CAUSES OF DYSFUNCTIONAL BEHAVIOUR WITHIN SELF-DIRECTED WORK TEAMS: A CASE STUDY

M. Strauss, Hons. BA

Anglogold

Mini-dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Magister Artium in Industrial Psychology at the Potchefstroom Campus of the North-West University

Supervisor: J. Pienaar

Potchefsroom

November 2005

FOR THE READER'S ATTENTION

The reader must note that the publication and reference style used in this article is in accordance with the instructions for publication (fifth edition) of the American Psychological Association (APA). This is in accordance with the policy of the Programme in Industrial Psychology at North-West University to use the APA-style in all scientific documents since January 1999.

PREFACE

I would like to express my gratitude to the following people and organisations for their contributions to this research:

- God for giving me the strength to persevere.
- Bert for his patience, love and support.
- My family and friends for the assistance through the trying times.
- Avril and Jana for their unfailing faith that I would complete this article.
- Dr. Jaco Pienaar for making the effort to become my study leader and for his constant guidance and support through this time.
- Management and employees of Moab Khotsong who participated in this study.
- Etienne for the valuable feedback he gave me concerning the research.
- Anglogold Ashanti for the financial assistance.
- Erika Rood for the tireless searches for information and the professional assistance and service she offered me in this time.

The opinions expressed in this research, and the conclusions drawn, are those of the author and not necessarily reflect the opinion of the North-West University or the School of Human Resources Sciences, or AngloGold Ashanti Limited.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
Preface		ii
List of Tables		vi
List of Tables		v
Abstract		vii
Opsomming		ix
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION		
1.1	Problem Statement	1
1.2	Research Objectives	8
1.2.1	General Objective	8
1.2.2	Specific Objectives	8
1.3	Research Method	8
1.3.1	Literature Review	9
1.3.2	Research Design	9
1.3.3	Study Population	9
1.3.4	Data Collection	9
1.3.5	Data Analysis	10
1.4	Chapter Division	11
1.5	Chapter Summary	11
1.6	REFERENCES	12
CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH ARTICLE		
Causes of Dysfunctional Behaviour within Self-Directed Work Teams		**15**

CHAPTER 3: CONCLUSION RECOMMEDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

3.1	Conclusions	48
3.2	Recommendations	51
3.2.1	Recommendations for the org	55
3.2.2	Recommendations for future research	55
3.3	Limitations	54
	REFERENCES	

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Description	Page
	CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH ARTICLE	
1	Themes and their frequency	39

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Description	Page
	CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH ARTICLE	
1	Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs	21
2	Adapted from Stephen Palmer's Model of Stress	25
3	Absentee trends for section under study	32
4	Injury trends for section under study	33

ABSTRACT

Subject: Causes of dysfunctional behaviour within self-directed work teams. A case study.

Key terms: Behaviour, Work Climate, Team Work, Work Groups, Group Dynamics

The key to production effectiveness lies in the optimal utilisation of the organisations own employees. This has been accomplished by changing the power structure within organisations with the introduction of self-directed work teams. In addition to carrying out the work, SDWT members make decisions that are traditionally the jurisdiction of first line supervisors. This method of management and work planning can lead to added stress and behaviour not anticipated from employees. This behaviour, if not addressed, may have a debilitating effect on the team's performance and therefore on the organisations' bottom line. To address this behaviour, the specific causes must first be identified. The pressure within the teams of a gold mine is increased due to the fact that one day's loss of production can cost hundreds of thousands of rand.

The objective of the research was to determine what causes certain dysfunctional behaviours in self-directed work teams, and the effect this has on the workplace and performance. A qualitative study was done whereby a single group of subjects was obtained. This group consisted of 40 subjects (N=40). Three different work groups were part of the case study. These groups were observed in the workplace, the group's interactions with other members in the group were observed, and the group's interactions with leadership figures were observed, and finally individual members participated in unstructured interviews in order to identify the experience of members in the work groups and also to discover what elements contributed to the dysfunctional behaviour identified in the workplace.

Data from interviews was used to develop major groupings, or general classifications of broad categories of themes, where a theme is a recurrent topic of discussion or often-mentioned key factor with regards to behaviour. Information was also gathered by observing individuals in their places of work.

The results showed that the factors, which were most frequently sited, were the issues of contradictory demands and control (leadership). Another factor considered important by all

role players was relationships. Other influences identified, but of less importance, were support, trust and communication, cultural diversity, role clarity and finally, individual needs.

By way of conclusion, recommendations for future research are made.

OPSOMMING

Onderwerp: Oorsake van dis- funksionerende gedrag binne self-besturende werkspanne

Sleutelterme: Gedrag, Werksklimaat, Spanwerk, Werksgroepe, Groepdinamika

Die sleutel tot effektiewe produksie lê in die optimale benutting van 'n organisasie se werknemers. Dit word vermag deur die gesagstrukture van die instansie te verander deur van selfbesturende werkspanne (SBWS) gebruik te maak. Benewens hul normale take sal SBWS-lede besluite neem wat normaalweg deur eerstevlak toesighouers geneem word. Hierdie metode van beplanning in die bestuurstegniek mag lei tot verhoogde stresvlakke en onvoorspelbare gedragspatrone tussen werknemers. Indien die gedrag nie onmiddellik hanteer word nie, sal dit rampspoedige gevolge op die span asook die organisasie as 'n geheel se resultate hê. Die identifisering van kernoorsake moet dus eers plaasvind. Een dag se verlies aan produksie kan miljoene rande se verlies vir die myn tot gevolg hê en dit plaas verdere druk op die produksiespanne.

Die doel van die navorsing was om te bepaal wat veroorsaak sekere disfunksionel gedragspatrone binne SBWS-spanne, asook die gevolge daarvan op hulle uitsette en die werksplek. 'n Kwalitatiewe studie is gedoen waarby 40 mense betrokke was. Die 40 individue *(N=40)* was deel van die drie groepe in hierdie gevallestudie. Hierdie groepe is noukeurig dopgehou in die werksplek om onder meer die interaksie met ander lede van die groep, asook interaksie met leierskapfigure waar te neem. Individuele lede van die groepe het onder meer deelgeneem in ongestruktureerde onderhoude om vas te stel hoe hulle die werksomstandighede in die werksplek ervaar asook watter elemente bydra tot die wanfunksionerede gedrag in die werksplek.

Die inligting verkry deur ongestruktureerde onderhoude, is gebruik om die hoofgroepering vas te stel asook die basies indeling van die temas in die geval waar die temas herhalend voorgekom het of gesien is as 'n sleuteltema. (Inligting is ook verkry deur persone waar te neem in hulle werksomstandighede.

Die resultate het gewys dat die punte wat die meeste aangehaal is, die gevolg was van weersprekende verwagtinge en beheer (leierskap). Verhoudinge is 'n punt wat ook deur rolspelers as baie belangrik geag is. Ondersteuning, vertroue en kommunikasie,

kultuurverskille en rolduidelikheid en individuele behoefte is punte wat ook genoem is, maar is tot 'n mindere mate as belangrik geag.

Ten slotte word aanbevelings vir toekomstige navorsing gemaak.

CHAPTER 1

This mini-dissertation deals with the causes of dysfunctional behaviour within self-directed work teams.

In Chapter 1 the motivation for the research is discussed in terms of the problem statement and the objectives of the research. Thereafter the research method and the division of chapters are discussed.

1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The world of work has moved towards participative management, work groups and self-managed work teams. Odiorne (1991) identifies numerous variations of self-managed work teams. These include Quality Circles, Employee Involvement (EI), Total Quality Management (TQM) and team building; where several supervisors are eliminated and replaced by a single "facilitator". Replacing general supervision with specialists has widened the span of control. These specialists also function as group facilitators and team problem solvers. This "delayering" also cuts overhead costs (Odiorne, 1991).

Fisher (1993) states that internationally; companies have learnt that the key to production effectiveness lies in the better utilisation of their own employees. Roy (2003), however also points out that the organisation of work into self-directed work teams has changed the power structure within companies considerably. In addition to carrying out the work, SDWT members make decisions that are traditionally the jurisdiction of first line supervisors (Roy, 2003). This method of management and work planning can however lead to added stress and behaviours not anticipated. A typical example of this is the leadership style, which is used. The supervisor told the crew when to do what and they obeyed. If they did not, there were consequences. Supervisors must now share all information with teams and no longer have absolute control. Now more time is also needed for a team to plan and execute a job and a supervisor does not merely give an instruction that is followed. This adds pressure to produce in an environment where one day's loss of production can cost hundreds of thousands of rand.

The gold mining organisation that forms the interest of study in this research is the second largest in the world. This industry provides a large portion of the formal employment in this

country but it has been dealt a heavy blow by the strengthening of the South African currency. The industry was budgeting on an exchange rate of eleven Rand to the Dollar, while in recent months this has improved to sometimes below seven Rand to the Dollar. Cost containment and increasing productivity levels are paramount in order to increase the lifespan of current operations and the viability of exploration activities. The SDWT concept disposes of the critical parameters required for a dramatic improvement in performance and a reduction in costs. The labour intensiveness and high cost of labour make productivity levels very important in the ore extraction process. Work teams need to be multi-skilled, self-directed and as small as possible in order to maximise efficiency, productivity levels and to minimise costs.

McNamara (1996) states in his report that as early as the 1990's, SDWT started to receive attention in South Africa. McNamara (1996) also points out that the attempts to implement SDWT were usually in the form of multi-skilling, team building and work group empowerment, which at times resulted in workforce downscaling and a change in the role and powers of mid-managers and supervisors. The idea was to produce more cost-effectiveness by utilizing better technology and using less labour.

The mining organisation that forms the subject of this investigation started up a new mine to access reserve ore identified in geological results. Employees had to have a minimum level of ABET 3 (Adult Basic Education Training Level 3, educationally equivalent to Grade 7), and be able to communicate in English. A person with this education level has basic reading and writing skills. The other requirement was the physical capacity to perform the labour intensive work necessary in the ore extraction process.

The new mine set out with the strategy of work groups which have a degree of self-direction although they are not fully self-directed work teams in the true definition of the term. Self-directed teams are small groups of employees who are responsible for managing themselves and their work. Team members typically handle job assignments, plan and schedule work, make production-related decisions as well as take action on problems. Self-directed teams require minimal direct supervision. The teams operate with fewer layers of management than traditional organisational structures. They require team members to learn multiple jobs or tasks and to take on many tasks that were once reserved for supervisors or managers, including hiring, firing, conducting appraisals, disciplinary action and scheduling tasks (Felts,

1995). The teams in this study only have partial control. This control is restricted to planning their own leave and deciding whether someone can have unplanned leave. They must still function within the structures laid down and underwritten by the Mines Health and Safety Act (1996) and the Minerals Act (1991). They are also multi-skilled in order to cut out some layers, but have direct supervision due to legal requirements and responsibilities. They can decide to remove someone from their team but they may not dismiss individuals. One month after the second team had completed their technical and team training, problems in the workplace started. Team Training is a behavioural-based team training approach. The team members are taken through a process of learning to plan and work together and are being taught life-skills which will enhance their effectiveness. These skills include things such as being economic drivers and what part they play in the organisation.

The team did not complete the cycle within normal shift time. This resulted in many hours of overtime. Employees started leaving the workplace before the tasks of the day had been completed and without permission from the Team Leader or Miner. The absenteeism rate increased. Other problems such as insubordination and slower working speeds were more frequent.

All these factors resulted in a loss of income to the mine due to the fact that target levels of ore extracted were not being met. The team was withdrawn from the workplace and refreshed in the team vision and self-directed team functioning skills. The Human Resource Manager also personally addressed them in their workplace concerning the problems with their behaviour and the impact it had on their performance. After this intervention, the situation improved, but resumed again a month later. When the problem resumed, employees were addressed through the disciplinary code for serious breaches such as failure to adhere to lawful instructions or leaving the workplace unsafe because they left the job without permission and before it had been completed. The problem escalated. Due to the seriousness of the charges employees were suspended in these instances. This in turn created a labour shortage at the workplace, which exacerbated negative feelings.

The negative behaviour started spreading to other processes within the mine and was no longer confined to the one team where the behavioural problem had manifested itself. Employees working in development (ore access) started to have difficulty finishing their jobs within the required time and started leaving the workplace without permission and with tasks

incomplete. Problems of severe insubordination were also experienced and disciplinary action was taken. The same situation of suspension and increased workload occurred.

It is important to note that the cycles of shifts have remained much the same through the decades of mining in South Africa. Certain tasks are performed in the day and then the cycle moves to nightshift in which other tasks have to be completed. These tasks are structured in such a way that they are performed during the shift times. All shafts work within this framework. Exceptions occur with breakdowns or other specific problems, which will always occur in a 24-hour operation. Due to the fact that the process for each shift has been in place for years and these shifts are structured around a blast that has to be achieved in a normal eight hour shift it seems logical to assume that the long hours worked in the organisation under study are therefore rooted in some other area and not in the structure of the job.

Many ideas exist to explain the phenomenon and type of behaviour outlined, but none appear to have an answer for this specific problem. Some of these ideas, which may result in the described behaviour, are discussed briefly in the following section.

Beach (1980) states that it is important to know that all human behaviour has a cause (or causes). Beach (1980) defines human behaviour as an interaction between a stimulus and the person's own internal interpretation of that stimulus. The actions of rational human beings are goal-orientated. Our behaviour is aimed toward the fulfilment of basic wants, drives and needs. Behaviour is purposeful and is caused. People are not uncooperative just for the sake of being perverse (Beach, 1980).

Maslow (1962) postulates that there is a definite rank-order priority of human needs. Until the more basic human wants are fulfilled, a person will not strive to meet his higher needs (Beach, 1980). He makes the assumption that people always want more, and their needs depend on what they already possess. A need that has already been satisfied is not a motivator – only unsatisfied needs can influence behaviour. He also makes the assumption that people's needs are arranged in order of importance. When one need has been partially satisfied, the next one will come forward to be satisfied (Brevis, Vrba & De Klerk, 2000). Maslow (1962) classifies the need hierarchy as physiological; safety, stability and security; belongingness and love; self-esteem and the esteem of others; and self-actualization, self-realization and self-accomplishment (Brevis et al, 2000).

Beach (1980) summarises by saying that if a person has barely enough food, water and shelter to survive, his entire energy is devoted to eking out an existence. He is not interested in status, prestige or making his ideas known to others. He cannot afford the luxury of engaging in ego-enhancing activities. When he has an abundance of food, clothing and shelter, the fulfilment of these needs no longer motivates him. He turns to his higher needs. The higher needs are social and psychological in nature.

Over the past few decades, on-the-job conflict has been viewed as a normal element of living within a complex work environment and which may actually result in positive outcomes in the organisation (Nicotera, 1993). Employees engage in a series of behaviours in an attempt to resolve or reduce the conflict or to protect their self-interests (Thomas, 1992). Lencioni (2002) points out that all great relationships that last over time require productive conflict in order to grow. Unfortunately conflict is considered taboo in many situations, especially at work. Teams that engage in productive conflict aim to produce the best possible solution in the shortest period of time. They discuss and resolve issues quicker and more thorough than others, and emerge from heated debates with no residual feelings or collateral damage, but with eagerness and readiness to take on the next important issue (Lencioni, 2002).

Relationships within the group and between the group and those outside it may have an effect on group functioning and effectiveness. Attitudinal similarities between a supervisor and his/her subordinate influence interpersonal attraction, absenteeism, cooperative behaviour, group cohesiveness and leader-member exchange (Hui, Cheng & Gan, 2003). Perception of similarity results in subordinates' trust and confidence in their leaders while perception of dissimilarity raises doubt and distrust (Turban & Jones, 1988). Lencioni (2002) defines this trust as confidence among team members that their peers' intentions are good and that there is no reason to be protective or careful around the group.

Culture may also have an influence. Culture refers to the shared knowledge and meaning system that exists for a group of people (Erez & Earley, 1993). Culture meaning systems are believed to be shared among a group of people because they share a common language, perform similar work tasks, and have common life experiences (Erez & Earley, 1993). People rely on these cultural systems to help them interpret the meaning of encountered events and/or objects and also to develop expectations about forthcoming events (Triandis, 1972).

They are believed to achieve certain self-concepts (Markus & Kitayama, 1991) and to produce certain effective responses as well as motivational intentions toward events or objects (Strauss & Quinn, 1997). Different cultures within a specific organisational culture may respond differently to different influences.

The work teams consist of individuals with totally divergent approaches to their work environment. Individualistic societies (mostly white South Africans) tend to have individualistic approaches to business where self-accomplishment is valued highly. Collective societies (mostly black South Africans) have group approaches to business where they tend to value group accomplishment and loyalty (Brevis et al, 2000).

Hui et al (2003) state that collectivists strongly value harmonious relationships with others and would be demoralised when such relationships are threatened or do not materialise at all. Individualists are less affected even if harmony is not guaranteed.

Feather (1994) states that national identification and in-group favouritism are associated with each other more strongly among collectivists than among individualists. On the contrary, self-esteem and satisfaction with freedom are influential on overall life satisfaction among individualists but less so among collectivists (Oishi, Diener, Lucas & Suh, 1999). To collectivists, being in a group is essential to success and well-being. Therefore, at the workplace, collectivists would strive to maintain harmony with colleagues as well as their superiors. Socially, it will also result in a generally positive climate at the workplace (Schneider & Baven/Bower 1985). Conversely, a discrepancy in personality from a collectivist's superior (which objectively would result in less liking) can be distressing, resulting in negative impact on work performance (Hui et al, 2003). Unlike collectivists, individualists do not have a longing for group membership that lasts indefinitely, nor do they mind switching from one group to another (Triandis, 1995). Hence personality discrepancies would not have as much impact on work performance for individualists (Hui et al, 2003). Triandis (1989) points out that collectivists may reserve helping behaviour for their in-group members, while individualists do not make much distinction between in-group and out-group members when deciding on an associative act.

The type of control used and the control mechanisms in place, influence team behaviour as well. It has been theorised that leaders affect how their followers feel in various ways

(George, 2000). George (1996) asserted, "Leaders who feel excited, enthusiastic and energetic themselves are likely to similarly energize their followers, as are leaders who feel distressed and hostile likely to negatively activate their followers". Lewis (2000) found that followers observing a leader expressing anger felt more nervous and less relaxed than followers observing a leader expressing sadness or no emotion. In addition she found that followers observing a leader expressing sadness felt less enthusiasm and more fatigue than followers observing a leader expressing anger or no emotion. The way a leader controls his emotions or exhibits them in the work environment could influence the behaviour of the team and their performance. It is also possible to make the assumption that any emotion or no emotion is always better than anger.

The role of the organisation, the leaders in the organisation and the roles of the employees or group members have an impact on reactions to influences and the consequent behaviours resulting from them. Sims (2000) points out that if differences do exist between the supervisors' modelling or expectations and the organisations' formal code of ethics, those differences may cause employees to receive mixed messages. The discrepancies in this may lead to conflict with employee attitudes (Sims, 2000). Even the most ardent believers in accountability usually balk at having to hold someone accountable for something that was never bought into or made clear in the first place (Lencioni, 2002).

The support received by employees within the workplace will also influence the way they react to influences on their group. Ilgen and Davis (2000) state that people need to receive feedback about how well they are performing their tasks/job. Yet in spite of the best intentions to stimulate performance improvement with negative feedback, it rarely works that way (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996); all too often negative feedback produces the opposite effect.

Certain influences on group members such as culture, demands, roles, relationships and support will have an effect on the behaviours exhibited by the group. These behaviours may include increased sickness, absenteeism, hours of work, turnover and reduced performance, morale and loyalty. It may also result in increased hostility (Palmer & Cooper & Thomas, 2001). The model basically postulates that certain environmental factors such as needs, culture, demands, role, control, support and relationships result in different behaviours. An environment, which may be lacking in, or is unclear in one of those areas, will result in behaviour such as increased absenteeism, industrial action, work hours, turnover, hostility

and decreases in moral and loyalty. All of these factors will in turn have a negative impact on the organisation (Palmer & Etal 2001).

The objective of this research is to study the dynamics and behaviours of team members in SDWT in the gold mining industry that contribute to instances for poor productivity as outlined in the problem statement. By investigating these phenomena in qualitative fashion it is believed that more will be learned about the dynamics and underlying mechanisms, which will present an opportunity for meaningful intervention and corrective measures from the employer.

1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research objectives consist of a general objective and specific objectives.

1.2.1 General objective

The general objective is to determine what causes certain behaviours in self-directed work teams and the effect this has on the workplace and performance.

1.2.2 Specific objectives

- To conceptualise group behaviours and their interrelationship in the gold mining industry.
- To determine what stimuli generate specific unproductive and counter-productive behaviours in self-directed work teams in the gold mining industry.
- To make recommendations for addressing the causes of dysfunctional behaviour in the gold mining industry.

1.3 RESEARCH METHOD

The research method consists of a literature review and an empirical study.

1.3.1 Literature review

The literature will focus on group dynamics, group leaders, and formal and informal organisational codes and cultures.

The collective catalogue for this research will be taken from the following databases:

- Library catalogues
- Internet
- Personal library.

1.3.2 Research design

A qualitative design will be used, whereby a single group of subjects is obtained (Huysamen, 1993). The reason for this approach is that the qualitative researcher gets a better understanding of behaviour of respondents and discovers the actor's definition of the situation – that is, his perception and interpretation of reality and how these are related to behaviour (Chadwick, Bahr & Albrecht, 1984). It is thus the aim of the researcher to accurately describe a person's experience and emotions at a specific point in time.

1.3.3 Study population

A group of 40 subjects will be used (N=40). Three different work groups will be observed as part of a case study. These groups' behaviours and reactions to others will be observed. Individual members will take part in interviews to try and discover what elements are contributing to dysfunctional behaviour in the workplace.

1.3.4 Data collection

Data will be collected in the following manner:

- Observation of group in workplace.
- Observation of group in interactions with other members.
- Observation of group in interaction with leadership figures or other management figures.

- Unstructured interviews will be used to identify the experience of members in the work groups.

In the beginning, personal information about the interviewer and the objectives of the research will be given. After the opening question, the interviewer will use non-directive counselling techniques to help the individual to verbalise his experience of problem solving, conflict resolution, communication and decision-making within the workplace and specifically the team.

The reliability of the interview will be assured by:

- Giving a precise description of the situation, the method of data-collection, analysis and interpretation.
- Making comprehensive notes of the experiences and emotions of individuals, as related by them.
- Giving an exposition of the interviewer's influence (e.g. values, pre-judgements, reactions) within the research framework.
- Reporting authentic themes at the hand of words used by respondents.
- Using a coding-recoding process in analysing the research data.
- Providing regular feedback to respondents concerning the progress of the research.

1.3.5 Data analysis

The observations will be combined with the interviews to gain insight into the reasons for the dysfunctional behaviours.

The interviews will be analysed as follows (Moustakas, 1994):

- The transcriptions of interviews are studied.
- The different subjects are seen as "horizontal", in other words, each subject is deemed to be of equal value.
- The "horizontal" statements are grouped in common categories of subjects and repetitive items are removed.
- The grouped statements are used to develop descriptions of the experiences.

- The descriptions are used to develop structured descriptions, which are integrated into the meaning of the behaviour.

1.4 CHAPTER DIVISION

Chapter 1: Introduction, problem statement and research objective

Chapter 2: Research Article

Chapter 3: Conclusions, limitations and recommendations

1.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter set out the problem statement, the objectives of the research, the research method employed and the chapter division. Chapter 2 is the research article.

REFERENCES

Beach, D.S. (1980). *Personnel: The management of people at work.* (4th ed.). New York, NY: Macmillan Publishers Co., Inc.

Brevis, T., Vrba, M.J. & De Klerk, A. (2000). Management Principles. In P.J. Smit & G.J. De J Cronje (Eds.), *A contemporary edition for South Africa Corp.* Kenwyn, South Africa: Juta & Co, Ltd.

Chadwick B.A., Bahr H.M. & Albrecht S.L. (1984). *Social Science Research Methods.* New Jersey: NJ Prentice- Hall.

Erez, M. & Early, P.C. (1993). *Culture, self-identity and work.* New York NY: Oxford University Press.

Feather, N.T. (1994). Values, national identification and favouritism towards the in-group. *British Journal of Social Psychology, 33*, 467-476.

Felts, C. (1995). *Taking the mystery out of Self-Directed Work Teams.* IM, March-April, 21-26 pages?.

Fisher, K. (1993). *Leading self-directed work teams : A guide to developing new team leadership skills.* New York: NY McGraw-Hill

George, J.M. (1996). Group affective tone. In M. West (Ed.), *Handbook of Work Group Psychology. (PP?)* Sussex, UK: Wiley.

George, J.M. (2000). Emotions and leadership: The role of emotional intelligence. *Human Relations, 53*(8), 1027-1055.

Hui, C.H., Cheng, K & Gan, Y. (2003, April). Psychological collectivism as a moderator of the impact of supervisor-subordinate personality on employees' service quality. *Applied Psychology: An International Review, 52*(2), 175-193.

Huysamen, G.K (1993). Metodologie vir die sosiale gedragswetenskappe. Halfweghuis: Southern Boekuitgewers.

Ilgen, D.R. & Davis, C.A. (2000, June). Bearing bad news: Reactions to negative performance feedback. *Applied Psychology: An International Review, 49*(3), 550-566.

Kluger, A.N. & DeNisi, A. (1996). The effects of feedback interventions on performance: A historical review, meta-analysis and preliminary feedback intervention theory. *Psychological Bulletin, 119*, 254-284.

Lencioni, P. (2002). *The five dysfunctions of a team: A leadership fable.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass

Lewis, K.M. (2000). When leaders display emotion: How followers respond to negative emotional expression of male and female leaders. *Journal of Organisational Behaviour, 21*, 221-234.

Markus, H. & Kitayama, S. (1991). Culture and the self: Implications for cognitions, emotion and motivation. *Psychological Review, 98*, 224-253.

Maslow, A.H. (1962). *Toward a Psychology of being*. Princeton, NJ: Van Nostrand.

McNamara, K. (1996). The transition to Teams: Lessons from SA companies. *The Innes Labour Brief. pp?*

Mine Health & Safety Act, 29 APCOR (1996).

Minerals Act, 50 APCOR (1991).

Moustakas, C. (1994*). Phenomenological research methods*. London: Sage.

Nicotera, A.M. (1993). Beyond two dimensions: A grounded theory model of conflict handling behaviour. *Management Communication Quarterly, 6,* 282-306.

Odiorne, G.S. (1991, August). The new breed of supervisor: Leaders in self-managed work teams. *Supervision, 52*(8), 148-18.

Oishi, S., Diener, E.F., Lucas, R.E. & Suh, E.M. (1999). Cross-cultural variations in predictors of life satisfaction: Perspectives from needs and values. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 25*,.980-990.

Palmer, S. Cooper, C. & Thomas, K. (2001). Model of organisational stress for use within an occupational health education/promotion or wellbeing programme - A short communication. *Health Educational Journal, 60*(4), 378-380.

Roy, M. (2003, June). Self-directed work teams and safety: a winning combination? *Safety Science*, 41(4), 359-377.

Schneider, B & Baven? D.E. (1985). Employee and customer perception of service in banks: replication and extension. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 70*, 423-433.

Sims, R.L. (2000, November). The relationship between employee attitudes and conflicting expectations for lying behaviour. *Journal of Psychology, 134*(6), 619-634.

Strauss, C. & Quinn, N. (1997). *A cognitive theory of cultural meaning*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Thomas, K.W. (1992). Conflict and conflict management. In M.D. Dunnette (Ed.), *Handbook of Industrial Psychology and Organisational Psychology*, (pp?) Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press.

Triandis, H.C. (1972). *The analysis of subjective culture.* New York (NY): Wiley Press.

Triandis, H.C. (1989). Self and social behaviour in differing cultural contexts. *Psychology Review, 96,* 269-289.

Triandis, H.C. (1995). *Individualism and collectivism*. Boulder, CO; Westview.

CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH ARTICLE

The world of work is moving towards participative management, work groups and self-managed work teams. Odiorne (1991) identifies numerous variations of self-managed work teams. These include Quality Circles, Employee Involvement (EI), Total Quality Management (TQM) and team building; where several supervisors are eliminated and replaced by a single "facilitator". Replacing general supervision with specialists has widened the span of control. These specialists also function as group facilitators and team problem solvers. This "delayering" also cuts overhead costs (Odiorne, 1991).

Fisher (1993) states that internationally, companies have learnt that the key to production effectiveness lies in the better utilisation of their own employees. Roy (2003), however, also points out that the organisation of work into self-directed work teams (SDWT) has considerably changed the power structure within companies. In addition to carrying out the work, SDWT members make decisions that are traditionally the jurisdiction of first line supervisors. This method of management and work planning can lead to added stress and behaviour not anticipated from employees. A typical example of this is the leadership style, which is used. The supervisor used to tell the crew when to do what, and they obeyed. If they did not, there were consequences. Supervisors must now share all information with teams and no longer have absolute control. Now time is also needed for a team to plan and execute a task and a supervisor does not merely give an instruction that is followed. This adds to production pressure in the gold mining environment where one day's loss of production can cost hundreds of thousands of rand.

The gold mining organisation that forms the interest of study in this research is the second largest in the world. This industry provides a large portion of the formal employment in South Africa, but it has been dealt a heavy blow by the strengthening of the South African currency. The industry was budgeting on an exchange rate of eleven Rand to the Dollar, while in recent months this has improved to sometimes below seven Rand to the Dollar. Cost containment and increasing productivity levels are paramount in order to increase the lifespan of current operations and the viability of exploration activities. The SDWT concept disposes of the critical parameters required for a dramatic improvement in performance and a reduction in costs. The labour intensiveness and high cost of labour make productivity levels very important in the ore extraction process. Work teams need to be multi-skilled, self-directed and as small as possible in order to maximise efficiency and productivity levels and to minimise costs.

The current situation created by the Rand Dollar exchange rate, and existing methods of gold extraction, is resulting in some smaller mining companies having to close down. The cost of mining gold is more than the income it generates for the organisation. With no alternatives in current mining methods to decrease costs, these companies do not have the large supporting capital of the larger mining companies. The resulting situation is increased unemployment as another 6 000 South Africans are left unemployed (Bamjee, 2005). Many of these people are unskilled and have no other employment prospects. Even the larger companies have been forced to revaluate their costs. The period into which the gold mining industry now moves is one of uncertainty and major cost reduction and control. This could result in the loss of more jobs. If no relief is gained in the future to lessen the stranglehold of the currency valuation and the gold price, then larger organisations may also have to start closing their business.

McNamara (1996) states that as early as the 1990's, SDWT started to receive attention in South Africa. McNamara (1996) points out that the attempts to implement SDWT were usually in the form of multi-skilling, team building and work group empowerment, which at times resulted in workforce downscaling and a change in the role and powers of middle managers and supervisors. The idea was to produce greater cost-effectiveness by utilizing better technology and using less labour.

The Case Study

One particular case was chosen as the research topic to demonstrate the complicated nature of behaviour within self-directed work teams within a production mining environment. The mining organization that forms the subject of this investigation started up a new mine to access reserve ore identified in geological results. Employees had to have a minimum level of ABET 3 (Adult Basic Education Training Level 3, educationally equivalent to Grade 7), and be able to communicate in English. A person with this education level has basic reading and writing skills. The other requirement was the physical capacity to perform the labour intensive work necessary in the ore extraction process.

The new mine set out with the strategy of work groups which have a degree of self-direction although they are not fully self-directed work teams in the true definition of the term. Self-directed teams are small groups of employees who are responsible for managing themselves and their work. Team members typically handle job assignments, plan and schedule work,

make production-related decisions as well as take action on problems. Self-directed teams require minimal direct supervision. The teams operate with fewer layers of management than traditional organisational structures. They require team members to learn multiple jobs or tasks and to take on many tasks that were once reserved for supervisors or managers, including hiring, firing, conducting appraisals, disciplinary action and scheduling tasks (Felts, 1995).

According to McNamara (1996), a self-directed work team can be defined as a multi-skilled, or cross-functional, work team whose members are empowered to regulate their own affairs and are jointly accountable for delivering a defined value-adding product or service to the organisation Fisher (1993) defines SDWT as a group of employees who have day to day responsibility for managing themselves and the work they do with a minimum of direct supervision. Members of a SDWT typically handle job assignments, plan and schedule work, make production and/or service-related decisions and act on problems.

The teams in this study are only meant to have partial control. This control is restricted to planning their own leave and deciding whether someone can have unplanned leave. Currently they do not, however, play a role in the day to day planning of the job. This is still a function performed by the supervisor. They cannot discipline their team members because they are bound to current organisational procedures regarding disciplinary action. Although trained in multiple skills, they do not function as multi-skilled team members. The breakdown of the daily cycle is such that every team member is responsible for one function. Ideally, with a multi-skilled team, the members should be able to plan the job and allocate multi-skilled employees according to needs. This does not happen because the job is planned by supervision and the team members are instructed as to their duties for the day. These duties do not vary from day to day because the most experienced employee on a machine, or in the performance of a specific skill, will be used in that function daily. This is to minimise the increased risk of using less experienced individuals to perform the job. The team must therefore still function within the structures laid down and underwritten by the Mines Health and Safety Act (1996) and the Minerals Act (1991).

One month after the team that forms the focus of this investigation had completed their technical and team training, problems in the workplace started. Team Training is a behavioural-based team training approach. The team members are taken through a process of

learning to plan and work together and are also taught life-skills which will enhance their effectiveness, such as being economic drivers and what part they play in the organisation.

Problems surfaced when the team did not complete the work cycle within normal shift time. This cycle entailed securing, blasting and cleaning. Failure to complete the work cycle in normal time resulted in many hours of overtime. Employees started leaving the workplace before the tasks of the day had been completed and without the permission of the Team Leader or Miner. The absenteeism rate increased. Sick leave was at 7,5%, while it was only budgeted for at 3%. Other problems such as insubordination and slower working speeds were more frequent.

All these factors resulted in a loss of income to the mine due to the fact that target levels of ore were not being extracted. The team was withdrawn from the workplace and refreshed in the team vision and self-directed team functioning skills. The human resource manager also personally addressed them in their workplace concerning the problems with their behaviour and the impact it had on their performance. After this intervention, the situation improved, only to resume a month later. When the problem resumed, employees were addressed through the disciplinary code for serious breaches such as failure to adhere to lawful instructions or leaving the workplace unsafe because they left the job without permission and before it had been completed. The problem escalated. Due to the seriousness of the charges employees were suspended in these instances. This in turn created a labour shortage at the workplace, which exacerbated negative feelings.

Negative behaviour started spreading to other processes within the mine and was no longer confined to the team where the behavioural problem had originally manifested. Employees working in development (ore access) started to have difficulty finishing their jobs within the required time and started leaving the workplace without permission and with tasks incomplete. Problems of severe insubordination were also experienced and disciplinary action was taken. The same situation of suspension and increased workload occurred.

It is important to note that the cycles of shifts have remained much the same through the decades of mining in South Africa. Certain tasks are performed in the day, and then the cycle moves to nightshift in which other tasks have to be completed. These tasks are structured in such a way that they are performed during the shift times. All shafts work within this

framework. Exceptions occur with breakdowns or other specific problems, which will always occur in a 24-hour operation. Shifts are structured around a blast that has to be achieved in a normal 8-hour shift. It therefore, seems logical to assume that the long hours worked in the organisation under study are a matter of historic pragmatism, and not rooted in the structure of the job or some other area.

Behaviour

Beach (1980) states that it is important to know that all human behaviour has a cause (or causes). Beach (1980) defines human behaviour as an interaction between a stimulus and the person's own internal interpretation of that stimulus. The actions of rational human beings are goal-orientated. Our behaviour is aimed toward the fulfilment of basic wants, drives and needs. Behaviour is purposeful and is caused. People are not uncooperative just for the sake of being perverse (Beach, 1980).

Maslow (1962) postulates that there is a definite rank-order priority of human needs. Until the more basic human wants are fulfilled, a person will not strive to meet his higher needs (Beach, 1980). The assumptions are made that needs are arranged in order of importance, and that people always want more, their needs depending on what they already possess. A need that has already been satisfied is not a motivator – only unsatisfied needs can influence behaviour. When one need has been partially satisfied, the next one will come forward to be satisfied (Brevis, Vrba & De Klerk, 2000). Maslow (1962) classifies the need hierarchy as physiological; safety, stability and security; belongingness and love; self-esteem and the esteem of others; and self-actualization, self-realization and self-accomplishment (in Brevis et al, 2000).

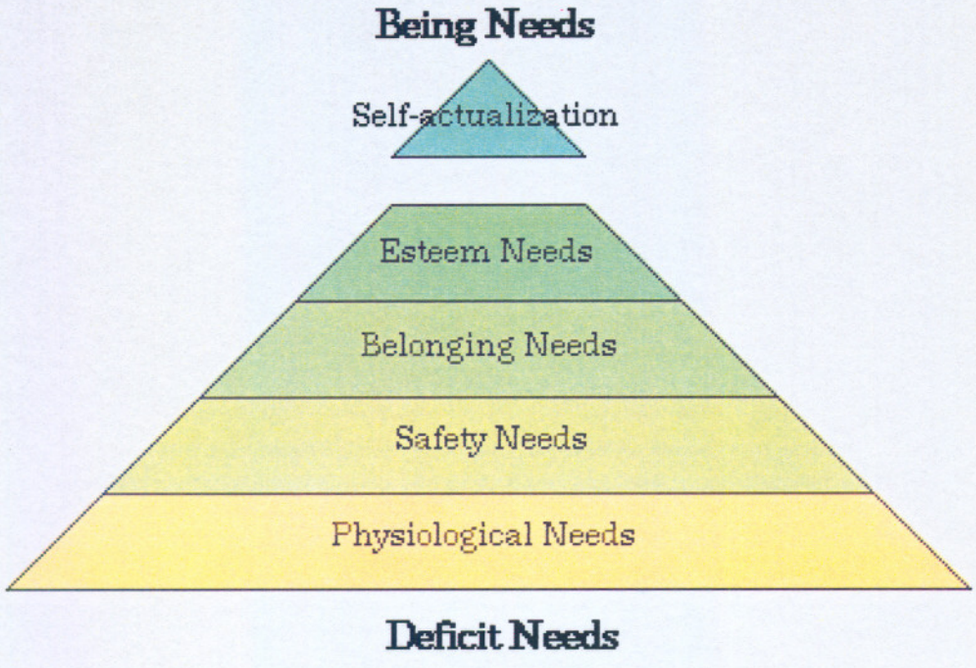

Figure 1. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

1) Physiological: hunger, thirst, bodily comforts;

2) Safety/security: to be out of danger;

3) Belongingness and love: affiliation with others, to be accepted;

4) Esteem: to achieve, to be competent, to gain approval and recognition; and

5.) Self-actualization.

Beach (1980) summarises by saying that if a person has barely enough food, water and shelter to survive, his entire energy is devoted to eking out an existence. He is not interested in status, prestige or making his ideas known to others. He cannot afford the luxury of engaging in ego-enhancing activities. When he has an abundance of food, clothing and shelter, the fulfilment of these needs no longer motivates him. He turns to his higher needs. The higher needs are social and psychological in nature.

The gold mining industry has through many years of industrial action and maturation of the employer-employee relationship reached a point where the lowest paid worker is still paid a liveable wage with benefits such as accommodation and medical aid. In the mine that forms the focus of this case study, the workers have been multi-skilled to facilitate the SDWT process. Their salaries have also been increased due to this process. The hypothesis is put forward that this has resulted in a situation where the employees' basic survival needs of safety, stability and security have been satisfied. A problem could result due to a change in the needs of the employees.

To accomplish the satisfaction of these needs, a natural outcome has been on-the-job conflict. Over the past few decades, on-the-job conflict has been viewed as a normal element of living within a complex working environment, and it may actually result in positive outcomes for the organisation (Nicotera, 1993). Employees engage in a series of behaviours in an attempt to resolve or reduce the conflict or to protect their self-interests (Thomas, 1992). Lencioni (2002) points out that all great relationships that last over time require productive conflict in order to grow. Unfortunately, conflict is considered taboo in many situations, especially at work. Teams that engage in productive conflict aim to produce the best possible solution in the shortest period. They discuss and resolve issues quicker and more thorough than others, and emerge from heated debates with no residual feelings or collateral damage, but with eagerness and readiness to take on the next important issue (Lencioni, 2002).

Relationships within the group, and between the group and those outside it, may have an effect on group functioning and effectiveness. Attitudinal similarities between a supervisor and his/her subordinate influence interpersonal attraction, absenteeism, cooperative behaviour, group cohesiveness and leader-member exchange (Hui, Cheng & Gan, 2003). Perceptions of similarity result in subordinates' trust and confidence in their leaders while perceptions of dissimilarity raise doubts and distrust (Turban & Jones, 1988). Lencioni (2002) defines this trust as confidence among team members that their peers' intentions are good and that there is no reason to be protective or careful around the group.

In the gold mining industry, black South Africans fill most of the unskilled positions. In contrast, most of the management positions are still filled by white males. This implies that there might be a discrepancy in the attitudes of the parties involved. The cultures of the groups also differ dramatically, which strengthens the feelings of difference. There is strong

in-group out-group behaviour within both these groups, which also results in conflict. One of the factors, which also impacts on the behaviour within the groups, is the phenomenon of individualist versus collective attitudes. The work teams consist of individuals with totally divergent approaches to their work environment than those overseeing their activities and performance. Individualistic societies (mostly white South Africans) tend to have individualistic approaches to business where self-accomplishment is valued highly. Collective societies (mostly black South Africans) have group approaches to business where they tend to value group accomplishment and loyalty (Brevis et al, 2000).

Culture may also have an influence. Culture refers to the shared knowledge and meaning system that exists for a group of people (Erez & Earley, 1993). Culture meaning systems are believed to be shared among a group of people because they share a common language, perform similar work tasks, and have common life experiences (Erez & Earley, 1993). People rely on these cultural systems to help them interpret the meaning of encountered events and/or objects, and to develop expectations about forthcoming events (Triandis, 1972). They are believed to achieve certain self-concepts (Markus & Kitayama, 1991) and to produce certain effective responses as well as motivational intentions toward events or objects (Strauss & Quinn, 1997). Different cultures within a specific organisational culture may respond differently to the same stimuli. Hui et al. (2003) state that collectivists strongly value harmonious relationships with others and would be demoralised when such relationships are threatened, or do not materialise at all. Individualists are less affected, even if harmony is not guaranteed.

Feather (1994) states that, among collectivists, national identification and in-group favouritism are more strongly associated with each other than among individualists. On the contrary, self-esteem and satisfaction with freedom are influential on overall life satisfaction among individualists, but less so among collectivists (Oishi, Diener, Lucas & Suh, 1999). To collectivists, being in a group is essential to success and well-being. Therefore, at the workplace, collectivists would strive to maintain harmony with colleagues as well as their superiors. Socially, it will also result in a generally positive climate at the workplace (Schneider & Bowen, 1985). Conversely, a discrepancy in personality from a collectivist's superior (which objectively would result in less liking) can be distressing, resulting in negative impact on work performance (Hui et al., 2003). Unlike collectivists, individualists do not have a longing for group membership that lasts indefinitely, nor do they mind

switching from one group to another (Triandis, 1995). Hence, personality discrepancies would not have as much impact on work performance for individualists (Hui et al., 2003). Triandis (1989) points out that collectivists may reserve helping behaviour for their in-group members, while individualists do not make much distinction between in-group and out-group members when deciding on an associative act.

The role of the organisation, the leaders in the organisation and the roles of the employees or group members have an impact on reactions to influence and the consequent behaviours resulting from them. Sims (2000) points out that if differences do exist between the supervisors' modelling and expectations and the organisations' formal code of ethics, those differences may cause employees to receive mixed messages. The discrepancies in this may lead to conflict with employee attitudes (Sims, 2000). Even the most ardent believers in accountability usually balk at having to hold someone accountable for something that was not bought into, or made clear in the first place (Lencioni, 2002).

Certain influences on group members such as culture, demands, roles, relationships and support, will have an effect on the behaviour exhibited by the group. These behaviours may include increased sickness, absenteeism, hours of work, turnover, reduced performance, morale and loyalty. It may also result in increased hostility (Palmer, Cooper & Thomas 2001). The Palmer Model of Stress (Palmer & Etal 2001) postulates that certain environmental factors such as needs, culture, demands, role, control, support and relationships result in different behaviours. An environment, which may be lacking in, or is unclear in one of these areas, will result in behaviour such as increased absenteeism, industrial action, work hours, turnover, hostility and decreases in morale and loyalty. All of these factors in turn will have a negative influence on the organisation (Palmer & Cooper, 2001).

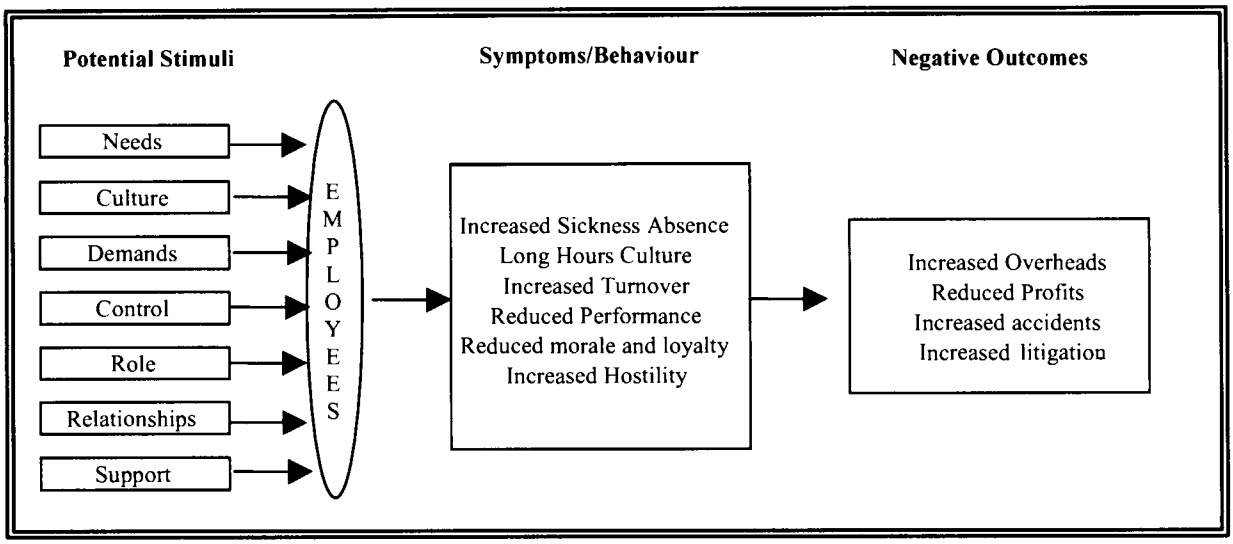

Figure 2. Adapted from Stephen Palmer's Model of Stress (Palmer & Etal, 2001).

The objective of this research is, therefore to study the dynamics and behaviours of team members in a SDWT in the gold mining industry that contribute to instances of poor productivity as outlined in the problem statement. By investigating these phenomena in qualitative fashion, it is believed that more about the dynamics and underlying mechanisms will be learned, which could present an opportunity for meaningful intervention and corrective measures from the employer.

METHOD

Unstructured interviews based on the phenomenological method were used to establish what the specific behaviours and their antecedents within the team are. The interview guide was designed to be an open-ended format to allow the interviewees to introduce any ideas that they think might be pertinent to the discussion and to allow the interviewer to explore concepts introduced by the interviewee. Questions were worded to elicit responses from the interviewees in their own words that would target what the behaviour was, and what they felt was causing that behaviour.

Interview data from interviews (n=40) was used to develop major groupings, or general classifications of broad categories of themes, where a theme is a recurrent topic of discussion or often-mentioned key factor with regards to behaviour (Bjorkegen, 1989). Each broad

category was broken down into themes, which provided a classification label for a common idea or issue articulated by the interviewees. Each theme was placed on a separate sheet on a coding form. On completion of the coding, the number of interviewees who mentioned the theme in the interview sessions indicated the importance of a theme. Where necessary, use was made of interpreters when interviewees were not fluent in English.

Data was also collected by means of observation. Observations of the group in the workplace; observations of the group in interactions with other members; and observations of the group in interaction with leadership figures or other management figures were all incorporated in an attempt to understand the causes of dysfunctional behaviour. In the beginning, personal information about the interviewer and the objectives of the research were given. After the opening question, the interviewer used non-directive counselling techniques to help the individuals verbalise their experiences of problem solving, conflict resolution, communication and decision-making within the workplace, and specifically within the team. Teams were observed over a four month period, from October 2004 till January 2005.

Themes were ranked according to the frequency with which they appeared in the interviews. The percentage was calculated as the frequency of the specific theme in relation to the total number of responses in the interviews. The interview themes were then compared to the themes identified in the observations of the various role players. Once again the frequency of the theme in relation to the total themes was used to calculate a percentage.

RESULTS

Initially, the teams were observed in the workplace. Behaviour, which was identified from observations of the team by the researcher, by organised labour, direct supervision and management, as well as the events or circumstances, which led to that behaviour was taken note of. In this way, certain themes were strengthened while other themes were eliminated.

Results are first presented as they were observed by the researcher, and then as they were made by an organised labour representative. Finally, the observations of management are incorporated into these results to give the full picture.

1.1 The following observations were made of work teams in their place of work by the researcher.

1.1.1 Too many shift instructions

It was noted that, during the course of the shift, different levels of supervision within the same department would give many, and sometimes conflicting instructions. Teams would often receive different instructions regarding their work from the Team Leader, the Miner, and the Shift Overseer, all within a single shift.

1.1.2 Instructions are often contradictory in nature

As indicated above, the problem was not just that too many instructions were coming from different levels during the shift, but also that these instructions were sometimes contradictory in nature. The day shift time is from 06:30 in the morning till 14:30 in the afternoon. Before the start of each shift, the Team Leader and the Miner meet with the Shift Overseer who gives them instructions for the day. The problem observed was at Management level.

Each month the Mine Overseer plans the targets for the teams. When he enters the workplaces at 10:00, he expects certain things to be happening in the work areas. When he proceeds underground and performance is not up to his expectations, new instructions are given to the Miner. These instructions are often in contradiction to instructions already given by the Shift Overseer earlier in the morning. When asked about this contradiction, the Shift Overseer indicated that he gave instructions based on the progress of the previous day, and on needs identified. Even though these were not always in line with the monthly plan, they were necessary for the overall successful and safe completion of the job. The monthly plan was in place because certain targets had to be reached to make the mine viable, but it could not make provision for all eventualities. The monthly plan therefore forms the base line, but the day-to-day requirements will determine the need for adjustments to the monthly plan. Because of the changeability of the underground environment, a supervisor must be flexible to changes and manage the workplace on a day-to-day basis, with the overall plan in mind.

The Mine Overseer was not working through his supervisors, or allowing for their planning and instructions. He did not consider the day-to-day needs and changed the instructions

according to what he felt should be happening. Obviously, this resulted in his supervisors being frustrated and powerless to manage their areas of responsibility. It also resulted in the team having to change everything and start a new task halfway through the day. This in turn resulted in long hours and frustration, because the team was always behind with their task and never sure when it would be changed again.

An example of this situation described above is reflected in the event where the monthly plan indicated a blast for the day. Due to a problem with the night shift, the Shift Overseer then decided to put in supports and clean the area. When the Mine Overseer came down, he found that the team was not drilling holes for the face to be charged up for a blast - they were in the back putting in packs for support. He called the Team Leader and instructed him to get people drilling because they would not be going home until they had blasted. Because the instructions were changed, a job that normally starts at 06:30 now only started at 11:00. Secondly, the crew and supervisors' planning for the day had been disrupted. In this case, the crew only left the workplace at 19:00 that evening. No one had time to pay bills or to spend time with their families. The result was that of a crew consisting of 16 people, there were two cases of absenteeism the following day. The absentees were members trained for specific functions. In their absence, the rest of the crew had to complete their functions. The crew therefore finished even later the following day. This scenario of the Mine Overseer giving contradictory instruction to those already given by the Shift Overseer carried on for the whole week.

1.1.3 Shortage of material

This was more of a logistical problem and not such a major item when the frequency of the problem was investigated. It does, however sometimes occur that the material, which has been ordered, is not at the workplace on time. Various reasons, which are not within control of the team, may lead to this. This does not, however happen frequently.

1.1.4 Negative communication

The type of communication in the workplace is more often than not of a negative nature. The crews and individuals in charge of them are told that they are not producing, they are never at work and they will be fired. This type of communication is a daily occurrence.

1.1.5 Unstable crews

Crews are not given an opportunity to learn each other's work methods and to gain trust in their fellow members. Those responsible for supervision constantly change individuals from one crew to another. The crew is also not involved in these moves, which is in contradiction to the self-direct work team ethos. Due to the constant change in the crew, it does not ever feel like a team and therefore does not effectively function as one.

1.1.6 Unpaid overtime

The current management policy is that employees will not be paid overtime if they do not finish their job, except in extreme circumstances. These circumstances include the unavailability of material or the breakdown of essential equipment.

Unfortunately, due to the previously mentioned matter of change of instructions during mid-shift, the crews were not finishing their daily jobs in the available shift time. Management, who were a direct cause of this situation, did not; however admit to this being an adequate reason for not completing the job. They indicated that it was because the people were just not performing to standard. The result was eventually that Miners were not paid for overtime work, and this further increased frustrations and negative behaviour by the teams.

1.1.7 No promotional opportunities due to the fact that skills are recruited from outside the organisation

The initial plan for staffing needs was to recruit employees with potential and train them to take positions of responsibility as the operations of the mine grew. For short-term requirements, employees who already met all job requirements would be recruited. The employees to be developed for similar positions would then be given the opportunity to expand their competency through relieving these experienced employees when they were absent. In this way, as the shaft grew, these employees would enter the positions, being fully competent to perform as required. This process is in place with employees of potential being trained to become leaders as the work areas increase. As with some of the other issues raised, this issue was not often mentioned due to the fact that employees with experience in the

mining environment know that there is a specific route to be followed to become a team leader and that not everyone is chosen for this position. It is a position of status as well as power, and traditionally the best member(s) of a team will be developed into that position.

1.2 Further observations were made by an organised labour representative regarding the work teams.

1.2.1 Lack of work experience

Many of the employees working on the shaft are novices to the mining industry. They have received all the necessary training needed to perform the job. They will now, however first have to gain experience in the mining environment and this can only be accomplished with time.

1.2.2. Slow work speed

The employees were, for various reasons, performing at a very inefficient speed when observed. This could be attributed to their inexperience, or even their frustration with the working environment. It could also be that they are using the work speed as a method of passive protest.

1.2.3 No bonuses

Currently a flat rate is paid to employees on a monthly basis. The bonus incentive scheme is still being developed. The lack of a bonus incentive system and the fact that achievement is not recognised have resulted in low morale and motivation. The crews simply do not feel motivated to perform.

1.2.4 Poor timekeeping

Team members do not necessarily all arrive at work at the same time. Some employees arrive at the workplace with the last cage, and therefore the last transport available, to the underground place of work. This results in the crew being held up due to the fact that not all the members are present.

1.2.5 Lunch breaks

Lunch breaks were negotiated by agreement due to the conditions underground and the short period of time at the face when work can effectively be done. Employees are therefore given a *Morvite*-mix, which they can drink, in the workplace. This mix is nutritious and has been formulated to sustain them through the shift. They are also given a meal allowance as part of the agreement. In spite of this, employees still walk off during the shift to sit and eat a snack. This disrupts effective production time and severely hampers the team's productivity.

1.2.6 Tribal and racial discrimination

Miners within a team often come from a diversity of African cultures. Within these cultures, there is often a large degree of discrimination and xenophobia. Certain ethnic groups such as Shangaans that hail from Mozambique are not put in the position of Team Leader. Since these individuals are not South Africans, other members refuse to listen to them or follow their instructions. This tribal discrimination, if not addressed, could have a debilitating effect on the crew. Supervisory levels must be cognisant of the fact that this behaviour exists, plan accordingly, and place labour to minimise the loss in productivity.

1.3 Management observations

Management representatives from different disciplines made the following observations:

The absentee rates of the production teams (the work teams of the current study) are generally 2% higher than the rest of the work force. The disciplinary cases for this section are also 3 times higher than any of the other sections on the shaft. Industrial action on the shaft was also instigated and perpetrated by the employees of this section. Production results also decreased as the absenteeism and the disciplinary issues increased. The increased disciplinary actions also led to increased hostility towards supervision and management. This was evident in the types of charges of which a majority were the refusal to obey instructions as well as insubordination. The union gained power in this section due to the hostility and dissatisfaction. More issues were raised with the union, which in turn were raised with management. Many of these are issues, which would traditionally have been solved at team

level, for example leave applications, discipline, overtime and duty rosters. Finally, discipline was applied inconsistently. The supervisory levels were never or rarely charged, whereas the regular Miners (worker level) were frequently charged and disciplined.

Figure 3 below gives the absentee trends for the sections under study.

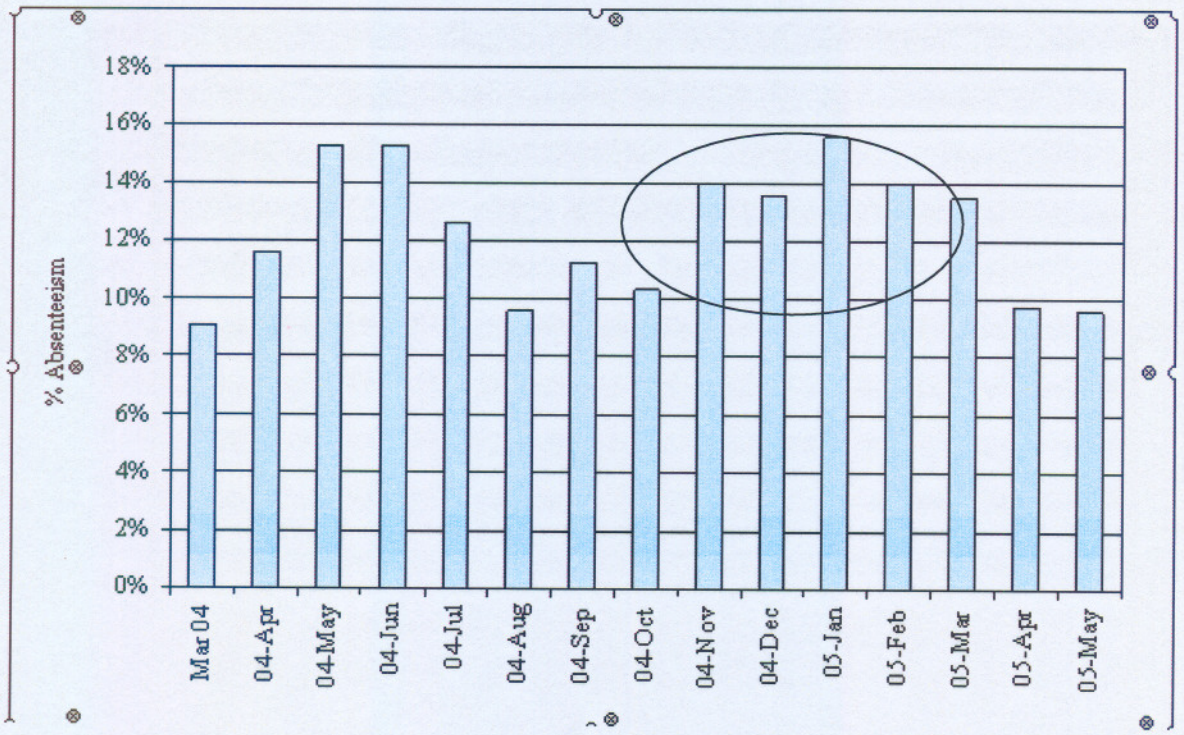

Figure 3. Absentee trends for section under study

As indicated by Figure 3, and echoed in the observations of the work teams made by management, organised labour as well as the individuals in their interviews, there was a definite increase in the percentage of absenteeism in the production section for the period in which the teams were observed. As indicated in the graph, there was an increase of about 10% in October 2004 to almost 16% in January 2005. This increase is significant, given the fact that during the same period all the other previously discussed issues manifested.

There was an increase in the number of accidents in the section (see Figure 4).

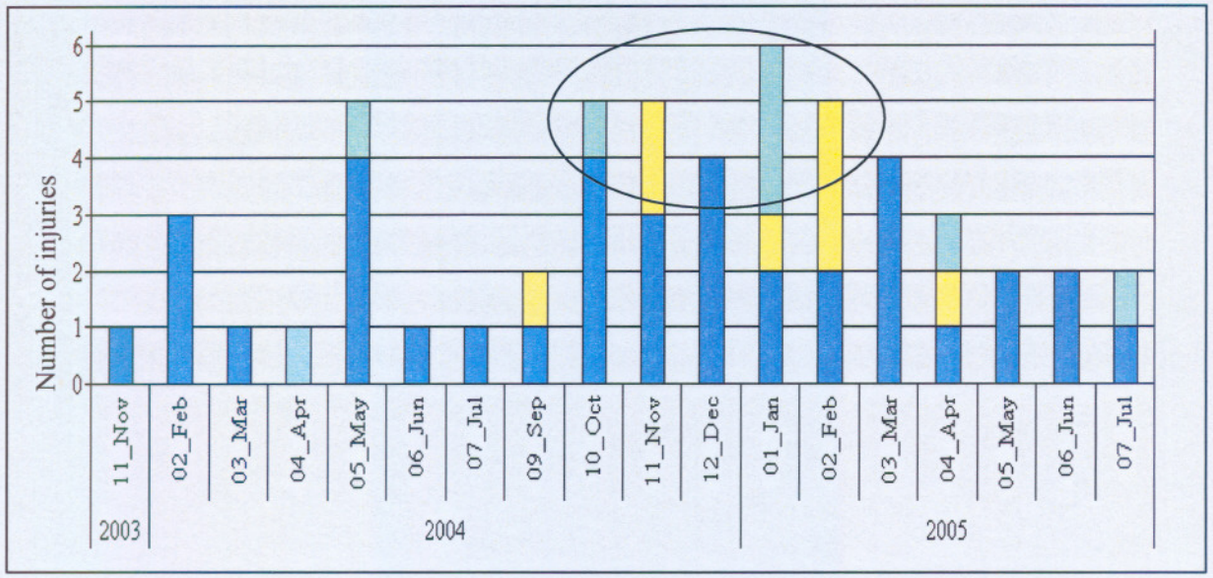

Figure 4. Injury trends for section under study

Figure 4, indicates that the number of safety incidents resulting in injuries doubled in the period under observation. Each colour in the stack graph indicates the seriousness of the injury. The lower light blue indicates dressings. These are injuries, which are reported and treated immediately. They do not result in the employee losing any shifts due to seriousness of the injury. The yellow is lost time injuries in which the employee is incapable of performing his job, because of the injury, for a period of 1 to 13 days. The final turquoise stack indicates serious injuries. These are injuries in which the employee loses 14 or more days, due to his injury. Other injuries such as loss of a limb or part of a limb or sustaining a permanent disability are automatically classified as serious injuries.

1.4 Interviews

Interviews were also conducted with employees (Team Members) to ensure that the problem was investigated and studied from all points of view.

Interviews held with employees supported many of the observations made. The different issues raised in the interviews often overlapped, but the themes remained constant throughout, and aligned to observations. Below is a list indicating the issues raised by team members in the interviews with the researcher. Direct quotations from interviews are given in support of themes.

1.4.1 Management and line supervision's contradicting instructions result in longer working hours. Different instructions from different management levels result in a lack of goal clarity. This theme was indicated in the interviews by employees stating: "The problems are job instruction at the end of the day, the job is not done clearly. Then we are blamed for an unplanned job. The changing of the job during the work hours confuses us."

1.4.2 A lack of clarity exists as to what the chain of command is. This theme was reflected in interviews by employees stating that: "MO (Mine Overseer) is always disturbing our job. He does have co-operation of our team." The MO is the lower management level for that function. He should not be involved in the day-to-day running of the teams' operations. The direct supervisor is the Miner, and the next level is the Shift Overseer.

1.4.3 No visible support is given by supervision when upper management behaves in a negative manner towards a team. This is indicated in remarks such as "The shift boss (Shift Overseer) is friendly and understands one, but with MO present he does not defend, he merely keeps quiet."

1.4.4 The communication and feedback are inadequate, and mostly negative in nature. This is reflected clearly in the flowing statement by one of the team members: "Unnecessary pressure by the captain (MO), vulgar language and disrespect to the workers"; and: "Communication is the master of the problems that is caused by the supervision side and we use to lose our concentration on that matter."

1.4.5 The employees are constantly informed as to what they are doing or have done wrong, and no positive feedback is given. This was highlighted by comments such as: "we are always told how "sleg" (*bad*) we are, and that he will fire us..."

1.4.6 The theme of job insecurity is directly linked to the above theme of negativity. The best example of this is the statement: "It feels like the MO only wants to fire the people, not motivate them".

1.4.7 Another issue identified was long hours of work and no overtime payment. An example of this is given in the statement: "...no extra pay is given for extra work", and "We don't get paid overtime for working late".

1.4.8 Another theme identified was that of no time-off being granted. This theme was indicated by remarks in the interviews such as "No days off are given and we never get time to do personal things" and "...people are not given off-day when asking for them and operating some creating some problems".

1.4.9 A concern raised was about the bonus scheme not being in place yet. Employees were receiving a flat rate and not a rate based on production results. This was a concern as can be seen in the statements: "We don't get bonuses the way they arranged with us", and "Bonus system must be implemented".

1.4.10 An unsafe and unfriendly work environment was also an issue raised by team members. Interviews indicated that employees felt that the "...working environment was not safe and conducive for people to work there..." and "...not enough support and it is not up to standard".

1.4.11 Safety is voiced as important, but not enforced on the job. This was indicated in the interviews with statements such as: "...seniors in our section is only concerned talking about safety and not implementing it".

1.4.12 The theme of misconduct within the team is shown in statements such as: "Leadership: No good conduct with the team".

1.4.13 It appears that the general feeling is that there is a "...lack of discipline in team" because "...miner not disciplining team members".

1.4.14 Workers also recognise the issue as identified by management observations that absenteeism is high. Interview excerpts such as "...yes, it (*absenteeism*) is high," and "...it (*absenteeism*) is high because people are not given any day off when asking for them". This also results in "Double work due to people being absent" and "...causes extra work for everyone and makes others angry". The high incidence of absenteeism

and its effect on the workers is seemingly a result of being overworked and not having enough time off and away from work.

1.4.15 Team members are not involved in planning. A theme identified from the interviews was that workers were not involved in solving problems. Workers felt that supervision should "...provide time to identify problems, find ways to address the section and come up together with a solution".

1.4.16 An issue identified as a problem is team instability. Members move between teams, which makes it difficult to develop cohesion. Interviews indicated that this was a problem: "Changing people without consultation of team members".

1.4.17 The idea that no proper planning and no proper shift handovers are taking place. Interviews support this with statements such as "...job planning is poor..." and more specific views, such as "...stope done late whereas they are supposed to do it in morning shift, which is wrong..." and then "...management don't do their work or arrangements properly". Another statement in this theme is "...day shift not prepare for night shift".

1.4.18 Another theme identified was lack of equipment/materials and labour. Simple statements such as "...late resuming work due to shortage of support team..." and "...shortage of mpahla (*materials*) and labour..."

1.4.19 Another theme identified is that of intimidation, by certain members of the crew as well as by management. Excerpts from the interviews such as "Only one thing is to stop intimidating the workers, when all they need is information" support this.

1.4.20 Issues of lacking motivation also emerged. Team members hold up work and slow it because they are "not working together as a team" and "too much load of work because of people who don't do their work".

1.4.21 No working clothes given was raised as an isolated issue in statements such as "No working clothes are given for work".

1.4.22 A theme which was alluded to was time keeping. Team members felt that often too much time was spent in the waiting place, resulting in them starting the day later than necessary. An example of this is "...some argue about things not important for long and we get to the workplace late".

1.4.23 Relationships within the section are not positive. The feeling of supervision not being cooperative "...the captain is not cooperative..." and not involving the team in important issues "...by not working together as a team and not solving the problems".

1.5 Themes identified common to both the interviews and observations

1.5.1 Cultural Diversity

A great many differences in race, culture and beliefs exist within work teams, which result in different reactions and approaches to behaviour, for example, collectivism vs. individualism and in-group vs. out-group behaviour. Direct quotations from the interviews that indicate this theme were: "People to be treated the same way or given the same amount of work", "Problem with Shangaan Team Leader" and "Only White workers promoted and trained".

1.5.2 Contradictory demands

Different instructions are received from different sources and perceived differences in the targets and messages from different levels of management. "Seniors in our section is only concerned in talking about safety but not implementing it", "Changing the job during the day" were some words used to describe this theme.

1.5.3 Role clarity

No clear definitions of different roles within the team structure and within supervision exist. The supervision roles are not being performed according to a clear structure, as indicated in the following quotations: "The team member will complain to the miner and the miner would address the matter with the shift boss and then the shift boss will take care of the problem", and "...morning shift people should do their job and the same applies to the nightshift people".

1.5.4 Relationships

The relationships between the members of the team, the supervision and the team, and finally between the team and its supervision and management, are often problematic. Quotes indicating this are: "Too much workload on some because of people who do not do their work", and "Supervisors are reprimanded in front of workers".

1.5.5 Support, Trust and Communication

The support offered by the organisation and the leadership, whether direct or removed, and the trust engendered by this support, was raised as a common issue. The support structure and the resulting trust are built on communication between all parties involved. A quote, which indicates the lack of this, is: "To stop intimidating the workers, when they are in need of information".

1.5.6 Control (Leadership)

The level of control delegated to teams, and the style of leadership resulting from this control was also a common theme. Quotes from the interviews raising the issue are: "Leadership of the team is not strong - results in bad conduct within team"; "We are not given a chance to explore and to make an input", and "The team members must be disciplined".

1.5.7 Individual Needs

Individuals have needs, which are important and need to be fulfilled. "Paid for longer hours"; "More time off and less overtime", and "Mine Captain to understand that sometimes a person is ill", are sentiments directly quoted from interviews, which indicate the needs individuals consider as being important.

1.6. Theme Frequency

Table 1, indicates the frequency of each theme as it appears in the interviews and observations. The frequency in turn gives an indication of the importance of the themes when addressed in the context of the problem of negative behaviour within the work teams.

Table 1

The Themes and frequency thereof, identified from the Interviews and Observations

THEME	FREQUENCY
Contradictory demands	97.50%
Control (Leadership)	97.50%
Relationships	87.50%
Support, Trust and Communication	62.50%
Cultural diversity	52.50%
Role clarity	42.50%
Individual needs	20.00%

The most important themes identified are *Contradictory Demands* and *Control (Leadership).* Another theme considered important by all role players is *Relationships*. Themes with less importance, in a descending order, are *Support, Trust* and *Communication, Cultural Diversity, Role Clarity* and finally *Individual needs*. It is important to note that in the interviews and observations, *Control (leadership)* and *Role clarity* were sometimes used in conjunction with each other, which may render *Role Clarity* a more important theme than that indicated by its frequency.

DISCUSSION

The investigation described above clearly identified direct causes of dysfunctional behaviour in the self-directed work teams. These results indicate that the behaviours within the work teams are a reaction to specific issues within the workplace. Beach (1980) also suggests that it is important to know that all human behaviour has a cause (or causes) and is purposeful.

People are not uncooperative just for the sake of being perverse (Beach, 1980). Many themes were identified as causes of the dysfunctional behaviour observed. The themes were identified by means of information gathered from observations of various role players, and interviews with team members. The themes, which were least indicative of the behaviour, were those of individual needs, role clarity and cultural diversity.

Unfulfilled individual needs featured as a minimal reason for negative behaviour. There were references to minimal promotional opportunities, but the frequency of this was low. The employees in the mine industry are well paid due to the dangerous and physically demanding nature of the work they do. They are also given meal supplements while in the workplace, and accommodation is provided at market-related and competitive rates. Accommodation is provided for single as well as married employees. The indication therefore, is that, with their basic survival needs seen to, employees develop other (i.e. higher order) needs, which are more actualising in nature. Maslow's hierarchy of needs supports this assumption. Maslow (1962) postulates that there is a definite rank-order priority of human needs. Until the more basic human wants are fulfilled, a person will not strive to meet his/her higher needs (Beach, 1980). The employees in the sample studied are no longer struggling to eke out an existence. They have the energy to turn to their higher needs. These higher needs are social and psychological in nature (Beach, 1980). This hypothesis is further supported by the low ranking of individual needs, compared to, for example, relationship needs and needs for support, trust and communication.

The issue of role clarity resulted in feelings of frustration. Employees felt that the chain of command was not being followed, resulting in confusion as to what is expected of them. This often resulted in the team members performing the instructions given by one level of supervision and ignoring others, which was in turn often perceived as negative behaviour. Each level of supervision has other expectations, creating an unclear environment, which results in negative behaviour. Palmer & Etal, (2001) indicate that this may also result in hostile behaviour, which in turn will have a negative influence on the organisation.

Cultural diversity was also of some concern. The workforce in the mine consists of a diversity of African cultures. The tribal and racial discrimination within the workplace is intricate in nature. It results in intimidation and non-cooperation among team members, which then results in decreases in production, raises issues concerning work speed, and

possible violence. Some groups are considered stronger and more worthy of being leaders. If a person who does not come from one of these in-groups is not put into a leadership position, the crew will simply not tolerate it, and performance will be negatively impacted. Feather (1994), Hui et al. (2003), and Triandis (1972, 1995) all support this in their research of in-group, out-group behaviours, and the effects of different cultural beliefs on behaviour of individuals within groups.

Themes, which showed a higher frequency, and are thus considered to be of greater importance, were those of relationships, and support, trust and communication in the workplace. The interview results, as well as the observations, showed a definite lack of a positive relationship between management and the employees. The negative relationship that exists between these parties translates to poor support, lacking trust and negative communication. Feelings of hostility towards management were exhibited in the interview results as well as in the behaviour observed. High absentee rates over the period of the case study as well as increased safety incidents consequently reflect the negative behaviour of employees. Employee sit-ins, threats toward management and general discontentment were observed in the workplace.

The type of communication in the workplace is more often than not of a negative nature. The crews, and individuals in them, are told on a daily basis that they are not producing, they are never at work, and are threatened with being fired. This type of communication is a daily occurrence and leads to dissatisfaction in the workplace. The employees do not feel appreciated, feel they get no recognition for the good they do, and that only negative events are noticed. Team members feel they cannot control the negative attitude towards them, so they behave in the way they are told they are behaving. The negative feedback thus becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. Team members feel that if they are continuously told how badly they perform and how often they are absent, they may as well perform badly and stay away from work - they are getting blamed for these occurrences anyway. This 'blame culture" is part of the traditional mining environment. If the blame can be shifted to someone else, it will, and this usually results in blame being shifted to the lowest levels of the organisation. This reaction to negative communication is supported by Kluger and DeNisi (1996), who state that in spite of the best intentions to stimulate performance improvement with negative feedback, it rarely works and all too often negative feedback produces the opposite effect (i.e. reduced performance).

The instability of the crews contributes to negative behaviour. With the flux in membership, the teams cannot build the necessary relationships of trust, which can lead to support, and behaviour that is more positive. Members do not get the opportunity to form a sense of identification with those of attitudinal similarity. This is supported by Hui, Cheng and Gan (2003), who found that relationships within the group, and between the group and those outside it, might have an effect on group functioning and effectiveness. Attitudinal similarities between a supervisor and his/her subordinate influence interpersonal attraction, absenteeism, cooperative behaviour, group cohesiveness and leader-member exchange. Perceptions of similarity result in subordinates' trust and confidence in their leaders, while perceptions of dissimilarity raise doubts and distrust (Turban & Jones, 1988). Since the composition of the work teams are not held constant, the natural process of team members getting to know one another and sorting out of attitudinal similarities and differences is undermined. Associations between individual members, and by implication trust and support, are destroyed by the reorganisation of teams.

The themes, which were of most concern, were those related to leadership and contradictory demands and control. These themes are, if looked at in detail, combinations of all the previous themes, which all summarise into one issue: A need for strong leadership and control, or the existing lack thereof, in this setting. Optimal utilisation of employees has been noted as the key to production effectiveness (Fisher, 1993). Strong leadership, clarity and consistency of required performance may play a deciding role. Normally, the Team Leader gives the instructions for a team. He receives his instructions from the Miner, who in turn receives his instructions from the Shift Overseer. The Shift Overseer reports to the Mine Overseer. This chain of command was not being followed in the group(s) observed. The Shift Overseer was giving the team instructions in the absence of the Team Leader or the Miner. As soon as the Shift Overseer had to go underground, the Mine Overseer would give the team instructions, either through the Team Leader or sometimes directly. Instructions were therefore coming from three different supervisory levels, and were often contradictory in nature. This lack of clarity in priorities for work resulted in confusion as well as a distrust of management. Supervision's failure to control time keeping issues, absenteeism, inconsistent discipline and control over team members' disruptive behaviour all broke down the worker-supervisor relationship, which in turn resulted in the negative behaviour of the type observed. This is clearly in line with Palmer and Etal's, (2001) model of behaviour. The employees in

the sample studied reacted to different influences on them as individuals and as a group. These influences were diverse cultures and the employees' views to them, unclear goals, demands in the workplace, negative relationships and a lack of support from those in leadership positions. These influences resulted in the negative behaviour observed in the workplace such as absenteeism, increases in industrial action and disciplinary problems. It also resulted in increased work hours, which in turn increased hostility and decreased morale of the teams and their members as well as their loyalty to each other and their supervisors. All of these factors could have a negative influence on the effectiveness and viability of the organisation (Palmer & Etal, 2001).

RECOMMENDATIONS

With reference to the findings, some recommendations can be made. Regarding personal needs, it seems urgent that the bonus scheme should be finalised. This will ensure all those involved will know the parameters of what their performance standards should be, and what levels of performance need to be exhibited in order to obtain rewards beyond the norm.

Policy concerning the payment of overtime should be put into place and communicated clearly to all parties. Payment of overtime can be audited by comparing time worked to payment with random samples. This may limit the opportunity to misuse employees. Employees as well as first line management must understand when overtime will be paid and when not. There must be no ambiguity concerning this and there should be consistency between crews regarding these payment arrangements. Managers that are audited and show excessive overtime worked, but with minimal payment, should be able to account for these discrepancies.

Cognisance must be taken of the cultural diversity of the mining working environment. Care must be taken with the ethnic compilation within teams, and the ideal solution would be the implementation of cultural diversity and/or sensitivity programmes for all levels of employees.

Regarding role clarity, it is an important recommendation that supervisors should adhere to the established chain of command. Employees must be made aware of each individual's role in the team and his/her responsibility to ensure that targets are achieved. The processes must

be broken down into areas of responsibility. This may be done in a formal manner by the organisation or as a team function. These areas of responsibility must be well communicated and understood by all parties involved.

Addressing needs for positive relationships, support, trust and communication also present a point of intervention regarding team behaviour. Feedback can be formalised to ensure consistency, while recognition and positive reinforcement for good performance and other positive behaviour must be part of a formalised communication system and feedback sessions. An immediate entry point is presented by employees with a very low rate of absenteeism, who may be easily encouraged to full attendance. Formalised sessions can facilitate better relationships, which can in turn lead to informal communication structures of a more positive nature.

The instability of teams undermines the fundamental assumption of the SDWT concept, which is that the team should function as an autonomous unit for the production of a product or delivery of a service. Transfers between crews must be minimised to ensure crew can develop trusting and cohesive relationships. If movements are necessary, consultation with the team will result in all parties understanding the reasons for the move, and being more comfortable with changes and new members. Teams may then also be able to suggest practical alternatives because of their knowledge of all members' strengths and development areas. Greater involvement will create confidence in the leader and grow cooperative behaviour.

The circumscription of leadership and demands and control was delineated as the most important need, the lack of which led to dysfunctional behaviour in teams. Instructions must be given through first line supervision. If instructions need to be changed, it must be done through this supervisor and with his agreement (i.e., the chain of command must be followed). Supervisors must take an active role in time keeping and absenteeism. Involvement in these issues, instead of third party involvement by Human Resources, will enhance a supervisor's control. Team discipline for absenteeism must also be considered. When relationships have stabilised, supervisors will be able to allow the team to discipline individuals by various means. This can take the form of warnings or transfers from the team for various transgressions such as absenteeism. Discipline must be consistent. In each incident, all parties involved must be given the opportunity to give input, and similar

incidents must be dealt with in a similar fashion. Attention must also be paid to supervisory training for leaders of self-directed work teams. The skills needed to lead a team are different to the skills needed to supervise and instruct a team. Supervisors and management will have to be given some type of "soft skills" development concerning people skills.

LIMITATIONS

Some limitations of the study do exist. Most notably, the sample group was small and the results may not be applicable to the general population of workers. Due to different needs and conditions the results may also not be applicable to employees from different levels or different organisations.

The study was also qualitative in nature and therefore some objectivity has been lost.

Language and the need for interpreters in some cases may have influenced the integrity of information obtained.

REFERENCES

Bamjee, S. (2005, July 17). Little respite for Stilfontein's destitute miners. *City Press.*6

Beach, D.S. (1980). *Personnel: The management of people at work.* (4th ed.). New York, NY: Macmillan Publishers Co., Inc.

Bjorkegen, D. (1989). *It doesn't have to be that way.* Paper presented at the organisational Behaviour Teaching Conference, Columbia.

Brevis, T., Vrba, M.J. & De Klerk, A. (2000). Management Principles. In P.J. Smit & G.J. De J Cronje (Eds.), *A contemporary edition for South Africa (pp?).* Kenwyn, South Africa: Juta & Co, Ltd.

Erez, M. & Early, P.C. (1993). *Culture, self-identity and work.* New York NY: Oxford University Press.

Feather, N.T. (1994). Values, national identification and favouritism towards the in-group. *British Journal of Social Psychology, 33*, 467-476.

Felts, C. (1995). *Taking the mystery out of Self-Directed Work Teams.* IM, March-April, 21-26.

Fisher, K. (1993). *Leading self-directed work teams: A guide to developing new team leadership skills.* New York; NY McGraw-Hill.

Hui, C.H., Cheng, K & Gan, Y. (2003, April). Psychological collectivism as a moderator of the impact of supervisor-subordinate personality on employees' service quality. *Applied Psychology: An International Review, 52*(2),175-193.

Kluger, A.N. & DeNisi, A. (1996). The effects of feedback interventions on performance: A historical review, meta-analysis and preliminary feedback intervention theory. *Psychological Bulletin, 119*, 254-284.

Lencioni, P. (2002). *The five dysfunctions of a team: A leadership fable.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Markus, H. & Kitayama, S. (1991). Culture and the self: Implications for cognitions, emotion and motivation. *Psychological Review, 98*, 224-253.

Maslow, A.H. (1962). *Toward a Psychology of Being.* Princeton, NJ: Van Nostrand.

McNamara, K. (1996). The transition to teams: Lessons from SA companies. *The Innes Labour Brief, pp?*

Mine Health & Safety Act, 29 APCOR (1996).

Minerals Act, 50 APCOR (1991).

Nicotera, A.M. (1993). Beyond two dimensions: A grounded theory model of conflict-handling behaviour. *Management Communication Quarterly, 6,* 282-306.

Odiorne, G.S. (1991, August). The new breed of supervisor: leaders in self-managed work teams. *Supervision, 52*(8), 148-18.

Oishi, S., Diener, E.F., Lucas, R.E. & Suh, E.M. (1999). Cross-cultural variations in predictors of life satisfaction: perspectives from needs and values. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 25*, 980-990.

Palmer, S. Cooper, C. & Thomas, K. (2001). Model of organisational stress for use within an occupational health education/promotion or wellbeing programme- A short communication. *Health Educational Journal, 60*(4), 378-380.

Roy, M. (2003, June). Self-directed work teams and safety: a winning combination? *Safety Science*, 41(4), 359-377.

Schneider, B. & Bowen, D.E. (1985). Employee and customer perception of service in banks: replication and extension. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 70*, 423-433.

Sims, R.L. (2000, November). The relationship between employee attitudes and conflicting expectations for lying behaviour. *Journal of Psychology, 134*(6), 619-634.

Strauss, C. & Quinn, N. (1997). *A cognitive theory of cultural meaning.* New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Thomas, K.W. (1992). Conflict and conflict management. In M.D. Dunnette (Ed.), *Handbook of Industrial Psychology and Organisational Psychology (pp?)*, Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press.

Triandis, H.C. (1972). *The analysis of subjective culture.* New York (NY): Wiley Press.

Triandis, H.C. (1989). Self and social behaviour in differing cultural contexts. *Psychology Review, 96,* 269-289.

Triandis, H.C. (1995). *Individualism and collectivism.* Boulder, CO; Westview.

Turban, D.B. & Jones, A.P. (1988). Supervisor subordinate similarity: types, effects and **mechanisms**. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 73*, 228-234.

CHAPTER 3

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

In this chapter, conclusions are drawn regarding the specific objectives of this study. The limitations of the research are discussed, followed by recommendations for the organisation and future research.

3.1 CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions are arrived at by addressing the specific objectives of the current study.

3.1.1 To conceptualise group behaviours and their interrelationship in the gold mining industry.

Literature indicates that certain internal and external influences on group members will have an effect on the behaviour exhibited by the group. These influences include the type of relationships within the group, and between the group and those outside it, and may have an effect on group functioning and effectiveness. The relationships between a supervisor and his/her subordinates influence interpersonal attraction, absenteeism, cooperative behaviour, group cohesiveness and leader-member exchange (Hui, Cheng & Gan, 2003). The culture of the individuals within the group as well as the accepted roles within it, also influences the behaviour within the group. The work teams in the gold mine consist of individuals with totally divergent approaches to their work environment than those overseeing their activities and performance. Individualistic societies (mostly white South Africans) tend to have individualistic approaches to business where self-accomplishment is valued highly. Collective societies (mostly black South Africans) have group approaches to business where they tend to value group accomplishment and loyalty (Brevis, Vrba & De Klerk, 2000). Support within the team is another important factor that will be influenced by differences in culture and leadership. Triandis (1989) points out that collectivists may reserve helping behaviour for their in-group members, while individualists do not make much distinction between in-group and out-group members when deciding on an associative act.

Based on the results of the current study, it may be concluded that certain influences on the teams and their members within this gold mine will have an effect on the behaviour exhibited by the group. In this study, there were specific dysfunctional behaviours, which influenced the performance of the teams. Problematic behaviour included increased sickness and absenteeism. This resulted in a shortage of labour, which in turn led to longer hours of work. The increase in pressure to perform with limited human resources resulted in an increase in the number of safety incidents within the teams. All of these influenced the overall productivity of the team as well as their safety rating, which in turn increased the pressure further. The culminating effect was that the morale and loyalty within the team went down, and overall feelings of negativity became the norm. It also resulted in increased hostility and industrial action. All of these factors in turn had a negative influence on the organisation in the form of increased overheads, accidents and litigation, and a decrease in profits. Accidents and litigation are detrimental to the industry's image in the community, and increased overheads and decreased profits influence shareholders' faith in the organisation and its reason for being.

3.1.2 To determine what stimuli generate specific unproductive and counter-productive behaviours in self-directed work teams in the gold mining industry.

According to Beach (1980), it is important to know that all human behaviour has a cause (or causes). Beach (1980) defines human behaviour as an interaction between a stimulus and the person's own internal interpretation of that stimulus. The actions of rational human beings are goal-orientated. Behaviour is aimed toward the fulfilment of basic wants, drives and needs. Behaviour is purposeful and is caused. The Palmer Model of Stress (Palmer & Cooper, 2001) postulates that these stimuli include factors such as culture, demands, role, control, and support and relationships and result in different behaviours.

It may be concluded from the study that certain stimuli have a greater impact on behaviour than others. The themes (stimuli), which were most represented in influencing negative behaviour, were contradictory demands, control (leadership), relationship and support, trust and communication. Cultural diversity, role clarity and Individual needs influenced negative behaviour to a lesser degree in the studied group.

Contradictory demands refer to different instructions being received from different sources and perceived differences in the targets and messages from different levels of management. This resulted in confusion and goals not being met. This is supported by Sims' (2000) theory that the roles of the leaders in the organisation, and the roles of the employees or group members, have an impact on reactions to influence, and the consequent behaviours resulting from these reactions and interactions. Sims (2000), points out that if differences do exist between the supervisors' modelling and expectations and the organisations' formal code of ethics, those differences may cause employees to receive mixed messages. This confusion was strengthened in the studied situation in that the team had no control over certain aspects of the day-to-day job and the leadership control over the team was split amongst too many individuals with no one taking final responsibility and ultimate accountability. This is also indicated in research by Lencioni (2002), in which it is pointed out that even the most ardent believers in accountability usually balk at having to hold someone accountable for something that had not been bought into, or made clear in the first place. A lack of strong leadership within a team and unclear goals resulted in dysfunctional behaviour. This also negatively influenced the relationships within the workplace.

The relationships between the members of the team, supervision and the team, and finally between the team and its supervision and management, are often problematic. The support offered by the organisation and the leadership, whether direct or removed, and the trust engendered by this support, was raised as a common issue. The support structures, and the resulting trust, are supposedly built on communication between all parties involved. In this study, support was lacking, the absence of support resulted in a lack of trust, and the situation was exacerbated by communication concentrating of negative behaviour and feedback. This is supported by Hui, Etal (2003), who found that relationships within the group, and between the group and those outside it, might have an effect on group functioning and effectiveness. Attitudinal similarities between a supervisor and his/her subordinate influence interpersonal attraction, absenteeism, cooperative behaviour, group cohesiveness and leader-member exchange. Turban and Jones (1988) state that perceptions of similarity result in subordinates' trust and confidence in their leaders, while perceptions of dissimilarity raise doubts and distrust.

Stimuli, which had a lesser influence on the dysfunctional behaviour in this study, were cultural diversity, role clarity and individual needs.

A great many differences in race, culture and beliefs exist within work teams, which result in different reactions and approaches to behaviour. In addition to this, no clear definitions of different roles within the team structure and within supervision exist. And finally, some individual needs, which were viewed as important, were not being fulfilled, resulting in unhappiness due to the feeling that these needs were not being considered at all. These needs included recognition in the form of payment of overtime and bonuses. Employees also felt a need for time off, due to the strains of long hours and the subsequent lack of time to perform personal business or to spend time with family.

3.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.2.1 Recommendations for the organisation

With reference to the findings, some recommendations can be made. Regarding personal needs, it seems urgent that the bonus scheme be finalised. This will ensure that all those involved will know the parameters of what their performance standards must be, and what levels of performance need to be exhibited in order to obtain additional rewards. The bonus scheme must include parameters for employees to be awarded incentives for production, safety and cost efficiency. To address specific issues such as absenteeism, a penalty system for absenteeism can be incorporated in the scheme. This can be based on specific individuals and their attendance. However, the ideal scheme must incorporate the principles of self-directed work teams. By penalising the team for individual behaviour not conducive to high standards of performance, will be motivate the team to take action against team members not pulling their weight. This will take some of the controlling and planning burden off supervision. The relationship of the employees with supervision will improve due to the fact that they have a better understanding of the needs of the organisation to accomplish its targets, and the fact that management is no longer seen as the whip in the relationship.

Policy concerning the payment of overtime should be put into place and communicated clearly too all parties. Payment of overtime can be audited by comparing time worked to payment, with random samples. This may minimise the possibility of employees being misused. Employees as well as first line management must understand when overtime will be paid and when not. There must be no ambiguity concerning this and there must be consistency between crews regarding these payment arrangements. Managers that are audited

and show excessive overtime worked, but with minimal payment, must be able to account for these discrepancies. Auditing sections with high instances of overtime worked, but low payment of overtime, may identify possible relationship issues and worker dissatisfaction before it leads to industrial action, as it did in the case study. Arrangement of this auditing will depend on the circumstances of each department, and the existence of other internal arrangements to which all parties have agreed. These internal arrangements might relate to issues such as time off in lieu of payment, or a common drive towards a specific target, which may result in a higher bonus.

Cognisance must be taken of the cultural diversity of the mining working environment. Care must be taken with the ethnic compilation within teams, and the ideal solution would be the implementation of cultural diversity and/or sensitivity programmes for all levels of employees. The focus of these programmes would be on education. Individuals cannot be expected to manage their own or others' performance within a culturally diverse climate, if they do not understand the basic cultural beliefs and behaviours of others. Once this knowledge is in place, it will be easier to develop culturally sensitive behaviour within the workplace.

Regarding role clarity, the most important recommendation is that supervisors must adhere to the established chain of command. Employees must be made aware as to each individual's role in the team, and his/her responsibility to ensure that targets are achieved. The processes must be broken down into areas of responsibility. This may be done in a formal manner by the organisation, or as a team function. These areas of responsibility must be well communicated and understood by all parties involved.

Addressing needs for positive relationships, support, trust and communication also present a point of intervention regarding team behaviour. Feedback can be formalised to ensure consistency, while recognition and positive, consistent reinforcement for good performance and other positive behaviour must be part of a formalised communication system and feedback sessions. An immediate entry point is presented by employees with a low rate of absenteeism, who may be easily encouraged to full attendance. Formalised sessions can facilitate better relationships, which can in turn lead to informal communication structures of a more positive nature. Formalised sessions can take place on a daily, weekly and/or monthly basis, in which different issues can be communicated, addressed, and rewarded. Daily

sessions can precede each shift in order to discuss and plan the day's job. This will facilitate involvement. Weekly sessions can be used to monitor performance and progress towards goals and to plan possible methods to improve production before the end of the period being measured. Finally, monthly sessions can be used to communicate the results achieved for that month and to give recognition to those who performed well. Some mention of problematic behaviour can also be made, although this will have to be done in a manner that will facilitate improvement in the behaviour, and not foster hostility. Team building interventions may be used to augment the already existing quality team training. Quality team training is a programme in which teams are taken through training in team behaviour, planning and communication skills and exercises, which strengthen team cohesiveness. Some type of team building intervention may be used to build on the foundation laid in this programme, and to strengthen feelings of unity and building a team identity.

The instability of teams undermines the fundamental assumption of the SDWT concept, which is that the team must function as an autonomous unit for the production of a product or delivery of a service. Transfers between crews must be minimised to ensure crews develop trusting and cohesive relationships. If movements are necessary, consultation with the team will result in all parties understanding reasons for the move, and being more comfortable with changes and new members. Teams must also be able to suggest practical alternatives because of their knowledge of all members' strengths and development areas. Greater involvement will create confidence in the leader and grow cooperative behaviour.

Leadership, demands and control, were delineated as the most important needs. The lack of this led to dysfunctional behaviour in teams. Instructions must be given through first line supervision. If instructions need to be changed, it must be done through the supervisor and with his agreement (i.e., the chain of command must be followed). Supervisors must take an active role in time keeping and absenteeism. Involvement in these issues, instead of third party involvement by Human Resources, will enhance a supervisor's control. Team discipline for absenteeism must also be considered. When relationships have stabilised, supervisors will be able to allow the team to discipline individuals by various means. This can take the form of warnings or even transfers from the team, for various transgressions such as absenteeism. Discipline must be consistent. In each incident, all parties involved must be addressed. Consistency of discipline is an important principle, and similar incidents must be dealt with in a similar fashion. Attention also needs to be paid to supervisory training for leaders of self-

directed work teams. The skills needed to lead a team are different from the skills needed to supervise and instruct a team. Supervisors and management needs to be given 'people skills', through the means of a focussed training intervention.

3.2.2 Recommendations for future research

In a larger sample, differences regarding collectivism and individualism, and how a discrepancy between the orientation of employees and supervisor(s) manifests in dysfunctional behaviour, may also be explored fruitfully by combining a qualitative and quantitative approach. Preferences in orientation of individuals may be quantitatively assessed, while the resultant behaviour and differences therein, may be assessed by in-depth qualitative information.

A study of the different cultures in the specific working environment, and the influence of their cultural beliefs on their behaviour, will also expand on the existing knowledge base concerning individuals' in-group or team-related behaviour.

Another area, which may be researched, further, is the conduciveness of the gold mining environment to the concept of self-directed work teams. Although the concept has been proven to work in other industries, there is no current substantiation that it works in the structured, and often hostile, mining environment. The highly hierarchical mining environment will need to be delayered, in order to create greater responsibility for teams in managing their own outcomes.

Research into the profile of leaders in the team concept, as opposed to leaders in a more controlled environment, must also be considered. The type of personality and dispositions needed to lead as part of a self-directed team can be expected to differ from those of a leader who merely does all the planning and gives instructions which are carried out with no involvement from the team.

3.3 LIMITATIONS

Some limitations to the study do exist. Most notably, the sample group was small and the results may not be applicable to the general population of workers. Due to differing needs and conditions the results may also not be applicable to employees from different levels, or different mining organisations.

The study was also qualitative in nature and therefore some objectivity has been lost, since the researcher is part of the situation being researched. Related to the qualitative nature of the current study, an important limitation is the language issue. Due to the fact that the study was done on a small group with great cultural diversity, the use of translators was necessary. Misinterpretations in the translations could have influenced the integrity of the information. To address this, various methods can be considered in future investigations. Firstly, a team of researchers, familiar with the different cultures and languages of the individuals under discussion, can be used. Phenomena described in this study may also be studied with a quantitative approach, where the results and interpretations are based on statistical data, gathered with validated measuring instruments.

REFERENCES

Beach, D.S. (1980). *Personnel: The management of people at work.* (4th ed.). New York, NY: Macmillan Publishers Co., Inc.

Brevis, T., Vrba, M.J. & De Klerk, A. (2000). Management Principles. In P.J. Smit & G.J. De J Cronje (Eds.), *A contemporary edition for South Africa.* (pp?) Kenwyn, South Africa: Juta & Co, Ltd.

Hui, C.H., Cheng, K & Gan, Y. (2003, April). Psychological collectivism as a moderator of the impact of supervisor-subordinate personality on employees' service quality. *Applied Psychology: An International Review, 52*(2), 175-193.

Lencioni, P. (2002). *The five dysfunctions of a team: a leadership fable.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass

Sims, R.L. (2000, November). The relationship between employee attitudes and conflicting expectations for lying behaviour. *Journal of Psychology, 134*(6), 619-634.

Triandis, H.C. (1989). Self and social behaviour in differing cultural contexts. *Psychology Review, 96,* 269-289.

Turban, D.B. & Jones, A.P. (1988). Supervisor subordinate similarity: types, effects and mechanisms. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 73*, 228-234.