control, monitor and evaluate personnel, resources and activities. In addition, management should be transparent, involve all members fairly and channel the energies of informal groups in a positive direction, for continuous capacity building. Management should further on a continuous basis remind members on the latest developments regarding various procedures, code of conduct, the necessity and consequences of non-compliance to organisational policies, principles and procedures.

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CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION

1.1 Introduction

The study was meant to investigate the influence of informal groups in the management and leadership of organisations. Various examples of informal groups are cited as, cabals, cliques or coalitions. Secondary research by the researcher revealed that informal structures have common characteristics, usually very influential and powerful, and are often effective entities in organisation (Luthans, 2005: 445). Therefore this study attempted to determine the experiences and perceptions of organisational members who are affected by informal groups' influence on the management or leadership of organisation. The study was based on the research questions formulated, which were informed by the main objectives of the study.

The significance of the study is to add to the existing body of knowledge and to provide managers and leaders of organisations with additional information on the nature and influence of informal structures. The findings would also reveal how managers and leaders could integrate and manage informal groups efficiently and effectively in the organisations.

A qualitative method was used in the study to establish the responses to research questions. This research approach was chosen because it usually focuses on phenomena that occur in natural settings, in other words in real life context (Leedy and Ormond, 2005: 342). The research design for the

study was a case study, based on four organisations, in the North West towns of Mafikeng and Vryburg.

1.2 Background

An organisation is a group of people brought together for a special purpose; it is a social entity. All people in the organisation will therefore be concerned and involved with change in order to achieve the prescribed purpose (Daft, 2001: 129). It is in this interaction of people that formal and informal groups are formed. According to Luthans (2005: 443), organisations are composed of individuals and coalitions that compete for resources, energy, information and influence. They seek to protect their interest through means that are unobtrusive when compared to existing controls, norms and sanctions.

Formal groups such as working committees, teams and informal groups like cliques or cabals are formed because people realise that they might have common goals that they can achieve through dependence on each other. Whatever is done in an organisation, in whatever position, it is difficult to avoid being involved with a small group (Daft, 2001: 130).

Secondary research by the author revealed that groups in organisational structures refer to informal groups and also encapsulate informal structures. The researcher therefore has decided to use the concepts inter-changeably to be similar within the contexts of this study. The role of informal groups commonly referred to as cliques or cabals and the influence they have on the management function and leadership of an organisation has been a subject of

serious debate in many organisations. The purpose of this study was therefore to learn and determine from those affected and their perceptions about the influence and the impact that cliques or cabals had in an organisation's management and leadership functions.

Cliques, cabals or coalitions, which are all forms of informal structures, emerge naturally in organisation in response to the common interest of practical group members. Luthans (2005: 445) identifies common characteristics of these structures as:

- Interacting group of individuals;
- Deliberately constructed by the members for a specific purpose;
- Independent of the formal internal structure;
- Lacking a formal internal structure;
- Mutual perception of membership;
- Issue-oriented to advance the purpose of the members;
- Concerted member action, act as a group.

Various perceptions exist about the presence of small informal groups, coalitions and cliques which are usually very powerful and often effective entities in organisations (Luthans, ibid). The negative sentiments are that cliques are detrimental to organisational functioning while positive sentiments indicate that cliques or cabals make formal organisations more effective by protecting the interest of such organisations. Irrespective of these perceptions, top management in particular and even middle to line managers in many organisations, continue to use and are part of cliques and cabals. It is this practice that has motivated research on the impact of these

groups. It is actually a common practice nowadays in most political, labour and social organisations to find people belonging to cliques or cabals.

Groups are very important components of any organisation. They serve as impetus to development similar to any real life situation. Informal groups are formed for political, friendship, or common interest reasons. For political purposes, an informal group may be formed to get its share of the political rewards. Friendship groups may be formed in the organisation or workplace and continue outside the workplace. Common interest in sports or ways to combat management can also bind members into an informal group (Luthans, ibid).

Managers need to understand the manner, reason and the development of informal structures. This knowledge and understanding will enhance effectiveness of managers to deal with these structures without compromising their independent in decision-making in the organisation.

1.3 Statement of the problem

It is common to hear that decisions taken by managers or leadership in organisations are not inclusively informed or addressing the sentiments of all members on the organisation, but rather most of the decisions and direction taken come from or are influenced by a group within the organisation which the leadership agree with.

There are managers in organisations who seem to rely on informal groups (cabals or cliques) to manage such organisations. The study sought to

determine from people affected by informal group's operations in organisations, what their experiences and perceptions were about the influence, if any, which informal groups had on management functions.

The main purpose of the study was to establish whether the existence of informal structures in an organisation had any influence in management activities and whether informal groups affect or influence how things are done in an organisation.

1.4 Research questions

The following research questions:

1.4.1. Does the existence of informal groups in the organisation influence the performance of management?

1.4.2. Are informal groups/ structures in the organisation there to serve the interest of management or that of themselves?

1.4.3. Are informal groups difficult to manage and lead?

1.4.4. Do they have a detrimental or positive influence to the organisation's management?

1.4.5. Do managers manage effectively with or without informal groups?

1.4.6. Do members or employees in the organisation rely on informal structures for support?

1.4.7. Are informal groups detrimental or not to the functionality and culture of the organisation?

1.5 Objectives of the study

The main objectives of the study were the following:

1.5.1. To investigate whether informal groups or cabals have any influence on the management of an organisation.

1.5.2. To establish whether these structures are or could be detrimental or beneficial to the organisation.

1.5.3. To determine the type of challenges that informal groups pose to the management of organisations.

1.5.4. To establish how managers succeed or fail to deal with cabals or cliques in organisations.

1.5.5. To investigate what perceptions people have on informal structures, particularly those who are or were affected by informal groups' operations and influence in organisations.

1.6 Importance of the research

Managers and leaders are usually entrusted with accountability and final decision making within their organisations. Accountability and decisions are supplemented by various organisational variables such as structures, personality, technology and interpersonal relationships. However, in different meetings and conferences there are always an outcry about the

existence and influence of these informal groups but yet they continue to exist. Informal structures are said to emerge naturally in organisations in response to the common interest of a particular group members (Mullins, 1999: 459).

It is important to understand the nature and influence of these structures so that managers could integrate them purposefully and manage them effectively within organisations. It is therefore significant to establish what the perceptions of informal group members are about these structures and how they could be efficiently and effectively used or prevented to the benefit of the organisations.

The knowledge and understanding of informal structure development will enhance effectiveness in managing, monitoring and involving them productively in the activities of organisations.

1.7 Research design

1.7.1 Research Method

In this study qualitative methods were used to elicit responses to research questions. The qualitative research approach usually focuses on phenomena that occur in natural settings, in other words in real life context (Leedy and Ormond, 2005: 133). It is defined as a systematic, empirical strategy for answering questions about people in a particular social context, and also as a means for describing and attempting to understand the observed regularities

in what people do or in what they report as their experience (Locke, Spirduso and Silverman, 2000: 214).

In most qualitative studies, the central problems are to identify how people interact with their world in what they do and then to determine how they experience and understand that world. In other words how they feel, what they believe and how they explain the relationship within the segment of their existence. The respondents in this study were expected to express their experiences and frustrations, if any, with regard to the influence of informal structures in their organisational environment (Leedy and Ormond, 2005: 133).

The qualitative research method was preferred in this study because the researcher intended to describe and reveal the nature of certain situations, settings, processes, relationships or people. The researcher would be able to gain new insights about a particular issue or phenomenon and discover the problems that exist within the phenomenon as argued by Leedy and Ormond (ibid). The researcher was able to ask general and relatively open-ended questions about the phenomenon studied. This resulted in the researcher gaining an increasing understanding of how informal groups operate and exercise their influence in the organisation.

The qualitative method was used because the interviews with respondents were to be relatively open. The respondents were expected to explain, describe and be spontaneous in their response. The approach assisted the researcher to elicit the perceptions of the respondent about the research problem.

In this approach researchers strive for objectivity in a quest to establish the ultimate truth. However, some researchers argue that there is not necessarily a single, ultimate truth to be discovered. Instead, there may be multiple perspectives held by different individuals, with each of these perspectives having equal validity or truth (Leedy and Ormond, ibid).

1.7.2 Design

The research design chosen for this study was case study based on four selected organisations, namely: Mafikeng Municipality, Naledi Municipality (Vryburg), the ANC Vryburg Branch, and the Quality Assurance Chief Directorate, in the Department of Education, North West Province.

1.7.3 Rationale for selected organisations

The aim of the study was to establish whether informal structures existing in organisations had any influence in management activities and to put forward practical and usable recommendation towards solutions to those challenges, but not to present an expose of problems encountered by the above mentioned organisations. The Mafikeng Municipality has frequently experienced changed leadership with regard to the mayor and the town managers in a period of 10 years from 1996 to 2006. Cases of mismanagement, leadership crisis and political interference orchestrated by certain groupings within the municipality were cited as probable causes of this situation.

The Naledi Municipality at Vryburg has been and is still going through a leadership crisis, particularly between the council and the town manager. The crisis spilled over to the workers, resulting in the workers union holding protest marches and some of the councillors are being investigated for corruption. This tension is also attributed to the existence of groupings trying to establish for dominance and survival in the council.

Problems in the ANC Vryburg Branch relate closely to that of the council, because certain members of the council are members of the branch, and positions in the council are decided at the branch. There is serious tension within and between members from different structures of the branch of the organisation. Reports indicate that houses of certain members were petrol bombed by members of the same organisations, which led to others being suspended from the organisation (Stellarlander, 14/09/05, p1,3). Informal groups within the organisation are said to be the cause of the tension.

The Quality Assurance Chief Directorate is located in the Department of Education, North West Province. The Unit is based at Head office, Mafikeng and members are recruited from all over the province. They are expected to relocate, settle and operate in Mafikeng. At some point the management agreed to allow members to operate from their regional bases, but that decision was later rescinded. It emerged from interaction with members by the researcher that certain informal groups influenced management to change the arrangement, which created a subtle tension and mistrust among members.

1.7.4 Data collection

An interview schedule with structured open-ended questions was prepared based on the research questions and objectives. A dictaphone was used to record the interview to allow for retention of facts and issues as well as in-depth analysis.

1.8 Scope of the study

Informal groups are not sanctioned structures within the organisations, therefore people will not willingly associate themselves with such structures. It was anticipated that some may be reluctant to discuss the subject of the study, while others could regard it as sensitive. The sampling was expected to consist of the first ten respondents from each organisation prepared to participate. The study would therefore concentrate on those that have been affected and have a certain understanding and perceptions about informal groups. Due to this dynamic nature of the situation, the population was relatively small and so was the sample.

It is evident that due to this limited scope of the study, the researcher cannot, with any degree of scientific certainty, generalise the results to other organisations in the North West province, nor to the rest of the country.

1.9 Plan of the study

Chapter one of the study presents the important aspects of the whole study the introduction, background, the problem statement, research questions, and

objectives, importance of the research, the methodology which includes sources, population, measuring instruments, date collection and analysis.

Chapter two reflects the base theory on broader issues pertaining to the study. Chapter three focuses on issues from the literature review on chapter two, and narrow the discussion towards the research questions and statement of the problem. The purpose is to reflect the value and importance of the study. Chapter four concentrate on the problem statement and objectives of the study, and the literature, which suggest and clarify the possibility of such a problem to surface and prevail in organisations.

Chapter five focuses on the research design and methodology used in the study, and the justification of using qualitative research. Chapter six provides the description of the respondents, the data collected and analysed, as well as the summary of the findings. Chapter seven presents the summary of the main findings and relates it to theory, the conclusion is based on the findings, and the implications derived from the conclusions, recommendations are based on the findings, conclusions and implications are also stated.

1.10 Conclusion

Within the formal structures of the organisation there will always be informal structures. The existence of informal groups in organisations is a reality and their influence on management is an issue to be investigated. The next chapter focuses on the base theory and the critical review of various

theories on organisational design, the nature, meaning and the importance of groups. The theories are on the group dynamics, which include formal and informal groups, roles in formal groups as well as reasons why people join cabals and cliques as informal groups.

The literature review highlights some of the tactics used by informal groups in manipulating and exercising influence in the organisations. The broader literature is provided within the context of groups in chapter two and is narrowed down and focused towards the research questions and the problem statement in chapter three.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

2.1 Introduction

Groups are an important factor of organisational life in that the entire organisation and its sub- units are made up of groups of people who must cooperate in order for work to be done. Formal and informal groups exist in organisations and have a particular role to play, therefore an understanding of the nature of groups is vital if managers and leaders are to influence the behaviour of people in the work or organisational situation. Managers and leaders must be aware of the impact of these groups: formal ones are created to achieve specific organisational objectives, while informal groups emerge naturally within the organisation and serve to satisfy psychological and social needs of its members (Mullins, 1999:560).

2.2 Organisational design

Every organisation is composed of a system of interrelated jobs. According to Wagner and Hollenbeck (2005: 374) the organisation structure comprises a network of interconnections and interdependencies among different people and tasks that make up an organisation. An organisational structure enables the people within it to work together, thereby accomplishing things beyond the abilities of unorganised individuals.

Organisations are designed in layer form there is senior, middle and lower management or the executive, national, regional and local leadership. The

determination of policy, decision-making, the exercise of authority and responsibility, and the execution of work are carried out by different people at different levels of seniority throughout the organisation structure. The design of an organisation is an exercise in matching structures, systems, styles of management and the people employed, to the various activities of the organisation. If there is a mismatch, then problems can arise (Mullins, 1999:566).

Traditionally, senior managers were entrusted with the responsibility of setting the strategic direction and objectives for the organisation while middle managers were expected to implement this strategy. The divide appears when middle manages complain that their seniors are solely concerned with short-term financial results, while senior management assure that the middle management devotes more effort to voicing problems than to finding solutions (Mullins, ibid). The divide, Mullins (ibid) argues, deepens as each level accuses the other of pursuing its own personal rather than organisational ends. Middle management accuses senior managers of being concerned with their own career advancement, while senior management accuse middle management of directing their efforts to protecting their positions.

2.3 Mixed forms of organisation structure

There are different forms of organisational structures, namely the organic and mechanistic structures. In an organic structure, groups of people are engaged in a set of broad functional activities while in a mechanistic structure groups tend to prefer and work within establishment rules, systems

and procedures. Other organisations are a mix of both mechanistic and organic structures. This is an uneasy mix which can lead to tension and conflict, for example, when one group prefers certain ways of how things should be done. The different perceptions of appropriate organisational styles and working methods present a particular challenge to management. There is a need for senior members of staff, in an appropriate position in the hierarchy and who have the respect of both groups, to act in a bridging role and to help establish harmony between them (Mullins, ibid).

2.4 Management and leadership

People are brought together in an organisation on the basis of defined roles. Once people are together, groups develop naturally and these are a major feature of organisational life. The organisation and its sub-units are made up of groups of people. Most activities in the organisation require at least some degree of co-ordination through the operation of group working. An understanding of the nature of groups is vital if the manager is to influence the behaviour of people in the work or organisational situation. The manager must be aware of the impact of groups and their effects on organisational performance (Mullins, ibid).

Therefore, the activities of individuals or groups cannot be separated from management and the process of leadership. The form of management and style of leadership adopted will influence the relationship between the group and the organisation and it is a major determinant of group cohesiveness. In other words, relationships and cohesiveness will be affected by the way and manner in which the manager gives guidance and encouragement to the

group, offers help and support, provides opportunities for participation, attempts to resolve conflict, and gives attention to both employee relations and task problems (Mullins, ibid).

Groups, therefore, assist in shaping the work pattern of organisations and the attitudes and behaviour of members to their jobs. The formation and operation of work groups and the behaviour of their members, has significance for the manager. Group forces are important not only in influencing the behaviour in individual work groups with regard to productivity, waste, absence and the like, they also affect the behaviour of the entire organisation (Mullins, ibid).

2.5 The nature of groups

Luthans (2005: 440) state that groups and group dynamics are like the weather which is something that nearly everyone talks about and only a few can do something about. The author argues that research, practice, and education about group dynamics are currently in a state of ferment. He further state that in the world of work, leaders encourage teamwork and support to empowering people and to establish an organisational culture that promotes total quality management. Each of these initiatives depends on understanding groups well and acting effectively with them.

2.6 Definition of a group

The term group can be defined in a number of different ways, depending on the perspective that is taken. There are different views on what group and

group dynamics mean. A comprehensive definition can be that if a group exist in an organisation, its members are motivated to join, perceive the group as a unified unit of interacting people and contribute, share and rely in the group successes (Luthans, ibid).

A group is constituted when two or more people come together and interact interdependently to achieve a common goal. Most of the definitions from various sources appear to have the following common characteristics: two or more people who are psychologically aware of each other and who interact to fulfil a common goal. These four basic conditions in the previous paragraph must be fulfilled to qualify a gathering or a collection of people as a group. Therefore a group is more than just a simple collection of people (Mullins, 1999: 451 and Bowditch and Buono, 2000: 243). Membership to a group implies that individuals accept conditions and abide by the rules of the group. The rules are clearly defined by values, attributes and behaviours (www. GROUP 1. com/ htm: 15/06/05).

2.7 The meaning and importance of groups

Groups are a characteristic of all social situations and almost everyone in an organisation will be a member of one or more groups. Groups are an essential feature on how people relate and work in organisations. Individuals seldom work in isolation from others and to realise the objectives of the organisation, members of a group must co-operate in order to do the work efficiently and effectively. Managers will also work within these groups such as in commissions. People in groups influence each other in many ways in that group pressures can have a major influence on the behaviour of

individual members and their work performance. The activities of the group are associated with the process of leadership, and the style of leadership adopted by the manager has an importance influence on the behaviour of members of the group (Mullins, 1999: 451).

There are five basic distinctions that are identified in the literature about groups and these are: (i) Primary and secondary (ii) Formal and informal (iii) Heterogeneous and homogenous (iv) Interacting and nominal and (v) Temporary and permanent. In this study the literature reviewed was confined to formal and informal groups, which in other literature encapsulate formal and informal structures.

There are different functions in an organization that groups can provide such as creating a motivating environment for members or employees and increasing communication among group members. Groups provide a platform for social behaviour, adding social dimension to the work environment like playing games, discussing peripherals like soccer, boxing and social rituals. They are a support system particularly in challenging the work environment where teamwork is critical, like in the police and emergency work. they also provide a platform for individual affirmation.

2.8 Group dynamics

According to Luthans (2005: 441), group dynamics is about how a group should be organised and conducted. Another view of group dynamics is that it consists of a set of techniques, like role playing, focus groups, team building and leaderless groups. Group dynamics is viewed from the

perspective of the internal nature of groups, how they form their structure and processes, as well as how they function and affect individual members, other groups, and the organisation. Group dynamics is the study of patterns of interaction among members as a group develop and achieve its set goals. Wagner and Hollenbeck (2005: 251) state that group membership says a great deal about who the group really is and in some cases membership is granted very selectively.

Groups have values, beliefs and attitudes attached to them. Different groups represent and reflect different values and needs in its members (Hunt, 1974: 91). In many groups individuals lose their individuality to adopt the group mentality. There are certain issues, which cannot be questioned. In political organisations there are those usually referred to as extremists, or the rightwing or leftwing or even populists. Members of small groups are expected to abide by a particular sentiment within an organisation, i.e. privatisation, education for all and foreign policy. The groups will always express a strong sentiment over a particular issue within a larger organisation (www. GROUP 1. com/ htm: 15/06/05).

A group's ability to be effective always depends, among other things, on its internal group process. This is the way members work together to transform resource inputs into group outputs. Among other things, it includes how well members communicate, make decisions and handle conflicts as they interact. In this sense, effective groups excel at teamwork, defined earlier as the process of people working together in groups to accomplish common goals. They also have positive group dynamics, which are forces operating in groups that affect task performance and membership satisfaction. When

teamwork breaks down and group dynamics fail in any way, group effectiveness is compromised (Schermerhorn, 1996: 210).

There is a theory that the existence of formal and informal groups in an organisation results in an individual cooperation dilemma and consequently there is always a potential for conflict (Hunt, 1974: 15). Members of a particular group can even use the platform created by the small group to express hatred of other groups. Group members are expected to conform to group's norms, because this gives order to group activities. Individual members trust each other and know what to expect from one another, this results in a more effective group performance. Both formal and informal groups exhibit the same general characteristic (Donnelly, et al, 1998: 415).

Knowledge of smaller-group dynamics is essential to managers because the ability to analyse the interactions and relationship in an organisation is important, because it provides managers with an indication of the level of satisfaction, cohesiveness and cooperation among members and groups. Predictable stages and patterns of behaviour will emerge (Napier, 1981: 306). The dynamics of how decisions are taken, or the ways in which a group decides what issues it will deal with reflects concerns about group process. Thus, the emphasis is not on what the group is doing, but rather on how the group is doing it (Schultz, 2003: 321).

2.9 Formal groups

People are brought together on the basis of defined roles within the structures of the organisation, and formal groups are formed deliberately by management to facilitate the achievement of organisational goals. Examples

of these groups are committees and teams. Mullins (1999: 459) argues that formal groups are used as organising, controlling and communicating devices when well managed. They are therefore the most important tools in the proper functioning of an organisation and are formed to perform certain functions within the organisation.

Formal groups have role players, for example in a committee, there will be a chairperson and a secretary. In teams there will be team leaders, scriber and timekeeper. Roles in a group are positions that are attached to expected behaviour like "who does what" and "who can tell others what to do" (Wagner and Hollenbeck, 2005: 257).

2.10 Informal structures

Within the formal structure of the organisation there will always be an informal structure (Mullins, 1999: 459). Schermerhorn (1996: 231), state that behind every formal structure typically lies an informal structure which is a set of unofficial working relationships among organisational members. Whereas the formal structure officially designates who report to whom, the informal structure is based upon who actually talks to whom and interacts regularly. Informal groups are based more on personal relationships and agreement of group members than on defined role relationships. They serve to satisfy psychological and social needs not related necessarily to the tasks to be undertaken (Mullins, 1999: 459).

Informal groups emerge naturally as a result of common interest as people interact, they are based on interpersonal relationships in the organisation, but not based on defined role relationship (Mullins, ibid). Unlike formal groups, informal groups are not deliberately or officially formed by the organisation, they have implied or implicit goals which are frequently interpersonal in nature. They are basically interest or friendship groups. They provide the need for association where members can easily and confidently express their social satisfaction and status. Informal groups can be effectively used but they can also be damaging to the organisation (Donnelly et al., 1998: 346).

Homans (2000), defined the evolution of informal groups, defined them as evolving from sentiments, interactions and activities of formal groups. Their existence is to be a forum for propagating and gaining support for certain views (Principles of Management Course Objectives. \MGMT 9/08/05).
According to Laurie (1999: 459), informal groups' membership can cut across the formal structure. They may comprise of individuals from different parts or levels of the organisation. An informal group could also be the same as the formal group, or it might comprise a part of the formal group.

On the negative side, the unofficial and informal structures may work against the best interests of an organisation as a whole. They can be susceptible to rumour, breed resistance to change and even divert effort from important objectives. People left out of informal groupings, that is, the outsiders, may feel less a part of the daily activities and become dissatisfied with their work. In most cases they have a powerful influence on the organisation's operations, both for the good of the organisation or to its detriment. Informal groups, for example, can set standards high or low that

govern the amount of work its members will accomplish, despite formal policies and standards set by management (Bowditch and Buono, 2000: 221).

The influence of an informal group lies in its ability to move its members in the direction of a common purpose. It is this influence, power and vigorous debate in them that forces top managers to align with them (www. GROUP 1. com/ htm: 15/06/05). Zwelinzima Vavi the general secretary of the Congress of South African Trade Union (COSATU) in his address during the National Congress of the federal allied workers union (FAWU), stated that where there are cliques and cabals and back stabbing, there can be no constructive debate and criticism (Vavi, 1997).

2.10.1 Hidden agendas

Informal structures, particularly cliques and cabals are characterised by hidden agendas and people can be inhibited from openly expressing their thoughts and feelings. Schultz et al, (2003: 244) state that hidden agendas include rivalries, distrust, ambitions and critical attitudes, the author argues that progressive members of the organisation require a set of attitudes and behaviours that include a willingness to conform to all decisions made by the team, to co-operate with other organisational members without unnecessary conflict, to contribute their talents without holding back for selfish reasons and to collaborate with others in the team.

Where informal groups exist there is potential for inter-group conflict because of hidden agendas, Bowditch and Buono (2000: 157) state that intergroup conflict refers to the

disagreement or differences between the members or representative of two or more groups over authority, goals, territory, resources, or values. They further argue that conflict can occur for a variety of reasons such as dispute over roles, scarcity of resources, structures, diversity and interpersonal relationship, power and positions. In the case of football in 1998, the South African Football Association (SAFA) was confronted by many problems at the time when South Africa qualified for the World Cup in France. SAFA went through a crisis that led to its administration being overhauled and the chairperson then, Mr Solomon Morewa resigned. At the centre of the controversy for the power struggle were small groups or cabals known as the A team and B team led by individuals in the top management of SAFA. The minister had to intervene by appointing the Pickard Commission to resolve the matter. The development indicated that the source of the problem in soccer was running the game by cliques (Maliti, 1998).

Managers and leaders should be very sensitive to cabals once formed and harness their goodwill and cooperation and make use of their leadership to achieve the formal organisation aims (www. teambuilding - informal group dynamics.htm: 15/06/05).

2.10.2 Cabals/cliques

People join informal groups for a number of reasons, including attraction to a group's goals, because they are attracted by similarity in attitudes, beliefs and opinions, like extremist, rightwing, leftist, self-enrichment, status and power. Usually they join to satisfy the need to be affirmed, to belong, and be seen to agree with certain individuals (Bowditch and Buono, 2000: 158).

In many instances cabal activities may be rewarding, the group may be aiming high, the goal may be attractive, for example, securing business, political position, promotion, self-enrichment, protection of members' positions, power, access to opportunities and status (www. Principles of management Group processes. Htm: 9/08/05). For example, the South African Boxing Commission was accused of favouring some promoters when allocating television dates, just because people belonged to certain groups. Maliti (1998) states cabals running and controlling national sports federations, nepotism, sexism and ineffective administration are some of the challenges that need to be attended to for the country to have a normal sport code.

2.10.3 Power and politics

Power, politics and conflict in organisations can increase productivity and efficiency, or reduce it substantially. Political processes can even determine the existence and strategic direction of the entire organisation. Restructuring for example is often stimulated by an internal power struggle (Wagner and Hollenbeck, 2005: 344). Power and politics are powerful forces that informal structures usually use as tools to achieve their objectives. The presence of organisational politics in any institution leads to the play of power and influence in an organisation. Politics has a tendency to arise most often when people in the organisation compete for scares resources or when important decisions are about to be made that affect the work, status, power and positions of individuals or groups (Schermerhorn, 1996: 268).

Although political behaviour can be disruptive, it is not necessarily bad because it keeps the organisation on alert and enhances communication. But because politics has a negative connotation, political behaviour is seldom discussed openly in organisations. Wagner and Hollenbeck (ibid) argue that managers and organisational members or employees may even deny that politics influence organisational activities.

2.10.4 Political tactics

Wagner and Hollebeck (ibid) define politics as activities in which individuals or groups engage to acquire and use power to advance their own interests. Political tactics applied in organisations by individuals or groups are described as playing "games". The games are described or played in various ways, for example, the "insurgency game" involves ploys and deceit in resisting directives from the higher authority. Lower-level personnel, for example, may conveniently lose an important directive or a new policy statement and thus fail to pass it on to their subordinates. The "counter-insurgency game", by contrast, involves gathering of unofficial information from various sources to confirm or disconfirm one's suspicion about the behaviour of others or their plans. The "sponsorship game" involves one person associating himself or herself or personal preferences to another person of greater power and then using that relationship to influence others.

The "whistle blowing game" is the most controversial because it has the potential to force change in an organisation. This can be done when a person or a group exposes to the public some aspects of an organisation that may be controversial and seriously damaging as a result of the because of the

attention and pressure, the organisation may be more susceptible to change under the circumstances (Schermerhorn, 1996: 269). On the other hand, organisational politics can be used toward the protection of individuals or groups.

Various ways and means are employed by individuals and groups to avoid taking accountability of their actions or protect themselves. The strategies include "passing the buck", and "scapegoat," where others, often less powerful people, are conveniently blamed when things go wrong. The flip side of this strategy is "taking the credit" when things go well, and downgrading or neglecting the contribution of others who made it possible (Schermerhorn. ibid).

2.11 Conclusion

This chapter has revealed that the entire organisation and its sub-units are made up of groups of people, and groups are an important factor of organisational life. Most activities of the organisation require at least some form of co-ordination through the operation of group working. An understanding of the nature of groups is vital if the manager is to influence the behaviour of people in the work situation. The manager must be aware of the impact of groups, how formal ones are created to achieve specific organisational objectives, while informal ones emerge naturally and serve to satisfy psychological and social needs of members.

The next chapter reflcts the specific theory related to the problem of the study, for example, if groups are in a situation where they compete for

resources, status or approval, inter-group rivalry is inevitable. The theory indicates that the presence of organisational politics in any institution leads to the play of power and influence in the organisational setup. The power oriented behaviour uses unofficial means to try to influence other people in a manner favourable to one's personal interest.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE SURVEY

3.1. Introduction

Groups are a characteristic of all social situations and almost members in an organisation will be a member of one or more groups. Groups are an essential feature on how people relate and work in organisations. Individuals seldom work in isolation from others and to realise the objectives of the organisation, members of a group must co-operate in order to do the work efficiently and effectively. What this study intend to establish was whether these structures were or could be detrimental or beneficial to the organisation.

People in groups influence each other in many ways and group pressure can have a major influence on the behaviour of individual members and their work performance. The activities of the group are associated with the process and style of leadership and management adopted by the manager as this has an importance influence on the behaviour of members of the group (Mullins, 1999: 451).

One of the issues that the researcher wanted to highlight was whether managers succeed in using these groups effectively to the benefit of the organisations. There is a theory that the existence of formal and informal groups in an organisation results in an individual cooperation dilemma, and consequently there is always a potential for conflict (Hunt, 1974:15). Members of a particular group can even use the platform created by the

small group to express hatred of certain other groups. Group members are expected to conform to group norms. Conformity gives order to group activities and individual members trust each other and know what to expect from one another, and thus result in a more effective group performance.

What the study tried to determine was whether managers found informal groups a serious challenge to manage and lead in these circumstances. Both formal and informal groups exhibit the same general characteristic (Donnelly at al, 1998: 415). The literature reviewed for this study revealed that membership of teams and groups shape an individual's perception and participation in organisational change and that groups play a key role in the process of planned organisational change. The change process typically involves groups in the organisation's hierarchy responding to the change agenda and adapting to it in terms of its tasks and processes (Mullins, 1999: 499).

Groups, therefore, help shape the work pattern of organisations and the attitudes and behaviour of members towards their jobs. The formation and operation of work groups as well as the behaviour of their members is important to managers. Group forces are important not only in influencing the behaviour in individual work groups with regard to aspects such as productivity, waste and absence, they also affect the behaviour of the entire organisation (Mullins, ibid).

3.2 Organisational factors

In any organisational structure, certain formal relationships between individual positions will arise from the defined pattern of responsibilities, which are designed in layer form. These individual authority relationships may be identified as, line, functional, staff or lateral. The design of an organisational structure in terms of the principle of line, staff or lateral, determines the pattern of role relationships and interactions with other roles. However, the operation of the organisation and working arrangement will be influenced by the style of management, the personalities of members and the informal organisation.

Mullins (1999: 537) state that the determination of policy and decision making, the exercise of authority and responsibility as well as the execution of work are carried out by different people at different levels of seniority throughout the organisation structure. It is possible to look at organisations in terms of three interrelated levels in the hierarchical structure, namely, the technical level, the managerial level and the community level. The last two levels are often referred to as middle management and senior management.

According to Mullins (ibid) the relationship between people and the organisation is reciprocal, that is, people modify the working of the formal organisation, but their behaviour is also influenced by it. The method of work organisation can determine how people relate to one another, which may affect both their productivity and morale. Managers, therefore, need to be conscious of the ways in which methods of work organisation may influence people's attitude and action.

In the past it was the responsibility of senior managers to provide strategic direction and objectives for the organisation, while middle managers were expected to implement them. Senior managers as strategists are more results oriented while and middle managers are concerned with the processes and resources to be used to achieve the organisational objectives. Mullins, (ibid) argues that conflict appears when both levels of management, senior and middle complain and counter accuse each other for not performing as expected. The author state that the divide deepens as each accuses the other of pursuing its own personal rather than organisational ends. senior management is accused of being concerned with their own career advancement, while middle management is accused of directing their efforts to protecting their positions.

3.2.1 Kinds of groups

There are two major categories of groups, namely formal and informal groups, formal groups are formed deliberately by management to facilitate the achievement of organisational goals while informal groups emerge naturally as a result of common interest as people interact. According to Mullins (1999: 459), groups are formed as a consequence of the pattern of organisation structure and arrangement for the division of work. The author also state that groups may also develop when a number of people of the same level or status within the organisation see themselves as a group. They are deliberately planned and created by management as part of the formal organisation structure. Mullins (ibid) further argues that groups however will also arise from the social processes, which constitute the informal organisation. The informal organisation develops from interaction of people

working within the organisation and form groups with their own norms of behaviour, irrespective of those defined within the formal structure.

3.2.2 Group development stages

In most organisations, choices between functional and work flow grouping are made by managers who must decide whether efficiency or adaptability should be given a higher priority. Group formation is, therefore, a process of determining the formal established characteristics of groups. What follows thereafter is group development, which allows informal aspects of the groups to emerge (Wagner and Hollenbeck, 2005: 255).

As groups develop, members modify formally prescribed group tasks, clarify personal roles and negotiate group norms. Studies have indicated that these developmental processes tend to advance through four stages. Wagner and Hollenbeck (2005: 255) describe the stages as follows: First stage: Initiation. Second stage: Differentiation, Third stage: Integration and Fourth stage: Maturity. Mullins (1999: 465) describes them as first stage; Forming, Second stage: Storming, Third stage: Norming and Fourth stage: Performing. Both concepts in each stage describe the same processes which groups go through in development.

Stage 1: Initiation or Forming: this is the initial formation of a group and bringing together of a number of individuals, who focus first on getting to know each other's personal views and ability. This stage is characterized by uncertainty and anxiety.

Stage 2: Storming or Differentiation: As members of the group get to know each other better they will put forward their views more openly and forcefully. Conflicts may erupt as members try to reach agreements on the purpose, goal, and objectives of the group. The storming stage is important because, if successful, there will be discussions and arrangements for the working of the group. Differentiation creates a structure of roles and norms that allows the group to accomplish missions that its members could not achieve by working alone.

Stage 3: Integration or Norming: After going through storming and differentiation, members then focus on re-establishing and reaching a consensus about the central purpose of the group.

Stage 4: Maturity or performing: At this stage group members have created structure and cohesiveness to work effectively as a team. Members can fulfil their roles and work towards attaining their group goals.

3.3 Inter-group dynamics

Strong, cohesive groups may develop a critical or even hostile attitude towards people outside the group or members of other groups. This is common when group cohesiveness is based on status, qualifications, technical expertise or professional standing. Group cohesiveness may result in lack of co-operation with, or opposition to, non-members. As a result, resentment and inter-group conflict may arise to the detriment of the organisation as a whole (Mullins, 1999: 467).

Groups can provide a pooling of resources and bring together a range of complementary knowledge and expertise. According to Mullins (ibid), interaction among members can have a 'snowball' effect and provoke future thoughts and ideas in the minds of others. It is, however, difficult to draw any firm conclusions from a comparison between individual and group performance. An example of this can be seen from decision-making. Certain groups, such as committees, may be concerned more specifically with decision-making, but all groups must make some decisions. Group decision-making can be costly and time-consuming, but would appear to offer a number of advantages.

Group interaction and participation lead to the evaluation and correction of possible decisions because members provide a different point of view. Any decisions after full group participation will have the acceptance of most members and they are more likely to be committed to decisions made and their implementation. On the other hand, inter-group rivalry may be deliberately encouraged as a means of building stronger within-group cohesiveness. The idea is that a competitive element may help to promote unity within a group. However, inter-group rivalry and competition need to be carefully handled by managers.

In order to help prevent, or overcome, unconstructive inter-group conflict, a manager should attempt to stimulate a high level of communication and interaction between the groups and to maintain harmony. Rotation of members among different groups should be encouraged. Groups should not normally be put in a situation where they have to compete for resources, status or approval. The manager should attempt to avoid the development of

'win –lose' situations. Emphasis should be placed on the overall objectives of the organisation and on super-ordinate goals. These are goals over and above the issues at conflict and which, if they are to be achieved, require the co-operation of the competing groups (Mullins, ibid).

3.4 Bases of inter-group action

Mullins (ibid) argues that social interaction is a natural feature of human behaviour but ensuring harmonious working relationships and effective teamwork is not an easy task. The author further state that managers and leaders' main concern is that members of the organisations co-operate in order to achieve the expected results.

Although there are potential disadvantages of cohesive groups, they may result in greater interaction between members, mutual help and social satisfaction, lower turnover and absenteeism often resulting in higher production. Co-operation among members is likely to grow in a united, cohesive group. Membership of a cohesive group can be a rewarding experience for the individual, can contribute to the promotion of morale as well as aid the release of creativity and energy. Members of a high morale group are more likely to think of themselves as a group and work together effectively. Strong and cohesive groups can, therefore have beneficial effects for the organisation (Mullins, ibid).

In order to develop the effectiveness of work groups, managers should be concerned with those factors that contribute to group cohesiveness, or that may cause frustration or disruption to the operation of the groups. The

managers need to consider, therefore, both the needs of individual members of staff and promotion of a higher level of group identity and cohesion. One might expect, therefore, a higher standard of decision-making to result from group discussion. However, on the one hand, there is the danger of compromise and decisions being made in line with the 'highest common view'. On the other hand, there is the phenomenon of the so-called risky-shift, which implies shifting accountability to often less powerful people who could be conveniently blamed when things go wrong (Schermerhorn. 1996: 269).

3.5 Target organisations

The following organisations were identified for the purpose of the study, Mafikeng Municipality, Naledi Municipality (Vryburg), Quality Assurance Chief Directorate, and the ANC Vryburg Branch.

3.6 Rationale for selected organisation

The following discussion focuses on the justification for the selected organisation

3.6.1 Mafikeng Municipality

As indicated in Chapter One, the Mafikeng Municipality has frequently changed leadership of the mayors and the town managers in a period of ten years from 1996 to 2006. Cases of mismanagement, leadership crisis and political interference orchestrated by certain groupings within the municipality were cited as causes of this situation. What was of interest to

the study was whether the existence of informal groups in the organisation influences decision making.

The nature of the problems at the Mafikeng Municipality led to the perception that power and political tactics are at play within the organisation. Power and politics according to Wagner and Hollenbeck, (2005: 344), are powerful forces that informal structures usually use as tools to achieve their objectives. The presence of organisational politics in any institution leads to the exercising of power and influence in the organisational setup. The power-oriented behaviour uses unofficial means to try to influence other people in a manner favourable to one's personal interest. Similar to a conflict situation, politics has a tendency to arise most often when people in an organisation compete for scares resources or when important decisions are about to be made that affect the work, status, power and position of individuals or groups.

The study was meant to reveal from the nature of the conflict whether informal groups or structures that were said to be in conflict in the organisation were there to serve the interest of management or that of itself. Further the study intended to identify the perceptions of members of the organisation affected by the challenges within the environment.

3.6.2. Naledi Municipality (Vryburg)

The Naledi Municipality covers the area of greater Vryburg town, Huhudi and Coleridge townships. The researcher chose the municipality for this study because the instability in the municipality was covered broadly in the

radio and local newspapers. The tension as reported by then was between the council and the town manager. The crisis spilled over to the workers, resulting in the workers union holding protest marches and some of the councillors investigated for corruption. This tension was also attributed to the existence of groupings fighting for dominance and survival in the council.

The literature reviewed for this study showed that where informal groups persist there is a potential for inter-group conflict because of hidden agendas. Intergroup conflict refers to the disagreement or differences between the members or representatives of two or more groups over authority, goals, territory, resources, or values. Conflict can occur for a variety of reasons such as dispute over roles, scarcity of resources, structures, diversity, interpersonal relationships, power and positions (Bowditch and Buono, 2000). This study wants to establish whether this was applicable within the Naledi Municipality as well as to determine how managers succeeded or failed in dealing with cabals or cliques.

Groups have values, beliefs and attitudes attached to them as a result different groups represent and reflect different values and needs of its members (Hunt, 1974: 91). In many groups, individuals lose their individuality to adopt the group mentality and there are certain issues in groups which cannot be questioned. In political organisations there are those usually referred to as extremists, rightwing or leftwing, and even populists. Members of small groups are expected to align to a particular sentiment within an organisation, such as privatisation, education for all and foreign

policy. Groups will always express a strong sentiment over a particular issue within a larger organisation (www. GROUP 1.htm: 15/06/05).

3.6.3. The African National Congress (ANC) Vryburg branch

It was pointed out previously that problems in the ANC Vryburg Branch relate closely to that of the town council. There is serious tension within and between members from different structures of the branch of the organisation. Reports indicate that houses of certain members were petrol- bombed by members of the same organisations, which lead to others being suspended from the organisation (Stellalander, 14 September 2005). Informal groups within the organisation are said to be the cause of the tension.

The literature reviewed for the study indicates that the influence of an informal group lies in its ability to move its members in the direction of common purpose. It is this influence, power and vigorous debate in them that makes top managers to align with them (www. GROUP 1. htm: 15/06/05). The literature also revealed that where there are cliques and cabals and back stabbing, there can be no constructive debate and criticism (Vavi, 1997). The study was meant to investigate and confirm whether informal groups posed such challenges to the management of organisations and leadership as is surmised from the allegations and activities in the ANC Vryburg branch.

Further the study was to reveal from the nature of the conflict whether informal groups or structures that were said to be in conflict in the organisation, served the interest of leadership or the groups themselves.

3.6.4. Quality Assurance Chief Directorate

In the North West Province, Quality Assurance Chief Directorate employees are expected to relocate, settle and operate in the capital city Mafikeng as the base of the head office. The preceding discussion revealed that the management of the chief directorate agreed to allow members to operate from their regional bases, but that decision was later rescinded. This decision created tension and a belief that some people or a group had influenced management to come to that decision.

Mullins (1999: 451) states that people are brought together in an organisation on the basis of defined roles and once people are together, groups develop naturally. Groups are a major feature of organisational life and the organisation and its sub-units are made up of groups of people. Most activities of the organisation require at least some degree of co-ordination through the operation of group working. Mullins (ibid) argues that an understanding of the nature of groups is vital if the manager is to influence the behaviour of people in the work or organisational situation. The author believes that a manager must be aware of the impact of groups and their effects on organisational performance. In the case of Quality Assurance Chief Directorate it was believed that informal groups influenced management to change the arrangement which created a subtle tension and mistrust among members.

This study was prompted amongst others by Bowditch and Buono (2000: 334) when arguing that the unofficial and informal structures may work against the best interests of the organisation as a whole. Informal structures,

Bowditch and Buono (ibid) argue can be susceptible to rumour, breed resistance to change, and even divert efforts from important objectives. The author further state that people left out of informal groups, that is, (outsiders) may feel less a part of daily activities and become dissatisfied with their work. Informal groups, for example, can set standards high or low that govern the amount of work its members will accomplish, despite formal policies and standards set by management.

3.7 Conclusion

Where informal groups exist, there is a potential for inter-group conflict because of disagreement or differences between the members or representative of two or more groups. In the interim, some people may have experienced or have become victims of these differences. It is the perceptions of such people about the informal groups that the researcher intended to determine.

Knowledge of smaller-group dynamics is essential to managers. The ability to analyse the interactions and relationship in an organisation is important because it provides managers with an indication of the level of satisfaction, cohesiveness and cooperation among members and groups. Managers and leaders should be very sensitive to cabals once formed so as to harness their goodwill and cooperation through their leadership to achieve the formal aims of their organisations (www. teambuilding / informal group dynamics. htm: 15/06/05). The next chapter focuses on the specific problem and the objectives of the study.

CHAPTER 4

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND OBJECTIVES

4.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the explanation of problem statement as well as the objective of this study. It is lately common that both print and electronic media reveal organisations that are constantly experiencing managerial and leadership crisis, which is linked to various factors such as mismanagement and informal groups. The literature reviewed for this study showed that where informal groups persist there is a potential for inter-group conflict because of hidden agendas. Wagner and Hollenbeck (2005: 344) argues that power and politics are powerful forces that informal structures usually use as tools to achieve its objectives.

The study was meant to reveal from the nature of the conflict whether informal groups or structures that were said to be in conflict in the organisation were there to serve the interest of management or that of itself. Further the study intended to identify the perceptions of members of the organisation affected by the challenges within the environment and to establish whether the existence of informal structures in organisations had any influence in management activities and whether such groups affected or influenced operational aspects in organisations.

4.2 Statement of the problem

The study was motivated by the continued instability in different organisations the researcher had links with. The researcher is based in one of the organisations, which is the subject of the investigation and interacts closely with the other organisations. The nature of the events and proceedings in these organisations, which are posing a challenge like tension among colleagues, political interference, management and leadership crisis, triggered the interest in this study.

4.2.1 Quality Assurance Chief Directorate

In the North West Province, the Quality Assurance Chief Directorate of the Department of Education is based at the department's head office, Mafikeng. However, members are recruited from all over the province and they are expected to relocate, settle and operate in Mafikeng.

This study was partly prompted by an incident in which the management of the directorate agreed to allow members to operate from their regional bases, but later rescinded that decision. This created tension and created the impression that some people or a group had influenced management to make such a decision. The affected individuals began to club together and raised similar comments and issues over the matter. This is closely in accordance with what Daft (2000: 130) states that informal groups like cliques or cabals are formed, because people realise that they might have common goals that they can achieve through dependence on each other. Daft (ibid) further

argues that whatever is done in an organisation, in whatever position, it is difficult to avoid being involved with a small group.

This issue created a subtle tension and mistrust among members of the directorate because others alleged that certain informal groups influenced management to change the initial arrangement. Luthans (2005:445) states that various perceptions exist about the presence of small informal groups in organisations. The author argues that coalitions and cliques are usually very powerful and often effective entities in organisations. He further states that negative sentiments are that cliques are detrimental to organisational functioning, while positive sentiments indicate that cliques or cabals make formal organisations more effective by protecting the interest of the organisation.

In the chief directorate, members could not actively challenge the management as individuals to ascertain the validity of the case but rather opted to mobilise a group. Mullins (1999: 451) state that people in groups influence each other in many ways and group pressure can have a major influence over the behaviour of individual members and their work performance. The author further argues that the activities of the group are associated with the process of leadership and management, in addition the style of leadership adopted by the manager has an importance influence on the behaviour of members of the group.

4.2.2 African National Congress Vryburg Branch, Naledi and Mafikeng Municipality

The crisis in both the Vryburg ANC branch and the Naledi Municipality also motivated the study. The tension became evident during the selection of candidates for the 2006 local municipality elections. Differences within the organisation led to the suspension of certain members of the ANC leading to the disruption of the conference by a certain disgruntled group. Subsequently some councillors were seriously attacked and injured (stellalander, 14 September 2005).

The nature of the problems that occurred in the Vryburg ANC branch, the Naledi and Mafikeng Municipalities, led to the perception that power and political tactics were at play within these organisations. Wagner and Hollenbeck (2005: 344) define power and politics as powerful forces which informal structures usually use as tools to achieve their objectives. The presence of organisational politics in any institution leads to the use of power and influence in such organisations. The authors' further state that power-oriented behaviour uses unofficial means to try to influence other people in a manner favourable to one's personal interest. Similar to conflict situations, politics has a tendency to arise most often when people in the organisation compete for scarce resources or when important decisions are about to be made that affect the work, status, power and position of individuals or groups (Wagner and Hollenbeck, ibid).

4.3 Other problems

4.3.1. Inter-organisational conflict related to informal groups the Zuma scenario

The existence of formal and informal groups in an organisation results in an individual cooperation dilemma and consequently there is always a potential for conflict (Hunt, 1974:15). Members of a particular group can even use the platform created by the small group to express hatred of certain other groups. According to the Sunday Times (09/10/05), The former deputy president of South Africa Jacob Zuma's corruption scandal has plunged the ruling African National Congress into its biggest crisis in more than a decade in power, with leftists, trade unionists and members of the ANC's Youth League rallying to Zuma's side.

Group members are expected to conform to the group's norms since conformity gives order to group activities. Individual members trust each other and know what to expect from one another, and as such results in a more effective group performance. This study attempted to establish whether or not managers found informal groups a serious challenge to manage and lead. Donnelly et al (1998: 415) state that both formal and informal groups exhibit the same general characteristic

The literature reviewed for this study revealed that the influence of an informal group lies in its ability to move its members in the direction of a common purpose. It is this influence, power and vigorous debate in them that makes top managers to align with such groups (www. GROUP 1. htm : 15/06/05). The study investigated whether informal groups posed such

challenges to the management and leadership of the organisations as it was inferred from the allegations and activities in the selected organisations.

4.4 Leadership and management roles in organisations affected by informal groups

According to Mullins (1999: 451) people are brought together in an organisation on the basis of defined role and once people are together, groups develop naturally. Groups are a major feature of organisational life and organisations and its sub-units are made up individuals and groups. Most activities of the organisation require at least some degree of co-ordination through the operation of group working. Mullins (ibid) argues that an understanding of the nature of groups is vital if managers are to influence the behaviour of people in organisations, and managers must be aware of the impact of groups and their effects on the performance of their organisation.

Based on the Zuma example mentioned in the previous section some leaders of the ANC may find it challenging to rally support for the organisation in certain parts of the country as they may be seen as belonging to one or the other camp. The division may paralyze effective campaign efforts by ANC leaders in various areas, as the warring camps continue to challenge each other (City Press, 20 November 2005).

As discussed in the preceding chapters, in the past senior managers were entrusted with the responsibility of providing the strategic direction and objectives for the organisation, while middle managers were expected to

implement it. Therefore from the scenario discussed, the ANC national executive committee (NEC) agreed that Zuma would now be expected to take responsibility for silencing expressions of disunity and factionalism in the party, because disunity was obvious when Zuma's supporters sang derogatory songs about President Mbeki during the support rallies. The ANC NEC made public an agreement it had reached in September 2005 that leaders were expected to take a principled stance against factionalism, respect the rule of law, be at the forefront of the struggle against corruption and lead by example (SAPA. 25 November 2005).

4.5 Effectiveness of groups

Groups can provide a pooling of resources and can bring together a range of complementary knowledge and expertise. Mullins (ibid) states that interaction among members can have a 'snowball' effect and provoke future thoughts and ideas in the minds of others. Group interaction and participation leads to the evaluation and correction of possible decisions because members provide different point of views. Any decisions after full group participation will have the acceptance of most members and they are more likely to be committed to decisions made and the implementation thereof. (Mullins, ibid). Strong, cohesive groups may develop a critical or even hostile attitude towards people outside the group or members of other groups. This is common when group cohesiveness is based on common status, qualifications, technical expertise or professional standing. Group cohesiveness may result in a lack of co-operation with, or opposition to, non-members. As a result, resentment and inter-group conflict may arise to the detriment of the organization as a whole (Mullins, 1999: 467).

Emanating from the preceding statements, an example is the alleged rape case of the deputy president of the ANC, Jacob Zuma, The Sunday Sun (20/11/2005) columnist Jon Qwelane called the claim, a deliberate smear campaign and is a huge political conspiracy against Zuma, as was also purported by some members of the ANC's tripartite alliance with the Congress of SA Trade Unions and the SA Communist Party. They suspected the so called the Mbeki faction or cabal to be responsible.

The study will establish whether the existence of informal groups in the organisation influence the performance and decision making of management and leadership, because according to Bowditch & Buono (2000: 334), the unofficial and informal structures may work against the best interests of the organisation as a whole. They can be susceptible to rumour, breed resistance to change, and even divert efforts from important objectives. In most cases they have a powerful influence on the organisations operations, both for the good of the organization and to its detriment.

4.6 Objectives

The following objectives formulated for the purpose of the study, were derived from the problem statement and based on the theory supporting the problem.

4.6.1 The main and secondary objectives

The main objective of the study was to investigate and establish the perceptions people have about informal groups' how they function to exert influence in organisations.

The secondary objective was to establish whether or not informal groups or cabals can had any influence on the management of organisations and further to establish whether these structures (informal groups) were detrimental or beneficial to organisations.

The study was also meant to determine the type of challenges that informal groups pose to the management of organisations, and how managers succeeded or failed in dealing with cabals or cliques in organisations.

4.7 Research questions

The following research questions were formulated for this study to assist in establishing the nature of the problems informal groups pose in organisations:

4.7.1 Does the existence of informal groups in organisations influence the performance of management?

4.7.2 Are informal groups or structures in organisations there to serve the interest of management or that of themselves?

4.7.3 Are informal groups difficult to manage and lead?

4.7.4 Are informal groups detrimental or have a positive influence to organisation's management.

4.7.5. Are members or employees in organisations relying on informal structures for support in challenging or supporting management?

4.8 Conclusion

The preceding discussion reflected the statement of the problem, the aims and objectives of the study. The chapter highlighted the issues which the problem statement emanated from, and the theories from literature which indicated and clarified the possibility of such a problem to surface and prevail in organisations. The next chapter focused on the research design and methodology that were employed to investigate the problem in this study.

CHAPTER 5

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provided the theoretical framework directed to the problem and research questions. The broader literature was narrowed down to provide the essence and value towards the research questions. In this chapter the research design and methodology used in the study are discussed. The researcher interviewed five participants who were chosen randomly from each four of the case organisations. The total of twenty participants were sampled from different levels of the organisations to ensure that a balanced representative view that included management or leadership and ordinary members or workers. The justification of using the qualitative research, data collection and analysis as well as ethical and limitations of the study are discussed in this chapter.

5.2 Qualitative research

Denzin and Lincoln (1994:4) states that qualitative research is a generic term for investigative methodologies described as ethnographic, field, naturalistic, anthropological, or participant observer research. The author further states that the research approach emphasises the importance of looking at variables in the natural setting in which they are found. Interaction between variables is important and detailed data are gathered through open ended questions. This Denzin and Lincoln (ibid) argue that it provides rich descriptions, illuminating the experience and interpretation of

events by subjects with widely differing stakes and roles and giving voice to those whose views are rarely heard.

In qualitative research, the interviewer is an integral part of the investigation. This differs from quantitative research which attempts to gather data by objective methods to provide information about relations, comparisons and predictions and attempts to remove the investigator from the investigation (Henning, Van Rensburg and Smith, 2004: 5). Qualitative data are not the exclusive domain of qualitative research. Rather, the term can refer to anything that is not quantitative, or rendered into numerical form. Many quantitative studies include open ended survey questions, semi-structured interviews, or other forms of qualitative data. Thus, qualitative researchers are often more concerned about uncovering knowledge about how people think and feel about the circumstances in which they find themselves than they are in making judgments about whether those thoughts and feelings are valid (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994: 378).

5.2.1 Advantages of qualitative research methodology

Henning et al (2004:3) argue that qualitative research produces more in-depth, comprehensive information because its emphasis is on understanding complex, interrelated and changing phenomena. The authors further state that the approach uses subjective information and participant observation to describe the context, or natural setting, of the variables under consideration, as well as the interactions of the different variables in the context seeking a wide understanding of the entire situation. They also state that in qualitative study the variables are usually not controlled because it is exactly this freedom and

natural development of action and representation that the researcher wishes to capture.

5.2.2 Disadvantages of qualitative research methodology

Henning et al. (ibid) state indicate that the subjectivity of the inquiry leads to difficulties in establishing the reliability and validity of the approaches and information. It is very difficult to prevent or detect researcher induced bias, and its scope is limited due to the in-depth, comprehensive data gathering approaches required.

5.3 Key qualitative research methods

A wide range of qualitative research methods are available to be used in studying social phenomena. The selection of a method, or a combination of methods, will be tailored to the questions being studied and the setting for research. Typical methods include naturalistic inquiry and participant observation, case study research, structured observations of meetings and events, content analysis of documents, collection and analysis of other archival, administrative and performance data focus groups and cognitive interviews (Henning et al, 2004: 57).

5.4 Case study

Case studies are detailed investigations of individuals, groups, institutions or other social units. The researcher in a case study, attempts to analyse the variables relevant to the subject under study (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994: 245). The difference between case studies and other research studies is that the focus of attention is the individual case and not the whole population of

cases. Most studies search for what is common and pervasive. However, in the case study, the focus may not be on generalisation but on understanding the particulars of that case in its complexity. A case study focuses on a bounded system, usually under natural conditions, so that the system can be understood in its own situation (Henning et al, 2004: 41).

A case study was chosen as a qualitative research method for this study because the researcher wanted to do a holistic description of organisations chosen. When conducting qualitative research, the investigator seeks to gain a total or complete picture. According to Berg (1998: 72), a holistic description of events, procedures and philosophies occurring in natural settings is often needed to make accurate situational decisions. This differs from quantitative research in which selected, pre-defined variables are studied.

In a case study, a corroboration process can be easily facilitated. The purpose of corroboration is not to confirm whether people's perceptions are accurate or true reflections of a situation but rather to ensure that the research findings accurately reflect people's perceptions, whatever they may be. The purpose of corroboration is to help researchers increase their understanding of the probability that their findings will be seen as credible or worthy of consideration by others (Berg, ibid).

5.5 Interviews

Interviews were the main source of data collection used in this study. This method was chosen because an interview has a wide variety of forms and a

multiplicity of uses. Interviews provide the interviewer with the opportunity to adapt, develop and generate questions and follow-up probes appropriate to the given situation and the central purpose of the investigation (Berg, 1998:59). The most common type is individual, face to face verbal interchange, however interviews can also take the form of face to face group interviewing, mailed or self–administered questionnaires, and telephone surveys. Interviews can be formal or informal, structured, semi structured, or unstructured (Berg, 1998:59). They can be used for marketing purposes, to gather political opinions, or to produce data for academic analysis. An interview can also be used for the purpose of measurement, its scope can be the understanding of an individual or a group perspective (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994: 306). However, interviewing can be a very time-consuming exercise, even though it is a valuable, data-gathering technique.

5.5.1 Planned interview

An interview session has to be well planned and if the overall design logic of the inquiry is clear, interviews may be scheduled for specific times at specific venues. The interview process can progress only if a researcher has prepared the logistics of the venture well. Since interviews are temporal activities and have beginnings and endings, most have a typical flow, even though the format may be different. Henning et al (2004:75) argue that most interviews share the same flow, starting with a "scene-setting" phase in which the research topic and aim as well as the role of this specific interview in the research is clarified. Then the researcher may provide the interviewee with a set of prepared questions to scan and reflect on for a while, and it depends on the type and needs of the study, because such action has the potential to pre-empt certain responses and alert the interviewee

unnecessarily to possible sensitive points, thereby compromising the conversation. What the researcher is expected to do is to choose an interview environment and conditions in which the participants feel comfortable, secure and at ease enough to speak openly about their point of view.

The researcher should control his or her reactions because the purpose of the interview is to establish what views people hold. These views should be unbiased by evaluative responses on the researcher's part. The "yes" or "no" questions should be avoided because they tend to stifle details. The researcher should be flexible in his or her approach to the respondents, what has been said in an interview is used to determine or define further questioning.

A good interview has many open-ended questions, most of which are formed prior to the interview. Sometimes, though, good questions emerge during an interview because of what has been said by the subject. Usually such responses facilitate the emergent questions and a lot of follow-up, if it's appropriate (Henning et al, ibid).

5.6 Researchers' roles

A researcher is an instrument in qualitative research and Denzin (1994: 232) suggests that the researcher prepares the logistics, gathers the data, compiles the footnotes, personal notes and the report. The researcher needs to know the instruments and be in position to describe the relevant aspects of self, biases and assumptions, expectations and relevant history.

5.7 Maintaining the validity of qualitative research

Maintaining the validity of qualitative research is a very important task of the researcher and can be achieved if the researcher becomes a good listener during field work. It is important as an interviewer to listen carefully to what is being said by the respondent because one important task of the researcher is to properly interpret the responses. All records should be accurately done, and maintained in the form of detailed notes. (Berg, 1998:94).

Henning et al (2004: 148) suggest that the researcher should prepare well by making a rough draft of the study before going into the field to collect data, in other words initiate writing early. This allows a record to be made when needed. The author further state that it is important to include enough details than few data and write accurately because incorrect grammar, misspelled words and statement inconsistency jeopardize the validity of an otherwise good study (Henning et al, 2004: 76).

The researcher should be candid, and avoid spending too much time attempting to keep her or his own feelings and personal reactions out of the study. If there is relevance in the researcher's feelings to the matter at hand, these feelings should be revealed. It is crucial for the researcher to attempt to achieve a balance between perceived importance and actual importance of the study. Often, the information reveals a difference in anticipated and real areas of study significance (Berg, 1998:94).

5.8 Data collection

Basic data consist of words, and the following procedure was followed for gathering data for this study.

5.8.1 Field Notes

In this study the researcher took notes during the interview sessions. Field notes are an account of what happens during data capturing process or transcriptions of audio tapes and there are various ways to keep them. According to Berg (1998: 145), some ethnographers carry tape recorders and periodically enter their own notes or record various conversations they witness. Other researchers carry slips of paper or index cards and simply jot notes and verbatim quotes periodically throughout the field excursion. Once out of the field, the researchers can use these notes and sketches to write full accounts.

Field notes are important in that they provide a narrative account of what goes on during the study (Berg, 1998: 145). It is therefore important to be thorough in taking field notes, particularly in the earlier phases of research. As much as possible, the researcher has to obtain the full information of what is said and happening. Field notes represent an attempt to record a maximum number of factors particularly concerning conversations, it is therefore crucial that note reproduction be as close to verbatim as possible. Sometimes jotting down a key word or phrase will assist ethnographers later when they attempt to reproduce conversations (Berg, ibid).

5.8.2 Personal notes

Berg (ibid) states that personal notes assist the recollection of events that occur during the field session. The author cites personal reactions, how respondents feels, self-reflection, memories and impressions. Similar to a diary, in order for one to later see ones' own possible influences on the data and the effects of personal events to the data collection and analysis. Personal notes help reveal inner dialogue, self doubt and questions, delight with insights, anger or frustrations one feels, but especially one's struggles.

Data collection for this study was done primarily by taking notes and using the mini tape recorder. Field and personal notes overlapped from time to time. (Berg, ibid) state that these notes can be made by hand with pad and pens, but some have found it beneficial to use other media such as a small cassette tape recorder, or using the audio track or a video camera. The disadvantage of these methods is the distraction to participants. Some researchers take periodic breaks to go to a separate area and write or type notes, or even use the restroom for this purpose.

Henning et al, (2004: 105) further argues that it is usually best to write field notes by hand at the site, and then rewrite them on the computer at the end of each day or at least by the next morning. In some cases field notes can be done at intervals if writing them openly arouses suspicion or there are other reasons they cannot be done at the moment of observation.

When observing, according to Berg (1998: 151), a researcher must write very concretely. Quantitative research speaks of operationalising concepts, stating them in observable, countable terms. Berg (ibid) cotes ways of

writing descriptions and they are as follow: Avoid inferences, generalisations, and vague terms. Avoid sophisticated terms that will obscure what actually occurred. Get down the details, even if they seem irrelevant at first. Describe the obvious because what is obvious to you may not be obvious to outsiders. Push yourself to describe actions without evaluating and generalising: it is important to get details. If one begins to generalise too early, you may be recording more of your bias as a researcher that what actually occurs (Berg, 1998: 151).

Denzi (1994: 235) states that indicates that enough data are needed from which to generalise, otherwise the results cannot be trusted. The author further states that important distinction between research and general experience is that research relies upon carefully documented data from which conclusions are formed. Alternative methods of making field notes include making recordings at intervals or, if it is not too distracting, talking quietly into a cassette recorder.

5.9 Method of data analysis

(Berg, 1998:151) states that there are many different ways to make sense of the information once the data are collected, organised and coded. However, when dealing with ethnographic data, there are few options which the researcher can take. In this study, the two options the researcher used in analysing ethnographic research while retaining the rich detail of the data, were inductive or qualitative content analysis and ethnographic narrative accounts.

Systematic data analysis for both qualitative content analysis and ethnographic narrative accounts begins with reading the field notes. The purpose of this initial reading of the notes is to reinforce any hypothesis or themes developed during the data-collection phase and to generate new questions and themes that emanated from interviews.

5.9.1 Qualitative content analysis strategy

When content analysis strategy is used to assess written documents, the researchers must first decide at what level they plan to sample and what units of analysis will be counted. Sampling may occur at any or all of the following levels: words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs, sections, chapters, books, writers, ideological stance, subject topic, or similar elements relevant to the context (Berg, 1998:228). Comparison and decoding of these sampled variables were used in this study to arrive at a particular conclusion.

5.10 Content analysis elements

According to Berg (1998: 231), there are seven major elements in written messages that can be counted in content analysis, namely, words or terms, themes, characters, paragraphs, items, concepts, and semantics

Word

The word is the smallest element or unit in content analysis. Its use generally results in a frequency distribution of specified words or terms.

Items

An item represents the whole unit of the sender's message, that is, an item may be an entire book, a letter, speech, diary, newspaper, or even an in-depth interview.

Concepts

The use of concepts as units to count is a more sophisticated type of word counting. Concepts involve words grouped together into conceptual clusters that constitute, in some instances a particular idea. For instance, a conceptual cluster may form around the idea of deviance. Words such as crime, delinquency, kitting and fraud might cluster around the conceptual idea of deviance. To some extent, the use of a concept as the unit of analysis leads toward more latent than manifest content (Berg, ibid).

Semantics

In this type of content analysis, semantics, researchers are interested not only in the number and type of words used but also in how affected the word(s) may be, in other words, how strong or weak a word or words, may be in relation to the overall sentiment of the sentence (Berg, ibid).

In this basic way of working data a research starts with a set of data, such as a transcribed interview. According to Henning et al (2004: 104), the transcription has to be verbatim, the researcher should leave a wide margin

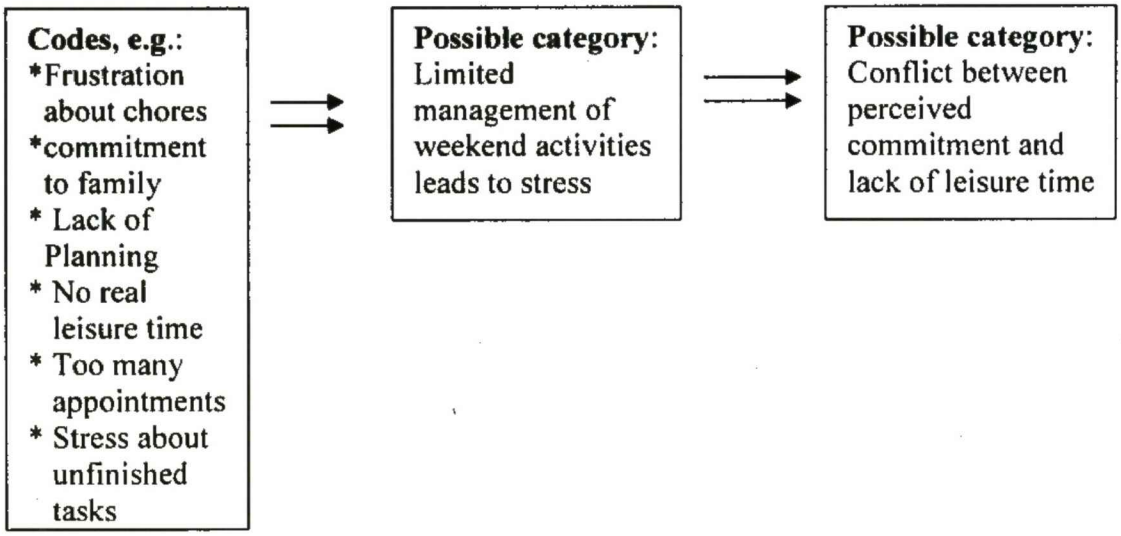
on the right-hand side of the page for notes and the writing of codes. In what is known as open coding, the analyst reads through the entire text in order to get a global impression of the content. Already some themes will be observed, but the coding process does not begin as yet. Some researchers prefer to read the transcripts of all interviews that have been conducted in a series, because it makes good sense to read all the relevant transcriptions before any formal meaning is attributed to a single unit.

Subsequent to a first reading, a transcript of a set of field notes are then read again and units of meaning are identified. By using a marker, or different colours, units of meaning (that you can include a number of sentences) are marked and labelled. This label can seldom be just one word because the meaning has to be more precise (Henning et al, 2004: 104).

5.10.1 From codes to categories

Once the codes have been identified, the analysis moves to a category where interpretations of content are done. A category will already begin to show the themes that will be constructed from the data and that will be used in the discussion of the inquiry. This part of the road from "raw" data to findings is as important as the coding and perhaps even more so because it invokes broader context. Figure 5.1 illustrates the process.

Figure: 5.1 **PROCESS STEPS**



Source: Henning et al. 2004: 106

5.11 Sampling strategies

Any of the many conventional sampling procedures used in other data-collection techniques may be used in content analysis. Some of the more commonly cited techniques include simple random sampling, systematic sampling, stratified sampling, and purposive sampling. For the purpose of this study and analysis, simple random sampling and purposive sampling were used. These two strategies are briefly described in the following discussion.

5.11.1 Simple Random Sampling.

Simple random sampling procedure is intended to produce a representative sample. The process draws subjects from an identified population in such a

way that every unit in that population has precisely the same chance or probability of being included in the sample (Berg, 1998: 228).

5.11.2 Purposive Sampling.

Developing a purposive sample, researchers use their special knowledge or expertise about some group to select subjects who represent this population. In some instances, purposive samples are selected after field investigations of some group in order to ensure that certain types of individuals or persons displaying certain attributes are included in the study. In this study the researcher sampled about five participants in each four of the case organisations, from management or leadership and from ordinary members or workers. The total sample was expected to be twenty because of many limitations in purposive sampling.

5.12 Interview questions

Interview questions are formulated to respond to the objectives of the study, and in this study the objectives were to establish members and workers' perceptions around informal groups' influence, impact, challenges on management and leadership. Question 1, 2, 4, and 9 related to influence and question 5, 6, 8 related to perceptions. Some questions were overlapping and related to more than one issue, like question 4, which related to objective 3, 4, and 5.

In Annexure 1, the questions which were used for the interview are provided.

5.13 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are very important particularly in this study because the study was about how people perceived informal groups in their work environment and in their organisations. This can be a very sensitive or controversial issue in certain organisations, because of the nature of the organisational culture. It was critical therefore to ensure the rights, privacy and welfare of the respondents. To a large extent, particularly in qualitative research, concerns about research ethics revolve around issues of privacy, harm, consent, and confidentiality of data (Berg, 1998: 31).

When the interview plan was finalised the process of ethical clarification began. Firstly, respondents need to give informed consent to participate. This means that they must be fully informed about the research in which the interview is going to be used. They need to know that their privacy and sensitivity will be protected and what is going to happen with their information after recording.

In a letter of consent, which was drafted by the researcher, the participant gives consent to these and any other ethical issues that may be relevant. This may sound easy to do, however it does, in fact, take time to go through all the procedures and to get the approval of the institution or organisation in whose name the inquiry is being conducted. The consent letter needs to be accompanied by a letter in which organisations also consent to the use of their sites and names (Henning et al, 2004: 73).

Henning et al (ibid) indicate that by virtue of the fact that participants have been involved in the inquiry there is an indication of the reason for which

they have been sampled. Thus the researcher should make sure that the consent either signed or not should be treated with the utmost discretion. The researcher remains accountable for the ethical quality of the inquiry and should take great care and when in doubt, ask advice.

According to Berg (1998: 44), one of the most serious ethical concerns that is and has received attention in the 1980s is the assurance that subjects are voluntarily involved and informed of all potential risks. However there are still violations and some controversies around these factors, for example, subjects are coerced or manipulated into volunteering to participate by offering incentives to potential subjects like monetary gain, enhancing their personal prestige or status. In contrast to these justifications for not obtaining voluntary participation, result in various invasions of privacy and manipulation of the fairly powerless segment of the society and organisations.

5.14 Limitations of the study

The type of a research that has been conducted already is a multi-case study of four organisations, two municipalities, one branch of the ANC and a Chief Directorate of Quality Assurance in the Department of Education North West. An in-depth study of the four organisations was done with certain key elements of the findings transferred and compared to similar situations. The major limitations are that the key findings of these qualitative case studies cannot be generalized, even though it can justify the purpose of the study.

The other limitation of this research was that at the time of the study the situational environment in some of the organisations targeted, for example, the Vryburg ANC branch was very tense because of serious internal struggle emanating from jostling for positions in the listing process for new councillors in preparation for the 2006 municipal local elections. The two municipalities, Naledi and Mafikeng were seriously challenged by their communities for both service delivery and good governance. The researcher was challenged to reduce the degree of possible subjectivity and bias that could have elicited, even though one cannot completely remove the effect of subjectivity in the collection of data. However, in dealing with this apparent limitation of the case-study, the researcher had to accept that biasness as a concept may cut across all types of research methodologies. However Denzin, (1994: 84) argues that biasness or subjectivity as a factor in the research should not be allowed to persist.

In this regard, everything must be done to minimize subjectivity throughout the key stages of data collection. In this study, sufficient efforts were spent on interacting with the respondents in the real situation so as to establish the authenticity of the facts obtained.

Another factor that can be cited as one of the limitations, given the importance and nature of the study on informal groups, is initial entry via gatekeepers. That is, those people that control access to these organisations. There is a potential for some to have other ideas, for example that one can spy for powerful people and even powerful gatekeepers can use power play or manipulate respondents or data to get the expected reports, thus compromising ethics (Denzin, 1994: 86).

Often access to the site is very different than access to participants. Some of the gatekeepers are not very verbal or trusting. Sometimes people most willing to participate do not represent many others. They are ostracized and looking for friends, but can hinder one if the goal is to study the group as a whole (Berg, 1998: 130).

5.15 Conclusion

The qualitative research methodology components that have been discussed in this chapter were found useful and easy to employ in the data collection for this study. The field work was conducted through interviews, recording and data analysis. According to Henning et al (2004: 48), the advantage of being able to rely on a guiding genre is that it is far easier to maintain overall coherence within the research approach framework, in this case it was qualitative research methodology.

CHAPTER 6

RESEARCH RESULTS

6.1. Introduction

A qualitative research design methodology was used in this study to attempt to address the objectives of the study. The previous chapter defined the advantages of using qualitative research, discussed the data collection methods as well as the ethical considerations and limitations of the study.

This chapter reflects the description of the respondents, the analysis of data collected from the respondents was linked to codes such as words, phrases, concepts, statements and suggestions to derive the findings. A summary of the findings is also provided.

6.2 Description of the respondents

The respondents from all cases were selectively sampled in line with the purposive sampling strategy. It was important that in the selection of the sample, people who were prepared to participate and add value with regard to responses to the objectives of the study were included. In a purposive sample, researchers use their special knowledge or expertise about a group, to select subjects who will be representative of the population. In some instances, purposive samples are selected after field investigations of some groups, in order to ensure that particular types of individuals or persons displaying certain attributes are included in the study (Berg, 1998: 228).

The researcher took into consideration the prevailed situational environment in some of the organisations, for example, in Vryburg ANC branch and Naledi Municipality the situation was tense. This study was conducted at that time when these organisations were going through a very sensitive or controversial period because of the nature of the operations and functions of the organisations. For ethical reasons it was critical therefore to ensure that the rights, privacy, and welfare of the respondents and organisations were upheld.

The whole population sample was expected to be twenty, with each organisation having five randomly and purposively selected respondents. To a large extent the researcher succeeded in getting cooperation from representatives who were placed in various levels and positions within the organisations. In the Quality Assurance Chief Directorate the sample included respondents from functional to middle management. In the Naledi Municipality, the Vryburg ANC Branch and the Mafikeng Municipality the researcher envisaged to sample everybody from all levels and different positions in these organisations who could share his or her experience regarding the research problem. At the scheduled time for the interviews, certain respondents did not avail themselves despite repeated calls and postponement.

In the Naledi Municipality and the Vryburg ANC Branch the sample was inclusive as envisaged while in the Mafikeng Municipality only two respondents from the level of workers and there was no cooperation and response from management. In the following tables, table 6.1 for respondents' profiles and table 6.2 for responses from respondents,

respondents from the Naledi and Mafikeng Municipalities were clustered together into one sample because there were only two respondents from the workers level in the Mafikeng Municipality, and both organisations are Municipalities and provide the same services, and it was argued that both were confronted by similar problems and challenges.

TABLE 6.1 PROFILES OF THE RESPONDENTS

SAMPLE	ORGANIZATION	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	MANAGEMENT LEVEL
A	Quality Assurance Chief Directorate	**0** **2** **4**	Top Middle Operational
B	Naledi Municipality and Mafikeng Municipality	**1** **2** **3** **2**	Top Middle Operational Operational
C	Vryburg ANC Branch	**1** **4**	Executive Branch members
Total	Respondents	**19**	

6.3 Content Analysis

A content analysis strategy is used to assess written documents on the responses of the respondents. Berg (1998 : 228) suggests that when this analysis strategy is used, comparison and decoding of words, phrases,

sentences, paragraphs, sections, concepts, suggestions, ideas, ideological stance, topic, or similar elements relevant to the context will be considered. The comparison and decoding of these sampled variables are used to arrive at a particular conclusion.

6.4 Data analysis

In Table 6.2 the various cases are reflected together with the questions and responses as well as the general conclusions. Sample A is the Quality Assurance Chief Directorate, Sample B is the Naledi Municipality and the Mafikeng Municipality, and sample C is the Vryburg ANC Branch.

TABLE 6.2 DATA FROM THE RESPONDENTS AND FINDINGS

QUESTION 1		Do [did] you personally experience the existence of informal groups (cabal, clique, faction) in your organisation?	
Different Samples	**RESPONDENTS**	**COMMENTS FROM RESPONDENTS (Words, Phrases, Concepts, Statements, Suggestions)**	**FINDINGS (Based on comments)**
Sample A Q.1	ALL -- Same response	-yes-	Indicating and acknowledging that formal groups exist in the organisation
Sample B Q.1	ALL -- Same response	- yes- - groups will be established naturally-	They all agree to the existence of informal groups
Sample C Q.1	ALL -- Same response	- yes- - formal- democratically elected- - informal- others gang-up against those they differ with-	Agree unanimously that informal groups exist in their organisation
General findings on Q. 1		All respondents on this question indicated positively that informal groups existed in their organisations.	

QUESTION 2		How did you notice that informal group/s exist..... [What happened? ..... (anything done that the group has suggested/ indicated).....]?	
Different Samples	**RESPONDENTS**	**COMMENTS FROM RESPONDENTS (Words, Phrases, Concepts, Statements, Suggestions)**	**FINDINGS (Based on comments)**
Sample A Q.2	ALL – similar response	- in meetings they agree- - have prior information on issues- - collude and support particular issue- - same comments-	They might have met, or obtained the same information from the same source, and took a position on an issue
Sample B Q.2	ALL – similar response	- there were intimidations - - accusations – - punch-up – - challenging management -	Where informal groups exist there are serious challenges and differences
Sample C Q.2	Similar experiences	- group always opposing & challenging- - group always counter issues, continuously disrupting meetings- - serious division/differences of opinion- - calling for dethronement of leadership -	Informal groups are formed to challenge opposing views/groups or protect interest in various ways.
General findings on Q. 2		The general view of the respondents on question two posits that, where informal groups existed there were potential for inter-group conflict because they challenged and opposed views from other people.	
QUESTION 3		When, if at all, did you first experience the influence/impact of informal groups in the organisation? [If so,] What was it like? What did you think then?	
Sample A Q.3	Different responses	- it is hard to be specific- - groups always agree or disagree with certain positions/views -	Informal groups are not active or can be easily identified until and unless there is an issue they agree or disagree, with certain individuals or groups
Sample B Q.3	Same ideas	- other councillors are used by management -- serious political differences existed – - lack of loyalty to leadership	Informal group members can do anything to get what they want
Sample C Q.3	Similar experiences at different time/period	- after 2002 local elections- - in preparations for local elections- - they were vilifying leadership- - consolidating their position – - they disrupted formally organized meetings	Informal groups become openly active during the period when position/stakes in management/ leadership are to be decided
General findings on Q. 3		On this question respondents indicated that informal groups became openly active during the period when position/stakes in management/leadership were to be decided. They will do anything to achieve their objectives.	

QUESTION 4		Does the existence of informal groups in the organisation influence the performance of leadership/management, and if so, how do you know that?	
Sample A Q.4	Same opinion but different levels of experience	- certainly yes- - yes to a certain extent – - leaders use informal groups as grape-vine- - staff not evenly treated -	The inference is that management or leadership's performance is influenced and there is preferential treatment to group-members –
Sample B Q.4	ALL – similar response	- they are very critical - - decision making processes are either hijacked or undermined – - stalls potential progress – - challenge management – - leaders fail to act -	Respondents unanimously agree that leadership/management is influenced because their authority is challenged and undermined • One viewpoint was that leadership is kept on its toes and in control of issues because of the critical challenges -- which is positive
Sample C Q.4	ALL – similar response	- yes - - affect negatively- - managers are drawn into informal groups - - leaders use groups to challenge other members- - more time and efforts are spent on resolving conflicts in the organisation than on service delivery	Informal groups affect the organisation negatively. Leaders/ managers are consumed into the problems of groups
General findings on Q. 4		Respondents unanimously agreed that informal groups have an influence on the performance of leadership/management.	

QUESTION 5		Are informal groups/ structures in the organization there to serve the interest of management/leadership or that of itself?...Could you describe the events /incidents that led you to this conclusion?	
CASE & QUESTION	**RESPONDENTS**	**COMMENTS FROM RESPONDENTS (Words, Phrases, Concepts, Statements, Suggestions)**	**FINDINGS (Based on comments)**
Sample A Q.5	ALL – Similar responses	- serve their own interest - - two fold: i. own interests ii. Leadership -- to gain, profit – - to be popular- - to get things their way	They serve whoever, to benefit themselves
Sample B Q.5	ALL – have Similar opinion	- they are egocentric- - divisive & destroying rather than building - have potential to serve management but they are not-	Their interest comes first
Sample C Q.5	The understanding is the same	- serve their own interest by trying to get into positions – - for personal gain and expanding their own influence – - depends – two fold as they serve leadership and themselves	They serve their own interest, but will also serve leadership if at the end, they will benefit
General findings on Q. 5		On this question respondents revealed that informal groups served their own interest, but would also serve leadership/management if in the end, they benefited from such.	
QUESTION 6		How do you view these groups? .. Are informal groups detrimental or have a positive influence on the organisation's management and operation?	
Sample A Q.6	Similar opinion	- they thrive on rumour mongering and gossip - - extreme degree of detrimental influence - - depends – sometimes dangerous or helpful - they can help leaders to get out of a sticky situation	Depending on which direction they take. They are detrimental to the welfare of the organisation
Sample B Q.6	Similar opinion	- they are detrimental - - they stifle the operation – - their existence stifles the organizational objective of participatory democracy by members of the public • Another viewpoint is that " like it or not, informal groups will always be there and more depends on the	Majority view is that they are detrimental to the operations of the organisation.

		creativity and dynamism of leadership to contain them"	
Sample C Q.6	Similar opinion	- they are viewed as detrimental to the operations of the organisation - - irrespective of how good they are – - yet to see any positive influence they make – - operate along lines of coercion and intimidation – - stifle organisational objectives -	Their existence is more negative than providing a positive influence
General findings on Q. 6		The general view of the respondents was that informal groups were more negative than providing a positive influence on the organisations. Another view from sample A was that they can be effectively used and can also be damaging to the organisations.	
QUESTION 7		What, do [did] you know about these groups?....[if anything at all]	
Sample A Q.7	Same viewpoint	- ambitious - - can do anything to sustain themselves- - they always strategize- - exist in all organisations	Informal groups will do anything to get what they want
Sample B Q.7	Same idea	- they are used by some leaders in high ranks – -such groups are fueled and exacerbated by external forces - they capitalize on scandals-	All views point to the fact that informal groups are or can be manipulated for or against leadership/management
Sample C Q.7	Similar opinions but different experiences	- they do not last long - - members do not trust one another – - formed by social friendship rather than on principles – - they disregard organisational processes and procedures	Respondents provide different opinions based on different experiences but all seem to agree with the previous views of lack of loyalty
General findings on Q. 7		The general view of the respondents on this question suggested that informal groups will do anything to get what they want, they are or can be manipulated for or against leadership/management and they disregard organisational processes and procedures.	

QUESTION 8		Tell me about your thoughts and feelings when you learned about the activities of these groups.	
Sample A Q.8	Same viewpoint	- not good to have such - - should be managed for positive influence- - secret meeting -	Respondents not really sure of what to say
Sample B Q.8	Different views	- suspend them - - unite them – - they are back-stabbers	There is a feeling of trying to work out something due to the negative rapport of informal groups
Sample C Q.8	Similar opinions but different experiences	- they are power hungry - - fear and don't trust them – - disappointed – - they were intimidating – - the organisation is going to lose members – - the potential of the organisation will not be realized	Respondents expressed the same concern of intimidation and how the organisation is going to be negatively affected.
General findings on Q. 8		Respondents postulated that informal groups have a tendency of intimidating others and doing things in secret.	

QUESTION 9		Do you know them.....? How influential are they in the organization? (Do not give specific names)...Are you disappointed with them?	
CASE & QUESTION	**RESPONDENTS**	**COMMENTS FROM RESPONDENTS (Words, Phrases, Concepts, Statements, Suggestions)**	**FINDINGS (Based on comments)**
Sample A Q.9	Different inputs	- yes - - they are not declared - - it may be a perception - - disappointed - -not disappointed as they are part of our existence – - to an extent disappointed -	Majority seem unsure yet disappointed but not optimistic. However, informal group members are known to the respondents
Sample B Q.9	Same viewpoint	- yes - - they are influential – - they are the corner- stone of the organisation	They are known in the organisation, some of them very influential but a letdown to other members
Sample C Q.9	Same viewpoint	- yes - - the public know them – - very influential – -arrogant and rude -	They are well known in the organisation, very influential and arrogant
General findings on Q. 9		On this question, respondents responded unanimously and concurred that informal groups' members are well known and influential members of the organisation, who serve their own interest.	

QUESTION 10		How, if at all, have your thoughts and feelings about these groups and people involved changed since past experiences/events?	
Sample A Q.10	Same viewpoint with various exceptions	- used to be irritated - - have bad feelings - - wish they could be stopped - - depends on interest -	Different people have different interest, thus it depends on where one is. However, majority does not approve of it.
Sample B Q.10	Same viewpoint with various exceptions	- not changed - - to a limited degree – - accept them as the black sheep in the family –	Mixed reaction that says even though we don't approve of them there is little that we can do
Sample C Q.10	Same viewpoint	- despise the basis and ideals of such - - cannot trust them – - have learnt to verify and investigate everything they say before believing them-	Informal groups are not welcomed or acceptable and trusted by many in organisations
General findings on Q. 10		Respondents answers were different to this question but generally indicated that informal groups are not welcome or acceptable and even trusted by many in their organisations.	

QUESTION 11		Could you describe the most important lessons you learned about informal groups?	
Sample A Q.11	Various but common views	- you cannot wish them away - - they wield a certain power – - for or against management – - distract management to think straight – - influence management -	Informal groups are a reality, and they are influential and powerful
Sample B Q.11	Various but common views	- they are inevitable - - detrimental – - divisive- - have negative impact – • A different view is that a leader should be firm not strict, flexible not rigid and open and inclusive	Informal groups are a reality, and they are detrimental to the organization. Leaders and managers should be dynamic in dealing with them
Sample C Q.11	Various but common views	- they are very destructive - - exploit any weakness (real or perceived) – -they use unscrupulous and unorthodox methods to achieve their goals	Informal groups are destructive and can do anything to get what they want
General findings on Q. 11		The general view of the respondents on this question indicated that informal groups are a reality and are detrimental to the organisation. They are destructive, can do anything to get what they want. Another view was that leaders and managers should be dynamic in dealing with informal groups.	

QUESTION 12		After having these experiences, what advice would you give someone who has joined...or... is closer to any informal group.....? Or is affected by a (cabal, clique, and faction) groups.....?	
Sample A Q.12	Different viewpoints	- they build or destroy - - abstain from them – - discourage anybody to join – - know how they operate -	Avoid them
Sample B Q.12	Different viewpoints	- keep a distance and remain neutral - - don't allow yourself to be used – - don't be reactionary -	Avoid them and deal with them carefully
Sample C Q.12	Different viewpoints	- be independent minded - - base your decisions and actions on values and principles of the organisation – - know and understand the policies of the organization	Be loyal to yourself and the organization, and know what your organisation stands for.
General findings on Q. 12		Respondents indicated clearly that members of the organisation should avoid informal groups and be loyal to oneself and the organisation, and know what the organisation stands for. Members must base their decisions and actions on values and principles of the organisation	

QUESTION 13 and 14		13. After going through this interview, is there anything that you might add and not have thought about before? 14. Is there anything you would like to ask me?
Sample A, B, & C Q.13 & 14	Same questions	1. What contributions will this research make towards addressing the challenge of informal groups? 2. What impact will this exercise have on the challenges presented by informal groups? 3. How would one deal with these challenges if one is in a leadership or management position?
General findings on Q. 13 & 14		Response to question 13 and 14 were more of a concern, respondents wanted to know how this study will contribute and assist them in addressing the problems caused by informal groups.

6.5 Summary of the findings

Informal groups emerge naturally in organisations and they are realities that can be detrimental to the organisation. Where informal groups exist there is a potential for inter-group conflict because informal groups serve their own interest and will serve leadership or management if in the end, they will benefit from such. Informal groups become openly active during the period when position or stakes in management or leadership are to be decided. They can and will do anything to obtain their objectives.

Informal groups have a powerful influence on the organisation's leadership or management and operations. Such groups are not welcomed, acceptable or even trusted by many in the organisations. Members of these groups have a tendency of intimidation, can be manipulative for or against leadership or management and they disregard organisational processes and procedures.

Leaders and managers need to be dynamic in dealing with them. Knowledge of smaller-group dynamics is essential for managers to know how they operate. It is important to avoid informal groups and be loyal to oneself and the organisation. Members and workers need know what the organisation stands for, and base their decisions and actions on values and principles of the organisation.

6.6 Conclusion

This chapter provides the description of the respondents from four different organisations, who were interviewed to get their perceptions on the influence of informal groups in their organisations. From the data collected, the findings were that informal groups existed in organisations and they have the potential to cause inter-group conflict because they disregard organisational processes and procedures in order to serve their own interest. The respondents indicated that informal groups' members were well known and influential members of the organisations, who had an influence on the performance of leadership or management. Findings revealed that the existence of informal groups is detrimental to the welfare of organisations.

The next chapter reflects conclusions, implications and recommendations based on these findings.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, the data from the empirical survey was analysed and certain findings were made, and the results lead to certain deductions. In this chapter, the researcher present a list of the summary of these findings linked to the research problems, and related to theory as well as the conclusions based on the findings. The researcher further present the implications derived from the conclusions and recommendations based on the findings, and then the conclusions as well as the implications formulated are presented.

7.2 Summary of the findings

The following main findings linked to the objectives of the study can be summarised based on the different questions posed in the empirical survey.

The main findings are:

7.2.1. All the respondents agreed that informal groups existed in their organisations.

7.2.2. Where informal groups existed, they served their own interest.

7.2.3. Informal groups are active during the period when positions or stakes in management or leadership are to be decided.

7.2.4 Informal groups are destructive and detrimental to the welfare and operations of the organisation.

7.2.5 Informal groups have a tendency to disregard organisational processes and procedures.

7.2.6 Informal group members are well known and influential people in the organisation.

7.2.7 Informal groups are not welcomed or acceptable in organisations.

7. 3 Relation to theory

The majority of the respondents' responses correspond with previous findings discussed in chapters 2 and 3, and the main findings in paragraph 7.2 above are compared and linked to theory.

7.3.1 Main finding 1 (paragraph 7.2.1)

This finding indicates that informal groups exist in organisations and according to Mullins (1999: 459) they emerge naturally in organisations as a result of the common interest as people interact.

Bowditch and Buono, (2000: 221) indicate that in most cases informal groups have a powerful influence on the organisation's operations, both for the good of the organisation or for its detriment. Informal groups, for

example, can set standards high or low that govern the amount of work its members will accomplish, despite formal policies and standards set by management. This finding and the theory suggest that there is potential for management or leadership to be influenced in the execution of their functions.

7.3.2 Main finding 2 (paragraph 7.2.2 and 7.2.3)

Main finding 2.2 suggests that informal groups serve their own interest, and paragraph 7.2.3 indicates that informal groups become openly active during the period when positions or stakes in management or leadership are to be decided.

According to Mullins (1999: 459) informal groups are based more on personal relationships and agreement of group members than on defined role relationships. They serve to satisfy psychological and social needs not related necessarily to the tasks to be undertaken.

Bowditch and Buono (2000: 157) suggest that conflict in organisations can occur for a variety of reasons such as dispute over roles, scarcity of resources, structures, diversity and interpersonal relationship, and power and positions. Because informal groups exist to serve and protect their interest in organisations, they have a potential to cause inter-group conflict within the organisations Schultz et al. (2003: 244) also state that informal structures, particularly cliques and cabals are characterised by hidden agendas, and people can be inhibited from openly expressing their thoughts and feelings

such as hidden agendas include rivalries, distrust, ambitions and critical attitudes.

Daft (2001: 98) argue that formal groups like working committees and teams and informal groups like cliques and cabals, are formed because people realise that they might have common goals that they can achieve through dependence on each other. Whatever is done in an organisation, in whatever position, it is difficult to avoid being involved with a small group. This finding supported by theory, indicates that there is a possibility that informal groups can cause instability in organisations.

7.3.3 Main finding 3 (paragraph 7.2.4)

This finding reveals that informal groups are negative and do not provide a positive influence and are be detrimental to the welfare of the organisations. Bowditch and Buono (2000: 221) suggest that the unofficial and informal structures may work against the best interests of the organisation as a whole. They can be susceptible to rumour, breed resistance to change, and even divert effort from important objectives. People left out of informal groupings, that is, the outsiders, may feel less a part of the daily activities and become dissatisfied with their work.

Vavi (1997) states that where there are cliques and cabals and back stabbing, there can be no constructive debate and criticism. All these characteristics could pose a serious challenge to management and can be detrimental, if not well contained.

7.3.4 Main finding 4 (paragraph 7.2.5)

In line with the finding, views expressed in the theory indicate that group membership displays who the group really is, and in some cases membership is granted very selectively (Wagner and Hollenbeck 2005: 251). Hunt (1974: 91) suggests that groups have values, beliefs and attitudes attached to them and in many groups' individuals lose their individuality to adopt the group mentality. The author further indicates that there is a theory that posits that the existence of formal and informal groups in an organisation results in an individual cooperation dilemma, and consequently there is always a potential for conflict. The finding has shown that informal groups will do anything to achieve their objectives and they have tendencies to disregard the contributions of others.

7.3.5 Main findings 5 (paragraph 7.2.7)

The theory on this finding suggests a similar view that informal groups are not acceptable by many in organisations. Napier (1981: 306) states that knowledge of small-group dynamics is essential to managers. The ability to analyse the interactions and relationship in an organisation is important, because it provides managers with an indication of the level of satisfaction, cohesiveness and cooperation among members and groups and predictable stages and patterns of behaviour will emerge.

Mullins (1999: 451) suggests that the manager must be aware of the impact of groups and their effects on organisational performance. Therefore, the activities of individuals or groups cannot be separated from management and

the process of leadership. The form of management and style of leadership adopted will influence the relationship between the groups and the organisation.

According to French and Bell (1999: 56), a manager is a designated leader who is accountable to ensure that performance goals set are realised. Leadership is explained as getting things done through the efforts of other people or subordinates. It is a process of focusing the entire team on a common direction. Leadership is inter alia about being open minded, and being able to accommodate dissenting views. If individuals in an organisation feel threatened and not accommodated, they will easily find solace in informal structures.

Schultz (2003: 244) suggests that progressive members of the organisations require a set of attitudes and behaviours that include a willingness to conform to all decisions made by the team, to co-operate with other members without unnecessary conflict, to contribute their talents without holding back for selfish reasons and to collaborate with others in the team.

7.4 Conclusions

The following conclusions are based on the main findings formulated in paragraph 2 and supported by theory in paragraph 3.

The conclusions are:

7.4.1. Informal groups in organisations can have an influence on the management and leadership.

7.4.2. Informal groups serve their own interests, and are a potential for conflict in the organisation.

7.4.3. Informal groups are active during the period when positions or stakes in management are to be decided, and they can elicit confusion and disruptions.

7.4.4. Informal groups can be destructive and detrimental, which will affect the welfare and operations of the organisation.

7.4.5. Informal groups can disregard organisational processes and procedures, and they have the capacity to influence, intimidate and affect management or leadership in the performance of duties.

7.4.6 Because members of these groups are well known and influential people, they can dominate and dictate terms to others. What they say is easily believed to be correct and factual.

7.4.7 Informal groups are not welcomed or acceptable by management and ordinary members, and they are not trusted by many in the organisations.

7.5 Implications

7.5.1 First implication

The first implication is based on the finding that (paragraph 2.1) and conclusion that (paragraph 4.1). It implies that management or leadership must be pro-actively aware of the informal groups and endeavour to manage them in a positive way that will positively influence the performance of the organisation.

7.5.2 Second implication

This second implication based on the second finding (paragraph 2), and conclusion (paragraph 4.2), suggests that management or leadership should establish a platform for open discussions to ensure that the group interests does not become the barrier to operations of an organisation basic co-duties and to inculcate a culture of serving the interest of the organisation.

Procedures for conflict resolutions should be established so that problems could be dealt with early, procedurally and decisively.

7.5.3 Third implication

The third implication based on the third finding and conclusion, suggest that management or leadership should create known communication channels and information flow to keep members informed of all developments. They should ensure that all requirements for prospective positions or stakes as well as procedures on recruitment and promotion are well known and understood by all.

Management should use the negative energy of informal groups to the development of the organisation by involving them in various tasks and activities.

7.5.4 Fourth implication

The fourth implication is based on the finding (paragraph 2.4), and conclusion (paragraph 4.4), which suggests that management or leadership must work on people management, team effectiveness and improve the needed skills to coach and integrate different personalities to function or operate as a team. They should encourage and ensure that all activities in the organisation are aligned to the vision and mission of the organisation.

Informal groups should be accepted as a way of life and managed appropriately, and any deviation should be dealt with according to existing organisational disciplinary procedures in a discrete fashion.

7.5.5 Fifth implication

This implication is based on the fifth finding and conclusion in paragraph 7.2.5 and 7.4.5 respectively. The finding and conclusion suggest that management or leadership must develop policies and procedures that guide operations of the organisation, and systems that will clarify the job descriptions of all, clarify reporting channels and line functions. Management or leadership should be firm, fair, democratic and consistent in implementing established procedures to ensure compliance to policies.

7.5.6 Sixth implication

The sixth implication is based on the finding (paragraph 7.2.6), and conclusion (paragraph 7.4.6), which indicate that management or leadership must establish an effective formal information flow and communication lines that keep every body informed at all times e.g. internal memos, regular meetings and information sessions. Management or leadership must recognise that the dominant and influential members create an environment to curtail their influence and they should contain them by involving them.

7.5.7 Seventh implication

It is based on paragraph 7.2.7 and 7.4.7, which is a conclusion that management or leadership must establish systems and procedures, and forums to address and discuss ethical issues and organisational effectiveness, welfare clubs, get-together activities that encourage team building and team effectiveness.

Management should encourage members to participate in informal teams or clubs, and society, and create an effective internal reporting mechanism so that for example, what is not officially reported should not be regarded as fact and binding to members.

7.6 Recommendations

The following recommendations are based exclusively on all findings, conclusions and implications made.

7.6.1. Management or leadership should discern, identify, pre-empt the Actions of informal groups and be ready to deal with them by formulating and creating structures and systems to regulate, manage, control, monitor and evaluate personnel, resources and activities.

7.6.2. Management or leadership must channel the energies of informal groups in a positive direction by involving them in important organisational activities to neutralise the disruptive tendencies of the group.

7.6.3. Management or leadership should be transparent about the contributions made by informal groups by discussing such inputs in a large forum and inculcate the culture of serving the interest of the organisation.

7.6.4. Management or leadership should continuously capacitate and remind their members on the latest developments regarding various procedures, code of conduct, and the necessity and consequences of non-compliance to organisational policies, principles and procedures.

7.7 Recommendations for future research

The following is recommended:

7.7.1 Further research can explore the role of gender-based differences in the degree of confrontations and provision of solutions in formal and informal groups.

7.7.2 Further research regarding the role of informal groups based on a larger sample from different organisations can be considered.

7.8. Limitations

The current study was limited in several ways. First, access and cooperation in certain organisation was a challenge. The other factor was the nature and the topic of the study which were problematic to the respondents and as a result it was a challenge to receive cooperation from other sectors of the organisation. The period and time in organisations such as the Vryburg ANC branch, the Naledi and the Mafikeng Municipalities were problematic because it was when tension was very high and informal groups were very active. The study was limited and generalisations should be treated with caution.

7.9 Conclusion

From the study conducted it can be concluded that managers and leaders are expected to be aware of several factors that cause conflict among individuals or groups in an organisation. A demand for scarce resources, such as money, information, or supplies, as well as positions and favours, usually lead to formation of informal groups for support. It is crucial therefore that managers and leaders always be alert and ready to deal with challenges brought by these groups.

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Annexure: 1

Interview Questions

Interview Questions are about the informal groups that exist or allege to in the organization, what do you think about them?

Initial open-ended questions

1. Formal and informal groups exist in organizations. Do [did] you personally experience the existence of informal groups (cabal, clique, faction) in your organization?

.....

.....

.....

2. How did you notice that informal group/s exist..... [What happened? ..... (anything done that the group has suggested/indicated).....]?

.....

.....

3. When, if at all, did you first experience the influence/impact of informal groups in the organization? [If so,] What was it like? What did you think then?

.....

.....

4. Does the existence of informal groups in the organization influence the performance of leadership/ management, and if so, how do you happen to know that?

.....

.....

.....

5. Are informal groups/ structures in the organization there to serve the interest of management/leadership or that of itself?...Could you describe the events / incident that led you to this conclusion?

.....

.....

.....

6. How do you view these groups? .. Are informal groups detrimental or have positive influence on the organization's management and operation?

.....

.....

.....

Intermediate Questions

7. What, do [did] you know about these groups?....[if anything at all]

.....

.....

8. Tell me about your thoughts and feelings when you learned about the activities of these groups

.....

.....

.....

9. Do you know them.....? How influential are they in the organization? (Do not give specific names)...Are you disappointed with them?

.....

.....

.....

10. How, if at all, have your thoughts and feelings about these groups and people involved changed since past experience/ events?

.....

.....

11. Could you describe the most important lessons you learned about informal groups?

.....

.....

.....

Ending Questions

12. After having these experiences, what advice would you give someone who has joined...or... is closer to any informal group.....? Or is affected by a (cabal, clique, faction) groups.....?

.....

.....

.....

13. After going through these question, Is there anything that you might add not have thought about before this interview?

.....

.....

3. Is there anything you would like to ask me?

.....

.....

.....

THANK YOU