

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

**EXPLORING LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS OF
ENGINEERS AT TONGAAT HULETT SUGAR SOUTH AFRICA**

By

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ABSTRACT

Tongaat Hulett Sugar SA (THS SA) embarked on serious cost-cutting initiatives as a result of the drought that has prevailed in the country over the last three years. Some of these initiatives involved strict budget controls, freezing of vacancies, and limited expenditure on plant maintenance. This brought about issues of low staff morale, poor plant performance, and low productivity. Employees in management positions and leadership roles – including engineers – are under extreme pressure to achieve more with fewer resources. Engineers are at a critical organisational level, being the link between the general workforce and senior management. The success of each operating centre is greatly dependent on the way in which each engineer effectively leads his team in achieving excellent performance on the set targets. This study sought to explore the leadership effectiveness of the engineers as they lead their teams; therefore various literature texts relevant to effective leadership were consulted to provide an in-depth comprehension of the theoretical cornerstone of effective leadership with respect to private organisations. The qualitative research methodology approach, which incorporated purposive sampling, was employed. The interviews were semi-structured and were conducted in person with fifteen engineers out of twenty that were initially selected from THS SA's five operating centres – Felixton (FX), Amatikulu (AK), Darnall (DL), Maidstone (MS) and Hulett Refinery (HR). Participants were selected for this study by virtue of their current positions; and data were analysed using thematic analysis. During the interviews, a number of issues that had an impact on the effectiveness of the engineers were identified, the main issue being the perception from the majority of the engineers, that the organisation was placing very little emphasis on their role as leaders, which led them to believe that they were not recognised as leaders. The engineers' appointments are based on their technical competencies; considering that the nature of the business is a production environment in which compliance is essential, engineers are expected to practise more managerial duties: this then, makes the leadership role seem a secondary responsibility. To address this finding, a comprehensive role profile for the engineers' positions, which should include the detailed leadership competencies and responsibilities, must be developed. The engineers' performance evaluation, apart from being based on the technical aspect, should also include the leadership aspect of the position. The study concluded with recommendations on how to improve the leadership capabilities of the engineers to enhance their effectiveness, implying that it is currently compromised.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Tongaat Hulett Sugar South Africa (THS SA) being an agricultural, agri-processing organisation, has been faced with serious shortages of the raw material for sugar manufacturing as a result of the drought situation that has prevailed in the country over the last three years.

According to Allix (2016), the group mentioned that the conditions under which it was operating were still arduous; and as such, total sugar production volumes were still being heavily impacted by the reduced cane yields resulting from the crippling drought in KwaZulu-Natal. Kilian (2016) added that the Group CEO, Mr. Peter Staude, highlighted that the company's sugar volumes had decreased from 1.4 million tons several years ago to about one-million tons forecasted for this season. However, Mr. Staude was hopeful that production will increase to yield an additional 600 000 tons once the rains come.

Serious cost-cutting initiatives have been implemented, such as strict budget controls, an embargo on employment, and limited plant-maintenance expenditure. This has brought about issues of low staff morale, poor plant performance and low productivity, which then highlighted the need for effective leadership as an instrument with which to address the above-mentioned problems. Willcocks (2012) expressed that the nub of effective leadership is excellent management of teams, with solid prominence of interpersonal relationships as well as tasks.

Employees in management and leadership roles are under extreme pressure to achieve more with the few resources they have. Engineers fall into this category, their role being a combination of both management and leadership. Engineers are at a critical organisational level, being the link between the general workforce and senior management. The success of each operating centre is heavily dependent upon the way in which each engineer effectively leads his team in achieving excellent performance on the set targets of the key performance areas.

This study sought to explore the leadership effectiveness of the engineers as they lead their teams at THS SA's five operating sites - Felixton (FX), Amatikulu (AK), Darnall

(DL), Maidstone (MS), and Hulett Refinery (HR). The five operating centres are shown in Figure 1.1, which also shows all the other business sites for Tongaat Hulett.

The other sites are: the starch mills in Johannesburg and Cape Town; the farming areas in Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and Swaziland; the sugar mills in Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and South Africa; the sugar refinery in Durban; as well as the marketing and sales offices in Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and South Africa (Johannesburg and Port Elizabeth). Refer to Figure 1.1.

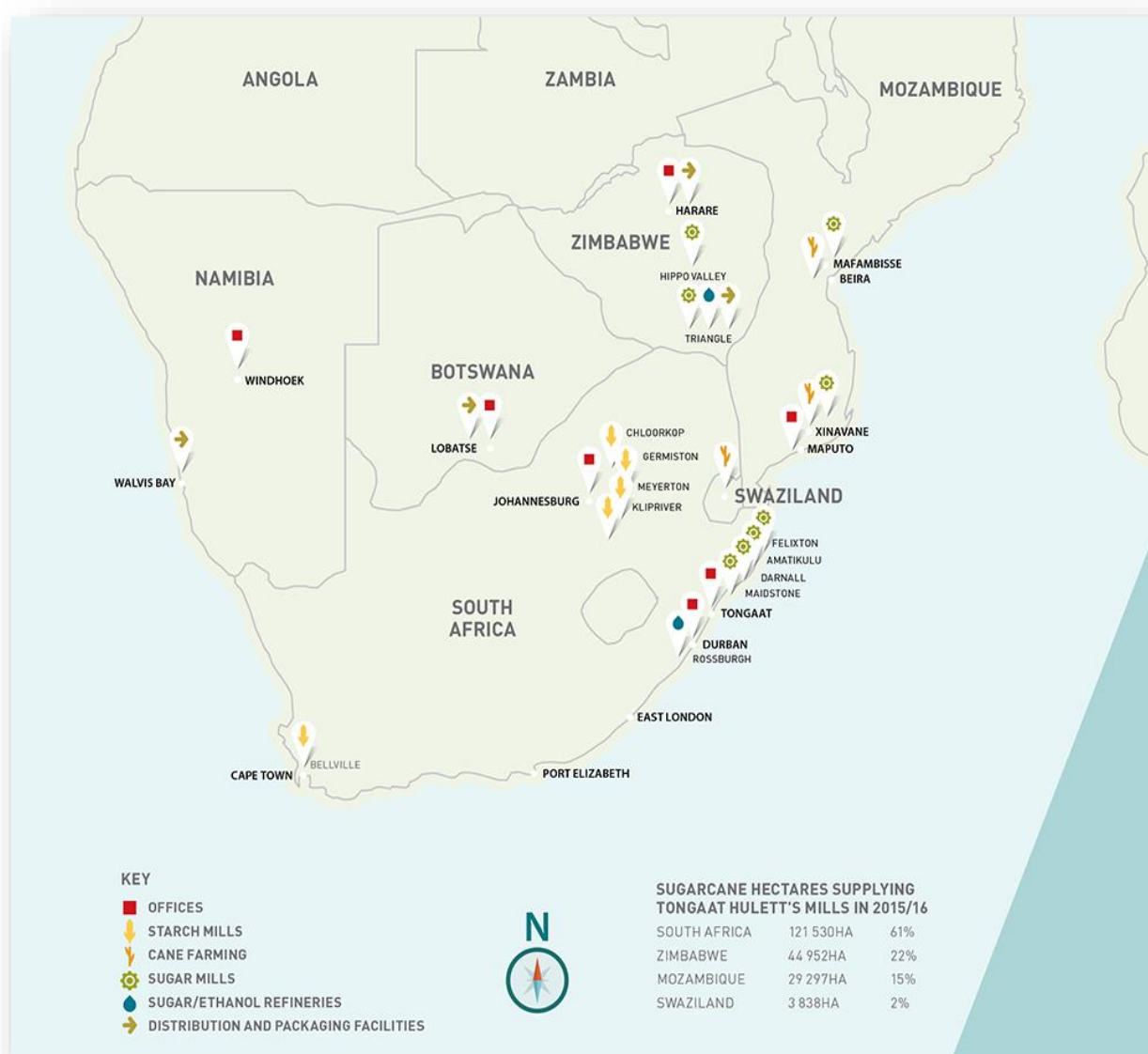


Figure 1.1 Geographic Foot-print for Tongaat Hulett

Source: Tongaat Hulett Integrated Annual report (2016)

1.2 Motivation for the Study

The sugar industry has been hard hit with a period of drought over the past three years. This has adversely impacted the cane crop, which translated to a massive reduction in the amount of sugar that could be produced (Crawford, 2015). As a result, THS SA remained equally affected by the driest year recorded, estimating the production of sugar for the 2016/17 season to be between 1 million tons and 1.1 million tons, compared with 1.02 million tons produced in 2015 (Heiberg, 2016).

Owing to management's having no control over the rainfall patterns, and sugar manufacturing being heavily reliant on rain for raw material, THS SA's management have had to concentrate on implementing serious cost-control measures and execution of effective interventions to realise attractive returns on capital. Also, owing to the nature of the business, the fixed costs' element of the business has remained very high; which means that the campaign for reducing costs has had to continue throughout all the operations (Goko, 2016).

On the 4th May 2016, in a meeting with the Managing Director (MD) for THS SA, Mr. Martin Mohale, which was unfortunately not formally recorded using minutes, Mr. Mohale, stated that, owing to the current economic and business climate conditions it was critical for the business to develop and implement initiatives that would save costs and also bring revenue to the business.

Mr. Mohale continued that the THS SA board had approved a number of strategic initiatives which had been developed by the executive leadership team during their leadership budget and business planning process. These strategic initiatives would create value for the business with an expected increase in revenue in the order of R600m, should they all come to fruition. Mr Mohale then urged every person participating in these initiatives to give of their best to ensure that the returns from these initiatives were realised. Mr Mohale further emphasised that success would depend on the commitment and effectiveness of each team member.

According to Corporate Affairs Tongaat Hulett (2016), collective cost-reduction strategies had been implemented. Such strategies would provide an opportunity for further reduction in the flexible and non-value-adding activities, ensuring waste eradication, and challenging patterns of costs customarily viewed as being fixed. In

addition, the flexible milling concept was developed to ensure that a further reduction in costs was achieved. Mills were run based on the available crop; for example, Darnall mill was shut down during the 2015/16 season, owing to insufficient cane supply: all employees were redeployed to other operating mills.

Furthermore, the interventions included special projects to enhance plant performance with emphasis on monitoring the current key performance areas, centralising certain services within the organisation, evaluating stores' inventories, concentrating on bought-in goods, services, transport, and marketing (Corporate Affairs Tongaat Hulett, 2016). Other interventions which were already in place included strict budget controls, an embargo on employment to reduce salaries and wages, reduction in maintenance expenditures, and eradicating of non-value-adding activities (Corporate Affairs Tongaat Hulett, 2016).

These latter interventions, unfortunately, had brought about issues of low staff morale, poor plant performance, and low productivity; consequently becoming the main elements motivating the conducting of this study.

According to Tiwari (2014), low staff morale results in poor plant performance and low productivity. Employees in management and leadership roles find themselves subjected to extreme pressures to uplift the morale, achieving more with the scanty resources they may have, the goals of the organisation still having to be accomplished. With regard to THS SA, the success of each operating centre, which would ultimately culminate in the success of the organisation, was heavily dependent on the way in which each section engineer effectively led his team in achieving excellent performance on whatever the target they set.

A number of studies (Shekari et al., 2012) on leadership effectiveness have been conducted both globally and locally. These studies highlighted the importance of effective, productive and enduring organisations and the fact that as much as these organisations can be re-organised, restructured or re-engineered to achieve the desired effectiveness, such will not be sustainable unless change is built on the preeminence of the human resource (the teams and their leaders).

According to Shekari et al. (2012) people and processes will always be more important than tasks and organisational structure in accomplishing goals and productivity and the effective systems and processes are only effective if the people who make them work and their leadership is effective.

These studies have mainly been focused in other areas of study and limited cases have been explored that focused on engineers as leaders. This then prompted the need to explore the leadership effectiveness of the engineers, to ascertain whether they are effective or not in their leadership roles, and then identify areas of improvement which needed to be addressed apropos of their leadership capabilities. The ways in which their leadership capabilities could be developed to the standard required by the organisation had to be determined – this in an effort to ensure that the effects of the difficult times were mitigated.

Other studies (Allen & Padayachee, 2011) done at THS SA had focused on different fields of study such as health, agriculture, human resources, and none had looked at leadership effectiveness of engineers.

It is believed that the outcomes of this study will add value to the existing knowledge base by shedding light on the above concerns for the benefit of the leaders within the organisation. It is hoped that, once the leaders have a full understanding of the identified gaps such as the need for formal leadership programmes, the need for job assignments, the need for executive coaching and action learning, as well as the need for networking they will initiate appropriate actions to ensure that the leadership effectiveness of the engineers is effectively addressed, to the benefit of the engineers, their teams, the organisation, and all other stakeholders.

1.3 Focus of the Study

This study focused on the leadership effectiveness of engineers at middle management level at THS SA, covering the engineers from the five operating centres – FX, AK, DL, MS and HR. The engineers, by virtue of being section leaders (managing and leading people), are in a leadership position within the organisation; hence effective leadership is an important component of their responsibilities.

1.4 Problem Statement

For any organisation, effective leadership at all levels of the organisation is a critical component for its success. The competency of many leaders is adequate when business conditions are normal and prosperous; however, when conditions change for the worse, and the situation becomes exacting and complicated, only the best of the leaders rise to the occasion (Direction, 2013).

Leaders give direction and guidance; therefore employees generally look up to them for such. Some leaders find themselves experiencing great apprehension as a result of the massive delivery expectations of the job: they find themselves struggling to manage. In most instances, the resultant loss of concentration has an effect on their ability to make the proper decisions, such that an undesirable situation is allowed to become intolerable, owing to incorrect decisions taken (Direction, 2013).

This is no different to the situation in which the engineers, as leaders at THS SA, find themselves. Their subordinates look to them for guidance and direction: if they cannot deliver, more often than not, the question of their leadership capability arises. Such situations cause stressful conditions for the engineers and there has been evidence indicating their technical competency being negatively affected, their self-confidence being dented, their general morale being affected, leading to them isolating themselves from the leadership teams. Evidence has also shown that this led to poor overall performance as most of the engineers had failed to achieve their key performance parameters.

On some occasions the engineers had even resorted to leaving the organisation because of failure to cope with their responsibilities: this has been experienced by some of the THS SA centres. During such times, it is imperative to have engineers with strong and effective leadership capabilities, this proving a success factor for the organisation.

Nicholson (2009) mentioned that the state of the business environment, globally, is volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous. It is at times like these that leadership effectiveness at all levels of an organisation becomes a game-changer. Leaders of businesses are faced with complex dynamics that have the potential either to build or

destroy their businesses during such difficult times: hence the need for organisations to adopt leadership that will sustain the business through periods of hardship.

Typically, the engineers at THS SA have adequate technical and other relevant competencies to deal with the technical matters demanded by their roles, as well as other, related matters. However, situations emerge when engineers are faced with leadership issues, and their leadership competencies and leadership effectiveness come seriously into question.

Examples according to Kutz (2012) are situations in which:

- leadership decisions have to be taken with regard to the direction of a team;
- the leader has to implement strategic directives from seniors;
- the leader has to inspire and motive his team for improved relationships, increased morale, and improved performances;
- the leader has to improve credibility and integrity of his team; and
- the leader has to decide how much autonomy has to be given to the team, and when.

Such situations demand a leader who is competent and effective.

In addition, one other difficulty that any leader faces, according to Direction (2013), is gaining the desired response from subordinates. This is a practical problem which the engineers, as leaders at THS SA, must confront. Their ability to motivate their teams to work towards a common goal for the organisation is at times severely tested. Döös et al. (2015) highlighted that leadership involves the process of exerting influence on others to understand and agree on the goals which have to be achieved in a given instance; and to accept the way in which the plans leading to the accomplishment of the goals may be effectively implemented.

1.5 Purpose of the Study

This study aimed to explore the leadership effectiveness of engineers at THS SA.

The objectives of the study were:

- To establish the leadership effectiveness of engineers as leaders at THS SA;
- To identify the areas of improvement that had to be addressed with regard to the engineers' leadership capabilities, in effectively leading their sections at THS SA; and
- To determine the way in which the leadership capabilities of engineers within THS SA could be developed to the standard required by the organisation.

1.6 Research Questions

This study focused on answering the questions below:

- How are engineers as leaders at THS SA effective in leading their teams?
- What are the areas of improvement that must be addressed with regard to the engineers' leadership capabilities in effectively leading their sections at THS SA?
- How may the leadership capabilities of engineers within THS SA be developed to the standard required by the organisation?

1.7 Research Methodology

The approach that was used for this study was the qualitative research methodology. This research methodology encompasses the exploration and comprehension of the meaning that individuals and groups attribute to a human or social problem. Typically, with such a methodology, questions and procedures emerge, data is collected and analysed, and the researcher makes meanings and interpretations of the data (Creswell, 2014).

Purposive sampling was used in this study, as this is the most apposite in cases in which researchers choose participants by virtue of their positions in the organisation, or because of the knowledge they may have on a particular subject (Hancock et al., 2009). The interviews conducted were semi-structured and face to face, which allowed for interaction between the researcher and the respondents. This approach also allowed for follow-up questions which helped the researcher to gain more clarity on the subject..

Twenty engineers from THS SA's five operating centres were initially selected as participants in this study by virtue of their current positions; however, only fifteen could be interviewed, the others having personal commitments during the research period. Data were analysed using thematic analysis, and the themes were used to present results for discussion in a narrative-text format. This is the most suitable format for displaying qualitative data on which to draw conclusions and make recommendations.

Various literature articles relevant to effective leadership were consulted so as to provide an in-depth comprehension of the theoretical cornerstone of effective leadership with respect to private organisations.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

A number of the respondents could have felt that some of the questions asked required responses that might have reflected badly on their leaders; as such they might have decided to be conservative with the truth. Others may have felt that any responses that would highlight areas which they needed to improve would be a poor reflection on them as individuals: their competencies could be focused on; hence they might have decided to be conservative with the truth.

A further limitation could have been that some respondents (newly appointed) were cautious in their responses, being uncomfortable about their inclusion in the sample. This was addressed by stressing the confidentiality of the responses; as well as by completing interviews in a closed meeting-room. Lastly, owing to possible bias and subjectivity of the researcher, certain preconceived ideas on the topic and personal experiences might also have contributed to the limitations. However, all efforts were applied in conducting a fair, objective, and unbiased study.

1.9 Structure of the Dissertation

1.9.1 Chapter One – Introduction

This chapter served to introduce the study by presenting information on the background of the study, the motivation for conducting the study, the focus of the study, and the problem statement. This was followed by the objectives of the study, and the research questions that were to be addressed. Also, provided in this chapter were the research methodology overview, and the study limitations.

1.9.2 Chapter Two – Literature Review

The literature review for this study is presented in this chapter. This review focuses on literature relevant to leadership, leadership factors, leadership principles, effective leadership, and leadership theories. Various journal articles were the main sources of information. The study will be contextualised by analysing theories found within the national as well as the international context of the literature. The review will provide support for the importance of conducting such a study.

1.9.3 Chapter Three – Research Methodology

This chapter discusses the research methodology that will be employed to conduct the study. It will also discuss the method of sampling utilised; the method of collecting data utilised, the instrument employed for data collection; and the data-analysis method used. The research quality criteria of the study will also be discussed taking into account the credibility, dependability, conformity and transferability of the information after taking into consideration the ethical issues relevant to the study.

1.9.4 Chapter Four – Results

The results of the interviews that were conducted with the respondents will be presented in this chapter. Themes were used to discuss the results in order to give an in-depth comprehension of the problem statement. In addition, a summary of the views of the various respondents is also provided in this chapter.

1.9.5 Chapter Five – Discussion of Results

This chapter presents the discussion of the results obtained from the study. Literature review is also brought in to assess the existence of any correlation between the findings from this study and those of other studies previously conducted.

1.9.6 Chapter Six – Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter will conclude this study by presenting the fundamental findings as well as the recommendations to management, together with recommendations for future research studies.

1.10 Conclusion

This chapter, being the first, introduced the study by giving information on the background of the study, the motivation for conducting the study, the focus of the study, and the problem statement. This was followed by the objectives of the study and the research questions to be addressed. Also covered in this chapter, was the research methodology overview, as well as the study limitations. The following chapter will focus on the literature review regarding leadership, leadership factors, leadership principles, effective leadership, and leadership theories.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the way in which the elements of leadership, leadership factors, and leadership principles, have been defined and explained by other scholars. It also examines the controversy surrounding the differences between leadership and management, while at the same time highlighting what other scholars have said about the leader–manager phenomenon. Through this literature review, attempts are made to clarify the essential differences between a leader and a manager, this being a crucial component of the daily responsibilities of the engineers as leaders at THS SA.

The subject of effective leadership and the outcomes of effective leadership have also been examined, and other authors' perspectives have been explored in seeking clarity and a better understanding. The chapter then explores leadership evolution and the related leadership theories, placing the various styles of leadership within a broader theoretical framework of leadership. Leadership theories that were reviewed in this chapter are: The “Great Man” theory, the trait theory, the situational theory, the transactional theory as well as the transformational theory.

The theoretical framework for this research is informed by the various leadership theories which have evolved over many decades. These leadership theories give a theoretical view of the study relating to the concept of leadership effectiveness of engineers at THS SA.

2.2 Leadership

Leadership is a diverse and complex concept that has proved to be difficult to define in one simple sentence or paragraph, there being many models and definitions provided by the literature. Allio (2012) stated that leadership comes across as having many facets, dimensions, and aspects. Lopez (2014) supported this notion by adding that scholars are yet to determine an absolute definition of leadership. Many of the scholars still disagree on the exact elements that comprise leadership, and on the norms or practices of leadership that one may successfully emulate (Allio, 2012).

Examining the above statements, it is evident that there are many and varied opinions with respect to defining leadership; hence leadership has been portrayed as an inexplicit, unclear, and even unearthly concept. This scepticism has created some difficulty in conceptualising leadership; and it has made it even more difficult to implement (Kutz, 2012).

McCarthy (2014) argued that leadership is both a process and a property. On the one hand, the process element consists of using non-intimidating influence, whilst on the other hand the property element consists of the set of qualities ascribed to an individual that is perceived by others successfully to employ influence in accomplishing desired outcomes. With many leadership definitions in existence, McCarthy (2014) contributed to the literature by simply defining it as the creative process of leading people. Green and McCann (2011) added that leadership is about inspiring and motivating other people to achieve positive outcomes, and also guiding people in the desired direction whilst being exemplary in all aspects.

Similarly, leadership has been defined by Döös et al. (2015) as the process of exerting influence over others to understand and agree on goals to be accomplished in a given instance; and the way in which plans leading to the accomplishment of the goals may effectively be implemented. Leadership is further defined as the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to achieve shared objectives (Döös et al., 2015). Sharma and Jain (2013) contributed to the literature by saying that leadership is a practice that an individual uses to influence other people to achieve goals, and also to channel the organisation in a manner that translates to improved integration and consistency.

Expanding on the process element of leadership as mentioned earlier (motivating and influencing), Allio (2012) pointed out that many dynamics are at play, adding that some are visible while others are not. Some of these dynamics may be named as: the followers' expectations from the leader, the organisational culture, and the conditions surrounding the matter under review. The matter under review and its context seems to be the determining factor in when and how the leadership should be exercised; this leads to the conclusion that the dynamics of leadership are influenced by the prevailing circumstances.

Allio (2012) went further, giving an example of an organisation in a crisis creating a strategy such as employing a charismatic leader to guide the organisation out of the crisis situation, turning its fortunes around. However, in calm, peaceful, and stable times, the expectation from the leaders is to maintain the status quo, maximising the returns and market shares. Spicker (2012) agreed, pointing out that such leadership concepts are linked to the comprehension that leadership is a set of competencies or methodologies used to exercise influence in a situation.

Discussing the property element (personal traits) of leadership, Lopez (2014) commented that scholars concur on several notions that demonstrate the qualities of a leader. He mentioned that leaders possess leadership traits. Each leader offers his unique qualities, such as authenticity, confidence, decisiveness, and so forth, differentiating him from the rest. This leadership trait phenomenon introduced the once-common belief that leaders were born, and not made (Sharma & Jain, 2013).

Other important leadership traits worth mentioning are: charisma, emotional intelligence, enthusiasm, toughness, fairness, honesty, humility, and integrity (Spicker, 2012). According to Spicker (2012), the list of these leadership traits is endless, each leader potentially having a multiplicity of traits. Spicker (2012) added some other key elements of leadership to include the leader's ability to achieve certain objectives which set him apart from the rest; the skills and knowledge the leader possesses make him highly competent. The behaviour displayed by the leader is important as it predicts his or her attitude in any given situation. Lopez (2014) added relationship as another key element – in which case the focus becomes the leader-follower relationship in an inclusive process.

Allio (2012) summarised the categories for these traits as issues encompassing capacity, achievement, responsibility, participation, status, and situation. Sharma and Jain (2013) further commented that, while leadership is learned, the attributes or traits of the leader may influence the competencies and know-how possessed by him or her. Such traits were named as values, ethics, beliefs, and character. On the one hand, the competencies and the knowledge make a direct contribution to the leadership process, while on the other hand, other attributes endow the leader with certain qualities which individualise him.

In addition, Allio (2012) suggested that people grow into leaders as they test and try out various approaches, in an effort to deal with new problems. They gradually merge the approaches that have been successful into a preferred leadership style which they practise. Ultimately, this means that to improve or gain leadership competencies and introspection, and to develop a genuine personal identity which supports a leadership role, one must experience the leadership journey.

2.3 Leadership Factors

Sharma and Jain (2013) named four key leadership factors that make up the leadership process. Without any one of these leadership factors the leadership process cannot exist. These factors are listed and briefly discussed below:

2.3.1 Leader

There must be someone in the role of leader. It is important for this person to clearly understand himself, to clearly understand his knowledge limitations, and to clearly understand his capabilities. The success of the leader is determined by his followers, not by him or anyone else. The followers' inspiration comes from their trust and belief in their leader, having confidence in him (Sharma & Jain, 2013). Allio (2012) pointed out that a critical collaboration must exist between the parties, that is, the leaders and the followers, when choosing a course of action. Allio (2012) also pointed out that the effective implementation of the leader's agenda is dependent upon the followers' response to the leader.

2.3.2 Followers

There must be followers. Sharma and Jain (2013) argue that the followers will come from very different backgrounds, having very different experiences, different attitudes, values, and beliefs. This means that the leadership styles to be utilised in leading the followers will not be identical in every case. Alkahtani (2016) supported this argument, saying that a leader cannot afford to use one standard or prescribed leadership style, hoping to lead effectively.

Rajkumar et al. (2016) gave a typical example in which a new team member needs closer supervision compared with an experienced team member. Also, a team member lacking motivation needs an approach that will be different from the one

employed towards a team member who is highly motivated. Sharma and Jain (2013) added their view again by saying that this ultimately means that the leader must know and understand his followers. Lastly, the above researchers said that it was critical for the leader to possess a good comprehension of the element of human nature, which includes such aspects as emotions, motivation, and needs.

2.3.3 Communication

This is viewed as a critical component of the leadership process. The leader has to lead by means of a two-way communication method, which should be dominated more by personal demonstrations than by verbal communication. For instance, when the leader “sets the example,” this should give a clear and concise message to the subordinates of what they are required to perform: the leader should also be willing to engage in such action. It is important to realise that what is being communicated and how it is communicated will either build or destroy the relationship between the leader and the subordinates (Sharma & Jain, 2013).

2.3.4 Situation

Situations in the workplace will vary widely. This means that what works in one situation will not necessarily work in another. A complex situation always exists when it comes to people and leadership situations in the work environment, and therefore the skill of being adaptable in every situation is imperative. Also, the correct judgement is crucial, in terms of deciding on the best leadership style to use in any particular situation (Giltinane, 2013).

The timing of the implementation of the leadership style to use is also of paramount importance. For example, a situation may call for an employee to be confronted by the leader for unacceptable conduct. If the engagement happens rather early or too late, or if it falls on either on the harsh or weak side, the engagement may have no proper effect. Normally, the circumstances have a more profound impact on the leader's course of action than do his traits (Sharma & Jain, 2013).

2.4 Leadership Principles

Over the years, researchers have presented a number of leadership principles as a guide to leaders in enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of their leadership roles. These principles are basic in nature and can easily be put into practice. They should form part of the daily lifestyle of any leader: it is crucial for the engineers of THS SA to adopt such principles. Sharma and Jain (2013) listed some of the principles as follows:

- 2.4.1 Self-understanding, coupled with pursuing self-improvement – the self-understanding aspect is about understanding one's personal attributes, and knowing one's strengths and weaknesses as a leader. Pursuing self-improvement means strengthening personal attributes and continually improving on weaknesses. This may be achieved through self-study, formal classes, reflection, and in interacting with others.
- 2.4.2 Technical proficiency - as a leader, one must have a clear understanding of one's job, whilst also having a sound knowledge of the tasks being executed by the employees. The employees need to know that they can receive help and advice about their tasks any time they approach their leader; this ensures that the leader commands respect and admiration from the followers.
- 2.4.3 Embracing responsibility and being responsible for own actions – the leader must find ways to add value to the organisation; he must avoid the blame culture when things go wrong. He must 'stand up and be counted' at all times, striving for solutions to problems, and accepting challenges as learning opportunities.
- 2.4.4 Making the correct decisions at the proper times – the appropriate tools are always available for the leader to use when required for decision-making, problem-solving, and proper planning. The leader must be decisive, and avoid procrastination.
- 2.4.5 Exemplary behaviour – employees reciprocate good behaviour, therefore the leader must be a good role model for his team. The team must not only hear what they are expected to do, but also see it in action. ("We must become the change we want to see" - Mahatma Gandhi). The leader must avoid being a

boss who merely tells the team what to do. Rather, he must be a leader, demonstrating the actions.

- 2.4.6 Knowing your subordinates, and take good care of their welfare – the leader must ensure that he knows and understands his subordinates. This will help him take the best course in dealing with subordinates individually. Caring leaders find that their followers are appreciative and will make supreme efforts to perform their tasks assiduously.
- 2.4.7 Keeping your workers informed – effective communication is crucial: one cannot easily over-communicate with one's workers. The leader must share his vision with the followers in words they can understand. Effective communication also applies between a leader and his seniors, and other stakeholders within the organisation.
- 2.4.8 Instilling a culture of responsibility in subordinates – the leader must empower his workers with the necessary skills and knowledge they need to effectively execute their tasks, giving them the most apposite tools for the job. The leader must guide subordinates to build good character traits that will assist them in effecting their professional responsibilities and obligations.
- 2.4.9 Making certain that there is clear understanding, supervision, and accomplishment of all tasks – clear communication to workers of what is expected of them is crucial in ensuring that the desired organisational outcomes are achieved. The leader must share the glory of the achievements with the subordinates, whilst protecting them from deleterious situations.

2.5 Leadership and Management

There is always some controversy surrounding the relationship between leadership and management. Algahtani (2014) drew attention to the fact that most people assume that all managers are leaders, and that all leaders are managers. Algahtani (2014) disputes this assumption, saying that this is fallacious because, in reality, certain institutions have managers who are not involved in practising any leadership; in some organisations people perform leadership roles even though they do not hold any managerial positions. This statement upholds the notion that the controversy surrounding the differences between managers and leaders remains ongoing.

According to Kutz (2012), management and leadership differences are best explained by scrutinising the desired processes and outcomes. Kutz (2012) says that typically, the desired leadership outcomes are vision-casting, change, and innovation; whereas management has predictability, vision implementation, and maintaining the status quo as the desired outcomes. Leadership and management, even though striving towards similar outcomes, often require different approaches, their operating frameworks differing from each other.

Döös et al. (2015) simplified the leader-manager controversy by highlighting that, in reality, a person appointed as a manager within an organisation has sometimes to perform certain leadership responsibilities whilst holding the managerial position. The above-mentioned researcher continued that leadership is therefore viewed as being an integral part of managers' duties, and that this function given the name 'managerial leadership'.

Organisational practices have proved that there is an overlap between leadership and management, even though these two activities are not the same in nature or application. Furthermore, there are still many differences in opinion on the degree of overlap; some scholars see the overlap as extreme, whilst others see it as very close. The extremists believe that if a person is good as a leader, he cannot be good as a manager; conversely, that if he is good as a manager, he cannot be good as a leader (Algahtani, 2014).

Allio (2012) contributed to the discussion by saying that some academics have tried to differentiate leadership from management. Such academics argue with confidence that managers intimidate or threaten, while leaders use gentle persuasion, or that managers look at the “now” or status quo, while leaders look beyond the present. Ultimately, the practical realisation is that managers must perform their leadership roles, and leaders must also perform their managerial roles within an organisation.

According to Spicker (2012), leaders are risk-takers, whereas managers would rather avoid taking risks; leadership tackles nasty problems, while management handles docile problems. Some elements of management are: execution, proper structures, efficiency, and effectiveness; whereas leadership is focused on the future, and in unknown and ambiguous conditions. Algahtani (2014) added that leadership and management encompass a peculiar set of activities or functions. While common similarities are shared between leaders and managers, such as influencing others by using specific powers to accomplish certain objectives, some prominent differences exist.

Kutz (2012) continued that, while both leadership and management exercise command, possess authority and influence, and lay down objectives, the notion that the internal drive and motivation between the two concepts are distinctly not the same differentiates leadership from management. As mentioned earlier, leadership predominantly uses alignment, vision-casting, effective communication, introspection, and self-assessment to advance willing subordinates; whereas, management utilises planning, organising, controlling, and coordinating, irrespective of whether their subordinates are willing.

One example given by Algahtani (2014) was that, while managers maintain the status quo of a well-operating organisation, leaders subject the current status quo to testing, promoting the establishment of new innovations and functions. In other words, leaders are exploring new territories for long-term goals. With today’s volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous business environment, it is of utmost importance that organisations pride themselves on both effective managers and effective leaders for optimal success.

Allio (2012) further stated that one of the fundamental differences is that managers assign subordinates, whilst leaders assign followers; and that influence is applied by leaders as opposed to authority which is used by managers. Stated differently, this means that management is considered a role or function within an organisation, whereas leadership is a relationship developed between the leader and follower, irrespective of the context of the organisation.

On the one hand, management comes to the fore in dealing with technical problems when they arise, and this requires the intervention of standard policies and procedures. On the other hand, leadership is needed when random issues emerge that need adaptability, critical and strategic thinking, creativity, and innovation. These issues do not have pre-established or standard solutions (Kutz, 2012).

The above literature seems to have drawn a clear distinction between leadership and management. However, according to Kutz (2012), one must not forget that academics have defined the fundamental roles of a manager as planning, leading, organising, and controlling; and the inclusion of the term “leading” then creates the unresolved controversy.

Spicker (2012) concurred with the above notion by pointing out that, apart from the formal authority roles, informational roles, and decision roles which managers play, managers also have interpersonal roles to play, such as the role of figurehead, leader, and liaison person; and this statement further complicates the controversy.

Table 2.1 below gives a comparison between leader and manager characteristics.

Table 2.1: Leader Characteristics vs Manager Characteristics

LEADER CHARACTERISTICS	MANAGER CHARACTERISTICS
• Thinks outside the box	• Looks inwardly
• Executes plans	• Communicates a plan
• Invents the future	• Enhances the current times
• Gives autonomy	• Takes charge
• Refers to teammates	• Refers to workers
• Trusts and develops	• Trusts and develops
• Does the right things	• Does things correctly
• Brings about change	• Administers change
• Serves subordinates	• Serves superiors
• Utilises influential power	• Utilises command
• Avoids unnecessary disagreements	• Uses conflict situations
• Is firm and resolute in decision-making	• Accounts for his actions

(Sourced from Lunenburg as cited in Algahtani, 2014:80)

In concluding this discussion, Algahtani (2014) emphasised the fact that leaders and managers are the backbone of an organisation, and with their roles overlapping, they should be viewed as complementary to one another. He stressed that strong leadership and strong management are crucial to the success of any organisation; and that its optimal effectiveness can only be realised if the two roles are allowed to co-exist. Green and McCann (2011) added that organisations need good managers who will make the right decisions with regard to resourcing and planning in generating the required outcomes, using the available resources effectively.

Algahtani (2014) emphasised that the business environment is currently both dynamic and hostile. As such, organisations can only survive under good leaders who can excel when faced with new problems; bringing about transformation that will enhance the organisations' competitive advantage in the marketplace. Algahtani (2014) also pointed out that there must be a good balance between the roles of both management and leadership, as well as a good mix of leaders and managers, for an organisation to reap the fruits of success.

2.6 Effective Leadership

It is important in this section to discuss the concept of effective leadership, as this particular study is focused on exploring the leadership effectiveness of engineers at THS SA. According to Willcocks (2012), the term effectiveness is a subjective concept that is socially constructed; hence it is argued that scholars have differing opinions about its true meaning. As a result, the term leadership is exposed to many differing interpretations and meanings, being dependent purely on the viewpoint of the individual person or stakeholders of the organisation.

Characteristics given by Willcocks (2012) of effectiveness are that it may be associated with results or outputs; it may be about performance enhancement through achievement of production targets, financial targets and standards. Inputs, likewise, may be linked to effectiveness, for instance, the input from the leader into the process, or the team's input. In some instances, effectiveness may mean having a great deal to do with the process; and this could be referring specifically to the accomplishment of targets and standards.

Algahtani (2014) added that being an effective leader is underpinned by certain behaviours and qualities that are common knowledge, some of them being: the mentality to serve, the ability to coach and mentor, being reliable, being an expert in certain areas, being responsible, possessing listening and communication skills, having a clear vision, being authentic, having good ability to prioritise; being honest and willing to share, as well as having self-confidence. Willcocks (2012) argued that ultimately, the nub of an effective leadership style is excellent management of teams with solid emphasis on interpersonal relationships as well as tasks.

Allio (2012) pointed out that effective leaders must be competent, and must have integrity and commitment to their organisations. Understanding the organisational culture and the structure within which it functions is of utmost importance. Furthermore, he articulated that effective leaders address the needs of the many stakeholders with whom they are involved; they strike a good balance between economic and non-economic objectives; and they set up, as well as keep track of performance measures, be they short-term or long-term.

Willcocks (2012) added that characteristics such as intelligence, self-esteem, internal drive, integrity, physical attributes, initiative, resilience, and achievement have been highlighted by research studies as being crucial to effective leadership. The latest studies have associated leadership effectiveness with a variety of characteristics such as physical and personal characteristics, work-related characteristics, intelligence and ability, social characteristics, as well as social background.

Green and McCann (2011) highlighted that some of the basic ingredients an effective leader must have in his toolbox to assist him in his leadership role are the following:

- A professional and personal vision - The leader must have a vivid personal vision that guides him, as well as an understanding of the vision of the organisation.
- The leader must enjoy what he is doing. Passion and enthusiasm are critical elements in his behaviour.
- The leader must have ethics and be a person of integrity. Self-knowledge, maturity, and honesty must form the fundamental basis of the behaviour.

Green and McCann (2011) further mentioned that the next generation of effective leaders will share many common behaviours, beliefs, values and traits, such as intellectual capabilities, a strong desire to learn, unlimited eagerness, spreadable positive attitudes, having faith in workers as well as teams, a strong desire for risk-taking, commitment to growth on a long-term basis as opposed to short-term gains, devotion to brilliance, originality, morality, and imagination. This means that organisations will experience more or less the same kind of leadership, with only the differing organisational cultures bringing in the slight variations.

Another important point to mention apropos of effective leadership is the issue of ethics in the workplace. According to Nainawat and Meena (2013), the definition of ethics is a collection of principles, values, beliefs, and standards of human conduct that rule individuals' and organisations' behaviour. Furthermore, it is the field of study that deals with moral duties and obligations, an explanation of what is good and what is bad for others, as well as for oneself.

Numerous corporate scandals have dominated headlines globally, over many years. As such, ethics has become a crucial topic in corporate headquarters for effective

leadership. Well-known global business leaders have been caught up in unethical and unlawful practices, resulting in their falling from grace: many lessons have been learnt from such cases (Keller-Krawczyk, 2010). It is therefore essential that leaders maintain the highest standards of ethics to remain effective in their leadership roles.

According to Green and McCann (2011), the success of leadership in the present global work environment requires effective leaders to motivate followers to accomplish goals through leaders' working hard and committing to people and the organisation. Furthermore, the above-mentioned researchers stated that effective leadership encompasses guiding followers in the desired direction whilst remaining exemplary as leaders.

In addition, leadership success and effectiveness is considered only as good as the 'what' (leadership behaviours) as well as the 'why' (personal values) of the way in which the leader leads. Therefore, in essence, leadership comes down to respect, trust, honour, and integrity. It is important for leaders to practise or model principles to which they subscribe. This will ensure the effecting of the desired authority and sustainable respect to lead competently (Green & McCann, 2011).

For this particular study, the concept of effective leadership or leadership effectiveness means the capacity to achieve results and enhance achievement of targets and standards, coupled with excellent management of teams with solid emphasis on interpersonal relationships as well as tasks.

2.7 Outcomes of Effective Leadership

Kutz (2012) commented that, whilst the norm is to accept the notion that good leadership competencies give rise to the achievement of goals with improved results, these claims cannot be proved empirically. An example given is that, owing to the many variables to be considered when evaluating change or analysing results, researchers and theorists cannot produce evidence to support the notion that for all, most, or even some of the improvements in performance, leadership is the main key driving component responsible for the outcomes.

According to Rosete and Ciarrochi (2005), the measuring of leadership effectiveness has always been difficult, as objective criteria are often non-existent. Some have argued that emphasis must be laid on the return on investment for the shareholders; while others have advocated for a more balanced approach, which also incorporates non-financial measures. Kutz (2012) expressed that, despite there being an element of ambiguity in the measuring of leadership, there are some accepted outcomes that are based on empirical studies.

Some examples of such outcomes as highlighted by Kutz (2012) are: leadership in others, improved reliability and integrity, improved correlations, greater levels of agreement, higher levels of motivation, increased confidence, improved tenacity and commitment of subordinates, enhanced learning, mutual respect, empowerment, critical thinking, innovation, a sense of direction, future ambitions, and fulfilment.

2.8 Evolution of Leadership

The leadership field has seen huge progress being made towards discovering some of the enduring mysteries associated with leadership over the many decades of leadership research. Some of these mysteries include the question of whether leaders are born or made; the way in which followers determine the success of their leaders, the way in which some societies and organisations are built or destroyed by charismatic leaders; as well as the impact of leading in the world of advanced technology, and the way in which this affects individual and collective performances (Avolio et al., 2009).

Allio (2012) argued that we are all witnesses to the fact that leadership styles have been evolving over time: this is a process that will continue for as long as mankind is alive. Avolio et al. (2009) concurred, saying that it is evident that, as long as leadership research scholars are still in existence, the leadership theory research will be conducted for many decades to come; and the outcomes are expected to be the most exciting in the history of this planet.

In the twentieth century the dominant leadership style was the autocratic and directive approach, which over the years has changed to one more participative and democratic. A study contrasting the merits of autocratic leadership (Theory X) with the

merits of the participative style (Theory Y) was conducted by Douglas McGregor: these contrasts are still applicable to the present times (Allio, 2012).

One can attribute the changes in leadership styles to a number of factors, some being the change in people's attitudes, the skills and knowledge acquired by people, people's lifestyles, and advances in technology. Avolio et al. (2009) pointed out that, during the early days of the leadership study, the main objective was to analyse a single individual who was most likely a male, and who was perceived to have great authority and power. However, as the workers acquired more skills and knowledge, this model lost its popularity.

In present times, the leadership field has become diversely focused, the leader no longer being the only centre of focus. The focused diversity now includes the group of people being led, the colleagues, organisational culture and all stakeholders associated with an organisation. One can no longer simply describe leadership as an individual characteristic; but rather, as a vast collection of characteristics depicted in many models (Kutz, 2012).

According to Allio (2012), during the 1950s leadership-based theories were made popular. Models built on these theories suggested that the approach a leader used to communicate with his followers was the main determinant of his leadership effectiveness. Lopez (2014) explained that these leadership studies had concentrated on the characteristics of the leaders, which were identified as leadership traits. Sharma and Jain (2013) added that it was evident that these traits influenced the leaders' actions and, emanating from this, was the customary belief that leaders were born as opposed to being made.

At the time it was believed that leadership was a characteristic ability of extraordinary individuals who had the natural ability to lead. This leadership concept; known as the "great man" theory, evolved into the study of the trait theory of leadership (McCleskey, 2014). As the research on leadership progressed, the style approach was developed in the 1960s, placing a great deal of emphasis on the leader's behaviour (behavioural theory). Allio (2012) pointed out that the behavioural theory presents itself in two dimensions that exhibit the relative importance of task-orientation and relationships between subordinates.

Lopez (2014) added that afterwards, the situational approach was established and this was during the late 1960s and early 1970s. This approach gave birth to the situational theory which focused on the actions of the leader towards a given situation. Around the same era, Fiedler developed the contingency theory with its basis the concept that leaders must be matched to appropriate situations.

According to Allio (2012), research at the time suggested that the relationship between leadership style and performance alone was not solid enough, hence the contingency models developed, further suggesting that the effectiveness of leadership was the consequence of the interconnection between three elements: the make-up of the task to be executed, the leaders' and followers' relationships, and the positional powers of the leaders.

Another element was added by the most comprehensive of the contingency models: the followers' willingness to perform. This on its own reflected the amount of power possessed by the leader (Allio, 2012). Lopez (2014) stated that during the 1970s, the path-goal theory then evolved with its basis the leader's ability to inspire his followers to achieve particular objectives.

All the theories that were developed during the above-mentioned periods gradually shifted away from a leader-centred to a subordinate-centred perspective. Further research during the 1970s and 1980s led to the establishment of another theory called the leader-member exchange theory, which had its focus more on a leader-subordinate perspective (Lopez, 2014).

Lopez (2014) continued with the discussion by introducing another theory that was established during the 1980s and 1990s. This theory, according to Odumeru and Ifeanyi (2013), became known as the transformational leadership theory, entailing the kind of leadership that created positive change in the follower's mind through motivation and inspiration, resulting in increased performance.

Interestingly, according to Lopez (2014), another leadership theory called the transactional leadership theory was also developed around the same time. This theory became synonymous with a typical manager's leadership style, owing to its concepts of task completion, and predictability, as well as the give-and-take practices that are

involved. In addition, Lopez (2014) gave an example, stating that a manager offers a reward or a performance bonus to the best-performing employee for the chosen period; whereas the transformational leader comes across as the visionary individual, with the capability of motivating his followers purely by persuading them in a gentle manner with moral influence. Lopez (2014) concluded that the transformational leader seems in perfect contrast to the transactional leader.

2.9 Leadership Theories

Leadership literature reviews reveal that there is an evolving series of 'schools of thought' with regard to leadership theories. Research brought about the great man and trait theories, further unearthing many other theories leading to recent theories such as the transactional and transformational leadership theories. Whilst it is evident that theories developed during the early years were inclined to focus on the behaviour and characteristics of leaders who were successful, it is also evident that later theories began to consider an inclusive approach, viewing the followers' roles and the context of the calibre of leadership being practised (Bolden et al., 2003).

As mentioned earlier, during the evolution phase, researchers developed and produced a wide range of leadership approaches, theories, and models. For the purpose of this study, the following leadership theories were analysed and discussed. These were selected because of the close relevance they have to this study. They are as follows:

- The "Great Man" Leadership Theory
- The "Trait" Leadership Theory
- The Situational Leadership Theory
- The Transactional Leadership Theory
- The Transformational Leadership Theory

Table 2.2 below briefly describes the above-mentioned theories. Further discussions on these theories follow in the subsequent subsections of this chapter.

Table 2.2: Leadership Theories

Great Man Theory	Built upon the belief that leaders are exceptional individuals, born with innate characteristics, bound to lead. The term 'man' was used purposefully, as, until the later years of the twentieth century, people perceived leadership to be a predominantly male, military, and Western notion. This led to the next school of trait theories.
Trait Theories	Long lists of traits or characteristics linked with leadership exist and are still being generated to this day. These lists offer practically all the descriptive words used for positive or honourable human attributes, from aspirations to passion for life.
Situational Leadership	This approach views leadership as particular to the situation in which it is being practised. Whilst some situations may warrant an autocratic style, others may require a participative approach. The approach also suggests that leadership style differs at various levels within the same organisation.
Transactional Theory	In this approach the leader–follower relationship is important. The approach concentrates on the correlative benefits that come from a form of 'contract' through which perquisites such as incentives or recognition are delivered by the manager in return for the allegiance or obedience of the subordinates.
Transformational Theory	The fundamental concept in this approach is transformation and the role of leadership in envisaging and executing the transformation of performance within the organisation.

(Sourced from Bolden et al., 2003:6)

2.9.1 The “Great Man” Theory

Allio (2012) elaborated that, during the beginning of the revolution of industry the “Great Man” theory ruled the explanations of the leadership that existed during the time. Kutz (2012) added that the “Great Man” theory encouraged the notion that genetics influenced the superior leader status, suggesting that a leader was born with certain innate qualities and capabilities for leadership.

Avolio et al. (2009) pointed out that, during the early days of the ‘great man’ era of leadership, the main objective was to analyse an individual, who was most likely a male, and who was perceived to have great authority and power. The term great man

dominated at the time, because people perceived leadership to be a quality that was predominantly male. Kutz (2012) supported this notion by saying that during these times the influence and powers of the leader came naturally; and being a visionary was not viewed as a necessity for secure backing from the followers. It emerged that, in most cases, fear or respect was the basis for a leader's influence; and under this model, it was very rare to have the leader's position challenged.

According to McCleskey (2014), the ideology was that only exceptional individuals possessed leadership characteristics. The study of the leadership traits then came about as a result of the evolving of the great man theory. McCleskey (2014) continued by saying that it was not surprising to note that this great man ideology still has some serious supporters in this day and age.

Typically, this is evident in some workplaces, as expressed by Hofmeyr and Mzobe (2012), that the promotion of females into senior positions in all sectors of the economy – including the South African government – remains a huge problem confronting the business sector. The mere fact that only a few females are in positions of senior leadership, specifically as board members, means that businesses are not fully utilising the capabilities of women.

Rarieya (2013) argued that people still believe that leadership positions in society and organisations belong to the male species: these traditional societal gender stereotypes pose a fundamental challenge to women in leadership. In addressing this problem, according to Zyl (2003), the Employment Equity Legislation worldwide sought to make certain that females and other designated groups in all occupational classifications and grades had the same representation in the business sphere.

According to Mkhize and Msweli (2011), the terms of the employment equity policies and guidelines state that employment preferences in the workplace should be given to women applicants as opposed to male candidates. This will ensure that the imbalance in the workplace that exists between males and females is dealt with effectively; most importantly, at senior levels of management, women leaders still numbering too few.

2.9.2 The “Trait” Theory

According to Bolden et al. (2003), the trait approach is a subsequent build-up from the great man theory. The trait theory arose as researchers were seeking a method of identifying the important characteristics of successful leaders. Researchers were of the opinion that the key leadership traits of these leaders could be singled out through this approach. Anyone who demonstrated traits of this nature could then be engaged, hand-picked, and appointed as a leader. The military predominantly used this approach – it is still practised in some places as a selection criterion for candidates.

Kutz (2012) added that the trait theory assumes that leadership traits are either naturally inherent to an individual, or a godly quality that has been bestowed upon the individual; or that, since the traits are part and parcel of the natural identity of the individual, the person can at any stage be called up to lead effectively, regardless of how much time he may have been lying idle, and not been involved in any leadership role.

The trait theory of leadership also postulated that leader emergence and effectiveness was influenced by personality traits. It placed strong emphasis on the belief that certain traits differentiated leaders from other individuals. If one did not display those particular traits, one was deemed unsuitable as a successful leader (Colbert et al., 2012).

Bolden et al. (2003) argued that, with traits as numerous as they are, there was no reason to believe that an individual who did not possess some of the key traits would fail as a leader. The above-mentioned researcher continued that, although consistency in the results was limited, some traits appeared more consistently than others. These were said to include: technical skills, kindness, task motivation, charisma, and emotional intelligence.

Some scholars have come out to criticise this theory by saying that it focused on a small set of individual attributes such as the Big Five personality traits, to the neglect of cognitive abilities, motives, values, social skills, expertise, and problem solving skills (Hoque, 2013). According to Hoque (2013) the scholars further argued that the trait theory failed to consider patterns or integrations of multiple attributes; did not distinguish between those leader attributes that are generally not malleable over time and those that are shaped by, and bound to, situational influences and that it did not

consider how stable leader attributes account for the behavioural diversity necessary for effective leadership.

Colbert et al. (2012) mentioned that the first half of the twentieth century was dominated by leadership studies conducting tests on the trait theory, trying to identify common traits for effective leaders. However, after several years of such tests, it became evident that there was no consistency in the results of traits identified. Such inconsistency created much doubt in the minds of the researchers, this theory eventually losing its popularity.

2.9.3 Transformational Leadership Theory

The notion of transformational leadership was introduced by James MacGregor Burns in the year 1978, during his descriptive study on leaders involved in politics. Over the years this notion has found itself widely used in all fields of management and leadership studies, becoming the theory most subscribed to today (Odumeru & Ifeanyi, 2013). In examining the concept of transformational leadership, one has to begin by defining a transformational leader.

Odumeru and Ifeanyi (2013) gave the definition of a transformational leader as an individual who invigorates others, inspiring them to accomplish exceptional results. The above-mentioned researchers added that a transformational leader is one who is very attentive to the concerns and developmental requirements of every one of his followers. Furthermore, a transformational leader transforms the followers' mental consciousness of issues by channelling them to view and deal with old problems in a completely different dimension; whilst stimulating, inspiring, and exciting them to go the extra mile in achieving organisational objectives.

McCleskey (2014) gave a similar definition, saying that a transformational leader is one who raises the followers' awareness levels on the importance and value of the desired results, and the ways and means of achieving these outcomes. Such a leader influences subordinates to lay aside personal interests in pursuit of the organisation's success, while the level of their needs on Maslow's hierarchy of needs is raised from concerns of lower-level on safety and security, to higher-level needs for accomplishment and self-realisation.

Kutz (2012) added to the literature by summarising the transformational leadership concept as the kind of leadership that inspires and motivates followers. He maintained that the inventiveness, appreciation, originality, and respect demonstrated by the leader helps him to effectively practise this leadership approach. Followers who are associated with transformational leaders admire and respect their leaders; and this is because they are also given respect and admiration by their leaders.

According to Odumeru and Ifeanyi (2013), a number of mechanisms are used in transformational leadership to augment the morale, inspiration, and performance of the followers. These include leading by example at all times, stimulating followers to take serious ownership and pride in their work, as well as knowing and understanding each one of the followers in terms of their strengths and weaknesses. This is in order to distribute and align the workload accordingly, so as to gain good performance from every team member.

The transformational leadership theory describes leadership that creates and instils positive change in the minds of the followers. The followers acknowledge the importance of ensuring that the interests of each individual team member are guarded by the same team members, whilst simultaneously considering group interests as a collective (Odumeru & Ifeanyi, 2013).

According to McCleskey (2014), as the transformational leadership style was being further researched, four key components of the concept emerged. The transformational leader displays these four components in different situations with differing levels of intensity, so that the anticipated organisational results are achieved by soliciting the efforts of the subordinates.

Bolden et al. (2003) had raised these components in earlier literature; with McCleskey (2014) supporting the notion, naming the components as follows:

- Idealised influence – the extent to which the leader conducts himself in a commendable manner, demonstrating his beliefs, and occupying a position that motivates subordinates to align with him. The leader has strong principles, and his conduct is exemplary in the eyes of the subordinates.

- Inspirational motivation – the extent to which the leader communicates a vision that fascinates and inspires the subordinates, offering certainty about future objectives, whilst giving substance to the present responsibilities.
- Intellectual stimulation – the extent to which the leader challenges assumptions, invigorating and promoting subordinates' innovations by giving a structure for them to ascertain their association within the organisation.
- Personal and individual attention – the extent to which the leader addresses each subordinate's requirements whilst practising as a mentor or coach, and providing respect to and recognition of the subordinate's value to the team. This satisfies and improves each team members' requirements for self-actualisation, and self-worth – whilst simultaneously motivating subordinates to strive for more accomplishments and better personal development.

Bolden et al. (2003) concluded by saying that a differentiating factor for transformational leaders was their pro-activeness in a number of unique and different approaches. Bolden et al. (2003) endeavour to advance employee growth over and above employee productivity. The growth aspect involves the flourishing of ability, enthusiasm, perspectives, and principles. These leaders strive to uplift the degree of maturity of the followers' needs, some of the needs being those of security, achievement, and self-development.

The transformational leaders influence their subordinates to aspire to accomplishments, morality, and ethical standards at higher levels. The development of the organisation is optimised through the development of their followers, hence these elements are critical. Ultimately, high-performing organisations are built through high-performing employees (Bolden et al., 2003).

Having said all the above about transformational leadership, critics of this theory have come out to argue their point about the perfect picture being portrayed by those who support this theory.

Lee (2014) argued that the first and foremost criticism was that transformational leaders were represented as 'great men'. Scholars writing about this theory highlight a strong heroic bias in transformational leadership. This heroic leadership bias may

naturally have detrimental consequences such as “blind trust” from followers and “autocratic” behaviour by leaders.

According to Lee (2014) transformational leadership emphasizes how followers can contribute to the organisation, not vice versa. In such instances the transformational leader will influence followers to exert extra and exceptional efforts in order to achieve the common goal and this influence is assumed to be unidirectional as it flows from the leader to the follower. The danger of such unidirectional influence is that it makes the followers more susceptible to deception.

Lee (2014) further argued that followers risk fulfilling their leader’s vision however impractical, over-ambiguous or even deceptive it may be. Indeed, the extent to which the goal proposed by the transformational leader is for the collective good is often open to debate. Ultimately, there is no exact means to ensure that the new direction or vision proposed by a transformational leader is better or more promising than the existing organisational priorities and the dangers can be considerable. Consider the case when the leaders’ vision is intentionally deceiving or unethical; where would it direct the organisation?

2.9.4 Situational Leadership Theory

In 1968, Ken Blanchard and Paul Hersey developed the situational leadership concept. This approach focused on the actions of the leader in a given situation (McCleskey, 2014). This approach gave birth to a theory called the ‘situational leadership theory’, which emerged as very effective in encouraging communication between leader and subordinates, at the same time enhancing the quality and frequency of performance discussions and developments (Kutz, 2012).

McCleskey (2014) added that this theory suggests that effective leadership needs a logical comprehension of the situation at hand, which should then be followed by an appropriate course of action. The leader identifies the maturity level of his subordinates, adopting a leadership style that will be most suited to dealing with the matter at hand. To gauge the maturity level of the subordinates, a relationship between their competency and commitment is used, allowing the leader to make correct judgement in terms of approaching the situation.

A typical example given by Kutz (2012) in this case would be that, on the one hand, the delegation of supervision to subordinates with a high level of competency and high work commitment would be limited, whilst on the other hand, employees who exhibit shallow competency levels but have acute loyalty to their work necessitate close supervision and guidance aimed at developing their competency.

With reference to the engineers' leadership effectiveness being explored in this study, this is one of the important theories for the routine leadership operations of engineers at THS SA. The underlying factor here is that all situations are different – no one situation is the same as the other in the work environment; therefore the engineers must deal with each situation according to its merits or requirements.

Sharma and Jain (2013) argued that what may have worked in one situation will most likely not work in another. It is therefore crucial that the correct move is made, and the most pertinent leadership style employed in any given situations. Failure to do so may have serious consequences.

Leaders find themselves having to lead employees from different backgrounds, having vast differences in their competencies, experiences, and commitment to their work. This applies a great deal of pressure on the leaders, situational dynamics constantly changing, and in some instances, within a very short space of time. Under such circumstances, the leaders still have to react appropriately in implementing the correct leadership styles, leading their sections and their teams effectively, as expected of them in ensuring that the organisational objectives are achieved (Giltinane, 2013).

Critics of the situational leadership theory have stated that the timing for the implementation of the course of action is pivotal. Wrong timing may yield completely different results from what may have been intended. For example, if the situation warrants an employee to be reprimanded or corrected immediately, a delayed action may be ineffective. On the other hand, a good response may not come about as a result of a speedy intervention (Sharma & Jain, 2013).

In addition, according to McCleskey (2014) three flaws with this theory were identified and these related to its consistency, continuity, and conformity. Also noted was its conceptual contradictions, and ambiguities. McCleskey (2014) went on to say that as

the concept of the situational leadership theory was such that everything was decided on the spot, as per the situation requirement, with no pre-planning required the element of inconsistency, continuity and conformity became very subjective as the leader changed his/her pace with the changing situation. This had the potential to create dissatisfaction and division amongst the followers who witness these flaws being practiced by leader.

Lastly, Situational Leadership models have been criticized by researchers and academics for having very few theoretical bases and little research support. For example, Blanchard's more recent publications do not clarify the relationship underlying the performance curve, despite its being central to the Situational Leadership theory, leading to a question being asked about the extent to which the nature of this relationship has ever been satisfactorily demonstrated (Avery & Ryan, 2002).

2.9.5 Transactional Leadership Theory

Transactional leadership is a unique kind of leadership style relating to the way in which management lead; hence at times the term managerial leadership is used. The transactional leadership theory concentrates on the fundamental responsibilities of supervision, organisation, and the performance of groups. Its unique feature is that followers are encouraged by their leader to comply through a system of tangible rewards for good work and loyalty, and punishment for wrong-doing or poor performance (Odumeru & Ifeanyi, 2013).

Kutz (2012) concurred with the above, saying that transactional leadership in most instances constitutes the exchange of pay-outs, such as salaries or benefits in recognition of excellence; and that the approach resembles the traditional definition of a manager. McCleskey (2014) added that exchanges are used by the leaders in achieving their performance goals, having their required tasks completed, maintaining the status quo of the organisation, motivating followers by having contractual agreements, and channelling the behaviour of followers towards the accomplishment of set goals.

In return, transactional leadership gives followers the opportunity of having their self-interests fulfilled, reducing workplace anxiety, and allowing employees to focus on clear goals for the organisation (McCleskey, 2014). Furthermore, Odumeru and Ifeanyi (2013) commented that leaders using the transactional leader approach are said predominantly to wish to retain the status quo of an organisation, as opposed to wishing to turn things around, influencing the future as a transformational leader. Transactional leaders accept the existing organisational structures and organisational culture, working within such systems to achieve the organisational goals.

It is also said that transactional leaders tend to think ‘inside the box’ when solving problems, as opposed to thinking outside the box as practised by a transformational leader. Transactional leaders behave more like managers or supervisors as they prefer micromanaging in order to spot faults and deviations in employees’ work. This practice or leadership style is deemed most appropriate in crisis management, emergency situations, and for special projects that have to be executed in a specific manner (Odumeru & Ifeanyi, 2013).

Table 2.3 below shows the differences between transactional and transformational leadership.

Table 2.3: Transactional and Transformational Leadership

Transactional Leadership	Transformational Leadership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is reactive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is proactive
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retains the status quo within the business culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strives to transform the business culture by introducing innovative ideas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assists workers to accomplish goals through pay-outs and penalties as laid down by leader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assists workers to accomplish goals through elevated standards and ethical principles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspires subordinates by allowing personal interests to be the first priority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspires subordinates by motivating them to consider interests of the team as the highest priority
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is management-by-exception: retaining the business norms; emphasis on corrective approaches to enhance productivity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers personalised reflection: Individualised conduct aims at each person as a separate entity in demonstrating consideration and support. Is intellectually stimulating: inventive and unconventional ideas are encouraged in addressing issues

(Sourced from Odumeru and Ifeanyi, 2013:359)

Contrasting the two different leadership theories above it is evident that a typical organisation such as THS SA would want its engineers to practise the transformational leadership style, this being geared towards making a difference for the organisation through the manner in which the tasks are performed and the way in which relationships are built with the employees.

It is important to add that, although the transformational leadership style may be the preferred leadership style, it will not always be effective in every situation. According to Alkahtani (2016), the maturity and experience of the leader has to kick in to ensure that the correct leadership style is immediately brought into play as and when required.

According to McCleskey (2014) critics of this theory have argued that transactional leadership practices tend to lead followers to short-term relationships of exchange with the leader. These relationships are inclined towards shallow, temporary exchanges of gratification and often create resentments between the participants as destructive competition is created, and in the long run this can impair an organisation. Additionally, a number of scholars criticize the transactional leadership theory because it utilizes a one-size-fits-all universal approach to leadership theory construction that disregards situational and contextual factors related to organizational challenges.

Fernandes and Awamleh (2011) added that transactional leadership behaviors did not even qualify for a “true” leadership label since they are based on exchange and do not seek to motivate followers beyond the level that is required to avoid punishment or gain in extrinsic rewards. In most instances it is argued that a transactional leader does not make the effort to find out about subordinates’ excellence or the necessity to give compliments for expected good work. Accordingly, total reliance on this leadership style may cause performance and satisfaction to suffer in the organisation.

It is also argued that a transactional leader is inflexible in his expectations about the working relationship with his subordinates as he considers them to only have one responsibility; that is of executing the given instructions. As the transactional leader applies his official powers to instruct subordinates, he expects them to follow his instructions without asking questions (Sultana et al., 2015).

Such an approach according to Sultana et al. (2015) poses the risk of inducing an element of fear and exploitation on the subordinates' part, which may have negative consequences to their overall output. The dependence on this one-way approach makes transactional leaders unwilling to talk about their own ideas or even consider ideas from their subordinates. This attitude frustrates and limits the element of innovation and creativity within the team, which ultimately stifles the growth of the organisation (Sultana et al., 2015).

2.9.6 The Behavioural Theory

Behavioural theories of leadership are based on the belief that great leaders are made and not born. This leadership theory focuses on the actions of leaders and not on intellectual qualities or internal states. According to the behavioural theory, people can learn to become leaders through training and observation (Amanchukwu et al., 2015).

According to Bolden et al. (2003) different patterns of behaviour are observed and categorised as 'styles of leadership' and the interest in the behaviour of the leaders has been stimulated by a systematic comparison of autocratic and democratic leadership styles. It has been observed that teams under these types of leadership styles perform differently.

Amanchukwu et al. (2015) added that autocratically led teams will work well so long as the leader is present. The team members, however, tend to be unhappy with the leadership style and express hostility. Democratically led teams do nearly as well as the autocratic teams. Team members have more positive feelings, however, and no hostility. Most importantly, the efforts of team members continue even when the leader is absent.

There are two kinds of leaders under the behavioural theory: the task oriented leader and a people oriented leader. The task oriented leader being more concerned about the organisational structure, the task at hand and its operating procedures as well as ensuring full control of the activities. People motivation is not of primary importance. The people oriented leader on the other hand is concerned about ensuring that the inner needs of the people are satisfied. Thus this leader will seek to motivate the staff through emphasizing the human relations. People oriented leaders still focus on the

task and the results, however, they just achieve them through different means (Bolden et al., 2003).

2.9.7 Effective team Performance and Team leadership

To date, evidence has shown that teams are central to organizational success and that organisational performance is heavily dependent on team performance, which to large degree is influenced by team leadership (Ullah & Park, 2013). Structuring work around teams has become a fact of organizational life and most, if not all, organizations use some form of team-oriented work (Morgeson et al., 2010).

Team work according to Morgeson et al. (2010) is characterized by recurring cycles of mutually dependent interaction. These temporal cycles of goal-directed activity can be divided into two distinctive phases, namely: the transition phase, where teams engage in evaluation or planning activities designed to foster goal attainment and then the action phase, where teams perform work activities that directly contribute to goal accomplishment. Over time, teams repeatedly cycle through these transition and action phases and it is through these performance cycles that collective (team) action occurs.

With the structure of the teams being in place, effective team performance then becomes a crucial element for the success of an organisation and according to Ullah and Park (2013) team effectiveness refers to the collective effort among the team members for a common objective. Practically effective team performance is enriched with high task interdependence, high role differentiation, high task differentiation and distributed expertise.

Effective team performance is derived from several fundamental characteristics and according to Zaccaro et al. (2001) some of these characteristics are:

- The need for team members to successfully integrate their individual actions. The members have specific and unique roles, where the performance of each role contributes to collective success. This means that the causes of team failure may reside not only in member inability, but also in their collective failure to coordinate and synchronize their individual contributions.

- The increasing need for the teams, particularly organisational teams to perform in complex and dynamic environments, which requires members to operate more adaptively when coordinating.
- Team leadership, which is a key component of effective team performance.

According to Morgeson et al. (2010) team leadership has been associated with a number of other concepts, such as functional leadership and shared leadership. In their definition, Morgeson et al. (2010) have stated that team leadership is a concept that encompasses a variety of leadership processes. These leadership processes guide leaders as they conduct their day to day leadership duties. The processes include coaching related activities, the role of leaders in promoting team learning and adaptation, how team leaders manage events that occur in the team context, the role of team leaders in managing team boundaries, how traditional leadership theories such as transformational leadership theory operate in a team context, the role of dynamic delegation leadership processes in teams and how leadership roles are shared in teams.

Most teams contain certain individuals who are primarily responsible for defining team goals and for developing and structuring the team to accomplish the organisational strategic goals. The success of the leader in defining the team directions and organizing the team to maximize progress along such directions contributes significantly to team effectiveness (Zaccaro et al., 2001). The work teams in this study are hierarchical in nature with specified role incumbents. The engineer is the responsible person for defining the team directions. Team leadership research has provided compelling evidence that setting challenging goals and clear performance expectations is one of the most important leadership functions for facilitating effective team performance (Morgeson et al., 2010).

Bolden et al. (2003) suggested that team leadership can be learned through understanding the nature of leadership and the qualities required. In the rapidly changing and uncertain work environment of today no one person has all the answers to leadership. A Team leadership style based upon the development of the strengths and the allowable weaknesses of all of the roles will permit a more holistic, or

participative, style of leadership where teamwork, problem solving, decision making and innovation can flourish with heightened teamwork and work performance.

2.10 Conclusion

There have been many studies conducted by leadership researchers in the recent past, specifically studying the component of effective leadership as a separate entity from the broad leadership concept. However, owing to the complexity of leadership and all its facets, no one component should be studied in isolation, each component being intertwined with the rest.

The literature that was used to address the aims and objectives of this study was reviewed in this chapter. This literature review was undertaken to ascertain the various viewpoints of other authors regarding the objectives of this study.

The discussion on the leadership theories gave an in-depth comprehension of leadership and how one may implement the various concepts in order to become an effective leader. Included in the chapter review was the important discussion that sought to differentiate the role of a leader *vis-à-vis* that of a manager. The next chapter concentrates on the presentation of the research methodology that was employed in this study.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will explain the research methodology that was employed in this study. According to Kothari (2004), research methodology is defined as a means of methodically finding a solution to a research problem. Research methodology may be comprehended as the science of studying the way in which research is conducted in a scientific manner. Kothari (2004) stated further that one characteristic of research methodology is the examination of all the various steps often adopted by a researcher while studying his research problem; this includes examining the logic behind those steps.

This study was designed such that it allowed the researcher to conduct detailed research regarding the leadership effectiveness of engineers at THS SA. The term research in this context is defined as the exploration aimed at unearthing fascinating facts about a topic using the most pertinent and appropriate research methods (Walliman, 2011).

Through this research, data was collected and interpreted accordingly. As explained by Khalid et al. (2012), research is conducted to establish findings in a methodical manner in which collected data is methodically interpreted, and the objective guiding the enquiry is clearly defined. Research involves a string of properly formulated and meticulously implemented tasks to obtain answers to research problems.

3.2 Research Approaches

Two kinds of research methods are generally and predominantly employed in the research world, namely, qualitative approach and quantitative approach. A third method, known as the mixed methods approach, which combines the quantitative and qualitative methods, has been developed in recent times and is gaining popularity amongst researchers, as it capitalises on the strengths of each of the other approaches (Curry et al., 2009).

Quantitative and qualitative research methods investigate and explore the various claims to knowledge; these two methods are designed to answer a specific type of research question. While the quantitative method gives an objective measure of reality, the qualitative method permits the researcher to explore and better comprehend the complexity of a phenomenon (Williams, 2007).

Qualitative research is a set of techniques that are often utilised in social science and marketing. Small groups of participants are used to obtain the data which is not analysed using statistical techniques. Comparison with the traditional quantitative research method reveals that the qualitative research method uses less structured data-collecting instruments, coupled with the use of open-ended questions. Findings may not be easy to reproduce, and the analysing of data is inherently more subjective (Meurer et al., 2007).

3.2.1 Leadership research

Scholars agree that all research, be it quantitative or qualitative, must subscribe to certain principles, such as being unambiguous, disciplined, and having a structured approach to unearth the unknown, using the most suitable methods to address the question being asked (Hancock et al., 2009).

According to Ospina (2004), leadership researchers have discovered that empirical, quantitative methods of research are inadequate when used on their own to fully explain the complex phenomenon of leadership and culture. This has, therefore, given rise to the use of the qualitative research methods as a means of research for leadership topics.

Ospina (2004) further argued that the reason quantitative research cannot yield a good comprehension of the leadership concept when used in isolation is owing to the severe and enduring complications of the leadership phenomenon. Leadership entails a number of categories of phenomena; it has dynamic characteristics and symbolic components. All these elements are most suitably attended to using qualitative methodologies.

Of recent years, it has emerged that certain new leadership scholars have advocated for the use of a mixed methods approach in better exploring the leadership concept. Qualitative approaches have mainly been used to advance the present understanding of the concept of leadership. However, of recent times, the use of quantitative and qualitative styles has obtained some good support from various prominent leadership researchers (Arlene et al., 2015).

According to Beck (2010), merging the two approaches can strengthen the integrity of each. While simultaneously being accommodative to some of the shortfalls, this would permit researchers to formulate a more thorough comprehension of their outcomes. Also, by intensively examining the two data sets, a mixed methods research design emerges as the most suitable to employ when studying a complex subject such as leadership (Beck, 2010).

3.2.2 Quantitative research method

This research method is described as one that incorporates the testing of objective theories through investigating the correlations amongst variables. Measurements of the variables are generally conducted using certain instruments to produce data that is numbered: such data is then analysed by employing statistical procedures (Creswell, 2014).

Quantitative research depends on deductive reasoning: techniques of a wide range are utilised for the analysis process. Such techniques range from presenting a fundamental description of the variables involved, to developing statistical correlations amongst variables by using complicated statistical modelling (Khalid et al., 2012).

Williams (2007) added that quantitative research, being grounded in theories that are in existence, is specific in its surveying and experimentation process. According to Khalid et al. (2012), this kind of research employs probability sampling, and is reliant on samples that are large in size when matched against the qualitative study approaches. The quantitative research approach is generally employed when the emphasis of the study is of a descriptive nature, and when the phenomena may be clarified and predicted.

The methodology for this kind of research supports the assumptions of an empiricist paradigm. The researcher, in this case, is not a factor when it comes to the study's being dependent on him; consequently, data is utilised to objectively quantify the reality (Williams, 2007).

3.2.3 Qualitative research method

According to Creswell (2014), this kind of research approach is about exploring and understanding the logic that an individual person or groups of people accredit to a human or social problem. Typically, this study process has by nature questions and procedures that emerge, the gathering and analysis of data, as well as the interpretations made by the researcher on the implications of the data.

Ospina (2004) defined this type of research as a framework of a methodological empirical investigation into meaning. He went further to explain the meaning of each of the terms in his definition above, as follows:

- Methodological: planned, orderly, and publicly conducted;
- Empirical: a kind of investigation that has its roots in real-life experiences; and
- Investigation into meaning: researchers endeavour to comprehend the ways in which other people find meaning in their experiences.

Williams (2007) stated that a qualitative study bases its arguments on inductive reasoning as opposed to deductive reasoning. The intense relationship linking the person observing and the data itself becomes a significant differentiating factor when a comparison is made with a quantitative study: the person conducting the research remains completely divorced from the phenomena under investigation. Williams (2007) continued that the researcher has no reference point of reality or known premises to which he can refer, hence this study type is about data gathered from participants' wisdom, and employed to explain phenomena that is pertinent to human conduct in theories that could be new, and in others, very advanced.

The notion of correlations and authority that associates researchers and respondents is heavily rooted in this type of study; and the willingness to partake in the study rests upon the respondents' desire to openly discuss their experiences (Orb et al., 2000). As a result of the qualitative research encompassing an explanatory and innate

approach, the people conducting the research examine items in their natural orientations, endeavouring to formulate a meaning and explanation of the phenomena being presented to them by the participants (Ospina, 2004).

Hancock et al. (2009) explained that this kind of study assists people to have a clear comprehension of the social environment in which they live, and why particular aspects of life appear as they do. This type of research takes a keen interest in the social elements of our real-life experiences, and tries to give answers to the following:

- The behaviour of individuals and reasons for conducting themselves in a particular manner;
- The views and schools of thought of people, and the way in which they are formed;
- The way in which people are affected by occurrences or events that happen around them; and
- The development of cultures and practices, how and why they have happened the way they have.

Qualitative research is particularly useful when the research questions involve situations in which people's experiences and perceptions are sought (Hancock et al., 2009). This comment is relevant to this study, the study seeking to explore the leadership effectiveness of engineers in a manufacturing environment; hence the qualitative approach was the most appropriate.

According to Williams (2007), the structure of the research approach is formulated from the various kinds of research designs that utilise qualitative research principles, such principles differing and therefore bringing about a significant influence on the research strategies to be employed by the study.

A considerable number of disciplines are studied using various qualitative research approaches, examples being: anthropology, sociology, philosophy, social psychology, and linguistics. This means that there is huge diversity in the types of studies that may be said to fall under the "qualitative" umbrella; and, as such, researchers have identified a set of core characteristics common to all these study modes (Moriarty, 2011).

Moriarty (2011) listed these core characteristics as follows:

- Objectives that are directed at giving a thorough and clearly interpreted comprehension of the research participants' social environment through studying their social and tangible conditions, their experiences, opinions, and backgrounds;
- Samples in small scale chosen consciously on the basis of salient criteria with very detailed and information-rich data;
- Data-gathering approaches that generally consist of a tight liaison between the people conducting the study and the study respondents. These are interactive, using tools such as semi-structured interviews and questionnaires, and are developmental in nature, allowing for new matters which arise to be further investigated; and
- Results that have a tendency to concentrate on the explanation of social meaning by displaying and focusing on the social lifestyle of respondents.

The advantages, as highlighted by Ospina (2004), of conducting qualitative research on leadership, are said to include the following:

- Willingness to pursue unanticipated ideas which emerge during the study, successfully interrogating the processes;
- Sensitivity to circumstantial elements;
- Competency to learn symbolic features and social meaning; and
- Expanding of the opportunities for detailed and long-term examinations of leadership phenomena.

Table 3.1 gives a summary of some of the elements that highlight the comparisons between qualitative and quantitative studies.

Table 3.1: Comparison of Qualitative and Quantitative Research

Qualitative research	Quantitative research
Usually concentrates on ways in which a person or groups of people have somewhat differing methods of focusing on real-life experiences (generally social or psychological).	Usually concentrates on descriptive approaches and comprehension of real life by the unearthing of common phenomena.
Takes consideration of complicated situations by encompassing the real-life environment – can accommodate different points of view.	Takes consideration of complicated situations by exactly defining the area of interest and principles supporting the mentality that external ‘noise’ can be disregarded.
Analyses human conduct in innate environments or employs individuals’ experiences as data; generally, variables are not changed.	Encompasses changing of some independent variables while irrelevant and invalid variables are left unchanged.
Emphasises description of people’s accounts of incidences or data that cannot be sufficiently presented as numbers.	Uses numerical principles that permit us to discuss the likelihood of something being ‘true’ for a particular population, in an objective or quantifiable manner.
Concentrates on descriptive and interpretative concepts that may result in the development of new notions or theories.	Emphasis is on cause and effect - for instance, experiments are used to test and verify an hypothesis
Utilises an easy-to-change, up-and-coming but methodological research process.	Calls for the research process to be laid down up-front.

(Sourced from Hancock et al. 2009:6)

3.2.4 Mixed methods

This is an approach to an investigation which combines the two forms of research - qualitative and quantitative, in which the outcomes of these two research forms coexist at some instance in the research proceedings (Teddlie & Yu, 2007). This study, as explained by Borrego et al. (2009), encompasses the gathering or analysis of the two types of data in one study, in which the data gathered simultaneously or successively are prioritised. This entails the combination of the data at different phases of the research process. Researchers have named the method the 'third methodological movement' – following on from the quantitative and qualitative methods.

Williams (2007) gave an example of the way in which mixed data could be collected. The researcher stated that surveys containing closed-ended questions might be distributed to gather the statistical data (quantitative data), followed by conducting interviews utilising open-ended questions to address the narrative aspect of the study (qualitative data).

According to Curry et al. (2009), the mixed methods approach to research is not a substitute for, nor a replacement of the use of the quantitative and qualitative research approaches; instead, it is an extension which supplements these existing methods. The objective for researchers in using the mixed methods approach is to take advantage of the respective strengths of each approach, minimising their weaknesses.

Furthermore, Curry et al. (2009) explained that a variety of goals may be accomplished by combining quantitative and qualitative components of a larger study. These may include validation of outcomes, comprehensive data being generated, and employing the outcomes from each approach to improve the understanding acquired, using the corresponding approach.

This study used the qualitative research approach to explore the leadership effectiveness of engineers at THS SA. This methodology was chosen because it allowed for the examination of the engineers' self-described behaviour and practices, their experiences as leaders in their sections, and their perceptions of effective leadership (Folta et al., 2012).

3.3 Data Collection

In research, the primary and secondary data are the two kinds of data that a researcher may utilise in obtaining the required information. The research involved conducting semi-structured interviews with key informants.

3.3.1 Primary data

Primary data are data collected to be used in a specific research problem by means of procedures most suited to the particular research problem. At every instance in which primary data are gathered, the existing knowledge base is credited with the new data. As this material becomes available to be used again by the general research community; it is given the name secondary data (Hox & Boeije, 2005).

The type of research being conducted influences the decision to gather primary data; and the need for primary information is most often associated with the practical aspects of the study as opposed to the academic aspects. Researchers conduct primary research when the data they need is not contained in existing publications. (Currie, 2005).

According to Currie (2005), the three main tools used to collect primary data are: surveys, interviews and observations. The tool that is decided upon is determined by the type of data that is required. Only primary data was collected for this study.

3.3.2 Qualitative and Quantitative Data

Hox and Boeije (2005) defined quantitative data as numerically explained data with respect to its objects, variables, and their values; whilst qualitative data is explained as data which encompasses the comprehension of the complications, characteristics, and context of the topic being studied, in most cases being made up of texts (such as interview transcripts and field notes), or audio-visual material.

Currie (2005) concurred with the above definition by adding that the nature of the qualitative data is such that the data have not gone through a quantifying process; and having said that, this does not suggest that the data have not been subjected to an analysis process. Currie (2005) stated further that by design, qualitative information is the outcome of the participants' individual perspectives, values, attitudes towards, and

understanding of the topic under discussion, hence it inherits the status of being subjective.

According to Sanjari et al. (2014), in a qualitative study, data are gathered with emphasis on a number of interview sessions and narratives in developing an explanation of the experiences. Currie (2005) highlighted that quantitative data, on the other hand, are specific, and have been quantified; such as when the data acquired from an occupational selection test are analysed with the use of psychometric techniques, or when the findings of a large-scale survey are analysed and quantified.

3.4 Sampling

According to Moriarty (2011), while quantitative methods usually rely on statistical probability samples, which allow assured generalization from the sample to a larger population, qualitative sampling normally concentrates on comparatively small, purposefully chosen samples that are grounded in theoretical principles of sampling. As the objective of the study was to acquire the most pertinent information to the study, purposive, or strategic sampling was used. Probability-based sampling (random sampling) was inappropriate since the study required quality information as opposed to a quantity of information (Hancock et al., 2009).

As the study was about exploring the leadership effectiveness of engineers at THS SA, the selection of the participants was based on the relevance of their positions at THS SA, in this case engineers at middle management level. This type of sampling is called critical-case sampling, and is defined by Hancock et al. (2009) as a case in which researchers choose participants by virtue of their positions in an organisation, or because of the knowledge they may have on a particular subject.

The sample size was initially twenty engineers from the five different THS SA operating centres; such a size was in line with the comment from Curry et al. (2009), that the sample size changes and this was dependent on the breadth and complexity of the study. However, only fifteen engineers could be interviewed as the other five had commitments during the period. The above-mentioned researchers added that qualitative samples are normally smaller than those of quantitative studies.

Furthermore, Curry et al. (2009) explained that the objective of the sample is to determine 'information-rich' respondents that possess particular qualities, extensive know-how, or experience that is directly pertinent to the phenomenon of interest. This means that the engineers in this study are the perfect sample choice, owing to the in-depth knowledge and experience they possess in their field.

3.5 Data Collection Methods

According to Hox and Boeije (2005), social scientists collect information by using a variety of differing data-gathering approaches. For the quantitative design, experiments and quasi-experiments are used; these are essential as they usually encompass a research design that permits extreme causal inferences. In addition, surveys that entail organised questionnaires are used as an alternative data-gathering approach. These normally encompass data collection from a large and well-represented sample of participants on a large variety of variables.

Meurer et al. (2007) explained that data from a qualitative research design are obtained in large quantities from a comparatively small number of participants, and statistical techniques are not used during the analysis. A qualitative-research design entails detailed, verbal descriptions of characteristics, cases, and settings, and it utilises observation, interviewing, focus groups, and document review, as source data: a collection of narrative and open-ended questions in questionnaires.

3.5.1 Interviews

According to Moriarty (2011), interviews are still the most widely used data-gathering instrument in qualitative research. Interviews are a popular and versatile approach to eliciting the views and experiences of participants. A fascination for researchers is that data in substantial quantities may be accumulated in a matter of one or two hours from such a process. Furthermore, the reason for the popularity of qualitative research is also that it has proved very successful in presenting a human figure to research problems. It is noted that conducting an interview and taking part in one can prove a fulfilling experience for both respondents and the researchers (Mack et al., 2011).

The qualitative research interview is defined as an interview with the goal of collecting representations or accounts of the interviewees' experiences regarding the understanding of the connotations of the phenomena being related to. Therefore, the aim of any qualitative research interview is to understand the subject of the study from the participants' point of view, and also to comprehend the reasons that may have led to the participants having those specific opinions (King, 2004).

According to Mack et al. (2011), the interview is a methodology formulated to elicit a clear image of the respondent's point of view on the research topic. During the process, the person being interviewed assumes the status of subject specialist; while the person conducting the interview becomes the learner. Furthermore, Mack et al. (2011) stated that the techniques used by the researchers to conduct the interviews are driven by the will to capture and comprehend all the details that may be shared on the study topic. Interactions with the interviewees are conducted through asking questions in an impartial way, paying attention to respondents' answers, and posing more questions for clarity, as and when necessary.

Qualitative interviews may be either semi-structured or of in-depth format. The semi-structured format is grounded in a number of open-ended questions pertaining to matters thought by the researcher to be pertinent to the topic. The in-depth format may comprise more than one topic; however, it is pursued with great emphasis on the details. The use of these two formats permits the researcher to unearth information on matters that may not have occurred to him (Moriarty, 2011).

In this research, semi-structured interviews were the most ideal data-collection tools, being based on a series of open-ended questions which provided for interpersonal interaction between the researcher and the participants. The semi-structured interviews afforded the interviewer the flexibility and latitude to ask the participants to expand or clarify any vagueness on an initial response, or to pursue a train of thought that may have been initiated by the participant (Hancock et al., 2009).

The interviews were conducted in a face-to-face manner in the offices of the participants at their respective operating centres - FX, AK, DL, MS, and HR, during the period of 22nd August 2016 to 9th September 2016. A total of 21 questions were asked within a time frame of 45 minutes to one hour. This resulted in large quantities of data

being obtained, as explained by Meurer et al. (2007), that within a qualitative-research design the data are obtained in large quantities from a relatively small group of respondents. The interview questions for this study were formulated on the basis of the study aim and objectives - see Appendix 2.

3.5.1.1 Demographic details

Twenty people were selected to be interviewed, based on purposive sampling.

Table 3.2: Demographical Information: Interview Respondents

Reference	Position	Gender	Race	Experience in position (years)
R1	Process Engineer	Male	Black	4
R2	Process Engineer	Female	Black	5
R3	Electrical Engineer	Male	Indian	2
R4	Mechanical Engineer	Male	Black	1
R5	Mechanical Engineer	Male	Black	2
R6	Electrical Engineer	Male	Black	12
R7	Mechanical Engineer	Male	Black	4
R8	Mechanical Engineer	Male	Coloured	3
R9	Mechanical Engineer	Male	Black	10
R10	Mechanical Engineer	Male	Indian	8
R11	Process Engineer	Female	Black	5
R12	Electrical Engineer	Female	Indian	3
R13	Process Engineer	Male	Black	4
R14	Process Engineer	Male	Black	11
R15	Electrical Engineer	Female	Indian	1
R16	Mechanical Engineer	Male	Black	4
R17	Process Engineer	Female	Indian	9
R18	Process Engineer	Female	Black	5
R19	Electrical Engineer	Male	Black	6
R20	Mechanical Engineer	Male	Indian	5

Twenty engineers were initially selected to participate in the interviews. The group was composed of fourteen males and six females. The population consisted of Blacks,

Indians, and Coloureds. The average work experience was approximately 5 years, thus most of the participants had been in their positions for a reasonable length of time. Only fifteen out of the twenty were interviewed.

3.6 Ethical Issues

Ethics, in general, is defined as the field dealing with moral responsibilities and obligations, describing the good and the bad for all human beings and organisations (Nainawat & Meena, 2013).

In the field of research, ethics is said to be about doing good and avoiding harm. Any likely harm may be prevented or reduced through the application of appropriate ethical principles. Ethical issues are present in any kind of research, thus the protection of human subjects or participants in any research study is imperative (Orb et al., 2000).

The nature of ethical problems in qualitative research studies is subtle and different compared with problems in quantitative research. For example, potential ethical conflicts exist apropos of the way in which a researcher gains access to a community group; and in the effect the researcher may have on participants (Orb et al., 2000). The relationship and intimacy that is established between researchers and participants in qualitative studies can raise a range of ethical concerns. Qualitative researchers therefore face quandaries over issues such as respect for privacy, establishment of honest and open interactions, and the avoiding of misrepresentations (Sanjari et al., 2014).

Qualitative studies are frequently conducted in settings involving the participation of people in their everyday environments, the participants, being anonymous, will share information willingly. Therefore, any research that includes people requires an awareness of the ethical issues that may be derived from such interactions to encourage disclosure and trust (Orb et al., 2000).

All the ethical considerations for this research were covered. The study only began after the University of KwaZulu-Natal's Research Committee had granted the ethical clearance, which is attached at the end of this study as Appendix 3. The gatekeeper's letter was also obtained from THS SA.

According to Orb et al. (2000), ethical dilemmas may arise from an interview: at times, these may be unpredictable. However, the researcher must be aware of sensitive issues and potential conflicts of interest; and the fact that an interview is usually equated with confidentiality, informed consent, anonymity, and privacy (Sanjari et al., 2014).

As a result, the Informed Consent Form (see Appendix 1) was signed and sent to the participants, who signed their consent form before the interviews commenced. The Informed Consent form explained the content of the study to the participants, making it clear that participation in the research was voluntary, and that participants were free to withdraw from the study at any time. In addition, permission to use the tape-recorder was requested from the respondents before the interviews. Transcribing took place during the interview period.

To cover the confidentiality aspect of the study, all data collected will be securely stored for a period of five years at the Graduate School of Business and Leadership. After this period, the Ethical Clearance Committee will accordingly instruct the disposal of the data to ensure that other people or researchers who could use it without authority, and for the wrong reasons, do not gain access to it.

The researcher being an employee of THS SA and holding an influential position could have found himself being biased in the research process as he had his own perceptions about the subject. However, knowing about the importance of remaining ethical to oneself and the organisation at all times the researcher guarded against this common error by remaining impartial throughout the process. The researcher's perceptions were suspended for the whole duration of the process so as not to influence the research and the findings. The risk of selective reporting was eliminated by ensuring that the data collected 'spoke for itself'.

3.7 Data Analysis

Data analysis is defined as a process of resolving data into its constituent components, thereby revealing its characteristic elements and structure. Without analysis, researchers would have to rely entirely on impressions and intuitions about the data as a whole. The aim of analysis is not just to describe data, but also to describe the objects or events to which the data refers. Quite often researchers wish to do more than describe: they wish to interpret, to explain, to understand—perhaps even to predict (Dey, 2005).

The data-analysis approach used in this research was the inductive approach, which, according to Burnard et al. (2008), involves analysing data with little or no predetermined theory, structure, or framework, using the data itself to derive the structure of analysis. It is most suitable where little or nothing is known about the study phenomenon, as was the case with this study. Of the many inductive approaches that may be used, the thematic-content analysis process was the most suitable for this study. It is also the most common method of data analysis used in qualitative work.

The thematic analysis process, as defined by Clarke and Braun (2013), is a method of identifying and analysing patterns in qualitative data. This method involves analysing transcripts, and identifying themes and categories that emerge from the data. It also involves discovering themes in the interview transcripts, and attempting to verify, confirm, and qualify themes by searching through the data, and repeating the process to identify further themes and categories (Burnard et al., 2008).

According to Clarke and Braun (2013), thematic analysis is suited to a wide range of research interests and theoretical perspectives, and is useful as a ‘basic’ method because of the following:

- It works with a large selection of research questions, from those on people’s experiences or understanding, to those on the representation and construction of particular phenomena in particular contexts;
- It may be used to analyse various types of data, from secondary sources such as media, to transcripts of focus groups or interviews; and
- It works with either large or small data-sets; and it may be applied to produce either data-driven or theory-driven analyses.

This section outlines the process that was followed in analysing the data from the interviews. As mentioned earlier, the process followed was based on the thematic-analysis process.

Owing to the amount of data collected from the interviews, the first step taken during the analysis process was data familiarization. This refers to becoming au fait with the data through immersion in the raw data, by listening to tapes, reading transcripts, studying notes, and so on, in order to list key ideas and recurrent themes (Pope et al., 2000).

The next step was coding the data, which, according to Clarke and Braun (2013), entails generating pithy labels for important features of the data of relevance to the research question guiding the analysis. Coding is not simply a method of data reduction; it is also an analytic process, therefore codes capture both a semantic and conceptual reading of the data. The researcher codes every data item and ends this phase by collating all the codes and relevant data extracts.

The third step was finding and organising ideas and concepts. This has to do with searching and identifying themes, recurring ideas or language, and patterns of belief that link people and settings together. This is the most intellectually challenging phase of the analysis and one that can integrate the entire endeavour (O'Connor & Gibson, 2003). A theme in this context is defined as a coherent and meaningful pattern in the data relevant to the research question. The searching of the themes is an active process: the themes do not hide in the data; the researcher constructs them (Clarke & Braun, 2013).

After having identified the themes, these were then reviewed, defined, and named as the fourth step of the data-analysis process. According to Clarke and Braun (2013), reviewing the themes entails ensuring that the themes have an aligned relationship with both the coded extracts and the full data-set. The themes should be analysed in detail to ensure that they relay a convincing and compelling story about the data. Themes with a common connotation may be combined into one; and other themes may be broken down into two or more themes. Identifying the gist of each theme and developing a concise, effective, and informative name for each theme is crucial.

Finally, writing up – this is an integral element of the analytic process in thematic analysis. Writing up entails knitting together the analytic narrative and clear data extracts to tell the reader a coherent and persuasive story about the data, contextualising it in relation to existing literature (Clarke & Braun, 2013).

The analysis and the results of the interview questions are outlined in the following chapter.

3.8 Research Quality criteria

It is critical that the correct research quality criteria are used for the kind of research being pursued; be it the quantitative or the qualitative research. This is to ensure that the diligence and the authenticity of the findings is genuine (Anney, 2014). The qualitative research employs credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability as the trustworthiness criteria, whilst in contrast, the quantitative research refers to internal validity, reliability, objectivity and external validity as the trustworthiness criteria (Morrow, 2005).

Meticulous attention to these aspects of trustworthiness can make the difference between good research and poor research, and can help to ensure that fellow scientists accept findings as credible and trustworthy. This is particularly vital in qualitative work, in which the researcher's subjectivity can so readily cloud the interpretation of the data, and in which research findings are often questioned or viewed with scepticism by the scientific community (Brink, 1993).

3.8.1 Credibility

The term 'credibility' refers to the concept of internal consistency, where the main issue is about ensuring thoroughness in the research process and how that is communicated to others to give assurance that it has been achieved (Morrow, 2005). According to Anney (2014) credibility can be defined as the confidence that can be placed in the truth of the research findings. Furthermore, it ascertains whether or not the research findings constitute credible information drawn from the participants' original data and is a correct interpretation of the participants' original views.

Morrow (2005) stated that there are number of strategies that can be employed to ensure credibility of the research is achieved, some of them being: prolonged engagement with participants; persistent observation in the field; triangulation; interview technique; researcher reflexivity and peer examination.

In this study, the credibility was achieved by utilizing the strategy of prolonged engagement with the participants as well as the persistent observation in the field. The fact that the researcher worked in the same organization with the participants and at the same centre with some of them and had no limited access and interaction with the others from the other centres made it possible to apply the mentioned strategies.

3.8.2 Dependability

The term dependability in qualitative research addresses the manner in which the study is conducted in dealing with consistency across time, across the researcher and across the analysis techniques. Thus, the process through which findings are derived should be explicit with the element of repeatability being as high as possible (Morrow, 2005). In addition, according to Anney (2014), dependability also refers to the stability and integrity of the findings over time, which involves the participants evaluating the findings and the interpretation and recommendations of the study to make sure that they are supported by the data received from the informants of the study.

Dependability can be accomplished through keeping an audit trail, that is, a detailed chronology of research activities and processes; influences on the data collection and analysis; emerging themes and analytic memos. The audit trail may then be examined by peer researchers, a student's advisor, or colleagues in the field (Morrow, 2005). Other strategies that can also be employed are the code-recode strategy, stepwise replication, triangulation and peer examination or iterator comparisons (Anney, 2014).

In this study the dependability was achieved through utilizing the code-recode strategy, whereby the researcher went through the coding of the same data twice. A two weeks' gestation period was allowed for between each coding session and the results from the two coding sessions were compared to ascertain any discrepancies. The coding results were in agreement, which enhanced the dependability of the inquiry.

3.8.3 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the degree to which the results of an inquiry could be confirmed or corroborated by other researchers. It is concerned with establishing that data and interpretations of the findings are not figments of the inquirer's imagination, but are clearly derived from the data (Anney, 2014).

Explained differently, Morrow, (2005) stated that the term confirmability is based on the acknowledgment that research is never objective. It addresses the core issue that findings should represent, as far as is (humanly) possible, the situation being researched rather than the beliefs, pet theories, or biases of the researcher. It is based on the perspective that the integrity of findings lies in the data and that the researcher must adequately tie together the data, analytic processes, and findings in such a way that the reader is able to confirm the adequacy of the findings.

Studies suggest that confirmability is achieved through an audit trail, reflexive journal and triangulation; these being similar processes for accomplishing the goal of dependability. The audit trail is said to offer visible evidence—from process and product—that the researcher did not simply find what he or she set out to find (Anney, 2014).

3.8.4 Transferability

The term transferability refers to the extent to which the reader is able to generalize the findings of a study to her or his own context and addresses the core issue of how far a researcher may make claims for a general application of their theory. In other words it refers to the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be transferred to other contexts with other respondents (Morrow, 2005).

Transferability is achieved when the researcher provides sufficient information about the self (the researcher as instrument) and the research context, processes, participants, and researcher– participant relationships in order to enable the reader to decide how the findings may transfer. Given the usually small sample sizes (selected purposively) and absence of statistical analyses, the qualitative data cannot be said to be generalizable in the conventional sense (Morrow, 2005).

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter focused on the research methodology. Qualitative research was the research methodology chosen for the study. Qualitative research, quantitative research, and the mixed-methods research were defined and compared, and reasons for choosing the qualitative research method were given.

Interviews were used as a data-collection method as opposed to using questionnaires, to ensure that rich data in terms of the engineers' experiences, perspectives and perceptions was obtained. The semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions allowed the interviewer to be flexible when there were misunderstandings with the questions being asked.

The sampling method, data collection, and data analysis was discussed, with the thematic analysis process being used as the data-analysis method. The concepts of credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability were also clarified. The following chapter focuses on the presentation of the results from the interviews.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter outlined the research design that was used for this study. The focal point of this chapter is the presentation of the key findings of the research study. The purpose of this study was to explore the leadership effectiveness of engineers at THS SA; interviews were used as a suitable research technique to collect data from the respondents.

The intention in the study was to interview twenty engineers from the five THS SA operating centres, however, only fifteen respondents were available. The other five could not be reached as they were away from work during the study period. This gave a response rate of seventy-five per cent. The data collected from the interviews were interpreted and analysed. The discussion and interpretation of the data collected focused on the eight main themes that emerged from the data analysis.

4.2 Demographical Details of the Respondents

Twenty engineers were selected to participate in the interviews using purposive sampling; however, as mentioned earlier, only fifteen could be interviewed. The engineers were selected by virtue of their positions in the organisation, as they performed a leadership function in their daily roles and responsibilities. The interviews lasted for a period of forty-five to sixty minutes.

Table 3.2 in Chapter Three provided further details of the respondents. The respondents, besides being requested to answer the specified questions, were also allowed to raise any issues they felt were relevant to the interview. Their responses were summarised; and direct quotations were made, where necessary. Respondents were also requested to give examples, where possible, to substantiate their responses.

Each respondent was asked to state the number of years that he or she had practised as an engineer in his or her entire career, as well as the number of years practised as an engineer at THS SA. This was in an attempt to ascertain the respondents' level of understanding of leadership as an engineer, seeking to know his or her level of

involvement over the years. It would make sense that those who have practised in the engineer's role for over three years would have a profound understanding of their leadership roles, as engineers exposed to wide-ranging and complex situations.

Figure 4.1 below shows the number of years' experience that each male respondent had as a THS SA engineer.

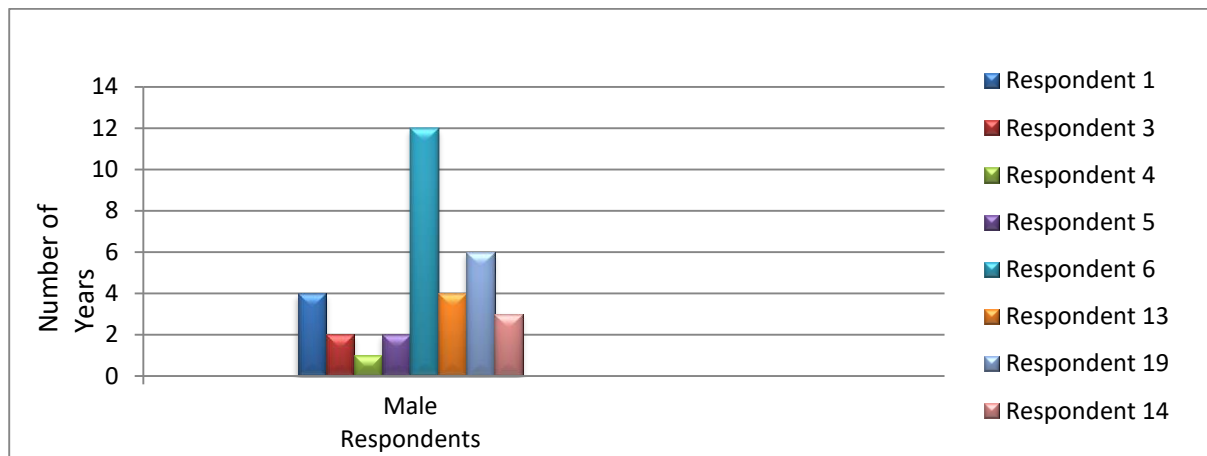


Figure 4.1: Number of Years' Experience for Male Respondents

Figure 4.1 above shows that there is a good mix of experienced and inexperienced male respondents. Sixty-three per cent of the male respondents have experience of over three years, which suggests that these respondents have a good understanding of a leadership role.

Figure 4.2 below shows the number of years' experience that each female respondent had as a THS SA engineer.

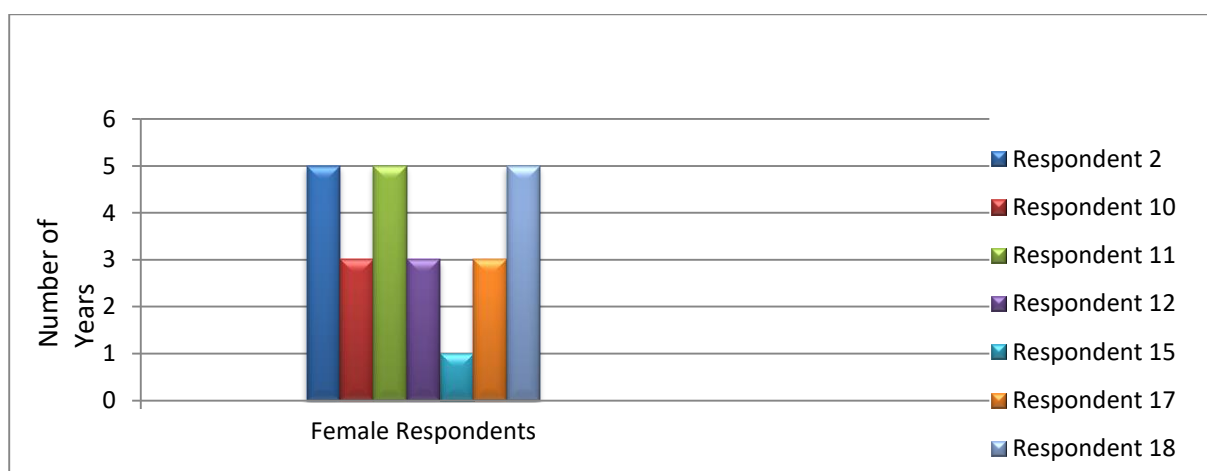


Figure 4.2: Number of Years' Experience for Female Respondents

Figure 4.2 shows that there is an even better mix of experienced and inexperienced female respondents than found in male respondents. Eighty-six per cent of female respondents have experience of over three years, which also suggests that these respondents have a well-defined understanding of the role of leadership.

Figure 4.3 below shows the race groups for the respondents.

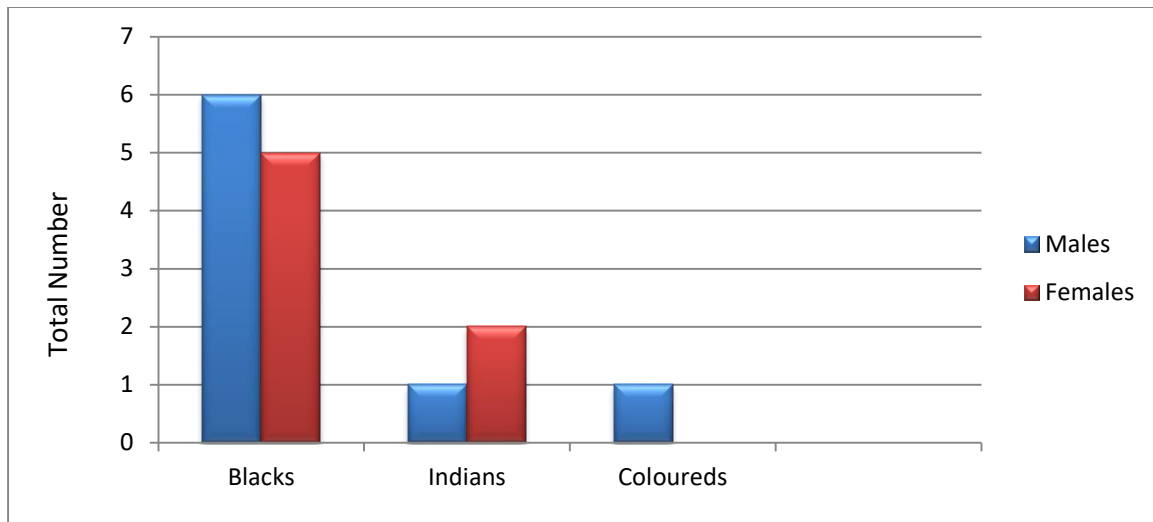


Figure 4.3: Race Groups for Respondents

Figure 4.3 above shows that the respondents' race is dominated by Black males and Black females.

4.3 Themes and sub-themes

Table 4.1 below summarises the themes and sub-themes that emerged as a result of analysis of the data.

Table 4.1: Themes and Sub-themes

Theme 1	Effective leadership as understood by the engineers
Theme 2	Engineer's adjustment to different leadership styles
Theme 3	Unsupported leadership pipeline of engineers
Theme 4	Lack of leadership role clarity for the engineers
Theme 5	Insufficient leadership skills empowerment
Theme 6	Lack of leadership training and development
Theme 7	Leading with limited decision-making powers
Sub-theme 7.1	Interference by superiors (micromanagement)
Theme 8	Lack of exposure to relevant business aspects
Theme 9	Lack of resources
Theme 10	Self – improvement of leadership skills

The themes mentioned above discuss the issues influencing the leadership effectiveness of the engineers in their roles as leaders of their teams, which differed from centre to centre.

4.3.1 Theme 1: Effective leadership as understood by the engineers

The respondents gave similar responses apropos of their understanding of effective leadership. Some said that effective leadership was about the leader leading with a clear vision in mind, whereby he would transform his team, aligning them with the vision of the company. They said that the leader empowered his team to make decisions, allowed his team to make mistakes, and allowed them to learn from those mistakes.

In addition, the respondents mentioned that effective leadership was about the leader being available to give guidance when required to do so; and it was about the leader being able to make the right decisions, whether to lead from the front or from the back as demanded upon by the situation at hand. Respondents also said that the leader must be approachable and trusted by his team members.

The respondents also maintained that effective leadership was about achieving the desired results through teamwork, promoting humility and unity within the teams. Furthermore, the respondents stated that with the organisation as diverse as it was, effective leadership was also about embracing this diversity and ensuring that organisational values were upheld.

One respondent said:

'I view effective leadership as a concept of being able to effectively transform and inspire your team to subscribe to a culture of high performance at all times, whereby every team member understands what his/her role is within the team structure.' (R15).

Another respondent added:

'Effective leadership encompasses many elements, some of which include the leader's ability to be empathetic with his people's feelings and being able to create an open and trusting relationship between himself and the team members.' (R2).

The respondents stated that some means of measuring their leadership effectiveness would involve assessing the morale of their team members, checking on the achieving of the deliverables, as well as checking on whether or not objectives and targets were met.

One respondent explained:

'For me, one way of ascertaining the leadership effectiveness of a leader would be by checking out how the team performs when the leader is away for an extended period. If the team still delivers or performs to the same standards as when I am around, then I would know that my leadership is effective and I have created a formidable and competent team.' (R3).

4.3.2 Theme 2: Engineers' adjustment to different leadership styles

The respondents all agreed that, to a great extent, their style of leadership was influenced by the kind of leadership that they were experiencing from their superiors; this varied from centre to centre.

The majority stated that they did not subscribe to the leadership styles practised by their seniors, however, for the sake of alignment, respondents were not confrontational. This was very frustrating for them as their leaders did not embody the style of leadership valued by the respondents; this seriously affected their leadership effectiveness.

One respondent explained:

'The calibre of seniors we have here believed in using the autocratic and authoritative styles of leadership; it is either their way or no way. This may have worked for them in the past, but they need to realise that they are now leading a very different generation and their style is no longer effective as it only causes so much stress on the subordinates. I wish they understood how much this hinders our creativity, innovation, and growth.' (R13).

Other respondents said that they felt very comfortable, very happy, fully subscribing to the leadership styles practised by their seniors. This made alignment with their seniors very easy, and created a very good working atmosphere that translated to a highly productive environment. These respondents felt very confident about their leadership effectiveness.

A respondent explained:

'I know other centres are not as fortunate as us when it comes to leadership matters. We have a very good leadership team here that is supportive and always willing to listen. They allow participation from each team member and our contribution is always valued. This motivates us to go that extra mile in the call of duty.' (R17).

All the respondents agreed that their leadership styles were guided by the situation at hand; and that they preferred to practise a participative, engaging, and consultative style of leadership that would stimulate creativity, innovation, and growth both for

themselves and their teams. The researcher did, however, conclude that there were some respondents who practised the autocratic and authoritative style of leadership every now and then to remind their subordinates that they were still in charge.

4.3.3 Theme 3: Unsupported leadership pipeline of engineers

The majority of the respondents felt that the organisation did not really consider them leaders in their role as engineers. These respondents argued that this was evident even in the training programme for the Engineers in Training (EITs) in which there was very little emphasis on the importance of empowering the trainees with the necessary leadership competencies. These respondents mentioned that the emphasis in the programme was only on the technical competency of the individual.

One respondent said:

'Engineers are not really considered as leaders in the organisation. We are only viewed as technical people who should just deliver on the technical aspects of our responsibilities.' (R6).

Another respondent made this point:

'The organisation does not consider us to be leaders, we are merely appointed to manage a production environment, where we should be working according to rules, regulations, policies and procedures. The leadership aspect of my role is secondary and to prove this; how many times has anyone in the organisation discussed my leadership competencies with me – it never happens – it is all about plant performance and production figures.' (R2).

Yet another respondent further argued:

'If the organisation believed that engineers were leaders, they would have put a lot of emphasis in the leadership role right from the foundation phase and there would be leadership programmes, seminars and workshops in place to train and develop all the engineers.' (R11).

The respondents stressed that they believed their leadership role was crucial to the organisational structure, as they were the link between the people on the ground and

senior management. These respondents believed that effective leadership on their part, as a collective, would yield positive results in the overall performance of the organisation; hence it was critical that the organisation considered them as such, empowering them with the necessary skills.

A respondent argued:

'If we were considered to be playing a crucial leadership role in the organisation we would be empowered accordingly and the results would be evident as each centre would have very effective leaders (engineers) leading their individual teams and that would translate to exceptional team performances, which in turn would be reflected on the overall performances of each centre.' (R5).

The respondents also felt strongly that the organisation's failure to seriously consider engineers as leaders, and failure to properly empower them, was of great concern: the organisation was losing the opportunity of grooming its future leaders. Respondents argued that they would be leaders with a rich THS SA culture, leaders who would take the organisation to newer and greater heights.

Respondents reflected that, from the THS SA organogram, it was clear that the engineer's level should be the foundation level for the organisational leadership role. They said this was because senior managers, that is, engineering managers and production managers, were appointed from a group of experienced engineers; these senior managers are promoted to general managers and executives of the organisation later on in their careers.

Figure 4.4 below shows the current organogram for the THS SA milling operations from the production and engineering teams to the milling executive.

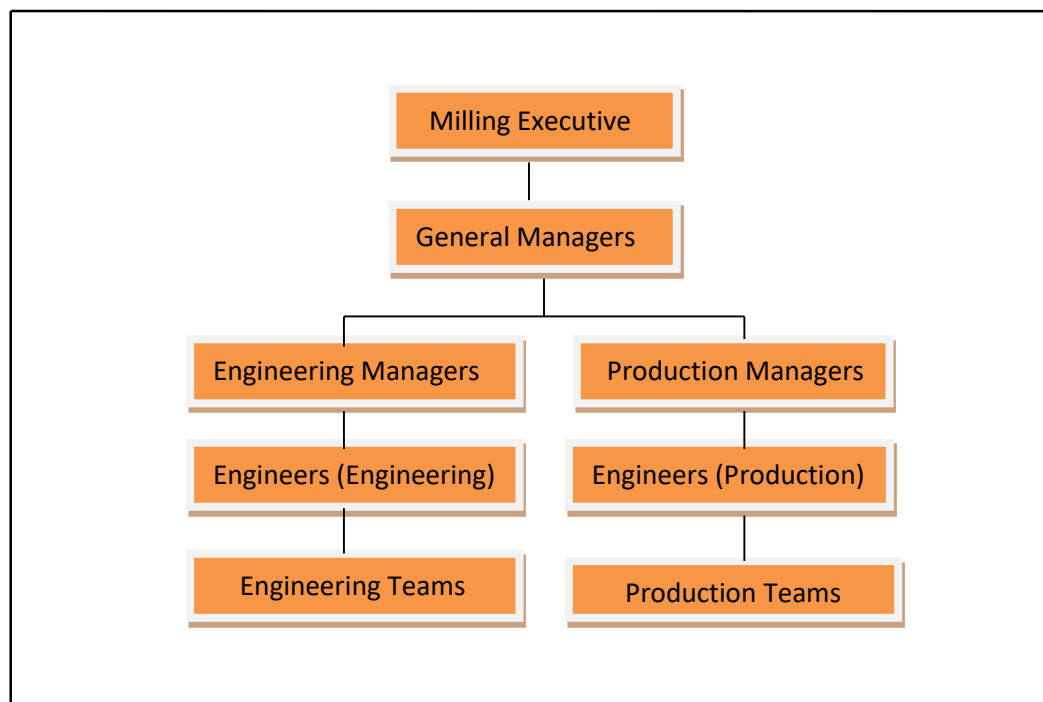


Figure 4.4 Organogram for THS SA

Source: Tongaat Hulett Sugar milling structure (2012)

One respondent stated:

‘The opportunity lost in grooming effective leaders at the engineer’s foundation phase shows itself when the engineers are promoted to the senior positions. These positions entail serious leadership and most of the new appointees find it hard to deliver in their new demanding roles because they lack leadership empowerment. They end up using their leadership instincts and leadership skills that they picked up along the way in their careers and some them end up performing very poorly in the leadership discipline. This is suicidal for the organisation.’ (R19).

4.3.4 Theme 4: Lack of leadership role clarity for the engineers

A large number of the respondents mentioned that what was expected of them in their leadership roles, which ideally should align with the organisational leadership culture, was not really defined or explained to them. They said the norm was that they would be appointed as engineers and given a section to lead and manage. The expectation from senior management was that they should effectively lead and manage the people in the section to give the desired results.

One respondent commented:

'Leadership roles are not defined and explained when one is appointed into the position, one is appointed as an engineer, thrown in the deep end and expected to survive. I pick up the pieces of what my leadership role should be as I go along. I meet all sorts of challenges and surprises, get burnt in the process and whipped at the same time for wrong decisions that I may have taken through ignorance.' (R7).

The respondents mentioned that they found this 'norm' very unconventional: under normal circumstances such a critical role would be clearly defined to the individual so as to prepare him or her properly on what to expect and what was expected of him or her, ensuring that the individual was aligned with all the other leaders in the centre.

One respondent added:

'How am I expected to perform a leadership function that is aligned to the overall organisational strategy if I am not told about the leadership culture of the organisation? I use my leadership instincts to lead my team and at times these are totally out of line with what my boss expects and I get to learn about that when I have already made the mistake. I pity the younger engineers because they are really in the dark for the better part of the early years of their careers.' (R2).

Another respondent said:

'I am using my leadership instincts, skills and understanding of the engineer's leadership role that I acquired from the opposition before I joined THS SA. Half the time I find myself in a dilemma because the organisational cultures are not the same. However, I do get out my way to enquire about the organisational leadership culture

to ensure that I am still aligned and to ensure that I remain effective in my leadership role. (R5).

The majority of the respondents agreed that their leadership effectiveness would be much improved had they a better understanding of the organisational leadership culture, and what was expected from them as leaders of their sections. They believed that many unnecessary problems, mistakes, and frustrations would be eliminated; and that they would quickly and easily have their teams aligned with the organisational strategy, resulting in improved performances.

The researcher gathered during the interviews that, even though the respondents' leadership roles were not clearly defined, other important elements, which are production related, such as the key performance areas (KPA's) for the sections, were clearly set and defined to them, and the respondents were all well aware of that mandate.

One respondent commented:

'I do have my key performance areas (KPA's) which I sit, discuss and agree upon with my boss at the beginning of every season, however, these seem to be changing every so often depending on the production requirements and it makes it difficult at times to manage them accordingly.' (R14).

Another respondent lamented:

'I'm well aware of my KPA's. However, it is disappointing in my case because the overall achievement of these KPA's is dependent on another department's performance. If the operation's team performs badly, my KPA's suffer.' (R7).

4.3.5 Theme 5: Insufficient leadership skills empowerment

This is one theme on which all the respondents concurred: that there was insufficient leadership skills' empowerment for the engineers. The feeling was that, currently, there was no emphasis on leadership skills' development within the organisation: respondents relied on their own instincts and experiences to lead their sections.

One respondent said:

'I have been an engineer for the past twelve years and the last time I got any leadership training was eleven years ago. I am relying on my leadership instincts and experience to lead my team and I think I am doing a good job under the circumstances. Unfortunately, my leadership experience can only take me up to a certain point and beyond that my effectiveness becomes shallow.' (R6).

The respondents felt that the organisation was more concerned with their technical competencies and less with other essential skills a person in their position needed to acquire. Respondents argued that this approach worked well for someone who was not going to be involved with the operational aspects of the business, for example, a technical specialist. However, the approach was questionable for the organisation if the engineers were deployed into the various plants, where most of them were currently working.

Respondents added that the engineers' position warranted that any appointee be adequately empowered with all the relevant skills, including leadership skills, to be able effectively to lead their teams, producing the desired outcomes.

Another respondent added:

'I have been in this position for about a year and I am still in the dark with regards to how I should be leading my team. I have no experience and I am only relying on what I pick up from my seniors and what I read from books. I get frustrated at times because the expectation is that as a qualified engineer I should be able to effectively lead my team. My boss understands my situation though and is very helpful.' (R4).

4.3.6 Theme 6 Lack of leadership training and development

All the respondents agreed that their training and development was essential to their leadership effectiveness; and that, unfortunately, the majority had not received any formal leadership training since they had been appointed into their current positions. Respondents said that the lack of training left them vulnerable, and exposed them to all sorts of problems when their leadership skills were tested by real-life situations in the workplace.

One respondent narrated:

'I had been emulating my senior's leadership style of being autocratic because it worked for him and it still does. Unfortunately, I had an incident just after I had taken over the current section when this kind of leadership style backfired on me. This was because the team had been previously exposed to a very participative kind of style and there I was being autocratic. This simply highlighted my lack of leadership skills as I had failed to analyse and to understand the team dynamics before deciding on the kind of leadership style to use. I learnt the hard way.' (R7).

The respondents highlighted that the training and development would not only empower them with the required leadership skills, but would also act as a motivator, boosting their morale. They believed that this would be a strong message from the organisation, saying that it cared and had its interests vested in their empowerment, which would certainly reinforce the organisation's retention strategy.

One respondent said:

'For me the lack of training and development is a clear indication that the leadership aspect of our role is secondary. We just need to understand that we are supposed to be technical experts. The assumption from the organisation is that once we fit into that technical role, we would also automatically acquire the much needed leadership skills. That is impossible.' (R1).

Some of the respondents disagreed with the statement that the organisation was not doing anything to train and develop them. They argued that the organisation had introduced the Management Development Program (MDP) in 2015 purely to address

the leadership gaps that were identified, and to bring all candidates up to date on certain critical aspects of the business.

One respondent argued:

'I was chosen for the MDP program and its content opened my eyes. I now have a better understanding of managerial and leadership issues as well as a better understanding of the business as a whole. I certainly feel that I am more empowered now than before. I am hoping that the others who were left out during the first round will be given an opportunity in the near future.' (R18).

The majority of the respondents also added that the non-availability of a coach or a mentor in their careers was another issue to confront. They explained that the coach or mentor would play a significant role in their leadership development, as he would be there constantly to guide them and give them advice on how to improve on their effectiveness as leaders.

One respondent said:

'It is so unfortunate that I am not getting enough attention with regards to my leadership development. I always feel that I am on my own for most of the time and having a coach or a mentor would make such huge difference as I would know who to call on when the going gets tough or even when I need a bouncing board for simple and general matters.' (R11).

4.3.7 Theme 7: Leading with limited decision-making powers

The majority of the respondents expressed their disappointment at the way in which they were driven to run their sections. The feeling was that they were only leaders because they had sections to run and teams to lead, but no decision-making powers at all. All respondents did acknowledge, however, that this could be owing to the difficult times the organisation was currently facing, hence tighter controls were required. However, they felt that there could be better ways and means of handling these tighter controls.

One respondent said:

'I feel that I am only filling in a position here. To put it bluntly; I feel that I am a glorified supervisor who performs messenger duties. I am hardly given the opportunity to make any decisions in and around my section and with my team and this definitely affects my effectiveness.' (R2).

The respondents mentioned that this was one of the most frustrating issues that they were faced with in their daily activities. They explained that, at times, production was severely jeopardised purely because they needed authority to decide on certain minor issues, or they had to spend time locating a particular signature before any work could commence.

The respondents added that this hindered their ability to think outside the box, implementing innovative ideas in their sections.

A comment from one respondent was:

'My position feels like it has been downgraded, as a result my team has lost confidence in me because they know that I can hardly make any decisions. Every time a decision has to be made I have to consult with my boss, very frustrating.' (R3).

Another respondent added:

'We are micro-managed right to the smallest decision that one has to make. This is very demoralising and I wonder how the organisation expects us to grow and become good decision makers in the future if this is the kind of culture that dominates.' (R13).

Yet another respondent vented:

'The approach from my bosses is always autocratic. This is very frustrating and demoralising and it makes me feel that my opinion is not valued, or that my decision making capability and competency is undermined. How can I effectively lead my team when I have no authority over them? I must add though that I appreciate guidance where I need it, but what is happening is really out of the ordinary.' (R2).

The researcher also noted that some respondents had a different experience from the others. These respondents mentioned that they had sufficient authority to decide on what to do in their sections and how to do it. Their bosses were there to consult with them as and when required.

One respondent explained:

'I have a very good trusting relationship with my boss. He gives me the leeway to run my sections and teams as I see fit. I touch base with him when I need his guidance or if there is a serious decision to be taken. This makes me so effective in my leadership role.' (R20).

These respondents explained that this had immensely enhanced their self-confidence and they had also managed to instil self-confidence into their team members; which in turn had promoted a good team spirit within their sections.

Another respondent said:

'The vibe around my team is so positive. We are all aligned and strive for one common goal. Our results speak volumes about the close-knit team that we have.' (R17).

4.3.7.1 Sub-theme 7.1 Interference by superiors (micromanagement)

The majority of the respondents also mentioned that there was a great deal of interference from their superiors, which made their leadership roles difficult to execute. It was not clear whether this interference emanated from trust issues between themselves and their seniors, or from their seniors perceiving them as lacking the necessary competencies.

The respondents also mentioned that this interference could again be influenced by the way in which the seniors themselves were led or are being led; or by the seniors being under a great deal of pressure from their principals to produce results, therefore not giving the respondents room to make mistakes. According to the respondents, this problem created an environment in which everyone in the line of command operated at a lower level than he or she should, which is contrary to best leadership practices.

One respondent said:

'It has now become difficult for me to be innovative because I am not given the opportunity to effectively lead my team. I get told what to do and this frustrates me because somehow it undermines my competency. Half the time I wait for my boss to give me instructions. The problem here is: How can he hold me accountable if his own instructions go wrong?' (R12).

The respondents also felt that the interference restricted their learning abilities: they believed they could benefit greatly through making mistakes. They believed that the bosses should be there to give them proper guidance and support when needed.

A respondent asked:

'How can we learn if we are in a confined environment where we are not allowed or given a chance to make mistakes? Learning organisations allow their people to make mistakes. We obviously understand that we cannot afford to make costly mistakes and hence we will consult accordingly with our bosses if the need arises.' (R14).

A few respondents praised the manner in which their bosses worked collaboratively with them. These respondents said they were very effective in their leadership roles,

as they were given free rein, and they had seen significant growth in their leadership capabilities.

One respondent boasted:

'I work freely without any interference from my boss. I have been allowed to make mistakes and I have learnt a lot from them. My boss' intervention is critical in ensuring that I am still on the right track and I am happy for him to step in as and when required.' (R8).

4.3.8 Theme 8: Lack of exposure to relevant business aspects

The majority of the respondents highlighted the lack of exposure to certain relevant business aspects as presenting problems to their leadership effectiveness. These respondents argued that some of the decisions they made would have been different, had they had an understanding of the impact of such decisions in the greater scheme of things.

One respondent emphasised:

'It is critical to expose the engineers to other business centres so that they can get a feel of how others work and to experience the different challenges faced by others. A better understanding of the overall business concept completely changes a person's mentality of doing certain things.' (R19).

One respondent owned up to his mistake, saying:

'I once dispatched a batch of sugar to the Refinery that did not meet the required specifications. For me this was a once off incident, unfortunately it turned out that my decision created a lot of problems as the Refinery had to double handle the sugar to be able to eventually get the final product and this seriously affected their production schedule, which in turn would have affected the availability of the sugar to be sold by the marketing team.' (R2).

This respondent mentioned that had he had a better understanding of the way in which the refinery operated, and how it was negatively affected by out-of-specification sugar; and also how this would have impacted on the sales department, he would not have made such a decision.

The respondents further explained that the understanding of the value chain by every internal stakeholder was important to the smooth operating of the business. They referred to the adage that a chain is as strong as its weakest link, adding that a poor decision by one engineer, who failed to understand the business value chain, would have serious consequences for the overall business operation.

Another respondent went on to say:

'I feel that we are currently working in our own little silos. I have no full appreciation of certain business aspects and this confines my lateral thinking. I eventually make decisions considering only what affects my immediate surroundings and fail to look at the bigger picture.' (R18).

The respondents felt that, if the various business centres interacted more often, the staff members would have a better understanding of each other's production issues. This would promote the sharing of ideas, and improve tolerance amongst the different teams.

4.3.9 Theme 9: Lack of resources

All the respondents highlighted that the current business climate had brought about many frustrations for them and their teams. They cited the lack of human resources and the financial constraints as the most serious problem that they were faced with in their everyday leadership roles; and this seriously affected their leadership effectiveness.

The respondents mentioned that it was extremely difficult to make decisions pertaining to proper plant maintenance, because they knew that the budgets available for such were very limited. This had led to all the plants not being able to achieve their mechanical efficiency targets, some being worse off than others.

One respondent said:

'We find ourselves in a very difficult situation where we know that we need to be spending money to ensure the plant is available and reliable, however, we also have to understand that funds are limited and we have to do the best with what we have. This certainly affects our leadership effectiveness, but we do the best under the circumstances.' (R6).

The respondents also mentioned that the financial situation had affected the human resource element of the business: they were not allowed to fill certain vacant positions. The respondents argued that, in some instances, a section was reduced to about fifty per cent of its normal labour complement, yet it was still expected to reflect excellent performances. The respondents felt that this subjected the remaining team members to extraordinary workloads, considering that the targets remained the same, in some instances even increasing.

The respondents also added that, as a result of the labour shortage, the remaining people within the team and others were stretched beyond their capabilities. Some were unfortunately finding themselves working excessive hours, which created other problems, such as lack of concentration, and mental and physical fatigue, which translated to poor performances in some cases, as well as serious exposure to safety risks.

A respondent argued:

'How does management really expect me to produce the same high standard performance when my team is down by thirty percent? I try so hard to constantly motivate my team to ensure that they do not focus much on the added workload. Fortunately, I have a very dedicated and committed team, but it is not easy.' (R15).

Another respondent said:

'The shortage of labour is very demoralising; we are expected to produce more with very few people. Anyway, in my case I believe this is where my leadership effectiveness is being tested because as a leader I need to influence my team to achieve good results, regardless of the circumstances. It is very challenging though, I must add.' (R12).

The shortage of skilled labour was another difficulty mentioned by all the respondents who said that this was also driven by the financial situation. All non-critical and non-statutory training was frozen, which, according to the respondents, may not have been a wise decision.

One respondent said:

'I believe that training should be the last element to be suspended when an organisation goes through such tough times. The most important thing in my opinion during such times is the availability of skilled labour. The skilled workforce will produce excellent results in everything they touch, resulting to good overall performances which is exactly what the organisation needed to sustain its operations. Training also serves as a motivator as it gives the indication that the organisation cares about the development of its employees and to a certain degree staff turn-over gets improved.' (R3).

Furthermore, the respondents expressed their disapproval of the lack of succession planning within the various centres. According to the respondents, many of their subordinates were concerned about the future of the industry. As such, they did not hesitate to resign if other organisations in more stable industries gave them lucrative offers. The respondents felt strongly that the organisation was doing little to ensure that such critical resources were retained.

One respondent commented:

'We lose a lot of skilled individuals to other industries and the most frustrating part is that there is no succession planning in place. Everyone knows how difficult it is to recruit skilled people, especially to some of the remote centres that we have and yet succession planning is still treated as a secondary issue.' (R6).

4.3.10 Theme 10: Self Improvement of leadership skills

The general feeling from the majority of the respondents was that the organisation was doing very little to empower them as leaders. These respondents acknowledged that this seriously affected the effectiveness in their leadership roles, which in turn affected the performance of their individual teams.

The majority of the respondents also stated that they were not doing anything in the interim to improve themselves in this discipline. They stated that they were hoping the organisation would continue with the MDP and that they would all have an opportunity of being slotted in there. The single concern they raised was that the selection criteria for this programme were not explained to them when the programme was introduced; that they were not sure whether, ultimately, all engineers would be given the opportunity of undertaking this programme at some stage.

One respondent stated:

'I got disappointed when certain individuals were chosen for the MDP in 2015 and I was left out. No explanation was given to me for my exclusion and this de-motivated me. Right now I am not in a position to register for any leadership course because the company will not pay for my fees and I will not be given any time off to attend to my studies.' (R5).

Another respondent explained:

'We cannot all be enrolled to do the MDP at the same time because we acknowledge that the plants still have to operate and some of us have to stay behind, however, one needs assurance that his/her turn will come to attend the program as we feel it would add a lot of value in our leadership competencies.' (R18).

A few of the respondents mentioned that they were currently studying on their own to empower themselves in the leadership discipline. They stated that they realised the importance of ensuring that they properly crafted their careers in the right direction, empowering themselves with the necessary leadership skills to be able to deal with any future issues, whether at THS SA or in any other organisation.

One respondent stated:

'I realised the need to privately enrol for a post graduate leadership qualification because nothing was forthcoming from the organisation and yet I know myself to be very passionate about leadership. I am hoping my qualifications will open doors for me in places where my leadership competency will be valued.' (R2).

Another one added:

'I am looking beyond this organisation; hence I am empowering myself with the necessary leadership skills. I am currently doing a post graduate qualification in leadership and it is a great pity that I currently feel that I am not considered as a leader in my current role, yet I know I have a lot to offer.' (R1).

The researcher noted that there were two categories of respondent when it came to self-empowerment. On the one hand, one group was content with the way things were, and was patiently awaiting the organisation's providing the necessary training for them. If no steps were taken, they would accept the status quo and continue as normal.

The other group, on the other hand, was very concerned about the future. They had reflected on their leadership shortcomings and taken the initiative to close those gaps. These are the people preparing themselves for greater and better opportunities found elsewhere. This group has taken the future of their careers into their own hands and will most likely part ways with the organisation at some stage, seeking positions in which they will be able to apply what they have learnt or studied.

One respondent commented:

'It is sad that even after one has taken the initiative to privately enrol for a leadership program, the organisation seems not to recognise the will and desire from the individual to empower himself. This is so de-motivating and the organisation will find itself losing us; young, dynamic and career oriented engineers. Pity because we are the future of this organisation, we are the game changers.' (R13).

These respondents acknowledged that there seemed to be some misalignment between themselves and the organisation with regard to their personal development needs and the business needs. Such respondents said that the position of the

business was that they were adequately empowered to be able to handle their responsibilities, whereas they felt they had leadership gaps that needed to be filled.

One respondent stated:

'It is clear that my personal development needs are not aligned with those of the organisation. However, this will not stop me from taking my career into my own hands and pursuing my personal goals. I am doing it for myself and when the time comes I will make the right move.' (R2).

The respondents argued that this misalignment made it difficult for the organisation to retain them; and as long as misalignment existed it was inevitable that they would leave at some time.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter presented the summary of the research results. The data were analysed using thematic analysis, and findings were presented in themes and sub-themes. Chapter Five will present a discussion of the themes and sub-themes identified in conjunction with the applicable theory.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter focused on the presentation of results, while this chapter discusses the findings of the study and makes reference to literature from previous studies in identifying any similarities and differences.

5.2 Theme 1: Effective leadership as understood by the engineers

The study identified that a common understanding of effective leadership existed amongst the respondents. According to their thinking, effective leadership implied that the leader led with a definite vision in mind, transforming his team and aligning them with the organisational vision. The respondents maintained that effective leadership was about leadership in which the leader empowered his team to make decisions, allowing them to make mistakes, learning from those mistakes.

Shekari and Nikooparvar (2012) supported the above notion with their explanation that effective leadership was about motivating employees through investing in them and ensuring that they were sufficiently empowered to make the best decisions. The above-mentioned researchers continued that highly motivated and well-trained employees were the pillars of any organisation that sought effectively to achieve its goals.

The study also identified that the respondents were well aware that the call of duty for an effective leader went far beyond simply having a vision and being able to align the teams with the vision. They understood that, ultimately, there has to be a plan of action which must be effectively executed to obtain the desired outcomes. Failure to execute this plan could only mean disaster for the organisation, the desired outcomes not being achieved.

According to Shekari and Nikooparvar (2012), in effective leadership, the leaders have the capability of translating purpose and vision into action; they are able to influence the workers to align with the organisational vision. These leaders are able to recognise the unique skills or talents of each worker. Such skills or talents are developed to the

individual's full potential and utilised effectively for the benefit of the organisation. This statement supports the above finding.

The respondents also explained that effective leadership was about achieving the desired results through teamwork and promoting humility and unity within the teams. Furthermore, the respondents stated that, with the organisation being diverse in nature, effective leadership was also about embracing this diversity, and ensuring that organisational values were upheld.

5.3 Theme 2: Engineers' adjustment to different leadership styles

The study identified that the respondents used various leadership styles in their everyday leadership roles. A leadership style is defined as an approach to leadership that provides clear direction, implements plans, and motivates employees. It is therefore essential that a leader be able to identify the most appropriate leadership style that would yield the most effective results for the organisation (Alkahtani, 2016).

The study also identified that, to a large extent, the leadership styles practised by the respondents were influenced by the kind of leadership styles that they were experiencing from their superiors; this varied from centre to centre; and, according to Ekaterini (2010), for one to be authentic in his leadership style and behaviour, one has to develop one's own leadership style in accordance with one's personality and character.

From the study it was evident that the respondents used predominantly the transactional, transformational, and the situational leadership styles. As mentioned earlier, making the right choice is fundamental, and it is influenced by a number of factors, such as the leader's personal traits, the response of the employees towards the leader, the employees' readiness or level of competency on certain tasks, and the complexity of the task (Alkahtani, 2016).

The study identified that the transactional leadership style featured mainly because of the nature of the business, it being a production environment in which compliance with many elements offered by the employees was key. According to Giltinane (2013), transactional leadership offers rewards to employees in return for proper compliance with elements of the organisational strategy. This can have a positive effect on

employees' satisfaction and performance; however, the transactional leader tends to concentrate on managerial tasks, the style being task-oriented at the expense of leadership activities.

The respondents' understanding of the transformational leadership style added another dimension, the study identifying that the respondents used certain elements of this leadership style, such as employees' development, employees' motivation, and teams' inspiration. It is said that the transformational leadership style empowers employees to the extent that the desired goals are accomplished by encouraging employees to make their own decisions which are aligned with the vision of the leader (Ekaterini, 2010).

Another finding from the study was that the respondents placed a great deal of emphasis on teamwork. Respondents constantly stressed the need for excellent team performance, especially in the austere times in which the organisation finds itself currently. The concept of teamwork was further reinforced by Alkahtani (2016) who argued that transformational leaders were able to concentrate on teamwork rather than individual interests. Furthermore, with the team roles clearly defined, the leader allowed a fair amount of autonomy in his team, knowing that an element of trust and honesty existed in both directions.

Situational leadership was also identified in the study as a further approach used by the respondents. This emerged as the most dominant style, encompassing a combination of the transactional and transformational leadership styles, as well as other leadership styles that might be brought in to be used as determined by the circumstances. The underlying factor here was that no single situation was identical with other situations in the work environment; the respondents acknowledged that they needed to deal with each situation according to its merits or requirements.

Sharma and Jain (2013) supported this argument, explaining that, in the work environment, what may have had a good outcome in one situation would possibly not in another. It is therefore vital that the correct judgment is made by the leader to decide on the best possible course of action and the leadership style needed for each eventuality.

According to Giltinane (2013), a complex situation always exists when it comes to people and leadership situations in the work environment. Therefore; the ability to be adaptable is required; hence the situational leadership approach becomes an essential tool. This approach encourages leaders to recognise the complexity of work situations, considering many factors when deciding which action to take.

The study further identified that the various senior leaders from the other centres used different kinds of leadership styles. Some subscribed to the transactional, transformational, and situational leadership styles, which may be classified as democratic, whilst others used the autocratic approach. The study discovered that the democratic style of leadership when practised, tended to produce happier and more satisfied respondents. Respondents also confirmed that they obtained a good response from their teams under the democratic style. The opposite outcome was effected by the autocratic approach. The respondents were unhappy and frustrated when such an approach was used. The respondents' teams also displayed the same kind of feelings when subjected to the autocratic approach.

Bhatti et al. (2012) concurred with the above finding, saying that the democratic leadership style produced good relationships with the employees and created a conducive working environment, resulting in high team performance. Conversely, the autocratic leadership style created a tense environment which produced unhappy, angry, and frustrated employees who did not perform to their full potential. Giltinane (2013) added that autocratic leaders tend to create fear among employees, often making unilateral decisions rather than involving the teams. Quite often the employees are given the impression that they do not add any value to the teams.

In addition, the study further identified that the majority of the respondents did not subscribe to the leadership styles practised by their seniors. However, for the sake of alignment, they remained compliant. This was very frustrating for them as it seriously affected their leadership effectiveness. Ekaterini (2010) advised that understanding the implications of the differences in leadership styles was important for the development of good working relationships. Ekateni (2010) added that overlooking the effects of these differences could lead to situations of unnecessary interpersonal disagreements and conflicts. Thus, for effective leaders to be successful, they must

first understand their own way of leading, and then understand the ways of the people who surround them.

5.4 Theme 3: Unsupported leadership pipeline of engineers

The study identified that the majority of the respondents believed that the organisation did not really consider them leaders in their roles as engineers. Respondents argued that this was evident even in the training programme for the EITs, in which there was very little emphasis on the importance of empowering the trainees with the necessary leadership competencies. They mentioned that the emphasis in the programme was only on the technical competency of the individual.

Respondents added that it was important for engineers to be considered leaders because they ultimately had to lead their teams within organisations. Farr and Brazil (2009) echoed this sentiment, stating that leadership must be a key element in advancing the engineering profession, keeping it relevant and connected. As much as technical excellence is the essential attribute of engineers, the engineers should also have in their possession team communication skills, ethical reasoning skills, contextual analysis skills, and leadership skills.

Furthermore, engineers must be trained and recognised as leaders in their own rights: too often an engineer is employed for his technical competency, dismissed for having poor people skills, and promoted for his leadership and management skills (Farr & Brazil, 2009).

The study also identified that, resulting from the perceived non-recognition of the respondents as leaders, respondents felt that they were excluded from a great deal of training and development opportunities that would better prepare them for both their current and future leadership roles. Respondents argued that the organisation is also losing the opportunity of training engineers as a succession-planning strategy for their future roles. Current managers were previous engineers. In addition, respondents said that this missed opportunity becomes evident when the managers find themselves lacking in their leadership competencies.

Furthermore, the study identified that respondents felt that, as a result of their technical inclination and the nature of the business, being a production environment in which compliance was essential, they were expected to practise more managerial duties than leadership duties. This included planning, leading, organising and controlling; leaders had also to ensure that full compliance with rules and regulations of the organisation was achieved.

According to Kutz (2012), management comes to the fore in dealing with technical problems when they arise, and this requires the intervention of standard policies and procedures to enforce compliance. Leadership, on the other hand, is required when random problems arise, which do not have pre-established or standard solutions, and therefore require adaptability, critical and strategic thinking, creativity, and innovation.

5.5 Theme 4: Lack of leadership role clarity for the engineers

The study highlighted that a number of respondents were uncertain about what was expected of them in their leadership roles as newly appointed engineers. This introduced an element of frustration and self-doubt, with most respondents relying heavily on their instincts and experiences to navigate their way around. This created some role ambiguity, which, according to Srikanth and Jomon (2013), is defined as the lack of sufficient information availed to one enabling one effectively to execute responsibilities. There was a distinct lack of adequate information about the processes needed to be followed for engineers' responsibilities to be effectively executed.

The study also identified that some of the respondents had their roles clarified for them; hence, in such cases, role ambiguity was eliminated. This made it a lot easier for the respondents to execute their tasks well, with a full understanding of what was expected from them as new leaders.

Srikanth and Jomon (2013) discussed that it is essential for role expectations to be made known to the individual, and for sufficient knowledge of activities needed to fulfil those expectations to be provided. Role ambiguity is associated with a lack of information on objectives, conditions in which the job is to be performed, as well as the full responsibilities of the job; and as part of clearing any ambiguity, the consequences of effective or ineffective performance in the role have to be clarified upfront.

The study also discovered that the respondents strongly believed that, had they better understood their roles, they would be in a more viable position to lead their teams effectively, as they would more confidently execute their responsibilities. According to Brault et al. (2014), role clarification is a competency professionals have to have in ensuring that their own roles are well understood by all team members. As such, professionals have the responsibility to fully comprehend their own roles and the various dynamics related to them.

It is argued, according to Nandal and Krishnan (2000), that when the leadership roles or any other associated roles are clear, that is, when the expectations are known, there will be increased self-belief in the person; this will translate to effective leadership and increased performance. Nandal and Krishnan (2000) continued that any new appointee must be coached on the purpose of the job, the key performance objectives, the expected outcomes, and the responsibilities of the position. This will assist the person in mapping out a concrete action plan guiding him towards achieving the clearly known expectations.

5.6 Theme 5: Insufficient leadership skills empowerment

The study uncovered that the respondents believed that, as much as they had the necessary technical competencies to execute their responsibilities as engineers, they were very concerned with their leadership capabilities – they felt they were not adequately empowered to effectively lead their teams. According to Mendelsohn (2009), it is crucial for engineers to be empowered to fully comprehend the principles of leadership and be able to put them into practise in progressive proportions as they pursue their careers. The finding from the study is well-supported by this statement.

Leadership empowerment may be defined as a kind of resource allocation strategy that may be used to cut down the dependence of an individual or team on higher power or senior personnel. This strategy entails a number of management and leadership practices, which include decentralization, participation, information-sharing and training (Liu, 2015). Leadership empowerment is further defined as a philosophy which believes in enriching the leaders' jobs and giving them power to exercise control over certain issues, taking responsibility for the outcome of their efforts (Sahoo & Das, 2011).

Hassan et al. (2013) added that leadership empowerment was about leaders sharing the decision-making authority with their subordinates, consulting them on important work-related decisions; giving them more autonomy, and removing unnecessary bureaucratic red tape that placed obstacles in the productivity and efficiency of the individual or team. These definitions are in line with the finding of the study.

The study also unearthed that the respondents mostly relied on their leadership instincts and personal experiences to guide them through their leadership journey. At times they were faced with serious leadership problems that exposed their leadership incompetency. It was also identified that the respondents did not have the necessary opportunity of attending leadership training courses, leadership seminars, and workshops.

In addition, the respondents stated that they had never been addressed by senior leaders of the organisation on leadership matters. Respondents felt that such a contribution would go a long way to showing that the organisation had keen interest in their leadership empowerment. Granta and Hartley (2013) supported this notion, stating that such approaches to leadership empowerment are essential to the success of leadership empowerment. Many global organisations are successfully using such approaches as part of their leadership development initiatives. This action ensures solid alignment with the organisation's goals, values, and culture.

The study further discovered that, resulting from the lack of leadership empowerment, the respondents felt de-motivated and impotent when faced with leadership issues that were difficult to deal with. This finding was aligned with the argument by Prieto (2013) that leadership empowerment is always associated with motivation; meaning that empowered employees are usually motivated enough to freely run independently with their tasks, being well-prepared to deal with any problems they may face in the workplace.

Furthermore, leadership empowerment inspires change, and enhances the level of workplace commitment and autonomy, which in turn increases the degree of individual employee self-confidence, commitment, job satisfaction, and performance. This helps in the accomplishment of the goals of the organisation (Sahoo & Das, 2011).

5.7 Theme 6: Lack of leadership training and development

The study revealed that the majority of the respondents had not been given any kind of formal leadership training or development, which made them rely on their individual instincts and experiences in trying effectively to lead their teams. This highlighted the urgent need for these respondents to be offered leadership training and development. According to Kulkarni (2013), such a need is determined by the employees' performance deficiency, and, according to the respondents, in their cases such performance deficiencies are evident.

Leadership training and development, as defined by Tahir et al. (2014), is a process dealing with acquiring comprehension, knowledge, techniques, and practices, as well as learning experiences that are planned to educate leaders on how to execute current and future tasks. Leadership training improves individual leaders' performance at team level as well as at organisational level. Organisational benefits, training, and development of leaders and employees leads to improved profitability and competitiveness. For the individuals, training enhances job knowledge, improved morale and job satisfaction, whilst also promoting alignment with the organisational goals (Tahir et al., 2014).

The study also disclosed that the exposure of the respondents to their current leadership roles, and the fact that they were reporting to other leaders somehow accelerated their learning experiences. One may believe that this arrangement was a typical 'on the job training' concept. Farr and Brazil (2009) expanded on this concept, explaining that leadership development in most industries tends to be an ad hoc event, mainly practised as 'on-the-job training', which is mistakenly assumed by the seniors to be sufficient to develop the engineers to the required level with regard to their leadership competency. The study identified that this seemed to be the case with the respondents.

The teaching processes for engineering, being a very technical field, stressed task execution over the quality of people relationships and leadership. This makes it difficult to teach leadership principles to engineers. It therefore becomes imperative that any form of leadership training and any development programmes implemented are conducted in a manner appealing to engineering sensibilities: engineers prefer to be

trained in practical and tangible skills that may be applied immediately (Simpson & Evans, 2012).

Furthermore, the study highlighted that certain respondents had been given the opportunity of enrolling for an internal MDP. These respondents wished this opportunity had come sooner in their careers, the experience being invaluable.

Kulkarni (2013), in support of the enrolment into development programmes, explained that leadership training and development programmes had a crucial role to play in every organisation. Kulkarni (2013) argued that these programmes improved the performance of the leaders, refreshed the leaders' knowledge, and enhanced their personal skills, whilst keeping them au fait with current leadership affairs. The above-mentioned researcher continued that the training and development programmes cultivate effective and efficient leaders within the organisation.

The study also disclosed that the majority of respondents felt that the non-availability of mentors and coaches to guide them in their leadership roles was a serious cause for concern. They believed that the role of mentors and coaches was essential for their leadership development: they would be obtaining guidance from a person who has 'been there and done that'.

Farr and Brazil (2009) supported this idea, explaining that the coaching and mentoring process had the potential to develop and reward both the upcoming engineer and the senior leader, leadership development being a two-way process. Quite often the differences in career progression between engineers may be attributed to the differences in the mentorship or coaching that they were exposed to, as well as their developmental experiences. Ultimately, a good development and mentorship programme will lead to all upcoming engineers having the opportunity of developing to their full potential.

MacIntyre (2016) contributed his agreement with this finding, highlighting the importance of leadership coaching by executives or senior leaders within an organisation: it was an instructional technique used to teach upcoming leaders strategic orientation and alignment through conversations. Leadership coaching created a learning environment for discovery, and an experience that was

transformative for the individual. It also provided an accelerated learning curve for the development of leadership, promoting an excellent culture of organisational learning.

Furthermore, MacIntyre (2016) mentioned that leadership coaching being interdisciplinary integrates adult learning, organisational development, psychological counselling, and management education. All these components are necessary ingredients for shaping an engineer as an effective leader.

5.8 Theme 7: Interference by Superiors (micromanagement)

The study identified that the majority of the respondents felt that they had very little decision-making power when running their sections. Coupled with that, there was a high level of interference by their superiors in their daily activities. This frustrated their leadership effectiveness and their general performance. Respondents could not infer the reason for such interference, whether this arose from trust issues between themselves and their seniors, or because their seniors perceived them (respondents) as lacking the necessary competencies.

According to the respondents, this situation was a typical case of micromanagement which, according to literature, has seriously negative outcomes on the performance of the affected individuals and teams. Rajkumar et al. (2016) defined micromanagement as the process of closely observing every step or activity being performed by the employees, making sure that they knew that the boss was watching them at all times.

Micromanaging also entailed excessive examination of work being done, planning of minor details for the teams, and keeping track of the time employees were occupied at work or when they were found to be away from their work stations. Furthermore, micromanagement may simply be defined as the process of closely evaluating people and controlling their work activities, with the superior making all the necessary decisions (Delgado et al., 2015).

The study also identified that the micromanagement style of leadership frustrated respondents and seriously hampered their leadership effectiveness as section leaders. This aligned with what Rajkumar et al. (2016) highlighted, that a micromanaging behaviour tended to have seriously negative consequences for the

performance of the organisation. Performance levels of employees tended to be reduced when they felt they were under heavy scrutiny all the time.

Also supporting the above finding, Delgado et al. (2015) argued that micromanaging could have a detrimental impact on employees' morale. It gave a sense to the employees that they were not being listened to, and when such happened they could either switch off or avoid making positive contributions to the team for continuous improvement, the leader having removed the incentive or motivation for the employees to show effort, commitment, and creativity.

Wanjau and Kyongo (2013) added that micromanagement interfered with employees' performance and productivity, resulting in massive hidden costs, either direct or indirect, to both the employees and the organisation. The above-mentioned researchers added that, regardless of the motive for micromanaging, this behaviour had the potential effect of creating resentment, employee disengagement, inhibition of innovation, and the destruction of trust between the parties involved. This prompted the comment from the respondents that their supervisors did not trust them sufficiently to competently execute their leadership responsibilities.

Furthermore, the study identified that the respondents acknowledged and appreciated that micromanagement did have a place in the workplace. There are instances when this style may be used effectively. Delgado et al. (2015) concurred with this finding, arguing that leaders should not completely disregard micromanagement, stressing that there were instances when it had its role in the workplace. Rajkumar et al. (2016) also supported this argument, stating that micromanaging may be beneficial to organisations when the manager's interference may be required to enhance productivity. This may arise when employees are inexperienced or technically incapable of performing their particular activities.

According to Delgado et al. (2015), micromanagement could be effectively engaged in the following circumstances:

- (1) When the strategy of the organisation was changing, making guidance necessary.
- (2) If there was a new leader, a new employee, or a new division or unit.
- (3) If an employee or leader failed to execute a mandate, and, as a result, the programme was in limbo.
- (4) If there were serious complaints or serious errors that may have occurred, resulting in the section obtaining poor results.

In these circumstances, the leader should engage in proactive micromanagement (giving direction and setting the course straight, and identifying individual needs right from the outset, as in the case of a new employee) or reactive micromanagement (to correct poor results or errors). It is vital to inform the team when a leader intends switching from a “hands-off” leadership style to micromanagement mode, to eliminate any misunderstandings and to ensure team alignment (Delgado et al., 2015). It is also important to note that, while there is a necessity for micromanagement, continuing it for an extended period may prove detrimental; hence this role has to be re-evaluated as often as possible, the leader backing off at the right time.

5.9 Theme 8: Lack of exposure to relevant business aspects

The study identified that the majority of the respondents believed they were not sufficiently exposed to some of the important business aspects of the organisation: this deprived them of the critical understanding of the complete value chain. Respondents argued that, in some instances, this impacted on their decision-making abilities: they may not have the full understanding of the organisational vision, or the way in which their decision would impact on the next internal stakeholder. Respondents further mentioned that the tendency was for one to be left to concentrate on his ‘silo’, often failing to synchronise with the organisation’s vision for the future.

The term ‘silo’ mentioned above defines internally focused organisational units or divisions, in which insufficient or no attention is given to external relationships. Common features of silos are communication breakdown between divisions, less co-operation between division members and other stakeholders, and the development of unhealthy relationships between the divisions. The consequences of the existence of

silos are that the organisation struggles to achieve the desired business outcomes, the misalignment between the divisions having a huge effect on the overall performance (Vatanpour et al., 2013).

Cilliers and Greyvenstein (2012) explained that silos were not a tangible feature in organisations – they resided in the minds of employees who had a common impression of their reality. To the employees, silos provide safety and comfort by isolating the others who were perceived to be outsiders. The outcome was the creation of barriers that hugely affect the overall performance and ultimately the productive culture of the organisation.

The study also identified that the respondents from the various centres seemed to be disconnected from one another. Engineers and their networking was very limited: as a result, information-sharing and collaboration was non-existent.

In support of the above finding, Bevc et al. (2015) argued that the development and sustainability of inter-divisional networks promoted the sharing of resources, knowledge, information, and good relationships. The networks should emphasise working collaboratively and across boundaries to increase the knowledge base of individuals as well as to share the various experiences. Good networks are known to present benefits such as enhancing output by reducing costs, leveraging resources, and identifying solutions that may have been difficult to achieve.

5.10 Theme 9: Lack of Resources

The study identified that there were many frustrations found in respondents emanating from the shortage of skilled labour to strengthen their teams. When positions became vacant and could not be filled, this affected all the engineering disciplines in the organisation. Respondents explained that it was extremely difficult to recruit suitably qualified and experienced technical people, ranging from the artisans, technicians, technologists right to the engineers.

Mateus et al. (2014) concurred with the above statement, stating that organisations found that artisans and engineers' positions remained the most difficult positions to fill. This affected the majority of industries in the country as a whole. Mateus et al. (2014) further argued that South Africa's persistent skills' shortage was being complicated by

the lack of proper technical skills' training, which was largely attributed to the decline of the apprenticeship and learnership systems that were known to produce excellent tradesmen in the past. Also, the lack of experience from the people who had acquired some form of technical training made it difficult for industry to integrate such individuals into their organisations.

The study also identified that respondents believed that the impact of the general lack of skills seriously affected their individual teams' performances, as, quite often, the new recruits delivered unsatisfactory and sub-standard performances. Other team members were compelled to fill in the gaps somewhat haphazardly, to ensure that the team still excelled as a collective. Respondents mentioned that the organisation needed skilled and productive individuals who would 'hit the ground running' and make a positive contribution right from day one.

Organisational performance excellence and sustained growth cannot be achieved without the efficient performance of skilled workers. The skilled workers are an important lever for accelerating production and human development, as well for adding value by bringing in improved job knowledge, transferring their knowledge to other workers, upholding organisational culture and cultivating more positive attitudes in the organisation towards profit orientation (Tahir et al., 2014).

Considering the vicious cycle in which an organisation finds itself with regard to knowledge transfer from a skills' development perspective, a skills' depleted workforce cannot transfer any knowledge, skills, and training to the new generation of employees. This can only mean that the incompetency levels in the organisation further spiral downwards, affecting the organisation's ability to enhance its productivity and expand its wealth (Tshilongamulenzhe, 2012).

Furthermore, the study identified that the respondents believed that proper training and succession planning would help alleviate the problem of skills shortage in the organisation. Respondents expressed their concern that training had been suspended owing to the current financial constraints, and that succession planning was non-existent.

Putta (2014) supported this finding, maintaining that it was unfortunate that training budgets in most organisations were the first budgets to be suspended when these organisations were going through difficulties. Organisations suspended such programmes because they were trying to reduce expenses so as to improve their profits and keep the businesses afloat. Sadly enough, such decisions had a greater impact on the operational excellence of the organisations, as the shortage of skilled and productive workers became even more pronounced.

Putta (2014) went on to advise that it was critical for leaders in organisations to understand that training is a vehicle for the development of the human resource. Therefore, in demanding economic times organisations needed personnel who would think outside the box and also think on their feet. This can only be achieved by well-trained employees (Putta, 2014).

Supporting the succession-planning notion, Odhiambo et al. (2014) explained that succession planning was a key element for human development in that it provided organisations with methodical processes for identifying high potential workers, developing and promoting their growth.

Furthermore, the goals for succession planning are to enhance job-filling for critical positions through active development of longer-term successors, by ensuring that there is progress in their careers, and seeing that they achieve the range of work experience they need for the future, encouraging a culture of progression (Odhiambo et al., 2014).

Succession planning may also be explained as an intentional and systematic strategy by an organisation to safeguard the continuity of leadership in critical positions, to guarantee the retention and development of intellectual and knowledge capital for the future; and to encourage individual advancement, thus securing the continued, effective performance of an organisation (Garg & Weele, 2012).

The embargo on employment was identified in this study as another serious issue of concern. The respondents mentioned that vacancies were not being filled, all in an effort to save costs. Certain sections were operating with only fifty per cent of their labour complement.

Saddington (2011) expanded on the above, saying that the current economic climate has subjected many organisations to tremendous pressure to keep labour costs low by reducing staff numbers and benefits whilst simultaneously increasing performance and productivity. Unfortunately, the 'do-more-with-less' business mentality of these organisations may only be a short-term solution, as it has physically and emotionally negative effects on workers, equipment maintenance, and the infrastructure as whole.

5.11 Theme 10: Self-Development of leadership skills

The study identified that the majority of the respondents were currently not attempting to develop their leadership skills, and were relying on the organisation to provide the necessary training and development. This was contrary to the notion that the emerging knowledge society imposes new demands on individual leaders to continuously develop their leadership and management competencies so as to remain abreast, relevant, and adaptive to the work environment challenges (Louys et al., 2009).

Farr and Brazil (2009) explained that successful engineers become successful because of the continued demonstration of their technical excellence, together with certain management abilities. For engineers to become effective and respected leaders, they must continue developing and refining their leadership competencies, which unfortunately was not the case with some of the respondents.

All successful leaders were continually learning and adapting to leadership challenges throughout their careers. These leaders went as far hiring executive coaches to help them hone their leadership competencies, guaranteeing their relevance and effectiveness. One of the most important responsibilities for the engineer in his career is to influence his team to accomplish its goals. During this process the engineer impacts the lives of the employees and the welfare of the organisation; hence it is more crucial than ever that the engineer at this stage of his career continually improves his leadership skills (Farr & Brazil, 2009).

The study also identified that a number of respondents had decided to take control of their individual careers, taking proper steps to develop themselves. These respondents had opted to enrol for post-graduate leadership programmes without the involvement and assistance of the organisation.

This resonated well with the notion that, increasingly, some individuals in the workplace have acknowledged that their learning efforts and development processes should be under their control without any directive from their organisations. Such an approach fits perfectly well with the new breed of leaders, who appreciate the need for ongoing professional development and who also take full responsibility for managing their own career paths (Ren et al., 2014).

According to Farr and Brazil (2009), most senior engineers are successful because they have displayed excellence in their technical expertise and with their management abilities. For them to make the transition to respected leaders, they need to continuously develop and refine their leadership qualities, all successful leaders constantly learning and adapting.

5.12 Conclusion

This chapter provided the discussion of the findings which highlighted the issues that were faced by the respondents. These findings were linked to the relevant literature, supporting or contradicting them. The following chapter will provide the recommendations, and also conclude the study.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the key findings of the study, drawing a conclusion and recommendations based on these findings.

THS SA has been faced with difficult times owing to the drought situation in the country which has persisted for the past three years. Serious cost-cutting initiatives have been implemented, some being: strict budget controls, freezing of some positions, suspension of training programmes, and reduced maintenance expenditure. This has brought about issues of low staff morale, poor plant performance, and low productivity. There are job insecurities amongst employees, who are concerned about the future of the sugar industry.

Employees in management and leadership roles are under extreme pressure to achieve more with the few resources they have. Engineers fall into this category, their roles being a combination of both management and leadership. They are at a critical organisational level linking the general workforce and senior management. The success of each operating centre is dependent on the way in which each engineer's team performs in achieving their targets, apropos of their respective key performance areas.

This study sought to explore the leadership effectiveness of the engineers at THS SA as they lead their teams. The qualitative research methodology approach was employed and purposive sampling was used. Semi-structured face-to-face interviews were conducted which allowed for interaction between the researcher and the respondents. This approach also allowed for follow-up questions which helped the researcher gain more clarity on the subject.

Twenty engineers from THS SA's five operating centres (FX, AK, DL, MS and HR) were initially selected as participants in this study by virtue of their current positions at middle management level. However, only fifteen could be interviewed as the others had personal commitments during the period. Data were analysed using thematic analysis, and the themes were used to present results for discussion and to draw conclusions and make recommendations.

Various literature articles pertinent to effective leadership were consulted in order to enable a deeper level of understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of effective leadership within organisations.

The objectives of the study were:

- To establish the leadership effectiveness of engineers as leaders at THS SA;
- To identify the existing areas of improvement with regard to the engineers' leadership capabilities in effectively leading their sections at THS SA; and
- To determine the way in which the leadership capabilities of engineers in THS SA may be developed to the standard required by the organisation.

6.2 Key findings

The purpose of this study was to explore the leadership effectiveness of the engineers at THS SA. The key findings of the study will be discussed with respect to the study objectives and the themes that emerged from the analysis of the interview data.

- **Objective 1:** To establish the leadership effectiveness of engineers as leaders at THS SA.

The study highlighted that the leadership effectiveness of engineers was severely compromised by a number of issues that they faced as they endeavoured to effectively perform their leadership roles. The issues identified were as follows:

- The mode of leadership practised by respondents' seniors.
- The perceived lack of recognition of the engineers' leadership status or lack of support for the engineer's role by the organisation.
- The ambiguity of the leadership role for the engineers.
- The lack of sufficient empowerment of leadership skills for the engineers.
- The micromanagement practices applied to the engineers by their seniors.
- The lack of networking and collaboration between the centres and divisions.
- The shortage of resources (financial and human resources).

These issues are further discussed in detail.

The style of leadership that was practised by the respondents' leaders played an important role in influencing the leadership style finally adopted by the respondents. The majority of the respondents mentioned that, in most instances, autocratic and authoritative styles were used by their leaders: they (respondents) did not subscribe to them. However, for the sake of alignment and good working relationships with their leaders, respondents had to be adaptive at the expense of their happiness and effectiveness.

The perceived lack of recognition of the leadership status or lack of support for the engineers' position by the organisation was also offered as a problem. The respondents felt that this deprived them of the necessary leadership training and development opportunities for their current and future roles, leaving them vulnerable when their leadership competencies were tested by difficult situations in the workplace.

The strong feeling was that respondents were viewed only as technical people who should concentrate on the delivery of the technical aspects of their responsibilities. Respondents also added that their role was perceived to be more managerial, which made the leadership role a secondary aspect of their responsibilities. A comprehensive role profile for this position must be developed to include the leadership role, to which everyone would subscribe, thus ensuring that the leadership role does not lag behind.

Role ambiguity was identified as another issue. The majority of the respondents mentioned that they were not clear on what was expected of them in their leadership roles as newly appointed engineers. This introduced an element of frustration and self-doubt; most respondents relied heavily on their instincts and previous experiences to navigate their way around. Their roles became clearer as they gained more experience in the engineers' positions; and their leadership effectiveness improved accordingly. Proper and timely role clarity would have helped properly to set the scene right from the onset.

Another issue identified in the study was the lack of sufficient empowerment of leadership skills for the respondents. This was either owing to lack of formal training,

lack of development programmes, or lack of mentoring and coaching. All the respondents mentioned that they were confident about their technical competencies; however, they were very concerned with their leadership capabilities, as they felt they were not adequately empowered to effectively lead their teams. This resulted in their feeling demotivated and helpless when faced with leadership issues difficult to deal with, and this seriously compromised their leadership effectiveness.

Micromanagement was also raised as a serious problem. The majority of the respondents felt that they had very little decision-making power when running their sections. Coupled with that, they felt that there was a high level of interference from their superiors in their quotidian round. This frustrated their leadership effectiveness and their general performance. They stated that they were unsure of the reason for such interference, whether it was trust issues between themselves and their seniors or that their seniors perceived them (respondents) as lacking the necessary competencies. The respondents stated that micromanagement interfered with their individual performances as well as their teams' performance and the overall productivity.

The respondents mentioned that the company had embarked on a 'one company philosophy' to attempt to ensure proper networking and collaboration between the centres and divisions. Unfortunately this had not yet been fully realised as the various centres still worked in 'silos'. This was a problem as there was evidence of communication breakdown between centres and divisions, and poor networking between the respondents from the various centres. The consequences of this were poor sharing of information and experiences, lack of collaboration, lack of resources sharing, lack of appreciation of the 'bigger picture' and organisational strategy misalignment, leading to poor performance and poor productivity.

The shortage of resources was identified as another huge problem. The respondents stated that this applied to both financial and human resources. Considering the human aspect, the problem was said to concern the shortage of skilled labour, which affected the competency base of their teams, as well as the shortage of labour. The labour shortage came about as a result of the embargo on employment, which affected their staff complement, resulting in some of the sections operating at fifty per cent of their labour complement. The respondents expressed that a skilled workforce is

fundamental to performance excellence and sustainable growth within organisations; and they believed that proper training and succession planning would help alleviate the problem of skills shortage in the organisation.

With regard to the paucity of financial resources, the respondents mentioned that this, unfortunately, had resulted in the freezing of the training budgets, reduction of staff complement, as well as the reduction of plant maintenance expenditure, which meant doing more with less. This 'do-more-with-less' business mentality can only be a short-term solution, as it has physical and emotional negative effects on workers, equipment maintenance, and the infrastructure as whole, ultimately crippling productivity.

- **Objective 2:** To identify the existing areas of improvement with regard to the engineers' leadership capabilities to effectively lead their sections at THS SA.

The study identified that there were a number of leadership improvement areas on which the respondents needed to focus: these are discussed below.

The first area of leadership improvement on which the respondents needed to focus was the understanding of their own way of leading others, before they could try to understand the leadership of other people around them. Failure to do this could lead to the respondents vacillating, being easily influenced by others, resulting in unnecessary disagreements and conflicts between the parties involved.

There will always be differing leadership styles practised by both the respondents and their leaders; hence understanding the implications of the differences in the leadership styles was of paramount importance to the establishment of good working relationships. The respondents needed to adapt to the leadership dynamics in the workplace, whether or not they subscribed to the leadership style being practised at the particular time.

Role-balancing was identified as another area of improvement. The respondents expressed that, owing to the business being a productive environment, and with respondents coming from a technical-based background, they tended to focus more on technical and managerial issues, resulting in their leadership roles lagging behind. Serious improvements of the balancing of the roles were essential for the respondents

to be able to cover the complete role profile for the engineers' position. This would certainly enhance their leadership effectiveness.

The study also identified a lack of assertiveness from the majority of the respondents. This was evident from the issues mentioned around role ambiguity. It appeared that the respondents expected to be told about every small detail of their leadership role. Very little initiative and effort was seen on their part with regard to proactively making more enquiries about the role profile of the engineers' position. This area certainly needed to be improved on, assertiveness being one of the key characteristics of effective leaders.

Leadership skills' empowerment was identified as an area demanding urgent attention. It is obvious that without proper empowerment the respondents will never be able to lead effectively; there will always be someone pulling the strings behind the scenes; with the workplace being dominated by the unfavoured autocratic and micromanagement styles. The respondents conceded that this was a two-way affair, in which both the company and the respondents needed actively to play a role in addressing this problem. Under the current economic climate, however, it was obvious that the company's contribution might be limited, however, there were other means such as mentoring and coaching that could be utilised to help improve the situation. More respondents could also embark on self-development initiatives as some of them had already done.

The respondents mentioned that there was a serious lack of networking and collaboration within the various centres of the organisation, which emanated from the 'silo' mentality that existed, even though the organisation was promoting a 'one company philosophy' theme. Improving this aspect would ensure that there was effective communication between the centres, effective sharing of information, effective sharing of resources and experiences, and a better understanding of the overall business value chain, which would enhance decision-making for the respondents, taking into account the bigger organisational picture, leading to improved performances and productivity.

- **Objective 3:** To determine the way in which the leadership capabilities of engineers at THS SA may be developed to the standard required by the organisation.

This objective seeks to offer recommendations of interventions that may be put in place to develop the respondents' leadership capabilities for effective leadership. This development must be aligned with the leadership standards and leadership best practices of the organisation.

In the absence of a formal leadership standards and leadership best practices document for engineers in the organisation, the recommended leadership development practices for the respondents were based on best practices from world-class organisations that are well recognised for their leadership development practices, such as: General Electric (GE), Motorola, PepsiCo, Federal Express, Johnson & Johnson (J&J) and Coca Cola.

The practices reviewed in this study as highlighted by Day and Halpin (2001) are as follows:

- Formal development programmes – which often include a number of other specific practices;
- Job assignments – to challenge or stretch an individual's leadership capabilities;
- Executive coaching – focusing on one-on-one learning;
- Action learning – project-based work to enhance learning in the context of business imperatives; and
- Networks – connecting to others across the organisation's internal boundaries.

It is important to note that for leadership development to be successful, it must become a systemic process entrenched in the organisational culture, and not a simple event. Also, it should be acknowledged that leadership development is a future investment, which may take some years to mature, hence patience, tolerance, and perseverance is essential (Day & Halpin, 2001).

6.3 Recommendations

The study proposes that the interventions discussed below should be implemented to help develop the respondents' leadership capabilities, thus ensuring effective leadership. It is critical for leaders who have attended any form of leadership development activities to plough back into the organisation. Leaders should be held accountable for implementing what they have learned because the organisation has to realise its returns on investment - ROI (Davis, 2014).

6.3.1 Formal leadership development programmes

Formal development programmes are the backbone for most leadership development systems. In most cases these programmes take place in a classroom environment in which seminars and conferences are held to discuss leadership principles and theories (Day & Halpin, 2001).

It is important that such programmes be supported and sponsored by senior leadership of the organisations. Typically, Johnson & Johnson, as one of the world-class companies, involves their senior executives in such programmes by having them choose a leadership topic to be discussed during the 'executive conference', based on current themes within the organisation (Fulmer et al., 2000).

According to Day and Halpin (2001), the trend in leadership development is more to tailor-made programmes that are best suited to capturing the unique culture of the organisation. The curriculum must be customised to cater for the company's needs; and this makes the transfer of the lessons back to the work setting much easier and more effective.

These programmes may be designed and delivered "in house," or developed in partnership with an external partner such as a university or a consulting firm. This approach was epitomised by PepsiCo's chairman and CEO, Roger Enrico, who spent more than 100 days a year personally conducting workshops for senior executives and junior leaders (Day & Halpin, 2001).

6.3.2 Job assignments - exposure to challenging experiences

According to Day and Halpin (2001), experience is one of the most important elements of teaching leadership. Job assignments have been specifically identified as particularly helpful to leaders in learning and gaining experience about building teams, becoming better strategic thinkers, and gaining valuable persuasion and influencing skills.

It is therefore crucial that the respondents in this study are driven out of their comfort zones to accelerate their learning experiences. This may be achieved by directing or encouraging respondents to undertake 'stretch' assignments that will challenge and impel them into unknown territories, thereby experiencing growth and development (Farr & Brazil, 2009).

Typically, this approach had been practised by Coca-Cola Company. Over 300 professional and leadership staff members were transferred to new countries in one year under a leadership-development programme, to expose leaders to new challenges, giving them stretch assignments that would add value to their growth, in turn adding value to the organisation as a whole (Day & Halpin, 2001). It is imperative that junior leaders are given the freedom to try out different leadership approaches as part of their developmental assignment.

6.3.3 Executive coaching

Executive coaching may be defined as a practical, goal-focused form of personal, one-on-one learning, which may be used to enhance individual performance, enhance a career, or work through organisational issues such as change initiatives (Day & Halpin, 2001). World-class executives invest a significant amount of their time personally guiding and mentoring their future leaders. To them, leadership development is not a luxury, but a strategic necessity (Fulmer et al., 2000).

According to Davis (2014), the importance of actively involving senior leaders in leadership development initiatives can never be overemphasised. Having the senior executives of the organisation sharing their experiences and anecdotes with developing leaders goes a long way towards entrenching the organisational culture, values, and corporate identity.

In addition, executive coaching may be an excellent vehicle for knowledge transfer. Coaching or mentoring programmes gain added value when busy senior executives are involved as speakers or facilitators. A clear message is sent to the whole organisation that leadership development is a priority for the organisation and that it is taken very seriously. Hewlett Packard has both their CEO and senior executives serving as mentors and coaches in their leadership development programmes (Fulmer et al., 2000).

Farr and Brazil (2009) suggested that as part of coaching, young leaders must be given opportunities to sit in with senior executives in senior leadership meetings, thus exposing them to several levels of leadership responsibility, giving them an inkling of what takes place at the senior-level meetings. Furthermore, after the meeting, constructive discussions about the meeting critiquing the tactics and skills of the various participants must be held. Such an approach would certainly expose the junior leader to some of the qualities imperative to an effective leader.

6.3.4 Action learning

A number of world-class organisations have identified that the type of conventional, lecture-based, classroom training presented in most formal leadership development programmes was mostly not as effective as it should be in preparing the new generation of leaders. It has emerged that sometimes the lessons learned from these conventional classroom development programmes did not last much beyond the end of the programme, people reverting to their old habits immediately after the course, with very little of the development objective achieved (Day & Halpin, 2001).

Organisations such as General Electric (GE), Johnson and Johnson (J&J), Shell, inter alia, have embraced the action-learning process, which is a continuous process of learning and reflection, with an emphasis on achieving goals. A key advantage of action learning is that it is problem- or project-based, with individuals learning and gaining experience by becoming involved in the real action (Day & Halpin, 2001).

According to Fulmer et al. (2000), action, and not knowledge, is the goal of best practices in leadership development processes. Typically, at GE, the CEO over the years has been directly involved in the selection of key action-learning projects for the three annual leadership development courses that were presented in his company.

Participants were highly motivated to participate in the project, knowing that they had been sanctioned by the CEO and aligned with the organisational strategy.

Some of the respondents in this study mentioned that the management development programme undertaken in 2015 exposed them to action-learning project work, in which some of the executive leaders of the organisation were directly involved as sponsors. The respondents expressed that such kind of action learning gave them valuable experience, hence such initiatives needed to be implemented annually.

Action learning takes the learners through multiple stages of action and reflection. During these stages the leadership skills are entrenched in the minds of the learners, these skills not being simply learned without repeated application. As a result, an effective approach to leadership development through action-learning should be guiding the learners to master the proper skills, providing multiple opportunities for application, and offering an increased level of contextual support through processes, environment, and leadership (Heffner et al., 2011).

6.3.5 Networking

One way of dismantling functional silos within the organisation is to incorporate development activities that are targeted at developing wider individual networks. According to Day and Halpin (2001), networking initiatives assist in developing leaders past the mentality of 'knowing what' and 'knowing how', to 'knowing who' with regard to problem-solving resources.

Networking development for the respondents may be achieved through action-learning projects used in leadership-development seminars. Project work may be executed in cross-organisational teams as a means of encouraging greater awareness of capabilities, sharing of information and experiences, as well as assessment of cross-business opportunities.

Such projects allow the participants to strengthen their personal networks, improving individual networks being found an effective way of increasing the leaders' innovation and problem-solving capacities. Companies such as Motorola have successfully used such approaches (Day & Halpin, 2001).

6.4 Recommendations for Further Study

The current research focused on exploring the leadership effectiveness of the engineers at THS SA, which provided a snapshot view of the projected outcome of leadership effectiveness where the technical community within the organisation is concerned. This study identified that the engineer's position was the foundation level for the organisational leadership role as senior manager, that is, engineering managers, production managers, factory managers and general managers were appointed from a group of experienced and high-performing engineers. These senior managers progressed to occupy executive positions in the organisation further on in their careers.

A recommendation for further studies could be to explore the leadership effectiveness of the 'technical population' of people that hold positions one to three levels above the engineer's position, that is, the production and engineering managers, factory managers and general managers. Such a perspective could elicit findings that could corroborate or contrast with the views of this study, and in essence impact the recommendations proposed by the researcher.

Leadership effectiveness would ultimately foster the formulation of a leadership standards and leadership best practices document (at present non-existent) for technical people within the organisation. This document would then become the 'Bible' for every technical person in the organisation. Each leader's leadership effectiveness and competency would be judged on compliance with this document.

Another recommendation for further studies could be to explore the leadership effectiveness of senior leaders who are currently in charge of the respondents from this study. This would be conducted to ascertain the leadership capabilities of such senior leaders: gaps existing in their leadership effectiveness and ways in which such gaps could be closed.

The findings from such a study would either confirm or contrast the earlier concerns raised by the respondents that the lack of leadership training and development at their level had a huge impact on the performance of senior leaders when promoted to senior positions. The assumption from the respondents was that some of these senior

leaders struggled with leadership issues at their level because they had not been properly developed and empowered while still at the engineer level.

6.5 Conclusion

The aim of this study was to explore the leadership effectiveness of engineers at THS SA – all the research objectives that were set were answered. The findings of this study identified that the effectiveness of the engineers was compromised by the many leadership issues that they faced in their everyday leadership roles: these were mentioned and discussed in Chapter 4. The study also identified that there were areas of improvement on which engineers must focus in enhancing their leadership effectiveness: these areas were discussed in this chapter.

Recommendations on how to improve the leadership capabilities of the engineers to enhance their leadership effectiveness have been made. These were based on best practices from world-class organisations. Improving the leadership effectiveness of the engineers may result in improved effectiveness of teams, which ultimately would translate to higher productivity levels, benefiting the organisation and all other stakeholders.

“When the effective leader is finished with his work, the people say it happened naturally.” — Lao Tzu

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APPENDIX 1: INFORMED CONSENT

Informed Consent Letter 3C

**UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND LEADERSHIP**

**MBA Research Project
Researcher: Dennis M Dlamini (0827552884)
Supervisor: Dr Cecile Gerwel Proches (0312608318)
Research Office: Ms P Ximba (0312603587)**

Dear Respondent,

I, Dennis M Dlamini am a Masters in Business Administration (MBA) student, at the Graduate School of Business and Leadership, of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. You are invited to participate in a research project entitled: "Exploring the leadership effectiveness of Engineers at Tongaat Hulett Sugar South Africa (THS SA)". The aim of this study is:

- To establish the leadership effectiveness of engineers as leaders at THS SA.
- To identify the existing areas of improvement with regard to the engineers' leadership capabilities to effectively lead their sections at THS SA.
- To determine the way in which the leadership capabilities of engineers at THS SA may be developed to the standard required by the organisation.

Through your participation I hope to identify the issues you are faced with as a leader in your section; and also to determine the areas of improvement with regard to your leadership capabilities, and the way in which your leadership capabilities may be developed to the standard required by the organisation. The results of the interview are intended to contribute to the existing knowledge base of engineers as leaders, by empowering them with a better understanding of the concept of leadership.

Your participation in this project is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw from the project at any time with no negative consequences. There will be no monetary gain from participating in this interview. Confidentiality and anonymity of records identifying you as a participant will be maintained by the Graduate School of Business and Leadership, UKZN.

If you have any questions or concerns about participating in the interview or about participating in this study, you may contact me or my supervisor at the numbers listed above. The interview should take about 45 minutes to an hour. I urge you to take the time to participate. Your cooperation will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely

Investigator's signature _____ Date _____

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND LEADERSHIP

MBA Research Project
Researcher: Dennis M Dlamini (0827552884)
Supervisor: Dr Cecile Gerwel Proches (0312608318)
Research Office: Ms P Ximba (0312603587)

CONSENT

I..... (full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

I hereby consent/do not consent to record the interview.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

.....

APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND LEADERSHIP

MBA Research Project

Researcher: Dennis M Dlamini (0827552884)

Supervisor: Dr Cecile Gerwel Proches (0312608318)

Research Office: Ms P Ximba (0312603587)

EXPLORING THE LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS OF ENGINEERS AT TONGAAT HULETT SUGAR SOUTH AFRICA (THS SA)

Interview Questions

1. How many years have you been an Engineer at Tongaat Hulett Sugar SA?
2. What is your field of study?
3. Which section/s are you responsible for?
4. How many people are in your section and how many report directly to you?
5. In your understanding, what is the role of a leader?
6. As an engineer, do you consider yourself a leader within the organisation? Please elaborate.
7. Are you clear about what is expected of you as a leader in your section? Please elaborate.
8. Are you, as a section leader, well informed of the difficulties that the organisation faces? Please elaborate.
9. Do you understand the impact of the difficult times that the organisation is currently experiencing? Please elaborate.
10. Do you, as an engineer, consider yourself sufficiently empowered to lead your section/s? Please elaborate.
11. Do you consider yourself effective in your role as the leader of a section?
12. How would you measure your leadership effectiveness?
13. What are some of the leadership issues that you are faced with as an engineer leading your section/s?
14. How best should these issues be addressed?
15. As an engineer in charge of your section, what areas of improvement are you conscious of which affect your leadership capability?
16. How may the gaps in your leadership capability be closed?
17. Have you had any formal training on leadership? Please elaborate.
18. How have you acquired your leadership skills?
19. Do you at any time have leadership discussions with your supervisor? Please elaborate.
20. What is the significance of effective leadership at all levels within an organisation, especially during difficult times?
21. What do you think makes a good leader?

APPENDIX 3: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



20 May 2016

Mr Dennis Mlungisi Dlamini (200100809)
Graduate School of Business & Leadership
Westville Campus

Dear Mr Dlamini,

Protocol reference number: HSS/0483/016M

Project title: Exploring the leadership effectiveness of Engineers at Tongaat Hulett Sugar South Africa (THS SA)

Full Approval – Expedited Approval

With regards to your application received on 29 April 2016. The documents submitted have been accepted by the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee and **FULL APPROVAL** for the protocol has been granted.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

Please note: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

Dr Shamila Naidoo (Deputy Chair)

/ms

Cc Supervisor: Dr Cecile Gerwel Proches
Cc Academic Leader Research: Dr Muhammad Hoque
Cc School Administrator: Ms Zarina Bullyraj

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Dr Shonuka Singh (Chair)

Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000

Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 3587/8350/4557 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 4809 Email: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za / snymenm@ukzn.ac.za / mohunp@ukzn.ac.za

Website: www.ukzn.ac.za



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APPENDIX 4: TURN-IT IN REPORT

Exploring Leadership Effectiveness of Engineers at Tongaat Hulett Sugar South Africa

ORIGINALITY REPORT

3	1	0	3
%	%	%	%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1	Submitted to South Bank University Student Paper	<% 1
2	Submitted to University of Cape Town Student Paper	<% 1
3	Submitted to University of KwaZulu-Natal Student Paper	<% 1
4	Submitted to University of Witwatersrand Student Paper	<% 1
5	Submitted to New College, Nottingham Student Paper	<% 1
6	ir.dut.ac.za Internet Source	<% 1
7	Submitted to Cardinal Stritch University Student Paper	<% 1
8	Submitted to Higher Education Commission Pakistan Student Paper	<% 1
9	Submitted to University of Johannesburg Student Paper	<% 1

APPENDIX 5: EDITOR'S REPORT



Lydia Weight
NTSD English Specialist
SACE No: 11135129

E-mail: lydiaweight@gmail.com

Pinpoint Proofreading Services

40 Ridge Rd

Kloof

Durban

3610

22 November 2016

To whom it may concern

This is to certify that I, Lydia Weight, have proofread the document titled: Exploring leadership effectiveness of engineers at Tongaat Hulett Sugar South Africa by Dennis Dlamini. I have made all the necessary corrections. The document is therefore ready for presentation to the destined authority.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "L. Weight". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

L. Weight