

A conceptual situational leadership framework for senior municipal managers in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree *Magister Philosophae* in **Public Management and
Governance** at the Potchefstroom Campus of the North-West
University

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May 2017



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I thank God for guiding me on this special project. I owe my existence, courage and the energy of those who supported me for the duration of this Master's programme – to our Father above.

I also thank the following persons for their support:

- Prof Willie Van Wyk, my supervisor during the study. Prof Van Wyk has been with me from my undergraduate years and has always believed in me. His thorough knowledge of the subject simplified my research and aided the completion of this study. The energy that he transferred to me during this study, has made my work easier. May the Good Lord bless him.
- Mrs Farzanah Loonate, administrator in the postgraduate office for her support. She went out of your way to support me in various ways. May God bless you.
- Me Christien Terblanche who undertook the language editing of the dissertation.
- Me Simone Roos for her technical assistance and support.
- Colleagues who helped me at the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality.
- My wife, Brenda Metswamere, and my children for allowing me this opportunity and supporting me throughout my studies. Their understanding and love gave me the strength to work on this programme. I appreciate their love and patience with all the time that I was busy with my studies and not with them. I love them very much.
- My mother, Motena and my late father, Ramasilo Metswamere, for their support and encouragement through the course of my studies. They raised me to believe that I could achieve anything that I wanted. They made sure that I attended to my studies and supported me throughout.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the Almighty God.

Furthermore, I offer the findings of this study in service of improving general service delivery in South African municipalities.

I hope that these findings would find expression in similar government initiatives that to improve the quality of leadership, especially in senior management of municipalities.

DECLARATION

I, Mogapane Abel Metswamere (Student Number 10909001), hereby declare that the thesis entitled:

A conceptual situational leadership framework for senior municipal managers in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality,

submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Master of Public Administration, at the North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus, is my own work and has never been submitted by me to any other university. I also declare that all the sources used have been acknowledged by means of complete referencing.

I understand that the copies of the thesis submitted for examination will remain the property of North-West University.

Signed.....on this day.....of.....Month, 2017.

ABSTRACT

The leadership and management skills of senior municipal managers in South Africa remain critical to the delivery of quality services to citizens. Managers in municipalities are faced with various challenges in their effort to ensure that basic services are delivered efficiently, despite political, socio-economic and technological dynamics within municipalities in the country. Various scholars are of the opinion that effective delivery of quality basic services depends on adequate competencies of senior management of municipalities.

The South African government has clear legislation and policies for municipalities and councillors that govern how they should serve the communities within their jurisdiction. The relevant legislation and policies expect municipalities to be sensitive to community needs, interests and views and to be responsive to local problems and demands. Understanding and successfully addressing the interests and addressing the basic needs of local communities depend to a large extent on good management and leadership by both municipal councillors (the political sphere) and municipal officials (the administrative sphere).

The Constitution (1996) determines in Section 178 (1) that a local government shall ensure that its administration is based on sound principles of public administration, good governance and public accountability so as to render efficient services to the persons within its jurisdiction through the effective administration of its affairs. In lieu of this, this study offers a conceptual situational leadership framework based on the theoretical knowledge gained from scholarly literature in this field of study. The researcher explores phenomena such as management, leadership (leading) and situational leadership in local governance.

The study further explores the philosophy and principles underlying conceptual situational leadership. This forms the theoretical foundation for the conceptual situational leadership framework for senior municipal managers in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality. This conceptual situational leadership framework is aimed at helping senior municipal managers to understand that different leadership approaches mean that one would use different styles of intervention depending on the situation. The situational leadership theory of Hersey and Blanchard states that to be

effective, leaders must use the right leadership style for subordinates at different maturity levels during different situations.

The situational leadership theory can, apply to senior managers working in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality and other municipalities in South Africa. This may help them to lead and motivate their subordinate municipal officials to reach the objectives of the District Municipality and other South African municipalities in general. The study concludes with recommendations for the successful implementation of the developed conceptual situational leadership framework for senior managers in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality.

Key words: Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality, senior managers, municipalities, public sector, leadership, management, situational leadership and conceptual framework.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

NMMDM	Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality
SALGA	South African Local Government Association
NWU	North-West University

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Orientation

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (108 of 1996) (hereafter the Constitution) determines in Chapter 7, Section 151, the focus of this study, should consist of municipalities that should be established across the whole territory of the Republic. In accordance with the Constitution, the Local Government Municipal Structures Act (117 of 1998) lays down the framework for the establishment of specific categories of municipalities, namely:

- Category A municipalities (metropolitan municipalities);
- Category B municipalities (local municipalities); and
- Category C municipalities (district municipalities).

Category B refers to local municipalities that shares the authority in its area with the Category C municipality within which it falls. Category C refers to a district municipality that has authority to administer and make rules in an area that includes more than one local municipality. In other words, within each Category C municipality, there are a number of category B municipalities. As Categories B and C share responsibility for service delivery to communities, local municipalities, through their designated councillors, have representation on district councils. The primary task of these councillors is to represent the interests of their specific local councils at district level (SALGA, 2006:12).

These categories of municipalities are tasked to address the basic interests and needs of local communities. Local communities are defined by Aggarwal (2015:68) as a human or social system of people where the members interact personally over time and where behaviours and activities are determined collectively. Communities have specific norms and customs according to which they take collective decisions and members of such a community may freely secede whenever they want to (Aggarwal, 2015:68).

From a geographical viewpoint, a local community can be described as residents in a specific area who have "...something in common that is not always shared with others outside the community or location" (Maré & Poland, 2005:1-5). This means

that places such as towns and townships in various forms can be defined as local communities. A municipal local community may be defined as an area over which a municipality has jurisdiction to govern and which may include only one populated area or several populated areas, such as towns or townships (Maré & Poland, 2005:1-5).

Local communities can thus be formed at the hand of:

- physical geographical boundaries, which make it distinct from others;
- identity, such as having a common culture;
- a specific interest or solidarity; or
- uniqueness that was intentionally formed by, for instance, political ideologies (Aggarwal, 2015:68).

The South African government has clear legislation and policies that govern how municipalities and councillors should take care of the communities within their jurisdiction. These pieces of legislation and policies expects municipalities to be sensitive to community needs, interests and views and to be responsive to local problems and demands. The White Paper on Local Government (1998) determines that local government must be committed to "work with citizens and groups within the community to find sustainable ways to meet their social, economic and material needs and improve the quality of their lives" (White Paper, 1998). As such, municipalities should:

- target the needs of those members and groups within communities that are most often marginalised or excluded, such as women, disabled people and very poor people;
- maximise social development and economic growth;
- *provide leadership* (own emphasis) to all those who have a role to play in achieving local prosperity;
- play a central role in promoting local democracy; and
- stay on top of extremely rapid changes at the global, national and local levels and must constantly rethink the way they are organised and governed to address these changes (White Paper, 1998).

Understanding and successfully addressing the basic interests and needs of local communities depend to a large extent on good management and leadership by both municipal councillors (the political sphere) and municipal officials (the administrative sphere). According to Van der Waldt (2011:5), municipalities refer in this context to the organisational structures and entities as decentralised agencies for the national sphere of government.

The Constitution further determines in Section 178 (1) that a local government shall ensure that its administration is based on sound principles of public administration, good governance and public accountability so as to render efficient services to the persons within its area of jurisdiction through the effective administration of its affairs. Within these broad guidelines of the Constitution, a municipal council must (Section 160(1)) employ the personnel necessary for the effective performance of its functions.

Within this wide context, government promulgated the Local Government Municipal Systems Act (32 of 2000) with the goal of providing for the core principles, mechanisms and processes that are necessary to, inter alia, enable municipalities to (RSA, 2000:2):

- provide a framework for local public administration and human resource management; and
- provide a framework for the core processes of planning, performance management, resource mobilisation and organisational change.

Van der Waldt (2011:2) links this to effective and efficient delivery of quality basic services to local communities, which depends on the successful municipal activities of municipal employees. Van der Waldt (2011:2) also states that effective municipal service delivery by municipal employees is typically embedded in complex, dynamic environments that involve many unpredictable components with diverse stakeholders and are characterised by a high degree of uncertainty.

1.2 Background to the study

Sound municipal activities should be supported by effective management and leadership capacity to secure that subordinate employees implement council policies

successfully. Although the study focuses on senior managers as leaders in municipalities, it is important to emphasise that many scholars in public administration see management and leadership as different phenomena (Auriacombe & Van der Waldt, 2015:207).

According to Auriacombe and Van der Waldt (2015:207), good leadership is often equated with good management, but leadership and management can be different processes. Management strives to maintain stability and improve efficiency through effective strategic planning, management of human resources, financing and control, while effective leadership is about:

- creating a vision for the future for subordinates;
- designing the social architecture that shapes culture and values;
- inspiring and motivating followers to reach organisation goals successfully;
- developing personal leadership skills such as operational skills, human relation skills and conceptual skills; and
- creating an atmosphere for change so that subordinates are willingly following a leader (Auriacombe & Van der Waldt, 2015:207).

The nature of effective leading and leadership can be indicated as:

- a key factor in the life and success of any organization;
- the transformation of human potential into reality;
- the ultimate act that guides human resources successfully to reach organisational goals; and
- the key to motivate subordinates to do the work to be done in order to reach organisational goals (IAAP, 2009).

When defining leadership, there are as many definitions as scholars that analyse and describe the phenomenon. Khan and Naidoo (2011:73-74) posit that leadership is about influencing, motivating, persuading and enabling subordinates to contribute so that institutional goals are effectively and successfully reached. Jarbandhan (2011:21) sites various definitions on leadership, but concentrates on the definition provided by Hellriegel *et al.* (2010:295), namely that leadership has to do with

influencing subordinates to act towards the attainment of an organisation's objectives.

De Groot (2015:27) defines leadership as the way in which individuals are able to inspire others to follow them and to change any negative attitudes and behaviours in the process. Nealer (2009:138) defines leadership as "...the ability to anticipate and envision the future and initiate changes that will create a competitive advantage for the organization in the future." De Koude Grond (2012:16) stipulates that good leadership by municipal managers has three core dimensions:

- developing a clear vision for subordinates to understand their role in the municipality's success;
- leading subordinates in a professional manner so that they not only reach their own personnel ambitions, but do so within the broader municipal environment;
- being an excellent communicator; and
- motivating subordinates to follow the leader.

The focus of senior managers as leaders is therefore to engage others, especially subordinates, to change the organisation's thought processes to critical thinking and to motivate employees to strive to accomplish a set of shared objectives. Leadership in this regard plays a critical role in a municipality to secure an atmosphere of positive work ethos to the advantage of communities and the particular municipality (De Groot, 2015:27-28).

According to Peretomode (2012:13-17), scholars over time have classified leadership into broad theoretical approaches, such as classical, behavioural, contingency/situational, and emerging or contemporary leadership theories. Bolden *et al.* (2003:6) state that a review of literature on leadership reveals a constantly evolving body of knowledge. According to Bolden *et al.* (2003:14), early approaches and theories tended to focus upon the characteristics and behaviours of successful leaders, but more contemporary theories have begun to consider the role of leaders in motivating followers to follow them willingly to reach organisational goals. Bolden, *et al.* (2003:6-14) identified, *inter alia*, the following broad approaches and theories on leadership (Also see IAAP, 2009):

- **Great Man theories:** These theories are based on the belief that leaders are exceptional people, born with innate leadership qualities. The use of the term “man” was intentional, since leadership was thought to be a primarily male attribute until the latter part of the twentieth century.
- **Trait theories:** These theories concentrate on the idea that people are born with certain characteristics or traits. Leaders are born as leaders and with the qualities and characteristics to be leaders. Lists of traits or qualities associated with leadership are abundant and continue to proliferate today.
- **Behaviourist theories:** These theories concentrate on what leaders actually do rather than on their qualities. Different patterns of behaviour are observed and categorised as “styles of leadership”. This area attracted most attention from practising managers.
- **Contingency leadership theories:** These theories see leadership as specific to the situation in which leadership is being exercised. The viewpoint and focus of theories in this category are on identifying the situational variables that best predict the most appropriate or effective leadership style to fit particular circumstances. Scholars also bring a further variable into the equation, namely the maturity or development level of a subordinate. They also propose that there are differences in required leadership styles at different levels in the same organisation.
- **Behavioural theories** of leadership are theories that focus on the study of specific behaviours of leaders. For behavioural theorists, a leader’s behaviour is the best predictor of his leadership influences over subordinates and as a result, is the best determinant of leaders’ leadership success.
- **Transactional theories:** These theories emphasise the role of the performance of subordinates and is a style of leadership in which the leader promotes agreement or obedience of subordinates by both giving rewards and or punishment for achievements. It is a form of “contract” through which an effective leader will give such things as rewards or other forms of recognition in return for the commitment or loyalty of the followers.
- **Transformational theories:** The central focus of these theories is that leaders and their subordinates or followers have to elevate or raise one another to higher levels of morality and motivation during periods of change. The role of leaders is

to envision change and to find ways to motivate themselves and their followers to take part in the transformation process in order to secure better performance in the future.

The contingency approach to leadership includes the situational leadership theory of Hersey and Blanchard, the focus of this study. Scholars who focus on contingency leadership theories conclude that no one leadership style is right for every circumstance and that the maturity level of subordinates should also be taken into account when leaders guide their subordinates.

Well-known contingency and situational theories include the following (Anon, 2015:7-20):

- Fiedler's contingency theory;
- the Hersey-Blanchard theory of leadership;
- Tannenbaum and Schmidt's leadership continuum theory; and
- Adair's action-centred leadership theory.

Fiedler's contingency theory was developed by the Austrian psychologist, Fred Fiedler, in the mid-1960s. He studied the personality and characteristics of leaders. The model looks at three situations that could define a leader's behaviour in a specific environment, namely:

- **Leader member relations:** How well do the manager and the employees get along?
- **Task structure:** Is the job highly structured, unstructured, or somewhere in between?
- **Position power:** How much formal authority does the leader possess? (Anon, 2015:17-20).

The theory focuses on leadership style; the situation in which the leader acts and the formal 'power' that a leader possesses because of his or her position in an organisational structure. Criticism of the model is that Fiedler believed that leadership style is fixed and this makes the model inflexibility (Anon, 2015:17-20).

The Hersey-Blanchard theory of situational leadership provides a *situational* perspective on leadership. The underlying assumption of the situational leadership theory is that leaders can and must change their leadership styles to suite a specific situation. The theory also postulates that the development or maturity levels of a leader's subordinates play the greatest role in determining which leadership style is most appropriate for the situation. Hershey and Blanchard suggested, according to Cherry (2014:1), that there are four primary leadership styles that should be linked to four maturity levels of a subordinate.

The Hersey-Blanchard model, within the broader context of the contingency body of theoretical knowledge, will form, as mentioned, the foundation of this study.

Tannenbaum and Schmidt's leadership continuum as an approach to leadership expanded on Hersey and Blanchard's theory and they suggested that leadership style (and behaviour) varies along a continuum and as a leader moves away from an autocratic extreme style to a style where subordinates participate and become involved in decision making, such a leader will change not only his leadership style, but also his or her behaviour toward subordinates (Tannenbaum & Schmidt, 1958:95-101). This leadership continuum approach is based on the notion that leaders move on a continuum from autocratic to democratic leaders, with various leadership styles between the two extremes (Bolden, *et al.*, 2003:6-14).

Adair's action-centred leadership model states that the action-centred leader gets the job done through close relations with team members, staff and fellow managers. The model includes situational and contingent elements, because it calls for different responses by leaders when they put emphasis on a subordinate's behaviour when a specific task must be undertaken. Action-centred leaders must be task-orientated, individual-orientated and team-orientated at the same time. They should maintain discipline, build team spirit, encourage, motivate, give a sense of purpose, appoint sub-leaders, ensure communication within the group and develop the group (Gosling *et al.*, 2003:6-14).

Scholars of the situational leadership approach describe Hersey and Blanchard's work as a "theory", "approach" or "model". These different descriptions of the same

phenomenon need clarification to determine a term for use in this study. The following are examples of the different terms that are used:

- Hersey and Blanchard (1969:26-34) refer to the results of their research as a situational leadership model.
- Vecchio (1987:444-451) refers to it as a theory in a scholarly article.
- Graeff (1983:444-451) also refer to it as a theory in a scholarly article.
- Lerstrom (2008:21-27) did a case study on situational leadership and he referred to it as a leadership approach and later on in his text as a model.

When the evolution of the situational leadership theory of Hersey and Blanchard is taken into account, the following conclusion can be reach regarding the terminology:

- The situational leadership *theory* was first introduced by Hersey and Blanchard during the sixties of the previous century as the "**Life cycle theory of leadership**" (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969: 26-34).
- During the mid-1970s, they renamed the "Life cycle theory of leadership" to the "Situational leadership theory" (Hersey & Blanchard, 1977:159).
- In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Hersey and Blanchard developed their own models of situational leadership, using their original situational leadership theory as the foundation for their individual models. These models were called the Hersey Situational Leadership Model and the Blanchard Situational Leadership II Model (Blanchard *et al.*, 1985:144).

Vecchio (1987:444-451) states that most scholars refer to the situational leadership theory of Hersey and Blanchard as a theory or approach. In this study, the concepts situational leadership theory and situational leadership approach are both used. The term *theory* refers to the principles on which the theory is built, and *approach* refers to how it is manifested in practice (Richards, 2016).

The situational leadership theory has been refined and revised several times since its development and it has been used extensively in organisational leadership training and development (Northouse, 2007:91). Kahn and Naidoo (2012:660) states that in the public sector, effective leadership provides higher quality and more

efficient goods and services. He also states that effective leadership provides a sense of group cohesion, personal development and higher levels of satisfaction among those conducting the work. Effective leadership provides an overarching sense of direction and vision, an alignment with the environment, a healthy mechanism for innovation and creativity and a resource for invigorating the organisational culture (Kahn and Naidoo, 2012:660).

Jarbardan (2011:30) emphasises that senior managers as leaders are required to have outstanding communication skills, to be problem-solvers, to manage knowledge and to find innovative mechanisms to promote service delivery within the *Batho Pele* framework. This brings another important factor into the situational leadership equation, namely the skills that a situational leader should possess to be an effective leader.

The skills model or approach, first proposed by Katz (1955) and refined by Mumford, Zaccaro, and Connely (2000) lay the foundation for an understanding of skills that are important for leaders to be effective. The skills needed for effective leadership also form an important part of the situational leadership framework developed for senior managers in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality in this study.

Katz's skills model or approach focuses on three skills needed for situational leaders to be effective as senior managers and they are the following:

- **Technical or operational skills:** excellence in operational activities.
- **Human skills:** mastery of human relations.
- **Conceptual skills:** ability to understand the complex environment in which leaders must function (Wedlich & David, 2012:11-12).

The skills approach provides a structure for understanding the nature of effective leadership and the approach emphasises that these skills can be learned by managers in the process of becoming good leaders (Northouse, 2013:16).

1.3 Focus of the study

The focus of this study is the senior management level in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality in the North West Province. The district municipality includes five local municipalities, namely Ditsobotla, Mahikeng, Ratlou, Ramotshere Moiloa and Tswaing. The district municipality covers an estimated 28 206 km² with an estimated population 842 698, as indicated by the 2011 census of Statistics South Africa (Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality, 2014:T1.2.1).

There are six hundred and forty (644) employees who work for the municipality, of which nine are at a senior managerial level (Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality, 2014:21).

1.4 Problem statement

Kahn and Naidoo (2011:71) express concern that leadership in the South African public service, including local government, is facing specific problems, one problem being the state of leadership in public institutions. They conclude that local government institutions are currently adversely affected by the degenerating state of leadership (Kahn & Naidoo, 2011:71). They mention that in his State of the Nation Address in 2011, President Zuma indicated a number of challenges that the public sector in South Africa must address urgently. He stated that the citizens of South Africa are adversely impacted by the worsening state of leadership in the public sector. While a number of valid reasons can be advanced for this phenomenon, he states that ineffective leadership in the South African public sector may be one of the core reasons for poor service delivery (Kahn & Naidoo, 2011:71).

However, this is also a problem experienced in many other countries. During an international summit held in Canada, it became clear that leadership in government institutions experiences the following problems:

- Poor leadership is a key factor that hampers the success of government organisations.
- Human potential is not converted into reality.
- Government institutions do not fully tap into the potential of effective leadership to help them reach their goals successfully.

- The potential of effective leadership to motivate subordinates to reach organisational goals is not being utilised fully (IAAP: 2009).

The question of poor leadership seems to be a problem in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality as well. The Annual Performance Report (2014:275-277) of the municipality stated, for instance, that municipal management "...did not implement effective human resources activities to ensure that adequate and sufficiently skilled human resources are in place". This seemingly includes a lack of management and leadership development and performance management programmes at the senior managerial level. A work skills plan (WSP) was submitted to the local Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA) to report on senior management training implementation and this report indicated that due to financial constraints, not all training planned for senior officials could be implemented in the municipality. The skills competencies of senior managers, including managerial and leadership skills, may therefore not be at the required level (Annual Report, 2014:275-277).

Leadership is a complex research area and across all sectors, there is uncertainty of which leadership approach, styles and behaviour are the most effective to guide subordinates through the maze of complexities in their internal and external municipal environment (Altbeker, 2003:4). Difficulties with linking the traditional management functions with the more "open" leadership approaches is also problematic. In many cases, municipalities still have a more autocratic internal environment because of strict rules and regulations. This hampers the leadership approaches of leaders. It remains a difficult process for municipal leaders to integrate their leadership responsibilities with the core business of municipalities and then at the same time to lead their organisational entities and subordinates successfully to reach the goals (Altbeker, 2003:4).

In light of the above discussion, the general research question that guides the study, is formulated as follows: *"Can knowledge of the situational leadership theory of Hersey and Blanchard and the ultimate development of a conceptual situational leadership framework guide and assist senior municipal managers in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality to become more effective leaders?"*

1.5 OBJECTIVES WITH THE STUDY

In order to address the guiding question, the following objectives were identified:

- To explore and understand the theoretical foundation of leadership and to contextualise the situational leadership theory in this broad body of knowledge on leadership (Chapter 2);
- To analyse and comprehend the contents of the situational leadership theory of Hersey and Blanchard as one of the contingency theories, which will form the theoretical basis of the situational leadership conceptual framework for senior managers in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality (Chapter 3);
- To determine and discuss the leadership skills needed for effective situational leaders at the hand of Katz's three-skills model, which focuses on operational, human relations and conceptual skills and which is included in the situational leadership conceptual framework (Chapter 4);
- To establish the theoretical principles on which a conceptual framework should be developed (Chapter 5); and
- To develop a situational leadership framework for senior management in the mentioned district municipality (Chapter 5).

1.6 Theoretical statements

Theoretical statements support the theory(ies) that a study is founded on. They introduce and broadly describe the theory(ies) that explain(s) how the research problem, general research question and objectives will be addressed (Richards, 2016).

Theoretical statement one: Leadership is a process through which a person influences others to accomplish objectives and to direct them to achieve organisational goals in a cohesive and coherent way (Jarbandhan, 2011:21-22).

Theoretical statement two: Contingency theories, of which the situational leadership theory is one, are theories that contend that there is no one best way of leading and that a leader's leadership style should be adapted from situation to situation to secure the successful implementation of an organisation's goals (Hughes *et al.*, 1998:101).

Theoretical statement three: The situational leadership theory of Hersey and Blanchard can, according to Farmer (2005:484), be described as a leadership style where a leader “must adjust his leadership style to fit the development level (maturity level) of the subordinates he is trying to influence”. Within the context of situational leadership, leaders should be able to change their leadership style according to the level of development of subordinates and the situation in which this takes place.

Theoretical statement four: Katz argues that leadership skills are different from the traits or qualities of leaders. Skills are what leaders can accomplish, whereas traits are what leaders are and born with. Skills can be identified as operational, human and conceptual skills. Operational skills refer to the knowledge and competency that a person should develop to be proficient in a specific work or activity. A human skill enables a leader to work with people. Conceptual skills are abilities to work with complex ideas and concepts (Mumford *et al.*, 2007:154-166).

Theoretical statement five: Leadership skills can be developed over time and could enable a manager as situational leader to understand the environment in which he and his followers can function better and to visualise the future in which his organisation and its employees will have to work (Mumford *et al.*, 2007:154-166).

Theoretical statement six: A scientifically developed framework (or model) is a graphical presentation of a process, function or system. This may take the form of diagrams, figures, tables, charts or schemes. From this vantage point a model or framework enables the reader to see and comprehend all the variables and relationships among them that the researcher considers as part of the phenomenon under investigation (Van der Waldt, 2013:11).

1.7 Research design

A research design refers to the overall strategy that a researcher chooses to integrate the different components of the study in a coherent and logical way, thereby ensuring that the research problem is adequately addressed and the objectives of the study are reached (De Vos, 2011:17). In the social sciences, a research design can be qualitative, quantitative or a mixed-method, the last-mentioned including both the mentioned designs. This study follows a qualitative

research design, which is usually associated with the uncovering of the deeper meaning of a phenomenon in the real world (Creswell, 2013: 14-30).

Creswell (2003:4) further defines a qualitative design as a means for exploring and understanding of the meaning of phenomena where specific problems are identified that should be addressed. Denzin and Lincoln (2000:2) state that qualitative research consists of a set of interpretive mechanisms that makes the world visible to the researcher and that will help the researcher to interpret an occurrence in the real world better and to make more sense of it.

A qualitative approach to research transforms the unknown to the known through the utilisation of specific data collecting techniques, such as the analysis of literature, interviews and questionnaires (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000:37-38) and (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:2). Qualitative researchers therefore study occurrences and events in their natural settings and attempt to make sense of it and bring meaning to it in the form of something new (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:3).

De Vos (2011:305) explains that a qualitative research design or approach entails the following:

- The approach is used to answer questions about the complex nature of a phenomenon for the purpose of describing and understanding the phenomenon from the participants' point of view.
- The qualitative researcher seeks a better understanding of complex situations.
- Their work is often exploratory in nature.
- The research starts with a general research question rather than a specific hypothesis.

A qualitative research design does not always include an empirical phase and may focus only on a thorough literature analysis, which can result in a conceptual framework or a model. This links theory and practice together in the form of new knowledge obtained through scientific research, which then culminates in a practical way to implement it (Kowalczyk, 2014). In such an instance, the phase of exploring the phenomenon and the environment in which it occurs may result in a visual format, such as a conceptual framework (Kowalczyk, 2014).

This study undertakes a thorough analysis of relevant sources on the theories on contingency leadership and situational leadership. This has resulted in a conceptual leadership framework to guide senior managers in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality to become more effective leaders. Knowledge is also gained on the leadership skills that may help them to become effective situational leaders.

1.8 Methodology

Bak (2004:25) explains that the function of the research methodology is to give the reader a clear indication of the way in which the researcher hopes to achieve the research objectives. The methodology should explain the detail of the method and procedures to be undertaken in the research (Bak, 2004:25).

1.8.1 Data collecting techniques and analysis

The primary source of information for this study is the available scholarly literature.

1.8.1.1 Literature study

Mouton (2008:86) identifies a literature study as the first stage of a research endeavour. The process of reviewing existing literature ensures that important literature on the subject under investigation is retrieved, analysed and described in a scientific manner. Mouton (2008:86) also explains that the researcher should review the existing body of scholarly literature to obtain the recent most reliable sources of information on which to build new research. The researcher establishes general knowledge and an understanding of fundamental concepts regarding his own study through the literature review.

Reviewing scholarly literature requires the ability to undertake multiple tasks, from finding and evaluating relevant material to synthesising information from various sources. It requires critical thinking to discover what a phenomenon is all about (Bourne, 2013:16).

Bourne identifies the following important elements when undertaking a literature study:

- Defining the topic precisely.

- Searching and re-searching the literature.
- Always keeping the purpose of the study in mind.
- Taking notes while reading.
- Being critical and consistent.
- Finding a logical structure to present information.
- Always being objective.
- Using contemporary sources, but not forgetting older sources.

After the analysis of the information gathered during the course of a literature study, the findings should be interpreted to attach significance and meaning to it. This gives a researcher a general sense of what the sources produced that explains the phenomenon under discussion, in this case leadership. This process entails the identification of repeating ideas expressed by different authors and then interpreting these ideas to report it to a specific audience (Schmidt & Hunter, 2004:1). Schmidt and Hunter (2004:1) further state that when themes and categories have been identified and data have been analysed, the data that have been produced should be presented in a rich and exhaustive manner in a scientific dissertation or thesis. It should include the findings, address the final results and must make recommendations to address the research problem.

A researcher has to make sure that the conceptual framework that has been developed is trustworthy by building it based on the theories that have been analysed (Mishler, 1990:415). A conceptual framework derived from extensive research and a literature study should be implemented by knowledgeable practitioners to secure the successful implementation of such a framework (Stutsky, Spence & Laschinger, 2014:2).

A researcher should make sure that the following aspects are considered before a conceptual framework is implemented (Moody & Shanks, 2003:3-13):

- The researcher should determine whether all the concepts proposed in the framework make sense, not only to the researcher, but also to other scholars and practitioners.
- The researcher should determine whether the completed framework makes sense at all.

- The researcher should determine whether the framework is based on a reasonable theory for scholars studying the phenomenon.
- The researcher should determine whether the framework presents a reasonable practical understanding for the practitioners who must implement the framework.

1.9 Significance of the study

The significance of the study on the situational leadership theory of Hersey and Blanchard is threefold:

- The framework provides a platform for the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality to develop the ability of its senior managers to lead their subordinates effectively to reach the municipality's goals, namely the delivery of services to its communities.
- It provides a platform for other municipalities, including district municipalities, to improve the leadership ability of their senior managers to act effectively as leaders. Because this is not a case study in the true sense of the word, the framework can be adapted and implemented in other district municipalities.
- It generates new knowledge in the field of situational leadership, particularly in the context of local government.

1.10 Ethical considerations

The researcher adhered to the following ethical aspects over the course of the research:

- The researcher ensured that selected participants in the study were treated in an ethical manner and according to the ethical guidelines laid down by the North-West University (NWU).
- The researcher only proceeded with the study after consent had been obtained from the district municipality (political and administrative levels).
- The researcher ensured that names and confidential information were withheld.

1.11 Chapter layout

The research includes the following chapters:

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 1 offers an introduction to the study. An analysis of the leadership problems encountered by the municipality is presented. The chapter formulates the general research question and from it, the objectives of the study. The theoretical foundation on which the study is based is discussed and the methodology to be followed to reach the objectives of the study is described. It is a qualitative research design that focuses on an analysis of scholarly literature on leadership and situational leadership.

Chapter 2: A contextual and conceptual orientation of leadership in the public sector

This chapter explores the public sector, which includes municipalities. Leadership as such is also contextualised as it features in the public sector in South Africa. Public sector “managerial leaders” are described. The chapter argues that senior managers in the public sector have to find a balance between management and leadership activities in public institutions. The philosophical underpinning for managerial leaders is discussed. From this, the chapter concludes that managerial leaders are persons who perform their various managerial tasks more effectively by providing proper leadership to their subordinates. Leading is thus regarded in this chapter as an inescapable part of a public sector manager’s managerial tasks (Akrani, 2010:1). The chapter also gives a theoretical background of relevant theories on leadership, such as the great man theory, the trait theory, the contingency theory and the behaviour theories of leadership, which forms the foundation of this study.

Chapter 3: Exploring the situational leadership theories of Hersey and Blanchard

This chapter explores leadership theories such as the great man theory, the trait theory, the behavioural theory and the contingency theory of leadership. In addition, the chapter explores the context in which the situational leadership framework was developed. The managerial leaders in the public sector are facing many challenges when it comes to their leadership role during policy-implementation actions. This chapter argues that if senior municipal managers have an understanding of leadership principles, they will become better leaders *per se*.

Chapter 4: The development of leadership skills of senior managers as leaders in municipalities

As the situational leadership theory is the focus of this study, the principles of this theory are analysed and discussed in this chapter. Situational leadership theories include various approaches to leadership, such as Fiedler's contingency approach, Vroom's decision-making contingency approach and the situational leadership approach of Hersey and Blanchard. Because Hersey and Blanchard's theory forms the foundation of this study and of the situational leadership framework that is developed, it is analysed in more detail.

The leadership skills needed to become an effective leader are discussed in this chapter. The significance of being a good leader who has mastered the skills to lead subordinates effectively, is explored. An effective leader can make a success of a weak organisation, but a leader with poor leadership skills can ruin even the best organisation. That is why developing effective leadership skills at all levels across the organization can return significant value. These skills also form part of the conceptual framework presented in the next chapter.

The development of leadership skills plays a critical role in the effective functioning of senior managers as leaders in all organisations, whether in the public or private sector. Senior managers in municipalities should therefore take any opportunity to develop their leadership skills. In order to ensure this, senior managers as leaders in municipalities should focus on specific leadership skills to become effective leaders in their department. The three-skills model of Robert Katz is ideally suited to guide senior managers in any organisation. Katz builds his three-skills leadership model on three specific leadership skills needed by an effective leader. They are technical (operational) skills, human skills and conceptual skills.

Chapter 5: A conceptual situational leadership framework for senior managers in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality

A conceptual framework is defined as a network of interlinked concepts that together provide a visual picture of a phenomenon or phenomena experienced in real life situations. A conceptual framework is the outcome of an analysis of literature on

relevant theories. It therefore paves the way for implementing scientific knowledge in a visual format to bring theory and practice closer to each other.

A conceptual framework for leadership in the Modiri Molema District Municipality is described in this chapter based on the extensive literature study and analysis of relevant theories on leadership and situational leadership in previous chapters. First, the chapter provides the theoretical foundation for the scientific development and implementation of a conceptual framework.

Chapter 6: Conclusion and recommendations

This chapter focuses on a summary of all the chapters. It especially indicates whether the objectives of the study have been reached successfully or not. It is also important to make recommendations regarding the development of the senior managers in the Modiri Molema District Municipality as more effective leaders in the departments where they have to lead.

The following chapter focuses on leadership in the public sector. It describes what the public sector entails and contextualises leadership in this sector. Special attention is given to leadership in the local sphere of government. The better-known theories on leadership, such as the great man theory, the trait theory, the behavioural theory and the contingency theory are examined to determine where the situational leadership theory fits in.

CHAPTER 2: A CONTEXTUAL AND CONCEPTUAL ORIENTATION OF LEADERSHIP IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

2.1 Introduction

Stern (1986:200-22) describes the term *context* as the setting or situation in which something takes place or happens. *Contextual orientation* refers to an action that explains or describes a specific setting or situation in which something takes place (Stern, 1986:200-227). In this study, the public sector, which includes municipalities, represents the setting in which something (leadership) takes place.

The term *concept* refers in this chapter to the features or characteristics of an abstract or nonconcrete phenomenon, such as theory (Stock, 2010:1951–1969). *Conceptual orientation* refers to a coherent and rational analysis and discussion of theoretical principles on which a specific phenomenon is founded (such as leadership) (Feiman-Nemser, 1987:1-2). It gives a theoretical background of relevant theories on leadership, such as the great man theory, the trait theory, the contingency theory and behavioural theories of leadership (Feiman-Nemser, 1987:1-2).

Public sector “managerial leaders” are officials who are put in a position where they should find a balance between management and leadership activities in a public institution (Akrani, 2010:2). Managerial leaders would be able to perform their various managerial tasks more effectively if they provide their subordinates with proper leadership. Leading is therefore, an inescapable part of a public sector manager’s managerial tasks (Akrani, 2010:1).

Managerial leaders in the public sector are faced with many challenges when it comes to policy implementation. Negative perceptions among community members regarding the successful implementation of service delivery policies is on the increase and this is evident from the upsurge in the number of service delivery protests (Mdlongwa, 2014:39). When focussing on policy implementation in the local sphere of government, scholars have general agreement that the implementation of policies needs a solid theoretical foundation (both managerial and with regard to leadership) to improve service delivery (Mdlongwa, 2014:39).

According to Luthuli (2009:460), some of the key causes of poor service delivery by municipalities are to a large extent related to the lack of managerial and leadership skills among senior managers. Strong, coherent and transformative managers are needed to steer the policy implementation process in the right direction to achieve municipal objectives better (Koma, 2010: 116-117). Many municipalities lack proper leadership skills development programmes based on sound theoretical leadership principles (Meyer & Cloete, 2006:305).

One way in which to address the aforementioned problems is to assess the leadership approach and style of the senior managers in the municipality. The question to be answered is whether they follow the 'best' leadership approach and style to motivate their subordinates to reach the municipality's goals regarding service delivery (Turner, 2007:1554-1557).

This chapter first focuses on the context of the public sector environment and then attention is focused on the theoretical foundations of leadership.

2.2 The South African public sector

According to the Constitution, the public sector in South Africa is composed of national, provincial and local (municipal and district municipalities) spheres of government. The Constitution demarcates local government as a distinctive sphere of government. It is interdependent and interrelated with the national and provincial spheres of government (Ndzelu, 2016:27). Each sphere of government is expected to exercise their powers and perform their functions in a manner that does not encroach on the geographical, functional or institutional integrity of government in the other spheres (SALGA, 2006:2).

According to Mthethwa (2007:1-44), the public sector of South Africa is responsible for 40 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the country. This means that in monetary value, the public sector is responsible for a large number of all the finished goods and services produced within the country's borders during any given period. Innovation, good governance and leadership in the public sector are required to enhance the vision of a developmental state that seeks to bring about a better life for all in our country (Mthethwa, 2007:1-44).

2.2.1 The difference between the public and the private sectors

There are specific differences in the functioning of the public sector and the private sector. The activities in the public sector are unique in that its focus is on service delivery and not on profit making (Van der Waladt, 2011:67). There are also differences in the nature, demographics, ideology, type of dispensation and work culture related to each of these sectors. Even the managerial and leadership cultures of private sector organizations and public sector institutions differ (Van der Waladt, 2011:67).

Maseti and Gumede (2011:1479) indicate that managerial leadership in the public and private sectors has its own signature. Public sector managerial leaders are more and more under pressure to improve service delivery and this is closely linked to effective leadership and the motivation of workers in this sector. As a result, there is a growing demand for public sector managerial leaders with sound leadership skills and capabilities that enable them to carry out their leadership role under various circumstances and in various situations (Maseti & Gumede, 2011:1479-1485). Agranoff (2012:17) argues that from a motivational point of view, there are differences between what motivates managerial leaders in the public sector to do their work compared to the private sector. Managerial leaders in the public sector are motivated by intangible aspects to a greater extent than managerial leaders in the private sector. Specifically, according to Agranoff (2012:17), these intangible sources of motivation are closely associated with serving and forwarding a public cause. Financial rewards play a significant role in motivating private sector managers.

2.2.2 Municipalities as part of the public sector

According to SALGA (2006), local government can be defined as that part of the public sector that "...interacts with citizens, civil society and the private sector in a localised manner". As such, it is where residents and businesses receive services from the public sector and where citizens regularly interact with public municipal officials. The most common way for the public sector to interact with people at the local level is through elected local governments (municipalities). When local government officials are responsive to the needs of their communities, it increases

the responsiveness, effectiveness and accountability of the public sector (SALGA, 2006).

The local government sector or sphere in South Africa (the third sphere of government) consists, as mentioned, of the following structure (The Constitution, Chapter 7 (155)):

- Metropolitan municipalities, which provide local government services in major urban areas (Category A municipalities); and
- A two-tiered system of municipalities (Category B and C municipalities), which provide local services in cities, towns and rural areas.

Category B municipalities refers to local municipalities that share the authority in its area with a Category C municipality, which are district municipalities. A district municipality and the local municipalities within the area of that district municipality, must cooperate with one another by assisting and supporting each other. Part of this cooperation is that a district municipality, on request of a local municipality within its area, may provide financial, technical and administrative support services to that local municipality to the extent that the district has the capacity to provide those support services (SALGA, 2006:12).

The significance of quality service delivery by local government has been extensively researched over the past decades. Local government institutions, such as municipalities, are widely recognized as the primary drivers of service delivery to the people due to their ability to facilitate agglomeration services that will secure economic growth. In developed countries, urban areas are supposed to be the engines of service delivery and economic growth and they should provide the platform for social transformation and political inclusion (Boex, *et al*, 2016:i).

This is the case because dynamic and prosperous cities and towns are able to attract and retain both the talent and the capital investments necessary to generate economic opportunities for the development and securing of high quality urban services and infrastructure (Boex, *et al*, 2016:i). The problem is, however, that decentralised local government does not always ensure quality service delivery (Boex, *et al*, 2016:i).

The assumption that the local government sphere are the key decision makers and key service delivery providers in their jurisdictions and that they are largely autonomous when it comes to urban service provision, seems to be contradicted by emerging evidence in decentralization literature. Boex *et al.* (2016:2-8) posit that local government, as part of the public sector structure, should focus on better intergovernmental relations, subnational governance practices, subnational public finance management, local public service delivery and local economic development in an effort to in developing and transition countries around the world (Boex *et al.*, 2016:2-9).

Chapter 5 of the Municipal Structures Act (1998) deals extensively with the role that the local government sector should play in securing effective service delivery. District municipalities are responsible for the following local government functions when municipalities are not able to deliver them efficiently:

- Integrated development planning for the whole area;
- Potable water supply;
- Bulk supply of electricity;
- Wastewater and sewage disposal management;
- Solid waste disposal;
- Roads; and
- Infrastructures and facilities that service the entire district.

District municipalities are therefore part of the public sector and should, according to van der Waldt (2011:12), submit to the strong demands from both the public and politicians for improved public service delivery. This puts pressure on senior municipal managers not only to undertake their management tasks, but also to be effective leaders.

2.3 Management and leadership in the public sector

Many scholars on leadership are of the opinion that leadership *per se* is a full and equal managerial task such as policy making, managing human resources, organizing, directing (leading), managing finances and establishing control mechanism. However, other scholars such as Auriacombe and Van der Waldt

(2015:207) are of the opinion that the management tasks of managers and their leadership activities are two separate practices, although closely linked.

These scholars feel that management has to do with the more formal tasks of a manager and that leadership is a skill that every manager can develop over time in order to better undertake their managerial tasks. Managers who are not able to develop their leadership skills may not be as effective in implementing their management task as those managers who are able to develop their leadership skills (Auriacombe & Van der Waldt, 2015:207).

Murray (2010:1), however, cautions against a total separation of management and leadership and states that management and leadership must go hand-in-hand. The activities are not the same, but they are closely linked and are complementary. Any effort to separate the two phenomena completely is likely to cause more problems than it solves (Murry, 2010:1).

This study focuses on senior managers as leaders working in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality, thus clarity should be provided on the leadership approach that is favoured in this study.

2.3.1 The management and leadership approach followed in this study

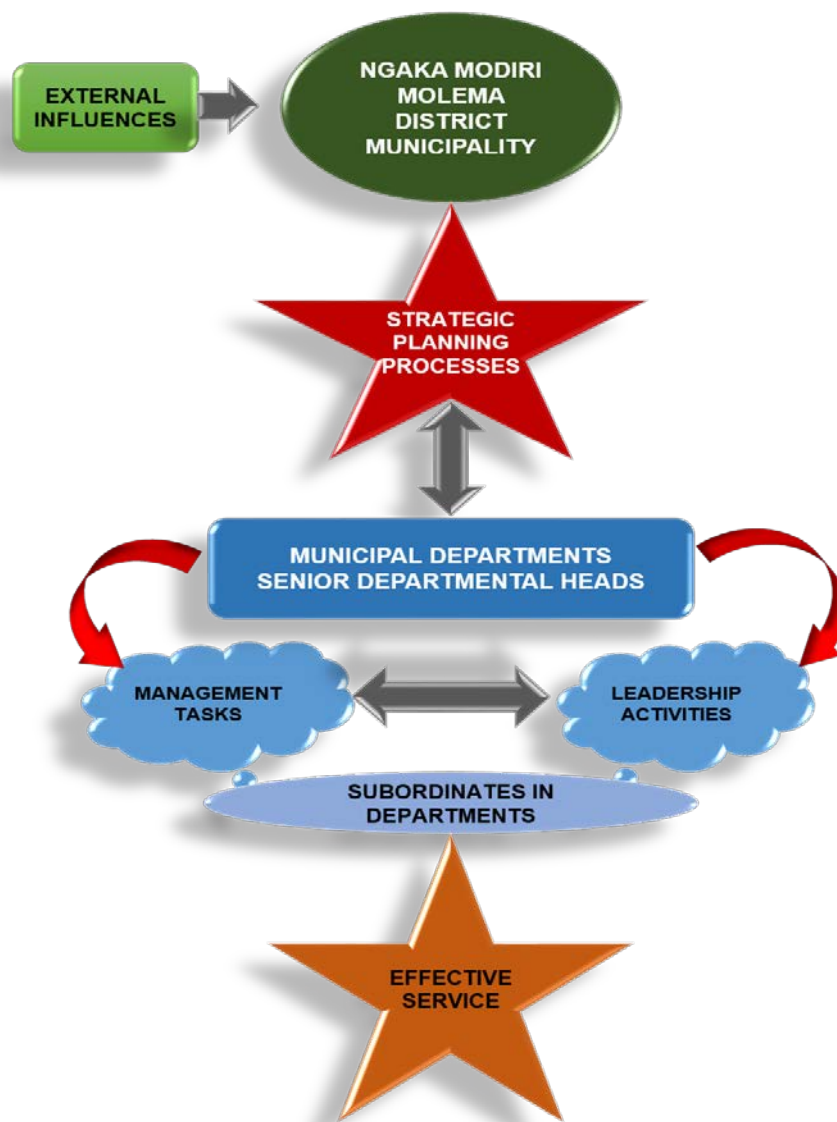
Murry (2010:1) sees management and leadership holistically, comprising recognised formal management tasks that focus on accomplishing the prescribed goals of the organisation. Leadership is the ability of managers to influence, motivate, guide and lead their subordinates to contribute willingly toward the effective and successful attainment of the prescribed organisational goals (Murry, 2010:1).

Not every manager in a managerial position may necessarily have good leadership skills. However, should a person find him or herself in a management position, such a person should strive to become a good leader (Akrani, 2010:2). A manager who lacks effective leadership skills will, according to Murry (2010:1-2), manage an organization “into the ground” in a short period of time. Developing effective leadership skills cannot be achieved overnight and it takes time and energy to improve leadership skills and to become a more effective manager (Murry, 2010:1).

The management leadership approach that followed in this study posits that persons who find themselves in managerial positions in a municipality have to be both strong managers and strong leaders. Therefore, the term *managerial leaders* is used. Managerial leaders should have the ability to get their subordinates on board to bear their day-to-day responsibilities in an effective manner and should lead and motivate them to follow leadership willingly towards reaching the organisation's goals (Akrani, 2010:2).

This can be illustrated as follows:

Figure 1: The management and leadership approach of this study



Adapted from the viewpoints of Murry (2010:1) and Akrani (2010:2)

To give more substance to the diagramme above, the management and leadership activities of senior managers in municipalities are highlighted in the next two subsections.

2.3.2 *Management activities of senior municipal managers*

According to Van der Waldt (2011:2), due to political dynamics, development complexities, resource constraints and financial risks, managers in the public sector (such as municipal managers), find themselves in a challenging environment in which management, and especially accurate planning, are exceptionally difficult. Jarbandhan (2011:21-22) is of the opinion that the effectiveness of managers as leaders in municipalities is critical for the success of municipalities as public sector organisations. He concurs with Van der Waldt (2011:2) and indicates that with the ever-evolving national and global environment, managers in the public sector have to possess the relevant competencies to lead these organisations successfully in order to enhance service delivery to communities (Jarbandhan, 2011:21-22).

At the beginning of the previous century (1916), the French engineer Henri Fayol formulated the first so-called principles of management, which eventually became the classical management theory. Van Vliet (2014) indicates that Fayol identified five managerial activities or functions (or principles) that describe the role of a manager in any organization. Although these functions have been changed or adapted since then, they are still in one form or the other relevant to public and private organisations today. In spite of the many other management functions identified by scholars later on, the core management functions identified by Fayol still remain the basis for discussions on the tasks of a manager. Van Vliet (2014) identifies the five management functions of Fayol as follows:

- planning;
- organising;
- commanding;
- coordinating; and
- controlling.

Planning entails looking ahead. This requires the active participation of the entire organization. With respect to time and implementation, planning must be linked to and coordinated at different organisational levels. Planning must take the organization's available resources and flexibility of personnel into consideration, as this will guarantee continuity (Young, 2003:2-5).

Organizing entails developing and aligning an organisation's structures to achieve organisational goals. It also includes arranging several elements into a purposeful sequential or spatial (or both) order or structure. This means that there must be sufficient capital, staff and raw materials so that the organization can run smoothly and that it can build a good working structure. An organizational structure with a good division of functions and tasks is of crucial importance (Young, 2003:2-5).

Commanding is when a manager gives orders and clear working instructions to employees so that they will know exactly what is required of them. Successful managers have integrity, communicate clearly and base their decisions on regular audits (Young, 2003:2-5).

Coordinating has to do with the alignment of all the activities in an organisation to harmonise them with an organisation's goals and objectives. This requires clear communication and good leadership (Young, 2003:2-5).

Controlling is when a manager verifies whether everything in his or her department is going according to plan. Controlling is a basic managerial function. It is the process of ensuring the actual activities confined to planned activity. It is an essential function for all levels of management. It ensures that the right things are done in the right manner at the right time (the meaning of controlling). Controlling ensures that all the organizational activities are carried out in accordance with the organisation's strategic plan (Young, 2003:2-5).

Senior managers in municipalities should strive to create an environment where organisational resources and public servants can deliver effective services to the citizens by means of effective planning, organising, financial and human resource management and control (Van Vliet, 2014). In order to implement these management principles successfully, managers should master leadership skills and

should understand how effective leadership can provide the mechanism to manage effectively (Van Vliet, 2014).

A managerial leader can be defined as a person who has a combination of knowledge, skills and experience to lead other people and to make them his or her “willing” followers (Jarbandhan, 2011:44). He defines leaders in the public sector as persons who can motivate subordinates to follow them to promote better service delivery and in the process, help to overcome the critical outlook of the public towards public service institutions such as municipalities (Jarbandhan, 2011:44).

2.3.3 Leadership as activity of senior municipal managers

A leader can be defined as a person who has a combination of knowledge, skills and experience to lead other people and make them his or her ‘willing’ followers (Jarbandhan, 2011:44). He defines leaders in the public sector as persons who can motivate subordinates to follow them to promote better service delivery and in the process, help to overcome the critical outlook of the public towards public service institutions, such as municipalities (Jarbandhan, 2011:44).

Leadership has been identified by scholars as a key determinant of the success of public sector organisations, such as municipalities. Research indicates that creating the appropriate leadership development climate and leadership approach within a municipality will lead to a motivated workers core, increase performance and will establish a ‘happy’ core of subordinates that are focussed on reaching municipal goals (Drajat, 2014:79-85).

A senior manager as leader in municipalities, should have or develop outstanding communication skills, be problem-solvers, able to manage information and be innovative to find the best way to motivate subordinates to promote service delivery within the municipality (Turrini, 2012:1-2). Furthermore, Turrini (2013:1) explained that a municipal leader should have specific leadership skills or will have to learn such skills in order to motivate subordinates to improve the performance of public sector organizations, such as municipalities.

Tshishonga (2013:357) is, however, of the opinion that management and leadership in all public sector institutions are still taking place in a too rigid bureaucratic or even

autocratic manner. He believes that transforming this approach to a more open approach to management and leadership, public sector institutions should implement a more democratic approach to management and leadership. Such an approach to management and leadership in the public sector, and especially at local government level, may create better leadership which is essential to establish a work force that will not only strive to reach their organisations goals, but is in the process striving to reach their own goals (Tshishonga, 2013:357).

Managers in municipalities however tends to be cautious for any change in their management and leadership approaches or styles because of the intolerance of internal as well as external role-players regarding any failures by them (Donkin, 2004). This is especially applicable for senior managers because of constant scrutinising of inhabitants of how effective they do their work and to what level they are successful in deliver services. The fear of failure thus dampens many new approaches to management and leadership (Tshishonga, 2013:357).

Negative reporting by the media and excessive interference by politicians will also more likely inhibit any new initiatives of municipal managers as leaders to minimising failure. This situation eliminates development on various levels that include the development of the leadership approach of senior managers (Donkin, 2004).

Donkin (2004) states that unlike in the private sector where the results of successful leadership are measured at the hand of clear financial growth, successful public sector leadership cannot be benchmarked against financial gain or profit. In the public sector few concrete or visible results are noticed to measure effective leadership. According to Donkin (2004), effective leadership can in many instances only be measured at the hand of how motivated subordinates are to reach their and the municipalities goals and how enthusiastically they are willing to follow a leader. This may lead to a situation where managers as leaders will focus more on institutionalised leadership methods rather to focus more on new approaches to leadership (Donkin, 2004).

New leadership approaches should include more collaborative and engaging leadership styles to lead subordinates. Donkin (2004), however, is of the opinion that leadership in the public sector as such is based on personal power or power they

gain from their seniority in their position in the organisational hierarchy. Turrini (2011:1), on the other hand, is of the opinion that personal power should rather be founded on the ideal leadership approach to accomplish success and that the situational leadership approach may be the answer.

It thus seems that, according to Turrini (2011:1), the development of effective leaders on local government level (local municipalities and district municipalities) should follow a more 'open' approach where a leader is willing to delegate more decision-making power to subordinates as they develop more into capable workers.

In light of the above, the following section explores in greater depth what senior managers as leaders in the municipal context entail.

2.4 Senior municipal managers as leaders

Senior managers in municipalities are an essential part of the municipal management system and as professional officials their primary responsibility is to manage their respective departments effectively and to lead their subordinates in an efficient way. As such senior municipal managers form an essential part of the management team of a municipality (Leinonen and Juntunen, 2007:4).

In practice this means that senior managers as leaders of their subordinates should endeavor to maximize (Van der Waldt, 2007:75) and (SALGA, 2011):

- A municipality's internal activities through, for instance, the development of competent subordinates able and motivated to reach the municipalities goals.
- Their own performance through the development of their managerial and leadership capacity and skills.
- A positive work ethos or spirit amongst their subordinates to such a level that the municipality becomes a focused organisation striving to deliver effective municipal services.

Senior municipal managers have thus a specific role when it comes to managing and leading their subordinates effectively.

2.4.1 Role of senior managers in a municipality

Newell and Ammons (1987:247) describe that senior managers should manage their respective departments according to well-tested management principles. They should also lead their subordinates at the hand of sound leadership principles as described in leadership theories. Newell and Ammons (1987:247) further indicate that senior municipal managers have a policy-initiating role to play which means that they should understand the culture, needs, requests and demands of their community and forward it to councillors to develop policies in this regard.

Senior managers are also policy implementers and to achieve success with this, they should be exceptionally good leaders of their subordinates who must in the final analysis implement the policies. As policy implementers, they should not follow an attitude of implementing policies just because they exist on paper or to satisfy the expectations of policy-makers (councillors). Instead municipal managers should implement policies in a spirit of always thinking about improving implementation practice of their subordinates to secure more successful addressing of community needs. The reason for this is that the policy implementation processes takes place in the dynamic environment in which municipalities function (London *et al.*, 2009:1-6.).

In line with this, the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) states that senior municipal managers should attend to the following (SALGA, 2011:20-23):

- They must develop means to establish and assess community needs and maintain a management system to address these needs to the satisfaction levels required by the communities (Also see Section 55(1)(d) and (o) of the Systems Act).(*part of policy formulation*).
- They are responsible for the provision of services to the local community in a sustainable and equitable manner through the effective leading of subordinates (Also see Section 55(1)(d) and (o) of the Systems Act)(*This is policy implementation*).

Dahlgard and Dahlgard (1999:1) indicate that senior managers must demonstrate that they are skilful as managers and that they know and understand the principles on which effective leadership is built.

They call their view the "Seven S's" – framework, which emphasises that managers as leaders should be:

- **Strategic thinkers (cognitive managerial and leadership skills):** They must be strategic thinkers in a competitive environment which is also a conceptual leadership skill.
- **Specialist on organisational structures and systems (management and leadership skills):** They must know and understand the organisational structures of their organisation in order to understand what is expected of each of their subordinates and to coordinate their subordinates work to reach organisational goals.
- **Knowledgeable of their leadership styles (aspect of leadership theories):** They must know the principles of effective leadership and leadership styles, such as democratic or autocratic leaders. This is important when it comes to the leadership capabilities of a manager and how willing subordinates will be to follow willingly.
- **Knowledgeable on their organisational HR-policies and rules (management and leadership):** They must have knowledge on their organisations human resource policies and rules so that they can manage, lead and motivate their subordinates on aspects such as performance management systems, performance management appraisal procedures, salary scales, formal training and development and career planning.
- **Developing their own leadership skills (Katz Three-skill model of leadership):** They should focus on the development of their own leadership skills such as technical skills, human skills and cognitive skills in order to become more effective leaders. With these skills, leaders will be able to lead their subordinates on matters such as morale behaviour, good attitudes, and high levels of motivation.
- **Link subordinate goals to that of the organisation (situational leadership skills):** They must be able to link subordinates' goals with that of the organisation. Linking goals will provide stability and this will lay the foundation to motivate and lead subordinates to visualise and reach these goals.
- **Harnessing and developing the operational, human and cognitive skills of their subordinates (relevant to management and leadership):** They must

develop the operational, human and conceptual skills of their subordinates so that they can become more mature and successful workers.

Peters and Waterman's (1984:15) are also of the opinion that in order for senior managers to be effective leaders, they should see the “seven S's” as seven guiding factors to align their thoughts and the thoughts of their subordinates in pointing in the same direction of the organisational goals.

Senior managers in municipalities who possesses over the qualities and skills to be effective leaders and motivators in organisations will be able to (IAAP: 2009):

- Secure subordinates thoroughly understand visualise the goals of the municipality and will be able to motivate them to reach those goals.
- Transforming human potential into reality by developing subordinates' ability and maturity levels and to motivate them to undertake their tasks successfully.
- Motivating subordinates to deliver work of high quality and in the process, help the municipality to satisfy the many needs of their communities.
- To motivate their subordinates to develop themselves in order to create their own future progress to become leaders and managers in their own right.

The operating environments in which senior municipal leaders are executing their tasks, clearly ask for good communication between the inhabitants of the municipality and its senior managers. The bureaucratic structures and culture of the public sector often work to constrain the communication between municipal officials and communities at large. Senior municipal managers as leaders, should however, as far as possible, undertake their responsibilities when it comes to the community in which they live and work (Peters and Waterman's, 1984:15).

2.4.2 Senior municipal managers' role as community 'leader'

Lubimow (2014:138) indicates that apart from their management and motivational role, senior municipal managers should also be:

- An architect (builder) to reach consensus between the community and the municipality.
- A person understanding and communicating local matters.

- A good interpreter of local values.
- An example of good ethical conduct.
- The following outlines these roles as dictated by Lubimow (2014:133-138):
 - a) **An architect (builder) to reach consensus:** Senior municipal managers must be able to 'hear' the different interests of all formal and informal groups and try to reach consensus on the needs, problems, potential benefits of each group of stakeholders to be taken up in the policy-making processes of the municipality.
 - b) **A person understanding and communicating local matters:** Senior municipal managers should be able to understand the local environment of their municipalities and should be able to communicate municipal policies effectively to all community stakeholders. They should also be able to communicate community needs in an effective way to relevant municipal structures.
 - c) **A good interpreter of local values:** Senior municipal managers should be able to understand and interpret local community values of all inhabitants and should not focus on only certain values or groups. They should be able to identify when inhabitants are unsatisfied how their values are handled by the municipality and should forward these dissatisfactions of inhabitants along the municipal structures to relevant people who can pay attention to it.
 - d) **An example of good ethical conduct:** Senior municipal managers should always adhere to good ethical conduct which is visible in their day to day activities. This should also be visible to the inhabitants with which they are in communication as well as the internal municipal environment. They should be known as persons with 'perfection' in the area of morals and should always be regarded as ethical in all their behaviour.

A senior municipal manager, who builds a strong networks or connections with the local community, is a manager who will help that that municipal goals are achieved and will be able to guide their subordinates to follow suit (Lubimow, 2014:133-138). Senior managers as leaders in municipalities should understand their role as leaders in order to adhere to the above-mentioned aspects. In order to do this, they should gain knowledge on what the phenomenon 'leadership' exactly means. Although

many definitions can be found to describe what is meant by the concept leadership, it is even more complex to define the phenomena in the context of a public sector environment (Cambell and Kodz, 2011:3).

The concept leadership, should according to Cambell and Kodz (2011:3), be defined and described at the hand of scientific descriptions and definitions to fully understand what is meant by it. Understanding of what leadership refers to will also lay the foundation for understanding the relevant theories on leadership (Cambell and Kodz, 2011:3).

2.5 Understanding the concept leadership

Gill (2009:5) is of the opinion that managers in the public sector of today, should not focus entirely on their more traditional technical, operational and authoritative roles, but that they should also focus on their role as leaders. Managers in the public sector can be more effective in their respective organisational entities and may secure more subordinates successes if they understand the principles of leadership. Managers who understand the value of effective leadership may be able to secure more motivation, cooperation and engagement from their subordinates (Gill, 2009:5).

The current trend of leadership in the public sector worldwide is towards a more 'open' approach to leadership. In such an open environment, leaders can develop not only their own leadership skills, but can also guide their subordinates to understand what leadership entails, which may help leaders to implement new leadership approaches, such as the situational leadership approach (Gill, 2009:5). It is thus necessary for senior managers in the public sector and more specifically senior managers in municipalities and district municipalities to understand what their roles as leaders entail.

2.5.1 Defining the phenomenon leadership

Beach (2006:ix) defines leadership from a managerial point of view as the art of understanding changes in an organisation's internal and external environments and to adapt an organisations functions, structure and practices accordingly and then to lead followers to pursuit goals willingly. LeMay and Ellis (2006:228-231) defines

leadership as a process of motivating followers to reach organisational goals without the use of excessive formal authority.

Nealer (2009:2) defines leadership more from a leader's point of view as the influence of managers to motivate their followers to follow them freely to reach their own objectives as well as the objectives of the organisation. Mahmood *et al.* (2012:513) also understand leadership in this context, and define it as a process where individuals or groups are influenced by others toward the attainment of individual, group and organisational goals.

Jago (1982:315) defines leadership as the process of non-coercive influence to direct and coordinate the activities of the members of an organised group toward the accomplishment of group objectives. He further defines leadership as a set of qualities, characteristics or skills developed over time by certain people in an organisation to successfully lead subordinates in an organisation to reach that organisation's goals (Jago, 1982:315).

2.5.2 Leadership as field of research

Although the phenomenon of leadership has been around from infinity, the systematic scientific research on the phenomenon has started in the 1930's. Research undertaken focussed initially on follower-centred leadership as field of study, which included the traits or characteristics that effective leaders should have to be effective leaders (Yukl, 2006: 81-94). In this sense, these early studies focused on identifying the "one best way of leading". Criticism of this focus was that they ignore the important role which situational factors play in determining the effectiveness of individual leaders (Koech and Namusonge, 2012:1-2).

It is this limitation that gives rise to the situational and contingency theories of leadership. The emphasis moved away from "the one best way to lead" to context-sensitive leadership. The general tenet of the situational and contingency perspectives is that leadership effectiveness is dependent on the leader and how they understand situational factors, followed by the adoption of the appropriate style to deal with each circumstance (Koech and Namusonge, 2012:1-2).

Recent studies, however, show that researchers on leadership focus since the nineteen's of the previous century on leadership, as "transactional" and "transformational" leadership (Koech and Namusonge, 2012:1-2). Transactional leaders are said to be instrumental in the relationship with their subordinates. In contrast, transformational leaders are argued to be visionary and enthusiastic, with an inherent ability to motivate subordinates (Koech and Namusonge, 2012:1-2).

As an academic field of inquiry, the study of leadership has become of interest to scholars from a wide variety of disciplinary backgrounds. Today leadership has a multidisciplinary field of study and is included in numerous curricula in subjects such as sociology, anthropology, psychology, humanities, management and public management (Van Wart, 2003:216-218).

Terry (1995:10) however, noted in 1995 that there is a gross neglect of discussions and articles on leadership in public sector literature at that point in time. Van der Wart (2003:216-218) also did research to determine how leadership as phenomenon futures in the public sector worldwide. He found that since 1940, only twenty-five (25) scholarly articles have been written that focussed entirely on leadership. He found that most articles on leadership have been written within the context of organisational change. He also found that most books on the subject Public Administration has only sections dedicated to leadership (Van der Wart, 2003:216-218).

To obtain more knowledge on the phenomenon leadership, an exploration of leadership theories will be undertaken next. The theoretical basis of leadership will be explored in the next section as this knowledge will, in part, be utilised in the development of the situational leadership framework in Chapter Five.

2.6 Theories that contextualise leadership

In literature on the phenomenon leadership, the concepts theory and approach are used interchangeably. Some scholars refer to the same leadership phenomenon as a theory or an approach. An example is the contingency leadership theory or the contingency leadership approach. Some scholars even describe that the contingency leadership theory consists out of different leadership approaches (St-Hilaire, 2008:6). To clarify this confusion the concepts 'theory or theories' will be used in this Chapter.

Theories are analytical tools for understanding, explaining, and making predictions about a given subject matter, such as leadership. Horne (2016) states that numerous focuses can be identified when leadership is explored, depending on aspects such as culture, language and approaches to management. It may thus be that theories on leadership can be approached from a Western view point, as is the case of this study, an African view point or Eastern view point.

Most scholars identify four core groups of leadership theories, namely (St-Hilaire, 2008:6), (IAAP, 2009) and (Avolio, Waumbwa and Weber, 2009:10).

- Great man and Trait theories (What Type of Person Makes a Good Leader?)
- Behavioural theories (What Does a Good Leader Do?)
- Functional leadership theories (What is the Source of the Leader's power?)
- Contingency theories (How Does the Situation Influence good leadership?)

These leadership theories, developed over time, will be discussed in the next sub-sections and the place of the situational leadership theory in these broad 'band' of leadership theories will be highlighted.

2.6.1 The Great Man and Trait theories of leadership

The Great Man theory(ies) was popularized by Thomas Carlyle, a writer and teacher in the 1840's. The Great Man theory was inspired by the study of influential heroes and the focus of this theory was on analysing leadership attributes of a wide array of heroes. The philosophy on which the Great Man Theory was founded actually dates back to the ancient Greek and Roman times when leadership used to be correlated with certain peculiar mental, physical and personality characteristics (accessed from LeadershipCentral.com).

Bolden *et al.* (2003:6) further explain that the term "Great Man" was used because, at the time, leadership was thought of primarily as a male quality, especially in terms of military leadership. They were born with natural leadership skills which mean that there was something in their anatomy, physiology and personality which make them leaders and 'mortals' to the people. Because leaders were thought to be born, a measure of divinity used to be attributed to them and their behavior (Sethuraman and Suresh, 2014:165).

The Great Man theory is thus founded on the following premises (Sethuraman and Suresh, 2014:165) and (Bolden *et al*, 2003:6):

- Leaders are gifts of God to mankind (divinity).
- Everyone cannot aspire to become a leader and to attain greatness.
- Inborn leadership qualities alone are necessary for a leader to exercise influence over his followers.
- Leadership qualities and effectiveness are independent variables. Situational factors like the nature and needs of followers, the demands of task and the general socio-economic environment have little or no influence on a leader's emergence or effectiveness.
- Individuals cannot be obtained through training or educational and exposure.

In 1860, Herbert Spencer, an English philosopher disputed the Great Man theory by affirming that these heroes are simply the product of their times, their actions and the results of social conditions (Sethuraman and Suresh, 2014:165).

The Great Man Theory is today rejected by modern theorists because of the following reasons (Cherry, 2016):

- The so called born leaders tend to be misfits in the modern complex fast changing world.
- Leaders are ordinary mortal people who happen to acquire certain skills useful for influencing other people.
- Leadership qualities can be acquired and developed by anyone through proper education, training and exposure.
- The Great Man theory of leadership does not provide a scientific, verifiable and predictable explanation of leadership.

The Great Man theory carries according to some researchers on leadership some credibility to the extent that leaders in general and great leaders in particular, have certain mystique about them and are viewed with awe by their followers (Cherry, 2016) (Ehrenberg and Stupak: 1994:85). Hoffman *et al*. (2011:347) also mention that gaining knowledge on mental (intelligences), physical and social characteristic of great leaders may help to identify future leaders.

Cherry (2016), however, states that many scholars on leadership later criticise this theory by stating that there are many people who possess the personality and traits associated with leadership, but that many of these people never filled leadership roles.

Further criticism was (Cherry, 2016):

- Explanations were not offered as to the relation between each characteristic and its impact on leadership.
- The context or situation in which leadership took place was not considered.

The relevance of these theories has, as mentioned, faded away over time and today the approach is rather that leaders can learn and develop their own leadership skills to become effective leaders (Hoffman *et al.*, 2011:347). During the 1980's the trait theory re-emerged and once again regained popularity, but was again criticised by scholars as not been accompanied by a corresponding increase in sophisticated conceptual frameworks (Chemers, 1997:70).

2.6.2 Behavioural theories

As the early researchers ran out of steam in their search for traits, they turned to how leaders behaved towards followers. They moved from leaders to leadership and these theories became the dominant way of approaching leadership within organizations in the 1950s and early 1960s. For behavioural theorists, a leader's behaviour is the best predictor of his leadership influences as a leader and as a result, is the best determinant of his or her leadership success (Bolden, *et al.* 2003:6).

Different patterns of behaviour were grouped together and labelled as leadership approaches or styles. Behavioral theorists created a Leader Behaviour Paradigm (consisting out of different leadership approaches) over time. They fit leadership into four broad leadership approaches (De Rue & Meyers, 2014:832–855) and despite different names for the four approaches, Wright (1996:36-37) describe them as follows:

- Concern for task. Here leaders emphasize the achievement of concrete objectives. They emphasize the achievement of concrete objectives and they look for high levels of performance and productivity. Such leaders are task-oriented who initiate a structure in which task could be defined, relationships among group members be determined, coordination between group members' actions could established and performance and quality could be secured.
- Concern for people. In this style, leaders look upon their followers as people with needs, interests and problems. They are not simply 'units' of production or means to an end. Leaders with relationship behaviour show high consideration, concern and respect for individual group members and they are friendly, more often than not
- Directive leadership. This style is characterized by leaders taking decisions for others and expecting followers or subordinates to follow instructions.
- Participative leadership. Here leaders want to share decision-making with others. They are approachable, are open to input from others, and treat all group members as equals. Researches also call this approach as empowering, participative and democratic. These leaders also focus on change and want to take their subordinates on board when changes are needed. Change-oriented leaders embrace actions such as developing and communicating a vision for change, encouraging innovative thinking, and the taking of risks.

Within the context of the Behavioural leadership approaches different leadership styles have been established. In this context leadership styles refer to the manner and approach of leaders when providing direction, implementing plans, and motivating people (Newstrom & Davis, 1993). Three major leadership styles have been identified, namely (Pearce *et al.*, 2003:22) and (Newstrom & Davis, 1993):

- *Authoritarian* or autocratic leaders where leaders tell their subordinates what to do and how to do it, without getting their advice.
- *Participative* or democratic leaders where leaders include one or more employees in the decision-making process, but the leader normally maintains the final decision making authority.
- *Delegative* leaders where leaders allow their subordinates to make decisions on their own but leaders are still responsible for the decisions that are made.

Behavioural theories were also built on the philosophy that anyone can be made a leader by teaching them the most appropriate behavioural fundamentals, such as to stay composed when confronted with conflict situations (De Rue, 2009:859–875). With the evolutions in psychometrics researchers were able to measure the cause and effects relationship of specific human behaviours and with this knowledge they could predict whether a person would become a good leader or not. With the 'right' behaviour any person could become a good leader. In other words, leader's behaviour can make of them good leaders and not traits that they were born with (Bolden, *et al.* 2003:6).

These styles, based on the behaviour of leaders have developed and evolved largely independent of each other (Pearce 2003:22, 273-307). Although effective leaders use all three styles, with one of them normally dominant, bad leaders tend to stick with one style, normally *autocratic*. The strengths of Behavior Theories can be found in the following (Avolio *et al.* 2009:429-450):

- Theorists argued that leaders could be made, and are not necessarily born with innate traits. Theorists saw "leadership" as a characteristic that one can develop.
- The new idea that leaders could be developed allowed for more recent research on leadership.

A major weakness related to the behavioral leadership theory is the lack of adaptability of the principles. The theory lacks to establish on how leadership behavior can be used in various situations. One behavior that works in one situation may not be universal enough to work in another situation (Avolio *et al.*, 2009:429-425).

Behavioural theories were however a big leap from Great Man and Trait Theory, in that it assumes that leadership capability can be learned, rather than being inherent. This opened the floodgates to leadership development, as opposed to simple psychometric assessment that sorts those with leadership potential from those who will never have the chance (Robins, 2016).

The Behavioral Leadership theory is by no means a redundant theory in its entirety. It started research on the idea that leadership can be developed through learning and experience. Current theorists, such as Avolio *et al.*, 2009:425) have supported

the behaviorist idea that the living and working and work environments in which a person grow up and work in is more influential than heritage factors in showing career leadership success. According to DeRue and Myers (2014: 832-855) in order to be a successful leader, there must be development past knowledge and skills and that leadership development occur primarily through action-based learning and experience.

2.6.3 Functional leadership theories

Functional leadership theories have, as was the case with Behavior theorists, been developed after researchers studied the behaviors of successful leaders and identifying the particular actions that led to successful leadership results. The focus was however more on what the leader does to lead teams than on who the leader is or what the behavior of a leader is (Martin and Bal, 2007:16).

Structuring work around teams has become an important approach to secure successful organizational performance. A relatively new survey found that 91% of high-level managers agreed with the statement "...teams are central to organizational success" (Martin and Bal, 2006:16). An important focus of theorists focused on the role that leadership had to play to secure successful functioning of groups in team settings (Morgeson *et al.*, 2010:5-39).

According to the functional leadership approach the primary task of leaders is to ensure that subordinates are satisfied in their work environment so that organizational goals can be achieved. A functional leadership approach and leadership style also emphasize the importance on leader's behaviors (informal leadership style) to get things done rather than following a formal leadership role (Morgeson *et al.*,2010:5-39). The philosophy on which this theory is founded is that leadership is defined by the behavior of the leader and its corresponding effect on the group. Leadership is something that any individual provides to a group to meet certain needs (Morgeson *et al.*, 2010:5-39).

The Functional Leadership theory (McGrath, 1962) is a particularly useful theory for addressing group's needs. By taking care of subordinates, leaders can be said to have done their 'job' well when they have contributed to group effectiveness and

cohesion. While the functional leadership theory has most often been applied to team leadership it has also been effectively applied to broader organizational leadership as well (McGrath, 1962).

In order to achieve success as functional leaders, they should pay attention to six broad functions to be successful leaders and they are Kozlowski and Ilgen (2006:77-124):

- They must be profound analyses of the environment (internal and external) in which they and their subordinates work in.
- They must understand and have knowledge on the work tasks that their subordinates are doing.
- They must organise their subordinate's work activities clearly for all to know what their role in the organisation is.
- They must teach and coach their subordinates to become capable workers that do their tasks successfully.
- They must learn the skill to motivate their subordinates.
- They must intervene actively in the group's work.

A variety of leadership behaviours or approaches are expected to facilitate these functions and an important one is that subordinates should perceive their supervisors' behaviour to be consideration and initiating structure in their work. Consideration includes behaviour involving the fostering of effective relationships and to get involved in initiating structure by focussing on task accomplishment. Miao, *et al.* (2014:2797) refer to these leaders as participating leaders.

Participative leaders are the opposite of autocratic leaders and seek to involve other people or subordinates in solving problems or decision-making processes in an organisation (Miao *et al.* 2014:2797). Most participative leaders work in close relationship with their teams and create an environment of immediate team involvement. According to Lam *et al.* (2015:836), participative leadership is defined as shared influence and joint decision making leaders which allows interaction between them and their followers.

The Functional leadership theory prescribed specific tasks functional leaders should undertake (Hoel and Stergioulas, 2010:7):

- Engaging relevant stakeholders in decision-making processes.
- Keeping subordinates fully informed of the relevant aspects of the engagement process.
- Provide subordinates with a broad picture of the situation in which decisions must be taken that may have an impact on their future plans; and
- Support subordinates in disseminating their results and findings to a wider audience.

One of the key theorists in the functional leadership approach to leadership is John Adair. It is called the Adair's Action-Centred leadership model and the contents of this model are still used in many leadership training programmes today. The philosophy behind Adair's approach is that (i) leaders should balance their leadership activities across the task, team and individuals (ii) individual leaders must improve their leadership effectiveness and (iii) leaders should focus on their leadership actions. This means that a leader's focus should be on the functions of leadership as a whole rather than on the personality of the leader (Hackman *et al.*, 1986:72-119) and McGrath, 1962:17).

Some scholars today see Adair's Model as somewhat out-of-date - having been first formulated in the 1970's. Other regards it as too simplistic. Still other scholars argue however that the simplicity of the model is its greatest strength. More importantly, it should be recognised that, at the time it was developed, Adair's Functional Leadership model represented a departure from existing models of leadership, such as the Great Man and Trait theories. According to Stella (1916:1-5), Adair changed the thinking of the whole management and leadership world.

2.6.4 Contingency theories

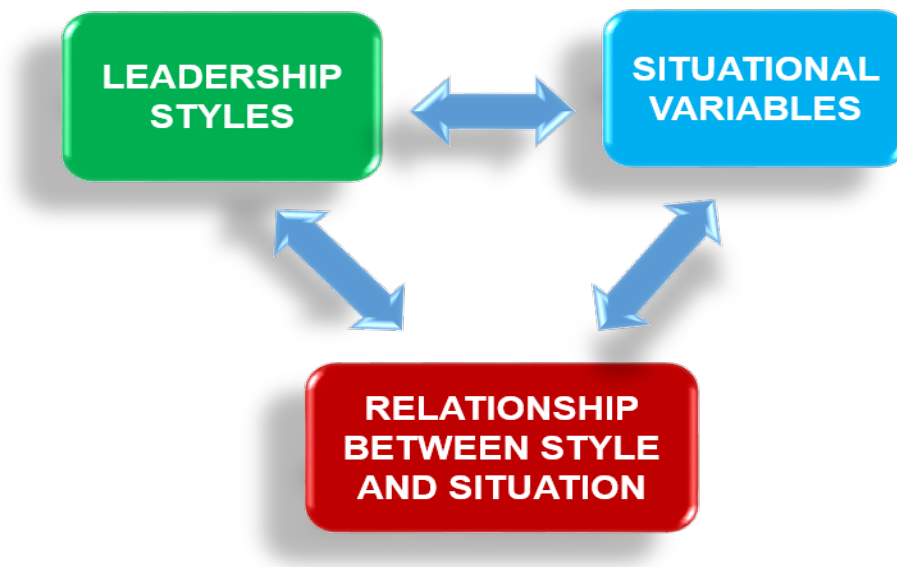
The contingency approach to leadership was proposed by the Austrian psychologist Fred Fiedler (a scientist who studied the personality and characteristics of leaders) in

his landmark 1964 article, "A Contingency Model of Leadership Effectiveness." In this article, Fiedler states that there is no one best style of leadership; instead a leader's effectiveness is based on the situation and which leadership style the leader used in different situations.

Fiedler's leadership philosophy of no best leadership style to lead subordinates was based on three variables, namely (Fiedler, 1986:532-545):

- The **ideal leadership style** is contingent (dependent) upon;
- Different **situations that may occur** in which followers should be led; and
- The **relationship** between the leadership style and the situation

Figure 2: The contingency theory of Fiedler



Fiedler, 1986:532-545

Fiedler's contingency model will further be elaborated on in more detail as the so-called origins of the contingency theories that followed.

2.7 The contingency approach to leadership

Wooton (1977:431) states that the contingency leadership approach, which was initiated, as mentioned, by Fiedler, has virtually become the "conventional wisdom" of post-industrialism, a phenomenon that was well discussed in management literature. It provided a way out of the "leadership theoretical jungle", since it

integrates the diversity that has characterized leadership theory up to then. Since it also has been effective in linking theory to practice, it was the ideal philosophy for leaders to secure that their subordinates are successful in the undertaking of their tasks by focussing on different leadership styles during different situations (Wooton, 1977:431).

2.7.1 Philosophical foundation of the contingency leadership body of theories/approaches

From a leadership perspective, it was generally accepted by scholars on the contingency leadership approach/theories that persons in leadership positions will more likely interact more closely with their subordinates in a flexible leadership style than in a fixed leadership style (Sethuraman and Suresh, 2014:167 and Jago, 1982:320). St-Hilaire (2008:9) emphasised that the effectiveness and success of leaders was depending on their capability to integrate diverse leadership eventualities (contingencies) into one coherent approach which would ultimately led to organisations reach their goals.

In support of the above, three conclusions can be made regarding the contingency theoretical approach, namely (Lorsch & Morse, 1974:134):

- **Firstly**, leaders should understand the need for a fit between individual predispositions and both the external and internal environments, thereby satisfying their intent to extend the contingency theory of organization design to include variables related to the personalities of organisational members;
- **Secondly**, leaders should understand that the set of internal variables which are contingent on task and environmental demands have an influence on their subordinate's behaviour and which may hinder them to pursue the organizational goals; and
- **Thirdly**, leaders should understand that the congruence between them, subordinates' and the environment (situation) in which they function is crucial to organisational effectiveness.

As this study also focus on senior managers as leaders, the contingency approach can also be made applicable to management as activity. According to Halpern (2016) one of the most important contemporary viewpoints is the contingency

approach to management and leadership. The contingency approach in this regard is that managers as leaders should be flexible and adaptable in their management and leadership practices and ideas to suit changing circumstances and situations in their organisations. They should pay attention to the following aspects as managers as leaders, within the context of the contingency approach (Halpern, 2016):

- Adapting to changing situations in their organisations because no two situations are absolutely identical and every situation require its own unique solution.
- No organisation wants a manager and leaders who is dogmatic and inflexible.
- They should adapt their management and leadership techniques to solve problems in every situation.

Scholars on the contingency approach concurred that the approach has the following benefits for organisations (Gupta, 2009:1):

- It is supported by a vast number of empirical studies (more than 400).
- It is predictive in nature because there is a well-defined methodology.
- It reduces the amount of expectations of a leader matching a leader to a task
- It can be used to create leadership profiles in an organisation which can be of value during periods of organisational change, performance management, and changes in management structures.

As mentioned, there are various contingency theories that focus on leadership. According to Hughes *et al.* (1997:101) the following contingency theories are more of the well-known contingencies theories that are richly discussed in literature:

- Fiedler's contingency theory on leadership.
- Hersey and Blanchard's situational leadership theory.
- Vroom and Yetton's decision participation contingency theory.

These theories are by no means a full array of the contingency theories, but are selected to give examples of such theories. Other contingency theories are, for instance, Robert House's Path-Goal Theory, Contingency theory of decision making, etc. (Crawford,2005:62).

2.8 Exploration of well-known contingency theories

The idea of a contingency theory of leadership is not novel. In the 1960s, several scholars conducted research and proposed such an approach arguing that the style of leadership that would be most effective depended upon the situation (Fiedler; Hershey & Blanchard; Tannenbaum & Schmidt; and Vroom & Yetton). Their research was an integral part of the wave of research on organizational behaviour and was eventually labelled as the "Contingency Theory" of organizations (Lorsch, 2010).

Scholars that developed the contingency theory of leadership started to identify specific leadership styles and identified in which situations each style would work the best (Capenter *et al.*, 2012:7-9). They came to the conclusion that an authoritarian leadership style, for example, is appropriate for crisis situations, but that this style will in all probability fail to winning the "hearts and minds" of followers in day-to-day management. A democratic leadership style on the other end of the leadership spectrum may be more adequate in situations that require consensus building (Capenter *et al.*, 2012:7-9). A laissez-faire leadership style may also be included and appreciated for the degree of freedom it provides, but if a crisis is poorly managed laissez-faire leaders can be perceived as a failure as leader (Vecchio, 2002: 67-84).

All contingency theories, except Fiedler's contingency theory, indicate that leaders should be flexible regarding their leadership style (Hickman, 2010:101). In further supporting this, Yukl and Mahsud (2010:81) point out that there are different types of situations that necessitate the need for flexibility, adaptable and innovation leaders and leadership styles. According to this theory, leadership success depends on how a leader is capable of 'reading' the leadership environment and then reacts to it in an adequate manner, thus securing that organisations goals are reached (Amanchukwu *et al.*, 2015:8).

The selected contingency theories, as indicated in 2.6.1 will be elaborated on in the next section.

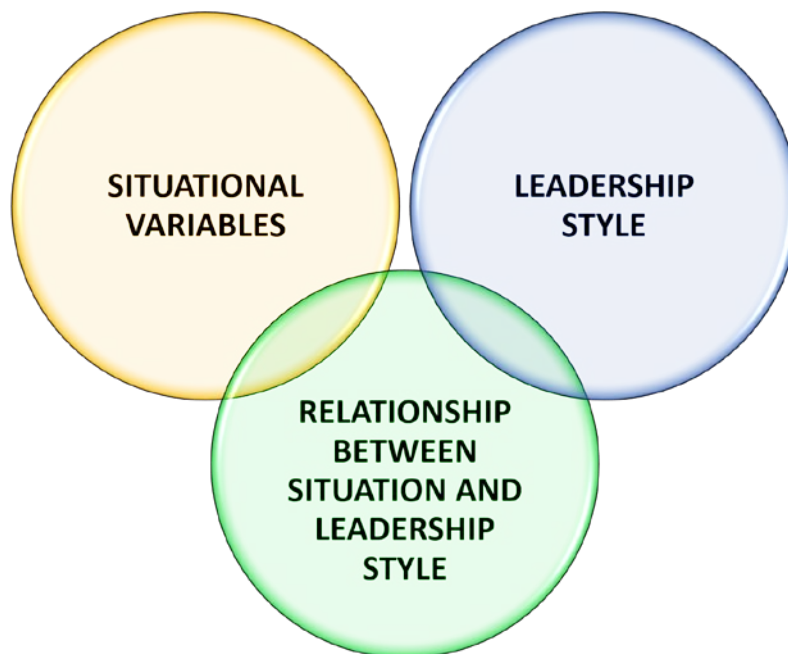
2.8.1 Fiedler's theory as foundation of the contingency theories

The leadership theory of Fiedler is the earliest and most extensively researched on leadership and paved the way for other contingency leadership theories that followed. Fiedler departs from Great man/Trait and behavioural models and he ascertains that there is no single best way for managers to lead and that (i) specific situations will create (ii) different leadership style requirements for a leader to lead his or her subordinates (Hughes *et al.*, 2010:101).

Bolden *et al.* (2003:8) accentuated that Fiedler's contingency theory postulates that leaders should have flexible and adaptable leadership styles. For example, in a highly routine (mechanistic) environment where repetitive tasks are the norm, a relatively directive leadership style may result in the best performance, however, in a dynamic environment a more flexible, participative style may be required (Bolden *et al.*: 2003:8).

Fiedler's contingency model can be depicted in the following diagramme:

Figure 3: Fiedler's contingency approach



Adapted from Bolden *et al.*

Situational variables have been identified by Fiedler as the following (Forsyth, 2006:245-277):

- **Leader's Position Power:** This situational variable is concerned with the power or authority a leader derives from the position held by him in the organization. Leaders in absolute power positions will influence the situation and behaviour of others more than the ones without power.
- **Task Structure:** The task structure means the extent to which the task requirements are clearly defined in terms of the task goals, processes and relationship with other tasks. Clearly defined tasks of subordinates create a situation where leaders can direct their subordinates in a well-controlled manner.
- **Leader-member Relations:** If subordinates have trust, confidence and faith in their leaders it creates a situation for a leader to perform his leadership activities with confidence in his own capabilities as leader.

The leadership style that can be selected depends on two dimensions, namely task-oriented and human-relations oriented (Forsyth, 2006:245-277):

- The *task-oriented leader* is primarily concerned with the task performance and the accomplishment of task goals. He gets satisfied with the accomplishment of task performance.
- *Human relations-oriented leaders* lay more emphasis on developing the interpersonal relationship with their subordinates.
- The relationship between situational variables and leadership style is the following (Forsyth, 2006:245-277).
- Leadership effectiveness depends on the situation, as one situation will not be similar to another situation.
- Each situation gives leaders the opportunity to choose the right kind of leadership style suited to lead subordinates effectively.

The situation thus gives leaders an opportunity to influence their subordinates through selecting the right kind of leadership style. Fiedler's contingency model has however drawn criticism, mainly because it implies that the only alternative for a mismatch between a leader and a situation, is changing the leader. The model's validity has also been disputed, despite many supportive tests (Bass 1990: 494–510).

Fiedler's contingency model provides a number of factors that contemporary managers as leaders can modify to improve the efficiency of group cohesion. For instance, according to Fiedler's model an impersonal but task-oriented leader can be effective in a group as long as the group is highly structured and has clearly defined tasks (by Andrew Latham – www.smallbusiness.chron.com).

2.8.2 Vroom and Yetton's decision participation contingency theory

The Vroom–Yetton contingency theory is a situational leadership theory in Industrial and Organizational Psychology developed by Victor Vroom, in collaboration with Phillip Yetton (1973) and later with Jago (1988) (Mohan, 2013). The Vroom-Yetton contingency theory argues that the best style of leadership is contingent to the situation, but this theory includes a further element which is the decisions making activity of a leaders (Mohan, 2013).

The Vroom-Yetton-Jago model is a contingency approach to group decision making that is designed specifically to help leaders select the best approach to making decisions. The model identifies different ways a decision can be made by considering the degree of follower participation. It proposes a method for leaders to select the right approach to making a decision in a given situation (source: www.boundless.com).

Vroom and Jago (2007:17-24) later emphasise that effective leadership decision-making depends solely on the situation and that there is no single best way to make a decision without understanding the situation in which it is taken. Their theory is based on the following assumptions (Vroom and Jago, 2007:17-24):

- Different tasks and situations require leaders to make different types of decisions.
- There are five different approaches to making group decisions according to the degree and type of follower participation.
- There is a decision tree for determining the right mode of decision making under different conditions. The decision tree is a visualization of a complex decision-making situation in which the possible choices and their likely outcomes are organized in the form of a graph.

The Vroom-Yetton-Jago model defines five different decision approaches that a leader can use. In order of participation from least to most, these are (Vroom and Jago, 2007:17-24):

- *A1 – Autocratic Type 1:* Decisions are made completely by the leader on their own with whatever information is available.
- *AII – Autocratic Type 2:* Decisions are still made by the leader alone, but the leader collects information from the followers before making the decision. Followers however play no other role in the decision-making process.
- *C1 – Consultative Type 1:* Leaders seeks input from selected followers individually based on their relevant knowledge. Followers do not meet each other, and the leader's decision may or may not reflect followers' influence.
- *CII – Consultative Type 2:* Similar to C1, except that leaders share the problem with relevant followers as a group and seeks their ideas and suggestions. The followers are involved in the decision, but the leader still makes the final decision.
- *GII – Group-based Type 2:* The entire group works through the problem with the leader. A decision is made by the followers in collaboration with the leader. In a GII decision, leaders are not at liberty to make a decision on their own.

The model also indicates to leaders which leadership style should be chosen in different situations. The leadership style will be determined by asking the following questions:

- Is there a quality requirement? Is the nature of the solution critical? Are there technical or rational grounds for selecting among possible solutions?
- Do I have sufficient information to make a high-quality decision?
- Is the problem structured? Are the alternative courses of action and methods for their evaluation known?
- Is acceptance of the decision by subordinates critical to its implementation?
- If I were to make the decision by myself, is it reasonably certain that it would be accepted by my subordinates?
- Do my subordinates share the organizational goals to be met by solving this problem?
- Is conflict among subordinates likely in obtaining the preferred solution?

If leaders answer these questions honestly, the decision tree provides the leader with the preferred decision style for the given situation. The model is most likely to work when there is clear and accessible opinions about the decision quality importance and decision acceptance factors. However, these are not always known with any significant confidence (Boundless:2016).

2.8.3 Hersey and Blanchard's situational leadership theory

The situational leadership approach is based on Hersey and Blanchard's research on leadership and the basic principles of this theory are closely linked to the contingency way of thinking. Hersey and Blanchard, however, stated that a further element complicates the contingency leadership approach and that is that subordinates' maturity or level of competence to do a task successfully, also play a role in the leadership style that a leader should choose (Graeff, 1997: 153-170).

Leaders should also have to change their leadership style, not only to address a specific situation, but also according to the maturity level of subordinates to undertake a task successfully (Graeff, 1997: 153-170). For Hersey and Blanchard, tasks are different and to undertake tasks successfully a specific level of maturity is needed by subordinates and leader's leadership style should also take this contingency into account. An effective leader should thus have the ability to adapt his or her leadership style according to the maturity level of subordinates during specific situations (Graeff, 1997: 153-170).

- There are thus three contingencies that leaders should take into account when leading their subordinates according to the situational leadership approach, and they are (Graeff, 1997: 153-170):
- The **situation** in which leading takes place.
- The **maturity level** of subordinates to complete their tasks successfully in the situation.
- The **leadership style** a leader should follow during a *specific situation*, taking the *maturity level* of subordinates into account.

Being the focus of this study, the next Chapter will explore the contents of the situational leadership theory of Hersey and Blanchard in depth. The next section will

however provide a brief introduction to the situational leadership theory of Hersey and Blanchard.

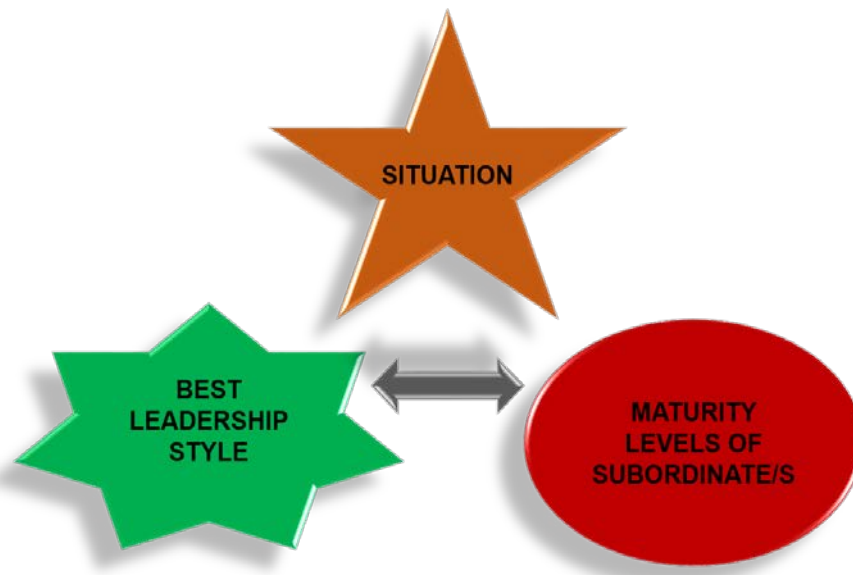
2.9 The situational leadership theory of Hersey and Blanchard: introductory notes

According to the Centre for Leadership studies: in the USA. (2013), the Situational Leadership Theory of Hersey and Blanchard is “...arguably the most recognized, utilized and effective leadership approach and influence tool in the history of the behavioral sciences” The Situational Leadership theory was initially developed by Dr. Paul Hersey in the late 1960s as a powerful, yet flexible tool that enables leaders of all kinds; managers, salespeople, peer leaders, teachers or parents to more effectively influence others. The theory is based on the relationship between leaders and followers in specific situation in which this relationship takes place. The principles that founded the theory are based on three variables, namely (Situational Leadership:2014):

- The **situation** in which leaders should act when leading their subordinates;
- The **readiness or maturity** level of subordinates to perform their tasks successfully; and
- The **leadership style** that leaders should apply, taking the previous two aspects into account.

Langton and Robbins (2007:17) indicate that the Hersey and Blanchard’s Situational Leadership Theory states that an effective leader will be able to adapt his or her leadership style to coincide with their subordinates’ capacity (maturity) to address their tasks successfully in a specific situation. The theory argues that to be effective, leaders must use (i) the right leadership style (ii) to link to each subordinate’s development or maturity stage (iii) when a specific task has to be undertaken (Bolden *et al.*, 2003:9).

Figure 4: Three principles on which the situational leadership theory is based



Adapted from Bolden *et al.*, 2003:9

It is according to Wile (2001), however important that situational leaders should be aware of subordinate's perceptions and experiences should they change from one leadership style to another. It may be difficult for subordinates to understand changes in the leadership style of their leaders if they are not educated in the 'new' leadership approach which replaces the 'old' leadership approach. This may hamper the implementation of the new leadership approach, which is in this case the situational leadership approach, and it may even put a question mark to the credibility of the situational leadership theory *per se* (Wile, 2001).

Graeff (1997:153-170) is of the opinion that situational leaders with sound leadership skills will be knowledgeable to implement this theory successfully. These skills can be developed over time and include skills such as operational skills, human relation skills and conceptual skills (Graeff, 1997:153-170). Because of the importance to develop these skills Chapter four will be dedicated to it. Skills development will also be included in the situational leadership framework that will be developed in Chapter Five.

2.10 Conclusion

Leadership in the public sector is not only about leading subordinates, but it includes the ability to be a visionary thinking of what the future may look like. They should also be able to create an environment in which subordinates are 'empowered' to reach organisational goals. To lead their subordinates to follow them willingly they should be motivators that will secure that followers reach municipal goals (Kroukamp, 2007:60).

Kroukamp (2007:60) also state that senior municipal managers as leaders in the public sector should demonstrate leadership skills and competencies to shape future actions to address the needs of their inhabitants and to secure that subordinates follow in the process. In order to achieve these senior managers as leaders in municipalities must understand what the principles of effective leadership are. They should understand what is meant by the concepts leadership and leader *per se*. If they understand the principles of leadership, as provided by leadership theories, it will enable them to engage subordinates in the process of developing, sharing and moving towards achieving a municipality's vision and operational functions.

Municipal leaders who have knowledge of leadership theories and more specific knowledge on the principles on which the situational leadership theory is founded may be able to influences their subordinates to pursue the objectives of the municipality. The complexity of relationships in modern day municipalities requires that their senior managers as leaders will comprehend the whole picture in which they function. Leadership theories may assist them to guide their subordinates to address the ever-changing municipal environment they are facing with every day.

The public sector is according to Drajat (2014:79-90), under pressure to improve service delivery and should develop a culture of strong leadership to become more effective functioning organisation. As a result there is a growing demand for leaders and leadership able to carry out their tasks in an effective manner and to lead their subordinates through fundamental processes of change. Knowledge, on which leadership is founded, as discussed in this chapter, may assist senior municipal managers to achieve this (Drajat, 2014:79-90). According to Drajat (2014:79), if leadership is to be improved at municipal level the development and supply of

effective leaders for this sector should be improved, both from within the sector and also with help from the outside.

The next chapter will focus in its entirety on the principles on which the situational leadership theory of Hersey and Blanchard is founded to understand what this theory entails. The knowledge gained in the next chapter will further provide the foundation for the leadership framework to be developed for the management cadre of the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality in the North West Province.

CHAPTER 3: EXPLORING THE SITUATIONAL LEADERSHIP THEORY OF HERSEY AND BLANCHARD

3.1 Introduction

In the previous Chapter, a broad overview of leadership theories applicable to the public and private sectors was provided. Municipalities are part of the public sector in South Africa, and these theories are also applicable to this sphere of government. These theories include various approaches to leadership, which includes the various contingency theories, such as the situational theory of Hersey and Blanchard. Because this theory forms the foundation of this study and the situational leadership framework that was developed, it is important to analyse the situational leadership theory in more detail to determine more precisely what it entails.

Nevarez, Wood and Penrose (2013) state that the situational leadership approach may help managers to avoid the drawbacks and difficulties of a single-style approach when leading their subordinates. The situational leadership theory recognises that there are different leadership styles applicable for different situations and that the maturity levels of subordinates will determine which leadership style should be followed in a specific situation (Nevarez *et al.*, 2013).

The situational leadership theory emphasises the complexity of different and dynamic situations leaders and their subordinates function in. If leaders understood this complex interaction between leadership style, maturity levels of subordinates and the different situations in which it takes place, they would be able to implement the best leadership style that may secure, according to the theory, their becoming more effective leaders in their respective organisations (Nevarez *et al.*, 2013).

It is important for senior managers in municipalities to understand the situational leadership theory, its approach, and its successful implementation. It would help them improve the way in which they lead their subordinates to resolving complex community issues and effectively guide their municipalities to be effective deliverers of services. This theory to leadership recognises that municipalities today are

complex organisations and it will help senior managers to be better equipped to lead their subordinates to addressing community needs.

3.2 Understanding the philosophy of the situational leadership theory

The situational approach has been refined and revised several times since its inception and it has been used extensively in organisational leadership training and development over the world (Northouse, 2007:91). Situational leadership is the model of choice for developing leaders in more than 500 organisations in the USA alone (Northouse, 2007:91).

Calvert (2015) states that the broad foundation on which situational leadership is built includes the following key philosophical underpinnings:

- It is an integrated and comprehensive view of a specific leadership phenomenon that can be followed by leaders in any organisation.
- It provides a specific way of thinking about leadership in organisations which differs from the normal, one-dimensional leadership style.
- It lays the foundation for leaders in organisations who want to follow new leadership to become more effective leaders in their organisations.
- It provides specific leadership principles for guiding subordinates according to various leadership styles which are linked to their levels of maturity to perform their tasks effectively.
- It provides leaders with the fundamental truths about a specific leadership approach which aims at developing subordinates' capacity to better perform their tasks.
- It lays the foundation for the belief that leadership approaches can differ from situation to situation as experienced in an organisation.
- It would create a progressive mindset for leaders to lead their subordinates to become workers who are motivated to empower themselves to become excellent in what they do for their organisations.

Understanding the philosophy behind situational leadership would allow managers, as leaders in South African municipalities, to see the larger leadership picture in which they function and will make them aware of the many leadership complexities that they may encounter in their municipal environment. It is important for situational leaders not only to know the strategic management issues of a municipality, but to acquire the necessary knowledge on how to lead their subordinates effectively in the municipal managerial environment (Calvert, 2015).

Yukl and Mahsud (2010:81) state that the philosophy on which situational leadership is built can be found in the idea that leaders must be flexible and that their leadership style should change according to different situations in their work environment. This view can be summarised in the phrase “there is no one best way of leading people” (Yukl and Mahsud, 2010:81). According to Gates *et al.* (1976:348-349), the situational leadership theory is built on the belief that successful leaders are those who can adapt their leadership style or behaviour to meet the capabilities of individual employees in their own unique environment.

In this regard, Mumford *et al.* (2007:154-166) emphasise that the rational or logical points of departure which the situational leadership philosophy is built on, are the following:

- Situational leaders need to understand the content of the situational theory in order to enable them to successfully implement it in their respective organisations.
- That every situation in which situational leadership takes place is unique and that it constantly changes.
- That the situational leader’s knowledge of the various leadership styles is in place and that the appropriate leadership style is followed in every situation
- That the maturity levels of subordinates form the basis for the correct leadership style to be followed.
- That the levels of maturity of each subordinate are always on different levels of development and that it is progressive in nature.

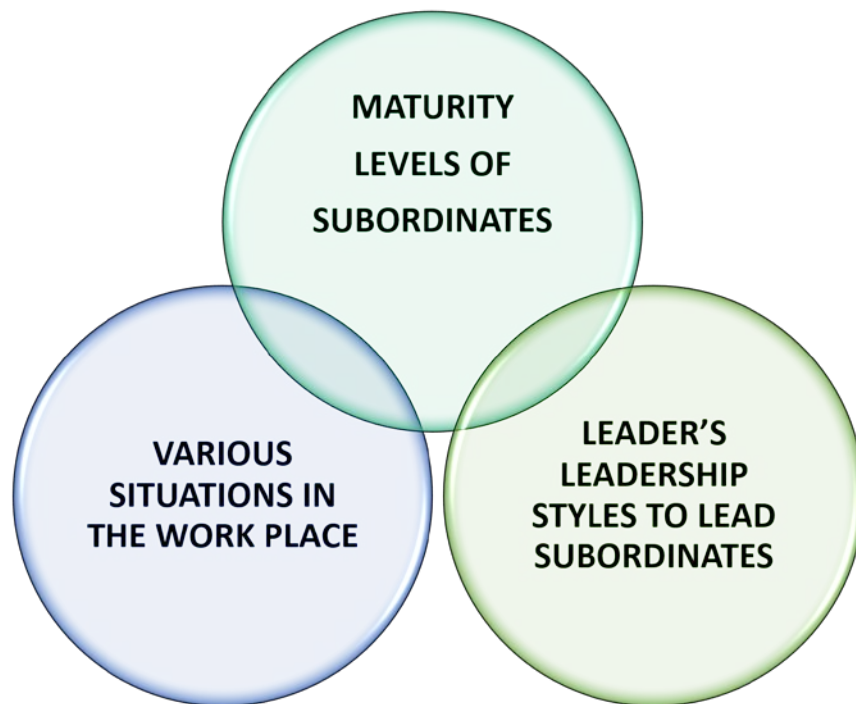
- That the leadership skills situational leaders need to develop should fill the gap between “current leadership knowledge” and “acquired leadership knowledge” to be effective leaders.

According to Alves and Canilho (2010:9), when Hersey and Blanchard developed their situational leadership theory they were of the opinion that leaders would have to master the link between leadership style, subordinates’ maturity level and the situation in which leadership takes place. There must be an “optimum combination of the three elements” in order for situational leaders to be effective leaders (Alves and Canilho, 2010:9).

Blanchard, Zigarmi and Nelson (1993:14) stated, in a retrospective analysis of the situational leadership approach, that the proof of the success of the situational leadership approach may lie in the “mosaic approach” in which different pieces or elements fit together. If correctly applied, the situational leadership approach will display an understanding of what happens in the interplay between subordinates and their leaders when leadership is taking place. Blanchard, *et al.* (1993:1-17) state that the mosaic of various situations, different maturity levels of subordinates and a variety of leadership styles may lead to a more effective leadership approach than the leadership approach where only one leadership style is followed by a leader (Blanchard *et al.*, 1993:1-17).

The principles upon which the situational leadership theory is based is depicted in the following diagramme:

Figure 5: Situational leadership principles



Deducted from Hersey and Blanchard (1969:26-34)

According to Amanchukwu *et al.* (2015:8) the situational leadership approach suggests that leaders should follow this approach on a continuous daily basis and not during specific incidences that may take place during the day. Corvelay (2003) states that it is extremely important to implement the situational leadership over an extended period of time in order to secure the successful implementation of the approach.

Bolden *et al.* (2003:8) state by implication that the implementation of the situational leadership approach is a process that develops over time. As followers' level of maturity increases over time, the leader should begin to change his or her leadership style accordingly. This means that the leadership approach is a long-term approach that needs time to implement in full (Bolden *et al.* 2003:8). To be effectively implemented situational leaders should have the time to understand the philosophy underlying the situational leadership theory and should also have the time to implement it in their respective organisations (Amanchukwu *et al.*, 2015:8).

3.3 Guiding principles on which the situational leadership theory is based

The situational leadership theory and the principles on which it is based sees effective leadership and effective leaders as a prerequisite for managers to be effective in their work. Leaders who have the ability to lead their subordinates is one of the more important principles that organisations should strive to achieve, whether in the private or the public sector (Bolden *et al.*, 2003:6). Graeff (1997:1) states that the principles of the situational leadership theory are focussing on the successful relationship between the organisation and its leadership core where both entities should strive to reach their respective goals in harmony. In the public sector the goals are to deliver quality services to the citizens and the leaders should have as their goals that subordinates deliver the services as best as possible (Graeff, 1997:1)

Peretomode (2012:15) sees Hersey and Blanchard's situational leadership theory as based on specific principles; if leaders are able to master these principles, they can be successful in leading their subordinates to reach the organisation's goals. Peretomode (2012:15) describes the principles on which the situational leadership theory is based as (i) subordinates' four levels of maturity (ii) four different leadership styles to address each of the four maturity levels, which takes place during (iii) many different situations in the work environment of the leaders and subordinates.

Schermerhorn (1997:6) also emphasised that the Hersey-Blanchard Situational Leadership Theory is based on, what he calls, three pillars that form the foundation of the theory. He identifies these pillars as:

- Leadership style (Indicated with the letter S);
- Maturity level of subordinates (Indicated with the letter M); and
- Situation.

Silverthorne and Wang (2001:400) state that situational leaders should have the ability to be flexible as leaders in order to be able to link each of these three principles or pillars into one methodology. They should also have the necessary leadership skills to implement this methodology. This implies that situational leaders should not only have the necessary knowledge on the principles of the situational

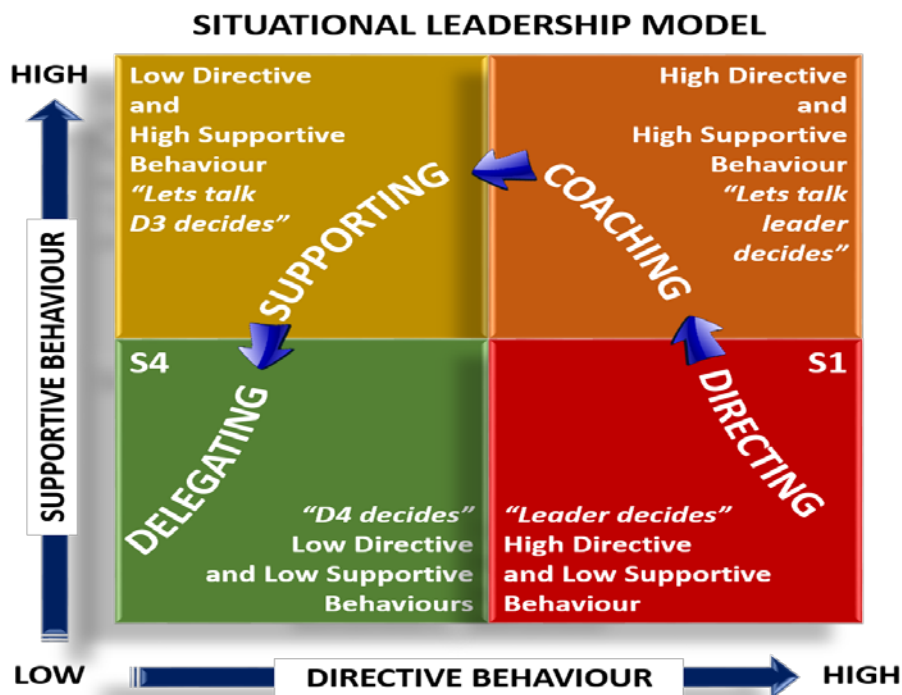
leadership theory, but they should also have the necessary leadership skills to make the theory work in different situations (Silverthorne and Wang, 2001:400).

According to Peretomode (2012:15) the situational leadership theory identifies the following four leadership styles that situational leaders can follow when leading their subordinates on four different maturity levels:

- A **directing** (telling) leadership style (S1) for subordinates on a **low** maturity level (M1);
- A **selling** leadership style (S2) for subordinates on a **low to moderate** maturity level (M2);
- A **participating** leadership style (S3) for subordinates on a **moderate to higher** maturity level (M3); and
- A **delegating** leadership style (S4) for subordinates on a **high** maturity level (M4).

These principles or pillars on which the situational leadership theory is based are visually presented by scholars in situational leadership in many visual constructs and diagrams. Although there are many different visual presentations of the situational leadership theory, most of them are more or less constructed in the following manner:

Figure 6: Popular presentation of the situational leadership theory in the form of a diagram



Adapted from Buckner (2014: Fig.2A)

The leadership styles (S1 to S4) of leaders and the maturity levels (M1 to M4) of subordinates, as presented in the Diagram 3.2 above, will be discussed in more detail in the next sub-sections in order to give more substance to the principles on which the theory is based.

3.3.1 Leadership styles that a situational leader can follow

Ireh and Bailey (1999:23) state that the situational leadership theory focuses on the four leadership styles (S1 to S4), but they emphasise that the four leadership styles do not necessarily have to be followed in a strictly defined manner. A subordinate may be on two different maturity levels at the same time, which means by implication that they function at low maturity for some of their tasks, but on a higher maturity level for the rest of their tasks. This requires that the situational leader brings a more flexible dimension to leadership than most other leadership theories (Mwai, 2011:4).

3.3.1.1 *The four situational leadership styles*

Situational leaders should know how to adapt their leadership style to address the differing maturity levels of each subordinate under their leadership. Maturity level is a guiding element when situational leaders choose their specific leadership style (Smith, 2013:1-2). Willcocks (2011:97) and Van Vliet (2013) indicate that situational leaders should gain the necessary knowledge on each of the four leadership styles before undertaking them in real-life situations. Each of the four leadership styles exhibits its own particular focus or content, which differ from one style to the next and situational leaders will have to gain extensive knowledge on this before starting to implement them in organisational entities (Fatt, 2004:91).

According to Van Vliet (2013), Willcocks (2011:97), Smith (2013:1-2), and Fatt (2004:91) the following are the contents of the four situational leadership styles, each with its own particular focus or contents:

The Directing (telling) leadership style (S1): This leadership style is an instructional type of leadership, characterised by a leader who tells subordinates what they are expected to do and how exactly to perform their expected tasks. When leaders follow this leadership style they provide their subordinates with specific instructions, define their roles and tasks, and closely supervise them to complete a specific task(s) (*also see Joseph, 2016*). This leadership style requires that a leader relies on his knowledge and personal experiences on how a specific job should be done and where subordinates lack the competence to get things done.

Normally subordinates are new entrants into the organisation and are still in the beginning of a learning curve. This leadership style is, however, also applicable when, for some reason or another, subordinates are not motivated to do their work, even if they have the know-how. For any leader, this is a challenging situation and requires specific knowledge and experience to get these subordinates on track again.

The directing leadership style is in practice an authoritarian or autocratic leadership style where the situational leader dictates work procedures, decides what goals are to be achieved, and directs and controls all activities without any meaningful participation by the subordinates. When a directing leadership style is followed by

the situational leader, he or she has to take full responsibility for the outcome of the work of subordinates.

The coaching leadership style (S2): The next leadership style is the coaching leadership style. Coaching is where a leader still gets involved with subordinates who are still not fully competent to do their work and who are still incapable of undertaking their work fully on their own. They still require some level of direction, as well as advice and encouragement in order to build both their confidence and competence. Trademarks of a coaching leadership style are open communication channels, good listeners, and flexible when monitoring work performance. It remains in essence an instructional leadership style.

In a coaching leadership style, situational leaders play a supporting role to subordinates; they motivate and want to instil confidence in subordinates, so they eventually become better and more efficient and productive workers in time. The leaders want to ensure subordinates that they have the ability to perform the job successfully in future.

The coaching leadership style is especially effective in one-on-one situations. Effective coaching leaders will not only guide their subordinates on how they can improve and become more mature workers, but they will clarify how the subordinate's goals are linked to the overall strategic goals of the organisation and their organisational entities as such. The coaching leadership style is best suited where subordinates have strong motivation and initiative to develop their knowledge to do their work better.

The participating leadership style (S3): When leaders follow a participating leadership style they focus on building relationships with subordinates who are on a moderate to higher maturity level when it comes to performing their work successfully. Participative leaders decentralise authority and encourage subordinates to participate in decision-making sessions. Participating leaders play a more facilitating role as a leader that follows a directing approach. They facilitate the idea of subordinates and they share information and knowledge to further the maturity levels of their subordinates.

An important factor related to this leadership style is that it satisfies subordinates' higher-order needs, such as job security. Another basis for participation is the concept of power sharing between the leader and his or her subordinates. The idea is that the subordinate's participation is necessary to redistribute power in an organisation and protect employees' interests. This argument acknowledges that employees are stakeholders in the organisation and through their participation play an important role in reaching the organisation's goals.

The participative leaders will, however, always have to make the final decision, but all inputs come from the collective mind of the subordinates under his or her leadership. Participative leaders thus show a higher level of confidence in the capabilities of subordinates and will give subordinates on a moderate to high maturity level more and more responsibility to undertake their tasks on their own. With a participatory leadership style leaders want to further the capacity of subordinates to become successful workers, able to work on their own.

The delegating leadership style (S4): The delegating leadership style places more of the responsibility for successful work on the shoulders of subordinates. Very little guidance comes from leaders and this is regarded as the ultimate people-oriented leadership style, as management allows mature subordinates to make most decisions on how to undertake their work.

A delegating leadership style is a somewhat hands-off approach in which the leader places great responsibility on subordinates, since it is supposed that they have the skills to analyse situations and the confidence to implement their tasks semi-independently. Delegating leadership gives employees maximum room to increase their maturity levels and to develop and grow.

The delegating leader also transfers decision-making powers to one or more subordinates, but remains ultimately responsible for their decisions and work performance. This is because they are on a high maturity level and they are well-acquainted with the work that they are doing. Delegating leaders will, however, still provide guidance, but only when needed or requested by the subordinates. It allows for maximum creativity in how employees choose to go about accomplishing a task (*also see Joseph, 2016*).

A delegating leadership style can often energise subordinates and make them feel empowered and meaningful. Job satisfaction levels usually rise as subordinates believe they have a say in decision making and workplace efficiency.

Srivastava and Vyas (2015:698) argue that the leadership style chosen by a situational leader is not totally dependent on subordinates' level of maturity, but that the belief of the leader in the new leadership approach plays an equally important role in the success of the leader. Farmer (2005:485) affirms that, in order for a leader to select a new leadership approach – such as the situational leadership approach – such a leader should have peace of mind that the leadership approach with its different leadership styles is ideal for him or her for leading subordinates in a much more flexible mindset than is the case with a single leadership style or approach.

3.3.1.2 *Maturity levels of subordinates*

According to Yeakey (2002:76) the appropriate leadership style is determined by the leader's assessment of an individual's maturity level (readiness to undertake tasks successfully) relative to the task at hand. Assessing the maturity level of subordinates requires that situational leaders have operational (or technical) knowledge of subordinates' work. Such leaders will also have to develop their human and cognitive leadership skills in order to follow a specific leadership style successfully (Yeakey, 2002:76). Although it is not always easy to determine a subordinate's maturity level, it is of critical importance for a leader to do just that in order to become an effective situational leader (Kaifi *et al*, 2013:32).

Van Vliet (2013) states that a situational leader's choice of a specific leadership style "...is immediately adjusted to the employee's" level of maturity. Maturity, *per se*, can be defined as the capacity of an employee to undertake tasks successfully (Cubero, 2007:352). Cubero (2007:352) states that maturity within the context of Hersey and Blanchard's model can be defined as the capacity of a subordinate to perform work well enough to achieve set goals. Hersey and Blanchard also define maturity as "...a person's willingness and ability to take responsibility for undertaking tasks effectively" (Gumpert and Hambleton, 1979:10).

Chelladural and Carron (1983:372) define maturity more comprehensively and state that the maturity level of a subordinate refers to the capacity of a worker to work

independently and with little assistance from others. In the situational leadership approach, this level of maturity or capability is uniquely linked to the leadership style of the leader. Chelladural and Carron (1983:372) refers to this as the capacity to reach attainable goals in a responsibility way. Peretemode (2012:15) is of the opinion that one of the epitomes of the situational leadership approach is that subordinates' maturity levels should be developed according to a leader's leadership style; they should become high-quality workers that will assist in an organisation attaining its goals. It is a gradual, but progressive process that also includes specific actions to develop subordinates through coaching and training (Peretemode, 2012:15).

Nassar (2014) states that, for employees to mature in their work, leaders should play a key role in cultivating a work environment in which subordinates can develop their capacity to work better and more efficiently to undertake their work successfully. Leaders must also have a clear understanding of the levels of performance of their subordinates and should join forces with them to develop their levels of maturity. Leaders are thus not only supervisors to their subordinates, but should also act as mentors in the process of developing their subordinate's maturity levels. To be able to do this, situational leaders should have knowledge of what the different maturity levels entail (Nassar, 2014).

Scholars on situational leadership, such as Van Vliet (2013), Peretemode (2012:15) and Schermerhorn (1997: 5-12), describe the maturity levels of subordinates, as outlined by Hersey and Blanchard, as follows:

- M1: Subordinates with low levels of maturity and competence to undertake tasks successfully.
- M2: Subordinates with low to moderate levels of maturity and competence to undertake tasks successfully.
- M3: Subordinates with moderate to higher levels of maturity and competence to undertake tasks successfully.
- M4: Subordinates with high levels of maturity and competence to undertake tasks successfully.

When analysing these maturity levels, their meaning can be described as follows (Graeff, 1983:285-291; Schermerhorn, 1997: 5-12; Yukl, 2006:223-225; and Van Vliet, 2013):

M1: Subordinates on a low maturity level: These are normally the least experienced subordinates who will have to be instructed on how to do just about everything that makes up the task they are responsible for. While this usually means a leader is dealing with younger and less experienced employees, it could also be that the employees simply don't have much knowledge or background in the task at hand. This maturity level matches up with the directive (S1) leadership style, as the employees at this point will require complete direction for almost every task. This maturity level is normally associated with entry-level employees or those employees who are not motivated or neglect to deliver quality work, for some reason or the other.

M2: Subordinates on a low to moderate maturity level: Moving up a step, these are still inexperienced people who possess only slightly more knowledge and skill than those at the M1 level. Subordinates on this maturity level are progressing on their way to become highly successful workers, but their ability to deal with this successfully is still in progress. They still need the help of their leaders and of other more mature colleagues to perform satisfactorily. The subordinate has some experience and knowledge on how to undertake their tasks successfully, but is still regarded as a novice at the job. Further coaching is necessary so that a subordinate can move forward to undertake tasks more successfully.

M3: Subordinates on a moderate to high maturity level: Getting close to the top of the scale, this group would include subordinates who have most of the skill they need to undertake their work successfully, but they are not yet able to quite get all of their tasks done without some help. They can thus perform most of their tasks on their own. The applicable leadership style for subordinates on this maturity level (M3) is the participative leadership style (S3) because subordinates are able to work more independently. Leaders will be able to engage their subordinates on this maturity level more positively and include them more and more in the decision-making processes. These subordinates are thus well on their way to becoming experienced

workers with the capability to undertake their tasks to a high level of success, but they still need more expertise to be able to work independently.

M4: Subordinates on high maturity level: At the top of the maturity scale are subordinates who have the ability to handle their tasks independently and with little or even no help from their leaders. A delegating (S4) leadership style will be the choice for situational leaders and their involvement with subordinates on this maturity level will be occasional and with few leadership inputs. The subordinates on this maturity level have the knowledge and confidence to undertake their tasks independently. They thus feel comfortable with their own ability to their tasks well and are well suited to assist other, less mature workers to increase their ability to work. They should, in theory, form the core of employees in their departments and the organisation. Situational leaders will depend largely on these subordinates to secure effective service delivery.

Understanding the contents of the four leadership styles and the four maturity levels as described above are the first two steps to becoming an effective and successful situational leader. The success of Hersey and Blanchard's situational leadership approach lies in effectively linking the four situational leadership styles with the four maturity levels (Banakar, 2015:1-3). The successful 'pairing' of the leadership style to the maturity level of the subordinate is thus a critical factor for a situational leader to implement the situational leadership theory successfully in his or her organisation (Banakar, 2015:1-3).

3.3.1.4 Linking the leadership styles with maturity levels

When managers are following the situational leadership approach, they will have to link their leadership style to the specific maturity level of a subordinate. This is a crucial phase in the situational leadership approach which will, to a large extent, determine the successful implementation of the approach.

The linking or matching of the appropriate leadership style with the maturity level of the subordinate can be described as follows (Hersey, Blanchard and Johnson, 2000):

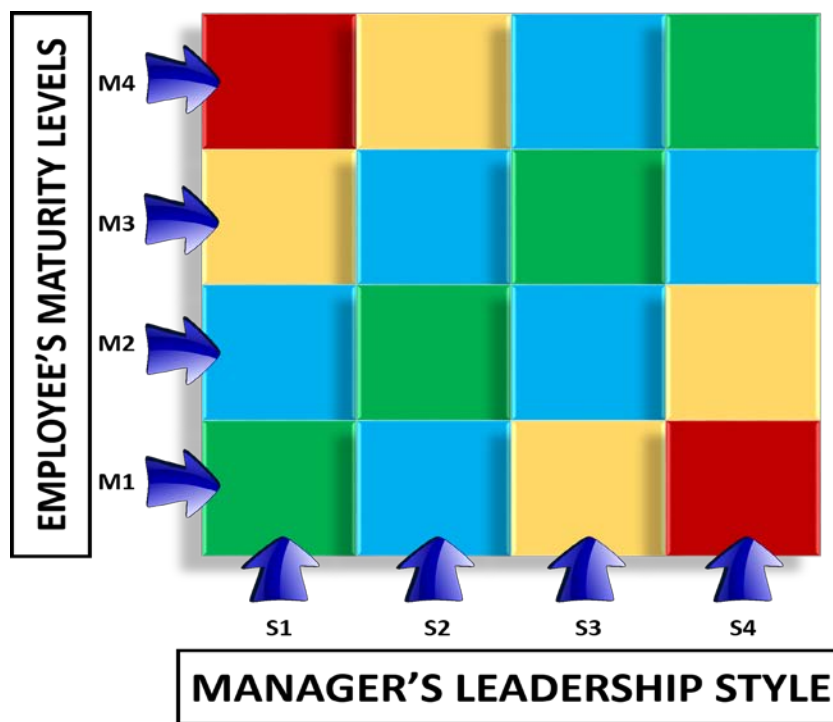
- A **directing** leadership style (S1) should be followed for subordinates on a **low maturity** level where subordinates are not yet competent to undertake their tasks successfully (M1);
- A **coaching** leadership style (S2) should be followed for subordinates with **low to moderate** maturity, but who still need close guidance to complete their tasks successfully (M2);
- A **participating** leadership style (S3) should be followed for subordinates on a **moderate to higher** maturity level where they are almost on a level where they can work independently, but where they still need guidance to some extent (M3); and
- A **delegating** leadership style (S4) should be followed for subordinates on a **high** maturity where they undertake their tasks not only independently but fully successfully (M4).

The basic philosophy of the situational leadership approach is thus that a situational leader will initially follow a directive leadership style in cases where subordinate's maturity level is low by accurately spelling out the duties and responsibilities of such a subordinate's work, telling them exactly what to do, how to do it, when to do it, where to do it and what the end results are likely to be (Centre for Situational Leadership, 2013:3-5).

When a subordinate's maturity level is progressively higher, the situational leaders will change his or her leadership style until a delegated leadership style is eventually followed. The situational leader will more and more become a participating leader, listening to and facilitating the work of subordinates, until the leaders has so much confidence in the worker's ability to successfully complete their tasks that they willingly give those subordinates almost total decision-making responsibilities and freedom to do their work independently (Centre for Situational Leadership, 2013:3-5).

For this study, the situational leadership approach will be depicted as follows and this depiction will be followed in the development of the conceptual situational leadership style for senior managers in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality in Chapter Five.

Figure 7: The situational leadership approach in this study



Adapted from Schermerhorn, 2011

In practice, every combination of leadership style and maturity level is possible, but the principle remains that the most effective leadership style is when a leader choose a leadership style that corresponds with the maturity level of a subordinate. According to Nobilis (2009:1), in cases where situational leaders follow the ‘wrong’ leadership style, or where they ‘over-lead’ or ‘under-lead’ it may cause anxiety, frustration and even hostility amongst subordinates, which is counterproductive to the philosophy of leadership, namely to lead and motivate subordinates to reach goals effectively.

Scholars on situational leadership believe that the situational leadership theory of Hersey and Blanchard hold specific advantages for senior managers who adopt this

leadership theory in their organisations (Schermerhorn, 1997:5-12; Graeff, 1983:285-291; and Yukl, 2006:223-225):

3.3.1.5 *The situation*

The third pillar of the situational leadership approach is the situation in which leadership is taking place. Different situations require subordinates on different maturity levels, which require different leadership styles (Mulder, 2012). An elementary example is the following:

Should the water supply to a community be suddenly disrupted, then the head of the department will have to intervene urgently, irrespective of the maturity levels of the supervisor and employees; action must be taken to repair the water supply line. Their maturity may be M4, but the situation requires that the head of department follows a S1 (directing) leadership style in spite of the high level of maturity of the subordinates. Despite this, it is thus important that the leader should adopt the correct leadership style for every situation (Mulder, 2012).

3.4 **Advantages of the situational leadership theory**

Scholars regard the situational leadership approach as having specific advantages for leaders in various organisational settings. Tomasco (2015) identifies, *inter alia*, the following advantages:

- The theory is relatively easy to understand and once a leader has the knowledge of the principles it is founded on, can implement it fairly easy.
- If leaders effectively adapt their leadership style to their followers' maturity levels, "work gets done" and relationships are built.
- The subordinates' maturity levels can be developed over time with the vision that they will eventually reach a high maturity level (M4) which will be to the advantage of the subordinate and the organisation.
- It may enhance subordinates' work performance in that the leader can identify at what maturity level subordinates are and by following the right leadership style subordinates may become motivated to perform.

A specific advantage for municipalities is that the situational leadership approach is a means to strengthen senior management's capability to be effective leaders that will develop their subordinates to perform better. It will also motivate subordinates to perform better because they may feel that leaders have an interest. From a leader's perspective they will become more aware of what their individual subordinates' needs are and by addressing it may create subordinates who will strive to become better workers in the organisation.

Northouse (2007:110) also highlights four major advantages or strengths of the situational leadership approach:

- It may create good relationships between leaders and subordinates and between subordinates themselves because of the openness of the approach.
- It may help subordinates to gain understanding of their own weaknesses and strengths, which may assist them in their own development.
- It may motivate subordinates to improve their own work performance.
- It may help to give subordinates confidence in their own ability to perform their work better.
- It may help subordinates to see the bigger picture where they function better and this may act as a motivator to perform more effectively.

Effective leadership, which includes situational leadership, is essential to an organisation's success. Leaders communicate the organisation's goals, message and focus to all employees and will have to make sure that strategic and operational plans are implemented. Organisations can develop leaders to follow a specific leadership approach to achieve this and if the situational leadership approach is favoured in an organisation, the following advantages can be expected (Kelchner at smallbusiness.chron.com):

- It is the ideal approach to determine on which maturity level all its employees are and with this knowledge employees can be developed to become more productive workers, focusing on reaching the organisation's goals.
- The special attention given to the employees by situational leaders may act as a means to motivate them. Employees will receive the coaching and support necessary to perform their duties better, which builds morale among them.

- The approach will help employees eventually achieve their full potential because situational leaders will provide a supportive work environment for employees of all skill levels.
- A motivating and supportive work environment can help increase productivity and effective service delivery.
- Morale and motivation play an important role in employee retention and replacing employees which function on high maturity levels and when employee turnover is high it will financially cost the organisation large sums of money. Not only in terms of normal human resources expenses such as recruitment, hiring and placement, but especially in terms of developing and training new employees who replace workers who leave the company.

The situational leadership approach is regarded by many researchers as one of the mechanisms that senior management in municipalities may use to prepare subordinates to perform their tasks progressively better, which will have an effect on the overall performance of the municipality. It is therefore important to understand what the situational leadership entails in municipalities.

3.5 The situational leadership theory in municipalities

In a research project on transformational and situational leadership in the public sector, Fernandez (2005:197-217) found that 'correct' leadership styles have a positive impact on employees' motivation and performance. He is of the opinion that transformational leadership and situational leadership are both effective leadership approaches to help institutions in the public sector to perform better. Situational leaders rely on knowledge of the situational leadership approach and how it makes sense in specific situations (Fernandez, 2005:197-217). Fernandez (2005:197-217) concluded that the situational leadership approach is especially valuable when leaders and their subordinates need to be developed to undertake their tasks successful in their specific departments.

3.5.1 *Building subordinates' work capacity*

One aspect that is not always highlighted when the situational leadership approach is implemented in an organisation (such as a municipality) is that this leadership approach is also a mechanism to develop the performance *capability* and *potential* of

subordinates to become more mature workers in their different organisational entities (Centre for Situational Leadership, 2015:1). To ensure this, senior municipal managers, as situational leaders, should cultivate their subordinates' potential and ability to perform their tasks effectively and skilfully during the variety of situations the municipality encounters. The Centre states that "...by tying potential and ability to task performance, the leader will accelerate the translation of a subordinate's capability into reality". In this regard the situational leadership approach can facilitate the growth of employees' knowledge and help to transform their potential, natural talent or innate strengths into skills that consistently produces meaningful results for the municipality at large (Centre for Situational Leadership, 2016:1).

To be effective situational leaders that can act as role models for their subordinates, senior municipal managers themselves should develop the following abilities which are directly associated with the situational leadership approach (Centre for Situational Studies, 2009:5-7):

- They should be able to precisely determine the maturity level of their subordinates. This means that the current ability and performance of subordinates should be benchmarked against set criteria for good performance. A senior municipal manager cannot undertake this without sound knowledge of the criteria the subordinates should adhere to.
- They should be able to correctly adapt their leadership style according to the maturity levels of their subordinates. This means that a senior manager in a municipality should understand and gain knowledge on what each of the four leadership styles entails and specifically what effect such a leadership style will have on their subordinates.
- They should have knowledge of the best way to communicate their leadership approach and specific leadership style to their subordinates. The level of success of implementing the situational leadership approach will primarily be determined by the ability of the senior manager to communicate the philosophy underlying the situational leadership approach with subordinates.
- They should realise that implementing a situational leadership approach in their departments is a process that will take time. Senior municipal managers should

also understand that transforming their subordinates' capabilities from raw talent to excellent skill will be a time-consuming process requiring skilful management.

- They should know they have the potential to become good municipal officials that are able to develop and align individual subordinates' strengths with the goals of their entities – to deliver excellent services to the public (Centre for Situational Leadership, 2016:10).

Ingram (2006:362-374) states that leadership in municipalities is increasingly emerging as a distinctive and autonomous domain that should be addressed more comprehensively by researchers and practitioners. Public sector institutions such as municipalities are seeing a definite shift from 'managerialism' to 'leaderism' (Ingram, 2006:362-374). The shift from 'managerialism' to 'leaderism' provides greater responsibilities and higher autonomy to senior public managers by allowing them to exercise their leadership approach in different ways. This includes situational leadership as approach (Orazi, 2013:486-504).

3.5.2 Senior managers as leaders in municipalities

Developing and establishing a highly performing municipal organisation starts at the top, with senior managers who should manage their specific organisational entities effectively and who should lead their subordinates purposefully to reach their municipal goals. Poor management can result in mismanagement of municipal resources and finances, strategic misalignment, poor service delivery and a host of other problems that can undermine a municipality's performance. Municipal managers with poor leadership abilities will not be able to direct and influence their subordinates towards achieving the goals of their municipality (Siswana, 2007:78-80).

It is in this context that managers, as leaders in municipalities, should be able to lead, support and guide subordinates to achieving municipal objectives; to direct their own organisational units in support of the vision and mission of their municipalities; and ensure that agreed tasks are performed efficiently and effectively. To do this, senior municipal managers should understand this role within the context of the municipal environment (Siswana, 2007:78-80).

The Centre for Situational Leadership (2016:1) emphasises this and states that today's public sector institutions cannot ignore the importance of developing their managers and leaders into effective front runners in encountering the many different situations confronting them. Public sector institutions, such as municipalities, must therefore equip their senior leaders with the abilities to lead their subordinates skilfully through the ever-increasing maze of public demands (Centre for Situational Leadership, 2016:1).

Duncan (2009:5) states that to become an effective manager and a superior leader in a municipal environment can be tough and is a daunting undertaking at the best of times. There are, as mentioned, many challenges facing senior managers in today's municipal environment. Part of the challenge is to be able to lead subordinates in an effective manner during the different situations that a municipality is encountered with every day. Duncan (2009:10) also emphasises that municipal leaders should be able to understand not only their management functions, but that they should know the principles of effective leadership and should put it to use in the wider context of municipal management. He is of the opinion that senior municipal managers can learn specifically from the leadership principles that form the foundation of the situational leadership theory (Duncan, 2009:10).

Orazi (2013:486-504) also states that within the situational leadership approach leadership principles and skills "...truly do matter in improving the performance of public sector organizations', such as municipalities". The situational leadership approach and principles can be the vehicles to secure better service delivery by establishing a worker's core that is motivated to achieve a municipality's goals (Orazi, 2013:486-504). These goals include many different actions such as the delivery of electricity and water for household use and the removal of refuse.

According to Johansen (2013:486-504) senior management in a municipality are 'key strategic actors' who have in many instances a positive or negative influence on their subordinates' motivation and performance in the municipality. The leadership quality of senior managers matters because they are in many instances in municipalities the direct supervisors of the workers in their specific organisational departments.

Senior managers in municipalities will have to develop certain skills to be effective managers and leaders, such human relations skills and cognitive skills. Johansen (2013:486-504) is of the opinion that managers, as effective leaders, will be able to create a positive atmosphere in which occurrences that may have a negative impact on the functioning of their departments can be addressed successfully.

Duncan (2009:7) concluded his research findings with the following statement: “Due to the diversity of the municipal work force and the general public at large, managers must be flexible and adaptable in their leadership style, depending on the capability of subordinates to do their work in any given situation”. He states that the type of leadership approach for municipalities is in all probability the situational leadership approach (Duncan, 2009:7). Johansen (2013:486-504) echoes this sentiment and state that the situational leadership approach is a given approach for senior municipal leaders to follow.

3.6 Situational leadership in municipalities: from theory to practice

Implementing the principles of the situational leadership approach successfully in a district municipality, such as the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality, depends on how well the senior managers understand the leadership principles of the situational leadership theory. Once they obtained the knowledge that forms the foundation of the theory they should be able to understand what measures they should put in place to strengthen their capability to become more effective leaders in the municipality. According to Farmer (2005:483-489) senior municipal managers as situational leaders, should take the initiative themselves to implement this leadership approach. The benefits of the approach will not only be for them and their respective departments, but will eventually benefit the municipality at large.

In order to implement the situational leadership approach and principles effectively, senior managers should pay attention to the following aspects (Educational-Business Articles, 2016):

- They should recognise, understand and know the principles on which the theory is based.
- They should be prepared to become leaders who are flexible in their leadership methodology and base it on changes in their current leadership style.

- They should be willing to learn from mistakes that may be a result of lack of experience on the new approach.
- They should be ready and motivated to develop their own leadership skills in order to guide their subordinates effectively on the principles laid down by the approach.
- They should be ready to see to it that their subordinates' maturity levels and skills are developing so that they can undertake tasks successfully.
- They should develop the ability to motivate their subordinates to accept the principles of the situational leadership approach.
- They should empower their subordinates through development and training to understand the principles of situational leadership.

Demmon-Berger (2007:18) states that senior municipal managers as leaders should, once they have the necessary knowledge and understanding of the principles of situational leadership, embark on actions to build and develop the capacity of their subordinate municipal officials. This is necessary because municipal officials under their leadership whose capacity (maturity) increase up to the level of M4 will need less attention from senior managers and can they delegate more and more responsibility to subordinates, leaving them time to concentrate more on the management functions in their respective departments.

Demmon-Berger (2007:18) is also of the opinion that senior managers in municipalities should concentrate on the following aspects to develop the capacity of their subordinates to become more successful municipal officials:

- Ensure that education and training on the approach starts with their deputies so that they can operationalise the approach in their own sections.
- Start with the educating of new subordinates on the approach as soon as they start their working career.
- Incorporate situational leadership principles with daily activities of subordinates.
- Clearly link knowledge of situational leadership principles with the importance of development of maturity levels for future progress in municipal structures (career planning).

- Emphasise how mentoring and coaching on leadership principles may lead to a subordinates to fit better into a municipal environment where a leader follows a situational approach and where the leadership environment is based on a situational leadership approach.
- Seek opportunities to train subordinate on the principles of situational leadership, inside a municipality as well as in the external environment.
- Enhance and motivate subordinate municipal officials by constantly emphasise the municipality's mission and goals and link it to the principles of situation leadership.
- Constant feedback to subordinate municipal officials on their progress to become more matured officials is important.
- Recognize the role of fully committed and matured municipal officials in the municipality to motive lesser committed officials to 'buy-in' on a situational leadership approach.
- Identify ways to get subordinate municipal officials to think outside their comfort zone and to accept the situational leadership approach which may push them toward excellence.

Graeff (1983:285-291) however already cautioned in 1983, that subordinates of situational leaders may react differently when they are confronted with new ways of leading by their superiors. Corvelay, (2003) states in this regard that:

- Subordinates can be extremely committed to follow a leader that under scribes the situational leadership approach, but a lack of talent to obtain the proper maturity levels (competency) over time to complete a task successfully never realises because of a lack of talent.
- Subordinates can be extremely talented to obtain the necessary maturity levels to complete their task successfully, but they lack the motivation to do so.
- The Ken Blanchard Institute (2016:1-4) caution however that senior managers as situational leaders should take note of the following "top five" aspects situational leaders fail to do and which counts for up to 85% of leadership failures:
- They fail to provide appropriate information and feedback on their leadership approach.
- They fail to involve subordinates in the leadership process.

- They fail to use a leadership style that is appropriate to the maturity level of the subordinate.
- They fail to understand the situation in which they should lead.
- They over- or under lead.
- They fail to set clear goals and objectives of their leadership approach.
- They fail to develop and train their subordinates to know the principles of their leadership approach.

Senior municipal managers can only become effective situational leaders if they obtain the necessary leadership skills to address any obstacles they may encounter with in their day to day work (Northouse, 2007).

3.7 Skills required for effective situational leadership in a municipality

The Ken Blanchard Institute (2016:1-4) states that today's leaders are the backbone of any organization and they are the "...catalyst for developing the individual bench strength to move the organization forward" The Institute also mention that developing leaders to their full potential remains one of the great challenges for organizations today. They state that inappropriate use of communication or listening, under- or over leading (direction or delegation) and a lack of management and leadership skills are some of the more important obstacles to develop effective situational leaders (The Ken Blanchard Institute, 2016:1-4).

Northouse (2010) states that specific leadership skills can be developed over time. Literature identifies a huge number of leadership skills that a situational leader should poses to effectively lead their subordinates in an organisation. Only some of the more important skills will be identified the next sub-section to lay the foundation for the next Chapter where the skills will be discussed in more detail. These skills will also be included in the framework that will be developed for situational leaders working in municipalities.

3.7.1 The Katz three-skill approach as basis for situational leaders in municipalities

Researchers have studied leadership skills and abilities for a number of years and the two most influential approaches are that of Robert Katz's Three-skill model and

of Michael Mumford, which was founded on Katz's model and which is called the Skills model (2000). Although the two approaches offer different views on leadership can be seen as complimentary to each other from a leadership skills point of view (Virkus, 2009:1-20).

The Three skills model of Katz grew from the obvious flaw in the trait approach. Skills theorists sought to discover the skills and abilities that made leaders effective. Skills theories are leader-centric, and focused on what characteristics about leaders make them effective (Burkes, 2010:1-2). The Three-skill model of Katz will form the basis of this discussion because Katz argued that his identified leadership skills are quite different from traits, qualities or characteristics of leaders (Virkus, 2009:1-20).

Katz's (1974) seminal article on the skills approach to leadership suggested that leadership is based on three skills that are necessary to become effective leaders. Leadership skills are what leaders can learn and developed whereas traits or characteristics are who leaders are. Skills can be learned over time but traits and characteristics are the inherent personality and behaviour with which leaders are born with. Katz's three-skill approach is in line with the situational leadership approach in that it is expected from situational leaders to develop their leadership skills irrespective of their traits or characteristics that they were born with (Virkus, 2009:20).

Katz proposed his Three-skill model or approach in 1955, but it was later updated, as mentioned, by Mumford, Zaccaro, and Harding and Northouse in 2000. The Katz three-skill approach three different skills a leader should own and developed, namely:

- Operational (technical) skills
- Human skills
- Conceptual skills

Mumford, *et al* (2000) included two further elements, namely experience and environmental influences. According to Mumford, *et al.*, (2000:23) the three skills refer to the following:

- **Operational skills** refer to having the knowledge, competence, and proficiency to do a specific work or activity. Senior managers in municipalities should have the knowledge, competence, and proficiency to do their specific operational activities in their departments, such as the financial department or the infrastructure services department.
- **Human skills** are the ability to work well with other people, both individually and in group perspective. Because managers as leaders deal directly with people, this skill is crucial. Managers and leaders with good human skills are able to get the best out of their people. They know how to communicate, motivate, lead, and inspire enthusiasm and trust. These skills are equally important
- **Conceptual skills** include the art of rational thinking and reasoning. Senior managers should be able to comprehend complex information and making sound decisions on the many complexities that they and their municipalities are encountered with every day. They will have to be excellent problem analysers and should be able to think in a visionary manner. With this skill senior managers and leaders should also have the skill to take subordinates on board to reach visions and related goals.

The three-skill leadership approach can be presented in a diagram.

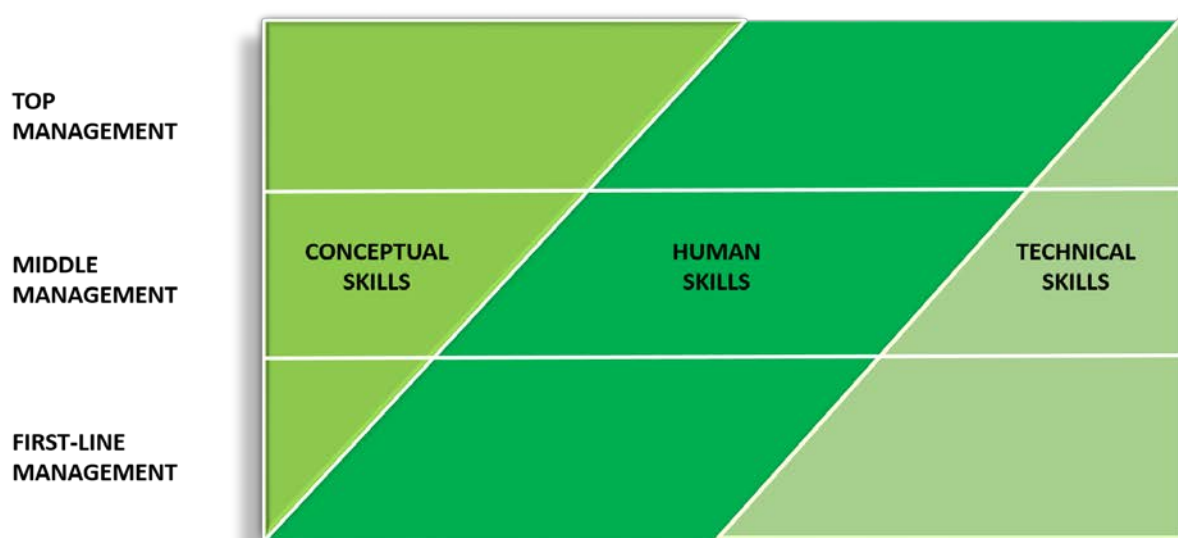
Figure 8: Katz's three skill leadership approach



Juliane, 2009: <http://performancetech.blogspot.com>

Although the model places all three leadership skills on the same level, the importance of each skill differs according to the official's hieratical position in the organisation. This can be depicted as follows:

Figure 9: Managerial and leadership skills according to Katz



Zaccaro and Harding, 2000

As can be seen, senior managers in a municipality will use their conceptual skills much more often than their operational skills. Subordinates on lower part of the organisational ladder will focus more on operational skills. Human skills are equally important on all levels of the organisational structure (Zaccaro and Harding, 2000).

Wedlich (2012:11-12) summarises the three-skill approach to develop senior managers as situational leaders as follows:

- To understand their and their subordinates' operational environment and to be able to solve new and unusual ill-defined operational problems;
- To understand which human skills are necessary to work productively with subordinates and to motivate them to achieve organisational goals; and
- Accumulation conceptual knowledge on how to address difficult and complex situations and to take subordinates on board to follow them to see future developments in their own organisational entities in the municipality at large.

Because the development of situational leadership skills is so important, the leadership skills of the senior managers in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality the leadership skills necessary to be effective managers will be analysed and discussed in depth the next Chapter

3.8 Conclusion

Leadership on the local sphere of government plays a crucial role in ensuring that promises made to the communities are effectively translated into concrete programmes. This primary role that senior municipal managers as leaders has to play in achieving this is to ensure effective collaboration and coordination of municipal activities by providing the necessary strategic direction and leadership guidance to achieve the set goals of their individual departments and those of the municipality at large.

Situational leadership may play an important part in achieving the above as this approach to leadership is based on a philosophy of developing the capabilities of subordinates to perform their work successfully which is the primary measurement of a municipalities success. Motivational inspiration, intellectual stimulation and individual consideration of subordinates are fundamental traits of this leadership approach.

Situational leadership with its focus on developing subordinates' potential and with its individualised approach makes subordinates feel that their leaders and their organisation value them and their need to understand and resolve their personal uncertainties. Situational leaders will in essence indicate to subordinates that have a 'calling' to work toward become more efficient workers because they will in most instances be more satisfied with their jobs because they receive special attention from leaders when they are led in different leadership styles.

Senior managers as leaders in municipalities require for specific leadership skills such as good communication, handling subordinates in a humane way and to develop their cognitive abilities to visualise future challenges that their own department and the municipality may face in future. The situational leadership approach will be applicable in all situations that municipalities may be encounter with and it will also lay the foundation for a department that can cope better with a changing municipal environment.

As mentioned, the next Chapter will focus on the leadership skills that senior managers will need to develop to become effective leaders in their individual departments and the municipality. Knowledge gained will be based on the Three-skill

approach of Katz, which includes operational skills, human skills and cognitive skills. The development of leadership skills is according to scholarly literature so important that it will be included in the situational leadership framework for senior managers working in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality that will be developed in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER 4: THE DEVELOPMENT OF LEADERSHIP SKILLS OF SENIOR MANAGERS AS LEADERS IN MUNICIPALITIES

4.1 Introduction

The development of leadership skills plays a critical role in the effective functioning of senior managers as leaders in all organisations – in the public or private sector. Quigley (2015:1) states that to truly succeed as managers, they should perfect the balancing act between gaining knowledge with regard to management and leadership skills and sustaining the respect of superiors, peers and subordinates in organisational entities. Zenger and Folkman (2014:1) are of the opinion that by knowing how to manage and lead subordinates, a solid foundation is established for positive relations in organisations. Subordinates may see in managers and leaders boasting exceptional managerial and leadership skills protégées that are worth following (Zenger & Folkman, 2014:1).

It is, therefore, important for managers – as leaders – to establish their current competency levels when it comes to the effective management and leading of their subordinates and then to address any shortcomings in this regard (Tyler, 2016:48). Senior managers in municipalities should, therefore, make use of every opportunity coming their way to develop their leadership skills. Municipalities as organisations should also create opportunities to develop the leadership skills of their senior managers.

In this regard, internal leadership training programmes can be implemented. However, senior managers should also be exposed to external leadership programmes to develop their leadership skills (Castellano, 2015:71). If the focus is on leadership training programmes, senior managers are well-prepared and well-motivated to take up their leadership roles in their respective departments for which they are responsible (Castellano, 2015:71).

In order to ensure this focus, senior managers as leaders in municipalities should acquire specific leadership skills in order to become effective leaders in their various departments. When scholarly literature was investigated concerning the specific leadership skills needed to implement the situational leadership theory of Hersey and

Blanchard, it became clear that the Three-skill leadership approach of Robert Katz is ideally suited to guide senior managers in developing leadership skills. Katz built his Three-skill leadership approach on three specific leadership skills needed to become effective leaders. They are, as mentioned before, operational skills, human skills and conceptual skills (Katz, 1955:10).

Tyler (2016:48) emphasises that senior managers as situational leaders should take cognisance of the fact that they also form part of the process to develop their subordinates in becoming more matured workers. This can only take place when a comprehensive understanding of what situational leadership is all about is obtained and when subordinates are led in a skilful way to reach organisations goals. Leaders should force themselves to step back and to remember that they are there to coach their people through work and that as managers, the transfer of skills and development should never end.

4.2 Leadership skills required for the effective leading of subordinates in municipalities

The USA Oracle White Paper (2012:1-2) reported on the significance of good leaders who mastered the skills to lead subordinates effectively. Good leaders can make a success of a weak organisation, but leaders with poor leadership skills can ruin even the best organisation. That is why the development of effective leadership skills at all levels across organisations can add significant value in reaching organisational goals (The Oracle White Paper, 2012:1-2).

The responsibility for the effective management of municipalities in South Africa is one of the major duties of senior managers working in the local sphere of Government. Mgwebi (2010) emphasises that on a local government level, the primary focus should be to pursue “developmental local government” and that local government managers are required to fulfil a leadership role during this process. Managers should strive, therefore, to involve and empower citizens and stakeholder groups in development processes by utilising their leadership roles in order to create a sense of common purpose in finding local solutions for local challenges (Mgwebi (2010).

4.2.1 Defining the concept “leadership skills”

From a generic point of view, leadership skills can be defined as the ability and capacity acquired through deliberate, systematic and sustained efforts to smoothly and adaptively carry out specific activities or job functions (McLaughlin, 2014). It involves ideas (cognitive skills), things (operational/technical skills) and people (interpersonal skills) (McLaughlin, 2014). Mastering specific skills may ensure incumbents that the outcomes of their efforts are in line with set criteria – even during periods of difficulty or uncertainties. The development of skills to perform successfully is necessary due to a fast-changing world in which local government functions. Mastering the necessary leadership skills to perform well is closely link to act intelligently, skilfully and with good judgment when leaders are faced with the unexpected (Claxton *et al.*, 2016:61).

Moreover, leadership skills can be defined as the skills that strengthen the abilities of leaders to assist them in overseeing processes, guiding initiatives and motivating and steering their subordinates toward the achievement of goals (McLaughlin, 2014). Vohra *et al.* (2015:18) further alluded that research on what leadership skills entail has been a very popular subject of study for political scientists, psychologists, historians, organisational behaviour scholars and practitioners from various fields.

The volume of research has, however, not aided in arriving at a clear and widely accepted definition of leadership skills. Leadership skills can be defined as the possession of a set of abilities and certain traits that individuals exhibit and these abilities and traits can be detected in a specific leadership style when subordinates are guided to complete certain tasks (Vohra *et al.*, 2015:18).

Within this context, leadership skills provide direction and support to team members (often described as “followers”), align the goals of a team with the broader purpose of an organisation and provide a clear vision to be followed (Vohra *et al.*, 2015:18). Leadership skills are normally not linked to a certain position or role-players in organisations. This means that individuals in organisations can develop their leadership skills to their own and to the advantage of subordinates (Vohra *et al.*, 2015:18). According to the Centre for Leadership Studies. 2014. Creative Leadership (2015:1), leadership skills should continue to evolve and adapt in order to meet ever-

changing conditions and challenges associated with the global marketplace. This means that the development of leadership skills should be a continual process during which the ability of leaders to lead effectively is repeatedly scrutinised and evaluated (Centre for Leadership Studies. 2014).

4.2.2 Approaches to describe leadership skills

According to Virkus (2009), researchers have been studying leadership skills and abilities for quite a number of years now and they have concluded that the following models or approaches can be used as a foundation when leadership skills are needed to become effective leaders in organisations:

- The Three-skill leadership approach developed and proposed by Robert Katz in 1955. Katz is of the opinion that “technical skills, human skills, and conceptual skills” are needed to be effective leaders.
- The skills approach developed by Mumford and colleagues in 2000. This approach focuses on the notion that individuals have the potential to become effective leaders and that experience may help them to develop their leadership skills, knowledge and their abilities to lead (Mumford *et al.*, 2000:155-170). Their approach consists of five leadership elements or skills that can contribute to effective leadership, namely individual attributes, competencies, leadership outcomes, career experiences and environmental influences.

The Three-skill leadership approach provided momentum for the development of the Skills Approach and can, therefore, be regarded as the basis for the leadership skills needed to become effective leaders in organisations (Northouse, 2013, p. 43-44). Northouse (2013:43-44) indicates that leadership skills differ from inborn traits or characteristics. Some researchers propose that leaders have inborn qualities or characteristics that provide them the necessary “power” to lead subordinates whereas leadership skills provide leaders with knowledge or skills to influence subordinates to follow them willingly (Northouse, 2013:43-44). The Three-skill leadership approach of Katz was ideal to use in this study, because this approach asks of subordinates to follow their leaders willingly.

The Three-skill leadership approach focuses on the following three skills (Virkus, 2009; Northouse, 2013:43-44; Hamilton, 2016:1-5):

- Operational (technical) skills
- Human skills
- Conceptual skills

Of importance to this study, is the fact that Katz (1974:1-28) indicated that when leaders implement these three skills, they should also change their management and leadership style and different balances should be maintained among their technical, human and conceptual skills as conditions or situations change. Katz (1974:1-28) indicates that as complexities in the environment of organisations grow, emphasis should be placed on drastic changes with regard to human and conceptual skills while only modest technical changes are necessary when changes are not that drastic. Leaders should, therefore, require knowledge concerning both human (intergroup) and conceptual skills during times of changes while their subordinates concentrate on their operational work in order to secure operational effectivity in their organisation (Katz 1974:1-28).

Managers – as effective leaders on a local government level – play a critical role as influential participants during policy decision-making endeavours and they have an even more important role to play when policies are implemented. Managers in local government institutions should lay a foundation for well-functioning municipalities and leaders with the necessary skills should become strategic visionaries who can lead their subordinates successfully (Mgwebi, 2010). The South African government decentralised power to municipalities and their functionaries with the task to create better opportunities by participating in communities with regard to service delivery, the implementation of policies and decision-making processes. Only managers with the necessary leadership skills are able to achieve the afore mentioned and it will speed up the development of the local government structure (Mgwebi, 2010).

Thornhill (2012:245) outlines that managers should lead and influence their subordinates in such a way that they address the numerous external and internal policies focusing on better service delivery. The need for managers in municipalities who possess the necessary leadership skills are, therefore, emphasised and should

be utilised to influence subordinates on how to achieve the goals, targets and objectives of their respective municipalities. This process goes beyond the mastering of leadership skills. In order to succeed as leaders, managers on a local government level should also rely on power established by expertise and knowledge of the local government environment. Thornhill (2012:246) is of the opinion that a comprehensive management leadership profile should be developed over time, but it cannot replace the role of experience obtained over time.

4.2.3 Abilities on which leadership rests

Certain specific personal abilities can augment leadership skills. Appelbaum and Paese (2001:2) identified nine such abilities that can assist leaders in management positions to become even better leaders:

- **Engaging navigators:** Leaders with this skill are in a position to act as “skippers”, “pilots” or “route finders” with regard to their followers when organisations are encountering complex issues, problems and/or challenges. By being engaging navigators, leaders can leverage opportunities and resolve difficult issues.
- **Strategic leaders:** Leaders with this skill act as tactical leaders with a premeditated approach to visualise the future of an organisation and to lead their followers to reach a specific vision.
- **Mobilisers:** Leaders with this skill proactively build and align followers to achieve targets quickly and successfully. Followers follow mobilisers willingly to achieve complex organisational objectives.
- **Capacity builders:** These leaders are able to determine what is important to develop the capacity of their followers to become more effective workers.
- **The ability to captivate people:** Leaders with this skill will be able to build a passionate follower core which is commitment toward a common goal.
- **Global thinkers:** Leaders with this skill are able to see the bigger picture. They can holistically integrate knowledge gained from various sources to develop a well-informed, diverse perspective that can be used to optimise the performance of followers and organisations.

- **Change facilitators:** The skill to facilitate change creates an environment that embraces change – it makes changes happen even if changes are radical. Change facilitators help others to accept new ideas.
- **Custodians:** With this skill, leaders can ensure followers that their needs and welfare are looked after and that they can trust their leaders to act positively on their behalf.

These above-mentioned abilities form the foundation from which more specific leadership skills can be developed to assist senior managers in municipalities to become more effective leaders (Appelbaum and Paese (2001:2).

4.3 The three-skill leadership approach

Katz argues that there is a huge difference between skills and the traits/qualities of leaders (Virkus, 2009). Skills suggest what leaders can achieve whereas traits/qualities refer to their intrinsic characteristics. Because leadership skills can be developed over time, in many instances skills are more important than leadership traits (Conway, 2000:81).

Before analysing the contents of operational, human and conceptual skills (as proposed by Katz), scholars on leadership skills identified two overarching skills that are extremely important for situational leaders to develop (Yukl & Mahsud, 2010:81; Mumford *et al.*, 2000:23-25; Northouse, 2013:43-44; McLaughlin, 2014):

- Good communication skills
- Flexibility

McBean (2012) states that situational leaders should have the ability to be *good communicators* and should be flexible in their mind-set to develop and implement skills effectively. Situational leaders who are good communicators have the ability to not only share their thoughts with subordinates in an understandable way, but are able to let their inner strength and personal character show through their communication methods. By making use of effective communication, situational leaders can empower subordinates to reach their own personal goals and the goals of their organisation by being excellent examples. Effective communication skills enable situational leaders to explain and describe the reasons for leadership style

changes – making followers more aware and open to a situational leadership approach (McBean, 2012).

Flexibility refers to the skill that situational leaders should possess – not only to change their leadership style but to change their attitude and behaviour towards subordinates in an ever-changing municipal environment (McBean, 2012). According to Yukl and Mahsud (2010:82), a good indicator of flexibility is the extent to which the behaviour of leaders vary in appropriate ways when different tasks and subordinates are managed. Most leaders have the responsibility of managing several diverse tasks during a typical day or week, and it is often necessary to adapt quickly from one type of activity to another (Yukl & Mahsud, 2010:82). This is especially the case in a municipal environment and situations change quickly. When changes are taking place, situational leaders should be flexible in their leadership approach to be able to lead subordinates effectively in a changing environment (McBean, 2012).

4.3.1 Contextualising the Three-skill leadership approach

Katz links his Three-skill leadership approach to different managerial and leadership levels in organisations and indicates that significant skills differ from managerial level to another. Kulkarni (2015:1-2) defines this occurrence as follows: The mastering of technical skills is more important to subordinates on lower levels in organisations although these subordinates should also be allowed to develop their conceptual skills. This means that managers on higher levels in the hierarchy of an organisation should be equipped with adequate conceptual skills to lead their subordinates, but their technical knowledge need not to be on the same level as their subordinates (Kulkarni, 2015:1-2). According to Kulkarni (2015:1-2), the development of human skills is of the utmost importance, no matter the level or the position of employees in organisations.

Although senior managers in municipalities should have some knowledge about the operational work of their subordinates, they should strive as leaders to develop their conceptual skills more while their human skills remain the anchor for their success when applying the situational leadership approach.

The contents of the Three-skill leadership approach is explored in the next sub-sections.

4.3.2 Effective leaders need operational skills

Operational skills refer to the knowledge that leaders have regarding their own work and knowledge of the operational work their subordinates are doing. However, this does not mean that senior managers as leaders need to have an in-depth knowledge about all of the tasks that subordinates are performing. The primary tasks of senior managers are to manage and lead their subordinates to reach the goals of their organisation (see Diagram 4). It is, therefore, more important for senior managers to develop their managerial and leadership skills than to have an exact knowledge of the operational work of their subordinates. With this knowledge, senior managers and their supervisors are able to develop an operational capacity for their subordinates to complete their work more successfully (Katz, 1955:33-42).

The operational skills of senior managers in a municipal environment also include knowledge of the overarching function and rules of their organisation and the standard operating procedures of all its entities. Knowledge of the products and services are also of the utmost importance (Yukl, 2006:10). Senior managers in municipalities should be in possession of the necessary knowledge, competence and proficiency to undertake their own managerial and leadership tasks as described in their job description. These tasks are not only to manage a municipality but also to understand and to lead subordinates in their operational municipal activities. Senior managers should, therefore, first master their own managerial, leadership and operational tasks in order to become effective municipal officials (Burkus, 2010).

4.3.3 Effective leaders need human skills

Katz (1974:1-28) indicates that while operational skills are primarily concerned with “things” (processes or physical objects), *human* skills focuses primarily on people. Human skills are broadly perceived as a combination of social and interpersonal skills within the context of broader leadership skills. Leaders who master human skills appeal to the human side of subordinates – important to generate enthusiasm and motivation in a working environment. Exceptional human skills are becoming increasingly important and applicable to all levels of management (Boundless, 2016).

According to Burkus (2010), human skills refer to being able to work with people. Human skills, according to Benar *et al.* (2014:61), is the ability of managers to work

with others, realising their needs and motivating them to become important instruments in the machinery of an organisation to deliver services or products effectively to communities (Benar *et al.*, 2014:61). Mumford *et al.* (2000: 155-170) argue that while effective leaders require specific operational skills, human skills are of the utmost importance for senior managers to manage and lead their subordinates effectively and to be motivated to reach organisational goals.

According to Sana (2015:1), human skills involve the ability of leaders to work well with other people – both individually and in groups. Leaders deal directly with people and this skill is, therefore, crucial to enhance the performance of subordinates. When leaders master human skills, they are able to motivate, lead and inspire enthusiasm and trust within subordinates and these skills are equally important with regard to lower level (first line) management, middle level management and top level management (Sana, 2015:1).

McBean (2012) explains that the mastering of human skills plays an important role in the leadership abilities of situational leaders. Exceptional human skills are needed to ensure that a situational leadership approach is accepted by subordinates and that subordinates are motivated to follow leaders willingly when such a leadership approach is applied within an organisation (McBean, 2012).

When analysing Katz's own understanding of what human skills are, the following is primarily of concern (Katz, 1974:3-4):

- It is the way in which leaders perceive and recognise the behaviour, needs and perceptions of their superiors, equals and subordinates and how they themselves behave subsequently.
- It is an awareness of their own attitudes, assumptions and beliefs about their subordinates, group behaviour and needs and how leaders secure effective interpersonal relations.
- The ability of leaders to accept the existence of different viewpoints, perceptions and beliefs in terms of human behaviour and needs.
- It is an understanding of what other individuals really mean (words and behaviour) by applying the principles of good communication and interpreting the context correctly in which it occurs.

- The creation of an atmosphere of approval and security in which subordinates feel free to express their human needs without fear of censure or ridicule.
- The creation of an atmosphere of encouragement to participate in the planning and carrying out of (human) things that directly affect them.
- To be sensitive to the human needs of subordinates in such a way that subordinates are motivated to willingly try to reach organisational goals.
- To address the human needs of subordinates should become a natural, continual day-to-day activity for leaders – it impacts the well-being of subordinates directly and the successful functioning of an organisation in general.

When literature on human skills was analysed, it became clear that different scholars emphasise certain human skills more than others. The list of human skills identified by different scholars also differs and in many instances not consistent when it comes to identifying specific human skills (Mumford *et al.*, 2000:24). Some of the most important human skills, as identified by Mumford *et al.* (2000: 24), Brandt (2002), (2005:15), Mumford, Campion and Morgeson (2007:154-166) and McBean (2012), are the following:

Humility and empathy skills: To act humble and to have empathy is the ability to identify with and understand the wants, needs and viewpoints of others. Leaders who lead subordinates in a humble way are good at recognising the feelings of others even when those feelings may not always be obvious. As a result, humble leaders who show empathy are usually excellent at managing relationships, they are good listeners and exceptional in relating with the deeper emotions of their subordinates. These leaders avoid stereotyping and they do not judge quickly. They lead their subordinates in an open and honest way.

Leaders who act humble gain respect and once followers respect their leaders, leading them becomes easier. To be able to lead subordinates humbly, not only gain leaders the respect of subordinates, but makes them trusted “partners” – necessary in leading subordinates during times of uncertainty and changes. When leaders are humble and show empathy, it does not necessarily mean that leaders are “weak” – it is an indication that leaders possess an inner strength to believe in and trust subordinates and these leaders support their subordinates during times of uncertainty. Humility and empathy show followers that their leaders will not act in a

calculated or harmful way. They view such leaders as honest and fair individuals who lead with integrity and lay the foundation for leaders to guide their subordinates effectively in reaching organisational goals.

Social skills (or interpersonal skills). Leaders with social skills have the abilities needed to get along with subordinates and the ability to create and maintain satisfying relationships with them. Social skills are those skills that leaders use to interact effectively with subordinates. They should be easy to talk to, are great team players, have the talent to resolve disputes, are excellent communicators, focus on helping others and are skilled at building relationships. Social skills refer to the way in which leaders interact with their subordinates, both verbally and non-verbally. Verbal communication includes the tone of voice, volume of speech and the words they choose. Non-verbal communication includes gestures, positive or negative body language and physical motions.

Sound **social skills will make leaders aware of how to understand the social environment in which their subordinates function, both inside the working environment and outside it.** Social skills are also about leaders being flexible and adjusting their behaviour to fit a particular situation in the social environment. Leaders should use different social skills for subordinates on different maturity levels and during different situations.

Leaders who mastered social skills will also be able to build bonds and to create a type of social network that will improve relationships between themselves and their subordinates and between the subordinates themselves. Social skill may thus help leaders to promote a climate of friendship and cooperation, to develop the strengths of each subordinate, to build a team where team members support and help each other and to seek opportunities to build the team's abilities to perform their tasks successfully. Mastering social skills will help leaders to create a motivated workforce, which will in turn help to cultivate better future leaders.

Patience and tolerance as a human skill: Professional workplaces are made up of people from all walks of life and leading such a diverse group of people is a daunting task for any leader. Having patience and tolerance and understanding for the differences among people is vital to long-term organisational success. Patience and

tolerance are exceptional human skills that are valuable for any leader. Patience involves being able to maintain an even temper, to repeat and explain information as necessary, and to control anger in even the most trying situations. Tolerant people have the ability to accept differences, even when they don't personally agree with or condone a person's view. This is an especially valuable skill in workplace environments that cater to people from different ethnic groups, religious backgrounds and cultural differences.

The skill to build subordinates' self-esteem: Leaders with this human skill know how to build their subordinates' self-esteem, which will make them proud of themselves and their work. This is an essential ingredient for motivation to perform well. Subordinates with high levels of self-esteem are linked to high levels of career and job satisfaction; improved motivation and engagement; high-quality work; better personal and professional relationships; and more innovation at work.

The skill to build trust: Trust in leadership is a critical requirement in any workplace. It affects overall organisational and group effectiveness, employee satisfaction with leadership, and innovation. Trust in a leader is a subordinate's firm belief in the reliability, ability, or strength of the leader, and this is closely linked to the level of confidence placed in the leader. Trust in a leader is the 'glue' that binds the leader to his or her subordinates and this is important to build the capacity of the leader and the organizations.

The skill to support subordinates: When subordinates are aware that their leaders support them, it gives them security when they undertake their various tasks. Support does not mean removing responsibility from subordinates. Subordinates remain responsible for producing high quality work, but without trust in their leadership, they may feel isolated from the rest of the group. Should a subordinate come to a place where he or she needs assistance to do their work better, trust in their leaders may motivate them to seek help, which is an important aspect in their development of their maturity levels.

Self-awareness: This is an attribute that will help leaders gain an understanding of their own inner emotional state when they guide their subordinates to be effective in their work. Leaders should be aware of their own personal strengths and

weaknesses when they are responsible for leading their subordinates. They should be aware of their own capabilities and limitations to develop and maximize their own potential as leader. This means that leaders should gain a better understanding of who they are and how they will influence the behaviour of their followers. This knowledge will enable them to understand themselves better in their leadership role. In being aware of their own strengths and weaknesses, leaders will also be able to accept themselves and who they are. Self-awareness helps leaders to accept their subordinates' weaknesses and to develop their subordinates to overcome any weaknesses.

Katz (1974:1-28) states that human skill is a vital part of everything a manager as a leader does. This skill must be naturally developed and consciously and consistently demonstrated in the leader's every action. It must become an integral part of a leader's whole being.

A situational leader should, according to Katz (1955), also have conceptual skills to be effective in their leadership role. This is discussed next.

4.3.4 Effective leaders need conceptual skills

Conceptual skills allow a situational leader to think through and work with ideas. Leaders with higher levels of conceptual skills are good at visualising the ideas that form an organization. They can visualise the future environment in which an organisation has to operate and can express these ideas and the vision into verbal and written forms. They have a good grip on the current and future political, economic, technical and social environment in which their organisation will have to function (Mumford *et al.*, 2007:154-166).

Leaders with conceptual skills ask questions such as "what if" and are comfortable to work with abstract ideas and to give such ideas meaning. Conceptual skills are important for municipalities managers because of the changing nature of their work in a municipality. Conceptual skills can be learned and situational leaders should make use of every opportunity to develop their conceptual skills and the ability to teach conceptually (Mumford *et al.*, 2007:154-166).

Bass (1990) state that conceptual skills can include creative thinking. They further indicate that conceptual skills are closely related to the intellectual ability of a person. The intellectual ability of leaders will stimulate new ideas and encourage creative problem-solving actions to assist subordinates to solve problems. Such leaders will support new and creative ideas from their subordinates (Bass & Avolio, 1994).

Katz (1974:1-28) identifies the following aspects related to conceptual skills:

- Conceptual skill involves the ability of a leader to see the organisation as a whole, which includes recognizing how the various functions of the organization depend on one another.
- Conceptual skills will allow leaders to visualize the relationship of the organization, the community, and the political, social, and economic forces of the country as a whole.
- Conceptual skills will help leaders to recognize and understand the significance of any change and how to address it to ensure that the success of the organization is guaranteed.
- Conceptual skills will give leaders the ability to think creatively about the direction in which the organization should move to address community needs.

Because a company's over-all success is dependent on its executives' conceptual skill in establishing and carrying out policy decisions, this skill is the unifying, coordinating ingredient of the administrative process.

According to scholars on leadership skills, there are many conceptual skills that are identified for leaders to develop (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Mumford *et al.*, 2000:12; Avolio *et al.*, 2009:421-440). These conceptual skills are, *inter alia*:

The ability of abstract thinking: A leader who has the ability to think in an abstract way will be able to conceptualize or generalize situations that are not concretely described and that have multiple meanings and explanations. Leaders with this ability see patterns beyond the obvious and are able to change abstract ideas into concrete ideas. Once ideas and challenges are clearly formulated, the organisation and its leadership is able to develop and implement plans to guide the organisation

into the future. Leaders who have conceptual understand complex situations and are able to lead subordinates through those situations.

The skill to be an analytic thinker: It is a conceptual skill where leaders have the ability visualise, articulate, conceptualize or solve both complex and uncomplicated problems by making decisions that are sensible given the available information. It involves a methodical step-by-step approach to thinking that allows leaders to break down complex problems into single and manageable components. A leader who can engage in analytic thinking therefore has the ability to think in a coherent and logical way. Analytical skills are essential for a leader to ensure that necessary problem solving occurs in a municipality and to secure that subordinates work in an environment where they will know how to think in a critical manner. Leaders who have analytical skill will help a municipality and its workforce to function smoothly.

Visionary skills: The quality that separates a good leader from a great leader can be summed up in one word: **vision**. Leaders who are visionaries are ahead of their time, always thinking creatively. They are able to envision what the future holds and to come up with solutions that fit that picture. Leaders with a vision work towards achieving goals that are greater than the leader's own goals. Leaders place organizational goals, for instance, before their own and their subordinates' goals. A vision can include something small, like the success of the team, or a larger vision like delivering quality services to the community. Working towards a vision is far more inspiring for subordinates than working towards the achievement of daily boring tasks. A leader who can visualize the future of his or her organization's future has the ability to communicate the vision clearly to subordinates.

Creative and innovative skills: Creative and innovative skills are closely linked. Creative leaders have the ability to identify something new or original that will be of value to the organization. An innovative leader has the ability to implement new or original ideas. Creative leaders come up with ideas to carry out tasks, solve problems and meet challenges and they bring a "fresh" and sometimes unorthodox perspective to their and their subordinates' work. They think "outside the box" and can help their organisation to move in more productive directions. Innovatively thinking leaders do not rely on past experience or known facts. They imagine a

desired future state and figure out how to get there. They want to find a better way of doing things and in achieving this, they explore multiple possibilities.

Problem solving skills: This conceptual skill is also closely related to innovative and creative thinking. Solving problems creatively requires extensive and effortful cognitive processing by a leader. This requirement is made necessary by the complex and confusing situations in which most organizational (such as in a municipality) problems occur. Leaders have the ability to define a problem, search and retrieve problem-relevant information, and generate and evaluate a diverse set of alternative solutions. This ability should be developed in subordinates, the task of every effective leader.

Decision-making skills: Leaders must have the ability to make good decisions in a range of situations. This is the ability to process information and then to make good decisions at the hand of such information. Decision-making is the ability to reason at the hand of the relevant facts and figures available to the leader. Decisions based on intuition should be ignored as far as possible, because such decisions are normally based on emotions and on particular, issues from the past that may affect the way that a leader takes decisions. More complicated decisions, which senior managers are often confronted with, require a more formal, structured approach, and the ability to make good decisions should be filtered down from the senior managers to their subordinates.

Wedlich (2012:11-12) states, in the final analysis, that mastering the three skills of Katz will assist leaders in becoming more effective in their leadership role in the following ways:

- They will understand their own environment better, which will enable them to lead their subordinates better in their work.
- With an understanding of what human behaviour entails, they will be able to address their subordinates' human needs better and this will have a direct influence on motivation, which will ultimately benefit the organization.
- Through the accumulation of conceptual skills, they will be able to visualize the future for themselves and their subordinates within the context of organizational operations.

To change the behaviour and perceptions of subordinates can be a demanding task. Subordinates would rather remain in their comfort zones than embark on change. Subordinates who do not want to renew their old way of thinking or who have resistance to any new form of idea are not easy to lead. Leaders will therefore have to master technical, human and conceptual skills to get subordinates acquainted with any new changes and this includes the implementation of the situational leadership approach (Hooper & Potter, 1997:10-14). Ammer (2016) states in this regard that mastering leadership skills is an important aspect for leaders to become effective in their work as managers.

4.4 Importance of leadership skills for senior municipal managers

Within the South African municipal context, the development of leadership and leadership skills are identified as an important area requiring special attention (Schmidt, 2010:6-20). The White Paper on Local Government 1998, has one of the four primary characteristics of developmental local government as “leading and learning” of public employees. The Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, focuses on clarifying and strengthening the role of political and administrative leadership. The act indicates that the development of leadership is pivotal for the successful functioning of government institutions. The act mentions that leadership and leadership skills development on provincial local government levels have been “piecemeal and ad hoc” in their focus.

The Centre for Policy Studies (CPS), as quoted by Schmidt (2010:13) indicates that the failure and poor service delivery by local government in South Africa can be contributed to:

- Weak management
- Poor leadership
- Absence of effective leadership skills
- Poor communication
- Political favouritism

Siegel (2010:139) indicates that much has been written on the importance of leadership skills, ranging from evidence-based to academic research and what has

specifically been written for municipal institutions tends to be fairly generic in nature. While leadership is perhaps one of the most discussed topics in research in the field of management over the years, it has also become a very important field of study in the context of public and municipal administration today (Leinonen and Juntunen, 2007:2). On the whole, leadership and the skills to lead effectively are considered today as (Leinonen and Juntunen, 2007:2):

- An important variable in enhancing management capacity in providing higher-quality goods and services to citizens.
- Important to secure higher levels of motivation and work satisfaction among employees.
- Important to improve organizational performance.

Schmidt (2010:6-20) states that effective leadership relies on the development and implementation of leadership skills, which includes qualities such as integrity, honesty, humility, courage, commitment, sincerity, passion, confidence, a positive attitude, wisdom, determination, compassion and sensitivity. Managers in public institutions in South Africa should take on leadership responsibilities that are based on sound leadership skills. The development of leadership skills in the public sector, including municipalities, should be a major focus within public sector institutions, which is a precondition for effective service delivery (Schmidt, 2010:6-20).

The effective management of organizations in the public sector therefore relies heavily on mastering the necessary leadership skills as described in the previous section (Schmidt, 2010:6). Effective management and leadership and the development of sound leadership skills are seen to be in many ways an answer to many challenges encountered in municipal institutions over the world (Leinonen and Juntunen, 2007:2). In their Ontario Municipal Chief Administrative Officer Survey 2016, Matheson *et al.* (2016:18) emphasize that the ability to move from a “team of good managers” to a “team of excellent managers” depends a great deal on the ability to develop sound leadership skills.

According to Singer and Singer (2001:387), leadership skills will help managers to motivate subordinates to perform beyond expectation and such results are accomplished when managers as leaders use their leadership skills to heighten

subordinates' awareness of the value of reaching goals, by inducing them to transcend self-interest in favour of the organization and by making them willing participants in organizational operations. McCleskey (2014:120) further support this by exerting that through the knowledge of leadership skills managers can raise followers' performance output to higher levels by convincing them to transcend their self-interest for the sake of the organization (McCleskey, 2014:120).

In addition, leaders should by applying sound leadership skills support and coach subordinates to handle different, complex situations and prepare them to cope with complex demands from the internal and external environments (Leinonen and Juntunen, 2007:2). Organizations need leaders with leadership skills to create the best possible organizational atmosphere and working conditions and co-operation in order to increase organizational effectiveness (Leinonen and Juntunen, 2007:2).

Siegel (2010:140) argues that senior managers occupy a unique position as leaders and they need exceptional leadership skills to lead subordinates because their role as leaders have changed in the ever-changing municipal government environment. According to Leinonen and Juntunen (2007:2), local governance is seeking leaders with the necessary leadership skills to lead subordinates from a traditional bureaucratic approach of leadership towards an approach where municipal managers should adapt an open and visionary approach to leadership.

Instead of traditional and rational ways of management and leadership, municipal managers are asked to become part of an open democratic governance "philosophy" to lead their subordinates with the necessary skills to address the needs of all citizens in the new dispensation (Leinonen and Juntunen, 2007:2). Leinonen and Juntunen (2007:2) call this a new type of public sector leadership that may include the following:

- By adopting the new type of public sector leadership and mastering new leadership skills, public sector managers can cope with the contradictory and ambiguous interests and expectations of different interest groups.
- The public sector's image to the public as a high performing institution can be raised at the hand of a new generation of leaders.

- The satisfaction and motivation levels of subordinates can be strengthened by leaders who have developed the necessary leadership skills to guide them effectively.
- Developing and adapting current and new leadership skills may assist leaders to guide subordinates through any internal or external influences changes and challenges that will increase the performance of the organisation.
- The satisfaction levels of the public may be increased if service delivery (quantitative and qualitative) are better and the needs of the citizens are addressed satisfactorily.

Municipalities in South Africa operate, as mentioned, in a complex milieu and municipal performance is influenced at four levels: the individual, institutional, environmental and macro-socio-economic (South African Development Plan, 2030). Municipal managers as leaders are therefore faced with an increasing variety of challenges when performing in this the complex environment. As important is the fact that municipal managers as leaders should find a balance between the political and administrative dimensions relevant to municipalities. This requires leaders, with not only multidimensional leadership competence, but asks for leaders with highly developed leadership skills (Leinonen and Juntunen, 2007:3).

The new democratic focus in which public sector institutions should function emphasize that the senior manager's cadre in these institutions have an important role to play to secure the successful implementation of this focus (Leinonen and Juntunen, 2007:3). According to Siegel (2010:143) managers should be effective leaders and strong leadership is required because of complex networks, demanding partnerships and turbulence in the operational public sector environment. Strong leadership is in the final analysis closely linked to public sector leaders, which includes municipal leaders, mastering the necessary leadership.

4.5 How to develop leadership skills of senior managers in municipalities?

According to Siegel (2010:140), the role of senior managers in municipalities has been well-documented, but more emphasis should be placed on leadership skills needed to be an effective senior manager in a municipality. As high ranking municipal officials, senior managers in municipalities are playing a critical role to

secure the effective functioning of a municipality and they need leadership skills to manage and lead the administrative component of a municipality (Siegel, 2010:140-141).

4.5.1 Responsibility of the municipality

The most valuable investment any municipality can make is in the development of its managers as well as future managers are to equip them with the necessary leadership skills to lead their subordinates effectively (Blech, 2012:1).

The primary responsibility of each municipality is therefore to create the opportunity for its leaders to develop their leadership skills. This vital task of each municipality is to ensure that leaders possess competencies to guide their subordinates to achieve the municipality's strategy and operational plans, continue to mature leaders, create a work culture to inspire the workforce to perform as best as possible (Blech, 2012:1).

Donaldson-Feilder and Lewis (2013:1-2) identified four roles that any organization, such as a municipality and its human resource function can fulfill, is to develop its employee's leadership skills and they are:

- Defining what effective leadership means in the context of the organization.
- Creating systems, processes and policies that support good leadership.
- Develop leaders' skills at the hand of leader's skills development training programmes.
- Creating the conditions in which the value of leadership is recognized and lays the foundation for their further development as leaders.

In order to adhere to these prerequisites organizations should (Donaldson-Feilder & Lewis, (2013:1-2):

- Understand that employees are often appointed or promoted into leadership positions without the necessary leadership skills to lead their subordinates to do their work successfully. To address this problem an organization should determine and understand the current levels of leadership capability in their organization. With this knowledge at hand an organisation needs to create

leadership development programmes that build the skills of both those employees that are already in leadership positions and those who are the future leaders.

- Leadership development programmes should be a long-term approach that not only focus on management principles, but also include the principles for effective leadership. Although long-term development programmes are important organizations should also include leadership skills in their short-term training programmes.
- Organizations should create systems, processes and policies that support the development of leaders and which also focus on the development of their leadership skills. Performance management and performance appraisals should also focus on the measurement and development of employees' leadership skills capability. Other policies and processes such as organizational development, culture and values exercises, job design, teamwork and employee engagement can all be used to underpin and emphasize good people leadership.
- Creating the conditions in which the value of leadership is recognized is important and organizations should invest leadership and leadership skills development on all levels of the organization and particularly those of senior managers.

Every forward-looking municipality should therefore ask the following questions (Blech, 2012:1-2):

- What is the organization doing to develop its current and next generation of leaders to master their leadership skills?
- Who in the organization is responsible for the development of leader's leadership skills?
- Is the quality of leadership development programmes of such quality that leaders are able to guide their subordinates in such a way that they are able to establish a spirited workforce?

When a municipality makes the development of its leaders and their leadership skills, their priority they should (Blech, 2012:1-2):

- Ensure that leadership and leadership skills development efforts are strategically driven.

- Secure that leadership development form part of the strategic plan of the municipality as well as the strategic plan of the human resourcedepartment in the municipality.
- Secure that when leadership programmes are developed they understand how to deal with challenges that the municipality will encounter.
- Link identified challenges that the municipality may encounter with the unique leadership skills their leaders will require to address them.

4.5.2 Responsibility of leaders to develop their own leadership skills

The development of leadership skills is not only the responsibility of the municipality alone but senior managers should also strive to develop their leadership skills by themselves (Eichinger & Lombardo, 1990). According to Eichinger and Lombardo (1990), successful and effective senior managers as leaders should regard the development of leadership skills as a lifelong endeavour and continuous efforts to develop in this regard is needed.

All leaders have the potential to improve their leadership skills but only those who make a sincere effort to do so will reap the benefits. There are many reasons why leaders in any organization need to develop their leadership skills and they include, inter alia the following (Arneson, 2010):

- It is a leader's obligation to serve their organization and acquiring the necessary leadership skills will assist a leader to do so.
- It is a leader's obligation as a manager of subordinates to develop the necessary skills to lead their subordinates effectively through the maze of challenges that organizations are confronted with daily.
- Leaders with sound leadership skills have the opportunity to help subordinates to grow and develop so they can take their skills and contribution to a higher level.
- Leaders with sound leadership skills will help their subordinates to face challenges they and the organization may face through effective leadership skills.

In order to positively impact subordinates, leaders will thus have to willingly learn and grow as leaders and one way to do it is through the development of their own

leadership skills. Robinson (2016:1-4) focuses on the following actions that leaders can undertake to improve their leadership skills:

- Leaders cannot rely solely on their organizations to create opportunities to develop their leadership skills. Leaders should follow a personalized learning and development strategy and a customized plan of action to develop their leadership skills.
- Leaders should determine their own proficiency as leaders. Performance appraisals are the ideal venue to establish what seniors are thinking of a leader's leadership skills, behaviour and capabilities. Subordinates may also provide their leaders with information on how they experience the leadership capabilities of their leaders.
- Leaders need more than just leverage, their leadership strengths and how to minimize their current leadership weaknesses. Leaders have the skills just mentioned, but it is not enough, they should improve their leadership skills in their role as leader in the future. This may include adding new leadership techniques like coaching, leading change, fostering innovation or broadening their peer leadership.
- Leaders should expand their leadership horizons and stretch their leadership ideals beyond the borders of their office and even the organization.
- Leaders should step out of your comfort zone as leaders and stretch the boundaries of their leadership approach.
- Leaders should remember that it is not about them, but rather about the people they are leading. They should pay attention to the development of their subordinate's maturity levels and prepare them for future progress in the organization.

Leaders should always remember that being a leader of people is a privilege. They have the opportunity to influence people's lives and developing their leadership skills is the first step in doing so (Arneson, 2010). In using self-directed leadership learning leaders teach themselves new leadership skills by selecting areas for leadership development, choosing learning avenues, and identifying programmes and resources for learning. This type of development is a self-paced process that aims

not only to acquire new leadership skills but also to gain a broader perspective on leadership responsibilities and what it takes to succeed as a leader.

4.6 Conclusion

Leadership skills development remains a critical part of any manager's profile to be effective in their role as managers and leaders in municipalities. This is particularly relevant during complex, uncertain, changing times and when municipal resources are drastically reduced. Leadership skills become key to create a motivated and persistently positive thinking core of subordinates that promotes innovation and entrepreneurialism to address tough problems while retaining valuable staff (Fernandez *et al.*, 2015:343).

For senior managers as leader's, leadership competencies such as human, interpersonal and conception skills are of the utmost importance to motivate subordinates to do their work successfully in order to reach municipal goals, which focus on the delivery of services to the public. Developing their leadership skills will ensure that senior managers are well-equipped and prepared to successfully address any situation that may arise in the municipal environment.

The responsibility for effective management of municipalities in South Africa is one of the primary duties of senior managers and by mastering leadership skills will help such managers to be effective managers and leaders in municipalities. Senior managers also need to master leadership skills to implement the situational leadership approach successfully. Understanding the need for the development of their leadership skills will allow senior managers to use these skills to adapt their leadership style to any circumstance or situation and it will most importantly create the environment in which their subordinates can be developed to become excellent performers to the advantage of the leader and the municipality at large.

Municipality should take the development of their senior managers' leadership skills seriously and include the development of their managers as leaders in every training endeavour. However, it is also the responsibility of every senior manager to take responsibility to develop their own leadership skills whenever an opportunity arises to do so.

The next chapter focus on the development of a conceptual situational leadership framework for senior managers in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District municipality. The chapter explains what is meant by a conceptual framework, how such a framework can be developed and how to implement such a framework.

CHAPTER 5: A CONCEPTUAL SITUATIONAL LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORK FOR SENIOR MANAGERS IN THE NGAKA MODIRI MOLEMA DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

5.1 Introduction

Karlen *et al.* (1997:7) defines a conceptual framework as consisting out of multiple concepts with interrelated propositions that should be made available in visual format to assist organizations to give meaning to specific research findings. According to Green (2014:6), a conceptual framework may be built on knowledge gained from literature, the analysis of various theories and the implementation of relevant research findings.

This may, according to Green (2014:6), suggests that the concepts from different fields of study can be included into one conceptual framework. This is not an indication of unscientific research, but is an indication that the knowledge of different study fields are utilized and amalgamated to explain a specific phenomenon better. It is presenting scientific knowledge in “a new way” that is for the benefit of the total scientific community (Ivey, 2015:145).

Developing a conceptual framework is an important mechanism for organizations, such as municipalities and its managers as leaders, to operationalize findings of in-depth research on a specific topic. It provides guidelines for organizations and their managers on how to address a specific managerial issue, such as leadership. A conceptual framework provides an understanding of the underlying dynamics of a specific phenomenon that makes the implementation of it in an organization easier (Burnard and Bhamra, 2011:585).

A conceptual situational leadership framework for the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality was developed after an extensive literature study and analysis of relevant theories on the subject under investigation. This chapter provides the theoretical foundation of how a conceptual framework should scientifically be developed and implemented and further focus on the development of the situational leadership framework for senior managers in the relevant district municipality.

5.2 Meaning of the concept conceptual framework

In order to ensure that the concept conceptual framework is well-understood, it is important to clearly define the concept conceptual framework and this will also clarify and contextualise how the conceptual leadership framework for senior managers at the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality was developed.

5.2.1 Defining the concept conceptual framework

A conceptual framework is defined as a network of interlinked concepts that together provide a visual picture of a phenomenon or phenomena experienced in real life situations (Jabareen, 2009:49). According to Green (2014:35), a conceptual framework can be regarded as the visual presentation of scientific research outcome after a thorough analysis of literature on relevant theories has been undertaken. Franks and Schroeder (2013:5-20) states that the findings of scientific research can be presented in various forms that include evidence-based programmes, diagrammes, models and conceptual frameworks that bridges the gap between science and practice. A conceptual framework therefore paves the way for implementing scientific knowledge in a visual format. A conceptual framework is therefore a mechanism to bring theory and practice closer to each other (Green, 2014:35).

According to Jabareen (2009:8) a conceptual framework is defined as a broad outline or skeleton of interrelated items or concepts that serve as a guide or blueprint to understand a specific phenomenon that can be modified over time by adding or deleting items or concepts as new knowledge becomes available. A conceptual framework is defined by Leamy *et al.* (2011:445) as a network or system of interlinked concepts that, when linked together, provide a visual presentation of a specific phenomenon as it is observed in real life.

A conceptual framework is a “vehicle” for decision makers and senior managers in municipalities to understand a specific phenomenon, such as leadership, better that will guide them to implement the phenomenon in a constructive and focused way in a practical environment (Hodon, et al (2015:630). According to Hudon *et al.* (2015:630) increased use of conceptual frameworks can have a positive impact on the functioning of an organization, which will ultimately result in better service delivery.

5.2.2 Purpose of a conceptual framework

The purpose of developing a conceptual framework is to capture and present the contents of a phenomenon in the real world. It makes it easier to understand what a specific phenomenon entails in that it gives a total picture of the phenomenon. At the hand of a conceptual framework it is also easier to apply or implement the knowledge gained through a literature study in practice (Smyth, 2004: 167-180).

According to Smyth (2004:167-180) the purpose of a conceptual framework is the following:

- To visualise a set of broad ideas and concepts of a phenomenon that occurs in real life.
- To use information taken from various, but relevant fields of enquiry, and present it in a cohesive structured arrangement.
- To assist researchers to clearly articulated or structure research information scientifically in order to make meaning of subsequent findings.
- To assist researchers to develop awareness and understanding of the phenomenon under scrutiny and to communicate it in an understandable construct to those interested in the phenomenon.
- To form an agenda for implementing the results of the research findings.

A conceptual framework can therefore be regarded as a means or a tool to scaffold research and to assist a researcher to make meaning of subsequent research findings. At any stage a conceptual framework should be seen as a snapshot of research findings and not an attempt to accurately portray the phenomenon under investigation (Childs, 2010:23-28). The development of a scientific conceptual framework is all about critical thinking and conceptual frameworks are products of qualitative processes of theorization (Philiber, 2011:8-17).

5.2.3 Characteristics of a conceptual framework

A conceptual framework is, as indicated before, an interconnected set of ideas (theories) about how a particular phenomenon functions or is related to its parts. A framework serves as the basis for understanding the causal or correlational patterns of interconnections across events, ideas, observations, concepts, knowledge,

interpretations and other components of experience (Svinicki, 2010:5). Conceptual frameworks have therefore specific features on which they are based (Svinicki, 2010:5).

According to Jabareen (2009:50) a conceptual framework may, *inter alia*, have the following characteristics:

- Conceptual frameworks can be developed and constructed through a process of qualitative analysis.
- The sources of data to develop a conceptual framework consist of many discipline-orientated theories that become the contents of the conceptual framework.
- A conceptual framework features a collection of concepts where each concept plays an integral role when a phenomenon is described.
- A conceptual framework does not provide a diagnostic or problem-solving analysis of a phenomenon, but rather gives an interpretative explanation of a specific phenomenon.
- A conceptual framework offers a visual explanation of a theory or theories on a phenomenon that provides a better understanding of that phenomenon.
- A conceptual framework does not provide a picture of “rigid inflexible facts” but rather provides an understanding, interpretation and clarification of a phenomenon.
- A conceptual framework does not predict an exact outcome as a model does.

Knowing the characteristics of a conceptual framework will enhance a person’s understanding of why conceptual frameworks exist. It will also provide a platform or point of reference for what the purpose with conceptual frameworks is (Svinicki, 2010:5). Childs (2010:23-28) states that an important characteristic of conceptual framework is that it remains a ‘work in progress’ in the sense that it forms a grounding upon which further research can be based.

5.2.4 Development of a conceptual framework

At the stage where the actual conceptual framework is developed or created the researcher should adhere to the following aspects (Jabareen, 2009:52):

- There should be a clear indication that the researcher has in-depth knowledge on the phenomenon under investigation.
- There should be proof that the researcher undertook a critical analysis of relevant scholarly literature.
- There should be evidence that the researcher understands the theoretical assumptions on which the phenomenon is based.
- There should be evidence that the conceptual framework will make a contribution to the body of knowledge of the study field(s) in which the phenomenon occurs.

According to Regoniel (2012) the development or creation of a conceptual framework is an iterative process where the essence of the literature and theories that has been analysed is visually presented. This means that the final visual presentation of the conceptual framework, which may look in many instances very elementary, is actually founded on complex scientific investigation. It is therefore the simplified results of complex scientific investigation (Regoniel. 2012).

Booth (undated) indicated that although conceptual frameworks are simplified visual presentations of a phenomenon it should adhere to specific principles to be regarded as a well-scientific designed framework. They include the following:

- The content and presentation of complex concepts should be visually presented in a simple format or layout for all to understand.
- The overall structure of the framework must be easy to understand that will make the implementation of it easier. Simplicity is achieved by giving the concepts clear meaning and show how they are interlinking with each other.
- The contents of the conceptual framework must be clearly encapsulated and presented in a “nut shell” format.
- The presentation of the conceptual framework should not be more complex than is necessary, which means that it should be structured as simple as possible to achieve the desired functionality.
- A conceptual framework should have clear boundaries, which mean that it should not exceed the purpose for which it has been developed. Any information outside the focus of the study and the framework will lead to confusion and will reduce the functionality of the framework. When a conceptual framework crosses its

boundary, it becomes overly complex and the purpose for which it has been developed will not be achieved.

- A conceptual framework should be expandable and modified over time as new information becomes available to do so. Expandability should, however, not be an afterthought based on feelings, but should be based on new scientific knowledge that becomes available.

A conceptual framework is therefore not merely a collection of concepts, but is in essence a presentation of each concept in an integrated way by linking them in an understandable way in a visible structure (Jabareen, 2009:52).

5.2.5 Process to develop a conceptual framework

It is important to understand the broad process that has to be followed to develop a conceptual framework. A process can be defined as consisting out of phases and a series of actions or steps that have to be followed in order to produce something or that lead to a particular result (Sequeira, 2015:2). It is, however, important to indicate that there is no universal procedure to develop or create a conceptual framework as such (Sequeira, 2015:2).

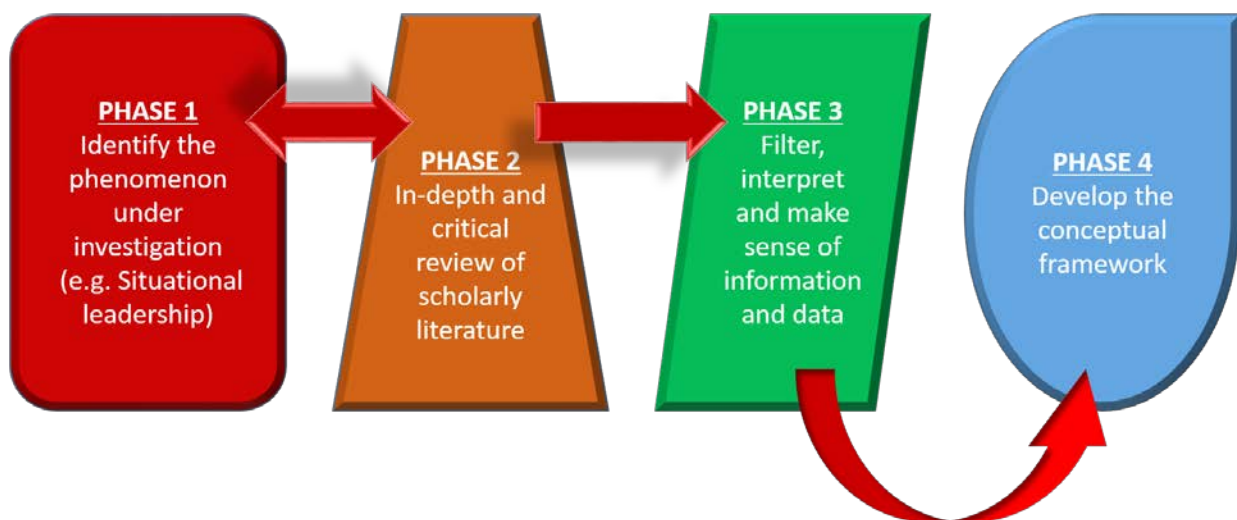
Sequeira (2015:2) indicates that the development of a conceptual framework should be based on scientific research methodology and that it can be depicted as a process that should be followed. The process may include the following phases (Sequeira, 2015:2) and (Childs, 2010:23-28):

- **Phase 1:** A complete in-depth literature study on the phenomenon under investigation should be undertaken. The literature study should focus on scholarly books, articles, legislation, policies, and other relevant literature. This will lay the primary basis for the conceptual framework that will be developed.
- **Phase 2:** Emanating from the literature study, relevant theories that will lay the theoretical foundation and ultimate creation of the conceptual framework will have to be analysed and described. It is important that the theories should not be “competing theories” but should be theories that form a cohesive focus and understanding on the phenomenon under investigation.

- **Phase 3:** The knowledge generates through the literature study and analysis of theories should then be filtered, analyzed and interpreted in order to transform it into usable and purposive knowledge. This may include finding salient themes and concepts, categorizing them, determine the meaning of each concept by defining it and preparing it to be utilized in the framework.
- **Phase 4:** In this phase the actual conceptual framework, that incorporates all the information obtained through the literature study and analysis of the theories will be developed or created.

The process can be depicted in the following diagram:

Figure 10: Process to develop a conceptual framework



Deducted from Sequeira's process (2015:2)

The first three phases have been completed in the previous chapters where literature on the phenomenon, situational leadership, has been undertaken and where the theories on leadership and situational leadership have been analyzed. Phase 4, namely the actual development or creation of the conceptual framework for senior managers in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality, is undertaken in the next sections (Sections 5.3 and 5.4).

5.3 Process to develop the conceptual framework for senior managers in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality

Childs (2010:23-28) is of the opinion that developing or creating a conceptual framework should be undertaken at the hand of its own process and is actually not a generic process. Greenhalgh *et al.* (2004:581-629) also state that the creation of a conceptual framework should follow its own process, consisting out of its own relevant specific steps.

5.3.1 Process of developing (creating) a conceptual framework

According to Rolland (1998:1-24), when it comes to the process of the actual creation of the conceptual framework, this should be undertaken according to specific steps after the locus of the study has been defined. The process to follow when a conceptual framework is developed may, *inter alia*, include the following steps (Greenhalgh, *et al.*, 2004:581-629) and (Rolland, 1998:1-24):

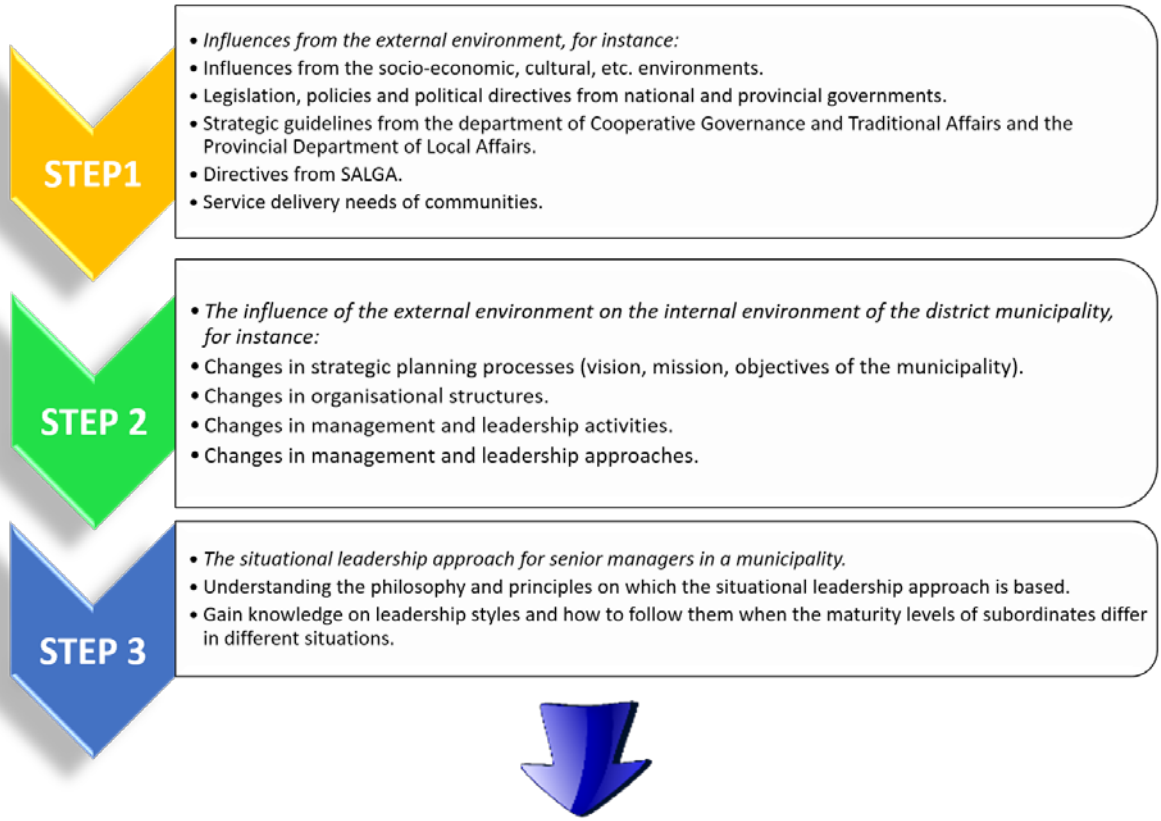
- **Step 1:** Determine the influences from the external environment (e.g. Government institutions, legislation, policies, politicians, general public and their needs, public opinion) should be taken into consideration.
- **Step 2:** Determine the influence of the external environment on the internal environment of the organization (e.g. the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality) senior managers (e.g. senior managers as departmental heads in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality), subordinates of the senior managers (e.g. municipal officials on all levels).
- **Step 3:** The content of the phenomenon under investigation (e.g. Hersey and Blanchard's situational leadership theoretical approach) should be included.
- **Step 4:** The development of the leadership skills of those who will have to implement the phenomenon (e.g. Katz's Technical/operational, human and cognitive skills) should be included in the framework.
- **Step 5:** Indicate how the conceptual framework will be implemented.

- **Step 6:** The possible challenges that the persons who implement the framework may face should be identified as far as possible and included in the framework (e.g. resistance to change, uncertainty of senior managers in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality). This includes how challenges will have to be addressed.

The different steps in the processes identified by Greenhalgh *et al.*, (2004:581-629) and Rolland, (1998:1-24) to be followed in the development of a conceptual framework forms the basis for the development of the situational leadership framework for senior managers working in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality. This is depicted in the following diagram (The content of each step is deducted from the knowledge obtained through the literature study as discussed in the previous chapters):

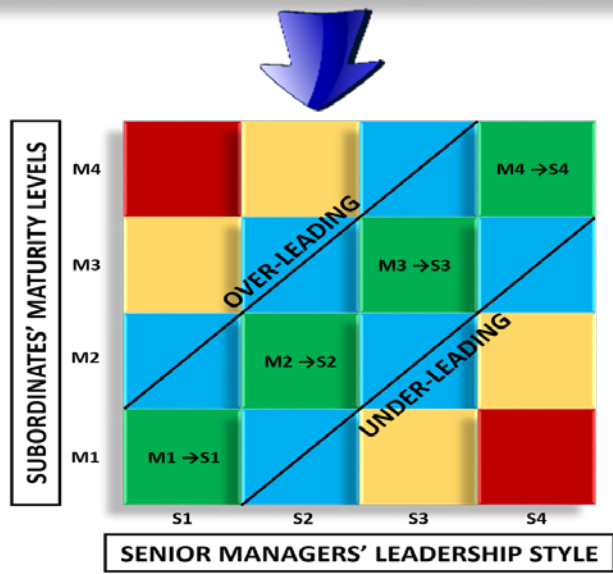
Figure 11: Process and steps in developing the conceptual situational leadership framework for senior managers in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality

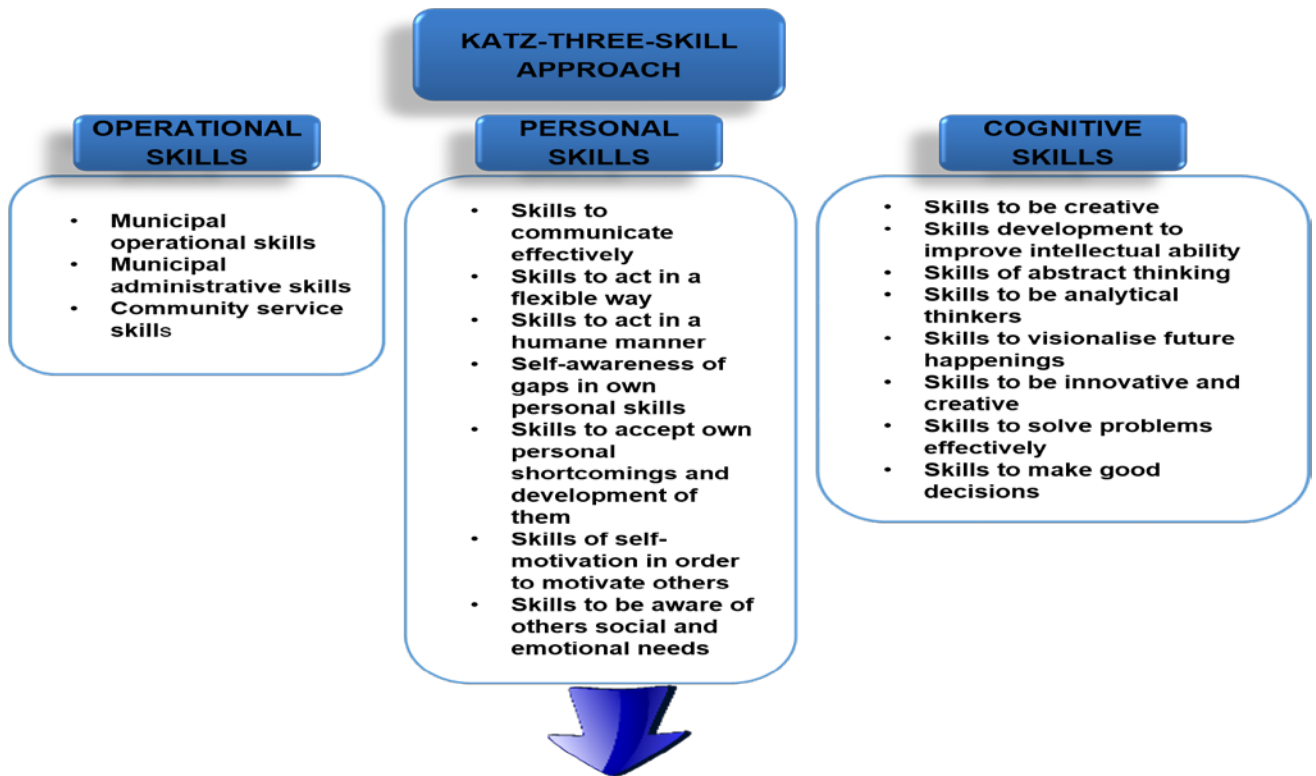




Step 4: Develop the leadership skills of senior managers

- PRINCIPLES OF SITUATIONAL LEADERSHIP**
- A directing leadership style (S1) for subordinates on a low maturity level (M1)
 - A coaching leadership style (S2) for subordinates on a low to moderate maturity level (M2).
 - A participating leadership style (S3) for subordinates on a moderate to higher maturity level (M3).
 - A delegating leadership style (S4) for subordinates on a high maturity level (M4).

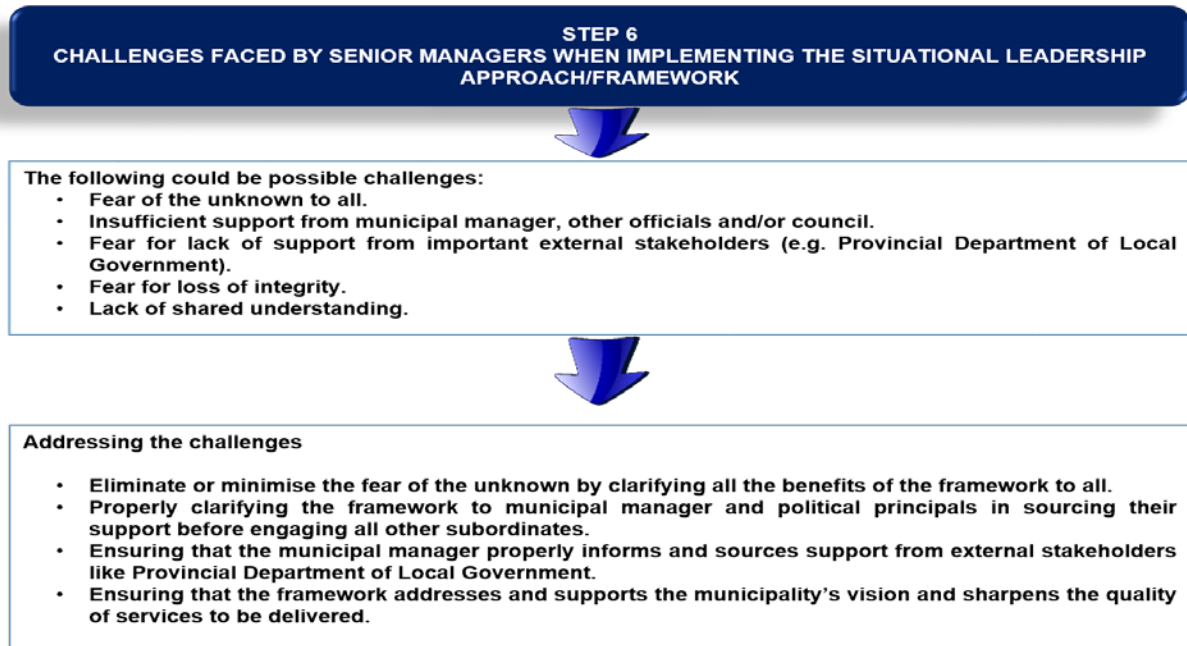




**STEP 5
SENIOR MANAGERS' ROLE IN IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SITUATIONAL LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORK/APPROACH**

- Activity 1:** Establish a steering committee for implementation and chair.
- Activity 2:** Create a positive culture for implementation.
- Activity 3:** Prepare municipal officials for the coming change and indicate to them the role that they will have to play to implement the new approach.
- Activity 4:** Arrange for training sessions to secure the successful implementation of the new approach.
- Activity 5:** Provide subordinates with information the process and step that will be followed to implement the framework.
- Activity 6:** Determine any problems that subordinates think may occur during implementation process and seek for answers to address any problems.
- Activity 7:** Monitor the implementation process and after the new approach has been implemented evaluate whether the new approach has been successfully implemented.
- Activity 8:** Adapt the framework and new approach as new knowledge becomes available.





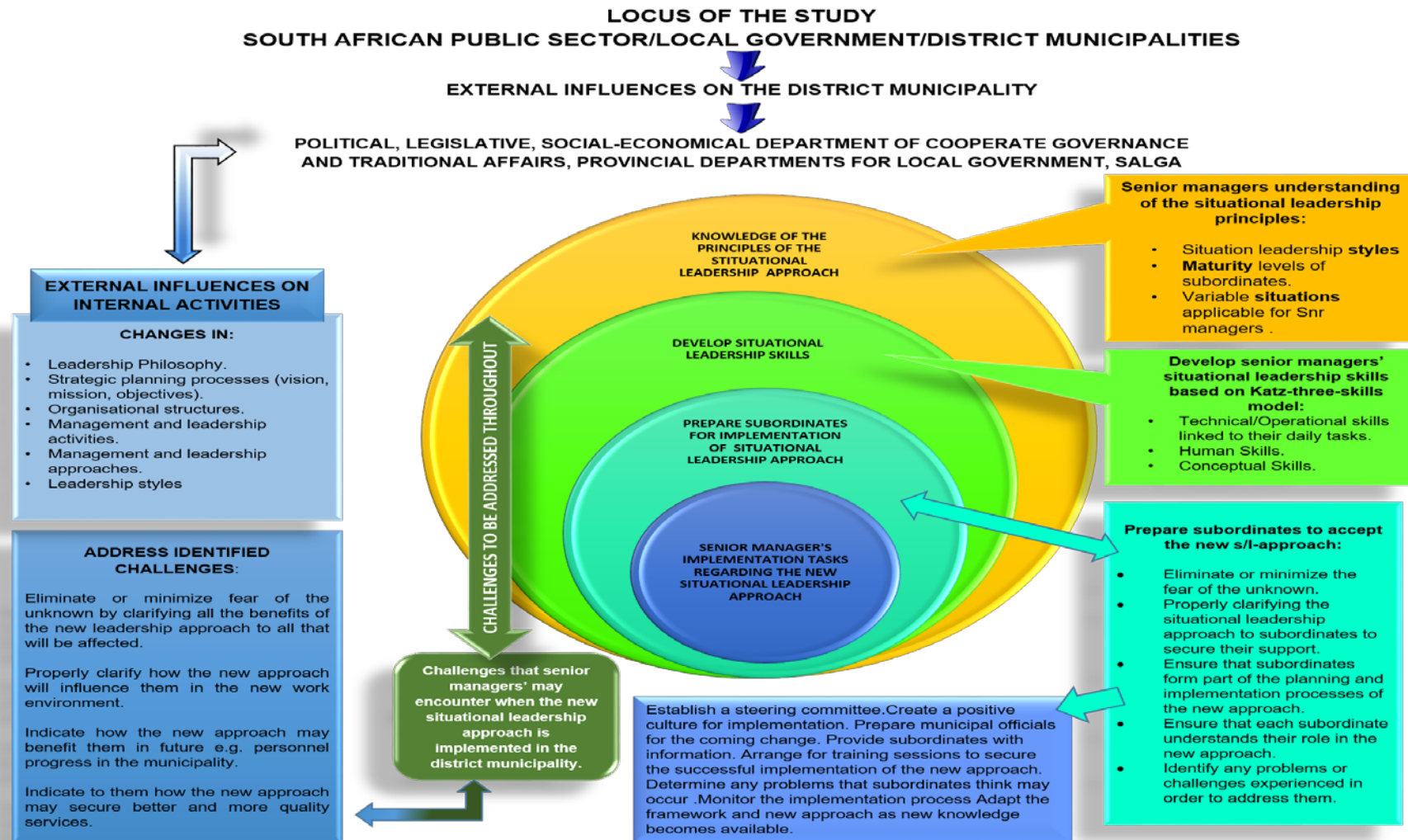
Adapted from the process as described by Greenhalgh *et al.* (2004:581-629) and Rolland (1998:1-24).

Research that ends in a conceptual framework is a logical process whereby new information and knowledge on the subject matter can be visualized. It is a fundamental requirement that knowledge gained through research should be made available to the research community or the associations on which it focuses (Regoniel, 2015). A conceptual framework may help stakeholders not to “wander away” from knowledge gained from an investigation and developing a conceptual framework puts findings into focus. What the conceptual framework therefore really does is to pin down theory into something concrete and visible that the researcher and those who will have to implement it in practice can utilize (Regoniel, 2012).

5.4 Creation of the conceptual framework for senior managers

According to Robinson (2016:3) and Franks and Schroeder (2013:5-20), as mentioned before, the findings of scientific research can be presented in various forms that include, *inter alia*, evidence-based programmes, diagrammes, models and frameworks that bridges the gap between science and practice. Robinson (2002:3) states that a conceptual framework is normally presented in the form of a diagram, the approach followed in this study.

Figure 12: Conceptual situational leadership framework for senior managers in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality



Own construct

The figure above was developed by the researcher with knowledge gained from the literature and theoretical analysis as discussed in the previous chapters.

Although the content of the conceptual framework has been discussed in the previous chapters, it is still necessary to elaborate briefly on it to guide senior managers in the district municipality to make further sense of it.

5.5 Making sense of the framework

The framework as previously discussed will be explained in detail in the next sub-sections.

5.5.1 Influences from the external environment

Influences from the external environment have a major influence on a municipality's vision, mission, objectives and operational activities. This may include, *inter alia*, influences from the socio-economic, cultural, technological, political, legislative and other environment. Legislation, government policies and political directives from national and provincial governments form the political framework in which municipalities should function and operate. This includes the way in which politicians on local government level (such as councillors) influence the activities of municipal administrations, which include municipal managers and senior management.

Strategic guidelines provided by the national department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) also lay down policies and guidelines that municipalities should adhere to when they determine their visions, missions and strategic planning processes. The Department (formerly the Department of Provincial and Local Government) is one of the ministries of the South African government and it is responsible for the relationship between the national government and the provincial governments and municipalities, and for overseeing the traditional leadership of South Africa's indigenous communities (CoGTA:2017).

Within this context CoGTA has an influence of the activities of municipalities in South Africa ensuring that all municipalities perform their basic responsibilities and functions consistently by:

- Putting their employees needs and concerns first.
- Securing that the delivery of municipal services are the right quality and quantity.
- Promoting good governance, transparency and accountability.
- Ensuring sound financial management and accounting.
- Building institutional resilience and administrative capability.

The Provincial Departments of Local Government also influence the activities of municipalities and are responsible for smooth interaction with other spheres of government and for formulating provincial legislation that promotes the sound operations of municipalities under their jurisdiction. This include the (Venter, 2007:86):

- Development and monitoring implementation processes of national and provincial legislation and policies and to assist municipalities to strengthen their management and operational capacity to fulfil their mandate to deliver the necessary services to the citizens.
- Development, promotion and establishing mechanisms, systems and structures to enable municipalities to deliver services in their jurisdiction.
- Promotion of sustainable development in the local government sphere.

The Organised Local Government Act, 1997 provides for the recognition of national and provincial associations representing municipalities. As such, SALGA is officially the national organization representing the majority of provincial associations and its core role is to secure local government transformation and to act as a national representative body of local government (Ally, Mbatha & Junge, 2006:29-38).

In line with its constitutionally defined mandate, SALGA sets out its role as follows (Ally *et al.* 2006:29-38):

- Represent, promote and protect the interests of local government.
- Transform local government to enable it to fulfil its developmental role.
- Enhance the role of provincial local government associations as provincial representatives and consultative bodies on local government level.

SALGA participates in intergovernmental structures and are therefore able to influence national and provincial legislation, programmes and policies and to gauge the impact of such legislation on local government (Ally *et al.* 2006:29-38). The primary external influence that guides every municipality has to a large extent an influence on the internal activities of each municipality.

5.5.2 Influences from the external environment on the internal environment of municipalities

The external environment provides the context in which a municipality will have to operate in. Each external factor can have an effect on the municipality's service delivery efforts and municipalities should plan and strategize to try to anticipate these effects on their internal proficiency. If the management of a municipality does not plan for external environment influences or changes or ignores them, then it may miss opportunities to develop and to secure effective service delivery to its citizens (Business Case, 2017).

For each municipality to develop, grow and prosper, senior managers must be able to anticipate, recognize and deal with change in the external environment that will cause changes in the internal management environment. Change is a certainty, and for this reason senior municipal managers must actively be engaged in a process that identifies change and modifies municipal activity to take best advantage of change (Business Case, 2017).

When municipal managers undertake strategic planning to include external factors and to reach their municipality's objectives the following process and steps may be followed (adapted from Isaac's model):

As mentioned, municipalities need to address external influences through internal strategic planning processes. Strategic planning processes may differ from municipality to municipality, but can according to Isaac include the following steps or activities (Isaac's model):

- Determine the vision, mission and objectives for the municipality.
- Analyse and adapt organizational structures.
- Create a positive organizational culture to reach objectives.

- Establish a positive management and leadership philosophy.
- Establish the best management and leadership approaches that focus on the objectives of the municipality.
- Implement the situational leadership approach in the various departments.

The first step in the strategic planning process has to do with the determination of a municipality's vision, mission and objectives. This includes the vision, mission, objectives and operational plans for each municipal department.

Municipalities may also be impeded by their organizational structures that are linked to the way they are managed. Organization structures in essence determines the way that the manager and his/her subordinates carry out their work to reach the objectives of the municipality. An organisation's structure is therefore the manner in which the municipal workforce is organized into specific job roles, tasks and responsibilities to undertake their work and this is closely linked to management and leadership styles of managers (Rodrigues & Pinho, 2010: 172).

The culture or work ethos within a municipality is an important factor in reaching municipal goals effectively. The attitudes of staff and subordinates and their ability to "go the extra mile" make a significant difference between the success or failure of the municipality to deliver sound services. Negative attitudes can severely influence the production of a municipality despite thorough planning processes. Positive attitudes of staff and volunteers will not only make the management task of senior municipal managers easier but also will be noticed and appreciated by the employees of that municipality. Negative attitudes by subordinates may lead to the unsuccessful change in management and leadership styles (Bommer, Rich & Rubin, 2005: 735).

The management and leadership philosophies, approaches and styles employed by senior managers as individuals or as members of the management team will also have a major impact on the morale of subordinates and organization culture. More contemporary forms of management and leadership approaches involve employees' decision-making processes and trusting that, although managers and workers have different viewpoints, they largely benefit by working together to achieve the business objectives. The inclusion of external environment influences in the strategic planning processes of municipalities depends to a large extent on the knowledge, experience

and capability of an organization's management team and its workforce. The development of the capacity of subordinates to become more productive workers is a determining factor of success of a municipality. For this reason one of the important pillars of the situational leadership approach is the development of subordinate's capability (maturity levels) through paying particular attention to the training of subordinates to establish a well-educated workforce.

5.5.3 *The situational leadership approach as part of the framework*

The principles of the situational leadership theory of Hersey and Blanchard and which form the core of the situational leadership framework (Diagram 3.1) has been discussed in detail in Chapters 2 and 3. Challenges that senior municipal managers may encounter during the implementation of the situational leadership approach and how they may be address by the senior managers in the district municipality has also been discussed in Chapter 2 and 3. In order to implement the situational leadership approach in the district municipality, the senior managers should acquire specific leadership skills. The three-skill model of Katz has been discussed in Chapter 4. As a result, the importance of skills development to implement the situational leadership approach successfully, it is also included in the situational leadership framework (see Diagram 4).

Nevarez *et al.* (2013) state that the philosophy of the situational leadership approach should always form the foundation of a situational leadership framework in any organization. This theory of leadership recognizes that there are different leadership styles applicable for different situations and that the maturity levels of subordinates will determine which leadership style should be followed in a specific situation. The situational leadership approach emphasizes the complexity of different and dynamic situations as well as the many individuals on different levels of maturity, functioning in these situations. If leaders understand this complex interaction they will be able to implement the best leadership style that may secure a positive outcome for the organization (Nevarez *et al.*, 2013).

The importance of understanding the philosophy behind situational leadership theory should therefore be to form the core of any situational leadership framework. The situational leadership framework will allow senior managers as leaders in

municipalities in South Africa to see the larger leadership picture in which they function and will make them aware of the many leadership complexities that they may encounter in their municipal environment. It is important for situational leaders not only to know the strategic management issues of a municipality, but that they should acquire the necessary knowledge on how to lead their subordinates to achieve municipal goals (Calvert, 2015).

5.5.4 Development of situational leadership skills

According to Amanchukwu *et al.* (2015:8) the situational leadership theory suggests that leaders should not only choose the best way to lead subordinates during the course of the day, focussing on the situation, maturity level of subordinates and link it to appropriate leadership styles, but they should develop their leadership skills in order to achieve this. As it is important for leaders to develop their leadership skills it should be included in a situational leadership framework (Amanchukwu *et al.*, 2015:8).

Senior municipal managers can therefore only become effective situational leaders if they have the necessary knowledge of leadership skills to implement it. Northouse (2010) explains that when leadership skills are developed it has not specifically to do with personality characteristics, which a person is usually born with, but from a situational leadership approach rather it has to do with the specific leadership skills that can be developed over time.

The three-skill approach of Katz, as further developed by Mumford, Zaccaro, Harding, Jacobs, and Fleishman, (2000) identifies three different skills a leader should have and develop, namely:

- Operational skills
- Human skills
- Conceptual skills

The three-skill approach refers to technical skills that relate to the specific functional field of the leader, human skills that relate to leaders' ability to communicate with people and conceptual skills that relate to think on a higher level, such as setting objectives to achieve. With these skills, senior managers, as part of their

“management and leadership armourment” guide their subordinates successfully (Mumford, Zaccaro, Connelly, & Marks, 2000:155-170).

Zaccaro, et al, 2000). It is important within the context of situational leadership that human and cognitive skills should be developed through other avenues, such as training.

5.5.5 Implementing the situational leadership approach

Senior municipal managers should also be guided and guide subordinates on how to implement the situational leadership approach in their municipalities. This aspect should form part of a situational leadership framework.

Senior managers in municipalities have an important role to play in the implementation of the situational leadership framework. Firstly, it's important for senior managers to establish a steering committee for implementation of the framework. Furthermore, the senior manager is also tasked to chair the steering committee. After the steering committee is established, the senior manager must create a positive culture for implementation of the framework. It is at this stage that the senior manager as a chair of the steering committee prepares municipal officials for positive change. During this time, the senior manager must ensure that all the doubts are eliminated from all subordinates. They must ensure that all beneficiaries of the committee are well-prepared for positive change that will be brought by the framework (Gagliardi, 1986:117).

All unclear issues pertaining to the implementation of the framework must be addressed and eradicated. Provide subordinates with step by step implementation process of the framework. Senior manager must break down the implementation process so that those who will be influenced by the new approach will understand what is expected of them. It is important to outline and indicate possible challenges that may arise (Okumus, 2003:871).

5.5.6 Identify and address all challenges

Senior managers must identify challenges that may occur during the implementation phase of the framework and which may hamper the successful implementation of the framework.

Some challenges that senior managers may experience when the situational leadership approach is implemented in a municipality are the following (Fixsen, Blase, Naoom, & Wallace, 2009:57-65):

- Subordinates who are confronted with a new leadership approach may resist the change and may become “passengers” when the new approach is implemented.
- Not all subordinates may come willingly on board to secure the successful change to the new leadership approach.
- Initial expectations of personal gain may turn into dissatisfaction and even emotional discomfort.
- When confronted with new practices, some subordinates may feel overwhelmed by the new demands that may progress into little motivation to accept the new approach or change.

These negative behaviours may, however, be countered by senior managers in that subordinates are (Fixsen, *et al.*, 2009:57-65):

- Provided beforehand on clear and precise information on the changes that they may expect.
- Provided with information on how change will affect them in person and their work environment.
- Familiarized with the contents of the new approach.
- Informed of the advantages or disadvantages they will experience regarding the new approach.
- Making part of the change process from the beginning to the end.
- Eliminate or minimize the fear of the unknown by clarifying all the benefits of the new approach to all.
- Ensured that the municipal manager and councillors are properly informs of the new leadership.

The conceptual framework for senior managers working in municipalities has been developed at the hand of the knowledge gained from an in-depth literature analysis, which include well-known theories on leadership. This knowledge had empowered the researcher to develop the situational leadership framework for the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality. Boyles and Garland (2016:25) indicate that at municipal level developing a conceptual framework can be challenging as the external and internal environmental influences will always change. However, what is an important factor is that the principles to develop a framework *per se* are based on sound theoretical principles that stood the test of time. In this regard the situational leadership theory of Hersey and Blanchard proofed to be a well thought through approach in leadership.

5.6 Conclusion

Establishing a high performing municipal organization starts at the top, with senior managers who are capable of leading their subordinates in an effective manner to reach the municipality's objectives. Poor leadership can result in mismanagement of resources, strategic misalignment, poor service delivery and a host of other problems that can undermine a municipality's performance. The Centre for Situational Leadership emphasizes this statement and states that today's public sector institutions cannot ignore the importance of developing their leaders to become effective leaders during the many different situations confronting them. Public sector institutions, such as municipalities, must therefore equip their senior leaders with the capability to lead their subordinates skilfully through the ever-increasing maze of public demands (Centre for Situational Leadership, 2015:1).

According to Kroeger and Weber (2014:43), the development of a conceptual leadership framework will guide and assist senior municipal managers to become high quality leaders that serve the needs of the municipality, communities and themselves. A primary objective of the development of a framework is that it sets clear guidelines for senior managers and their staff to understand the environment in which they operate better. It will help them to develop to become professional managers and leaders whom are able to initiate new ways of thinking and functioning to make municipality's better servants of their communities (Boyle and Garland, 2016:26). The situational leadership framework for the Ngaka Modiri

Molema District Municipality is, however, one management leadership instrument for senior managers and other frameworks can also be develop to make the district municipality a more effective provider of municipal services to its communities.

The following chapter focuses on conclusion and recommendations and determines whether the purpose of the study and its objectives have been achieved.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION, SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This study focused on the development of a conceptual situational leadership framework for senior managers in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality. A qualitative research design has been followed that emphasizes the systematic collection, organisation and interpretation of scholarly literature and other textual material. In a qualitative research design the researcher wants to understand the meaning of a phenomenon better as it manifests in real life. The qualitative research design applied proved to be the best approach as it kept the researcher focussed on the purpose and objectives of the study.

The qualitative research design assists the researcher to obtain relevant information from literature and this information was comprehensive enough to develop the mentioned framework. Ample literature was investigated to approach this study in a scientific manner and as a result knowledge gained on the phenomena, leadership and situational leadership formed the foundation of the conceptual framework. The researcher found it possible to develop the framework on literature conducted.

The primary problem that led to this study, namely that leadership in local government level and specifically the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality needs attention to secure better service delivery, was answered within the limits of a dissertation. The general research question was answered and the specific research question has been answered in a scientific manner. The objectives of the study have been met. The methodology followed also ensured that the objectives of the study have been met.

It is believed that the findings of this study will add value to the functioning of the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality and other district municipalities may also benefit from this study. In this regard the principles of the situational leadership theory of Hersey and Blanchard may assist senior municipal managers to become more effective leaders that may lead to better service delivery.

The conceptual situational leadership framework was developed in a scientific way with the knowledge gained from the analysis of scholarly literature and an analysis of relevant theories. The situational leadership philosophy of Hersey and Blanchard, namely that no one leadership style is right for every circumstance and that the maturity level of subordinates should also be taken into consideration when leaders guide their subordinates, was followed throughout the dissertation and it also found its way into the conceptual framework.

The careful examination of literature on Hersey and Blanchard's situational leadership theory as part of the body of knowledge of the contingency leadership theories, was an important part of this research and should be of value for the senior managers in municipalities to be more effective leaders.

6.2 Achieving the purpose of the research

The general research question that guided this research has been formulated in the first chapter as: *“Can knowledge of the Situational Leadership theory of Hersey and Blanchard and the ultimate development of a conceptual situational leadership framework guide and assist senior municipal managers in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality to become more effective leaders?”*

This general research question has been answered and it was found that the situational leadership theory of Hersey and Blanchard may indeed assist senior managers in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality to become more effective leaders.

6.3 Achieving the objectives of the study

The study the following objectives were reached with the general research question as guiding focus of:

- To explore and understand the theoretical foundation of leadership and to contextualize the situational leadership theory in this broad body of knowledge on leadership (Chapter 2);
- To analyse and comprehend the contents of the situational leadership theory of Hersey and Blanchard as one of the contingency theories, which will form the

theoretical basis of the situational leadership conceptual framework for senior managers in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality (Chapter 3);

- To determine and discuss the leadership skills needed for effective situational leaders at the hand of Katz's three-skill model, which focus on operational, human relations and conceptual skills and which will be included in the situational leadership conceptual framework (Chapter 4);
- To establish the theoretical principles on which a conceptual framework should be developed (Chapter 5); and
- To develop the situational leadership framework for senior management in the mentioned district municipality (Chapter 5).

These objectives have been achieved in this research as follows:

Objective one: To analyse and comprehend the contents of the situational leadership theory of Hersey and Blanchard as one of the contingency theories, which will form the theoretical basis of the situational leadership conceptual framework for senior managers in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality (Chapter 2).

The research established that there are many theories that focus on leadership as phenomenon. Bolden, *et al.* (2003:6-14) identified, *inter alia*, the following theories on leadership; Great Man theories, Trait theories, Behaviourist theories, Contingency theories of which the situational leadership of Hersey and Blanchard is one, Transactional theories and Transformational theories. Furthermore, the following are well-known contingency/situational theories that were discussed (Contingency theories, e-books, 2015:17-20):

- Fiedler's contingency theory.
- The Hersey-Blanchard theory of Leadership.
- Tannenbaum and Schmidt's Leadership Continuum theory.
- Adair's Action-Centred Leadership theory.

Objective two: To analyse and comprehend the contents of the situational leadership theory of Hersey and Blanchard as one of the contingency theories, which

forms the theoretical basis of the situational leadership conceptual framework for senior managers in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality (Chapter 3).

It has been discovered that there are a number of contingency theories developed until today, such as Fiedler's Contingency Theory, the *Situational Leadership Theory*, the Path-Goal Theory and the Decision-making Theory. While all similar on the surface, they each offer their own distinct views on leadership (Northouse, 2007:120).

According to Graeff (1997: 153-170), the situational leadership approach is based on Hersey and Blanchard's research on leadership and the basic principles of this theory are closely related to the contingency way of thinking. Hersey and Blanchard, however, stated that a further element complicates the contingency leadership approach and that is that subordinates' maturity or level of competence to do a task successfully, also play a role in the leadership style that a leader should choose. As such the situational leadership theory of Hersey and Blanchard has been discussed in Chapter 2 and 3 and it was discovered that, according to scholars and more specifically the Centre for Leadership studies in the USA (Situational Leadership:2014) that the Situational Leadership theory of Hersey and Blanchard "...is arguably the most recognized, utilized and effective leadership approach and influential leadership tool in the history of the behavioral sciences" (Situational Leadership:2014). The contents of this theory therefore form the foundation of this study as well as the situational leadership framework that was developed for senior managers in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality.

Objective three: To determine and discuss the leadership skills needed for effective situational leaders at the hand of Katz's Three-skill model, which focus on operational, human relations and conceptual skills and which is included in the situational leadership conceptual framework (Chapter 4);

In order to explain and fully understand what is meant with the development of leadership skills, the Three-skill model of Katz has been analyzed in this chapter. Katz stated that there are three skills that a leader should develop to become an effective leader of people and they are operational, human and conceptual skills. What is important for this study is that Katz (1974:1-28), in an article in the Harvard

Business Review, indicated that when leaders implement these three skills they will have to establish a balance between these skills when leading subordinates on different maturity levels. Katz (1974:1-28) indicates that a leader should have operational knowledge when subordinates on lower levels in the organisational hierarchy is led, but leading subordinates higher up in the hierarchy needs more conceptual skills. Mastering human skills is important when leading subordinates on all levels. Leadership skills are exceptionally important when subordinates are led during times of changes (Katz (1974:1-28).

Objective four and five: To establish the theoretical principles on which a conceptual framework should be developed and to develop the situational leadership framework for senior management in the mentioned district municipality (Chapter5).

The theoretical principles on which the conceptual framework was based is discussed in this chapter. The researcher made an analysis of the definitions and the meaning of conceptual frameworks in a scientific environment to understand the purpose of conceptual frameworks. It was explained that a framework is a network of interlinked concepts that together provide a visual picture of a phenomenon or phenomena experienced in real life situations (Jabareen, 2009:49). The researcher was able to develop a situational leadership framework for senior managers at Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality with the knowledge gained on the theories related to leadership *per se* and situational leadership as focus.

According to the theoretical guidelines on the development of scientific framework the researcher was able to create a framework that was based on the following aspects:

- It is presented in an understandable and a common language.
- The various concepts were clearly linked and conceptually presented in an understandable and coordinated way.
- It is presented in detail and is meticulously presented in the form of a diagram.
- Practitioners should be able to implement it in practice.

6.3.1 Theoretical foundation of the research

This research was based on specific well-known theories on leadership, such as the Situational Leadership Theory of Hersey and Blanchard. Furthermore, according to Peretomode (2012:13-17), scholars over time have classified leadership into broad theoretical approaches, such as classical, behavioural, contingency/situational and emerging or contemporary leadership theories.

Bolden *et al.* (2003:14) indicate that early approaches and theories tend to focus upon the characteristics and behaviours of successful leaders, but more contemporary theories begin to consider the role of leaders to motivate followers to follow them willingly to reach organizational goals. Bolden *et al.* (2003:6-14) identified, *inter alia*, the following broad approaches and theories on leadership – Great Man approach and its theories, Trait approach and its theories, Behaviourist approach and its theories, Contingency/Situational Leadership approach and its theories, Transactional approach and its theories, and Transformational theories.

Furthermore, the leadership theory of Fiedler, which is considered the earliest and most extensively researched on leadership, has paved the way for other leadership theories that followed. Fiedler's contingency theory departs from trait and behavioural models and discovered that group performance is contingent on the leader's psychological orientation and on three contextual variables: group atmosphere, task structure, and leader's power position (Huges, *et al.*, 1998:101).

The philosophy of the situational leadership theory is that an effective leader is task-orientated and the most successful leaders are those who adapt their leadership style to guide subordinates or groups according to their maturity level that influence them to achieve objectives (Hersey and Blanchard, 1977:10). Effective leadership varies, not only with the person or group that is being influenced, but it also depends on the successful completion of tasks in various situations (Hersey and Blanchard, 1977:10).

6.4 Sythesis of the chapters of the study

With this contextualising of the study as background, A summary of each Chapter is provided next.

6.4.1 Chapter 1 – Introduction and orientation

Chapter 1 provided the introduction to the study and it also gave an outline of the study to be conducted. This includes the background discussion, problem statement, general research question, objectives, central theoretical statements, methodology followed and the value of the study for the relevant audiences. The background discussion and problem statement indicated that senior managers at the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality have a significant and complex role as managers and leaders.

The research design of the study was discussed in this chapter and it was indicated that a qualitative research design was followed. The methodology that has been followed to reach the objectives of the study has been elaborated on. The methodology indicated how the in-depth literature study would determine what effective situational leadership is about and lead to the development of a situational leadership framework for senior managers in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality. The process of reviewing existing literature ensured that important literature on the subject of discussion was obtained, analyzed and then described in a scientific manner.

6.4.2 Chapter 2 – A contextual and conceptual orientation of leadership in the public sector

In Chapter 2 the public sector environment was contextualised and then attention was given to the conceptual theoretical foundation of the phenomenon leadership. Literature on leadership in the public sector, concepts of management and leadership, leadership within the context of management, theories related to leadership and specifically the contingency theory and situational leadership theory was researched and analyzed.

The chapter further discussed and interpreted the South African public sector, between the public and the private sectors, public sector managerial leadership, the local government “sector” sphere in South Africa, local government functions (municipal functions), new leadership approaches should include more collaborative and engaging leadership styles to lead subordinates According to Van der Waldt

(2011:2), due to political dynamics, development complexities, resource constraints and financial risks, managers in the public sector (such as municipal managers), will find themselves in a challenging environment in which management and especially accurate planning are exceptionally difficult.

Jarbandhan (2011:21-22) is of the opinion that the effectiveness of managers as effective leaders in municipalities is critical for the success of municipalities as public sector organisations. He concurs with Van der Waldt and indicates that with the ever-evolving national and global environment, managers in the public sector need to possess the relevant competencies to lead these organisations successfully in order to enhance effective and efficient service delivery to communities (Jarbandhan, 2011:21-22).

6.4.3 Chapter 3 – Exploring the situational leadership theories of Hersey and Blanchard

In Chapter 3 theories of leadership was explored with the focus on the situational leadership theory. Literature on leadership in the public sector, concepts of management and leadership, leadership within the context of management, theories related to leadership and specifically the contingency theory and situational leadership theory were researched and analyzed. The situational approach has been refined and revised several times since its inception and it has been used extensively in organizational leadership training and development (Northouse, 2007:91).

The importance of understanding the philosophy behind situational leadership will allow managers as leaders in municipalities in South Africa to see the larger leadership picture in which they function and will make them aware of the many leadership complexities that they may encounter in their municipal environment. It is important for situational leaders not only to know the strategic management issues of a municipality, but that they should acquire the necessary knowledge on how to lead their subordinates effectively in the municipal managerial environment (Calvert, 2015).

The basic philosophy of the situational leadership approach is thus that a situational leader will initially follow a directive leadership style in cases where subordinate's maturity level is low through by accurately spelling out the duties and responsibilities of such a subordinate's work, telling them exactly what to do, how to do it, when to do it, where to do it and what the end results will likely to be (Centre for Situational Leadership, 2013:3-5).

The advantage of the situational leadership approach for municipalities is that it strengthens senior management's capability to be effective leaders that will develop their subordinates' leaders to develop empathy towards their subordinates because they will become more aware of what their individual subordinates' needs are and by addressing it may create subordinates who will strive to become better workers. The situational leadership theory of Hersey and Blanchard has been defined as a leadership style where a leader must adjust his style to fit the development level (maturity level) of the subordinates he is trying to influence. Regarding the context of situational leadership, a leader must be able to change their leadership style according to the level of development of subordinates.

The researcher analysed literature to structure this chapter to further build a theoretical basis for the study,. The Chapter discussed the benefits of situational leadership as proposed by a number of authors. During the literature study and analysis, it appeared that an individual can obtain leadership skills by doing the work, getting experience and adequate training and development. It is a challenge for a leader to determine how much and what kind of formal task-orientated directions is right for a specific individual or team to execute a given task successfully.

6.4.4 Chapter 4 – The development of leadership skills of senior managers as leaders in municipalities

In this chapter the development of leadership skills as a critical role in the effective functioning of senior managers as leaders in all organisations, public or private sectors is interrogated and thoroughly explained. The detailed analysis of development of leadership skills for senior managers incorporate the knowledge into a conceptual framework for situational leadership specifically for the latter in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality.

A literature study was undertaken to understand the development of leadership skills better. This theory in the municipal environment indicates that the environment and the readiness of followers, the municipal officials working in the municipality, mostly determine how senior managers as leaders should function. It is therefore important for managers, as leaders, to establish their current competency levels when it comes to the effective management and leading of their subordinates and then to address any shortcomings in this regards (Tyler, 2016:48).

Furthermore, in this chapter, the researcher confirmed that in order to ensure efficient and effective management of municipalities, senior managers as leaders should focus on specific leadership skills to become effective leaders in their department. When exploring scholarly literature on specific leadership skills needed to implement the situational leadership theory of Hersey and Blanchard, it became clear that the Three-skill approach of Robert Katz is ideally suited to guide senior managers in any organization to develop their leadership skills. Katz build his Three-skill leadership approach on three specific leadership skills needed to become effective leaders. They are technical (operational) skills, human skills and conceptual skills (Katz, 1955:10).

The researcher further confirmed that senior managers, as effective leaders, on local government level, have a critical role to play as influential participants in policy making endeavours and they have an even more important role to play in implementing policies. Managers in local government institutions should lay the foundation for well-functioning municipalities and the core of this is leaders with the skills to become strategic visionary and who has the skills to lead their subordinates in achieving those visions (Mgwebi, 2010).

The chapter also revealed that when implementing the situational leadership approach, senior managers will be confronted with challenges. When subordinates are confronted with new ideas, it may result in resistance from them. Literature provides strategies to overcome resistance and these strategies, including negotiations, education, force and support of the insecure subordinates. The chapter brought the researcher to the conclusion that a conceptual framework on situational leadership for senior managers can be the solution to more effective leadership in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality.

6.4.5 Chapter 5 – Conceptual situational leadership framework for senior managers in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality

This chapter culminated in the development of the conceptual framework for situational leadership for senior managers in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality. An analysis of what a conceptual framework entails and how it should be developed is included in this chapter. A clear definition and thorough explanation of the concept was done. A conceptual framework is defined as a network of interlinked concepts that together provide a visual picture of a phenomenon or phenomena experienced in real life situations (Jabareen, 2009:49).

According to Green (2014:35), a conceptual framework can be regarded as the visual presentation of scientific research outcomes after a thorough analysis of literature on relevant theories have been undertaken. Green (2014:35) further states that the findings of scientific research can be presented in various forms that include evidence-based programmes, diagrammes, models and conceptual frameworks that bridges the gap between science and practice. A conceptual framework therefore paves the way for implementing scientific knowledge in a visual format. In this chapter it became clear that the conceptual framework could be scientifically developed based on the analyses of theories. A conceptual framework is therefore a mechanism to bring theory and practice closer to each other (Green, 2014:35).

Given the analysis of the contents of the situational leadership theory of Hersey and Blanchard, it was possible to develop the conceptual leadership framework for senior managers in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality to lead their subordinate municipal officials effectively during different situations they are confronted with. The process that involved in developing the conceptual leadership framework was described and followed in the actual development of the framework. The process also includes the role-players, skills and knowledge needed to implement situational leadership successfully in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality.

It addresses any resistance to the implementation of the situational leadership approach. The conceptual situational leadership framework for senior managers in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality is founded on a comprehensive and

secure literature study. With all the data gained and by following a scientific process, the conceptual framework was developed and presented in Diagramme 5.2.

6.4.6 Chapter 6 – Conclusion, summary and recommendations

The focus of this study was to develop a conceptual situational leadership framework for senior managers in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality. The design was based on a qualitative research, which emphasizes the systematic collection, organising and interpretation of scholarly literature and textual material. In a qualitative design, the researcher wants to understand the meaning of a phenomenon better as it manifests in real life.

The theoretical analysis enabled the researcher to develop the conceptual framework that can be implemented for senior management of municipalities in the country. The general research question has been answered and the objectives of the study have been met. The primary goal of the study, which was to develop the conceptual leadership framework scientifically, has also been reached.

The contents of the different chapters are summarized in this chapter to show how the study culminated in the actual development of the conceptual framework. The contents of each chapter focussed on the research objectives that were stated in the first chapter. The literature review and the process to develop the conceptual framework for senior managers working as situational leaders in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality were sufficient and based on scientific principles.

6.5 Recommendations

The concept recommendation in a dissertation can be regarded as a solution to an identified problem that a “client” can implement to address an identified problem(s). Each recommendation should be explained and justified with the support of or based on research findings. Recommendation(s) should specifically state what the problem is and what should be done to rectify it. A well-thought-out set of recommendations makes it more likely that the applicable organization will take such recommendations seriously (Swaen, 2016). Recommendations may also include additional research suggested for future research that researchers should take and which are the result of this study (Swaen, 2016).

The following specific recommendations are made to improve leadership in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality with this as background:

- The situational leadership principles of Hersey and Blanchard should be included in all training and development (capacity-building programme) of all senior managers and middle management officials of the municipality. The principles of the situational leadership theory should also be communicated with all subordinates that will be influenced by this leadership approach. *This may lead to a situation where all municipal officials are on “the same page” should or when the situational leadership approach is implemented.*
- The findings of this research should be shared with the North West Department of Local Government and Human Settlements to form part of their municipal support and development programme for senior and middle management in municipalities in the province. *This may lead to a situation where leaders and upcoming leaders are made aware of what effective leadership entails and this may hypothetically lead to better service delivery.*
- The content of this dissertation could also be included in the leadership programmes of SALGA for senior managers and politicians. This may fill gaps regarding leadership between politicians and administrators. *This may establish a better understanding by senior officials and the political cadres of what effective management entails.*
- Researchers who concentrate on the phenomenon leadership and situational leadership may undertake research on how situational leadership can be implemented in government institutions on national and provincial government levels. It may establish an environment where public officials become aware of the importance of leadership in the delivery of public services.
- From a behavioural point of view, researcher may determine how the implementation of a situational leadership approach is experienced by those who are in senior positions and their subordinates.

6.6 Conclusion

The successful addressing of the basic interests and needs of local communities by municipalities depend to a large extent on good management and leadership by both municipal councillors (the political sphere) and municipal officials (the administrative sphere). The Constitution determines, specifically in Section 178 (1) that a local government shall ensure that its administration is based on sound principles of public administration, good governance and public accountability so as to render efficient services to the persons within its area of jurisdiction through the effective administration of its affairs. Understanding the leadership role by senior municipal officials may be one manner in achieving this.

What is especially important to this study is that each municipality must develop frameworks at the hand of which better service delivery can be achieved and the situational leadership framework for the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality is an example of such a framework. Sound municipal activities should be supported by effective leadership capacity in order to secure that subordinate employees implement council policies successfully. Although the study focus on senior managers as situational leaders in municipalities, it is important to emphasize that subordinates should also be made aware of the importance of leadership when it comes to effective service delivery.

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