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Resourcing Change: A Grounded Theory Explaining the Process by Which Managers Address Challenges in Their Initiation of Change as Learning at Work

Fei, Foster

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**Resourcing Change: A Grounded Theory Explaining the Process by Which
Managers Address Challenges in Their Initiation of Change as Learning at
Work**

Submitted by Foster Fei BBA (Hons), MSc
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
at the University of Bath
United Kingdom

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“A man’s ontological vocation is to be a subject who acts upon and transforms his world, and in doing so moves towards ever new possibilities of fuller and richer life individually and collectively.” (Freire, 1972, p. 12)

Abstract

This grounded theory study conceptualises an abstract social process of ‘resourcing change’, explaining challenges managers face during the initiation of change as their learning in organisations and their responses to them. Both management challenges and their resolutions are theoretically organised on the global-local continuum, reflecting the inter-connected and mutually influencing nature of the social reality. The abstract social process of ‘resourcing change’ has general implications beyond the temporal and spatial boundaries of the study – managers in one UK subsidiary within each of two multinational corporations – Cooper Standard (UK) and Ricoh (UK), respectively, at the time when this study was conducted. The grounded theory of ‘resourcing change’ has made several significant theoretical and methodological contributions. First, the study of learning has been extended to the management population, given their strategic importance in organisations (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 1998). Second, management learning in organisations is conceptualised as ‘initiation of change’ – a seldom recognised, individual-to-organisation process of change (Quinn, 1996). Learning, as in this study, has been re-connected to accounts of organisational change (Hendry, 1996). A particular emphasis is placed on the initiation stage of change, not on any other stages (e.g. implementation). Third, from a process-relational perspective of organising and managing (Watson, 2002), this grounded theory study of ‘resourcing change’ has identified the contradictions in many processual-oriented research studies, highlighting the absence of the temporal and spatial dimensions in the on-going evolution of social processes. The methodological contributions that this grounded theory study makes are, first and foremost, the conceptualisation of the emerged concepts that are used to explain the process of initiating change in management learning. Research problems and questions are then formulated by abstractly conceptualising the concerns and resolutions of research participants, as opposed to the researcher’s own. This study begins with no focus, however uncomfortable that may make some researchers, recognising the key fact that the focus of the researcher, prior to his or her exposure to the research participants, has no relevance whatsoever to them. The focus is only established at the end of the study, following a set of rigorous and transparent methodological procedures. The adherence to the orthodox grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) confirms that grounded theory is a fully-fledged research methodology in its own right, not a set of methods for data analysis (McCallin, 2003).

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Aims and choice of methodology

The overall aim of this thesis is to use grounded theory methodology to conceptualise the way in which managers dealt with challenges arising from their initiation of change as their learning at work. My interest in the learning of managers evolved from my previous research interest in the learning of university students (Fei, 2002) and which then shifted towards natural learning (Fox, 1997a), the learning of managers at work. It contrasts sharply with learning in classrooms by emphasising “the *practical and social dimensions* of learning” (p. 25, italics in original). Learning at work and learning in classrooms represent two different schools of thought in the learning literature, situated learning theory and traditional cognitive theory, respectively (Fox, 1997b). My substantive research interest in the learning of managers in the workplace concerns their significant contribution to the strategic direction of organisations (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 1998). Therefore, this study aims to make theoretical and methodological contributions by examining the learning of managers in their day-to-day work.

The key feature of this thesis, adopting grounded theory methodology, is 'emergence', of both the research problem and research questions and ultimately of a social psychological process of 'resourcing change'. No pre-conceived theoretical perspective was adopted prior to the fieldwork, but instead an area of interest was

pursued. In doing so, the relevance of a grounded theory is earned, rather than preconceived (Glaser, 1978, 1992, 2003). Furthermore, it was explained that managers encountered challenges in their initiation of change, as well as in the way that they responded to those challenges. Other methodological features of this thesis include the literature as part of the data to be compared with the emerging grounded theory – the notion that ‘all is data’; analysis of a social psychological process towards abstract conceptualisation (not full or rich description); greater generalisability and coverage, transferability and durability (Glaser, 2001). The utilisation of grounded theory methodology, as opposed to a strategy for qualitative data analysis (McCallin, 2003), embodies its own procedures such as open and selective coding; constant comparison; theoretical sampling; theoretical saturation; theoretical coding; memoing; hand sorting of memos and theoretical writing (Glaser, 1978). Although the study was undertaken in one subsidiary within each one of two multinational corporations in the UK, the cultural and industrial contexts in which research participants find themselves, do not contribute to the abstract analysis of social process. This study is not about international business or the manufacturing sector. It is concerned with the social interaction of the management population in organisations. In other words, managers from these two organisations were chosen because they were needed (Glaser, 1992), for the development of theory.

1.2 Emergent research problem and questions

As with all orthodox grounded theory studies, the initial research problem and research questions 'emerged' in a process of gradual exposure to the concerns of research participants. This study began with an area of interest (i.e. the learning of

managers at work) and an awareness of past studies on the subject (e.g. Fox, 1997a & 1997b; Lindsey *et al.*, 1987; Burgoyne & Reynolds, 1997; Tamkin & Barber, 1998).

Arrangements in relation to the fieldwork were then made through personal contacts, permission was obtained to conduct the fieldwork in two subsidiaries of the U.S and Japanese multinational corporations, respectively. During the course of the fieldwork, interviews were conducted in addition to non-participant observations and a review of corporate literature. Several visits were also made to the facilities outside the UK, in order to understand matters being discussed by research participants at a global level.

In this grounded theory project, the emergent research problem and questions set out to discover a social psychological process involving managers at work. The emergence of research problem and questions contrasts with making a statement that identifies the phenomenon to be studied at the very beginning of a study (Backman & Kyngas, 1999; Glaser, 1992, p. 25). This is to confirm that the researcher begins with only an area of research interest, which in this study, is the learning of managers at work. The research problem and associated questions in grounded theory studies, are dealt with and resolved by research participants within their own organisations, on an on-going basis; there should be no pre-conception on the part of the researcher (McCallin, 2003). Details regarding the evolution of the following research problem and questions are contained within Chapter 3, the methodology chapter.

As a result of this process, the overarching research problem to be addressed by this thesis emerged and was identified as:

How do managers respond to challenges which arise from their initiation of change in the workplace?

Research questions derived from this problem were:

What does the term 'learning' mean to managers?

What changes have been initiated by managers as their learning?

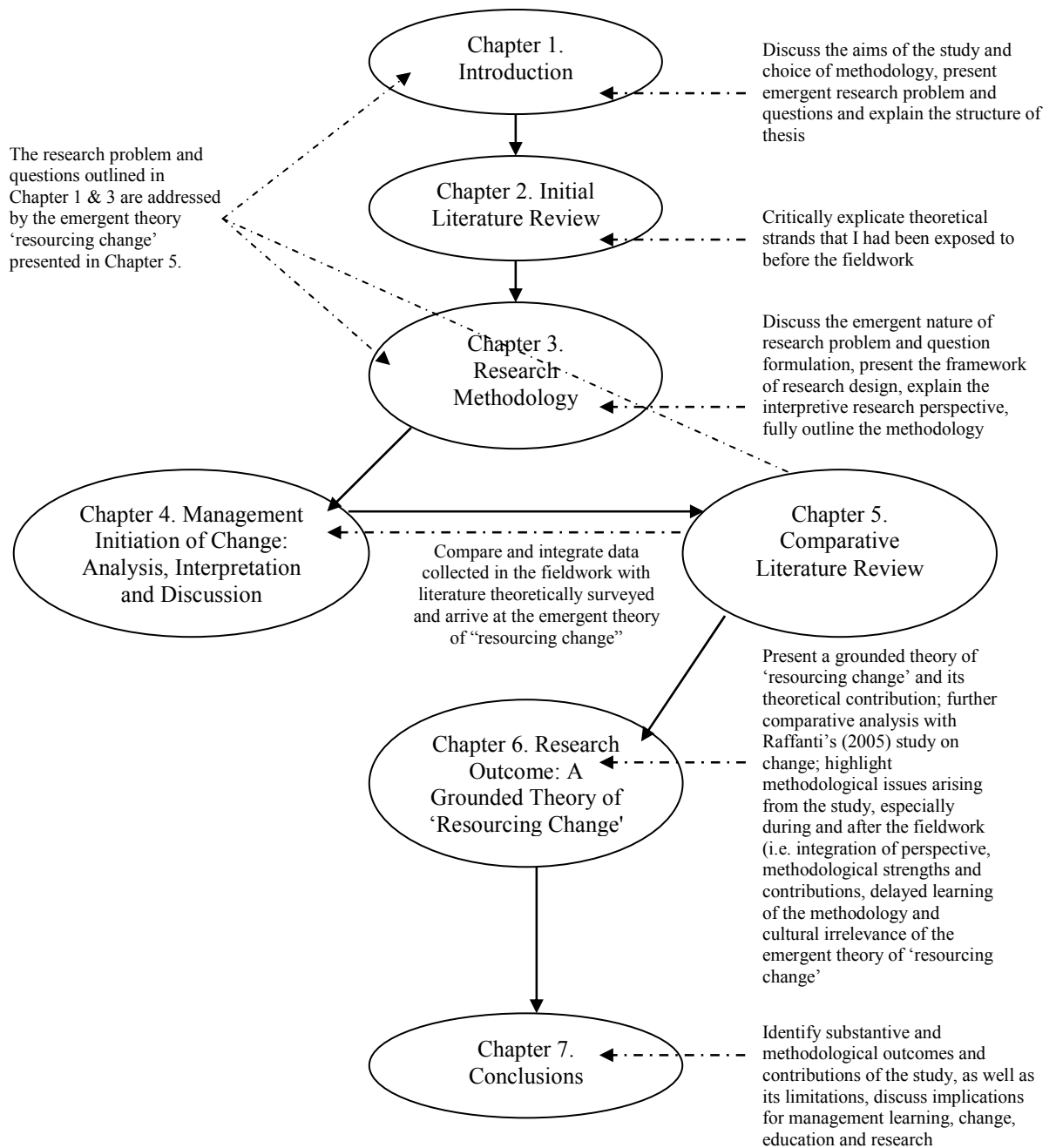
What challenges have managers encountered during their initiation of change?

What is the process by which managers responded to these challenges?

1.3 Structure of the thesis

Chapters contained in this thesis and the relationship between them are presented and explained in Figure 1.1 below.

Figure 1.1 Thesis structure



This chapter (1) introduces the entire thesis. It starts by outlining the aim and background of the study. Also explained is the grounded theory methodology that is adopted. The evolutionary process of my research interest including the shift of emphasis from students to managers, is made clear. The emphasis on the learning of managers has taken into account their significant contribution to the strategic direction

of organisation (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 1998). The emergent research problem and questions are presented, highlighting the crucial difference in terms of how they have been identified in this grounded theory study compared to studies adopting other methodologies (e.g. ethnography, case study and action research). Also explained is the basis upon which the research participants were selected, as well as the methods of data collection. The organisation of the thesis is explained in the last section of this chapter.

In Chapter 2, an initial review of literature is conducted prior to the fieldwork and is presented by covering a number of theoretical strands (i.e. learning in organisations, management learning, learning from mistakes, communities-of-practice). The purpose of this is multi-faceted. First, it has made me fully aware of any relevant theoretical sources surrounding my research interests in management learning. Second, it has explicitly demonstrated my critical understanding of the literature before the fieldwork and the subsequent data analysis and interpretation. Third, it allows the research problem and associated questions to emanate from those being researched and not from any pre-conceived ideas of mine.

In the methodology chapter (3), I begin by discussing the emergence of research problem and questions. This is followed by a presentation of the research design framework, including the interpretive research perspective. In the remaining part of the chapter, I explain the grounded theory methodology in detail. First, the methodological principles and procedures are outlined. Second, I offer a brief overview of different versions of grounded theory methodology since its conception. Third, the criteria for evaluating grounded theory is discussed and references are made

to qualitative research in general. Fourth, I indicate several challenges for applying grounded theory in research practices. Towards the end, I explain methodologically appropriate methods of data collection in my research setting – one UK subsidiary within each of two multinational corporations.

In the data analysis, interpretation and discussion chapter (4), I begin by including both of the organisations under scrutiny within their relevant industrial context and then dealt with each organisation separately. The substantive research findings are then presented to address the research problem which emerged during the course of this study.

The comparative literature review chapter (5), then integrates the research findings presented in the previous chapter with the emergent areas of literature, as well as with the body of literature reviewed at the start of the study. In particular, the relationship between learning and changing is further clarified by virtue of the research findings. What is also reviewed are the ways that the field of change management has been studied. It is highlighted that the processual approach to change has proven to be congruent with the methodological practice adopted. The issue concerning levels of analysis in the general change and learning literature is noted, with an emphasis on the relationship between various levels. Finally, the findings of this study – a social psychological process of dealing with challenges arising in the management initiation of change, are compared and integrated with their counterparts in the literature, and further conceptualised at a more abstract level.

In Chapter 6, methodological implications are further considered in relation to the comparison and integration of perspectives of research participants, myself (the researcher) and other researchers. The research outcomes of the study are presented and then compared with another grounded theory study of change (Raffanti, 2005). What is also discussed are the methodological strengths, contributions and implications for management learning, education and research. The delayed learning curve of grounded theory (Glaser, 1998) is then, described to illustrate my doctoral experience as an overseas student. Finally, it is stressed that cultural differences manifested in the managers from these two multinational corporations are irrelevant to this study of an abstract social process, involving the discovery of the “grammar of behaviour” (Fox, 2004, p. 10) of managers.

To conclude, outcomes of this study are summarised in Chapter 7, followed by the methodological and substantive contributions. Also highlighted are the limitations of this study and directions for future research. Last but not least, the implications of ‘resourcing change’ for management learning, change, education and research are discussed.

1.4 An overview of ‘resourcing change’ and its theoretical and methodological contributions

The grounded theory generated as a result of this study which I have named ‘resourcing change’ is an abstract social process explaining the challenges during the initiation of changes as management learning and their resolutions. Both challenges and resolutions are theoretically organised on the global-local continuum, reflecting

the inter-connected and mutually influencing nature of the social world in which they are operating. Although this study was primarily conducted in one UK subsidiary within each of two multinational corporations – Cooper Standard (UK) and Ricoh (UK), respectively, the social process of ‘resourcing change’ has general implications beyond the temporal and spatial boundaries of the study.

The theory of ‘resourcing change’ has made several significant theoretical and methodological contributions. First, the study of learning has been extended to the management population, given their strategic importance in organisations (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 1998). Second, management learning in organisations is conceptualised as ‘initiation of change’ – a seldom recognised, individual-to-organisation process of change (Quinn, 1996). Learning, as in this study, has been re-connected to accounts of organisational change (Hendry, 1996). Furthermore, a particular emphasis is placed on the initiation stage of change, not on any other stages (e.g. implementation). Third, from a process-relational perspective of organising and managing (Watson, 2002), this grounded theory study of ‘resourcing change’ has identified the contradictions in many processual-oriented research studies, highlighting the absence of the temporal and spatial dimensions in the on-going evolution of social processes.

Methodologically speaking, this grounded theory conceptualises the emerged concepts that are used to explain the process of ‘initiating change’ in management learning. Research problems and questions are formulated by abstractly conceptualising the concerns and resolutions of research participants, as opposed to the researcher’s own. This study not surprisingly begins with no focus, recognising the key fact that the preconception of the researcher, prior to the exposure to the

research participants, has no relevance whatsoever to them. The focus is only established at the end of the study, following a set of rigorous and transparent methodological procedures. The adherence to the orthodox grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) confirms the fact that grounded theory is a fully-fledged research methodology in its own right, not a set of methods for data analysis (McCallin, 2003) used by many researchers in a selective and unscholarly manner.

1.5 Summary

This chapter introduces the entire thesis. The aims of this study are to explore the learning of managers and subsequently conceptualise the way in which managers dealt with challenges arising from their initiation of change as their learning at work. The rationale behind the adoption of grounded theory as a fully fledged methodology is based on emergence and relevance (Glaser, 1998). Research problems and questions then emerged given the exposure to the concerns of managers, rather than professional interests pre-conceived by the researcher. An overview of the emergent grounded theory of ‘resourcing change’ is provided, as well as the theoretical and methodological contributions that it makes.

Chapter 2 Initial Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Given my research interest of this project in issues surrounding the learning of managers in organisations, this initial literature review chapter is directed towards a survey of extant theoretical and empirical perspectives on learning. The purpose of avoiding any specific pre-study literature review, is to keep “the grounded theory researcher as free and as open as possible to discovery and to the emergence of concepts, problems and interpretations from the data” (Glaser, 1998, p. 67). If an initial literature review is conducted, it is intended to explicate any “theoretical resources” (Watson, 1994b, p.215) that one has already gathered. The purpose of doing so is to avoid any contamination of the already known literature on the later data analysis and interpretation. Setting them aside at the beginning of the study also allows one to theoretically sample and constantly compare with other slices of data (Glaser, 1998). The existing literature is not, however, reviewed in order to identify gaps and limitations and subsequently formulate one’s research problems and questions (Glaser, 1998). As Glaser and Strauss (1967) put it clearly: “the sociologist may begin the research with a partial framework of ‘local’ concepts, designating a few principal or gross features of the structure and processes in the situations that he will study” (p. 45). Furthermore, they argue that: “the sociologist should also be sufficiently theoretically sensitive so that he can conceptualise and formulate a theory as it emerges from the data” (p. 46). Goulding (2001), similarly suggests that “nobody

starts doing research with a totally blank sheet...Grounded theory research is not a-theoretical, but it does call for an open mind and a willingness to have faith in the data. It further requires that a detailed literature review comes after the data has been collected when tentative theories or concepts have started to form” (p. 23).

As pointed out by Suddaby (2006), it is a common misconception “that grounded theory requires a researcher to enter the field without any knowledge of prior research” (p. 634). On the contrary, according to Backman and Kyngas (1999), “the researcher must identify and suspend what he/she already knows about the experience being studied and approach the data without preconceptions” (p. 148). This means that “researchers should not allow preconceived constructs and hypotheses to guide data collection” (Shah & Corley, 2006, p. 1827). It is also important to recognise that leads are to be pursued by one’s study of the data, rather than by the careful and exhaustive literature review in the traditional research design. The method in which a literature review is undertaken in grounded theory studies must not be an excuse for researchers entering the field, “lacking an understanding of the literature or the theoretical question to be addressed” (Shah & Corley, 2006, p. 1827).

In this chapter, Section 2.2 presents a number of key themes in the ‘learning in organisations’ literature. They include comparisons and contrasts between technical and social views of learning in organisations (2.2.1); identification and integration of levels of learning entity (2.2.2); conceptual overlaps and differences between learning and change (2.2.3); the notion of context applied in the learning literature (2.2.4); a social theory of learning and communities-of-practice (2.2.5); and learning from mistakes (2.2.6). Then, literatures relating to management learning are also reviewed

in Section 2.3. The final section (2.4) is a critical reflection on the limitations of current literature, with an indication of the potential for further research, some of which is to be addressed by this project. This chapter is summarised in Section 2.5.

2.2 Learning in organisations

2.2.1 Technical and social views of learning

To begin a discussion on learning in organisations, it is useful to map out two generally accepted views of learning in the literature. The views are compared and contrasted in Table 2.1. The two separate approaches are not mutually exclusive, as both include the study of activities of individuals in the process of learning (Cook & Yanow, 1993).

The technical view of learning (e.g. Huber, 1991; Crossan, Lane, White & Djurfeldt, 1995; Fiol & Lyles, 1985) assumes that in order for learning to take place, the cognitive aspect of a learning entity changes as a result of information processing – largely a mental activity or thought process. In contrast, the social view of learning (e.g. Nicolini & Meznar, 1995; Cook & Yanow, 1993; Richter, 1998) emphasises that social practices are mutually transformed through the actions of, and interactions among, participants. Learning can then be conceptualised as the process of becoming a competent participant in social and organisational practices (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998a; Gherardi & Nicolini, 2002).

Table 2.1 Technical and social views of learning

Technical View	Social View
Effective processing, interpretation of and response to information	Making sense of experience at work; learning emerging from social interactions, in the natural work setting; learning as socially constructed, as a political process and as implicated in the culture of an organisation
Individual/cognitive process	Social/cultural process
Learning takes place within the heads of individuals or in organisational systems and structures	Learning occurs and knowledge is created through conversations and interactions between people
Learners are individual actors processing information and modifying their mental structures	Learners are social beings who construct their understandings and learn from social interactions within specific socio-cultural and material settings
The system view - structural knowledge acquisition, information distribution, information interpretation and organisational memory	The interpretive view - meaning creation through ambiguity reduction and subject to multiple interpretations

(Adapted from: Easterby-Smith, Snell & Gherardi, 1998; Easterby-Smith & Araujo, 1999; Easterby-Smith, Crossan & Nicolini, 2000; Ford & ogilvie, 1996; Huber, 1991)

The social view of learning is often designated as the ‘practice-based’ perspective of learning (Gherardi, 2000), which gains its currency through the popularisation of the notions of ‘situated learning’ and ‘communities-of-practice’ (Lave & Wenger, 1991, Wenger, 1998a; Wenger, McDermott & Snyder 2002). The practice-based perspective of learning perceives learning as participation and engagement in practice which involves other organisational “entities” (Huber, 1991, p. 89). It supports the view that understanding does not lead to action, but rather action leads to understanding (Daft & Huber, 1987) and that knowledge is not a pre-existing object (Styhre, 2003). Learning is an interpretative device and is also enacted within a practice, and the “knowledgeability” (Giddens, 1984, p. 4) of practice is circulated among different organisational entities (Gherardi, 2001). Styhre’s (2003) notion of ‘fluidity’ has

adopted a similar perspective, which suggests that knowledge is inherent and unfolds in practices and interactions, as well as in the conflict between knowledge and managerial objectives in our doing, seeing, saying and writing.

2.2.2 Levels of learning entity

Informed by the technical and social views of learning described above, past research into learning in organisations has focused on various levels of “entity” (Huber, 1991, p. 89). In this section, different levels of learning entity, namely individual, group, organisational, inter-organisational and practice are introduced, first separately and then in synthesis.

Individual learning

According to Tsang (1997), individual learning is sometimes used as a model or metaphor for organisational learning. In other cases, the role that individuals play is perceived as an agent of organisational learning (Friedman, 2001). For instance, learning at the level of individual is seen as an entirely individual activity taking place within an organisational context (Argyris & Schon, 1978; Cangelosi & Dill, 1965; Dodgson, 1993). Simon (1991) suggests that all learning activities take place fundamentally within individuals’ heads. In a similar vein, March and Olsen (1975) place emphasis on aspects of individual learning, such as information exposure, memory, retrieval, incentives/motives for learning and individual belief structures. At the extreme, Hedberg (1981) equates organisational learning to individual learning. Others (e.g. Argyris & Schon, 1978; Cangelosi & Dill, 1965; Dodgson, 1993) seem to

have a strong orientation toward individual learning within an organisational setting. A number of authors (e.g. Senge, 1990; Garvin, 1993) have also emphasised the importance of individuals in organisational learning.

Group/team learning

Huczynski and Buchanan (2001) suggest that the terms ‘group’ and ‘team’ are often used interchangeably in the management literature, despite the differences between them. This is also the case in the field of learning in organisations. Senge (1990) advocates team learning as one of the core disciplines of building a learning organisation. Vennix (1996) further suggests that teams are the building blocks of modern organisations with complexity and uncertainty far beyond individual cognitive capabilities. Moreover, it is argued that team learning enables people to question their assumptions and opinions (Vennix, 1996). Nag (2001) argues that “group learning occurs through development and change in shared meanings held by group members as a result of continuous interaction with the actions performed, and the changes in the group’s composition and structure brought about by external constraints” (p. 415). From the technical view of learning, Gibson (2001) develops a framework for collective cognition in the workplace, featuring its process and impact on work behaviour. From the social perspective of learning, Moreland and Levine (2001) state that socialisation in organisations, as a type of learning, is “a process of mutual adjustment that produces changes over time in the relationship between a person and a group” (p. 69).

Organisational learning

Organisational learning is sometimes treated as an extension of learning of other entities or by itself. For example, Daft and Huber (1987) view organisational learning as an extension of individual learning, suggesting the importance of sharing, integrating and interpreting information or understanding via communication. Daft and Weick (1984) describe organisational learning as a form of group learning within an organisation. Organisations themselves are also described as learning entities *per se*. Hedberg (1981) views learning as being stored in the systems, structures and procedures of organisations. Huber (1991) argues that organisations learn through knowledge acquisition, information distribution, information interpretation and organisational memory. Duncan and Weiss (1979) view organisational learning as “the process within the organisation by which knowledge about action-outcome relationships and the effect of the environment on these relationships is developed” (p. 84).

From an organisation-environment fit perspective, a contingency model of organisational learning is developed by Gnyawali and Steward (2003), suggesting that perception of the environment influences the use of learning processes and the resultant emphasis on different types of learning. Levinthal (1991) argues that organisational adaptation and environmental selection are not “mutually exclusive alternatives, each with its own domain of applicability, but rather as fundamentally interdependent processes” (p. 140). Levinthal (1991) further maintains that, “on the one hand, organisational learning contributes, in part, to organisational inertia, which, in turn, is the basis of selection processes. On the other hand, far from being

incompatible with adaptive learning, inertial forces are a prerequisite for intelligent adaptation” (p. 140).

Organisational learning can also be conceived based on the notion of dynamic synchronisation (Purser & Pasmore, 1992), “a principle based on maintaining a balance between order and disorder” (p. 49) and assuming that “change is an integral aspect of organisational life” (p. 49). Purser and Pasmore, (1992) argue that rather than trying to minimise or avoid environmental fluctuations, self-organising systems adapt to environmental turbulence by “admitting increasingly complex inputs until a critical bifurcation point is reached which triggers the system to reorganise itself into a new, more complex and higher order structure” (pp. 49-50). Dynamic synchronisation contrasts with the principle of joint optimization – “towards finding the ‘best fit’ or most optimum design solution for an organisation at a particular point in time” (p. 49). Furthermore, the notions of exploration and exploitation (March, 1991) and the concepts of adaptation and design (Hutchins, 1991) represent different strategies of organisational learning.

A number of outcomes of organisational learning have been identified, according to Huysman (1999), namely improvement, intelligence and wisdom. There are two major debateable views in relation to the concept of learning, viz. (1) “learning towards achievement”, the oft cited outcome of organisational learning (Garratt, 1987; Garvin, 1993; Pedler, Burgoyne & Boydell, 1991; Senge, 1990), (2) a positive correlation exists between organisational change and learning (Argyris & Schon, 1978; Senge, 1990, Huysman, 1999). It is a widely held view that learning is not necessarily

synonymous with improved performance (e.g. Crossan *et al.*, 1995). Thus, there are no positive or negative connotations within the term ‘learning’.

The development of the field of organisational learning can be traced according to different disciplinary origins, as shown in Table 2.2. Psychology and organisational development, management science, organisation theory, strategy, production management and cultural anthropology are the main disciplines by which organisational learning has been shaped (Easterby-Smith, Snell & Gherardi, 1998).

Table 2.2 Disciplines of organisational learning

Discipline	Ontology	Key Ideas
Psychology and OD	Human development	Cognitive organisation; development; communication and dialogue
Management Science	Information processing	Knowledge; memory; feedback; error correction
Organisation Theory	Social structures	Effects of power and hierarchy; conflict and interests; ideology and rhetoric
Strategy	Competitiveness	Organisation/environment interface; learning between organisations
Production Management	Efficiency	Learning curves and productivity; design to production times
Cultural Anthropology	Meaning systems	Culture as cause and effect of Organisational learning; values Beliefs

Source: Easterby-Smith, Snell & Gherardi (1998, p. 264)

Inter-organisational and practice learning

Learning at the inter-organisational level (Coopey & Burgoyne, 2000), takes place in organisational fields such as joint ventures and strategic alliances (Inkpen & Crossan, 1995). The practice-based perspective of learning emphasises that “in everyday practices, learning takes place in the flow of experience, with or without our awareness of it” (Gherardi, 2000, p. 214). For example, Orr (1990) describes a major component of the job of photocopier servicemen as “the repair and maintenance of the social setting” (p. 169). Therefore, continuous configuration of a practice is being achieved, from a social, temporal and historical dimension, as a result of interaction between organisational actors and other organisational entities (e.g. group, organisation and strategic alliance) (Gherardi & Nicolini, 2000; Gherardi, 2000 & 2001). Although Giddens’ (1984) theory of structuration has successfully addressed the social configuration process, it is argued that it does not fully explore the subjective elements in it at a given point of time (Thompson & Walsham, 2004). This problem is however rectified by the notion of externalisation (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Berger and Luckmann (1966) suggest that “human existence is an ongoing externalisation. As man externalises himself, he constructs the world into which he externalises himself. In the process of externalisation, he projects his own meanings into reality” (pp. 121-2). Importantly, Gherardi, Nicolini and Odella (1998) suggest that practice should be conceived as a historical and social product together with other constituents evolving over time, not as a mere container for human activities or constituted by the mental structures of individuals. Organisational knowing therefore emerges from the ongoing, grounded and situated actions in, and engagement with, the world of organisational actors (Orlikowski, 2002).

Empirical studies of practice-based learning at work and their critiques

Several empirical studies of workplace learning have been informed by the practice-based perspective of learning. For example, Lave and Wenger (1991) researched the learning of midwives, tailors, naval quartermasters, meat cutters and non-drinking alcoholics. Wenger (1998a) investigated the learning of insurance claims processors, as did Orr (1990) with photocopier technicians. However, one common limitation of these studies is that they only explored the phenomenon with non-management personnel whose learning may make less significant contribution to the strategic direction of organisations than management personnel (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 1998). Similarly, Contu and Willmott (2003) note that popularised versions of situated learning (e.g. Brown & Duguid, 1991) neglect the exercise of power and control which are integral to the social perspective of learning. They further argue that even in Lave and Wenger's (1991) work on legitimate peripheral participation, "the power-invested situatedness of learning is under-developed, and the significance of the wider institutional contexts and media of learning practices is overlooked in favour of a focus on relations between community members and their significance for processes of identity formation" (p. 292). Despite that, the notion of situated learning may need to consider incorporating power with respect to "the social organisation of and control over resources" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 37). Contu and Willmott (2003) therefore urge a much closer and more systematic examination of power relations.

From a practice-based perspective, learning takes place and what is learned remains in the dynamic interplay of individuals and their collective practices (Gherardi, 2000; Gherardi, 2001; Gherardi & Nicolini, 2000). In other words, both organisational

actors and the collective practices are mutually transformed as a result of learning. According to Gherardi (2000), “participating in a practice is consequently a way to acquire knowledge-in-action, but also to change or perpetuate such knowledge and to produce and reproduce society” (p. 215). Similarly, Lave (1993) insists that theories of situated everyday practice shall not separate social actors and their social world of activity. Practice is therefore seen as “a system of activities in which knowing is not separable from doing, and learning is a social and not merely a cognitive activity” (Nicolini, Gherardi & Yanow, 2003, p. 8). With that in mind, it is suggested that the traditional emphasis on the individual, the formal team or the institutionalised organisation as the key unit of analysis may be less appropriate for studying learning from a practice-based perspective (Easterby-Smith, Crossan & Nicolini, 2000).

Synthesis of levels of learning entity

Attempts to synthesise the above levels of learning entity have taken various routes and are based on a wide range of conceptualisations of learning. With regard to the link between individual and organisational learning and representative of Tsang’s (1997) argument as cited earlier, one of the themes is that organisational learning is treated as individual learning taking place in an organisational context (e.g. Dodgson, 1993; Hedberg, 1981; March & Olsen, 1976; Richter, 1998). On the other hand, individual learning is referred to as a metaphor for organisational learning (Tsang, 1997) whereby organisations could be said to learn in the same way as individuals. From a balancing viewpoint, Huysman (1999) suggests that there is a need to consider both non-human factors (e.g. institutional forces, organisational histories, cultures,

group structures, power structures, environmental rules) and the mediating role of individuals in the processes of learning (e.g. Friedman, 2001).

Adopting a 'from-individual-to-organisation' view, people are sometimes regarded as an agency for the transferral of a collection of subjective individual associations, meanings, world views and ideologies through one's acquisition and internalisation of knowledge to organisational insights, thoughts and behaviours (Crossan *et al.*, 1995). Despite their socially-constructed nature, organisational insights, thoughts and behaviour remain the property of individuals (Crossan, Lane, White & Djurfeldt, 1995). Therefore, the role of individuals is to acquire and influence the development of knowledge within and among organisational entities (Richter, 1998), by being interactive, integrative and reflexive. Importantly, this 'from-individual-to-organisation' view suggests that what is learnt resides within both the heads of individuals and is also embedded in organisations (e.g. procedures, cultures and strategies) (Crossan *et al.*, 1995). Kim (1993), March (1991) and Hayes and Allinson (1998) adopt this approach by suggesting that the relationship between individual and organisational learning is in fact a matter of transferring learning through the exchange of individual and shared mental models. Likewise, Bogenrieder (2002) conceptualises organisational learning as an essentially social-relational and cognitive activity that is facilitated by social networks.

In contrast, McDougall and Beattie (1998) have taken a 'from-organisation-to-individual' view. They state that the relationship between individual and organisational learning is a transfer phenomenon – from formal and informal organisation-led learning processes (e.g. learning climate, training and development

strategies and enculturation) to individual learning. Such a transfer process is intended to support strategic changes and help individuals to cope with them. Broadly speaking, this conceptualisation still reflects a technical view of learning although the socially-constructed nature of organisational reality is acknowledged.

As far as learning is concerned, the notion of organisational/professional socialisation can be conceptualised at both ‘from-organisation/profession-to-individual’ and ‘from-individual-to-organisation/profession’ levels. When discussing the relationship between new individual workers and the production and reproduction of working practices, Evans, Hodkinson, Rainsbird and Unwin (2006) argue that learning is not just for newcomers, who can indeed change workplace practices. Workers’ personal and career interests, as well as the significance of external pressures have also to be taken into consideration in their argument. The way in which the workers deal with the powerful external forces is through strategic compliance – “going along with the letter of an instruction, without subscribing to the embedded values and purposes that supposedly underpin it” (p. 107).

Crossan, Lane and White’s (1999) influential 4Is framework (Table 2.3), addresses the levels of individual, group and organisation. Learning/renewal within organisations is illustrated within three distinct levels, further broken down into four separate processes. However, what remains largely implicit in their framework is the dynamic interaction between levels of learning.

Table 2.3 Learning/renewal in organisations: four processes through three levels

Level	Process	Inputs/outcomes
Individual	Intuiting	Experiences Images Metaphors
	Interpreting	Languages Cognitive maps Conversation/dialogue
Group	Integrating	Shared understandings Mutual adjustment Interactive systems
	Institutionalising	Routines Diagnostic systems Rules and procedures

Source: Crossan, Lane & White (1999, p. 525)

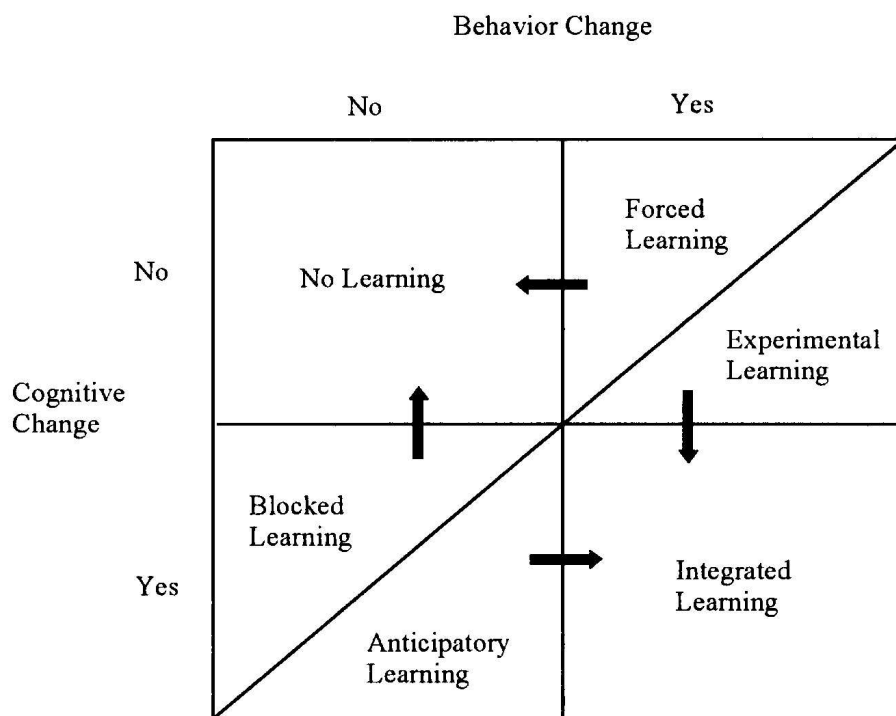
2.2.3 Learning v. changing

In relation to change, Crossan *et al.* (1995) present cognitive and behavioural views of learning and define learning as changes in interpretation (cognition) and/or changes in action or adaptation (behaviour). From a cognitive view of learning, learning occurs “when there has been an adjustment or change in the way organisations or individuals process information, develop shared meaning and interpret events” (p. 348). It is assumed that “learning has occurred if there is a change in thought process (unobservable), even in the absence of adjusted behaviour (observable)” (p. 348). From a behavioural view of learning, “learning has occurred if there has been a change in behaviour or action” (p. 348). It is understood that “learning has occurred if there is a noticeable change in behaviour, even if not preceded by a change in thinking to motivate the new behaviour” (p. 348). For example, Daft and Weick (1984) view learning as the action taken after interpretations are made. It means that learning has

only occurred when there is evidence of changes in action. Cangelosi and Dill (1965) state that learning has occurred due to a change in behaviour and improved performance.

Furthermore, a typology of learning was developed by Crossan *et al.* (1995) which takes into account ‘change or no change’ in either cognition, behaviour or both (see Figure 2.1 below). This model also emphasises that more research effort should be expended on the role of cognition and behaviour and the interrelationship of both (Crossan *et al.*, 1995).

Figure 2.1 Cognition, behaviour, and learning



Source: Crossan *et al.* (1995, p. 351)

Differing from Crossan *et al.*'s (1995) notion of learning in relation to change in cognition and/or behaviour, Fiol and Lyles (1985) regard change in behaviour as

adaptation and change in cognition as learning. However, it is also noted that adaptation is not necessarily determined by changes in behaviour. It can be either cognitively or behaviourally rooted (Crossan *et al.*, 1995).

Some writers place less explicit emphasis on the role of cognition and behaviour and use the term 'learning' and 'change' interchangeably. For instance, Rampersad (2004) states that organisational change is a learning process and that individual learning must be converted into collective learning, leading ultimately to organisational change. Masalin (2003) suggests that learning is change. Weick and Westley (1996) argue that learning is to disorganise and increase variety.

2.2.4 Context of learning

The analysis of the context of learning originates from two primary theoretical sources, viz. Giddens' theory of structuration and Pettigrew's contextualism. Wenger's social theory of learning, as discussed in the next section (2.2.5) also contributes to the understanding of the context of learning.

The theory of structuration

Giddens' (1984) duality of structure is "an attempt to overcome the action-structure and macro-micro dualisms" (Layder, 1994, p.125). Structure and action are "united through social practices" (p. 132). "It enables us to tackle the twin issues of social production" ("the way in which social life is produced by people as they engage in the social practices which are the substance of their lives and social experiences") and

“social reproduction” (the way that social life is patterned and routinised) (Layder, 1994, p. 132). “Social practices reflect the ability of humans to modify the circumstances in which they find themselves, while simultaneously recreating the social conditions which they inherit from the past” (p. 134). Therefore, “‘structure’ in social life has to be seen as both the medium and outcome of social activity” (Giddens, 1976 in Layder, 1994, p. 134).

Within Giddens’ theorisation of structuration, it is emphasised that context is “both internal to people – involving specific objects and goals – and, at the same time, external to people, involving artefacts, other people and specific settings” (Nardi, 1996, p. 76). Crucially, context cannot be conceived as “a set of external ‘resources’ that are ‘lying about’” (p.76). According to Nardi (1996), it is suggested that:

“One’s ability, and choice, to marshal and use resources is, rather, the result of specific historical and development processes through which a person is changed. A context cannot be reduced to an enumeration of people and artefacts. It is rather that the specific transformative relationship between people and artefacts is at the heart of any definition of context.” (p. 76)

Critics of the structuration theory suggest that it pays little attention to the material context in which people live (Stacey, 2001). Stacey (2001) also notes that structuration theory does not explain “the transformation process of social practices in their replication” (p. 63). I would argue that the definition of ‘material context’ is not the same as used in an everyday situation. Indeed it is both the consequences of one’s actions and interactions and the resources that either enables or inhibits one’s

engagement in social practices (Jensen, 2005). Material context, in my view, is a dimension of social structure or according to Nardi (1996), the activity in itself. Furthermore, material context is not a permanent entity “out there” (Nardi, 1996, p. 76), nor a given reality to be known or discovered. Rather, it reflects an emerging and recursive state created by the mutual influence between action/interaction and structure, both of which constitute social practices (Gherardi, 2000; Gherardi, 2001; Gherardi & Nicolini, 2000; Gherardi *et al.*, 1998; Thompson & Walsham, 2004). I would therefore suggest that social practices themselves undergo transformation accordingly.

The theory of contextualism

Pettigrew (1985) argues that “one of the core requirements of a contextualist analysis is to understand the emergent, situational, and holistic features of an organism or a process in its context, rather than to divide the world into limited sets of dependent and independent variables isolated from their contexts” (p. 228). Such an approach “offers both multilevel, or vertical, analysis and processual, or horizontal, analysis” (p. 238). Relevant to this study, the contextualist approach “recognises that process is both contained by structures and shapes structures, either in the direction of preserving them or in that of altering them” (p. 239). An attempt is made by firstly “conceptualising structure and context not just barriers to action but as essentially involved in its production”, and second, “by showing how aspects of structure and context are mobilised or activated by actors and groups as they seek to obtain outcomes important to them” (p. 239). Considering that structure is not a fixed entity, the contextualist analysis shall move beyond understanding “a process in its context”

(p. 228), towards an interactive and mutually influencing process involving action and context. The contextualist analysis should give priority to the very notion of process, rather than context.

Table 2.4 shows different conceptualisations of ‘context’ across various perspective of learning.

2.2.5 A social theory of learning and communities-of-practice

A social theory of learning

In addition to the cognitive and behavioural views of learning (Crossan *et al.*, 1995), a social theory of learning (Wenger, 2004), offers a radically different perspective on the subject. It places learning “in the context of our lived experience of participation in the world” (Wenger, 1998a, p.3). As far as learning is concerned, it requires the participation of people who are fully and mutually engaged in the process of creating, refining, communicating, and using what they know (Wenger, 1998b). Moreover, knowledge is characterised as existent in the human act of knowing, both tacit and explicit, both social and individual, and dynamic (Wenger *et al.*, 2002), in contrast to the classic conceptualisation in the education theories. As far as learning is concerned, “what people learn is their practice” (Wenger, 1998a, p. 95) and “what they practise is learning” (p. 102). However, as noted by Wenger (2004), it is important to distinguish ‘a social theory of learning’ from ‘a theory of social learning’. The former claims that “human beings are fundamentally social...whether it takes place in social interactions, in a group or by oneself” (p. 4). However, it does not suggest that “individual learning

Table 2.4 Conceptions of context in the learning literature

Study of Context	Description of Context
Zajac & Bruhn (1999)	the moral context (perspective) of participation in planned organisational change and learning as duty, utility, justice-based and virtue-based
Sambrook (2005)	contextual factors influencing work-related learning: organisational (culture, structure, senior management support, organisation of work, work pressures, targets, task vs. learning orientation), functional (HRD role clarity, understanding of HRD tasks & new initiatives, number of staff, expertise, amount of information, use of ICTs, strategic) and individual (responsibility for learning, motivation to learn, time, IT skills, confidence)
Bourgeon (2002)	two temporal contexts (perspectives) of organisational learning in new product development projects: the objective time of the project (first conception of time) and a subjective time (second conception of time)
Poell, van Dam and van den Berg (2004)	organising learning in work contexts (settings): highlights of the importance of organisational structure and the leadership style and the role of managers.
Jensen (2005)	a contextual theory of learning and the learning organisation: contexts support or hinder transformation process. Context is both shaping the structure in which actions take place and is created by the very same actions involving individuals, artifacts and social interpretations. A given context is shaped and changed all the time, but under given conditions. Not every action changes or develops the contexts. It is only essential events that (re)create the context, and structure is necessary to ensure that events can recreate context.
Engestrom (1987)	context as systemic relations between individuals and environment
Lave (1988)	context as setting in which actions take place between an acting individual and the institutional arena
Kalling and Styhre (2003)	a literature review of organisational context associated with knowledge sharing: Simonin (1999): cultural distance, organisational distance Epple et al (1991): training, geographical proximity, managerial and engineering attention Darr et al (1996): geography, perceived proximity, the level of communication Ingram & Baum (1997): chain affiliation Argote & Ingram (2000): social networks of individuals Hoopes & Postrel (1999): intraorganisational integration, intensive integrative practices Gupta & Govindarajan (2000): richness of transmission channels Tsai (2000): absorptive capacity, strategic relatedness, network centrality, perceived trustworthiness
Thompson & Walsham (2004)	the nature of organisational context which is an inseparable part of knowing: context as a process - context is located in the human mind whereby subjective and inter-subjective dimensions meet. Context is of its emergent nature, its temporal (historical) positioning in relation to phenomena, its location - in experience-in-action and its composition - both shared and non-shared.
Wallace (1991)	context as both enabling and constraining; recognition the uniqueness and multiplicity of contexts; management situations as contexts some aspects of which are similar across contexts and time

is somehow inferior or to be avoided” (p. 4). On the contrary, the theory of social learning “emphasises the prominent roles played by vicarious, symbolic, and self-regulatory processes in psychological functioning” (Bandura, 1977, p. vii).

A social theory of learning (Wenger, 2004) implies that learning will ultimately result in changes in actions or behaviours. In the workplace, this means that individuals learn and that their learning may bring out changes in a number of organisational entities (i.e. individual, group, organisation, inter-organisational, communities-of-practice). The focus on actions or behaviour can be illustrated by Duguid’s (2005) example that “the failing of many teachers can probably be attributed less to their lack of explicit knowledge of a discipline than to their inability to exhibit the underlying practice successfully” (p. 8), in “its both epistemic and ethical dimensions” (p. 11). The former, according to Duguid (2005), refers to difficulties in relation to “what knowledge people *can* meaningfully share” (p. 11, italics in original) and in the case of the latter, to difficulties concerning “what knowledge people *will* share” (p. 11, italics in original). However, these changes in actions or behaviour are not associated with the presence of external stimuli, but with the inter-subjective meanings that are brought by social actors into the process of social construction of realities (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 1998).

As shown in Table 2.5, a social theory of learning perspective (Wenger, 2004) has been adopted in order to investigate the learning of communities-of-practice of midwives, tailors, naval quartermasters, meat cutters and non-drinking alcoholics (Lave & Wenger, 1991), claims processors (Wenger, 1998a), photocopier technicians (Orr, 1990), flute makers (Cook & Yanow, 1993) and salespeople (Osterlund, 1996).

It is also suggested that the communities-of-practice are “the social locus” (Lee, 1999, p. 43) of these professionals’ “knowing in action” (p. 43), offering us insights into individual learning and its impact on the learning of other organisational entities (Crossan *et al.*, 1995). Furthermore, “the significance of the wider institutional context” (Contu & Willmont, 2003, p. 292) has been explicated and emphasised.

Table 2.5 A selection of empirical studies adopting a social theory of learning perspective

Author (Year)	Descriptions
Lave & Wenger (1991)	Learning of midwives, tailors, naval quartermasters, meat cutters and non-drinking alcoholics
Wenger (1998)	Learning of claims-processors at work
Orr (1990)	Learning of photocopier technicians at work
Cook & Yanow (1993)	Learning of flutemaking apprentices
Osterlund (1996)	Learning of salespeople at work

Communities-of-practice

The idea of communities-of-practice was popularised by a number of seminal publications of Wenger and his colleagues. Communities-of-practice are known as “groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis” (Wenger *et al.*, 2002, p. 4). They “connect people from different organisations, as well as across independent business units” (p. 6) and functions “around core knowledge requirements” (p. 6). They differ from the matrix structure as well as other forms of structure (e.g. business or functional units, project or operational teams, informal network, communities-of-interest or professional

associations) (see Table 2.6). Communities-of-practice also take many forms, ranging in size and longevity, collocated or distributed, homogeneous or heterogeneous, inside or outside boundaries, spontaneous or intentional and, unrecognised or institutionalised (Wenger *et al.*, 2002). Furthermore, the development and deployment of “a knowledge strategy” (p. 7) in implementing business strategies of a company, depends on communities-of-practice (Wenger *et al.*, 2002).

Table 2.6 Differences between community-of-practice and other group settings

	What is the purpose?	Who belongs?	What holds it together?	How long does it last?
Community of practice	To develop members' capabilities; to build and exchange knowledge	Members who select themselves	Passion, commitment, and identification with the group's expertise	As long as there is interest in maintaining the group
Formal work group	To deliver a product or service	Everyone who reports to the group's manager	Job requirements and common goals	Until the next reorganisation
Project team	To accomplish a specified task	Employees assigned by senior management	The project's milestones and goals	Until the project has been completed
Informal network	To collect and pass on business information	Friends and business acquaintances	Mutual needs	As long as people have a reason to connect

(Source: Wenger & Snyder, 2000, p.142)

One of the most significant values attributed to communities-of-practice, is said to be the connection of “personal development and professional identities of practitioners to the strategy of organisation” (Wenger *et al.*, 2002, p. 17). By so doing, “companies succeed by fully engaging the creativity of their employees” (p. 18). This has created an ideal situation for both employees and organisations. On one hand, the success of the business depends largely on the performance of employees. On the other hand, learning, for employees at least, is an integral part of their job. Within some

organisations, few formal developmental opportunities exist due to various reasons, for instance, uncertainties, costs, time, commitments elsewhere, in addition to the possible ineffectiveness of the programme. Employees therefore seem to learn in any natural working setting in which they find themselves. This type of learning is more meaningful and relevant to employees themselves and their work. However, considering the informal, loosely coupled nature of communities-of-practice, the question of how they should be supported and the conflict between stability as expected by the employees and the temporary, emergent and fluid features, needs to be taken into account (Boud & Middleton, 2003).

Relevant literature (Wenger, 1998a & 1998b; Wenger *et al.*, 2002) suggest that a community of practice defines itself in three distinctive parts which collectively describe itself, explain its functions and what its capabilities are (see Figure 2.2). It is these dimensions (domain, community and practice) that distinguish communities-of-practice from other types of groups that may be found in an organisation. According to Wenger *et al.* (2002), it is the terms ‘community’ and ‘practice’ that “refer to a very specific type of social structure with a very specific purpose” (p. 41).

Figure 2.2 Dimensions of a community-of-practice

A community of practice defines itself along three dimensions:

- What it is about – its joint enterprise as understood and continually renegotiated by its members
- How it functions – the relationships of mutual engagement that bind members together into a social entity
- What capability it has produced – the shared repertoire of communal resources (routines, sensibilities, artefacts, vocabulary, styles, etc.) that members have developed over time.

Adapted from: Wenger (1998b)

A social theory of learning (Wenger, 2004), “the convergence of learning theory and social theory” (p. i), “claims that human learning is fundamentally social...whether it takes place in social interactions, in a group, or by oneself” (p. 4). Furthermore, communities-of-practice are where “structure and agency meet through learning” (p. 6). “The community and its practice represent a social structure” (p. 6), whilst “membership and engagement in practice represent agency” (p. 6). “The community-of-practice is a linchpin concept for both learning and social theory because it refers to an intermediate level of analysis in which learning brings structure and agency in close interaction.” (p. 6)

A social theory of learning (Wenger, 2004) then presents a ‘conceptual turn’ concerning ideas such as learning, organisation, knowledge and human agency. These ideas can be encapsulated by the concept of ‘complex responsive process of relating’ (Stacey *et al.*, 2000; Stacey, 2001). By thinking of an organisation as processes, or more specifically, complex responsive processes of relating, as opposed to systems thinking, it is believed that “the interaction itself has the intrinsic capacity to yield coherent patterns of behaviour” (Stacey *et al.*, 2000, p. 7). Constituent parts, according to Stacey *et al.* (2000), “interact locally with each other, in the absence of any blueprint, plan or programme, and through that interaction they produce coherent patterns in themselves” (p.7). It is further argued that “that interaction in nature takes place not primarily in order to survive, but as the creative expression of identity” (p.7). Moreover, “it is only when the interaction between entities has a critical degree of diversity, emerging as conflicting constraints on each other, that there arises the internal capacity for spontaneous novelty” (Stacey *et al.*, 2000, pp. 7-8). From the perspective of complex responsive processes of relating, Stacey (2001) suggests that

“knowledge is not a ‘thing’, or a system, but an ephemeral, active process of relating. If one takes this view, then no one, let alone a corporation, can own knowledge. Knowledge itself cannot be stored, nor can intellectual capital be measured, and certainly neither of them can be managed” (p. 4). Human agency, from the perspective of complex responsive process of relating, is not “located *either* in the individual *or* the group/social” (p. 5, italics in original), nor is agency “located in *both* the individual *and* the social” (p. 5, italics in original). In actuality, “human agency is “not located anywhere because it is not an ‘it’” (p.5). Rather, human agency is “processes of interaction between human bodies and those processes perpetually construct themselves as continuity and potential transformation” (p. 5). According to Stacey (2001),

“Relating between diverse people in their local institutions is understood as the process in which knowledge is perpetually reproduced and potentially transformed at the same time. This relating is understood as communicative interaction in which power relations emerge. Individual minds/selves and social relationships, individual and collective identities, are all understood as aspects of the same phenomenon, namely relating” (p. 6).

Duguid (2005) sums up by proposing that knowledge is “rooted not in the epistemological stocks of individual heads, but in the flow of practice” (p. 14) within contexts which possess “emergent properties that, while they are no doubt the outcome of individual actions, amount to more than the sum of those actions” (p. 14).

2.2.6 Learning from mistakes

Research into learning from mistakes had traditionally been conducted in educational studies and has been hugely influenced by the works of Piaget and Skinner (Perkinson 1984). It is stated that “learning from mistakes is rooted in a Darwinian theory of evolutionary epistemology upon which a new theory of education – a Darwinian theory of education, is built” (pp. 40-41). Furthermore, “the role of the learner has been characterised as an active creator of knowledge, as well as a seeker of stability in order to learn. Therefore, the learner learns from making mistakes” (p. 41). Organisational studies in the past recognise that learning from mistakes can be studied, at least, at three levels in terms of who learns from mistakes – individual, group and system (Edmondson, 2004). They can be extended to other levels such as organisational, inter-organisational and industrial (Shrivastava, 1988). It is also important to acknowledge that the learning of one particular entity may bring out changes in other organisational entities, from a multi/cross-level perspective (Klein, Dansereau & Hall, 1994; Rousseau, 1985).

For instance, Edmondson (2004) studied eight hospital unit teams in two urban teaching hospitals affiliated with medical schools and reported group learning from individual mistakes in a group context. The outcomes of group learning from individual mistakes in this study are manifested in changes in group-level properties e.g. unit performance outcomes, unit shared beliefs, etc. In a mixed industrial setting, Tjosvold *et al.* (2004) investigated individual and group learning from group mistakes in a group context. It was found that group-level variables such as psychological safety and shared mental models helped overcome barriers to learning from mistakes.

Blaming each other is one of the key themes here, given its mistake ownership at the level of group. However, some potentially destructive implications for working in groups had not been adequately addressed. For instance, Newell, Robertson, Scarbrough & Swan (2000) point out the problem of groupthink - a tendency for participants to lose objectivity as a result of sharing a similar worldview, as well as blocking external or new ideas. Gherardi *et al.* (1998) also suggest that the seemingly consensual character of group is in fact conceived to co-exist with conflicts and power struggles between those who know and those who don't.

2.3 Management learning

Given my interest in the learning of managers at work, it is helpful to appreciate the nature of managerial work and the issues surrounding management skills. Mintzberg (1973) identifies six sets of distinguishing characteristics of managerial work dealing primarily with:

- a) the quantity and pace of the manager's work – much work at unrelenting pace;
- b) the patterns in his activities – activity characterised by brevity, variety and fragmentation;
- c) the relationship, in his work, between action and reflection – preference for live action;
- d) his use of different media – attraction to the verbal media;
- e) his relationship to a variety of contacts – between his organisation and a network of contacts;
- f) the interplay between his rights and duties – blend of rights and duties

One key issue concerning management skills, at least in the UK, is that leadership and management skills represent one of the particular skills gaps (Bloom, Conway, Mole, Moslein, Neely & Frost, 2004). As a part of the generic skills which are likely to be learnt through quality work experience and everyday interaction with work colleagues, leadership and management skills have been found to relate to individual, unit and organisational performance (Bloom *et al.*, 2004).

Considering the nature of management work and the shortage of management skills as stated above, research into management learning has become ever more encouraging and relevant. The study of management learning emerges from management education and development (Fox, 1997a; Grey & Antonacopoulou, 2004), despite the differences in conceptualisation and approaches. Educating managers, as argued by Fox (1997a), is a different proposition from educating school-leavers or undergraduate students, and formal education and development activities are merely “the tip of a learning iceberg” (p. 25). Broadly speaking, management learning, according to Burgoyne and Reynolds (1997), is conceived as issues and practices to do with the nature of both formalised, institutionalised management and learning (e.g. Latifi, 1997; Tamkin & Barber, 1998), and of an informal, naturally occurring one (e.g. Fox, 1997a; Lindsey *et al.*, 1987). In this study, the terms ‘management learning’ and ‘managerial learning’ are inter-changeable. Burgoyne and Reynolds (1997) further suggest that research into managerial learning can be classified according to the MLml framework as represented in Figure 2.3.

Figure 2.3 The MLml framework

M formal, explicit, deliberate management	L formal, explicit, deliberate learning
m informal managing	l informal learning

Source: Burgoyne and Reynolds (1997, p. 11)

Tamkin and Barber (1998) investigated from a formal learning perspective (with reference to the 'L' in the MLml framework), how managers learn within five reputable UK organisations in both the public and private sectors. The concept of management learning is described as "a process, as an acquisition, embodying changes and a growth in understanding" (p. 24). As far as the content of learning is concerned, it is suggested that both technical and managerial skills are acquired as well as an understanding of self, others and organisations, upon which managers have a profound impact (Tamkin & Barber, 1998). From the same perspective, Latifi (1997) investigated management learning in an Iranian context to address the concept of managerial universalism and the universalism of management learning. From an informal learning perspective (with reference to the 'l' in the MLml framework), Lindsey, Homes and McCall (1987) identified several key events in executives' lives through which they had learnt significant lessons. Those key events included, for example, developmental assignments and hardship. Given the wide range of disciplines and themes that the field of management learning covers (Grey & Antonacopoulou, 2004), analytical distinctions are further made between management learning and the roles of managers in organisational learning (e.g. Ellinger and

Bostrom, 2002; Friedman, 2001; Sadler, 2001). Table 2.7 summarises key findings and critiques raised in relation to management learning.

2.4 Critical reflection on the limitations of current literature

Having conducted an initial literature review, a number of limitations in the existing literature have emerged. The first limitation concerns the lack of conceptual and empirical evidence with regard to learning of managers in day-to-day work life. Given the diverse perspectives of management learning research, a lot of it is to do with the formal, organisation-led management education and development programmes (e.g. Latifi, 1997; Tamkin and Barber, 1998). It is partly because, as Fox (1997a) explains, natural and everyday learning processes are more difficult to investigate than those in classrooms and other formal settings. As suggested by Easterby-Smith *et al.* (1998), the exploration of phenomena in a non-management context and the learning of the personnel in that environment, may well contribute less to the strategic direction of the organisations concerned than would the involvement of management personnel.

The second limitation highlights the lack of integration of, and interaction between learning entities. As described earlier, learning entities in the existing literature are treated in isolation, without making significant reference to their counterparts. For instance, Crossan *et al.* (1999) urge that future research in organisational learning needs to move from the reasonably well-developed understanding of individual- and group-level learning to an understanding of the flows of learning between levels. In addition, the multiplicity of managers' learning outcomes has not been discussed adequately. This means that the multi-manifestation of the effects of managers'

Table 2.7 A review of conceptual and empirical studies of management learning

Author(s)	Key Findings
Fox (1997a)	<p>The emergence of management learning from management education and development: recognition that educating managers is a different proposition from educating school-leavers or undergraduate students; formal education and development activities are merely the tip of a learning iceberg</p> <p>Emphasis on natural learning – situated learning theory, which focuses on the practical and social dimensions of learning, as opposed to the traditional cognitive theory</p> <p><i>(Critiques: lack of insights into the process of management learning; potential problem of theorising management learning from a social learning perspective which has been based on craft-level work)</i></p>
Latifi (1997)	<p>Investigation of management learning in an Iranian context in order to address the notion of managerial universalism and the universalism of management learning</p> <p>The survey of learning needs with members of executive MBA programmes in Iran: less developed economies need more generalist-type MBAs Comparative analysis with managers from the UK, USA and Iran: Iranian managers are more people-oriented rather than market- or money-oriented</p> <p>The social role of managers in developing economies and collectivist cultures: mentoring, buffering, environment-awareness, resource-providing</p> <p><i>(Critiques: confusion over managerial learning, education, training and development; lack of evidence of how managers learn at work)</i></p>
Lindsey, Homes & McCall (1987)	<p>Identification of several key events in executives' lives through which they have learnt different lessons</p> <p><i>(Critiques: Not all the events, e.g. developmental assignments and hardship, will be experienced by managers. Lack of events/experiences of the usual, routine and common nature which managers all have.)</i></p>
Tamkin & Barber (1998)	<p>Research into how managers learn in five reputable UK organisations in both public and private sectors from a 360 degree view Manager's concept of learning as a process, acquisition, embodying changes and a growth in understanding mainly through different management development programmes offered by their employers</p> <p>Both technical and managerial skills are learnt as well as an understanding of self, others and organisations, upon which they have a profound impact.</p> <p><i>(Critiques: lack of significant insights into how managers learn in daily work situations)</i></p>

learning needs further explicit theorisation.

The final limitation is the lack of recognition of the role of human actors specially that of managers – the role of human actions and interactions in shaping collective practice and vice versa. This, to some extent, characterises the distinctions between organisational learning and knowledge management, whereby the latter often ignores the human element (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 2000). Furthermore, current research in organisational learning has placed much emphasis on organisational-level artefacts such as routines, systems, collective memory and so on, but not on the mediating role of individuals (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 2000). In other words, human agency is often neglected (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 2000). It is evident that although some studies have already addressed the role of individuals (e.g. Friedman, 2001), the exclusion of managers who are strategically important to organisations provides direction for future research.

2.5 Summary

As indicated in the introduction to this chapter, whilst undertaking an initial literature review in this study, it was not my intention to establish a pre-conceived conceptual framework, a research focus or questions and propositions. I have instead sought to record that which I had previously known on the subject matter before entering the research field. By so doing, I aimed to remain consistent with the established methodological approach which suggests that data collected in the fieldwork stage would be analysed, interpreted and compared with the literature reviewed both before and after (Glaser, 1998). In contrast to the initial literature review, a comparative

literature review (Chapter 5), is to conceptually integrate the data collected in the fieldwork with any relevant literature, driven by the emerged research focus.

Thus, prior to the fieldwork, a number of areas of interests in the literature concerning learning in organisations were visited. First, technical and social views of learning were compared and contrasted with both conceptual and empirical evidences. Second, several levels of learning entity were identified and described. Next, the overlapping and contrasting areas between learning and changing were discussed. The notion of context of learning in organisations was then explained. This led to the introduction of a social theory of learning (Wenger, 2004) and communities-of-practice (Wenger, 1998a). Furthermore, learning from mistakes was briefly touched upon. Given my interests in the learning of managers, several conceptual and empirical studies were further explored. It was discovered that few studies had actually been carried out, on the subject of the learning of managers in everyday work settings.

Within the literature reviewed thus far, a number of limitations have surfaced. They are mainly issues concerning the shortage of studies specifically examining the management population in organisations, the lack of integration of and interaction between learning entities and the absence of focus on the role of managers in shaping organisational practices. The pre-fieldwork review of the literature has therefore informed, only if theoretically relevant, the comparison and integration of perspectives in the subsequent data collection phase of the study, during which a set of methodological procedures, as introduced in the next chapter, are rigorously followed.

Chapter 3 Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This study adopts the Glaserian version of grounded theory methodology (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1978). To address the argument that the term ‘grounded theory’ has been used loosely as an excuse for the absence of a research methodology (Suddaby, 2006), the aim and purpose of this chapter is to clearly explicate the adopted grounded theory methodology in this project. It is not a mere presentation of methodological tenets and procedures, but a comparative and critical discussion of the methodology in the light of other methodologies, in order to further illustrate its uniqueness and similarities with its counterparts in social sciences.

I begin with an overview of my research project with associated problems and questions posed and deliberated upon from a grounded theory perspective (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1978). To underpin my methodological decisions in the context of Crotty’s (1998) research design framework, I then provide an introduction to the interpretive research perspective which influences my research, explaining how reality, human beings, science and purpose of research are perceived. The Glaserian version of grounded theory methodology (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1978), a general methodology for generating theory from data, is then explained in detail. The methodological congruence of methods of data collection used in this study is also explained. Finally, the fieldwork activities are explained in detail, setting the scene for

the data analysis, interpretation and discussion chapter that follows. The summary of the chapter highlights the usefulness and appropriateness of the adopted methodology in investigating the learning of managers in the workplace.

3.2 Emergence of research problem and questions

I began this project with a general interest in how managers learn in the workplace, as a point of departure from my earlier deliberations upon learning in the classroom setting (Fei, 2002). As demonstrated in the initial literature review chapter, I had been exposed to a number of theoretical strands in the body of management learning literature, which acted as initial guiding interests and disciplinary perspectives and provided points of departure for developing, rather than limiting ideas (Charmaz, 1995). With regard to the issue of research focus in grounded theory studies, the researcher begins with a general focus from the outset, given the nature of the unknown research problem (McCallin, 2003). In essence, it is likely to be exploratory because variables are unknown, irrespective of the area of research (McCallin, 2003). Specific variables and concepts are gradually developed through the research process (Charmaz, 1995, p. 32).

In grounded theory, research questions are “statements that identify the phenomenon to be studied” (Backman & Kyngas, 1999, p. 149) and are “always broad” (McCallin, 2003, p. 206). They are formulated to give researchers the flexibility and freedom to explore the phenomenon in depth, thus, the researcher is not able to know beforehand what the essential matters are and in any event, the research questions may even change during data collection (Glaser, 1978). Moreover, it is those interacting in the

field that define their problems or concerns (McCallin, 2003). The research problem should not be pre-empted by the researcher, but should be defined by the research participants themselves (McCallin, 2003). The way that the research problem and questions are formulated in grounded theory studies reflects its methodological objective that “grounded theory explains what is actually happening in practical life, rather than describing what should be going on” (McCallin, 2003, p.203).

In view of the methodological uniqueness of grounded theory in relation to the formulation of the research problem and questions as outlined above, I did not approach managers and ask them how they had learned in the workplace at the outset of the fieldwork. Nor did I, prior to entering the field, formulate the research focus through the identification of any gaps in the existing literature. Instead, I asked my research participants to talk about their daily work lives and share with me data of significance. After a number of initial interviews, it emerged that managers learnt by responding to the external changes as well as initiating the changes themselves in the workplace. Therefore they were, in fact, for the most part, discussing what kind of changes they had initiated, what challenges they had faced in the initiation of these changes and how they had dealt with them.

To reiterate, the research problem and questions emerged as follows:

Emergent research problem:

How do managers respond to problems arising when initiating changes during their learning in the workplace?

Emergent research questions:

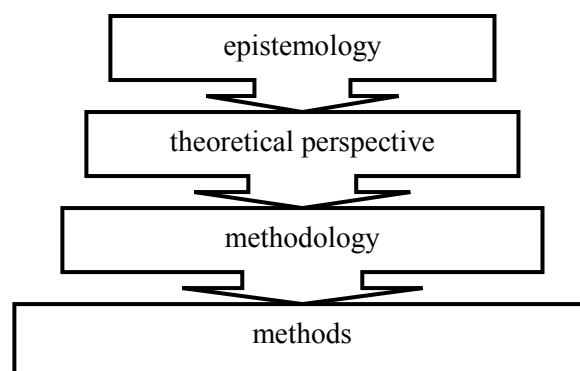
What are the problems for managers when they initiate changes during their learning in the workplace?

What is the underlying mechanism of their responses to these problems?

3.3 Framework of research design

The research design involved in this study contains four mutually influencing elements. With reference to Crotty's (1998) work, these four elements of research design are epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology and methods, as indicated in Figure 3.1.

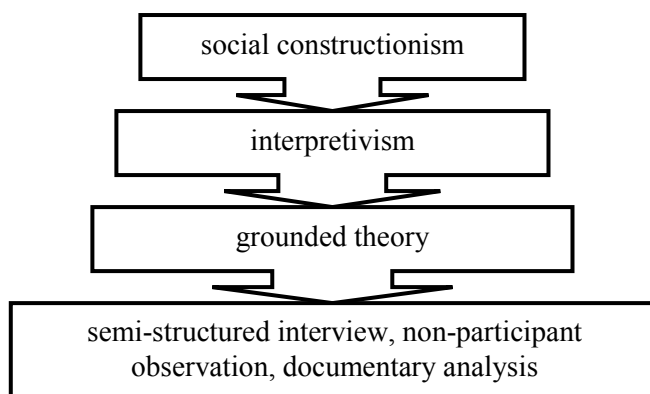
Figure 3.1 The four elements of research design



Source: Crotty (1998, p. 4)

According to Wilson and Hutchinson (1996), one's own philosophical underpinnings, methodological and analytic strategies and outcomes are associated with the choice of a particular research methodology. As with any other researcher, I am of course aware of my philosophical, methodological and analytic stance as a grounded theorist and using Crotty (1998)'s framework, they can be exemplified in Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2 Crotty's (1998) four elements of research design in this study



Grounded theory, like other methodologies, has its clearly defined theoretical and philosophical underpinnings (Becker, 1993). Wimpenny and Gass (2000) agree that “it is the methodological foundations which make the research strategies different” (p. 1489). Moreover, Norton (1999) suggests that the links between ontology, epistemology, methodology and method are important and need to be carefully observed in order to maintain research rigour. In this study, consideration has been given to ensure and demonstrate research rigour in terms of the congruence between the research problem and questions, as well as the ontology, epistemology, methodology and methods of data collection.

In the grounded theory methodology literature, the significance of congruence among various elements of research design has already been widely discussed (see Table 3.1 below). Failing to acknowledge the differences in methodologies is known as the muddling, slurring or blurring of methodologies (Wimpenny & Gass, 2000).

Table 3.1 Congruence among elements of research design in grounded theory

Author (Year)	Congruence between Grounded Theory and Other Elements of Research Design
Wuest (1995)	feminist theory
Wimpenny & Gass (2000)	interview
Turner (1981)	survey
Lomborg & Kirkevold (2003)	pragmatism, symbolic interactionism & social constructivism
May (1991)	interview

3.4 The interpretive research perspective

The interpretive research perspective adopted in this study is one which “tries to understand the action in a substantive area from the point of view of the actors involved” (Glaser, 1998, p. 115). The interpretive research perspective is in contrast to the positivist counterpart that also informs research into learning in organisations (e.g. Bontis, Crossan and Hulland, 2002; Suhomlinova, 1999). The distinctions between these two research perspectives are summarised in Table 3.2 below.

The social construction of reality is the essential concept of the interpretive perspective (Flick, 2002). It suggests that what people know and believe to be true about the world is constructed as people interact with one another over time in

Table 3.2 Theoretical perspectives in social sciences

Criterion	Positivism	Interpretivism
Reality is...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - objective, 'out there', to be 'found' - perceived through the senses - perceived uniformly by all - governed by universal laws - based on integration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - subjective, in people's mind - created, not found, interpreted differently by people
Human beings are...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - rational individuals - obeying external laws - without free will 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - creators of their world - making sense of their world - not restricted by external laws - creating systems of meanings
Science is...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - based on strict rules and procedures - deductive - relying on sense impressions - value free 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - based on common sense - inductive - relying on interpretations - not value free
Purpose of Research:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to explain social life - to predict course of events - to discover the laws of social life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to interpret social life - to understand social life - to discover people's meanings

Source: Sarantakos (1998, p. 40)

specific social settings (Le Compte and Schensul, 1999; Neuman, 2000). Grounded theory methodology places its emphasis on the social construction of reality (Goulding, 1998). According to Gergen (1985), a social constructionist approach is “principally concerned with explicating the processes by which people come to describe, explain, or otherwise account for the world (including themselves) in which they live” (p. 266). Social constructionists focus on the ways that people make sense of the world through sharing their experiences with others via the medium of language (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Lowe, 2002).

Furthermore, Sarantakos (1998) argues that interpretive theorists believe that reality is not out there to be discovered but is located only in the minds of people. Reality is internally experienced and socially constructed through interaction, and interpreted through people, based on their meaning systems. Burrell and Morgan (1979) suggest that interpretive researchers seek to understand the fundamental nature of the social world at the level of subjective experience. Explanation is sought via the realm of individual consciousness and subjectivity, within the frame of reference of the participants as opposed to the observers of action. The set of assumptions about the nature of reality, informed by the interpretive perspective, is the belief that the world is socially constructed and, therefore, subjective, and the job of the researcher is to understand the meanings of human interactions in everyday life and the beliefs that researchers bring to that process (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Lowe, 1991; 2002).

Interpretive researchers can adopt a range of methodologies such as ethnography, case study and grounded theory. For this study I have adopted grounded theory which is but one of the interpretive methods that are used to describe the world of persons under study (Stern, 1994). In order to do so, interpretive researchers have to rely on knowledge from the “inside” (Charmaz, 1995, p. 30). In a grounded theory approach, this means that “research participants’ concerns shape the direction and form of the research and the researcher seeks to learn how they construct their experience through their actions, intentions, beliefs and feelings” (Charmaz, 1995, p. 30).

It is recognised by Denscombe (1998; 2003) that the term ‘grounded theory’ is often used in a loose way, to refer to approaches that accept some of the basic principles but do not fully adopt the methodological rigour espoused by its originators. In this study,

the decision to adopt a Glaserian grounded theory methodology (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1978) was made on the basis of my understandings of the differences among various interpretive methodologies, the ambiguity in many adoptions and adaptations of grounded theory and the overlap between grounded theory and other interpretive methodologies (Stern, 1993). For example, according to Stern (1994), ethnographic researchers enter the field equipped with theory developed by other researchers and turn their attention to the culture within the framework from a particular pre-established theoretical perspective. Also, phenomenological researchers aim to discover the deeper meaning of “lived experience” for individuals in terms of their relationship with time, space and personal history (p. 215). The focus of grounded theory on participants’ points of view is broadly consistent with phenomenology’s concern with subjective experience (Denscombe, 1998 & 2003). But, Rothwell (1980) argues that grounded theory differs from action research or case study in terms of its use of constant comparative analysis.

A grounded theory approach is, therefore, particularly appropriate for studies of human interaction, given that there is a specific interest in practical activity and routine situations, and the participants’ point of view (Denscombe, 1998 & 2003). Grounded theory has been used across numerous academic disciplines (e.g. Andrews, 2003; Guthrie, 2000; Holton, 2005; Nathaniel, 2003; Vaughan, 1986) and my decision to use it has been further encouraged by the work of Locke (2001), who highlights its suitability for researching managerial and organisational behaviour for reasons such as: capturing complexity, linking well with practice, supporting theorizing of ‘new’ substantive areas and enlivening mature theorising. My decision is also substantiated by the fact that, grounded theory has the power, according to Watson (1994b), to

enable both researchers and practitioners to “have their own theory which will be derived from a combining of elements from the work of others (ancient or modern) and which will both fit with their own personal view of the world and usefully inform the practices they engage in” (p. 222).

3.5 Grounded theory methodology

Grounded theory methodology is regarded as one of the most recognised, widely used, and yet most misunderstood methodologies in social sciences (Suddaby, 2006; Shah & Corley, 2006; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). In the existing methodological literature of grounded theory, a large part of it has been criticised for its lack of adherence to the orthodox version (Eaves, 2001). Furthermore, grounded theory has been applied diversely in description, adoption, evaluation and teaching (Wells, 1995). For instance, its application ranges from that of the generation of theories, to a strategy for qualitative data analysis (McCallin, 2003). It is also observed that the terms ‘grounded theory approach, method and research’ have been used interchangeably and all of them have to be clearly distinguished (Benoliel, 1996).

Offering first and foremost a vision of how to do theoretically innovative research across the entire research process from design to writing up (Dey, 2004), grounded theory methodology has been suggested as “suitable for studying individual processes, interpersonal relations and the reciprocal effects between individuals and larger social processes” (Charmaz, 1995, p. 28-9). Its methodological strategy is “almost countercultural in its emphasis on sustained but detached attention to a problem, a rigorous conceptualisation of its dimensions, and humility with respect to the

solution” (Wells, 1995, p. 35). It is also clear that grounded theory “does not offer a panacea, a solution to all research problems” (Martin & Turner, 1986, p. 143), nor is it suitable for all researchers. As Glaser (1978) argues, “*our perspective is but a piece of a myriad of action in Sociology, not the only, right action*” (p. 3, italics in original).

From a research methodology point of view, researching management learning has presented a challenge in its own right. As Garvin (2000) points out:

“Managers seldom use the term learning when describing these situations. Typically, they reserve it for other purposes, primarily discussions of education and training programmes or workshops where knowledge sharing is the goal. When learning is embedded in real work, managers normally use other languages; frequently they overlook learning’s role completely. Yet situations like these – where learning is essential for completing a task, yet is neither recognised nor publicly acknowledged – are extraordinarily common.”
(p. 8)

As previously mentioned, my personal experience of interviewing managers, confirms Garvin’s (2000) assertion regarding the absence of the term ‘learning’ from their responses to me. One can see from the initial interview guide (see Appendix 3) that all the questions were directed towards both the general, day-to-day working lives of the managers and significant events that they had experienced. They then further described those significant events, during which they reported that they had learnt by initiating changes themselves in their workplaces as a result of both internal and

external factors. It is the research participants themselves who defined their learning at work.

3.5.1 Different versions of grounded theory

There are at least three versions of grounded theory available in the methodology literature: the original version by Glaser and Strauss (1967); the proceduralisation of it by Strauss and Corbin (1990); and the constructivist's approach by Charmaz (2006). Among methodological users, there is a lack of agreement on which version of grounded theory should be used due to a whole range of social science paradigms, academic disciplines, and fields of study and associated questions researchers identify themselves with (Wells, 1995).

In relation to Strauss and Corbin's (1990) prescriptive approach to grounded theory, it is observed that their explication of grounded theory methodology "has become rather programmatic and over-formulaic" (Melia, 1996, p. 370). However, as Eaves (2006) suggests, it is important to recognise that "the issue is not who is right about grounded theory and whether you agree with Glaser and Strauss (1967), Strauss and Corbin (1990), or Glaser (1992). (The issue is) what you will take from them and do with it and how you will argue for, advocate, and defend your own position" (M. Chesler, 1996, In: Eaves 2001, p. 662). It is further stated that "no one is excused from the possibility of being criticised. What you need from your doctoral study is the language to join the debate. For, in scholarship, the ongoing debate creates discourse and from discourse forms of knowledge (agreements) emerge from time to time" (Kahn, 1996, In: Eaves, 2001, p. 662).

In addition to discussions surrounding various versions of grounded theory, it is also acknowledged that the terms ‘grounded theory’ and ‘qualitative data analysis’ (QDA) are not clearly differentiated in research practice. Pettigrew (2000) observes that the orthodox application of grounded theory as originated, is not the same as the use of a ‘grounded’ approach to data collection and analysis, or a combination of grounded theory and qualitative data collection methods. Lowe (2006) compares grounded theory with qualitative data analysis. In his view, grounded theory is concerned with emergence and discovery, not accuracy and verification. As argued by Becker (1993), many grounded theory studies have turned out to be descriptive studies, lacking an abstract conceptualisation of a latent social process.

Despite the common practice of combining features of various methodologies in the social sciences, grounded theory differs from case study in that the latter approach rarely involves the constant comparison method (Rothwell, 1980). Grounded theory also differs from phenomenology and action research, as discussed by Baker, Wuest and Stern (1992) and Glaser (2001), respectively. Furthermore, Pettigrew (2000) discusses the compatibility of grounded theory and ethnography, both of which are deemed to have commonalities in terms of the emergent nature of sample selection, as well as collection of data from natural settings. In terms of generalisability of research findings, Pettigrew (2000) further argues that the generation of grounded theory leads to both localised, substantive and extended, formal theoretical outcomes, whilst ethnography emphasises the location specific nature of interpretations. Grounded theory can, to a greater extent, complement ethnography in that it “can formalise and extend the limited theoretical component of ethnography” (p. 258). According to Pettigrew (2000), the combined and overlapped grounded theory and ethnography

methodologies may produce a level of detail and interpretation, and at the same time, extend or validate existing theories, that are unavailable from other methodologies used on their own (p. 259).

3.5.2 Challenges of applying grounded theory methodology in social sciences: 40 years on

Grounded theory methodology has been widely adopted by researchers across many academic disciplines in the social sciences (see Table 3.3 below for exemplars in management studies). Lowe (2006) identifies a number of challenges for grounded theory researchers, ranging from dealing with pre-formed mindsets, allowing emergence instead of forcing, developing theoretical sensitivity, tolerating confusion and chaos and being able to stay open to modification.

Table 3.3 Exemplars of grounded theory studies in management studies

Author (Year)	Area of Research	Theoretical output
Brown & Eisenhardt (1997)	Organisational change	Insights linking successful product development with organisational structures and processes
Douglas, D. (2006)	Managerial decision	Revelations of organisational actors' disputed perceptions of how the business had been managed and ought to be managed, and the judgments and decisions that had been made and consequently should be made.
Raffanti (2005)	Organisational change	Identification of a social psychological process – weathering – accounting for how organisational members continually resolve their main concern of survival in the face of pervasive change, enabling them to endure changes in line with their personal and professional needs, goals and values.
Gersick (1994)	Organisational change	Managers use two distinct pacing mechanisms for proactive change

Adapted from: Partington (2000)

Like all research methodologies, grounded theory has its own problems (McCallin, 2003). First and foremost, a problem critical to many grounded theory researchers, especially those at the novice level, is “a researcher’s lack of the skills required to put it to effective practice” (Thomas, 2003, p. 10). Secondly, the ability to think abstractly (Glaser, 1978; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) hinders some grounded theory adopters. This can be explained by the fact that they are mostly trained in methods associated with qualitative data analysis, which aims at accurate description, not abstract conceptualisation. Next, for some researchers (e.g. Williams, 1976), the model of theory this methodology intends to generate is unclear. Then, Burgess’ (1984) interpretation of grounded theory methodology suggests that theory testing is not necessary. As was discussed earlier in the review of literature in grounded theory, Bulmer (1979) finds it exceedingly difficult for a researcher to ignore the literature relating to an area of study and avoid any prior conceptualisation in areas that have been well researched.

As identified at the beginning of this chapter, many researchers have clearly borrowed ideas from grounded theory but not adhered to its critical elements in their research practices (Becker, 1993). It was not intended by the originators (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), to encourage a ‘cookbook-style’ adoption and application of the clear-cut methodological procedures (Eaves, 2006). On the contrary, the idea was that creativity should be celebrated in the use of grounded theory (Glaser, 1978; 1998). According to Turner (1981), “the use of grounded theory approach enabled researchers to develop their own theories relating to the substantive area which they were studying, and encouraged them to use their creative intelligence to the full in doing so” (p. 225). In fact, the generation of grounded theory “implicitly assumes that

the analyst will be creative” (Glaser, 1978, p. 20). As Charmaz (1983) suggests, every grounded theory researcher will tend to develop his or her version of the methodology to suit local needs and requirements. But clarity, openness, honesty and consistency of one’s understanding and adoption of the methodology have to be evidentially demonstrated, to avoid the kind of ‘anything goes’ accusation.

Furthermore, grounded theory researchers should familiarise themselves with the theoretical and philosophical underpinnings of the methodology (Becker, 1993; Wells, 1995). Grounded theory researchers are dependent upon the quality of understanding which is developed during the course of the investigation (Turner, 1981) – a delayed action learning curve (Glaser, 1978; 1998). Becker (1993) argues that should the “adopt and adapt” approach (Glaser, 1998, p.40) be used, the rationale for doing so should make logical and theoretical sense, to indicate one’s understanding and appreciation of the methodology. Becker (1993) further suggests that provision of such evidence also promotes a rigorous and scholarly attitude towards the methodology, which consequentially “enhances the credibility” (p. 259) of one’s grounded theory studies.

3.5.3 Grounded theory tenets

Reading and using literature

Issues concerning reading and using literature in grounded theory are the most debateable ones among its users. Glaser (1978) suggests that “it is vital to read, but in a substantive field different from the research” (p.31). To a large extent, Douglas

(2006) shares this view by suggesting that “no researcher is devoid of pre-knowledge, be it closely associated or tenuously linked to that under study” (p. 269). Similarly, Smith and Biley (1997) observe that general reading of the literature may be conducted to serve two purposes: acquiring a feel for the issues at work in the subject area; and identifying any gaps to be filled by one’s grounded theory study. All these arguments lead to the view that being open minded does not necessarily mean blank minded (Creswell, 1994).

Grounded theory researchers are, as in my case, usually aware of the substantive literature prior to fieldwork so that they are able to approach the substantive area of study with some background knowledge (Smith & Biley, 1997). This is in line with the commonly held expectation that the researcher should avoid conducting any specific literature review when starting out on a grounded theory approach (Douglas, 2006). Bulmer (1979) argues that it is exceedingly difficult for researchers to ignore the theoretical literature on and avoid prior conceptualisation in an area of study (in Burgess 1984, p. 181). Glaser (1998) suggests that one of the ways researchers can deal with this is to “establish and state the assumptions they absorbed from the literature so they become part of the data to be constantly compared with what is really going on.” (p. 120). Consequently, in an ideal case, grounded theorists will generate a theory that both transcends the literature and synthesises it at the same time, as it takes on greater scope and depth than previous research (Glaser, 1998). In this process, the grounded theory researcher gains a wider coverage by integrating generated theory with established literature (Glaser, 1992).

Following on from the initial literature review (i.e. learning in organisations), my study adopts a different approach to further exploration, relation and integration of literature in the emerged substantive area (i.e. managing change, especially the social psychological processes of dealing with issues emerged from the initiation of changes). When the grounded theory has reached its theoretical saturation, the literature search and review in the related substantive area can be accomplished at greater depth and woven into the theory as more data for constant comparison (Glaser, 1998). This is to suggest that “reading the literature has a place in modern-day grounded theory studies, as everything is data and contributes yet another perspective” (McCallin, 2003, p. 206). Categories and core categories are discovered during and upon completion of the research and checked against the relevant literature, the review of which also takes place during and after data collection, not just prior to it (Smith and Biley, 1997). It is not until the completion of one’s conceptual analysis of the data, that the literature in the field of study is reviewed and compared in terms of how and where, one’s work fits in with it (Charmaz, 1995). The emergent theory influences one’s recourse to relevant literature to be reviewed (Douglas, 2006).

Reading and using literature in this way, allows the grounded theory researcher to remain as free and open as possible to the discovery and emergence of concepts, problems and interpretations from the data (Glaser, 1998). The delay of literature review is often recognised as one of the distinguishing characteristics of grounded theory (Charmaz, 1995; McCallin, 2003). According to McCallin (2003), such an approach to literature review is not unique to grounded theory; it is something that many researchers find difficult to put into practice, as they have been trained to search for the gaps and limitations in the literature prior to the fieldwork.

Emergence

Being open-minded to the problems of research participants, as opposed to the researcher's own professional problems, by being sufficiently aware of the emerging data is one of the fundamental qualities of grounded theory researchers (Charmaz, 1995). As already noted, particular attention should be paid to the formulation of the research problem and research questions in grounded theory studies. According to Becker (1993), however, "it would be naïve to state that a researcher choosing grounded theory as the research approach, enters the field without a set of preconceived ideas about the problem to be studied" (p. 256). In actuality, the grounded theory researcher starts with an area of interest containing a life cycle interest, not a preconceived problem (Glaser, 1998). The research question in grounded theory is not a statement that identifies the phenomenon to be studied (Backman & Kyngas, 1999). Rather, the focus of a grounded theory study emerges from the grounded theory procedures such as open coding, theoretical sampling and constant comparison (Glaser, 1992). Smith and Biley (1997) also suggest that research question must be sufficiently flexible, broad and open-ended enough to allow the theory to develop during the investigation of all facets of a phenomenon. Adopting this approach prevents what Glaser (1998) refers to as "a normative projection, a learned preconception, a paradigmatic projection, a cultural organisation" (p. 81), i.e. the forcing of a researcher's own problem or professional interest upon those being researched.

Since grounded theory involves an emergence of theory from the data, the research problem should emerge from the research participants in the field (Glaser, 1992).

Barriers associated with the research problems being clearly defined by the researcher at the outset, as indicated by Becker (1993), are: first, a constraint of data collection, and second, a loss of sensitivity and openness to emerging theory. The definition of the research problem emerging from the researcher's own professional interest counters the objective of grounded theory, which is "to generate a theory that accounts for a pattern of behaviour which is relevant and problematic for those involved" (Glaser, 1978, p. 93).

Conceptualisation of latent pattern

Glaser (2001) suggests that grounded theory involves the generation of emergent, conceptualised and integrated patterns, which are denoted by categories and their properties. The goal of generating a grounded theory which occurs around a core category is neither description, nor verification (Glaser, 1978). It aims to generate new concepts and theories, not just describe the research findings (Denscombe, 1998 & 2003). Therefore, the outcome of this study is a presentation of a grounded theory of 'resourcing change' and its sub-categories, which is abstract, conceptual and non-context specific. The grounded theory of 'resourcing change' was generated on the basis of data collected from two organisations, as well as other sources, such as the extant body of literature.

In principle, the grounded theory analysis of empirical problems in the social world is at the most abstract, conceptual and integrated level (Glaser, 1992; Charmaz, 1995). Three most important characteristics of conceptualisation of latent pattern, according to Glaser (2002b), are: (1) latent pattern naming by concepts which are categories and

properties; (2) the concepts have ‘enduring grab’ (meaning that the concepts have lasting interest); and (3) the concepts are abstract of time, place and people (Glaser, 2003), meaning that the concepts are independent of the parameters of time, place and people. Examples of such a concept are ‘keeping clients in line’ (Guthrie, 2000); ‘uncoupling’ (Vaughan, 1986), and in this study, ‘resourcing change’.

Social process analysis

Glaser (1992) states that grounded theory is the study of abstract problems and their processes, not units as in descriptive studies such as surveys and case studies. Glaser (1978) further argues that as opposed to social structural unit (e.g. persons, groups, organisations, etc) in many sociological studies, the focus of analysis in grounded theory is “social process analysis” (p. 109). Therefore, grounded theorists generate properties of process, not of units (Glaser & Holton, 2005). Comparisons are further made between unit and process in terms of focus, generalisability, durability, transferability, sampling, coverage, accuracy, historicity, research impact, relationability, etc (Glaser & Holton, 2005) (see Appendix 6). The grounded theory of ‘resourcing change’ is about a social process, not units, although it was generated from units (i.e. strategic business unit, organisation). In other words, given its focus on social process, it can be applied beyond the immediate organisations from which it was generated.

According to Glaser and Holton (2005), “there are two types of ‘basic social process’ (BSP): ‘basic social psychological process’ (BSPP) and ‘basic social structural process’ (BSSP)” (p. 10). “*A BSSP abets, facilitates or serves as the social structure*

within which the BSPP processes” (p.11, italics in original). However, it is also observed that only social psychological process is focused and social structural process is assumed or treated as a changing set of structural conditions—without being clearly formulated as a process (Glaser & Holton, 2005). The focus on social process analysis in grounded theory studies is consistent with the notion of conceptualisation of latent pattern (Glaser, 2002b) described above. Similarly, Charmaz (1995) argues that grounded theory is suitable for studying individual processes, interpersonal relations and the reciprocal effects between individuals and larger social processes.

All is data

The notion that ‘all is data’ (Glaser, 2001), is extremely important in grounded theory methodology. In such a methodology, ‘data’ covers everything, be it existing literature, views of participants and researchers, historical information or personal experience. As acknowledged by Wimpenny and Gass (2000), “the subjective involvement of the researcher is always present, irrespective of methodology” (p. 1489). Glaser (1998) regards whatever comes the researcher’s way in his substantive area of study, as data to constantly compare, to generate concepts and to induce the patterns involved. Glaser (2001) continues by stating that the grounded theory researcher is always taking a perspective on perspectives (data), with the goal of generating a theory that accounts for the continual resolution of a concern in a substantive area. In this study, I adhered to the principle of ‘all is data’ (Glaser, 2001) throughout my research in the field, during which time all resultant data derived from

various sources (i.e. two organisations, existing literature, personal experience, in addition to the experience of others), was collected, analysed and compared.

Grounded theory is abstract of time, place and people

As indicated in the earlier comparison between unit and process (Glaser & Holton, 2005), grounded theory is not restricted by time, place or people, given its emphasis on the analysis of social psychological or structural process (Glaser, 2003). This means that a grounded theory can be applied across different contexts, with different people, and at different times. Unlike other methodologies, the outcome of grounded theory studies has greater generalisability and coverage, transferability and durability (Glaser & Holton, 2005) (also see Appendix 6). This suggests that the grounded theory of ‘resourcing change’, given its analysis of social process, is applicable beyond the research participants engaged in the social process within the two organisations featured. The social process, identified in this study, can also be seen elsewhere.

In light of this, grounded theory can be further identified as substantive or formal grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Substantive grounded theory is “grounded in research in one particular substantive area, it might be taken to apply only to that specific area” (p. 79). On the other hand, formal grounded theory is defined as “a theory of substantive grounded theory core category’s general implications generated from, as wide as possible, other data and studies in the same substantive area and in other substantive areas” (Glaser, 2007, p. 4). Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Glaser (2007) also suggest a number of uses of formal grounded theory. In particular, it is

emphasised that “the transferability of formal theories to diverse substantive areas is seldom done in sociological consultation because most formal theories are ungrounded, and therefore not trusted by either sociologists or laymen when they face ‘real-life circumstances’” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 99).

3.5.4 Grounded theory procedures

In order to fully understand the basic tenets of grounded theory methodology outlined in 3.5.3, it is necessary to provide some details and definitions of key terms and procedures, with examples from a number of studies including this one. As Glaser (1992) suggests, grounded theory methodology is “a general methodology of analysis linked with data collection that uses a systematically applied set of methods to generate an inductive theory about a substantive area.” (p. 16). The systematic application of the following methodological procedures represents the delimiting process of grounded theory. Table 3.4 below provides a schematic overview of the procedures involved in the development of grounded theory. It should be emphasised that, as stated by Glaser and Strauss (1967), that these are just researchers’ “positions and counter-positions and examples” (p. 1), rather than “clear-cut procedures and definitions” (p.1). Despite the overlaps between grounded theory procedures and those of other methodologies, and the issue of remodelling orthodox methodology (Glaser, 2003), the purpose of outlining methodological procedures of grounded theory is to maintain originality and consistency in the use of terms and definitions throughout the study. ‘Originality’ and ‘consistency’, in this context, mean that the procedures adopted will remain as close as possible, to those that were originated by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Glaser (1978).

Table 3.4 Schematic list of the stages in the development of grounded theory

Stage	Main Activity	Comment
1.	Develop categories	Use the data available to develop labelled categories which fit the data closely.
2.	Saturate categories	Accumulate examples of a given category until it is clear what future instances would be located in this category.
3.	Abstract definitions	Abstract a definition of the category by stating in a general form the criteria for putting further instances into this category.
4.	Use the definitions	Use the definitions as a guide to emerging features of importance in further fieldwork, and as a stimulus to theoretical reflection.
5.	Exploit the category fully	Be aware of additional categories suggested by those you have produced, their inverse, their opposite, more specific and more general instances.
6.	Note, develop and follow-up links between categories	Begin to note relationships and develop hypotheses about the links between the categories.
7.	Consider the conditions under which the links hold	Examine any apparent or hypothesised relationships and try to specify the conditions.
8.	Make connections, where relevant, to existing theory	Build bridges to existing work at this stage, rather than at the outset of the research.
9.	Use extreme comparisons to the maximum to test emerging relationships	Identify the key variables and dimensions and see whether the relationship holds at the extremes of these variables.

Extracted from Glaser & Strauss (1967, in Turner, 1981, p. 231)

Open and selective coding

According to Glaser (2001), grounded theory is “a form of latent structure analysis, which reveals the fundamental pattern in a substantive area or a formal area” (p. 10). Coding in grounded theory methodology means conceptualising data by constantly comparing incident with incident and incident with concept to facilitate the emergence of more categories and their properties (Glaser, 1992).

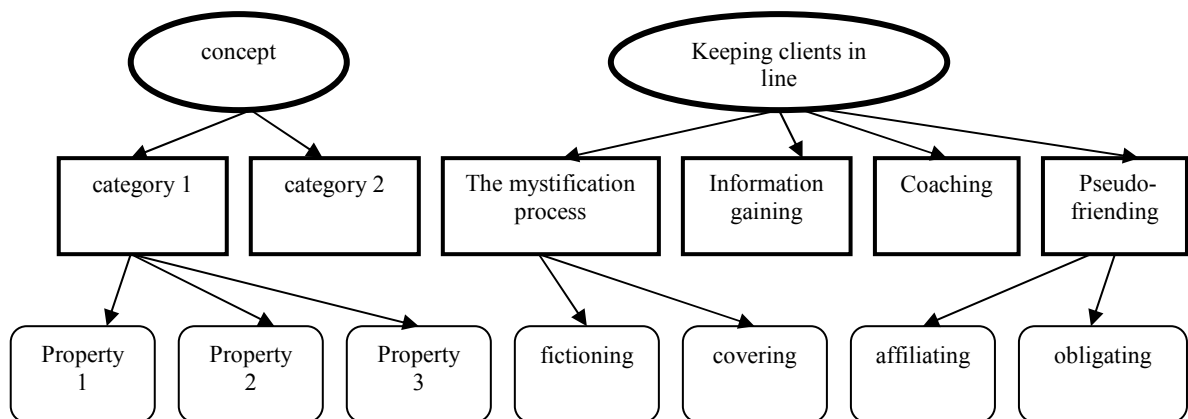
Open coding is the initial stage of constant comparative analysis, before delimiting the coding to a core category and its properties – or selective coding (Glaser, 1978). The analyst starts with no preconceived codes – he remains entirely open (Glaser 1992). Questions that a researcher is compelled to ask continually at the stage of open-coding are: “what is this data a study of? What category does this incident indicate? What category or property of a category, of what part of the emerging theory, does this incident indicate? What is actually happening in the data? What is the basic social psychological problem faced by the participants in the action scene? What is the basic social psychological process or social structural process that processes the problem to make life viable in the action scene? What accounts for the basic problem and process?” (Glaser, 1978, p. 57) On the other hand, selective coding means that “the analyst delimits coding to only those variables that relate to the core variable in sufficiently significant ways to be used in a parsimonious theory). The core variable becomes a guide to further data collection and theoretical sampling” (Glaser, 1978, p. 61). In this study, open coding took place in the first phase of data analysis, involving more than ten interviews. Each line of the transcript was coded, and substantive codes were then compared and integrated, if necessary. Once a set of substantive codes were

used effectively to explain the social process involving the research participants in the field, incidents in other interviews or slices of data relating to these codes were further identified and coded in order to saturate them.

At this point, it is perhaps useful to re-iterate Glaser’s (1992) definitions of key terms involved, viz. concept, category and property with corresponding examples from grounded theory studies including this one:

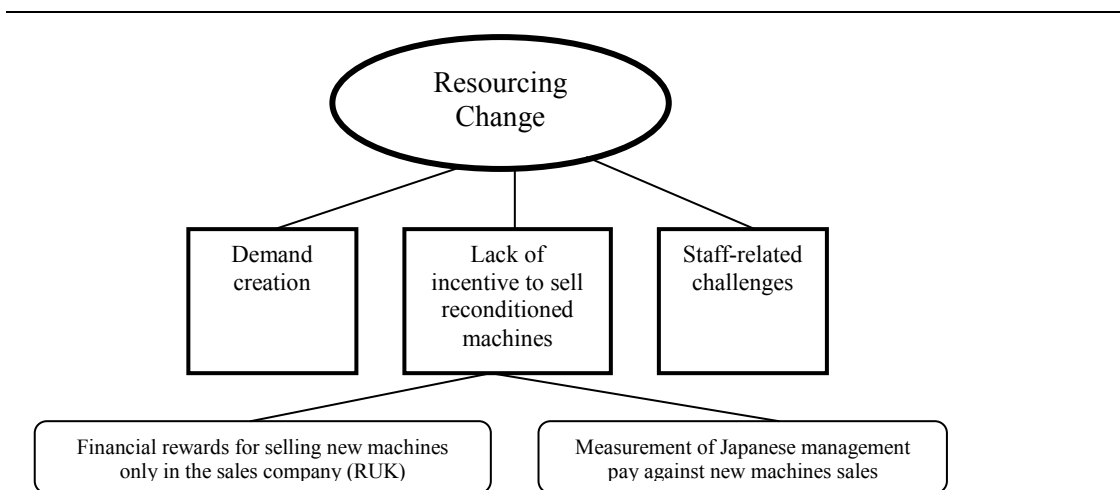
- concept: the underlying, meaning, uniformity and/or pattern within a set of descriptive incidents;
- category: a type of concept, usually used for a higher level of abstraction;
- property: a type of concept that is a conceptual characteristic of a category, thus at a lesser level of abstraction than a category. A property is a concept of a concept (p. 38).

Figure 3.3 Examples of concept, category and property from Guthrie’s (2000) study



In this study, the concept or core category is ‘resourcing change’ accounting for a social psychological process. The categories were conceptualised along the local-global continuum. Unlike Guthrie’s (2000) categories (see Figure 3.3 above), the categories in this study represent a non-linear social process in which managers had to deal with a number of problems simultaneously. The properties (e.g. obligating) are the dimensions of categories (e.g. pseudo-friending). Figure 3.4 below shows a selection of categories and their properties, which emerged from this study.

Figure 3.4 The concept, a selection of its categories and their properties that emerged in this study



The core category, which emerges as the researcher constantly codes, analyses and theoretically samples for more data, should be consistently related to many other categories and their properties which emerge iteratively (Glaser, 1998). The aim here is to achieve theoretical completeness which accounts for most of the variation in a pattern of behaviour conceptualised by a core category (Glaser, 1978).

Constant comparison

According to Glaser (1978, pp. 49-52), the process of constant comparison involves four steps: the analyst compares (1) incident to incident; (2) the concept to more incidents; (3) concept to concept; and (4) outside comparison (e.g. anecdotes, stories and literature). Incident to incident takes place during the line-by-line coding. Once a concept has been generated, more incidents are to be compared in order to saturate the emergent concept. Then concepts are compared between themselves so that a more abstract concept can be generated. Once the concept has reached its theoretical completeness, it is to be compared with the general body of literature or personal experience. For example, in the work of Guthrie (2000), the concept of ‘keeping clients in line’ is compared with the marketing literature including marketing of services and relationship marketing, as well as with the sociological literature. In this study, the concept of ‘resourcing change’ was compared with the managerial and/or organisational change literature (e.g. Senge *et al.*, 1999), as well as anecdotes of Jamie Oliver (Anstead, 2005; 2006). Furthermore, Table 3.5 below shows the process of comparing code to code towards their integration and conceptualisation at a more abstract level.

Theoretical sampling

According to Glaser (1978), theoretical sampling is “the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes, and analyses his data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his

Table 3.5 Constant comparison among substantive codes

moving to low cost countries		shipping parts from Europe to China		exploring new market opportunity									
Attending customer requests		explanation to customer		regular meeting with customer		getting closer to customer		developing close relationship with customer					
Keeping communication going		Communication		face-to-face contact		guard your perception		getting to know people		use of common sense			
Review		Self-assessment		feedback		assessment by corporate group							
top mgmt pressure	Having overall European strategy from top mgmt	getting top mgmt commitment	seeking mgmt support	putting issues on mgmt agenda	No priority on top mgmt	addressing top mgmt fragmentation	addressing top mgmt isolation	managing top mgmt	passion of Jap. Top mgmt	mgmt role in change initiation	top mgmt involvement	seeking top mgmt support	
learning to sell		factory tours for dealers		hosting factory visits for dealers and their customers		Promotion to end users		press launch		sponsorship (supplying sample machines) at launch events			
set up pilot scheme/project		Building a pilot case for direct sales		doing and using a case study with Lanier to convince NRG		setting up working group for European marketing of re-conditioned machines		set up task force		communicating the results of pilot schemes			

Note: substantive codes were constantly compared with each other in rows.

theory as it emerges. This process of data collection is *controlled* by the emerging theory, whether substantive or formal” (p. 36, italics in original). It is a different form of exemplifying technique that is controlled by the needs of the emerging theory, not a list of pre-defined variables (Coyne, 1997). Theoretical sampling takes ‘all is data’ (Glaser, 2001) – different slices of data (Glaser, 1998). Different from other methodologies, as Glaser (1998) points out clearly, that the standard search for negative cases is not part of theoretical sampling. Furthermore, according to Fox (2004), “exceptions and deviations may help to ‘prove’ (in the correct sense of ‘test’) a rule, in that the degree of surprise or outrage provoked by the deviation provides an indication of its importance, and the ‘normality’ of the behaviour it prescribes” (p. 10).

In the methodology literature regarding sampling, the terms purposeful, selective and theoretical are viewed synonymously and used interchangeably (Coyne, 1997).

Selective sampling is defined as “shaped by the time the researcher has available to him, by his framework, by his starting and developing interests, and by any restrictions placed upon his observations by his hosts” (Schatzman & Strauss, 1973, p. 39). According to Glaser (1978), selective sampling refers to “the calculated decision to sample a specific locale according to a preconceived but ‘reasonable’ initial set of dimensions, (such as time, space, identity or power) which are worked out in advance of a study” (p. 37). In contrast with selective sampling, a researcher who uses theoretical sampling cannot know beforehand what to sample and where the theoretical sampling will lead the researcher (Glaser, 1978).

It is also identified that some possible similarities and differences exist between purposeful and theoretical sampling (Coyne, 1997). In terms of purposeful sampling, its logic and power lies in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth, from which one can learn a great deal about issues of significant importance to the purpose of the research, hence the term ‘purposeful sampling’ (Patton, 1990). Moreover, Coyne (1997) suggests that “all sampling in qualitative research is purposeful sampling....Purposeful sampling is not always theoretical sampling. Theoretical sampling is purposeful selection of a sample according to the developing categories and emerging theory” (p. 629). Thus, theoretical sampling is “always purposeful selection of samples to inform the emerging theory in the study...Theoretical sampling involves sampling to test, elaborate and refine a category and further sampling is done to develop the categories and their relationships and interrelationships” (p. 626). Within the context of grounded theory methodology, it is also argued that an element of purposeful sampling is involved in theoretical sampling at the initial stage, according to (Coyne, 1997), as “the researcher must have some

idea of where to sample, not necessarily what to sample for, and where it will lead” (p. 625). In other words, “the researcher starts the study with a sample where the phenomenon occurs and then the next stage of data collection is when theoretical sampling begins” (p. 625). The rationale behind initial sampling in a grounded theory study is, as suggested by Glaser (1992) that “groups are chosen as they are needed rather than before the research begins” (p. 102).

Theoretical saturation

According to Glaser and Strauss (1967, pp. 61-2), theoretical saturation – the criterion for judging when to stop sampling, is the point at which no additional data (from which the analyst can further develop properties of a category) can be located. Theoretical saturation is often reached by collection and analysis of data in an iterative manner. However, the issue of theoretical saturation is often questioned in relation to the cessation of category development (Bulmer, 1979), in other words, when the theoretical saturation point can be confidently predicted. To illustrate the point of theoretical saturation with codes from this study, one of the processes that managers frequently mentioned in the initiation of change was ‘cost reduction’, which was mentioned in almost all interviews. Managers recognised the competition emanating from Asia and Eastern Europe in the manufacturing sector and their reaction to the threat was to cut costs locally. This code occurred repeatedly in almost all interviews with many examples recorded. In such cases, theoretical sampling of the code was terminated in the subsequent data collection and analysis activities, in the absence of further meaningful data.

Theoretical coding

Theoretical coding refers to the emergent organisation of substantive codes (Glaser, 1978). Given its emergence, substantive codes can be organised in a number of ways. Distinction between substantive and theoretical codes are made clear by Glaser (1998):

Substantive codes: “categories and properties of the theory which images the substantive area researched. They are used to build the conceptual theory.” (p. 136)

Theoretical codes: “implicitly conceptualise how the substantive codes will relate to each other as interrelated, multivariate hypotheses in accounting for resolving the main concern. They are emergent and weave the fractured story turned into concepts back to an organised whole theory. They provide the models for theory generation and emerge during coding, memoing and especially in [hand] sorting [of memos].” (p. 163)

In grounded theory studies, substantive codes are organised by a range of theoretical codes, for example, ‘stages’ in Guthrie’s (2000) “keeping clients in line” study, and ‘interaction of effects on a global-local continuum’ in this study. A complete list of theoretical codes is offered by Glaser (1978; 1998; 2005a) who encourages the analyst to study them along with new ones that appear in other subject areas.

Memoing

Memos, are defined by Glaser (1998), as “the theorising write-up of ideas about substantive codes and their theoretically coded relationships as they emerge during coding, collecting and analysing data and during memoing” (p. 177). They serve a number of important functions: (1) providing, through this process, the leads to theoretical sampling; (2) capturing and keeping track of the emerging theory; (3) the process (memoing) and the product (memos) being totally free and emergent; and (4) that as they accumulate and mature they reach the saturation point and need to be sorted for writing-up (p. 177). Therefore, memoing is for moment capture whose goal is to grasp meanings and ideas for one’s growing theory at the moment they occur (Glaser, 1998). An example of memos produced in this study is shown in Figure 3.5 below.

Handing sorting of memos

According to Glaser (1978), sorting is an essential step in the grounded theory procedures, as it facilitates the reconstruction of fractured data and necessitates the collection of the memos in a theoretical outline in preparation for the writing stage.

Figure 3.5 An example of memo

Memo 20 April 2006

On initiation of changes v. market-driven changes

Given my initial interests in the former, I gradually feel that I could not explore the former without mentioning the latter – market- or customer-driven changes.

This feeling came about to me stronger and stronger after last week’s interviews at Cooper. I wonder if it is to do with the nature of the OEM business: supplying parts to customers.

Again, I feel that these two notions of changes are indeed two sides of the same coin.

I think that I shall not distinguish these two notions in future; they are very much intertwined.

As far as the challenges and their resolution are concerned, they are still ok.

So far, the types of changes emerged are as follows:

- changes initiated/proposed due to:
 - o looking into future changes, anticipating future changes
 - o could also be response to market-driven changes(e.g. customers, other Cooper operations, global trends in manufacturing, competitors)???

===responses

What is the general process?

- the need for change (see above)
- initiation of changes
- review (how good are we doing? changes needed in the first place?)
- further changes

Therefore, documenting grounded theory requires a ‘write up’ of the theoretical sorting of memos. Furthermore, sorting is “of ideas not data, it is conceptual sorting, not data sorting” (p. 116).

3.5.5 Grounded theory criteria

According to Glaser (1998), the evaluation of grounded theory is based on a stand-alone set of criteria which are: fit, workability, relevance and modifiability. The four criteria that a grounded theory must satisfy in order to be considered useful in that: “they would *fit* the real world; they would *work* across a range of contexts; they would be *relevant* to the people concerned; and they would be readily *modifiable*” (Partington, 2000, p. 93, italics in original).

Fit is whether or not the concept adequately expresses the pattern in the data which it purports to conceptualise and is continually refined or refitted by constant comparison (Glaser, 1978). Given that grounded theory is “a theoretical discussion of ideas and the complex relationships among them” (Wells, 1995, p. 36), workability is whether or not the concepts and the way they are related to hypotheses, sufficiently account for how the main concern of participants in a substantive area is continually resolved (Glaser, 1978). A grounded theory can be presented “either as a well-codified set of propositions or in a running theoretical discussion, using conceptual categories and their properties” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 31). It is the power of workability that gives a grounded theory to explain or predict a basic social process, not the form in which a theory is presented (Glaser, 1978).

Relevance is whether or not the research deals with the main concerns of the participants involved, as opposed to the pre-conceived problem of a researcher’s professional interest (Glaser, 1978). Mintzberg (2004) suggests that people who are often too concerned about methodological rigour (i.e. doing their research correctly)

often fail to do it insightfully. “Methodological rigour sometimes gets in the way of relevance” (p. 399). Rigour is also not meant by “producing replicable work from which conclusions can be drawn independently of whoever does the work or applies the work results” (Schendel, 1995, p.1, in Mintzberg, 2004, p. 399). Such research is called “bureaucratic research”, as “it seeks to factor out the human dimension – imagination, insight, discovery” (p.399). The need to produce research relevant to research participants also highlights the differences between inductive and deductive research, as suggested by Mintzberg (2004):

“Induction is about coming up with ideas or concepts or theories from investigation in the first place. It requires probing, sometimes systematically, sometimes not, to generate description rich enough to stimulate the creative mind. Induction is what cannot be replicated because its findings are the inventions of particular brains, like the designing of a new product or the writing of a novel”. Deduction, in contrast, involves the testing of such findings to find out how explanatory they are. That is what can be replicated.”
(pp. 399-400)

Modifiability is the potential for response of the theory to new data (Glaser, 1978). The emergent theory is never right or wrong, nor better or worse on a temporal scale of a study, but becomes modified by new data (Glaser, 2001). In fact, modification never ends in grounded theory research (Glaser, 2001). Modifiability also reflects the assumption that sociological theory is “provisional in light of the fluidity of social phenomena” (Wells, 1995, p. 36).

3.6 Further details of the fieldwork

Wimpenny and Gass (2000) suggest that it is important “for the researcher to ensure that the data collection methods adopted are appropriate to the research methodology” (p. 1489). In this study, considerations have been given to the chosen methods of data collection, namely: non-participant observation, semi-structured interview and documentary analysis, to ensure congruency between elements in research design. I have also been fully conscious of the methodological implications of using a particular method of data collection (e.g. interview) in grounded theory. Undertaken within the context of grounded theory, “the interview is guided by theory development...the ongoing analysis will influence the questions that are asked, with the direction of the interview becoming driven by the emerging theory” (Wimpenny & Gass, 2000, p. 1489). Comparing interviewing in grounded theory with that in phenomenology for instance, “from a phenomenological perspective it may be considered that the openness remains irrespective of the number of interviews; the emphasis is on ‘the experience of...’ and is driven from the individual account as opposed to emerging theory” (Wimpenny & Gass, 2000, p. 1489).

The fieldwork (comprising mainly interviews, site visits and non-participant observation), began in December 2003 and ended in November 2006, involving two organizations in the UK manufacturing sector, namely, Cooper Standard (UK) and Ricoh (UK) (see Table 3.6 below). Given the focus of grounded theory on social psychological process (Glaser, 1998), the size and nature of the organizations were of little relevance to this study, as my primary concern was the acquisition of the

necessary data. In any event, the resultant data was constantly compared and theoretically integrated with data from other sources.

A total of fifty eight interviews were conducted throughout seven separate sites within these two organisations, with some managers being interviewed just once, whilst six of them submitted to two and three of them as many as three interviews. All interviews were undertaken in suitable locations such as manager's own office etc., as such considerations are of course of paramount importance in order that a relaxed atmosphere, conducive to such meetings, should be created. Each interview lasted for approximately one hour, with twenty nine interviews being tape-recorded and subsequently transcribed with of course the prior agreement of the interviewees (see Appendix 1 & 2, respectively). Notes were also taken during these tape-recorded interviews (see Appendix 5). On some occasions, the notes were produced by the managers themselves when they explained their ideas in writing on an electronic whiteboard connected to a printer. Respecting the views of the remaining participants, the interviews were not tape-recorded in the same way and instead, comprehensive notes were taken. I was fully aware that my data recording methods needed to be appropriate for the setting and participants and would facilitate conceptual analysis. In a similar vein, the managers interviewed were each assured at the outset, of total discretion and confidentiality and that they could withdraw and terminate the interview at any time should they wish to do so. To assist in the process, a topic guide was employed which did not remain static but was developed as the interviews proceeded (see Appendix 3). The topic guide, as the name suggests, was not comprehensive and in essence, contained only a number of general issues. On conclusion of each interview, all data obtained was carefully managed, prior to the

subsequent analysis informed by grounded theory methodological procedures. By estimation, a total number of 287,000 words of transcripts, memos and selected corporate literature were analysed. In this thesis, a unique numbering system is adopted to indicate the responses of research participants. In accordance with the confidentiality agreements (see Appendix 1 & 2), the meanings of the numbering system are only understood by the author.

In addition to interviews, a total number of eighteen site visits took place. Fourteen of them lasted for one day. The remaining of them lasted between two to six days. The principal methods of data collection involved in these site visits are non-participant observation and unstructured interviews by which methods I was enabled to observe and speak to participants in their actual work practices. Notes were taken both during and after these site visits. The analysis, comparison and integration of data obtained through site visits provided me a broader picture of the two organisations under study.

During the data analysis process, procedures such as open and selective coding were employed, in addition to memoing and eliciting additional questions for further theoretical sampling. Coding of data (i.e. interview and observation data, corporate literature and anecdotes from other sources) was that of paper and pen, with the absence of data analysis software that is often used in qualitative data analysis. Substantive codes were compared, integrated and conceptualised towards a more abstract level (see Appendix 9 for examples of open and selective coding).

Table 3.6 Summary of key data collection activities (interviews and non-participant observation)

Dates	Cooper Standard (UK)	Ricoh (UK)
<i>Number of Interviews</i>		
29/01/2004	5	
11/11/2005		1
24/11/2005		2
25/11/2005		2
14/02/2006		2
10/04/2006	7	
09/05/2006	1	
12/05/2006		1
06/06/2006		6
07/06/2006		6
08/06/2006		6
29/06/2006		1
08/09/2006	4	
27/09/2006		6
28/09/2006		3
Total Number of Interviews	17	36
<i>Site Visits</i>		
11/12/2003; 29/01/2004; 08/06/2004; 03/12/2004; 10/04/2006; 08/09/2006	Cooper Standard Coventry	
20/01/2004; 09/05/2006	Cooper Standard Maestag	
28/04-03/05/2005	Cooper Standard Poland	
23/09/2004	Cooper Standard Wuhu, China	
11/11/2005; 24- 25/11/2005; 09/12/2005; 14/02/2006		Ricoh Feltham
12/05/2006; 06- 08/06/2006; 27- 28/09/2006		Ricoh Telford
29/6/2006		Ricoh Shanghai, China

Some problems were, naturally enough, encountered during the fieldwork. For instance, two managers had pre-conceived ideas of the form that the interview would take and consequently proceeded to regale me with extraneous detail relating to their

careers *per se*. On those occasions, I chose not to interrupt them and instead, allowed them to continue. My reason for doing so was that at the very early stage of data collection, I wished to remain as open as possible and permit issues to develop. A particular hindrance to progress was encountered in those cases where the interviewees terminated their employment with their respective organisation. Quite clearly, in those circumstances, I was unable to follow through with questions and issues, arising from the earlier interview. On one particular occasion, all interviews scheduled for that particular day, had been cancelled but I had not been made aware of the cancellations. Yet another example of problems that may be encountered in such exercises is the case of an individual who had her own agenda and it transpired that she wished the interviewer to be a conduit through which she could cut a swathe through upper layers of management and ‘obtain the ear’ of the managing director! Another phenomenon which arose, almost inevitably, was that of individuals who conveyed information to me in a way that they wished it presented. From a sociological point of view, such aberrations are symptomatic of the way in which the social structure operates and functions. To contend with that factor, the social science researcher is required to understand and capture the process underlying the social structure and as part of that process, the data obtained from the interviews was constantly compared with other slices of data, leading towards abstract conceptualisation.

Potential problems generally associated with the data collection phase of the study are: working knowledge, organisational secrecy, trust and role definition, as identified by Rosen (1991). Given my prior lack of working knowledge in relation to both organisations, a number of important visits to their respective manufacturing facilities

in the USA, the UK, Poland and China, took place during different phases of this study to acquire a good 'feel' for the industry being researched. In the case of Ricoh (UK), permission to visit certain parts of its plant and to take photographs etc. was of course obtained, as was the case with Cooper Standard (UK). At all times, the photographs were submitted for approval to the Managing Director and throughout the entire process, the attainment of a good rapport with all levels of the organisation's personnel was actively sought. The element of trust is of course, absolutely essential and every endeavour was made to achieve it to the mutual benefit and advantage of both the interviewer and the organisations in question. Examples of the benefits to be derived are that the data obtained must inevitably be more meaningful and one's ability to return to the sites in question for follow-ups etc would be greatly enhanced. Quite apart from those considerations, one's own integrity of course, enters the equation and one would wish to adopt a fair, honest, and equitable approach to all concerned. I hoped that in the course of my involvement with the managers concerned, they would appreciate that my research (both process and outcome), could well benefit them individually and/or collectively in their day to day working life and in the aftermath to this exercise, I have sought to be responsive to any questions pertaining to my project and to the resultant publication.

With regard to the collection of data, three limitations were identified. First of all, the primary data was largely collected from just two subsidiaries of multinational corporations in the UK, both of which are in the manufacturing sector and therefore a large proportion of the data obtained was necessarily sector-specific. Secondly, given the research interests of the management involved, this study treats management as a homogenous whole and does not differentiate between junior, middle and senior levels of management. Finally, whilst I was able to interview managers throughout

almost the entire Ricoh (UK), in the case of Cooper Standard (UK), my access was limited to just one business unit.

Other factors to take into account, during my involvement with the two organisations, senior management for the most part, welcomed my interest in their respective organisations whilst in the case of some of the interviewees, I sensed that they considered my presence to be disruptive to their day-to-day routine. However, I felt confident that the majority actually welcomed the opportunity to impart their views to someone detached from their work structure. The fact that I am of Chinese origin and (relatively) young, did, I feel, influence, in some cases, the nature of the responses that I received. For instance, a comment made on a few occasions, (although I am sure mostly in jest), was the risk of my leaking confidential technical expertise to China. Whilst of course somewhat laughable, the comments exposed a little of the suspicion and hostility engendered by the level of manufacturing capacity being lost to China and other emerging economies. This situation served to re-emphasise the importance of total trust being established at the outset and the unsuitability of using data recording equipments such as tape recorder and camera. The age factor may, to a lesser degree, have some bearing on responses received, in that most managers interviewed, tended to be somewhat more 'mature'.

Methodologically speaking, the study in Cooper Standard (UK) has also provided several important lessons that have enhanced my research approach. It is concerned firstly, with the way that research participants were selected. The first few interviewees were chosen by the gatekeeper. They were not supposedly theoretically sampled until the emergence of the research problem. Secondly, I was too concerned

with accurately representing the views of research participants, due to my then limited grasp of the methodology. This has then contributed to the lack of conceptualisation undertaken in the initial stage. These two issues contributed to the development of my methodological learning curve which assisted my fieldwork in Ricoh (UK).

3.7 Summary

As a less inclusive and less descriptive research methodology (Keddy, Sims & Stern, 1996), the Glaserian version of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1978) is adopted in this study to address how managers deal with difficult situations arising in their initiation of changes. From research design's point of view, grounded theory is congruent with my interpretive research perspective, as well as the social constructionist's view on reality. The selection and subsequent use of methods of data collection is also consistent with the methodological principles. In this chapter, a huge amount of emphasis is placed on the explication of the methodology itself, in terms of its tenets, procedures, variations, evaluation criteria and challenges faced by its users. The purpose of so doing is multi-fold: to underpin my adoption of grounded theory in light of the similarities with and differences from other interpretive methodologies such as ethnography, phenomenology and case study; to defend my position with regard to the use of the Glaserian version; to demonstrate research rigour in data analysis, interpretation and discussion in the next chapter.

Data collection from two organisations and other sources (i.e. corporate literature, personal experience and anecdotal) during the fieldwork were explained, in addition to the multiple data collection methods used to collect data. Data was then analysed

by using open and selective coding techniques. Substantive codes were later constantly compared and conceptually integrated. The adoption of theoretical sampling technique also shows how the research focus and design evolved over time, due to the emergence of new theoretical leads to be followed. Problems experienced during the fieldwork mainly involved dealing with difficult interviewees, acquiring working knowledge of the organisations under study, establishing trust with gatekeepers and research participants and, defining my role as an academic researcher. Three limitations of the fieldwork were identified. Last but not least, my ethnic origin and age in relation to research participants represented some difficulties in the fieldwork.

The adoption and use of grounded theory methodology for the purpose of this study has proven to be an effective ‘tool’, identifying as it has, a social psychological process of management learning – ‘resourcing change’. The emergent focus of the research is directly relevant to research participants, rather than being imposed by the researcher, and reflects the views of research participants. The research participants’ understanding of ‘learning as initiation of changes’ was systematically gleaned from data of various sources (i.e. interviews, non-participant observation, corporate literature, anecdotal and personal experience). It can also be applied beyond the context of the two organisations under scrutiny as a result of subsequent conceptual comparison with the extant body of literature. The focus of the methodology on social process analysis reflects research participants’ interaction accounting for their resolution of problems arising from their initiation of change in learning, which is explained in detail in the next data analysis, interpretation and discussion chapter.

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings arising from the study of two organisations, which are used to sum up the resulting fieldwork and help introduce the grounded theory of ‘resourcing change’ (see Figure 5.3). Throughout this thesis, the aim is to “*write about concepts, not people*” (Glaser, 1978, p. 134, italics in original). Thus, the purpose of writing this chapter is not to fully present and describe substantive findings obtained from the fieldwork. Rather, it is theoretically driven to form the basis for further comparison with relevant literature and arrival at an abstract theory of ‘resourcing change’ in the next chapter (5). It can be likened to solving a maths problem in that the ‘working’ is illustrated, not just the ‘result’. The conceptual writing of a theory of ‘resourcing change’ “freezes the on-going for the moment...by using concepts and processes that have duration and are independent of time and place” (Glaser, 1978, p. 129). Such a writing practice is to overcome a problem commonly found in qualitative research, as suggested by Glaser (1978), that “the theory is left implicit in the write-up, as the analyst gets caught up in the richness of the data” (p. 129). Section 4.2 and 4.3 discuss management initiation of change in Cooper Standard (UK) and Ricoh (UK), respectively. Substantive findings from both organisations are summarised in Section 4.2.5 and Section 4.3.6, respectively. The methodological need for the subsequent conceptual comparison and integration of

substantive findings from both Cooper Standard (UK) and Ricoh (UK) and other slices of data are also explained in the summary section (4.4).

4.2 Management initiation of change in Cooper Standard (UK)¹

This section presents the findings arising from the study of one of the two organisations in this project, in addition to a brief synopsis of the worldwide-picture relating to the automotive components industry. Section 4.2.1 provides the global overview whilst Section 4.2.2 concentrates specifically upon Cooper Standard Automotive (UK). In response to the research problem and questions addressed by this study, the substantive findings generated from Cooper Standard (UK) have been discussed in detail in Sections 4.2.3 and Section 4.2.4. A summary of the findings from Cooper Standard (UK) is then presented in Section 4.2.5, accompanied by the conclusions drawn from the gathered instances of ‘resourcing change’ undertaken by managers within the organisation. Also contained in Section 4.2.5 are methodological lessons learnt from the study of Cooper Standard (UK). They have enabled me to enhance my methodological approach in the second organisation – Ricoh (UK), which company features as the subject matter in the ensuing section 4.3.

4.2.1 The global automotive components industry

The global market for automotive parts and equipment (excluding those for heavy vehicles) generated a total revenue of \$504.9 billion in 2006, which represents “a compound annual growth rate of 2.2% for the five-year period spanning 2002-2006” (Datamonitor, 2007b, p.7). Market performance is expected to improve somewhat

with an anticipated compound annual growth rate of 3% achieved for the five-year period 2006-2011, amounting to a market value of circa \$585.4 billion by the end of 2011 (p. 7). The existence of fierce competition throughout the industry (particularly from countries such as China) with the obvious effect of lower revenues etc. is one of the main factors explaining the relatively modest growth rate (p. 13). According to Nolan (2001), “the estimated number of automotive components makers worldwide has shrunk from around 30,000 in 1990 to around 8,000 in 2000. The number is predicted to shrink to just 2,000 in six to eight years, with around 30 ‘mega-suppliers’ that dominate the industry. The top ten firms in the components industry have annual revenues of between \$10-30bn” (p. 115). “Ten years ago a large [proportion] of components in Europe and the US were produced within highly integrated ‘Fordist’ firms. Those components that were purchased from outside, typically were supplied by a large number of small firms producing mainly for national vehicle makers, with small international sales” (p. 114).

According to Datamonitor (2007b), Europe is the most profitable regional market, with revenues of \$199.5 billion in 2006, equivalent to 39.5% of the global market value (p. 8). The U.S. lays claim to 37.7% of the market whilst Asia-Pacific and the rest of the world combined, account for 22.9% (p. 8). Car ownership of course plays a large part in society, particularly in the West and in the developed nations generally and this naturally creates the market demand for automotive components (p. 8). Despite problems faced by the industry over recent years – “including intense levels of competition and increased energy and raw material costs etc.”, a positive rate of growth has been maintained since the beginning of the decade (p. 8). This has been achieved “mainly through economies of scale created by consolidation” (p. 8), with

“the growing homogeneity of markets across borders” (Doz, 1981, p. 5) and the fact that “the finer segmentation between similar customer groups in various countries” (p. 5) and the reduced “costs of long distance transportation” (p. 5), made feasible “the development of common products for the world market” (p. 5). With commonality of parts, further cost cutting was then made possible by concentrating the manufacturing plants in single locations (p. 5).

Changes in cost factors such as wages and productivity have also effected the European market in particular because of the availability of cheaper suppliers elsewhere (particularly China but also other developing countries) (Doz , 1981, p. 5). To counter the problem, firms reacted differently (p. 5). For example, U.S. firms have reduced wages and cut costs wherever possible, in a bid to stave off the challenge, or at least to compete on a level playing field (p. 5). The same process has not occurred in Europe which places the European suppliers at a disadvantage when attempting to rival their competitors (p. 5). Demand for automotive parts and equipment remains constant although “whilst the demand was previously concentrated in a [relatively] few geographical regions, [it is] becoming increasingly [more] evenly spread throughout the world” (Datamonitor, 2007b, p.8). In consequence, suppliers have been forced to close plants and off-load non-core operations and somewhat ironically, whilst the practice of concentrating manufacturing plants in single locations has facilitated cost reductions, it has also rendered those firms more vulnerable to market fluctuations (p. 13). Many of those companies are therefore embarking upon a strategy of strategic acquisitions to ameliorate the damaging effects (p. 13).

“Technological innovation is set to [become] a key growth driver throughout the world, with companies who invest considerably in research and development, reaping the financial benefits of product differentiation” (Datamonitor, 2007b, p.8). In addition, “developing brand awareness is vital to the major players within the market, [for with all companies] subjected to... increased competition, a strong brand encourages loyalty from customers who generally search for familiar names within this highly diverse and complex market. The leading players [capitalise upon] their reputations for quality and service in order to capture a greater share of the [market]” (p. 13). “Margins should also improve as a result of continued savings from restructuring initiatives, greater focus on core operations by divesting non-core businesses, and significantly lower costs associated with the start-up of universal vehicle platforms, there is also a rising demand for vehicles in Asia” (p. 13). “Nevertheless, higher raw material and transportation costs resulting from the spiralling price of crude oil, and the slowing rate of SUV sales worldwide, will continue to offset some of the [savings in cost] from these restructuring initiatives” (p. 13). The reliability (and therefore longevity) of many traditional automotive parts and components has improved over the years, thereby reducing sales and depressing the market (p. 13). At the same time however, “the increasing electronic content and technological complexity of parts is creating [new opportunities]”, new sources of wealth and increased turnover levels (p. 13). “This trend highlights the need for high levels of investment in research and development (R&D), [in response to] changing consumer demand and advances in car design” (p. 13). Not surprisingly, “the companies that are [apparently] suffering the most are those that [derive the greater part of] their revenue from low technology operations, which also [render] them especially vulnerable to raw material costs” (p. 14). It can be seen therefore, that

“focusing on hi-tech automotive parts..., such as automotive electronics, etc.”, offers greater opportunities for the future and represents “the safest and most profitable strategy for manufacturers” (p. 14).

Internationalisation of manufacturing in the automobile industry, according to Doz (1981) is driven by: economies of scale in production and distribution; similarity among geographical markets; factor costs and productivity differences; free trade policies (pp. 1-5). “The 1990s saw a dramatic opening up of world motor vehicle markets to international competition and internationalisation of production” (Nolan, 2001, p. 114). This has greatly increased “the intensity of inter-firm competition” worldwide, during which only the most cost efficient manufacturers could survive (p. 114). “The maturing and the slowing growth of the markets in developed countries [means] that growth for individual manufacturers would come only through penetration of new markets in developing countries – markets usually controlled and regulated by governments, or through taking customers away from other suppliers in mature markets, a difficult and costly process” (Doz, 1981, p.5).

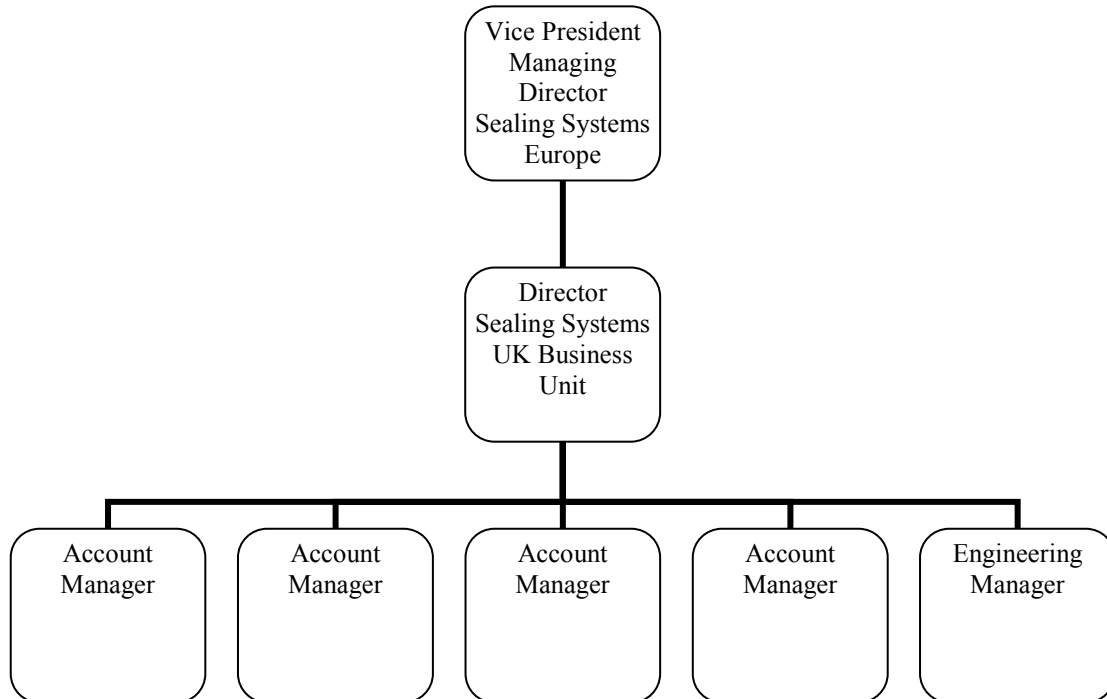
4.2.2 Cooper Standard Automotive (UK)

Cooper Standard Automotive is one of the two divisions of Cooper Tire and Rubber Company, a leading US manufacturer of replacement tires and original automotive components (Datamonitor, 2007b). Its headquarters are in Novi, Michigan and it employs about 16,000 people worldwide (p.4). Taking into account all of Cooper Standard’s automotive components business, it is one of the world’s leaders in the design and manufacture of automotive body sealing products and ranks among the top

producers of noise, vibration and harshness (NHV) control products, and fluid handling systems for the automotive industry (Cooper Tire and Rubber Company, 2003). It develops, designs, validates, and manufactures seals that not only protect vehicle interiors from weather, dust, and noise intrusion but also secure glazing within the auto body framework (Cooper Standard Automotive, 2007). With its international (non-US) fluid and sealing systems based in Coventry, it oversees a great number of technical/engineering centres and manufacturing facilities throughout Europe in addition to some joint venture projects in other parts of the world. It, together with other original equipment manufacturers (OEMs), serves customers such as General Motors, Ford, Daimler-Chrysler, Nissan and so on.

As one of the two organisations involved in this study, managers from just one of its business units (the automotive body sealing products), were interviewed. The selection of the interviewees was initially made on my behalf by the gatekeeper (the director of its sealing system unit), and later determined by the methodological requirements as explained in the previous chapter. The interviewees have a wide range of responsibilities and roles, such as: accounts sales and management, design and IT administration. As part of their jobs, they travel extensively both within the UK, the continent and beyond. The average length of service of the interviewees is 13.1 years, during which time most of them have previously been employed at other localities within Cooper Standard Automotive, Europe. Figure 4.1 below shows the organisational structure of Sealing Systems Unit of Cooper Standard (UK).

Figure 4.1 Organisational structure of Cooper Standard (UK) – Sealing Systems (UK)



The fieldwork undertaken in Cooper Standard (UK) has generated a number of substantive themes relating to the research problem and questions outlined in Chapter 1. Their significances vary on a global-local continuum. The substantive findings from this organisation are explained in detail in the remaining part of this chapter.

4.2.3 Changes initiated by managers in Cooper Standard (UK)

Given the experiences of Cooper Standard (UK) within the national and international business environment, managers have been compelled to initiate a whole spectrum of changes which represent (for the purpose of this study), their learning in the workplace. Ranging from global to local significances, these initiated changes include: moving the manufacturing facilities to the East (countries such as Poland, Turkey and

China); placing emphasis on early development work of their sealing products; making redundancies and standardising work practices, products and systems. Some of the more significant changes are explained in detail below.

Change 1 in Cooper Standard (UK): Moving East

The well established trend for manufacturers (of all products) throughout Europe and the U.S. to re-site their operations in low cost countries is also being followed by the automotive components industry, with, for example, Cooper Standard establishing new plants in China, Poland and Turkey, according to one account manager (IP080906)². The reason for doing so is primarily of course, the cost factor, but included in their reasoning is the wish to get closer to local customers and to explore the possibility of new business. It is the organisation's intention to expand their plants in China, Poland and Turkey, encouraged by their improved performance in comparison with other Cooper Standard subsidiaries. In fact the Polish facility is now one of the star performers in the entire Cooper Standard group. With China's rapidly developing economy, and the attendant demand for luxury items such as cars, there is a great potential for companies like Cooper Standard to expand their business base, thereby compensating for the relative stagnation of their business interests in Western Europe.

As suggested by Pongpanich (2000), a combination of causes may be encouraging a manufacturer to consider locational changes (as is the case in this study - moving towards the East), e.g. "cost reduction, customer demand, access to new markets, taxes/tariffs restrictions, exchange rate fluctuations, regionalisation of major

economic blocs, access to skills and knowledge, controlling technological assets, and pre-emption of competition” (p.14). Strategic considerations are also given to particular products and manufacturing processes to be located, the structure of the manufacturing network (vertical integration or horizontal expansion), strategic roles of and the most appropriate level of ownership involvement in overseas plants (Pongpanich, 2000). The causes of locational changes, as identified by Pongpanich (2000), can generally be equated to four types of foreign direct investment (FDI): natural resource seeking, market seeking, rationalised (or efficiency) seeking and strategic asset and capability seeking (Dunning, 1992, p. 350). It is also argued that “most western European multinational corporations have been actively involved in both resource- and market-seeking outward investments” for much of the twentieth century (Dunning, 1992, p. 357).

As far as the automotive components industry is concerned, China represents the first “developing world opportunity” (KPMG, 2007, p. 14). The country’s burgeoning automotive components industry has moved “up the manufacturing ladder: from low-tech, labour-intensive goods to more sophisticated and more profitable-products” (Fairclough, 2007, p. 21). According to KPMG (2007), key drives for investment in China are to sell to Chinese consumers, to export out of China and to reduce cost on parts and components (p. 14). Different from others emerging markets, the major reason for investment in China has shifted from sales to Chinese consumers, with an expected annual increase from 10 to 20 percent in vehicle sales over the next half decade, to cost-efficient manufacturing (p. 2). Ultimately, the Chinese and Japanese vehicle manufacturers will be chief beneficiaries as a result of this shift (p. 2). Other multinationals such as General Motors and Ford Motor have also benefited from an

accelerating development towards outsourcing, as “purchases of Chinese-made [components] to supply their global operations” have intensified (Fairclough, 2007, p. 21). Data gathered from Cooper Standard (UK) also suggests that components made in the West have increasingly been shipped to China to serve the vehicle manufacturers over there. In so doing, they seek to meet the demand of those vehicle manufacturers, which are their customers. On the other hand, this seems to imply a comparatively low manufacturing capability of their Chinese subsidiaries. In any event, they could not afford to get a sophisticated business wrong in such a challenging market – “a place that could redefine the future makeup of the global automotive business” (KPMG, 2007, p 14). Despite the fact that China will continue to grow at an unprecedented rate, it is also estimated that the growth rate will decrease slightly due to unprecedented demand for energy, in addition to pollution, logistical challenges and a large central bureaucracy (p. 13).

Change 2 in Cooper Standard (UK): Redundancy

Cooper Standard (UK) finds itself today in a very different business environment than a decade ago. The general fall in new business in the UK and elsewhere within Western Europe represents a major change in business context. This is reflected in “the quantity of work, number of things going on, the products, few new projects”, according to one account manager (NM080906). The issue of over-capacity of sealing suppliers within Western Europe has been identified as just one part of the industry adversely affected, as quoted by one account manager (NM080906):

“It is certainly a big issue because of the large number of sealing suppliers within the car industry. Volume of cars produced in Europe, is not entirely static but reasonably so. The market is therefore, not expanding and the manufacturers of the sealing products are vying with each other to secure what business there is.”

Redundancy is a familiar phenomenon in the European and US automotive parts industry and Cooper Standard (UK) is not an exception. Redundancy or the threat of being made redundant, has naturally generated some negative feelings among managers and other members of staff within the company. For example, one design and development engineer (SS080906), expressed his frustration in the following way:

“There have been a lot of redundancies in our Welsh plant, to the extent that they have perhaps just a quarter of the engineers left from those that were on the workforce at the beginning of the year. With so few staff remaining, a lot of things are being overlooked and the job is not getting done properly. That is obviously frustrating because no one wants to do a bad job.”

In the global, modern manufacturing context, a lot of critics blame countries such as China and India for the loss in jobs in the manufacturing sector in the West. Numerous commentators (e.g. Giddens, 2007; Legrain, 2002; Wolf, 2004) have suggested the opposite: the automation taking place in the manufacturing facilities contributed to the decrease in manufacturing jobs. It is also suggested that the industry’s future global strategy is “to accommodate, and benefit from, emerging markets in China, India, Vietnam, Eastern Europe and Latin America” (KPMG, 2007,

p. 2). These regions not only represent themselves as “sources of low cost labour” but also importantly “growing markets” within themselves (p. 2).

Change 3 in Cooper Standard (UK): Emphasis on early development work

Improved standards and quality of components supplied to the car manufacturers (i.e. the customer), are increasingly insisted upon. Several managers interviewed, confirmed the increasingly stringent quality control imposed upon them by the vehicle manufacturers. They confirmed that all items supplied are more closely scrutinised than ever before, with a stipulation that all specifications are fully complied with. One account manager (NM080906) stated that:

“There is now far more emphasis upon getting the design right from the outset and more pre-emptive work is required from a design perspective. The customer tends to build fewer prototype vehicles and in some cases, does not use such vehicles at all, which places a greater emphasis upon predictive techniques to ensure that the item supplied to the customer is right first time. Now that we are going straight into production, research and development work is increasingly done away from the vehicles, with more emphasis placed on predictive techniques.”

Change 4 in Cooper Standard (UK): Standardisation

Commonality and centralisation of designing sealing parts (RA100406), standardisation of reporting methods (RA080906) and convergence of customers

(DR100406) are among the practices introduced within Cooper Standard (UK). Commonality in design and the introduction of a common sealing profile has resulted in cheaper production costs with the resultant saving passed on to the customer, thereby, rendering the company more competitive. All design work is now carried out on one site (RA100406), with again, more savings arising although the centralised approach has led to some loss in design expertise across the company (SS100406).

As with all change, there have been some teething problems. One instance was the re-location of Cooper Standard (UK)'s head office to Coventry as a result of which some friction had been generated between the existing personnel and those drafted in (DR100406). Again, this represents just another example of necessary change, initially creating difficulties which managers needed to address and resolve. A further example of standardisation can be seen in that there is increasing movement towards design co-operation and co-development with some of its competitors (IP080906).

Yet another example of standardisation was the change in cost estimating, which change has been forced upon them by Ford, one of their main customers. One cost estimating manager (RA080906) explained the change, thus:

“Until recently, all cost estimating was done in-house whereby a drawing would be received in relation to the part to be produced and, liaising with the manufacturing plant itself we would produce the cost estimate which would then be conveyed to the customer. Ford now requires us to provide them with our best manufacturing speeds, our lowest cost per kilo, our best process time and in fact all the necessary raw data with which they produce the cost

estimate themselves. This means that Ford will always have the necessary information at their fingertips, which obviously speeds up the process but effectively cuts us out of the loop. Ford also expects the same information from other suppliers (competitors), which then enables them to compare costs very rapidly throughout the market and with the minimum of delay, decide upon the preferred supplier. One obvious down-side to this change is the very real threat of further redundancies, this time amongst those staff currently tasked with cost estimating. From an on-going operational perspective, Cooper Standard must ensure that the data supplied to Ford is comprehensive, competitive but also pitched at a level which provides an acceptable level of profit.”

It is generally suggested that “product cycles are getting shorter and shorter across the board because innovations are more rapidly copied by competitors, pushing down profit margins and transforming today’s consumer sensation into tomorrow’s commonplace commodity” (The Economist, 2004, p. 82). Firms therefore “have to innovate continuously and incrementally these days to lift products out of the slough of commoditisation” (p.82). From a multinational corporation point of view, Dunning (1958) identifies two key factors making for similar operating methods in parent and branch plants:

“Two factors which in their wider context have been frequently put forward to explain differences in operating methods and productivity as between British and American firms, but which we have found to be common features insofar as our inter-plant comparisons are concerned: (1) the British subsidiary is

invariably allowed full and easy access to its parent company's manufacturing methods and managerial experiences, and to its research and development knowledge, (2) fundamentally, top management methods and business philosophy appear to be very much the same in both British and American plants." (pp.119-120)

4.2.4 Challenges experienced by managers during their initiation of change in Cooper Standard (UK) and their responses to them

Having covered the changes that have taken place, it is necessary to consider some of the problems which have been encountered and which it is believed, will continue to represent a challenge. Some of the problems are local issues such as: the time factor; cost; customer support and staffing. Other challenges that managers have encountered have significances beyond the local level, for instance, organisational and industrial uncertainties and cross-culture communication. In the remainder of this section, issues beyond the local level are first discussed, followed by matters of a more local nature.

Challenge 1 in Cooper Standard (UK): Organisational and industrial uncertainty

A significant challenge is the level of uncertainty which besets the automotive industry as a whole, in a global context and in some ways, particularly within the UK. As one account manager (NM080906) explained:

“Customers must be questioning how long they will be able to build vehicles in the UK; how long will such operations be viable and for how much longer will engineering decisions continue to be made in this country.”

For the UK and European automotive components industry, the sector itself has gone through significant changes, finding itself in a highly competitive and dynamic, yet uncertain business environment (West, 2000). “Renowned for continuous change and innovation [in terms of work organization and business practices]..., the pursuit and implementation of approaches that encourage [managers in this sector] to learn, [features prominently] on the management agenda” (West, 2000, on the preface). “Automotive companies [worldwide] will not only need to [address] the effect of transportation systems on the environment and natural resources but how sociological, cultural, economic and political factors may affect these systems (Schuetzle & Glaze, 1999, p. 2). “Some key imperatives... [include]: to advocate global approaches to the establishment of international standards; champion consortia in cooperation with government, academia and industry; develop new approaches that integrate technical, social and economic solutions; balance free-market with regulatory approaches; support scientific research as needed to help develop sound environmental policies; and use life-cycle assessment models to help evaluate the potential environmental, economic and energy outcomes of transportation systems on a global basis” (p.2).

The account manager (NW080906) went on to describe the problem that Ford is experiencing in the U.S.

“They have serious financial difficulties and have just appointed a new CEO whose reputation is that of a ‘hatchet-man’. It is believed that something in the region of 13,000 jobs may be axed with obvious anxiety and uncertainty manifesting itself in the workforce. Clearly, when a company is not making money, every single aspect of its organisation is closely scrutinised and inevitably the labour costs are particularly focused upon.”

As far as Cooper Standard (UK) is concerned, there exists uncertainty as to whether its Coventry headquarters will still be in use in four or five years (AC100406). The level of uncertainty is high, is widespread and appears to affect all levels throughout the industry. It seems that nearly all the interviewees are fully aware of the uncertainty that both Cooper Standard (UK) and the entire automotive parts industry are facing. One significant affect of this on-going transfer of industrial capability from Western Europe to the East, is the change that it has brought about to corporate planning. Whereas in the past, long term planning was carried out in the UK, it is now very much short term (3-5 years).

Challenge 2 in Cooper Standard (UK): Cross-cultural communication

The general cross-cultural communication challenge arises from different languages, time zones, national cultures and geographic locations. With regard to the location aspect, the challenge of overcoming the distance between design and production was highlighted. One account manager (IP080906) explained:

“I can foresee problems arising in relation to the supplying of parts, viz: parts will need to be shipped, to be fitted and then assessed as to their acceptability, with modifications/improvements carried out as deemed necessary. It is the sheer distance that will create problems, remembering for instance, that it is when parts are actually fitted at the respective plants that questions are often asked by the plant personnel, that the designers haven’t even considered.”

Challenge 3 in Cooper Standard (UK): The time factor

At virtually every stage of my study, concerns were expressed about the lack of time that managers were experiencing. For instance, the example of the time consuming nature of developing relationships with customers was quoted (DR100406) and the overall process of implementing changes in general (NM080906; IP080906). One of the most obvious implications of the tighter time scale, coupled with the extent of redundancies that have taken place, is that there is the perception that in some cases, work is not being carried out to an acceptable level (SS080906).

Challenge 4 in Cooper Standard (UK): Cost

The requirement for customers (car manufacturers), to improve the quality of the vehicles that they produce, has an obvious impact upon their suppliers and the products which they supply (NM080906; SS100406). It was suggested that:

“In pursuit of higher quality, a number of changes to our products are often demanded by the customer. That might necessitate for example, changes in the

geometry of our seals and consequently, there would need to be a revised quotation with possibly a disagreement on that issue. Engineers would be required to re-design the product with attendant trials and validation, etc. etc. (NW080906) Quite clearly, all the additional work will affect the price which must remain as competitive as possible. Cost estimating data must at all times remain accurate and consistent in order that, (inter alia), the information supplied to Ford (UK), will tally with that supplied to Ford (US), and elsewhere.” (RA080906)

Furthermore, some of the challenges mentioned in the previous section relate primarily to the need to reduce costs and in that context, much can be achieved by moving production from the UK and Western Europe to low cost countries such as China and Poland. However, cost itself is not the only factor as one interviewee explained:

“It is necessary to consider what benefits will derive by sitting one’s plant in a particular location and conversely, what problems one might encounter. Poland has proved to be an eminently satisfactory choice due to reasons such as the engineering expertise that exists there and consequently we obtain skilled engineers, producing quality goods at low cost. We are now familiar with Poland’s employment laws and we have not encountered any insuperable problems or legal implications. Other factors such as logistic implications and accessibility *et al.* are all favourable in Poland. Other possible locations in Eastern Europe have been explored but to no avail. As mentioned previously, in view of the success of the Polish venture, Cooper Standard intend to open a

second manufacturing facility there which will be located about 1.5 hours car drive away from the first plant.” (NM080906)

Challenge 5 in Cooper Standard (UK): Customer support

Creating and maintaining a good working relationship with its customers and other suppliers is a critical objective which has to be worked at, not always an easy goal to attain. In some cases Cooper Standard (UK), is the only supplier of sealing products and whilst that might reasonably be supposed an advantage, there is also a negative element to it. Cooper Standard (China), is the sole supplier to Ford for its operations in China and in view of a perceived doubt about that particular plant’s capability, Ford is concerned that should some of the parts prove unsatisfactory, there is no one else to whom they can turn to make up the shortfall (IP080906). This means of course, that Cooper Standard (UK) must instil confidence in Ford by ensuring that it gets it right each and every time. That is a challenge that it must meet and overcome.

Paradoxically, Cooper Standard (UK) has been shipping some parts from Europe to China, which is of course, entirely contrary to the company’s stated intention and when asked why this situation had arisen, one account manager (IP080906) explained that “it was a temporary situation whilst the Chinese facility was further developed and was capable of producing the items locally.” It was also emphasised that “they had to satisfy the customer as failure to do so would mean that they would lose that customer”.

The practice of seconding a design engineer to work within the manufacturing plants of their various customers has proven to be beneficial in a number of ways (SS080906). It helps to establish a better rapport, provides a better understanding of the customers' requirements, reduces the time factor at each stage of design and ultimately reduces costs. Unfortunately, the level of support that Cooper Standard (UK) can provide to its customer in the UK and elsewhere is causing concern, particularly in relation to the above quoted example of such support. The main problem is the shortage of staff created by the level of redundancies (SS100406). Often, Cooper Standard's customers in China were satisfied with the prices quoted from within the Chinese plant but were not always so happy with the level of technical support (IP100406). Differences in technology and equipment between European and Chinese manufacturers compound the problem (NM080906) and it is therefore incumbent upon Cooper Standard to raise the standards in China to the level enjoyed in Europe, to expand their existing Chinese facility to cope with the increase in volume – and in fact, to expand further with the establishment of an additional plant in China.

The provision of support is also an issue between divisions of Cooper Standard's own organisation, especially concerning the newly established manufacturing facilities in Eastern Europe (RA100406). Cooper Standard see the provision of support as a two-way relationship, involving engineering design responsibility, and defining roles and lines of responsibility at the outset. Managers have emphasised the importance of ensuring that they communicate fully and understand and meet all customer requirements (IP100406). It is expected that Cooper Standard (UK), will be called upon to provide the required support to its Eastern European counterparts, given the

greater level of experience possessed by the UK division. An example of varying receptivity to the offer of support was given by one manager, contrasting as he did, the different attitude encountered between a Polish plant and their plant in Wales. Whilst in Poland, the support was greatly appreciated, whereas the Welsh personnel accepted it reluctantly and sometimes actually rejected it. It must be explained in mitigation however that the Welsh plant was at the time, overwhelmed by the changes arising from the transfer to them of a sister plant in Plymouth.

It was suggested that customer requests had always been attended to throughout the process of providing customer support:

“If Ford came to us, we’ve got an issue on the ...car, ...come and have a look at it, we want you to investigate, we have to go, we have to investigate, for the simple reason that if we don’t support them on that, then our chances of getting other business is reduced, because they think, well, they are not supporting us on this...The bigger picture is that, all the work we did is Ford PAG, they all talk to each other. If we piss one of them off, then the chances are we are not going to get favourable ...from the other people.” (SS080906)

In the case of standardisation of cost estimating methods of sealing parts, it was noted that customers had to be explained first. One cost estimating manager (RA080906) shared the experience of dealing with Ford.

“There maybe specific reasons, they may have it wrong, you have to check it, argue it, to make sure that you’ve got the right price. Ford is not cherry-

picking the best, you know. There may be technical reasons you can't do something... material reasons. So, I can't imagine Ford can know our product better than we do. There maybe specific technical reasons...they may attempt to over-simplify things and get the best price.”

Considering the challenge of separating design from production in terms of geographical location, I asked one account manager (IP080906) whether it was possible to bring some of the design engineers from Cooper Standard (UK) to the Chinese facility in order to work more closely with the Chinese counterparts. He made the point of getting closer to customer (Ford):

“It is always possible...But I thought the place to be is where the vehicle is, where the customer is, where the car needs to work. That is in Germany.”

It is apparent that being closer to customers presents several advantages for Cooper Standard (UK). As suggested by one design and development engineer (KP100406), one of the advantages of his being in the customers' sites in France, Spain and Turkey is that he is able see the issues first hand, therefore they could be resolved better. Take his Turkish counterparts for instance; as a result of his presence and instant availability in their facility, they are more involved working with Cooper Standard (UK) in terms of problem solving. In customer-supplier interactions such as this one, it was felt that the two-way communication factor was crucial. Furthermore, he is in a better position to report any findings in the customer's sites to Cooper Standard (UK) or other Cooper Standard entities with regard to proposed protocol modification (e.g. new introduction of glass seals).

The two-way element in the customer-supplier relationship was further elaborated by one account manager (SS080906), in discussing the reciprocal nature of developing close relationship with his own engineers and customers:

“I am covering five or six sites. What I do is I’ve got a reasonable relationship with engineers on the projects, I know them all quite well, in contact with them. So if there is any issue, they will phone me straightaway, I can talk things through with them...We had a good quality engineer there, who helps us awful a lot...I’ve got a close, a reasonably close relationship with the engineers in the customer. It helps because they understand the situations...I would help them as much as I possibly can. So the time pressure demands on us, as they could be. If we’ve got a good relationship with someone, like the guy I went to see this morning, he rang me up last week, said, ...I need this part, when can you have them? And I said give me a couple of days, I’ll come back to you. I took it to him this morning...Whereas other people that you haven’t necessarily got the good relationship with, it is more, I need this part, when can we have them? Ok, you have them by then. Or that is not good enough, I need it tomorrow. You know, I can then say, it is going to be a problem for me. I don’t care, I need it tomorrow. Because you haven’t got the good relationship there. And then they are thinking that you are trying to screw them around...”

Thus, there has been an increasing reliance on liaison engineers based in customer’s plant to address customer-related challenges. As this design and development engineer (SS080906) further stated:

“the only thing we can do is we are relying a lot more on our liaison engineers in the plants. Well as before, we would be driving the changes, both in our plants and in our customers’ plants. ...make sure that they happened. And then in the customers’ plants, we again would be making sure that the parts were there, and driving the...trial in the customers’ plants, make sure it happens. Now...we haven’t got the time to do this, so the plant programme manager will take more responsibility for getting...done... And in the customers’ plants, it is very much now we have all our parts, we are ready to do the ...trial, tell us when you are going to do it.”

However, the other aspect of these methods of addressing customer-related challenges is the loss of control. As noted by this design and development engineer (SS080906):

“We are delegating away back to, probably back to where it should be in the first place, because, I mean, in doing that, we are losing some of the control over the work we are doing, which is...plant programme managers generally.”

I then asked him (SS080906) whether such an act would attract any negative perception, he pointed out the lack of continuity and loss of responsibility from an account management perspective.

“I don’t think it is perceived as something negative by management and the people told what to do, essentially. But from our point of view, I think the general consensus is that it is a negative step for us, because we are losing that control. Coupled with the fact that there is often that plant programme

manager hasn't got the time to...running a trial in his plant, and ...customers' running trial there, and driving it through. So it is very often now it is turning it into we do the design...the parts are manufactured, and sent to the customer liaison engineers. So there is three different engineers, all on same project, which isn't, there is no continuity. I mean people, it is all down to communication now. People have to communicate properly to...make sure that we've still got the control. But, I think I see it as a negative step, because if we've made a change, then, we should be seeing it through...essentially. We should be there when it is being trialled in plants. We should be there in trials with the customer. We should be taking responsibility fully...essentially."

Challenge 6 in Cooper Standard (UK): Staffing issues

The level of staff morale varies from site to site occasioned by various factors (SS080906). The requirement for managers to be prepared to relocate to other geographical areas is perhaps, not surprisingly, unwelcome (AC100406). For example, one account manager (CP290104) commented that:

"When I joined the company, I lived in the...area, the central division there. I was relocated to Wales three years ago and that's where my programme is actually, the Land Rover business were launched there, ...Maesteg, but with the new structure and the new office opened here, we are trying to bring everybody together. So I'm here two or three days a week... Carried on with the same job as I've always done, but reporting to this unit, which was geographically a long way for me because most of people are based in France

and Germany. It became obvious that that wasn't the best, most practical way of running. Although I spoke German, I was a long way from the customer, a long way from the rest of the business unit. They want me to be relocated in Germany which I didn't want to do."

The level of change, with resultant frustration and work-related stress also takes its toll (SS080906; KP100406; DR100406). Complacency and apathy are prevalent throughout the organisation (KP100406), with a typical manifestation being the incidence of "blaming others" encountered (KP100406). Yet another critical factor creating unrest and uncertainty is the sense of job insecurity experienced by many managers (RA100406).

4.2.5 Summary of management initiation of change in Cooper Standard (UK)

The study of Cooper Standard (UK) first described the external business environment which is characterised by the decline in new business in the West and the increase in customer demand as a result of the globalising of large automotive assemblers (Nolan, 2001). As far as the automotive components industry is concerned, the institutional structure has experienced a major transformation in the past decade, which appears to be far from finished (p. 114). Major changes taking place simultaneously in the automotive industry have radically changed the components industry (p.114).

Managers from Cooper Standard (UK) who took part in this study have defined their learning in the workplace as initiating changes by themselves within the organisation,

considering the external business context in which they find themselves. The changes initiated by the managers range from global to local significance. At a global level, it is recognised that Cooper Standard (UK), like its competitors in Western Europe and the U.S., are re-locating their manufacturing plants to low cost countries such as Poland, Turkey and China, which has to some extent, resulted in redundancies in the facilities in the West. According to Nolan (2001), a common theme in the transformation in the global components industry has been a relentless pressure arising from the process of globalising large automotive assemblers to reduce costs through applying pressure to component makers such as Cooper Standard (UK) (p. 114). This has “produced a ‘cascade’ effect flowing down from the automotive assemblers to the first-tier components makers, with consolidation at the assembler level pushing forward consolidation at the level of the components suppliers. The first-tier components makers have only been able to meet this pressure by themselves developing greater and greater scale on a global scale” (pp.114-5).

In addition to the cost consideration, Cooper Standard (UK)’s expansion in the emerging countries helps better serve their customers operating in those countries and explore potentially new business. At a local level, increasingly stringent quality control have been demanded by the automotive manufacturers which has resulted in more emphasis on the pre-emptive work (e.g. the use of predictive technique), in the designing of sealing products. Driven by cost saving, many designs of sealing profiles have been standardised, often by introducing a common sealing profile for multiple customers, who then in turn become more cost efficient. The design work has been centralised to one location and sometimes carried out with its competitors. The standardisation of sealing profiles and the centralisation of designing work has

however, contributed to the loss of design expertise within Cooper Standard (UK). Another area of standardisation concerns the cost estimating process, which was largely driven by one of its customers and supported by Cooper Standard (UK)'s parent company in the U.S..

During the process of initiating these changes, managers in Cooper Standard (UK) experienced a number of challenges that they have managed to deal with. Again, the challenges that managers encountered and their responses to them range from global to local significance. Towards the global end, organisational and industrial uncertainty is one of the main challenges, which effect is the fact that corporate planning is now much more short-term (3-5 years). Given the global and inter-connected nature of the business, managers in Cooper Standard (UK) often find cross-cultural communication challenging, largely stemming from languages, time zones, national cultures and geographic locations. Given the changes that were initiated, managers expressed their concern about the lack of time in which to carry out their work, in addition to the constant pressure to reduce cost. Additionally, the need for Cooper Standard (UK) to fully support its customers and meet their full requirements is another crucial challenge. Finally, managers have to deal with staff-related matters caused by these changes, such as relocation, frustration and stress, complacency and apathy and job insecurity.

4.3 Management Initiation of Change in Ricoh (UK)³

This section presents the findings from the second organisation in this study – Ricoh (UK). Sections 4.3.1 and 4.3.2 briefly describe the nature of the UK photocopier and

multi-functional products (MFPs) industry and Ricoh (UK), respectively. The substantive findings from Ricoh (UK) are directed towards the research problem and questions addressed by this study. The substantive findings are discussed in detail in Sections 4.3.3 – 4.3.5. Section 4.3.6 summarises the substantive findings in relation to management initiation of change as their learning within Ricoh (UK).

4.3.1 The UK photocopier and multi-functional products (MFPs) industry

The photocopiers and office MFPs market, is classified according to “the speed of operation of the machines, which in turn affects the volume they can handle per month and the price” (Baxter, 2005, p. 3). The machines themselves are broken down into four categories: personal and low volume – up to 30 copiers per minute (cpm); mid-volume – 31-69 cpm; high-volume/production – 70 cpm and upwards; colour (p.3). “Speed is one of the main factors determining purchase price, but the higher-volume copiers tend to be cheaper to run in terms of cost per copy. The price is also affected by the range of functions offered, such as document finishing, double-sided copying and information security features” (p.3).

“The UK market for photocopier and fax machines including multi-functional products (MFPs) with copying and/or fax functions”, was estimated to be “worth £805m at manufacturers’ selling prices (msp) in 2004” (Baxter, 2005, p.1) (see Table 4.1 below). In 2004 and 2005, the top selling feature was seen to be a facility for affordable colour (p. 1). As the majority of machines on the market offer black and white in addition to colour, the need for customers to purchase two separate machines

is obviated (p. 1). The development of the dual facility machine provided a boost for the market and the situation has improved further with “the cost of colour machines continuing to fall, [whilst at the same time], speeds have increased” (p.1).

Table 4.1 The total UK market for photocopiers, fax machines and multi-functional products by value and volume (£m at msp and 000 units), 2000-2004

	<i>2000</i>	<i>2001</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>2003</i>	<i>2004</i>
Value (£m at msp)	730	750	770	790	805
% change year-on-year	-	2.7	2.7	2.6	1.9
Volume 000 units	1,283	1,730	1,880	1,990	2,275
% change year-on-year	-	34.8	8.7	5.9	14.3

Source: Baxter (2005, p. 15)

Note: msp = manufacturers' selling prices

General trends in the photocopiers and office MFPs market are identified as: growth of connectivity and networking; growth of paper documentation; maturity of the market; expansion of the SoHo (small office and home office) and home market; the rise of colour; higher speeds; the shift to digital technology; from single-function to multi-function products; reduction in the use of local, standalone, low-volume printers; improved features and design; falling prices; improved security and usage controls; energy and the environment (Baxter, 2005, pp. 4-9). Despite market maturity, “there remain opportunities for growth [arising from technological improvements] towards more versatile, higher-performance and more [sophisticated machines, allowing

customers to undertake jobs] that were previously outsourced to commercial printers” (p. 1). “Continued growth in office colour and strong growth in laser desktop multi-functional products, with colour” becoming even more affordable, is also predicted (p.1).

According to Baxter (2005), there are around 20-25 global manufacturers of photocopiers, copier/printers, fax machines and multi-functional products (MFPs), accounting for nearly all the UK market, none of which is British (p. 36). Almost all of them are “overseas manufacturers with offices in the UK for marketing, sales and service” (p.36). Consequently there is very little UK manufacturing, as most of the machines in the UK market are imported (p. 36). “Canon and Ricoh [(UK)] are the overall UK leaders for photocopiers, including copier/printers and office-based flatbed MFPs” (p.36). Ricoh (UK) is by far, the largest implanted factory in the UK (p. 36), employing 595 and 458 staff in 2004 in RPL and RUK, respectively (p. 31). Xerox, one of Ricoh’s major rivals, has developed from being an office equipment manufacturer to information management and workflow streamlining consultant (Yee, 2004). The re-branding “document management” has changed Xerox to a “service-led solution” – office digitalisation – provider (p. 30). Xerox’s “other high growth areas are in digital commercial printing and digitalising the office with ‘multi-function devices’ or networked machines that act as copiers, printers, scanners and faxes. Both areas are being driven by demand for colour printing” (p. 30).

In terms of the office products market, it is suggested that “the Western European market as a whole was weaker than that of the UK in 2003 and 2004, although the general market trends have been similar. High unemployment in several countries,

including Germany and France, has put these markets at a disadvantage” (Baxter, 2005, p. 14). Manufacturers operate on a global basis and “most of them have manufacturing plants in more than one country” (p. 22). “To some extent, these plants are sited to supply the local region, but they also concentrate on certain product sectors or ranges. For this reason, the copiers and fax machines that an individual manufacturer sells in the UK might come from different factories around the world” (p. 22). As shown in Table 4.2, “the UK is a net importer and the trade gap has increased as more manufacturing is being located outside the UK” (p. 22), on the other hand, “the Netherlands and Germany are the top suppliers of copiers to the UK, followed by Japan and China. In 2001, Japan was still the top supplier of copier imports to the UK. Since then, the Japanese manufacturers have shifted more of their production to plants that are local to their markets around the world. This means that production in European countries has tended to increase. So too has production in China and other Far East countries, which supply local markets but also Europe to some extent, because of their low labour costs” (p.24).

Table 4.2 Total UK imports and exports of photocopiers, photocopier parts and fax machines (£m), 2000-2004

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Exports	661.6	504.0	395.2	229.1	251.6
<i>Less imports</i>	853.5	807.9	722.9	681.0	710.8
Balance of Trade	-191.9	-303.9	-327.7	-451.9	-459.2

Source: Baxter (2005, p.23)

4.3.2 Ricoh (UK) Ltd (RUK) and Ricoh UK Products Ltd (RPL)

Ricoh (UK) Ltd (RUK), “which markets and distributes Ricoh-branded products in the UK and is responsible for rental” and Ricoh UK Products Ltd (RPL), “which manufactures copiers for the UK market and for export”, are two UK subsidiaries of Ricoh Company Ltd (Japan) (Baxter, 2005, p. 44) (see Table 4.3 below for the analysis of strength, weakness, opportunity and threat at the level of Ricoh Group).

Table 4.3 Group Ricoh’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT)

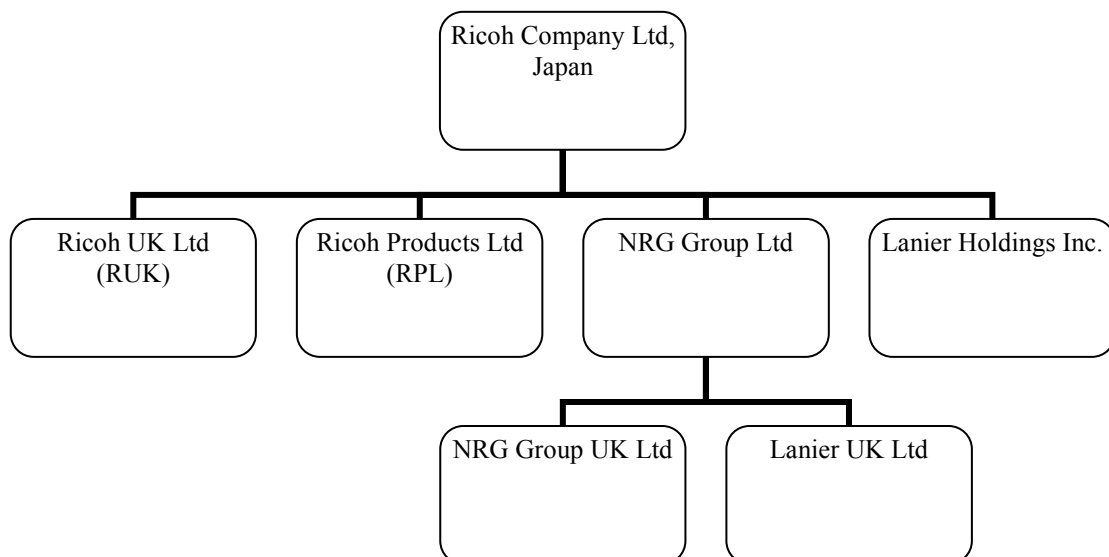
<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Weaknesses</i>
Successful expansion in international markets Strong research capabilities Expansive product and geographical spread	Weak performance in Japan Declining revenues from the ‘others’ segment
<i>Opportunities</i>	<i>Threats</i>
New product launches Market for digital photography and recordable players Global semiconductor market Tie up with Adobe Systems	Intense competition Growing popularity of paperless offices Increasing copper prices

Source: Datamonitor (2006, p. 14)

“RUK sells both direct and via dealerships and also sells consumables and accessories online...Ricoh products are also rebadged by NRG, Lanier and Infotec. NRG and Lanier Holdings Inc are both owned by Ricoh Company Ltd and form part of the ‘Ricoh Family Group’” (Baxter, 2005, p. 44) (see Figure 4.2 below). “The UK subsidiary of Lanier (Lanier UK Ltd) was merged into NRG Group Ltd in summer 2005. Infotec is outside the Ricoh group and is owned by Danka. Ricoh uses the Aficio sub-brand for its digital copiers, printers, MFPs and advanced fax machines.

This name is strongly promoted and is used by the companies that rebadge Ricoh products, as well as by Ricoh itself” (p. 44). “Many of the manufacturers in this industry own brand names in consumer and office equipment and they invest heavily in sponsorship to help publicise their brands” (p. 54). “As part of a £10m sponsorship deal made in 2005 by Ricoh and NRG Group, a new, high-profile £113m sports arena in Coventry [displays] the Ricoh name in huge letters on its rooftop, [which is] highly visible from the air” (p.54). In the fiscal year ending 31st March 2004, “turnover at RUK increased by a marginal 0.4% to £130.3m and a pre-tax loss of £2m in the previous year was turned into a pre-tax profit of £678,000 (p. 45). “In the same financial year, turnover... at RPL increased by 19.2% to £120.8m, including UK sales and exports” (p. 45). “RPL reported a pre-tax profit of £15.3m, up by 15.1% on the previous year” (p. 45).

Figure 4.2 Key UK-based subsidiaries of Ricoh Company Ltd, Japan



“Ricoh products include copiers, fax machines, MFPs, printers, duplicating machines and software relevant to document management. Since December 2003, all Ricoh’s copiers have been digital. Most of its copiers are multi-functional and nearly all its fax machines have some degree of multi-functionality, while some machines are of the AIO type” (Baxter, 2005, p. 44). Many new machines were introduced into the market in 2005 (p. 44). “In December 2004, Ricoh introduced the Aficio 2051 and 2061 office MFPs at 51 and 60 cpm/ppm, respectively. Single- and double-sided documents can be scanned at 75 ppm. The Aficio 2075, printing and copying at 75 ppm/cpm, is for reprographics environments. All three models benefit from Ricoh’s new Embedded Software Architecture, which allows the design of customised key applications. They offer many document-finishing capabilities, connect to all major network environments and have a warm-up time of just 30 seconds. The FAX3310Le workgroup fax was launched in February 2005. This has several security features and can be upgraded to a network printer and scanner. The FAX44020NF, a 33.6 kbps multi-functional fax, launched in April 2005, is for larger workgroups. It has a large message-storage capacity and can print, scan, fax to the Internet and scan to e-mail. A new range of colour-capable MFPs — the Aficio 3228C, 3235C and 3245C — launched in June 2005, are aimed at small and medium-sized workgroups. They have minimal use of power and consumables. In July 2005, Ricoh announced the Aficio 3260C and Aficio Colour 5560. The Aficio 3260C is a colour-capable multi-functional copier with copying and printing speeds of 60 cpm/ppm in black and white and 45 cpm/ppm in colour. It can handle A3 sheets and overhead projector sheets and offers extensive document-finishing options. The Aficio Colour 5560 is described as Ricoh’s new colour flagship, suitable for professional colour printing environments, as well as office environments. Both single-sided and duplex copying and printing are

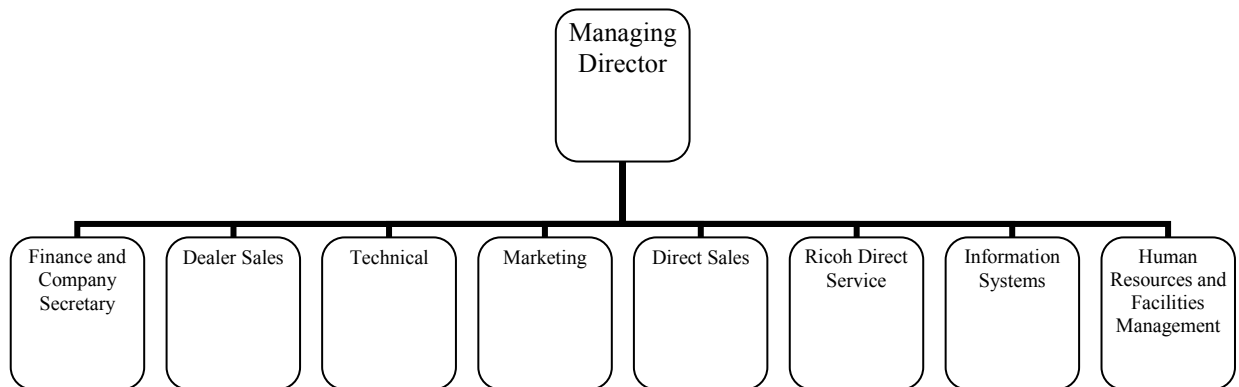
at 60 cpm/ppm for black and white and 55 cpm/ppm for colour. Two units can be used in tandem for very large print jobs and there is a full range of document-finishing options. The optional colour controller E-7000 brings a range of industry-leading Fiery utilities, such as centralised print-job management” (pp. 44-5).

As far as this study is concerned, the fieldwork took place in two organisations within the Ricoh (UK) group: Ricoh UK Ltd (RUK) and Ricoh UK Products Ltd (RPL). Interviewees were from a number of business units and functions, including the Managing Director of each organisation and some of the interviewees were initially selected by the Managing Director. Given the progress of the fieldwork, interviewees were later chosen to theoretically sample the leads emerging from data collection activities. The fieldwork undertaken in Ricoh (UK) has led to the emergence of a number of substantive themes relating to the research problem and questions outlined in Chapter 1. Consistent with the previous organisation under study, the substantive findings from Ricoh (UK) are explained in detail in the remaining part of this section.

4.3.3 Changes initiated by managers in RUK

Changes initiated by managers in RUK, as explained in detail in this section, are mostly at the local level. They include: changing the business orientation of Technical Solutions Centre; introducing Ricoh Easy – a web-based programme service for its direct customers; sharing findings of the employee satisfaction survey and changing its invoicing procedures. The organisational structure of RUK is shown in Figure 4.3.

Figure 4.3 Organizational structure of RUK



Change 1 in RUK: Changing in business orientation of Technical Solutions Centre from cost- to profit-centre

A move towards providing business solutions has been evident in RUK. One of the changes concerns the business orientation of its Technical Solutions Centre – a change in the business emphasis from ‘provision of technical support services’ to ‘sales of business solutions’. Such a change indicates that more focus has been placed on end users – “extending the vision from manufacturing to sales and now to end users, which makes lots of difference to customers” (TW060606). This requires specific changes such as: gaining publicity through dealer; benchmarking with other products through dealers; using the intranet to publicise what has been done; offering the sales director a fuller package of products and services; providing data to be included in a catalogue; serving internal customers any appropriate services; selling the training activities on application programmes and offering special support packages to customers (DM241105). The definition of ‘a good manager’ in the eyes of customers and colleagues has also changed in accordance with these changes. Previously, a manager was assessed on his/her technical knowledge – knowing how to

do the job, etc. The assessment is now on the basis of his all round managerial skill (DM241105).

Change 2 in RUK: Introduction of RICOH EASY

Another major change that has been initiated is the introduction of RICOH EASY, a web-based service freely available to all Ricoh direct customers who are enabled to log and track service calls and supply orders; enter meter readings online; as well as to resolve machine problems. Customers can login by using the serial number of the machine/equipment purchased, as opposed to the previous system that used username and password. The earlier system became problematic due to the turnover of staff.

According to one continuous improvement manager (JK251105), the initiation of RICOH EASY is the result of customer demand, in addition to the requests from the web manager. Thus, its initiation was both internally and externally driven. It was also recommended by a manager responsible for the continuous improvement of the organisation and who is in fact an assessor for the National Quality Award for Business Excellence, which background enables her to bring with her the best practices from other companies to Ricoh.

Change 3 in RUK: Sharing findings of employee satisfaction survey

At the senior management level, changes also took place with regard to how findings of the employee satisfaction survey were shared. The survey has been in existence for more than seven years. But whilst the results had previously been confirmed to the

board of directors, the results are now shared with all employees including its field engineers (YO111105).

The findings of the survey reveals the fact that dissatisfaction existed amongst the workforce and it was clear to the management that remedial action was required because quite apart from any other consideration, the dissatisfaction element had led to a high turnover of technical staff. The complaints/criticisms/grievances voiced by the workforce were taken on board and suitable action taken to significantly improve the situation.

Resulting from this enlightened approach, multiple communication channels were established to ensure that the workforce could make their views known and to keep them informed of any relevant developments (YO111105). A number of practical steps were also taken, viz:

- a) Laptops were supplied to engineers who were not required to visit the office on a regular basis;
- b) Establishing an intranet on which all information was available to all member of staff at any time;
- c) Organising company-wide staff meetings twice a year
- d) Setting up monthly breakfast meetings for field engineers within their respective regions.

Change 4 in RUK: Changes in invoicing procedures

One of the major changes initiated was the way that invoices were processed and sent out to RUK's customers. About three or four years ago, RUK suffered a 10-20% profit loss against actual sales. In other words, despite the growth in market share in the UK (from the 4th to 1st), RUK did not actually make a profit. It was later discovered that there was a fundamental problem in the invoicing department in terms of its procedures.

The problem lay in the fact that staff in the invoice department were overwhelmed by the volume of invoices to be dealt with and yet that information was not conveyed to management. Adding to the problem was the staff's unwillingness to work overtime, insisting that they finished at 1700 regardless of what work remained to be done (YO111105). Consequently, the invoicing system was completely revised, changing as it did, from a centralised to a de-centralised system, distributing the task to individual business divisions (e.g. according to dealer/direct sales division, geographical location).

4.3.4 Changes initiated by managers in RPL

This section identifies a number of changes initiated locally in several business units and function areas, particularly within the reconditioning business unit of RPL which represents a key working area. Other RPL-wide changes relate to: personnel, information technology, business development and manufacturing of new photocopiers. The organisational structure is presented in Figure 4.4.

Change 1 in RPL: changes in the reconditioning business unit

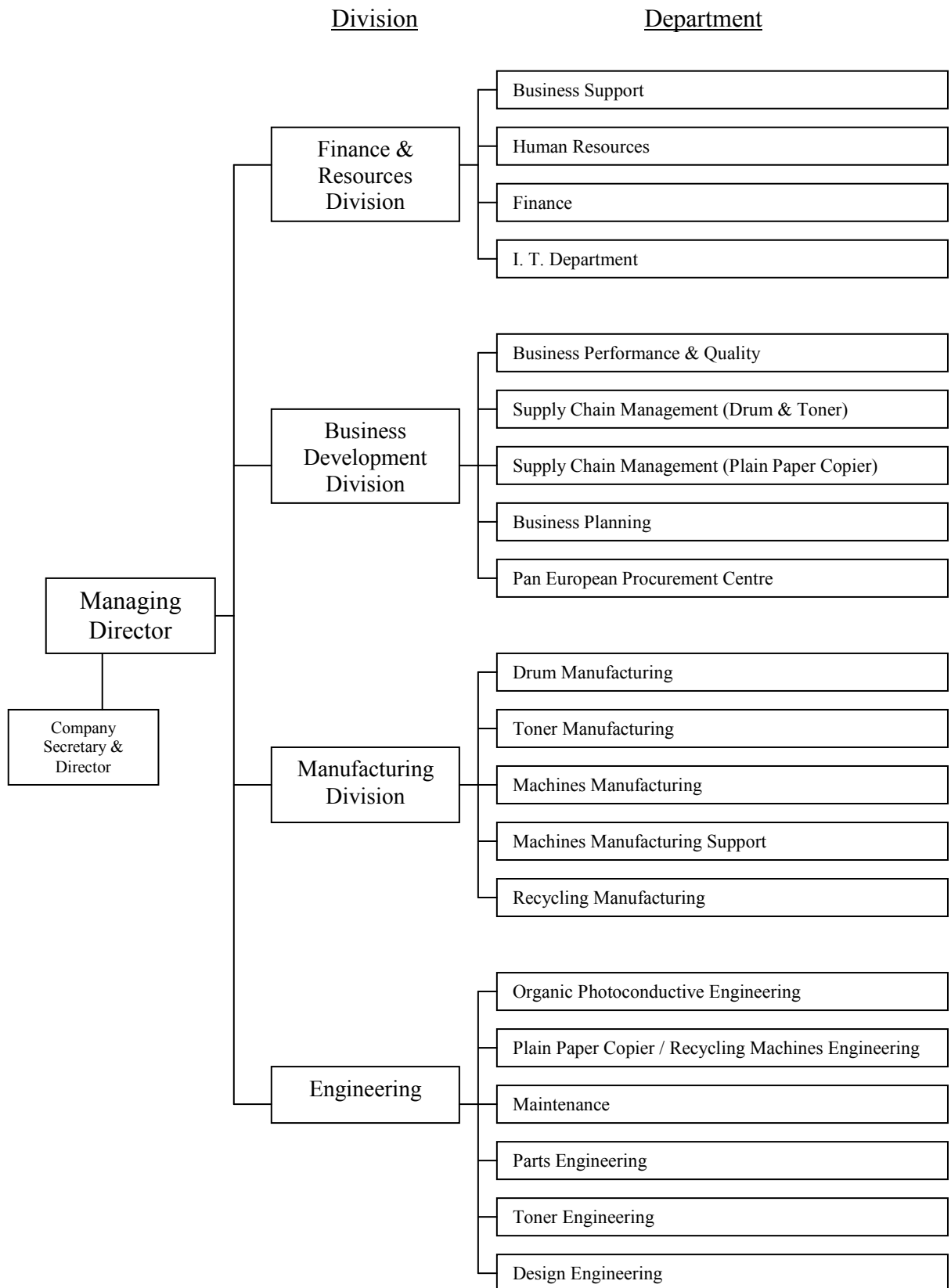
The reconditioning business unit has emerged as something of a key player within Ricoh (UK) and its facilities for reconditioning machines, actively promoted. One engineering manager (CS270906) described the significance of changes in the unit, from an engineering perspective:

“Changes have been quite dramatic with a great deal of technical effort and expertise expended on the unit with the result that every reconditioned machine leaves the plant with all the original facilities – many updated, in addition to network connections, and printer scanner facilities *et al.*; consumers now demand connectivity. Over the last two years, our business has changed enormously from essentially stand-alone copiers to an ‘office solution’, which links to printer, fax, etc.”

In the case of RPL, there has been a shift from dealer business to direct sales in the marketing of their reconditioned machines, the switch in emphasis being market driven (RJ270906). One engineering manager (RJ270906) explained the change in the following way:

“The service driven activities have gradually changed the market driven activities, with customers knowing what machines are available, are au fait with the various specifications and know what machine they want/need.”

Figure 4.4 Organizational structure of RPL



The current pro-active, market driven approach to their reconditioned machines market, “a demand that wasn’t recognised by the marketing people but was really recognised by the servicing people” (RJ270906), contrasts sharply with the previous passivity. This is indeed an example of niche-finding by the fragmentation of markets – “once-uniform mass markets are breaking up into countless niches in which everything has to be customised for a small group of consumers” (The Economist, 2004a, p. 82). One engineering manager (RJ270906) also gave an example of the change in mindset, viz:

“They used to say, here’s a good quality product, what is there about it that would appeal to a customer? Now they say, we need that product, there’s a demand in the field for it, people want to buy this product.”

In view of the increasing level of competition from overseas manufacturing facilities (SB080606), RPL must respond by becoming more competitive in the world market, and within Ricoh’s subsidiaries (RB070606). This priority to which RPL has committed itself has been reflected by the following changes. One of the major changes in the reconditioning business unit is material change in re-cycled components. According to one engineering manager (TJ270906), suggestions for using old parts were put forward to the main parent company and the main equipment original designer. The implications for such a change would have placed a demand on resources which were already quite heavily under pressure, as far as the main parent company and the main equipment original designer were concerned. Consequently, the idea may well not be acted upon, at least in the near future. From a sales point of view, advantages can be gained from changes currently being initiated to achieve

different functionalities from re-used machines and sell them to an entirely different market segment. Therefore it is intended to “make an entirely new machine, with a different function” (RC270906).

Change 2 in RPL: increasing cost consciousness

In its bid to become more cost-focused (SB080606; RB070606), RPL must maintain an effective cost structure (RJ060606) and bearing in mind that labour costs represent only 1% of the total cost in the modular photocopier manufacturing, a large proportion of the total cost can be attributed to inventory, raw materials, etc; RPL must therefore concentrate upon cost cutting measures in that area.

Change 3 in RPL: Changes in production methods in the copier business

In RPL today, copiers are manufactured in three separate modes, i.e. full, modular and a combination of both (DH060606). Copiers used to be manufactured locally in their entirety, whereas now a lot of business has been transferred to Ricoh (China). As suggested by one machine manufacturing manager (RF080606), the role and function of RPL has shifted from manufacturing machines from scratch using local parts suppliers. Currently, the make-up is 80% modular manufacturing and 20% full manufacturing. The reason why 20% full manufacturing remains within RPL is to retain an acceptable level of expertise within its workforce. As recognised by a number of interviewees, the future of copier manufacturing in RPL is that of modular, rather than full manufacturing (DR070606). That also suggests that in time only

modular manufacturing and the finishing end of the manufacturing process will take place within RPL (RB060606).

Table 4.4 below shows which model of copiers is produced either by modular, full manufacturing or a combination of both in RPL today.

Table 4.4 Modes of manufacturing for copiers within RPL

	Martini	Adoris	Finisher (attachment)
Modular manufacturing	√	√	√
Full manufacturing		√	

Change 4 in RPL: Integration and standardisation of information technology (IT) systems

One change has taken place within the IT systems used by RPL in that the original system, JEAC – a manufacturing module of a financial planning system, has been integrated with a system known as RINKS 21 – a global manufacturing system, which was developed by Ricoh (Japan) as an enhancement of an earlier version in the 90’s. Prior to the integration, problems were experienced with RINKS 21 in that whilst it works well in Japan, mainly due to a better supplier system and just-in-time (JIT) system, it did not work so well within RPL due to the fact that it did not permit flexibility in the manufacturing process (GD070606). Furthermore, because RINKS 21 was intended to be used in the photocopiers production process, it could not be used to support other products such as toners and drums. Consequently once a batch

commences its production process, changes cannot be made by the production personnel; only IT personnel can facilitate change. Similarly, with JEAC, problems were experienced prior to integration in that the programme was developed by a third party and not tailored to RPL's needs and was imbued with many extraneous features etc.

Other IT integration projects include Customs Freight Simplified Procedures (CFSP) package. It was backed by the H&M Customs and is being used to defer duty payment due to high duty rate. Based on IBM AS400, 40 servers were to be consolidated at the time of integration (GD070606). Additionally, the standardisation of information security management system was introduced, which is accredited by British Standards Institution (BSI) (LW080606). A computer-based production scheduling system was also introduced, which changed production scheduling activities from paper- to computer-based, from monthly to daily in order to forge closer relationship with distribution (TW060606). A web-based financial planning system, known as COGNDS, was also initiated which changed financial planning activities from paper-, to excel-, and now to web-based (RB060606).

Change 5 in RPL: Introduction of managerial assessment of proficiency (MAP)

Managerial assessment of proficiency (MAP) programme, developed by an external professional body, is a tool which has become a framework of management development within RPL. In 2006, the main activities were identification and assessment of development needs at both technical and management levels. Managers, assistant managers, team leaders and engineers were going through a development

period. In 2007, three different options were put forward, which provided three management development routes, viz: re-assessment of development needs, management certification, and certification for technical expertise (DW080606).

Change 6 in RPL: Development in supply chain management activities and manufacturing processes

Supply chain management (SCM) activities, already in existence in Ricoh (Japan), were introduced in RPL seven years ago. The objective of SCM is to reduce the sales lead time, but at the same time, minimise stock levels. The objective was to reach a compromise between sales and manufacturing whereby the sales division could rely upon sufficient machines being in stock to supply the needs of their customers but not to have any stockpiling on the manufacturer's premises. The introduction of SCM was primarily at the behest of the manufacturer (MS070606).

With regard to the development in manufacturing processes, a new production method in the copier unit, known as the trolley system, was introduced through a process of negotiation (KM270906). It was further explained (KM270906) why the conveyor belt system was replaced by the trolley system about four years ago in RPL with regard to the advantages of the latter, as opposed to merely transferred a production method from Ricoh (Japan):

“We have many problems...RPL has a unique production system in the Ricoh group...Our main Japanese factory is still using a conveyor belt system...If one part of them was having some problems, everything stopped. But current

production methods, if one section has some problems, there's no need to stop everything.”

The introduction of the trolley system is actually a key aspect of system development concerning the production method in the copier business (DH060606). Similarly, the development of the manufacturing processes took place in the reconditioning unit concerning production methods (MG060606).

4.3.5 Challenges experienced by managers during their initiation of change in both RUK and RPL and their responses to them

As described in the last section, it emerged that managers encountered several challenges that they had to address during the process of their initiation of change in both RUK and RPL. These challenges, as explained in detail in this section, vary in terms of their global-local significances. The single challenge towards the global end of the continuum is the Chinese dominance in the manufacturing industry in which RPL has to compete. This has also brought up new manufacturing challenges for RPL. At a local level, RPL finds itself, among other issues, lack of marketing experience especially concerning its reconditioning business. For the initiated change to be successfully implemented, it requires managers to address issues with regard to commitment of Ricoh's senior management, time, cultural change, effective communication, reluctance, and the workforce. It also has to find a solution of how to successfully implement Japanese manufacturing and management practices in the UK context.

Challenge 1 in Ricoh (UK): China

The concern over Chinese competition (RB060606) and dominance (TW060606) was expressed in virtually every interview undertaken and the lack of knowledge about China also adds to the feelings of unease which China evokes. Following the trend of having virtually everything manufactured there, the Japanese who used to manufacture and supply the mainframe of the machines, now also outsource those items to China (DR070606). All such changes add to the uncertainty and pessimism with which the future is viewed (RB060606), which is of course unsettling for all concerned.

As a consequence of the Chinese challenge and decline in business in the West, attraction and creation of new business would help RPL maintain its strategic position within the Ricoh group and to ensure its existential survival in the UK. The re-conditioning business was created – an area of business requiring an extensive amount of collaboration between manufacturing and sales (RJ060606). In terms of the price of a re-conditioned machine, it is normally at half of the price of a brand new machine (RJ060606). Considering the impact of EU regulations and the increased environmental awareness. RPL has become greener in several manufacturing processes. For example, organic photo conductors (OPC) drums are now going through stripping processes whereby coating being taken off. Prior to that, the drums were just thrown away and replaced with new ones from Japan (PL080606). Other new business creation includes areas such as component computation customisation (CCC) and accessories business (RJ060606). Another example is the motors of moulding machines, which are in different formats. In Japan, the design work is sub-

contracted, whereas in the UK, it is designed in-house. Therefore, it has brought down the cost per part and reduced one third (1/3) of the cycle time. When one Ricoh manufacturing facility in California became aware of this saving, they were interested and started buying from RPL (PL080606).

The attempts to create new business in RPL, addresses two inter-related issues: the current decline in production volume in RPL and the increase in components sourced from Ricoh (China). In RPL, there had been a flat production volume over recent years. The situation today was reported to be totally different, compared with 20 years ago. This can be partly explained by changes in duty imposed on goods in the European manufacturing sector in the early 90's (KY120506). There has also been a great increase in components sourced from Ricoh (China). It was suggested that components were initially supplied from Ricoh (Japan) and packaging from local suppliers in the UK (DR070606). About 30% of components had to be sourced from local suppliers, according to the then EU regulations. There were a few concerns associated with the fact that 30% of parts had to be sourced from local suppliers. There were difficulties in finding suppliers locally, worry over quality issues and concern about delivering on time. If these issues had not been adequately addressed, they would have created potential problems for assembly line production. About ten or eleven years ago, at more or less the same time as digitalisation started, components began coming directly from Ricoh (China). Today, about 70-75% of parts for copier business are from Ricoh (China), 15% from Ricoh (Japan) and the rest of it from local suppliers.

Challenge 2 in Ricoh (UK): Lack of marketing experience for RPL

From a manufacturer's (RPL) perspective, it was frequently suggested that there was a lack of marketing experience within the company. One engineering manager (RJ270906) suggested that the convergence of manufacturing and marketing/sales roles in RPL had represented a steep learning curve for himself. Within manufacturing, there has been discomfort associated with the fact that photocopiers are sold and distributed by others who make toners and drums rather than those who manufacture the machines themselves. The main problem relates to the fact that business targets are fundamentally set around new machine sales, not reconditioned. This is obviously a major issue, explaining the lack of motivation to sell reconditioned machines. He felt that things were gradually changing but there was still some way to go.

There exists a general lack of marketing experience within RPL and steps are being taken to remedy that situation. Managers are encouraged to attend marketing conferences and seminars etc. (RJ270906) and factory tours are organised for dealers and their customers. One remarkable fact which emerged from these tours was that the existence of the reconditioning facility was not commonly known, nor indeed about Ricoh (UK)'s general manufacturing business within the UK. Dealers appreciate the opportunity to visit the factories with customers as they are obviously able to demonstrate to their clients what RPL has to offer and in so doing, instil confidence and raise the profile of RPL. The advantages of reconditioned machines including lower cost etc. are emphasised during tours and their reliability and capability are emphasised and physically demonstrated. The machines have also been sold directly to end users such as Coventry City Council. Brochures, visits and

presentations were made to the Council who were initially unsure about the wisdom of purchasing reconditioned as opposed to new machines; the sales campaign was successful and was an encouragement to RPL in their bid to promote such sales.

Challenge 3 in RPL: Senior management commitment

There exists a perception among the workforce generally, including the UK (British) managers, that some new ideas and business opportunities such as marketing reconditioned machines (RJ270906) are not readily accepted by the Japanese strand of management within RPL. In any event, “the histories of multinational corporations are filled with complaints of local managers regarding the controls of home country firms” (Kogut, 2004, p. 269). It would appear that the Managing Director (also Japanese) – the final arbiter on major issues, tends to be influenced to too great an extent by his fellow countrymen with the result that it is difficult to make progress with some issues including the development of the reconditioned machine market. “As to the method by which control is exerted, the most direct method is clearly the expatriate manager” (Emmott, 1992, p.129). It should be explained at this point that there exists different attitudes on the part of the British managers as distinct from their Japanese colleagues. On the one hand the indigenous managers have a strong personal interest in the survival of RPL in the UK as it represents their jobs/careers and everything associated with matters central to their domestic scene etc. Success in their bid to introduce the manufacture and sales of reconditioned machines, will help to safeguard the survival of RPL and therefore their own future. Their Japanese colleagues however, maintain a completely focused business orientation, and are not distracted or influenced by personal factors. Should Ricoh (UK) decide to terminate

RPL's tenure in the UK, the Japanese managers would merely be recalled to Ricoh's headquarters in Japan or be relocated to another overseas plant. This is not to suggest that Japanese managers have less concern for RPL – merely that their mindsets differ from a cultural perspective.

The introduction of new ideas also necessitates the continuity of managers in their respective posts in order that an on-going commitment is ensured (RJ070606). Quite obviously, of equal importance is the loyalty, trust and willingness of the general workforce to accept change and commit themselves to new initiatives, as they arise and not to continually question all decisions in a negative manner. The element of trust has been vitiated to some extent by what the workforce view as a volte-face in relation to a promise made by management on the issue of life- long employment. Despite managers' promises to the contrary, there have been redundancies and the workforce feel let down (DR070606).

Japanese manufacturing advisors are often employed and are valued for their capacity to initiate and implement change, adopting the role of facilitator and consultant (DH060606). They spend an average of six or seven years in a unit and have a wealth of experience in their field. They often provide assistance in communicating with the Japanese Managing Director and their counterparts in Japan, and can help to influence on issues which they are happy to promote. Clearly therefore, their role in furthering ideas, etc. is of great importance. The employment of Japanese manufacturing advisors in RPL is a typical Japanese way of managing overseas manufacturing operations in Japanese multinational corporations: “foreign managers...foreign employees, but well shadowed by Japanese expatriate staff [who view] themselves as

the teachers” (Emmott, 1992, p.114), as well as act “as a communication channel between head office and the local managers” (p.131).

In addition to the personnel already mentioned, efforts are made to influence visiting Japanese VIPs who periodically visit RPL, by the visual demonstration of improvements made such as streamlining of the manufacturing processes, therefore creating more floor space, etc. The objective is of course to demonstrate (to those who have a ‘say’ in the future of RPL), that there is potential for growth and further enhancement of productivity and generally present an encouraging picture and one which it is hoped will attract new business. In this case, commitment is enhanced through the use of visibility, as suggested by Tushman and O’Reilly (1997). The specific activities may involve: “publicising an individual’s activities and accomplishments among peers, other employees, clients, and family; using appropriate ceremonies and symbols to promote a sense of belonging and identification within the group; encouraging public expressions of loyalty with customers and clients, at meetings, and with family and friends; encouraging the development of social relationships among members; using group evaluation and approval as a part of the feedback process” (p.136).

The Japanese Managing Director, contrary to the earlier mentioned perception that he was difficult to convince of the need for change, actually asserts that he is passionate about initiating changes and addressing the issues involved (KY280906). He remarked that although there is a little difficulty with the language barrier he is normally able to communicate more than adequately with the managers and the workforce and always attempts to convey the enthusiasm which he himself possesses.

He particularly enjoys charting the progress of an idea (e.g. the Rose Garden), watching it grow and develop from its embryonic stage and come to fruition, clearly representing as it does, a prime example of management initiative with an on-going commitment to change. Additionally, in the process, one witnesses the winning-over of all concerned, being assured of their support and willing co-operation. Clearly a good manager, bringing out the best in his workforce and establishing (or perhaps, re-establishing) good lines of communication. Another example, of the management initiation of change was encountered with a statement from an interviewee (RJ070606) that his modus operandi was to introduce various facets of change within his particular unit and then delegate each task individually to his managers. Those managers were then held accountable for the full implementation and on-going operational process. A number of things were achieved by this process, viz: the senior manager, by delegating the tasks to others, was able to re-assert his managerial status, to maintain an overview of progress made, (whilst at the same time, facilitating an assessment of each of his managers' weaknesses and strengths). Additionally he was enabled to continue with his principle role of trouble-shooter. In tandem with such considerations, his managers were made to feel part of a team (a re-establishment of the collegiate ethos) and were reassured that their manager had confidence in them. That in turn created job satisfaction and a feeling of worth, from which position many advantageous factors arise.

Challenge 4 in RPL: Manufacturing challenges

As with RUK, there are naturally enough, also problems within the manufacturing element of Ricoh (UK). In company with all industry in the West, the cost of a

manufacturer's products are of crucial importance (YM280906), bearing in mind the constant threat of cheaper goods emanating from the East. Every effort is therefore made to pitch an item at the right price, in the sense that it will be competitive and yet will yield a sufficient element of profit. To enable RPL to remain competitive, appropriate steps have been taken to streamline all manufacturing processes, to reduce the time factor in productivity whilst increasing output, reducing numbers of personnel where possible and generally becoming a 'leaner and meaner' organisation. Another problem frequently mentioned in my interviews with managers, was the lack of time (RJ070606), due primarily to reductions in staff, and the overall tightening-up of all aspects of the manufacturing process. The quality of components sourced from overseas is also causing concern and this is compounded by the fact that RPL have no direct control over the imported parts (RF080606). At stake, here is, ultimately, Ricoh's reputation and every effort is being made to forge a close working relationship with their overseas suppliers to overcome the problem (DR070606).

A further important factor is the need for RPL to attract investment in the form of capital from its headquarters to facilitate the modernisation of its machinery, most of which is over twenty years old (SB080606) and to ensure its survival in relation to other Ricoh subsidiaries (RF080606). RPL needs to demonstrate its attractiveness to justify such investment and to convince the Japanese headquarters that RPL is the overseas plant most worthy of support and encouragement.

The opinion was voiced on a number of occasions that Japanese and UK manufacturing and management practices did not always work out well together. It is generally considered that it is the basic cultural differences which are central to this

issue (YM280906). In Japan, a worker views his/her company almost as an extended family with total loyalty guaranteed and the normal expectation being a life time spent with that company. In the West of course, workers (and their employers), view their relationship in a totally different manner, each party espousing an independent stance. Over a period of time, the different cultures will no doubt draw closer together with the onus upon senior management to actively encourage and assist in that process.

Several specific challenges have emerged from my appraisal of the reconditioning sector of RPL's business. One significant feature is the absence of any bonus or commission payable on sales of reconditioned machines, which of course, represents a major disincentive to sales personnel (RC270906). The need to create a greater demand for the machines (bearing in mind that currently, sales represent a small percentage of all machines sales), goes hand-in-hand with the objective to build up customer interest and confidence (RC270906). By virtue of the fact that the machines are reconditioned, there remains an on-going need to maintain contact with the original designers from whom original design specifications can be obtained (TJ270906). The lack of interest exhibited by senior management and sales staff, is another inhibiting factor.

To counter these problems, a number of steps are being taken, viz: rectifying the anomaly, regarding commissions paid / or not paid, etc., convincing senior management and sales staff in both RUK and NRG, of the significant sales potential for the machines (RJ270906). They should also be appraised of the fact that the profit margin on the reconditioned machines will exceed that of new machines and also allay their fears that such sales will impact upon the sales of new machines

(RC270906). There will be increased exposure of the machines to the public and the market in general, extolling their advantages in terms of the lower price tag and demonstrating their capability and reliability (RJ270906). The 'green' element will be actively promoted vis-à-vis the use of recycled parts with the ecology benefiting accordingly. In the present climate of low carbon footprint etc, many schools, local authorities and public bodies will no doubt wish to be seen as supportive of any 'green' initiatives and are therefore likely to favour a reconditioned machine on the strength of its 'green' pedigree (CS270906).

Challenge 5 in RPL: Workforce challenges

Motivation of the RPL workforce has been accorded priority as there is seen to be a need to address and counteract the many negative issues which are prevalent within the industry. Those issues are many and widespread but can be categorised in general as uncertainty, both in relation to individual jobs, and to the industry as a whole within the UK. There is also a need to maintain an open mind (PL080606) and be receptive to change (i.e. changing individual and collective mindsets) including, for instance, being relocated within the plant or indeed elsewhere within the organisation. As part of the on-going information programme and endeavours by management to ensure employee involvement and participation in the process of initiation of change, a congress is held twice annually for the entire workforce (RJ070606). During the meetings, the need for change is emphasised and at the same time, recognition is accorded to instances of success already achieved.

The whole business climate is redolent of widespread change – change made imperative by various pressures throughout the entire manufacturing industry. Any industry which attempts to stand still at this time and, for whatever reason, shun change, will not survive and the task facing managers in RPL is to convey that message to the workforce in an open and frank manner and seek to obtain the acceptance of the workforce to necessary changes occasioned by the challenging times in which the company must operate. An example of the need for flexibility within the workforce is the practice whereby fluctuations in production volume are catered for by the use of a temporary workforce agency on site (RF080606). The learning of new skills in some cases is necessary but the overall picture is that of diminishing skills due to the fact that many components previously manufactured in-house, are now sourced from overseas (RJ070606). There is an attempt by RPL to retain a nucleus of the necessary skills on a much reduced basis as they are loathe to relinquish all such expertise.

Challenge 6 in RPL: Communication

Communication skills are one of the most valuable attributes possessed by mankind and the degree and complexity of its use is what sets us apart from other species. It is not only invaluable, it is a necessity in maintaining the cohesion of the social structure. In a multinational organisation such as RPL, communication, i.e. conveying information in a clear and accurate manner (PL080606), is needless to say, a crucial part of the process of change initiation. The necessity exists not only between Ricoh (Japan) and its subsidiaries but also, between the subsidiaries themselves and therefore throughout all levels of the manufacturing plants.

As touched upon in Challenge 5, communication, whilst always important, gains greater significance at times such as these with elements of uncertainty, unrest and anxiety prevalent among the workforce. It does not of course, emanate exclusively from managers, cascading down to the rest of the workforce, but is very much a two-way process with the opportunity and need for feedback, reviews, negotiation and consultation undertaken.

It cannot be stressed enough that the thread of communication must permeate the entire organisation to deal with any issues about which the workforce should be appraised, to address matters of concern to them and to maintain an open and frank dialogue at all times and at all levels, however unpopular the facts might be.

4.3.6 Summary of management initiation of change in Ricoh (UK)

The fieldwork undertaken in Ricoh (UK) including both RUK and RPL has revealed a number of changes initiated by managers themselves. Nearly all the initiated changes concern various aspects of the operation at the local level, for example, new practices in relation to the day-to-day work in RUK and copier (both new and reconditioned) manufacturing in RPL. They also cover the development of products, systems, programmes and procedures, cost, new business creation, and staff. It was also gathered that during managers' initiation of change, they encountered a number of challenging matters to which they have responded. One of the challenging matters, at the global perspective, concerns the Chinese competition and dominance, which has subsequently resulted other issues more at a local level. These local issues cover: manufacturing activities in RPL especially in relation to its reconditioning business,

the lack of marketing experience of RPL and the general reluctance and apathy towards change. Other issues associated with the initiated changes are: the commitment of senior management and potential resisters, the lack of time, workforce-related matters, and communication skills. The managers interviewed also indicated a number of ways of which these challenging issues were addressed. The potential of emerging economies such as Brazil, Russia, India and China is recognised as an attractive market for Ricoh (UK)'s products. Part of the potential that Ricoh (UK) can tap into is the newly-established reconditioning business. However, the reconditioning business unit has to be supported, as the managers have identified, in different ways. First, the sales company (RUK) has to be convinced concerning the profitability of selling reconditioned copiers. This also requires the synergies created throughout Ricoh (UK). Second, the senior management in both RUK and RPL has to be committed and involved, as well as the engagement of other important players, for the successful implementation of the initiated changes. Third, whilst managers in RPL learn to sell, some of the issues can be effectively dealt with by explaining, getting the people right and providing change readiness for the initiated changes. Lastly, some of the manufacturing challenges including those in the reconditioning business can be resolved by the overall cost reduction throughout Ricoh (UK).

In order to further conceptualise the challenges that managers encountered during their initiation of change and the ways in which they were dealt with, the substantive findings from both Cooper Standard (UK) and Ricoh (UK) are to be compared and integrated with their counterparts in the literature in the next Chapter (5). As explained in the methodology Chapter (3), the purpose of conceptual comparison and integration intends to reach an even higher level of abstraction of the social process –

'resourcing change', involving a wider coverage of people, place and time (Glaser, 2003).

Chapter 5 Comparative Literature Review

5.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out to conceptually compare and integrate substantive concepts emerging from the fieldwork with their counterparts in the literature on learning and change. From a methodological point of view, it aims to compare how and where this study fits in with the literature upon completion of conceptual analysis of the data (Charmaz, 1995, p. 47). As a post-fieldwork review of literature, the purpose of writing this chapter differs significantly from the initial literature review as carried out at the beginning of the study. The key distinction between a pre- and post-fieldwork review of literature is that in the case of the former, there is no, or should not be, any particular research focus as it covers only theoretical strands that one is exposed to in one's area of research interest. The post-fieldwork literature review however is driven by the emerged focus as a result of the fieldwork, which points to a specific area of the literature. Within this study, the pre-fieldwork literature review was conducted, covering various topical issues in the organisational and management learning literature. On the completion of the fieldwork, the focus of the comparative literature review has been refined towards management initiation of change.

Guided by the continually refined focus, this comparative literature review chapter begins with a conceptual elaboration on learning and changing at work (Section 5.2). The findings of this study favour the social theory of learning and the constructionist

view on learning, both of which place emphasis on the actual practice and knowledge in situ (Wenger, 1998a; 1998b). The production and reproduction of practice and knowledge further suggests that learning and changing at work are inextricably linked. What is then reviewed in Section 5.3 is a number of approaches to change that are widely known. Highlighted in Section 5.4 is the fact that this study focuses on the process of learning/change as “an ongoing process of action” (Vaill, 1996, p. 127), or more precisely, on the initiation phase of the change process. Such a process, as demonstrated in this study, starts at the individual (manager’s) level of analysis and then progresses to other levels. The focus on one level of analysis, as well as its impact on other levels, has also led to a review of the change management literature on the level of analysis *per se* (Section 5.5). The concepts arising from the fieldwork that explain the challenges in the management initiation of change and the way in which they are dealt with, are conceptually compared and integrated with their counterparts in the literature at the highest possible level of abstraction. As shown in Sections 5.6 and 5.7, this has produced a set of even more abstract concepts that were not constrained by the managers involved in the two organisations at the time the fieldwork was undertaken. This chapter is then summarised in Section 5.8.

5.2 Learning and changing at work

In relation to the research findings of this study as presented in the previous two chapters, this section attempts to theoretically integrate a number of key issues concerning learning. Learning in the classroom environment and in the everyday context is differentiated. It is the latter that, as supported by the situated learning theory, emphasises the production and reproduction of actual practice and knowledge

in situ (Wenger, 1998a; 1998b). The theorisation of this study which is management learning as their initiation of change in the workplace, has further supported, from a constructionist perspective of learning, that learning, working and changing are concomitant as a process (Senge *et al.*, 2005). It also led to the critique on the current organisation learning literature, on the basis of its ignorance of the change literature and its lack of integration with other levels of analysis (e.g. individual) (Croassan *et al.*, 1991; Hendry, 1996).

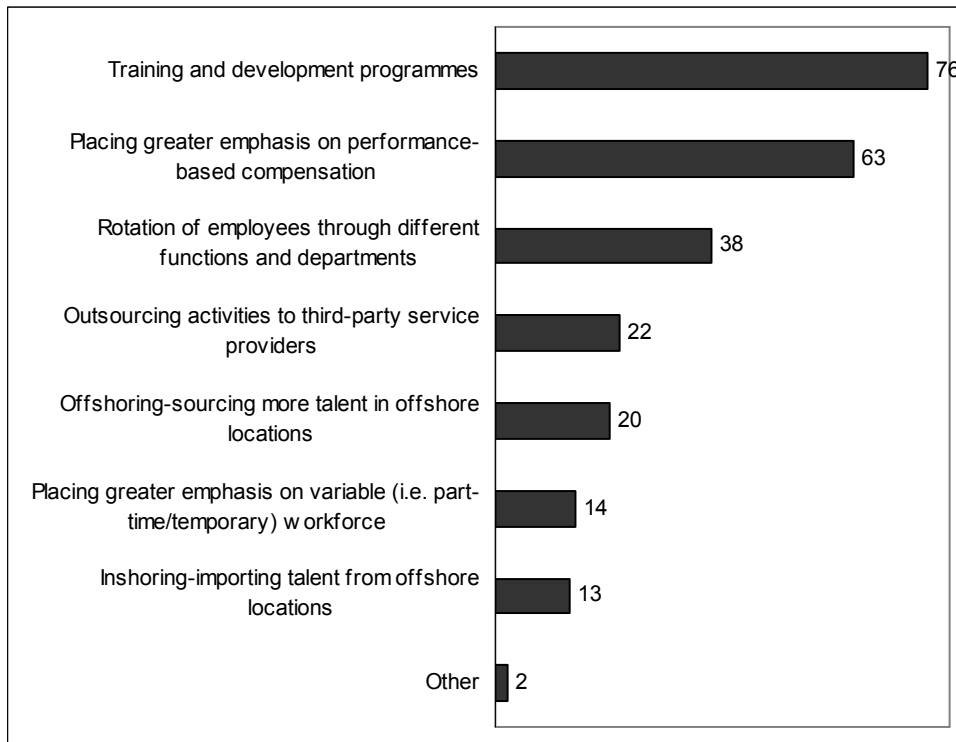
The nature and types of learning

“Learning is a pervasive process in everyday life and...worth studying in everyday contexts” (Fox, 1997b, p. 78). “Learning always occurs over time and in ‘real life’ contexts, not just in classrooms or training sessions” (Senge *et al.*, 1999, p. 24). Sometimes known as informal and incidental learning (Marsick & Watkins, 1990), this type of learning generates lasting knowledge which “enhances capacity for effective action in settings that matter to the learner” (Senge *et al.*, 1999, p. 24). Contrary to this view, many employers still believe that training and development programmes are the effective methods of meeting skill requirements of employees in their organisations (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2007) (see Figure 5.1 below).

Schein (1993) lists three types of learning: “knowledge acquisition and insight, habit and skill learning, and emotional conditioning and learned anxiety” (p. 86). The concept of learning is also closely related to the nature of knowledge, cognition and practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998a). Knowledge acquisition is much

more likely take place “from learning by doing, than from learning by reading, listening, or even thinking” (Pfeffer & Sutton, 2000, pp. 5-6).

Figure 5.1 How organisations will ensure that its employees have the skills required to meet its strategic objectives over the next three years



NB: the numbers indicate % of respondents in the Economist Intelligence Unit survey

Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit (2007, p. 25)

Sole and Edmondson (2002) view situated knowledge as “knowledge grounded in site-specific work practices” (p. 18). “Knowledge is contextually situated and is fundamentally influenced by the activity, context, and culture” (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989, in McLellan, 1996, p. 6). For example, “mindful practices and communicative interaction” are regarded as “situated issues at work in the reproduction of communities of practice in a wide variety of work settings” (Engestrom & Middleton, 1996, p.1). “What an organisation ‘knows’ is distributed

across its members” (Dixon, 1999, pp. 186-7). Brown and Duguid (2001), however, argue “a sharply contrasting and even contradictory view of knowledge” – as ‘sticky’ at times, “and at other times ‘leaky’” (p. 198). Knowledge does not always translate to action, as Pfeffer and Sutton (1999) identify the phenomena as “the knowing-doing gap” – “knowing too much and doing too little” (p. 135). “Integrating both thinking and doing”, Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski and Flowers (2005) distinguish all learning between reactive learning – “thinking is governed by established mental models and doing is governed by established habits of action” (p. 10) and deeper levels of learning, “creating increasing awareness of the larger whole – both as it is and as it is evolving – and actions that increasingly become part of creating alternative futures” (p.11). The concept of learning can be interpreted as: cumulating, maintaining, and restructuring knowledge; enslaving and liberating; changing environments; adapting and manipulating (Hedberg, 1981).

Situated vs. cognitive learning

Differences between situated learning theory (SLT) and traditional cognitive theory (TCT) are discussed by Fox (1997b) who views SLT as “a socially relational rather than a mentalist process..., [placing emphasis upon] knowledge production in situ and in the course of [actual] practices” (p. 727). However, SLT’s view of the social context of learning as pre-given, rather than emergent is critiqued (p. 736). Moreover, the practice-based theorisation of learning has been influential in the field, which gives rise to the notion of ‘situated-ness’ (Gherardi, 2000, 2001). According to Schatzki (2001), practices are conceived as “embodied, materially mediated arrays of human activities centrally organised around shared practical understanding....

Practices are the chief and immediate context within which the preponderance of bodily properties crucial to social life are formed, not just skills and activities but bodily experiences, surface presentations, and even physical structures as well” (p. 2). “Practice approaches to social order relate order, however conceived, to the field of practices. This means, first, that order is understood as (a) feature(s) of this field and, second, that components and aspects of the field are deemed responsible for the establishment of order” (p. 5). The practical understanding of an individual is “a battery of bodily abilities that results from, and makes possible, participation in practices” (p.9). Practices are understood as “the source and carrier of meaning, language and normality” (p.12).

Therefore, learning and work become increasingly synonymous (Dixon, 1999). Learning can be triggered by problems, opportunities and people (Hedberg, 1981). Fenwick (2006) argues that “the term ‘learning’ is used, often without definition or qualification, to refer to ‘processes’ as different as skill development, personal transformation, and collective consciousness-raising. The same term is employed to describe system ‘processes’ such as innovation, information transmission, knowledge management and organisational change” (p. 269). Workplace learning literature, as she continues, seems “to include professional development and managers’ learning alongside workers’ learning, [without a clear indication of] the relations and influences among these” (p. 269). Therefore, Fenwick (2006) urges a return to conceptual basics, “for greater rigour in articulating theoretical distinctions and justifications, for increased transparency in enunciating terms and purposes, and for deliberate disciplinary bridging to foster critical questions and dialogues about core concepts” (p. 275).

The interchangeability between learning and changing

The notion ‘learning’ and ‘changing’, centres on questions such as whether one is a process and the other an outcome (Fenwick, 2006), or whether both ‘learning’ and ‘changing’ are in this context, the same thing. From a process-outcome perspective, Coutu (2002) states that learning and the inevitably accompanied change is a complex process (p. 2). When used inter-changeably, Masalin (2003) argues that “learning is change” (p. 68). Sugarman (2001) suggests learning-based approaches to organisational change – organisational change involving significant personal change (p. 64). Organisations are “living systems”, within which people occupy essential roles, can think for themselves and often resist those who try to change them (p. 64). The learning-based change process relies upon change surfacing from the heart of the organisation, rather than on a programme cascading down from the top (pp. 74-5). Lahteenmaki, Toivonen and Mattila (2001) study organisational learning from the change management perspective and find both perspectives similar, and point out that “the organisational learning literature does not use the concept of change resistance”, despite its well-documented existence (p. 121).

Critique of the literature on organisational learning

Thus, one of the major shortcomings of organisational learning literature is the absence of change management theory – “many useful concepts and pieces of information... in terms of learning could have been found in this research tradition” (Lahteenmaki *et al.*, 2001, p. 121). Another major shortcoming lies with the two-way affective process of organisational learning (Lahteenmaki *et al.*, 2001, p. 123), as it is

unclear how learning at the individual level is integrated at the structural level. This shortcoming is consistent with Zey-Ferrell (1981)'s criticisms of the dominant perspective on organisations. Instead, organisations could be viewed as “arenas of micro-individual and group interests as well as arenas through which macro-societal, class, and multinational interests and conflicts” co-exist (p. 181). Similarly, it is suggested that learning theory should be reconnected to accounts of organisational change (Hendry, 1996, p.621). “Any theory of learning and change [has to reunite] ordinary processes of work and interaction, with their tendency towards inertia, reduction of variance, and routinisation... occurring through normal processes of becoming organised” (p.622). Therefore, management improvement requires changes in both individual managers themselves and “in the nature and pattern of their interactions” as they carry out their jobs (MacDonald, Deszca & Lawton, 1978, p. 11).

The constructionist approach to learning

It has emerged from this study that the respondents have regarded the term learning and change as interchangeable. Such an interchange-ability has indicated a constructionist approach to learning (Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski and Flowers, 2005), which leads to a state of conscious participation in a larger field for change – a shift from “re-creating the past” to “manifesting or realising an emerging future” (pp.13-4). As explained by Friedman (2001), this approach means that when individuals try to expand their space of free movement which is defined by internal and external factors, “the more that individuals recognise their own role in creating their images of reality and in shaping the context in which learning occurs, the more proactive they can be in determining their space of free movement” (p. 411).

In relation to changing, the constructionist approach to learning also highlights the past and future phase of learning. Traditional learning is concerned with the past, i.e. “learning something that someone else already knows” (Quinn, 1996, p.12). The problem associated with past- or present-oriented learning is, as argued by Tushman and O’Reilly (1997), that organisations might be trapped in their present successes. To prevent this from happening, “managers must sometimes create performance gaps or opportunities during periods of success” (p.10). This promotes another kind of learning, as stated by Quinn (1996), “a learning that helps us forget what we know, discover what we need [to]... create the future... [and learning] our way into the new and emerging world” (p. 12).

5.3 Approaches to change

The literature suggests a number of approaches to, or theories of change, for example, planned or emergent (Tissari, 2002), top-down or bottom-up (Koolhaas, 1982), Theory O and E (Beer & Nohria, 2000). They are characterised as complexity, interdependence and fragmentation, as suggested by Lles and Sutherland (2001). According to Tissari (2002), planned change is “initiated proactively by designing a vision of the target state”, whereas emergent change is “initiated responsively, based on an observed problem or opportunity in any level of the organisation” (p. 80). Common direction and focus, based on designed vision, are the main strengths of the planned change initiation, and relevance and concreteness as the main strengths of the emergent problem or opportunity-based change initiation (p. 85). Evidently, some planned change programmes might involve small incremental steps that only make sense to senior managers, thus they are said to be too little and inappropriate

(Starbuck, 1983, p. 91). External forces driving change include changes in technology, customers, competitors, market structure, or the social and political environment, and result as internal changes in practices, views and strategies (Senge *et al.*, 1999, p. 14).

Another set of approaches to change is known as ‘the top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’ one, each with different views on organisation (Koolhaas, 1982). The top-down approach views an organisation as a decision-making mechanism (p. 151), whereas the bottom-up regards an organisation as a human social system. In such a system “the main characteristic of the activities is the treatment and exchange of information on which decisions concerning each other’s activities are made” (pp. 153-4). The significance of the top-down and bottom-up approaches is further explicated in terms of the relationship between personal and organisational change. According to Quinn (1996), a top-down process is that organisations and their members reinvent themselves due to external pressure for change. Organisational change consequently brings about personal change (p.8). However, the top-down model “blinds us to an equally accurate but seldom recognised”, bottom-up counterpart “based on an opposing set of assumptions”, starting with an individual (p.8).

The third set of approaches to change is Beer and Nohria’s (2000) theory E and O of change (see Table 5.1 below), similar to the top-down and bottom-up approaches in some aspects.

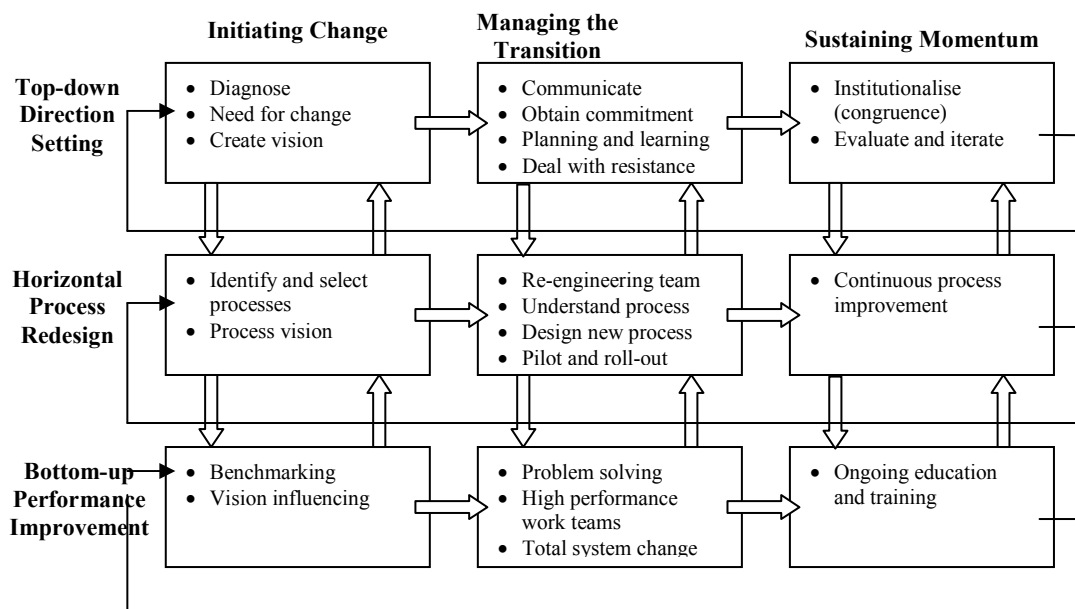
Table 5.1 Theories E and O of change

Purpose and Means	Theory E	Theory O
Purpose	Maximise economic value	Develop organisational capabilities
Leadership	Top-down	Participative
Focus	Structure and systems	Culture
Planning	Programmatic	Emergent
Motivation	Incentives lead	Incentives lag
Consultants	Large/knowledge-driven	Small/process-driven

Source: Beer and Nohria (2000, p. 4)

In addition to the top-down and bottom-up approaches to change, Orland (1997) identifies horizontal process redesign as a third approach that managers may consider in conjunction with the other two (see Figure 5.2 below).

Figure 5.2 The strategic change matrix



Source: Orland (1997, p. 234)

The literature also distinguishes between change management and organisational development (Worren, Ruddle & Moore, 1997), although there are some overlaps between them (see Table 5.2 below). Organisational development is characterised by a particular emphasis on processes, medium to long-term change orientation, involvement of the organisation as both a whole and its parts, its participative approach, the existence of senior management support and involvement, engagement of a facilitator as a change agent, and the process of planned change adaptive to a changing situation (Senior, 2002, p.302). As illustrated in Table 5.2 below, the role of management in organisational development and change management is differentiated. In the case of organisational development, managers often take up the role as process facilitators or consultants, whereas in change management, they also act as experts on the content of change programmes.

Among these approaches to change, the strength of the linear, prescriptive models is emphasised in that they provide managers and leaders a framework and guideline for formulating concrete actions (Orgland, 1997, 21). These approaches are known as the hard system model of change (Senior, 2002). On the other hand, the simplicity, linearity and generality aspect of these models is critiqued, as some of them fail to consider the differences in individual reaction to change (Orgland, 1997, 21). As stated by Quinn (1996), “organisational and personal growth seldom follows a linear plan” (p.83).

Table 5.2 Distinctive features associated with organisational development and change management

	Organisational Development	Change Management
Underlying theory and analytical framework	Based primarily on psychology (human process)	Includes principles and tools from sociology, IT, and strategic change theories
	Individual/group functioning	Individual/group functioning AND systems, structures, work processes (congruence model)
Role of change agent	Facilitator or process consultant	Content expert (organisation design and human performance) AND process consultant
		Member of cross-functional team which includes strategists and technologists
		Part of project organisation which includes client managers/ employees
Intervention strategies	Not directly linked to strategy	Driven by strategy
	Focus on one component at a time	Simultaneous focus on several components (strategy, human resources, organisation design, technology)
	Normative-reeducative (change attitudes in order to change behaviour)	Action-oriented (change behaviour before attitudes)

Source: Worren, Ruddle and Moore (1997, p. 5)

5.4 The processual analysis of change

Research into organisational change covers both the content and the process. As noted by Burke (2002), the distinction between the two is important because the content of change, “the *what*, provides the vision and overall direction for the change; and the process, the *how*, concerns implementation and adoption. Content has to do with purpose, mission, strategy, values, and what the organisation is all about – or should be about. Process has to do with how the change is planned, launched, more fully implemented, and once into implementation, sustained” (p.14).

The decision to focus on ‘process’ in this study is supported by other researchers. For example, Balchin (1981) suggests that:

“No landscape is static, and even as we examine and understand what it has become it is in the process of becoming something different. The only constant factor in the landscape is that of change. We are spectators of a transient scene and the process is never-ending with or without Man, though Man will often accelerate the rate of change or, conversely, slow down the process with conservation measures.” (p. 248)

Similarly, Vaill (1996) argues, in the explanation of his notion of ‘leaderly learning’, that:

“The word learning is not used here as a noun, meaning ‘knowledge obtained’. Rather it is to be taken as a gerund – thus, it describes an ongoing process of

action. The ongoing process of learning is occurring all the time in executive life. The word leaderly is an adjective modifying learning. Thus, leaderly learning is the kind of learning that a managerial leader needs to engage in as an ongoing process in the job.” (p. 127).

With reference to the focus of this study on the process of management learning as their initiation of change, Table 5.3 below summarises models that are commonly used to describe the process of change in the literature.

Other studies have similarly focussed on the process of learning (for example: Bird, Taylor & Beechler, 1999). Despite the same focus on the process of learning, this study differs from others in terms of its unit of analysis – individuals, not firms (e.g. Bird *et al.*, 1999). As far as this study is concerned, it deals primarily with the initiation phase of the change process during managers’ learning at work. This, however, does not indicate a top-down process in which organisations, responsive to external forces, change first, and are then followed by their members (Quinn, 1996, p.8) and the existence of external forces facing organisations is not disputed. Rather, this study focuses on the bottom-up approach to change, beginning with managers themselves. Therefore, one of the contributions that this study makes is to theorise, from a process-relational perspective of organising and managing (Watson, 2002), a seldom recognised, individual-to-organisation process of change (Quinn, 1996).

Table 5.3 Models for the change process

Model	Process
Lewin (1947)	Unfreezing – Changing – Refreezing
Beckhard and Harris (1987)	Present state – Transition state – Future state
Beer(1980)	Dissatisfaction – Process – Model
Bridges (1986)	Ending phase – Neutral zone – New beginning
Fink, Beak and Taddeo (1971)	Shock – Defensive retreat – Acknowledgement – Adaptation and change
Hage (1980)	Evaluation – Initiation – Implementation – Routinisation
Kanter (1983)	Departure from tradition and crises – Strategic decisions and prime movers – Action vehicles and institutionalisation
Kubler-Ross (1969)	Denial and isolation – Anger – Bargaining – Depression - Acceptance
Orgland (1997)	Initiating – managing – sustaining
Tannenbaum and Hanna (1985)	Holding on – Letting go – Moving on
Tichy and Devanna (1986)	Act I awakening – Act II Mobilising – Act III Reinforcing
Nadler and Tushman (1989)	Energising – Envisioning – Enabling

Adapted from: Kanter, Stein, and Jick (1992, p. 376); Orgland (1997, p. 20)

5.5 Levels of analysis in researching into change management

Known for its breadth and multi-facetedness (Senge, 2003, p. 47), the existing body of literature on learning and change covers several levels of analysis, treating them either in relation to or without integration with other levels. As suggested by Burke (2002), the levels of analysis include: individual, group/work unit, the total system (p.13).

The level of individual (especially managers)

Fundamentally, individuals are regarded as change agent (Basil & Cook, 1974). The findings of this study supports this view that managers across all levels in these two organisations acted as change agents, initiating changes in their learning. Their role, as suggested by the data, has a dual one. On one hand, they are learners themselves as they acknowledged implicitly or explicitly when describing their learning in the

workplace. On the other hand, they are change agents, championing changes in what they do on a day-to-day basis, both individually and collectively. The recognition of this dual role of managers in the workplace learning has an important implication for the academic discourse, which often regards managers as participants whose behaviours are changed as a result of learning. This study adds, or at least makes explicitly clear that managers can indeed, as a consequence of their learning, change the behaviour of individuals (including themselves), groups, organisations and a constellation of organisations.

At the level of individual, the role of senior management has been attributed as “the single most visible factor” (Kotter & Heskett, 1992, p. 84). According to Steve Newhall, DDI’s UK managing director, employers should “put more emphasis on leadership development for middle managers, to ensure that they get support and coaching and to open channels through which they can question and understand strategy” (Maitland, 2003, p. 16). At the same time, “middle managers must also help themselves by making time for personal development, seeking feedback, forcing themselves to delegate and forging good relationships with those above them so they do not feel ‘squeezed in a vice’” (p. 16). Within the context of this study, the role of subsidiary managers is divided into three categories: global networker and profile builder; entrepreneur and catalyst for change; advocate and defender of country operations (Birkinshaw *et al.*, 2006). The findings of this study support this specific categorisation in multinational corporations, extending beyond the existing general conceptualisation of management role in initiating and leading changes as architect, network builder and juggler (Tushman & O’Reilly, 1997, p. 225).

Management learning and the role of management in the initiation of change is further distinguished from ‘leaderly learning’ (Vaill, 1996), considering the differences in their paradigms (see Table 5.4 below). As argued by Sadler-Smith (2006), “managers are key players in the learning process in organisations” (p. 284) and can act as “sponsors of learning”, “clients of the L&D functions” and “facilitators of individual and organisational learning” (p. 285). Furthermore, managers may act as “agents of change in their organisations and through their own learning..., facilitate the learning of the organisation itself” (p. 285). Therefore, “the manager-in-learning and the manager-as-learner overlap in this respect” (p.285).

The level of organisation

Organisational learning and change consists of individual, team, and inter-departmental group learning, functioning as a recursive system (Coghlan, 2000). Van der Vegt and Bunderson (2005) examine “expertise diversity’s relationship with team learning and team performance under varying levels of collective team identification” (p. 532). Next, Antonacopoulou (2000) seeks to understand “how ‘learning structures’ are fabricated within a society and to distinguish the factors which facilitate and inhibit individuals’ receptivity towards the need to learn” (p. 1). It is also necessary to determine how societal, organisational and individual learning interact (p. 1). Moreover, Holmqvist (2003) makes comparison between intra-organisational versus inter-organisational learning. Finally, population level learning is understood as “systematic change in the nature and mix of organisational action routines in a population of organisations, arising from experience” (Miner & Haunschild, 1995, p. 118).

Table 5.4 **Three paradigms of organisational life**

	Individual Contributor Technical Paradigm	Manager Transactional Paradigm	Leader Transformational Paradigm
First objective	Personal survival	Personal survival	Vision realisation
Nature of organisation	Technical system	Political system	Moral system
Source of power	Technical competence	Effective transactions	Core values
Source of credibility	Technical standards	Organisational position	Behavioural integrity
Orientation to authority	Cynical	Responsive	Self-authorising
Orientation to elite	Rational confrontation	Compromise	Complex confrontation
Orientation to planning	Rational-tactical	Rational-strategic	Action learning
Communication patterns	Factual	Conceptual	Symbolic
Strategic complexity	Simple	Complex	Highly complex
Behaviour patterns	Conventional	Conventional	Unconventional
Ease of understanding	Comprehensible	Comprehensible	Nearly incomprehensible
Source of Paradigm	Professional training	Administrative socialisation	Personal rebirth

Source: Quinn (1996, p.113)

The relationship between individual and organisational learning

The relationship between these levels of analysis has generated a considerable amount of debate. Simon (1991) argues that “all learning takes place inside individual human heads; an organisation learns by either the learning of its members or ingesting new members who have knowledge the organisation didn’t previously have” (p. 125). That individual and organisational learning may produce knowledge of different but inter-related nature. However, Senge (2003) disagrees with the view that “organisations can change without personal change”, especially that of people in leadership positions (p. 48). Based on Parsons’ general theory of action, Casey (2005) proposes a sociological model of organisational learning “which defines individuals and organisations as learning systems, and uses diagnostic questions related to adaptation, goal attainment, integration, and pattern maintenance to identify individual and organisational learning needs” (p. 131). Slotte, Tynjala and Hytonen (2004) however, favour learning at

organisation and collective levels, and less so at individual level and are primarily concerned about “the challenges posed by learning and to the integration of individual learning needs with organisation needs through HRD activities” (p. 488). In Friedman’s (2001) study, the critical role of individual “as agent of, not as a metaphor for, organisational learning” is highlighted (p. 400). Four pairs of attributes of such a role, as suggested by the findings of his case studies, are: proactive but reflective, high aspirations but realistic about limitations, critical but committed, and independent but very cooperative with others (p.404). The considerable risks and disincentives attached to taking on such a role are also discussed in his study (p. 404).

Furthermore, Quinn (1996) places much emphasis on the important link between change at the personal and organisational level. To make personal change is to develop a new paradigm, a new self, aligning more effectively with today’s realities, provided that we are willing to enter into unknown or unfamiliar territory and confront the difficult problems we encounter (p. 9). Quinn (1996) also argues that “change can and does come from the bottom up” (p. 11), generating from individual all the way up to group, organisation and constellations of organisation:

“This journey does not follow the assumptions of rational planning. The objective may not be clear, and the path to it is not paved with familiar procedures. This tortuous journey requires that we leave our comfort zone and step outside our normal roles. In doing so, we learn the paradoxical lesson that we can change the world only by changing ourselves. This is not just a cute abstraction; it is an elusive key to effective performance in all aspects of life.”

(p.9)

The multi-levelled effort and contribution in the construction of the theory ‘resourcing change’ looked into the learning of individual, group, organisational and inter-organisational and the interaction between levels. My emphasis on the multi-levelled approach to management and organisational theorisation, to a large extent, reflects an increasingly important phenomenon of creating synergy in organising and managing in an inter-connected manner. This phenomenon is sometimes known as “network” (Nohria & Eccles, 1992), referring to both “certain characteristics of any organisation” and “a particular form of organisation” (p. ii).

5.6 Challenges of management initiation of change

This study focuses on the initiation stage, not on implementation or other stages of change and looks at difficulties that managers experience when initiating changes. It is suggested that “only a few companies have succeeded in implementing major change” (Orgland, 1997, p. 2). Kotter (1996) discusses several reasons accounting for their failures and common errors. The literature identifies other contributing factors towards partial or non-implementation of change: unexpected budget cuts and leadership turnover (Latta & Myers, 2005), irrelevance and “not walking the talk” (Senge, Kleiner, Roberts, Ross, Roth & Smith, 1999). Well-intended but poorly-implemented organisational changes are familiar in organisations known as ‘passive-aggressive organisation’ (Neilson, Pasternack & Van Nuys, 2005) which is characterised by its “quiet but tenacious resistance in every possible way but [receptive] to corporate directives” (p. 1). Furthermore, change initiatives are not able to materialise due to the misalignment between motivators, decision rights, information and organisational structure (p. 5). Thus, three common failings of

'passive-aggressive organisations' are: unclear scope of authority; misleading goals; agreement without cooperation (p. 4). Two companies (both Japanese) can claim however to have succeeded, namely Honda and Toyota (Pfeffer & Sutton, 2000). The genius of the Honda system was said to be "in its implementation, not in particularly novel or complicated technical ideas for enhancing productivity" (p.15). It was also stated that the Toyota Production System (TPS) was "about philosophy and perspective, about such things as people, processes, quality, and continuous improvement..., not just a set of techniques or practices" (p.23).

The literature also indicates an overlap or area of ambiguity, when discussing these two stages of change (initiation and implementation). Furthermore, the existing literature categorises change-makers into three distinct groups of people: strategist, implementers and recipients (Kanter *et al.*, 1992) and each with a different set of roles and mind-set, orientation to change and action focus. This study is about how change initiators or strategists (managers) cope with challenges in the change initiation process. The barriers that managers face, vary from open rebellion to subtle, passive resistance (Schlesinger *et al.*, 1992, p. 345). It is not about how change implementers or recipients cope with changes generally, which issue has been widely discussed previously, however, some of the barriers and coping mechanisms both groups employ might be similar. The focus of this study is about an entirely different social psychological process. The term 'challenge' adopted in this study means "the conditions of the environment that regulate growth" – "opportunities to improve by exercising our attention, understanding, and ultimate creativity", an alternative meaning suggested by natural systems (Senge *et al.*, 1999, p. 29).

Looking at the circumstances surrounding partial implementation, it has been estimated that the ratio between full implementation of the initiated changes and non-implementation is in the region of 80:20 (DR100406). The reasons given for non-implementation are varied and include instances where, despite an earlier perception that change was necessary and/or advantageous, a subsequent review determined that in fact change was not desirable as it would have been counter-productive and in practice would not have brought about any improvement. Similarly, some changes are simply considered to be unnecessary. At other times, initially unforeseen constraints were encountered. Finally, at times, the absence of sufficient data meant that recipients were simply unable to do as suggested. To avoid the partial implementation, retrospectively questioning the very rationale of initiated change is urged. This was to suggest that at the beginning, managers asked themselves why they were doing it in the first place. Besides questioning the rationale for changes, managers often looked at the possibly future changes in the sealing products business, such as coating and graining related sealing. Their view being that if the problem was not dealt with at the outset, it would only be encountered at a later date (KP100406).

Role ambiguity

Among ambiguities in goal, data, role, method and criterion of change, a frequently experienced barrier that managers experience when initiating change is the role ambiguity in a change situation (Stewart, 1983; Handy, 1999). For instance, the distinction between strategist (or initiator) and implementer is not so clear-cut. The problems associated with the separation of these two roles in the academic discourse have already been highlighted by the practising managers, who regard “not walking

the talk” as a common criticism or contributing factor to change management failures (Senge *et al.*, 1999). It is suggested that both change strategist (or initiator) and implementer should be encouraged to work much closer and to have a dual role rather than adopting damagingly clear division of labour. They should also become interested and look into each other’s problems to ensure the eventual success of organisational change. The challenge of role ambiguity can be interpreted as part of the general uncertainty surrounding change initiation. According to Quinn (1996), it is stated that:

“When we have a vision, it does not necessarily mean that we have a plan. We may know where we want to be, but we will seldom know the actual steps we must take to get there. We must trust in ourselves to learn the way, to build the bridge as we walk on it. Deep change is an extensive learning process. When we pursue our vision, we must believe that we have enough courage and confidence in ourselves to reach our goal. We must leap into the chasm of uncertainty and strive bravely ahead.” (pp.83-4)

Managers often assume different sets of role in leading change: architect, network builder and juggler (Tushman & O’Reilly, 1997); strategist, implementer and recipient (Kanter, Stein & Jick, 1992). The general challenge for the leadership in a change situation is, according to Tushman and O’Reilly (1997):

“Managing an organisation that can succeed at both incremental and radical innovation is like juggling. A juggler who is very good at manipulating just a couple of balls is not interesting. It is only when the juggler can handle

multiple balls at one time that his or her skill is respected. For organisations, success for both today and tomorrow requires managers who can simultaneously juggle several inconsistent organisational architectures and cultures and who can build and manage ambidextrous organisations.” (pp. 36-7)

Organisational and management culture

The next barrier to management initiation of change is the bureaucratic organisational and management culture (Schein, 1994). They include, for example, multiple layers of hierarchy, a tradition of top-down change, short-term thinking, lack of senior management support for change, limited rewards, lack of vision, an emphasis on status quo and lack of senior management commitment (Senge *et al.*, 1999; Quinn, 1996). Furthermore, Coutu (2002) argues that why learning to learn is so difficult has to do with culture - not knowing “how to systematically intervene in the culture to create transformational learning across the organisation” (p. 5). Embedded conflict is also a feature of organisational and management culture, which exists between functions in the organisation or between peers (Quinn, 1996, p. 135). Therefore, for changes and innovations to thrive, cultures of pride, success, empowerment and employee involvement should be cultivated (Kanter, 1983).

Peer pressure and resistant attitude of supervisors

Organisational change is sometimes resisted to save face, either due to peer pressure or because of a supervisor’s resistant attitude (Schlesinger *et al.*, 1992). In such cases,

it was suggested that “to go along with the change would be an admission that some of their previous decisions or beliefs were wrong” (p.348). According to Quinn (1996), “these pressures are not a result of bad intent; they are a natural consequence of the organising process” (p. 136). The average organisational member has a tendency towards conformity, i.e. “not rocking the boat” (p. 136). These two factors of course, go hand in hand with general determinants of group effectiveness (i.e. size, member characteristics, individual objectives and stage of development) (Handy, 1999). In the case of Ricoh, for example, the perceived resistance on the part of Japanese expatriate managers and the competitive pressure between sales and manufacturing personnel are challenges when promoting the reconditioning business in RPL.

Politics and political behaviour

Politics and political behaviour also generate resistance to organisational change. As suggested by Schlesinger *et al.* (1992), “people focus on their own interests and not the total organisation”, being afraid of losing “something of personal value due to change” (p. 345). “What is in the best interests of one individual or group is sometimes not in the best interests of the total organisation or of other individuals and groups” (p. 345). “As a result, politics and power struggles often emerge through, [and serve as barriers to], change efforts” (p. 345). The fact that people in organisations “compete amongst themselves for power and resources” (Handy, 1999, p. 291) and “there are differences of opinions and of values, conflicts of priorities and of goals” (p. 291) are the sources of political behaviour. Nevertheless, these differences are of essential importance to change (p.313) and managers do spend the

largest amount of time in dealing with and resolving them in their day-to-day work (p.291).

Misunderstanding and lack of trust

Misunderstanding and a lack of trust also causes people to resist change when they wrongly perceive or calculate the costs and benefits of change (Schlesinger *et al.*, 1992, p. 346). This is caused either by one's inability "to understand the full implications of a change" or the lack of trust in the change initiator-implementer-recipient relationship (p. 346). This area of ambiguity is regarded as goal ambiguity (Stewart, 1983), concerning the differences between implementer or recipient's analysis of the change situation and that of initiator (Schlesinger *et al.*, 1992, p. 346). As the Ricoh data suggested, the lack of incentive to sell re-conditioned machines in its reconditioning business was said to cause reluctance to embrace the initiated changes. This therefore splits true-believers from non-believers among those involved in the change programmes (Senge *et al.*, 1999). Furthermore, what is fundamentally crucial is the clarity and credibility of the management's aims and values and the match between their behaviour and espoused values (Senge *et al.*, 1999).

Fear

Fear is another major barrier to management initiation of change (Quinn, 1996; Senge *et al.*, 1999), creating a knowing-doing gap (Pfeffer & Sutton, 2000). Schein (1984) suggests Anxiety 1 & 2. 'Anxiety 1' is fear of change, based on a fear of the unknown, whereas 'Anxiety 2' is "the fear, shame or guilt associated with not learning anything

new” (Schein, 1993, p. 88). Schein (1993) also argues that to manage Anxiety 1, Anxiety 2 must be created (p. 88). Anxiety 2 must be greater than Anxiety 1 for new learning to take place (p. 88). Coutu (2002) similarly identifies learning anxiety and survival anxiety. Learning anxiety, as the basis for resistance to change, “comes from being afraid to try something new” (p. 6). Survival anxiety is the uncomfortable realisation that in order to make it, one will have to change (p. 6). According to Schlesinger *et al.* (1992), changes are sometimes resisted because people “know or fear they will not be able to develop the new skills and behaviours required” (p. 347). The research findings – both Cooper Standard and Ricoh’s workforce in the UK are uncertain about their future – also confirm that uncertainty contributes to the development of fear and anxiety (Senge *et al.*, 1999).

Time

Not having enough time is a frequently cited challenge in initiation of change (Senge *et al.*, 1999). “Changing the hearts and minds of everyone involved takes time and sustaining improvements over time is not easy” (David & Jones, 2001, p. 1). As suggested by Quinn (1996), personal time often constrains management initiation of change. Considering that managers work under stressful conditions, they “often indicate that it is very difficult to think about initiating anything new” (p. 135). According to Senge *et al.* (1999), one extreme situation will be that little or no progress will happen in the initiated change programme when there is no time flexibility (p. 69). People will either have no time to commit themselves or try to make some time when it is really too late (p. 69). Various factors associated with the ‘not enough time’ or ‘lack of time flexibility’ phenomena have been identified by

Senge *et al.* (1999). They are, for instance: non-integration of change initiatives, not valuing unstructured time, political game playing, and non-essential demands (Senge *et al.*, 1999).

Cost maintenance and reduction

At the operational level, cost maintenance and reduction poses a major challenge. In the manufacturing business in the UK, the pressure of producing at the right price is a major concern. Cost cutting involves the reduction, and if possible, removal of wasteful practices and procedures, controlling resources, managing the conflict between volume discounting and inventory reduction, and in the case of Ricoh (UK), using more recycled parts in manufacturing recycled copiers. The general cost maintenance and reduction has then, to a large extent, forces organisations to focus on the core business and disabled them to carry out experiments and non-core activities which are resultant from managers' learning. The pressure to manage the cost, on one hand, and the pressure to remain competitive on the other hand, is a tactful balancing act.

Working with others

In addition to cost, working with customers, designers and in the case of Cooper Standard, frequently with other suppliers in serving mutual customers presents a great challenge in the initiation of change. The importance of working closely between designer and manufacturer is suggested by Simon (1991):

“A common complaint about contemporary American practice in new product design is that the design process is carried quite far before manufacturing expertise is brought to bear on it. But ease and cheapness of manufacture can be a key to the prospects of a product in competitive markets, and failure to consider manufacturability at an early stage usually causes extensive redesign with a corresponding increase in the time interval from initial idea to a manufactured product. These time delays are thought to be a major factor in the poor showing of many American industries in competing with the Japanese.” (p. 131)

Considering the fact that Cooper Standard is the sole supplier of one of their customers in China, it has become more challenging for Cooper Standard to provide adequate level of customer support. With regard to support provision within the Cooper Standard group, failing to provide technical support to Cooper Standard’s manufacturing facilities in China would result in its customer in China having no safety net to fall back on, with no alternative suppliers to turn to in case of failure. The inter-plant support is also necessary, as far as Cooper Standard’s operation in Europe is concerned. However, it was noted that inter-supplier compatibility in terms of manufacturing capability had been a constant concern. If not resolved, the consequential effect on component quality could cause problems for its customer. In the case of Ricoh, having close contact with the original designers and building product confidence with customers, are the two major aspects of customer-designer-supplier relationship.

The subject of inter-supplier compatibility is proving a challenge that has yet to be adequately addressed (IP080906). Because of the involvement of multiple suppliers in service of a common customer, working with competitors within a collaborative framework is becoming increasingly crucial. For instance, Cooper Standard must satisfy themselves about all aspects of design undertaken by other suppliers and ensure that the items can be produced by their own plant in China. Some doubt has however been cast upon the capabilities of their Chinese division to produce all that may be required.

5.7 Addressing challenges arising in management initiation of change

Having reviewed challenges that managers experienced during the initiation of change, the findings of this study are compared with the existing literature with regard to ways of dealing with them. In this study, the core process (or core category) is conceptualised as ‘resourcing change’, a social psychological process with the following sub-processes explaining management behaviour. However, the core social psychological process being researched in this study differs from the general managerial strategies for coping with organisational changes and dealing with resistances to change covered in the literature (e.g. Bauman, 1998; Carnall, 1995; Kanter, Stein & Jick, 1992; Kotter & Cohen, 2002; Scott & Jaffe, 1989; Schlesinger *et al.*, 1992; Stewart, 1983). For instance, Carnall (1995) suggests strategies for coping with issues involved in the process of change: rebuilding self-esteem, providing information, giving people time, involving people. These strategies tend to focus on people related issues at the individual level. Other strategies (e.g. Bauman, 1998’s cultivate a winning attitude, make the organisation the hero, establish cumulative

learning, promote strategic communication, align strategy and behaviour) for coping with change have a group or organisational focus.

Reducing cost

A key feature of success in today's manufacturing industries, is the ever important need to reduce costs in order to become more competitive. Depending upon the company, its location and the nature of its business etc. steps to achieve that objective might include expansion, relocation, upgrading and in some cases, closing down of manufacturing locations (Pongpanich, 2000). In the case of Cooper Standard (UK), it meant the relocation of its manufacturing facilities to low cost countries in the East. To build upon the success of that bold move, the company plan to develop further plants in the countries concerned. Other measures included the introduction of a common profile in its sealing business to minimise the cost of designing different sealing profiles for different customers. With Ricoh (UK), the eradication of wasteful and inefficient manufacturing processes and a greater use of re-cycled parts in the manufacture of their re-conditioned photocopiers, were among their cost cutting initiatives.

With regard to the trend of relocating manufacturing facilities in low cost countries (such as Poland), it has been observed that in some cases, these countries are now suffering from a shortage of labour which in turn, results in higher wages. According to Perry and Power (2007), "fast growth and high emigration to richer Western European countries are threatening to undermine the strongest asset of the former Soviet bloc nations that joined the European Union" in recent years, viz. an

abundance of “skills labour at the right price” and in the right place. “A dwindling pool of workers is driving up wages in key industries and forcing companies to go to greater lengths to recruit and retain people” (p.1).

Convincing senior management and potential resisters

‘Convincing’, especially those at the senior management level, plays a significant part. This kind of behavioural pattern is also known as “the exercise of upward influence” (Mowday, 1978). According to Mowday (1978), there are two major elements in any influence behaviour, namely: ‘influence target’ and ‘methods of influence’. The latter may include “threats, legitimate authority, persuasive arguments, rewards or exchange of favours, providing information in such a way that the recipient is not aware that he or she is being influenced” (pp. 142-3). The data from both cases also suggests the exercise of downward influence (Mowday, 1978). In the Cooper Standard data, for instance, it is noted that ‘convincing’ was exercised by using the key people (i.e. in-house Japanese manufacturing advisors).

The strategy of convincing not just gatekeepers, but also potential resisters is discussed in the general body of change management literature covering Jamie Oliver’s campaign to bring healthy eating back into the UK schools (Anstead, 2005). Given the fact that the pupils themselves represented the biggest challenge, Jamie launched an educational campaign “to show the children what was going into their favourite nutrient-deficient food” (p. A5). “It was only when he invited [the pupils]... to make up their own suggestions from ingredients supplied in cookery classes that they seemed willing to try anything new” (p. A5). For that reason, the account of

Jamie Oliver's experience is an important lesson to be learnt by managers who need to involve themselves with workers and convince them "if they want to make a difference" (p. A5).

Moreover, the need for senior management commitment and involvement has been widely suggested in the change management literature (for example, Denton, 1998; Van der Sluis, Williams & Hoeksema, 2002). The literature also deals with the commitment required generally in change situations, not just that of senior management – a bottom-up process of promoting commitment through choice, visibility, irrevocability (Tushman & O'Reilly, 1997). Particular attention paid to senior management is deemed necessary because of the 'cappuccino economy' phenomenon of organisational life (Shapiro, 2000), which sees "two distinct layers, with the top layer slowly mixing in and infiltrating the one below it" (p.181). The senior management commitment, involvement and acceptance will then be translated to that of the entire workforce within the organisation (Van der Sluis, Williams & Hoeksema, 2002). An important ingredient in securing senior management commitment and involvement is passion. The data from this study suggests that managers are passionate about the changes they initiated. Elsewhere for instance, in Jamie Oliver's slow food campaign, passion is said to be a prerequisite for change (Anstead, 2006). Moreover, Tushman and O'Reilly (1997) suggest the "use the psychology of choice to promote commitment by: designing systems and procedures that encourage people to continually make choices; emphasising the intrinsic rewards for tasks, not just the instrumental ones; obtaining incremental or step-by-step choices and; ensuring that people have a realistic picture before choosing and inoculating them against future surprises" (p. 133). As shown in Table 5.5 below, the literature

also suggests a wide range of tactics for dealing with resistance to change, which can be used by both managerial and non-managerial personnel.

Yukl, Fu and McDonald (2003) explore “the cross-cultural differences in the perceived effectiveness of various influence tactics for gaining approval from a boss for a proposed change, or for resisting a change initiated by a boss” (p.68). However, this study regards the influence tactics for gaining approval from a boss for a proposed change as just one of the dimensions of dealing with proposed change.

Table 5.5 Tactics for dealing with resistance to change

Tactic	Best for:	Advantages	Drawbacks
Education/ Communication	Resistance based on lack of information or Inaccurate information And analysis.	Once persuaded, people will often help with implementing the change.	Can be very time consuming if large Numbers of people are involved.
Participation	Situations in which Initiators do not have all The information needed To design the change and Where others have Considerable power to Resist.	People who participant will be committed to implementing change. Any relevant information they have will be integrated into the change plan.	Can be time consuming. Participators could design an Inappropriate change.
Facilitation And support	Dealing with people who are resisting because of Adjustment problems.	No other tactic works as well with adjustment problems.	Can be time Consuming, expensive, And still fail.
Negotiation	Situations where someone Or some group will lose in avoid major resistance. A Change and where they Have considerable Power to resist	Sometimes it is an easy way to	Can be too expensive In many cases. Can alert others to negotiate for compliance.
Co-optation	Specific situations where The other tactics are too Expensive or are not Feasible.	Can help generate support for implementing a change (but less than participation).	Can create problems if people recognise the Co-optation.
Manipulation	Situations where other Tactics will not work Or are too expensive	Can be a quick and inexpensive solution to resistance problems.	Costs initiators some Credibility. Can lead to future problems.
Coercion	When speed is essential And the change initiators Possess considerable Power.	Speed. Can overcome any kind of resistance.	Risky. Can leave People angry with the initiators.

Source: Schlesinger *et al.* (1992, p. 352)

Creating synergies

As suggested by Kogut (2004), “globalisation is less and less about national competition around sectoral dominance but about the location of the value-added activities that compose the global commodity chains” (p. 280). Therefore it is critical to evaluate the degree by which industries have pulled together the building blocks of global coordination (p.279). Internal competition in a firm sometimes turns friends

into enemies (Pfeffer & Sutton, 2000). “In some industries, coordination costs overwhelm the savings of global sourcing” (Kogut, 2004, p.280). Bringing people and departments within, or even beyond, an organisation together, thus, creating synergies, is an effective way of resolving inter-unit, department or even organisational conflicts (Pfeffer & Sutton, 2000). From a network point of view, Kraatz (1998) argues that “strong ties to other organisations mitigate uncertainty and promote adaptation by increasing communication and information sharing..., rather than other, less productive, forms of inter-organisational imitation” (p. 621).

Considering that a critical measure of global coordination is the extent of worldwide prevalence in modularity, allowing for dispersed production (Kogut, 2004, p.279), Eisenhardt and Galunic (2001) define the term coevolving as a way to make synergies work. Originated in biology, co-evolution refers to “successive changes among two or more ecologically interdependent but unique species such that their co-evolutionary trajectories become intertwined over time. As these species adapt to their environment, they also adapt to one another. The result is an ecosystem of partially interdependent species that adapt together” (p.115). Applied into today’s business context, it is suggested that “links among companies are temporary” and it is the number of connections that matter, not just the content (pp. 111-2). In coevolving companies the context should simply be set and then collaboration (and competition) be permitted to emerge from business units, rather than any collaborative strategic planning from the top (p. 112). Table 5.6 below demonstrates the distinct differences between collaboration and co-evolution.

Table 5.6 Traditional collaboration vs. Co-evolution

	Traditional collaboration	Co-evolution
Form of Collaboration	Frozen links among static businesses	Shifting webs among evolving businesses
Objectives	Efficiency and economies of scale	Growth, agility, and economies of scope
Internal dynamics Focus	Collaborate content of collaboration	Collaborate and compete Content and number of collaborative links
Corporate role	Drive collaboration	Set collaborative context
Business role	Execute collaboration	Drive and execute Collaboration
Incentive	Varied	Self-interest, based on individual business-unit performance
Business metrics	Performance against budget, the preceding year, or sister-business performance	Performance against competitors in growth, share, and profits

Source: Eisenhardt and Galunic (2001, p. 115)

From a Japanese multinational corporation (MNCs) perspective, creating synergies have called for rethinking in some of the practices of Japanese internationalisation and different consequences discussed in Ricoh (UK) and beyond. According to Whitley, Morgan, Kelly and Sharpe (2001), “if Japanese MNCs firms do begin to produce a significant proportion of their outputs abroad, especially if they also locate strategic resources and activities in foreign locations, such that domestic markets and facilities constitute less than half of sales and value added activities, they may well consider developing a less centralised structure and attempt to learn from local innovations” (p. 4). It is further suggested by Whitley *et al.* (2001) that “given the continued success of many Japanese firms in consumer electronics and car manufacturing..., it seems improbable that they will radically change their coordination system, but particularly successful subsidiaries may be encouraged to contribute to product development and

process improvements on a global basis. Equally, rather less successful ones may be more open to more radical changes, particularly where they have been taken over by foreign companies. This is especially likely in sectors where the dominant framework and rules of the game are Anglo-Saxon rather than Japanese, as in international investment banking, and where changes in the international business environment are combined with domestic restructuring and deregulation. Here, some Japanese firms can be expected to invest in learning from their overseas branches and to operate in novel ways” (p.5).

Unlearning

On the other hand, it is also suggested that senior management and their past learning could play a negative role by preventing or inhibiting unlearning and new learning (Nystrom & Starbuck, 1984, p. 53). Unlearning, or cleaning out the old ways of doing things, may take place in a number of substantive forms or under various circumstances. For example, it may happen through which learners discard knowledge by discovering their inadequacies, making way for new responses and mental maps (Hedberg, 1981, p. 18). As far as managers are concerned, unlearning can be promoted by accepting dissents, interpreting events as learning opportunities, characterising actions as experiments, changing organisational beliefs and values, replacing senior management, and proactively constructing internal crises and responding to externally evoked crises (Nystrom & Starbuck, 1984; Kim, 1998). From a plant manager’s point of view, one interviewee (BM090506) described his strategy of creating a crisis, as opposed to stopping one, in order to address the challenges he faced when trying to re-vitalise Cooper Standard (UK)’s manufacturing plant in

Maesteg. He understood that by creating a crisis, he could initiate radical, rapid changes, not gradual ones. He began by having adopted a specific action plan with prioritised features including making individuals accountable for specific tasks. His regular routine was to walk around the plant at 9 o'clock every morning, ensuring that resources were available in order that his action plan could be implemented. When assessing the level of success arising from his plan, his yardstick was "action" and not "talk". He also communicated the outcome of initiated changes so that people took pride in what they did.

As opposed to external sources of crisis, internal events "provoke crises" – "deliberate actions taken internally" to "open up 'gaps' in the organisation", "although they may be unintentional by-products of other actions" (Hurst, 1995, p. 139). "If managers don't create their own pre-emptive crises, even in what appear to be successful operations, then something else will", as suggested by the eco-cycle (p.138). An ongoing process of renewal appears "to demand continual, constructive damage to the status quo... across at all levels of the organisation" (p. 138). As the Ricoh data suggests, a manager's learning to sell, calls for replacing the old behaviour (manufacturing-centred), with a new one (creating the demand for and selling manufactured copiers). The Cooper Standard data also suggests the case for manager's proactively constructing an internal crisis. However, it is also noted that the few people who feel the need to pro-actively constructing internal crises do so "because of multiple past experiences in making the terrifying journey", according to Quinn (1996, p. 12). Given what have been experienced, "terror turns to faith" and "people 'know how to get lost with confidence'" (p.12).

The practices of learning and unlearning are central features of ambidextrous organisations (Tushman & O'Reilly, 1997). They are characterised by “internally inconsistent competencies, structures, and cultures, yet with a single vision, [providing] the range of capabilities for excelling both today and tomorrow” (p. 35). Managers are given options “from which they can proactively shape evolving innovation streams. But when a management team decides either to shape a dominant design or to initiate a product or process discontinuity, it must also launch discontinuous organisational change” (pp. 35-6). As far as managers are concerned, “this means operating part of the time in a world of relative stability and incremental change, and part of the time in a world of revolutionary change. Innovation streams and technology cycles require that managers periodically destroy their existing products and organisational alignments as innovation streams evolve” (pp.35-6).

Providing change readiness

The proactive construction of crises calls for a supportive culture for learning in organisations, one of the determinant factors contributing to the quality of the learning process (Dixon, 1999). It is also noted that culture is a double-edge sword, as it can both provide competitive advantage and stifle innovation and change (Tushman & O'Reilly, 1997). Providing change readiness (in other words, defining and creating a culture) which supports management learning is characterised by: the specific set of followers, the particular perceptions of a leader and the proactive or passive orientation of a leader (Black & Oliver, 2005). Tushman and O'Reilly (1997) argue that a supportive culture for learning can be shaped through participation and commitment; symbolic actions; rewards and recognition. Moreover, Tyrrell (2005)

describes an organisational culture “in which innovative opportunities are spotted, nurtured and championed in an entrepreneurial manner” as ‘intrapreneurial’ whose main objective is innovation. The term ‘intrapreneurial’ is rooted in Macrae’s argument that “dynamic corporations of the future should simultaneously be trying alternative ways of doing things in competition with themselves” (Tyrrell, 2005). This is in contrast to many organisations who suffer from founder’s disease (Tyrrell, 2005).

The context-for-learning comprises four embedded resources. They are: discipline, stretch, trust, and support (Black & Oliver, 2005, p.75), and embedded competencies of each explained in Table 5.7 below. With regard to the cultivation of support, Sugarman’s (2001) study shows that the senior “executives of Epsilon, Delta, and Components were among the change leaders in their programmes or units; it was their initiative (not their boss’s). They were volunteers in their change initiatives, not under orders to do this, and in presenting it to their followers, they sought volunteers who wanted to become engaged in the initiative. The emphasis was on ‘growing’ support, not on ‘driving’ a programme forward” (pp. 74-5). This has led to the identification of “three identifiable waves of activity”, “led by a corporate entrepreneur”, “occurring in sequence or as successive iterations and reiterations” in “a prototypical innovation” (Kanter, 1983, p. 217). These three waves of activity are: “problem definition – the acquisition and application of information to shape a feasible, focused project”; “coalition building – the development of a network of backers who agree to provide resources and/to support”; and “mobilization – the investment of the acquired resources, information, and support in

Table 5.7 Context-for-learning: discipline, stretch, trust and support

Embedded Resources	Embedded Competencies
Discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear performance standards • Fast feedback • Open communication • Management by commitment
Stretch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared ambition for the future across the organisation • Collective identity • Personal link between the individual's work and the company's priorities (hence personal meaning)
Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived equity in decision making (a.k.a. fair decision making) • Involvement of people in decisions that affected their work or collective problem solving • Individual competence
Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to organisational resources (which was presented as inter-group cooperation and coordination) • Autonomy or the freedom to make decisions • Guidance and help including help from within groups, as well as from management in terms of coaching and support

Source: Black and Oliver (2005, p. 75)

the project itself, including activation of the project's working team to bring the innovation from idea to use" (p. 217).

Entering unfamiliar territory

One of the intrapreneurial behaviours is the exploration of new market opportunities, e.g. selling into BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India and China) market to balance the over-saturated markets in the West. Entering the unfamiliar territory (in one instance, seeking access to new markets by relocating manufacturing facilities, Pongpanich,

2000) can be described as “blue ocean” strategy (Kim & Mauborgne, 2005). Table 5.8 below compares and contrasts blue ocean strategy with red ocean strategy.

Table 5.8 Red ocean vs. blue ocean strategy

Red Ocean Strategy	Blue Ocean Strategy
Compete in existing market space	Create uncontested market space
Beat the competition	Make the competition irrelevant
Exploit existing demand	Create and capture new demand
Make the value-cost trade-off	Break the value-cost trade-off
Align the whole system of a firm’s activities with its strategic choice of differentiation <i>or</i> low cost	Align the whole system of a firm’s activities in pursuit of differentiation <i>and</i> low cost

Source: Kim and Mauborgne (2005, p. 18)

Getting the basics right

The findings of this study also suggest that, to overcome issues involved in the initiation of change process, much emphasis should be placed on getting the basics right. It primarily concerns areas such as customer service, communication, reflective evaluation, complacency and getting the job done. Serving customers better in Cooper Standard, for example, calls for new behaviours such as attending to customer requests in a timely fashion, explaining new procedures (i.e. new cost estimating system) to customers, getting closer to customers, increasing reliance on liaison engineers based in a customer’s plant and developing reciprocal, close relationships with customers. An example of which can be seen in the temporary shipping of sealing parts from Europe to China to satisfy the China-based customer requirements, in so doing, replacing the original (poor quality) parts from Cooper Standard’s

Chinese plant. For managers and organisations to learn better, it is also argued that learning sometimes takes place by assuming the customer's role, which is a common practice in Japan, in addition to employee transfers (known as Shukko in Japanese) (Lincoln, Ahmadjian & Mason, 1998, p. 245).

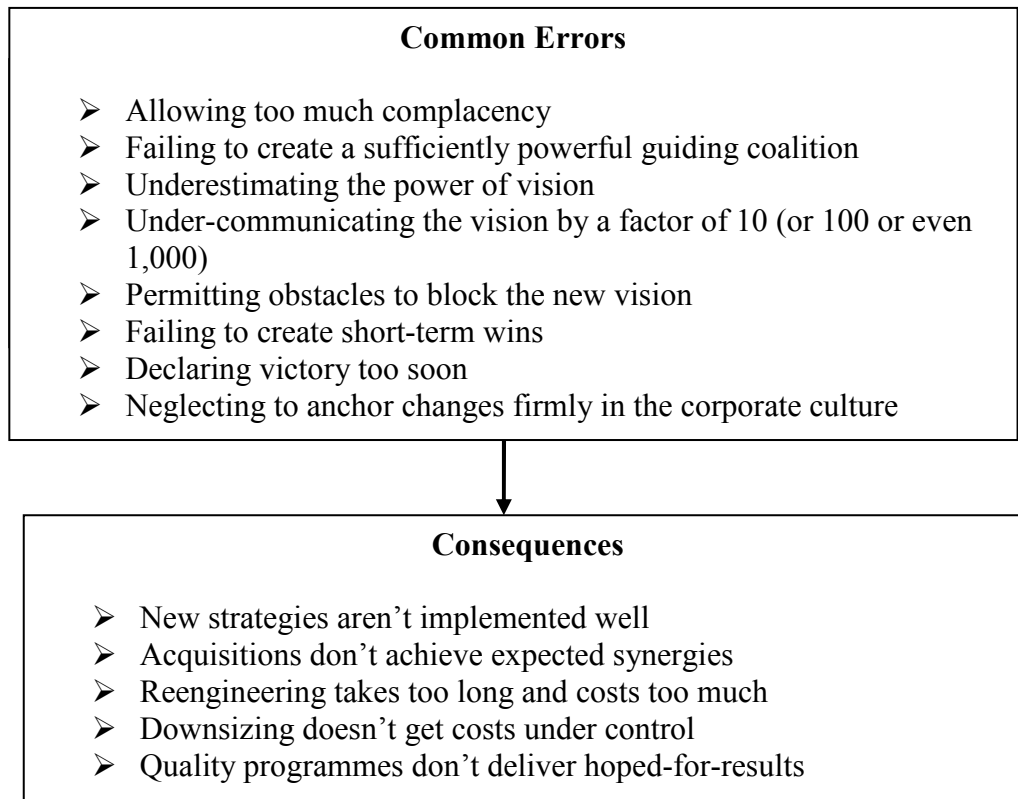
The next task in order to get the basics right, relates to communication in two dimensions. The first dimension is generally to do with keeping communication going, using common sense, to be aware of the possibility of an erroneous perception or impression, having face-to-face contact and getting to know people, all of which are critical in the change initiation process. The second dimension concerns the mentor-protégé relationship. In the Ricoh data, it is noted that effective communication in a mentoring relationship promotes management learning. However, good communication sometimes blocks learning (Argyris, 1994). It is stated that good communication sometimes discourages people from reflecting on their work and behaviour (p. 77). In addition, it “does not encourage individual accountability”, nor elicit the potentially deep, “threatening or embarrassing information that can motivate learning and produce real change” (pp. 77-78).

To bear this potential limitation of good communication in mind, ‘getting the basics right’ further requires evaluative reflection of managers during the change initiation process. Evaluative reflection means reviewing, assessing, questioning, reflecting, explaining, and asking for feedback. As suggested by Marsick (1987), “learning calls for... continual, [habitual and critical] reflection on one's actions..., digging beneath the surface to examine taken-for-granted assumptions, norms and values” (p.9). Following Argyris's (1994) argument, questioning the rationale of change is also

much needed in the change initiation process. “Simultaneous agreement and disagreement around the content and framing of interpretation is especially important in corporate innovative efforts” (Fiol, 1994, p. 403). Questioning the rationale of change is also a matter of balancing conviction and doubt in organisational learning (Srikantia & Pasmore, 1996). Doubt is important in that “individuals are encouraged to examine multiple interpretations of reality and based on such examinations reconfigure their [consensual and collective] working arrangements or methods, [in which situation] learning is more likely to occur” (p. 43). On the other hand, conviction is equally vital, providing “the courage to follow through on one’s creative learning”. When there is too much conviction, it “becomes complacency, rigidity or advocacy”; but without a sufficient amount of conviction, seeking “safety in repeating what is currently acceptable or has worked in the past”, seems to be the best choice (p. 47). In certain mature markets or under particular conditions, complacency has to be overcome to allow for change initiation. For instance, Schifferes (2007) describes that both the near-monopoly conditions in the American market and the seemingly unbeatable lead in technology and marketing within the U.S. causes complacency.

A further task involved in getting the basics right is to deal with complacency in a change situation (Kotter, 1996) (see Figure 5.3 below). As suggested by Hurst (1995), nearly “all the elements of the successful performance organisation can act as hindrances to the renewal process” (p.138).

Figure 5.3 Eight errors common to organisational change efforts and their consequences



Source: Kotter (1996, p. 16)

As an element of getting the basics right, getting the existing facilities right seems to be the only way forward. One of Cooper Standard (UK)'s subsidiaries has experienced significant problems in recent years with the unit underperforming to the extent that closure of the plant was mooted. The employment of a new plant manager some three years ago failed to achieve the required turnaround, as did the hiring of a successor. Both managers lacked the ability to 'stop the rot' and it was not until approximately 18 months ago, with a further replacement drafted in from their U.S. operations, that the decline was checked and the future of the plant was secured. Key features of the recovery plan, absolutely essential in order that the plant should be saved, according to one interviewee (BM090506), were as follows:

- a) Accountability emphasised and enforced, with more attention paid to financial results.
- b) Improvement in productivity – regular comparisons being made between the output of the UK division against that of other Cooper Standard facilities worldwide.
- c) Improvement in quality
- d) The cultivation of greater pride in the company's corporate identity with the resultant achievement of an enhanced status.
- e) The re-introduction of an organisational structure, applicable from shop floor level, up to and including senior management with a system of reporting for the entire workforce set in place.
- f) Streamlining the management team by reducing numbers from ten to five, with a further three leaving at a later date.

5.8 Summary

The study of management and managing has been undertaken from a number of perspectives: structure, process, resource and practice (Reed, 1984). From a multi-level perspective of theorising, this grounded theory study of the learning of managers focuses on the social psychological process – the process of 'resourcing change' that is initiated by managers themselves as their learning at work. It also includes a number of sub-processes with which managers overcome challenges arising in the process of change initiation. The conceptual comparison and integration of concepts emerging from this study, with their counterparts in the literature has led to a set of even more abstract concepts that can be applied beyond the managers in Cooper

Standard (UK) and Ricoh (UK) at the present time. Thus, it is believed that a theory “must not only provide explanations... and provide the means to describe those phenomena... [through defining] the domain of the theory, ...[but also be] universally applicable to all classes of phenomena (Koolhaas, 1982, pp. 25-6).

On learning and changing at work

The outcome of this study highlights the significant facet of ‘situatedness’ of learning (Gherardi, 2000, 2001), which emphasises the actual practice and knowledge in situ (Wenger, 1998a; 1998b). Other studies (e.g. Watson, 1994a) share this perspective on learning, in recognising “the value of formal management [learning and] training, ...a greater stress on its function as... a booster of confidence rather than a direct source of skills and knowledge” (p. 160). It can be further argued that informal management learning provokes changes in practice at the individual, group, organisational and inter-organisational level (Crossan *et al.*, 1995; 1999). The outcome of this study can also be justified by the new paradigm for workplace learning, which suggests that management learning takes place largely in their work practices, through, in and by, manager’s actions (Marsick, 1987). It is therefore believed that learning and changing at work are interchangeable and inseparable. From a constructionist approach to learning (Senge *et al.*, 2005), it is critiqued that the existing literature on organisational learning has yet to reconnect itself to the change management literature (Hendry, 1996).

Considering the absence of the connection between learning and changing (Hendry, 1996), this chapter reviews a number of approaches to change that are commonly

acknowledged in the literature on change management. This study emphasise the bottom-up, individual-to-organisation and multi-level approach to change initiation (Quinn, 1996), beginning with managers themselves. The emphasis on the analysis of social psychological process in grounded theory regards learning and changing as an ongoing process of action (Vaill, 1996), as opposed to content of action (Burke, 2002).

On challenges arising from management initiation of change as their learning at work

As emphasised earlier, this study focuses on the initiation stage of change management, during which a number of challenges should be effectively dealt with. It is also implied that many change programmes have not been successfully implemented due to the failure of taking these challenges into account at the initiation stage. In relation to challenges that managers face during their initiation of changes, the conceptual comparison and integration of the emerged concepts with the literature on change management has suggested a set of more abstract and conceptual concepts with wider applicability.

First of all, the role ambiguity in a change situation (Steward, 1983), to some extent, contributes to failure to implement changes that are initiated by managers. Second, bureaucratic organisational and management structure (Schein, 1984), characterised by multiple layers of hierarchy, a tradition of top-down change, short-term thinking, lack of senior management support and commitment, limited rewards, lack of vision and emphasis on status quo (Senge *et al.*, 1999; Quinn, 1996). Third, peer pressure and the attitudes of supervisors leads to resistance to change (Schlesinger *et al.*, 1992). Fourth, politics and power struggles encourages managers to focus on their own

interests, rather than those of organisations (Schlesinger *et al.*, 1992). Next, one's inability to understand the full implications of a change situation, fear and lack of trust in the change initiator-implementer-recipient relationship (Schlesinger *et al.*, 1992) are regarded as barriers by managers. Finally, from an operational point of view, not having enough time (Senge *et al.*, 1999), the pressure to reduce costs and difficulties of working with others, especially across time, cultural and geographical zones are all suggested as hindrances to change initiation.

On dealing with challenges of management initiation of change as their learning at work

Having discussed the challenges that managers face during their initiation of changes, the findings of this study also suggest a number of ways that these challenges have been dealt with. At a local level, reducing cost and convincing senior management and potential resisters (Anstead, 2005) are seen to be the first step in overcoming some of the challenges. From a global point of view, creating synergies with other units, departments and organisations “mitigates uncertainty and promotes adaptation” (Kraatz, 1998, p. 621). As far as the managers are concerned, unlearning (Hedberg, 1981), by for instance, proactively constructing internal crises (Kim, 1998), promotes new learning (Nystrom & Starbuck, 1984) and helps provide change readiness, thus a context-for-learning (Black & Oliver, 2005). At the level of organisation, the exploration of new market opportunities (especially those emerging economies) may help overcome the cost challenge. Last but not least, it is also suggested that managers must seek to get the basics right in areas such as customer service, communication, reflective evaluation and complacency.

In this chapter, the substantive concepts concerning challenges that managers face in their initiation of changes and how they have been dealt with, have been compared and integrated with their counterparts in the literature, leading to a set of concepts at a more abstract level. As already indicated, the core concept emerging from this grounded theory study is known as 'resourcing change', a core social psychological process with several sub-processes detailing how managers deal with issues arising from their initiation of changes at work. As a result of further comparison and conceptual integration, the grounded theory of 'resourcing change' can be applied beyond the context of organisations primarily involved in this study. To illustrate the research experience, the next chapter (Chapter 6) will include further methodological discussions undertaken during both the course of the fieldwork and the doctoral project as a whole.

Chapter 6 Research Outcome: A Grounded Theory of ‘Resourcing Change’

6.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to further consider some of the methodological issues with regard to: (1) the comparison and integration of the perspectives of the researcher (‘self’), research participants and other researchers, (2) the comparison of research outcomes in the light of other grounded theory studies of change and the identification of methodological strengths, contributions and implications of this study, (3) the delayed learning experience of grounded theory (Glaser, 1998) and (4) the irrelevance of cultural difference in the grounded theory of ‘resourcing change’.

The purpose of discussing these methodological implications is primarily to differentiate grounded theory from other methodologies in terms of research goals, procedures, outcomes and strengths. Section 6.2 contains an appraisal of the terminology ‘conceptual comparison and integration of perspectives’ in grounded theory studies and a definition of the term ‘perspective’ as used in the context of this study. Section 6.3 includes the comparison of the outcome of this study with that of other grounded studies of change management, in addition to the identification of methodological strengths and contributions of this study. The delayed learning experience of grounded theory (Glaser, 1998), from an overseas student’s perspective, is then illustrated in Section 6.4. The assertion that cultural differences have no

bearing on the grounded theory of ‘resourcing change’ is then discussed in Section 6.5, whilst Section 6.6 summarises these methodological discussions. There then follows a summary of this project in Chapter 7.

6.2 Substantive research outcomes and their theoretical contribution

This section presents the emergent grounded theory of ‘resourcing change’, resulting from the previous data analysis, interpretation and discussion (Chapter 4) and comparative literature review (Chapter 5). It is a deliberate attempt to demonstrate some degree of transparency of the research flow in the process of conceptualisation. As has been indicated throughout the thesis, this study is a conceptual exercise, unlike many other grounded theory studies that have ended up as descriptive studies, with an absence of an abstract conceptualisation of a latent social process (Becker, 1993). It must be emphasised however that the concept of ‘abstract conceptualisation’ is not unique to grounded theory studies, as explained by Handy (1999):

“The nature of the problem having once been explored, the individual must conceptualise it. He must learn how to set this one experience of the problem in a more general context or framework. If he does this he will be able not only to explain the first problem but all others like it. Conceptualisation elevates the particular to the universal. Without concepts the isolated experience becomes mere anecdote, an experience talked of but not learnt from.” (p.27)

The grounded theory of ‘resourcing change’ is a core social process of ‘resourcing change’ and its sub-processes, explaining the ways in which managers responded to the challenges arising during their ‘initiation of change’ beyond the direct context of this study. The core social process and its sub-processes are also situated along the global-local continuum, illustrating the varying levels of significance of the challenges facing managers and the fluidity of their responses across time. The global-local continuum has indeed reflected the contextualised and de-contextualised managerial capabilities – seeing and acting both locally and globally. None of the problems which managers may encounter or their responses to those problems may be viewed or dealt with in isolation but rather to recognise the interconnected relationship which exists between them.

The theoretical contribution of ‘resourcing change’ is critically assessed in the remaining part of this section in accordance with Whetten’s (1989) four building blocks of theoretical contribution: what, how, why and who-where-when, which I believe to be central to grounded theory methodology. Grounded theory methodology is really about theory development and within that context; theoretical and methodological contributions are synonymous.

Whetten’s (1989) first building block of theoretical contribution is ‘what’ – “which factors (variables, constructs, concepts) logically should be considered as part of the explanation of the social or individual phenomena of interest?” (p. 490). In grounded theory studies, these factors are not pre-defined as some would argue as the focus of their studies. The major problem with such a research practice is that the research participants’ voices are heard, but not listened to (Glaser, 2001). They should instead,

emerge as an evolutionary research process, reflecting the concerns of research participants and how they resolve them. With reference to Whetten's (1989) 'what' of theoretical contribution, "the social or individual phenomena of interest" (p. 490), from a grounded theorist's point of view, is that of research participants, not researchers themselves. Research participants explain to researchers what their "social or individual phenomena of interest" (p. 490) are. Grounded theory researchers do not describe, or represent, but abstractly conceptualise what they hear from research participants. "Variables, constructs and concepts" (p. 490) involved in the theorisation process derive in their entirety from the research participants themselves.

The second building block of Whetten's (1989) of theoretical contribution is 'how' – "having identified a set of factors, the researcher's next question is, how are they related?" (p. 491). As argued earlier, "a set of factors" (p. 491) are not identified by the grounded theory researchers in an upfront manner, but emerged gradually in the research process. Furthermore, how one factor relates to the other are not pre-determined as some other researchers would approach the matter, but are emerged, conceptualised and identified by the grounded theory researchers through analytical procedures such as memo writing (see Chapter 3). The relationships between "a set of factors" (p. 491) are not permanent in grounded theory studies but are subject to constant comparison with emerging factors.

The third building block of theoretical contribution, according to Whetten (1989), is 'why' – "what are the underlying psychological, economic, or social dynamics that justify the selection of factors and the proposed causal relationships?" (p. 491). The causal relationship, as identified by Whetten (1989), is just one of the many

sociological relationships one may find. Many researchers, given their training and institutional research norms, are often conditioned by one particular way of understanding the underlying dynamics in the social sciences. More often than not, it is the causal relationship, as suggested by Whetten (1989). Not surprisingly, they take no apparent interest in other dynamics and pre-suppose causality as the only mechanism in which the social world operates. As already discussed in the methodology chapter (3), grounded theorists are open-minded to a whole range of organising mechanisms (i.e. theoretical codes) and will only use them if they are relevant.

Whetten's (1989) last building block of theoretical contribution is 'who, where, when' – which “conditions place limitations on the propositions generated from a theoretical model” (p. 492). I broadly appreciate the concern of Whetten (1989) in relation to the limitations of these three conditions (who, where, when) but only in descriptive studies. In other words, the propositions generated in descriptive studies can not be immediately applied beyond the physical and temporal boundary within which they are carried out. However, grounded theory is not concerned about these limitations, as it is independent of time, people and place (Glaser, 1978). I am not against context-specific studies, as they are valid in their own right, but the job of a grounded theorist, simply de-contextualises a social process by abstract conceptualisation. Different methodologists just have different ontological and methodological stances, as far as there is no mis-match between one's ontological view and methodological preference. From a practice-based perspective, Nicolini *et al.* (2003) share my view by suggesting that:

“This processual, relational, constructive, and situated ontology involves a specific epistemic sensitivity and a set of related methodological preferences that allows the researcher to remain consistent with a practice-based approach...The study of everyday practices should constitute a major concern for social scientists: ‘the basic domain of study of the social sciences [is] social practices ordered across space and time’ (Giddens, 1984, p.2).” (p. 28)

What Whetten (1989) has not pointed out is theory contribution made by generating context-free propositions in a theory building and development process. By doing so, researching and learning about organisations is not looking backward, but looking forward. Like many other academic disciplines, the purpose of doing business and management research is not just about understanding the past, which in my view, is ‘reactive learning’ (Senge *et al.*, 2005). Grounded theory encourages and promotes ‘a deeper level of learning’ (Senge *et al.*, 2005) which establishes “increasing awareness of the larger whole, both as it is and as it is evolving” (p.11), and informs “actions that increasingly become part of creating alternative futures” (p.11). Grounded theories, especially formal grounded theory, serve as an on going link between past, present and future, rather than just re-visiting the past. Learning and researching therefore, becomes a part of constructing a future that people aspire to.

The world that we live in today, characterised by the nature of its interdependence, has been undergoing rapid transformation. Academic research, in my opinion, has to be ‘practice relevant’. Being ‘practice relevant’ does not simply mean that data is collected from the research participants. Nor does it share the often mis-leading and self-justificatory claim that academic research is ‘grounded’ in practice (Ashkanasy,

2006). All research is 'grounded' in practice, in one way or another (Glaser, 1992). Being 'grounded' in practice does not necessarily indicate that one's own research problem is the problem of research participants. If academic research aims to be thoroughly 'practice relevant', researchers have to: (a) re-think the way in which they formulate research problems, (b) question the very notion of research focus, (c) review the methods of their data collection, analysis and interpretation, (d) determine the research contribution to the future and, (e) examine how the next generation academic researchers will be trained. Grounded theory methodology also urges academic researchers to avoid the qualitative and quantitative divide, as it is a general methodology (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), and embrace a broader level of understanding of how the social world operates. In addition, this grounded theory has successfully demonstrated how theory may creatively inform practice and vice versa and the value of integrating the two in a logical and rigorous manner. Research relevance is achieved not at the expense of research rigour, or the other way round. Therefore, as will be further discussed, this grounded theory study has implications not only for management research, but also management teaching and learning.

As this grounded theory is about a conceptual social process of 'resourcing change', it is more than the 'processual' aspect of the process analysis. As argued throughout the thesis, the 'temporal' and 'spatial' aspects of the process have also been taken into account in the conceptualisation of 'resourcing change'. It becomes evident that many other 'processual' research studies are unfortunately contradictory, if the 'temporal' and 'spatial' elements are left untouched. They are, more often than not, 'processual' analysis of social phenomenon of interests, but the notion of 'processual' does not often suggest the passage of time and change in people in any given social setting.

This grounded theory study of ‘resourcing change’ therefore, sets an example of doing ‘processual-based’ research and urges researchers to be logically consistent with their ‘processual’ claims.

6.3 Further comparative analysis

As outlined in the previous chapter (Chapter 5), the outcome of this study is the identification of a managerial behaviour pattern accounting for the continual resolution of problems encountered in their initiation of change. This behavioural pattern has been conceptualised as ‘resourcing change’. The problems and the way that they have been dealt with, are presented in accordance with their local and global significance. The data from which ‘resourcing change’ has been theoretically constructed, is derived from several sources: two organisations in addition to existing literature in the relevant area. It is through viz.: the conceptual comparison and integration of various sources of data that dimensions, categories and theory have surfaced. Thus the theory of ‘resourcing change’ has general implications beyond the direct context of the two organisations in this study.

Adopting the same research methodology, Raffanti’s (2005) theory of ‘weathering change’ explains “how organisational members continually resolve their main concern of survival in the face of pervasive change” (p. ii). “Weathering change is a basic social psychological process that enables individuals to endure changes in a manner consistent with their personal and professional needs, goals, and values” (p. ii). The three stages involved in the weathering process are known as: sizing-up, filtering, and coping (pp. ii-iii).

The purpose of comparing my theory of ‘resourcing change’ and Raffanti’s (2005) theory of ‘weathering change’ is different from that in qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) or systematic reviews. Raffanti’s (2005) theory, as in this study, was theoretically and methodologically compared during the conceptualisation process and prior to the theoretical saturation of ‘resourcing change’. In other words, it was intentionally driven by the purpose of theoretically saturating the emerged theory of ‘resourcing change’. My study differs further from Raffanti’s (2005) in at least four important aspects, although we share the same methodological passion. First, the term ‘change’ has different meanings. For him, it is more about “organisational change initiatives that are imposed upon” organisational members (p.2). For me, it is quite the opposite. It is about changes initiated by managers themselves in their learning, leading to changes at other levels of analysis such as unit and organisation. My understanding of the term ‘change’ is based upon my interpretation of the data as opposed to any pre-conceived ideas in relation to its definition. Furthermore, he explained a general change process whilst I only focussed on the initiation stage of it, being aware from the data that many change initiatives have not materialised beyond this stage. Again, whilst management is my level of analysis in this study, his includes both management and non-management personnel. Finally, the sub-processes of ‘weathering change’ (Raffanti, 2005) are in a linear order, whereas the sub-processes of ‘resourcing change’ in this study have been conceptually non-linear, involving a spectrum of local-global significances.

My study shares the same methodological characteristics with Raffanti’s (2005) in relation to its generalisability. As suggested by Raffanti (2005), “‘weathering change’ does not describe the lived experiences of” research participants. “Rather, the theory

explains patterns of behaviour in a generalisable fashion” (p. 26). It is further argued that:

“As a theory, ‘weathering change’ conceptualises behaviour. It does not contemplate that each and every person who weathers change will do so in exactly the same manner. As different ways of coping with organisational change are discovered and compared using grounded theory methodology, the theory is open to being modified. The theory is limited therefore only by the ability and willingness of researchers to employ the constant comparative method as they encounter incidents that do not fit within the patterns set forth here.” (pp. 26-7)

6.4 Methodological strengths and contributions

On the basis of this study and the methodologically compatible comparison with other studies in the field of management learning and change, the methodological strengths and contributions of this study are summarised as follows:

First, this study has, methodologically speaking, abstractly conceptualised a managerial behaviour pattern which has wider implications beyond the direct research context. The comparison between data gathered from the two organisations in this study with the general body of relevant literature, further broadens the applicability of ‘resourcing change’. In addition, the abstract behavioural patterns of managers conceptualised as ‘resourcing change’ in this study, “cut across class, age, sex, region, sub-cultures and other social boundaries” (Fox, 2004, p. 2). It has also integrated the

perspectives of research participants, the researcher 'self' and other researchers. The social psychological process of 'resourcing change' is an abstract behavioural pattern which has been conceptualised in and from multiples perspectives. It is not the perspective *per se*. This 'processual' analysis does not only focus on the study of managerial behaviour across time, but also that incidents involving other people in other places have been compared and integrated. As repeatedly stated, the theory of 'resourcing change' is applicable beyond the immediate context of two organisations involved in this study. The theory of 'resourcing change', like other grounded theories, "provides a bridge to seeing the same problems and processes in other areas so the researcher can further inform his theory and develop comparative substantive theory and formal theory" (Glaser, 1992, p. 15).

Second, the emergence of a managerial behaviour pattern in the form of a social psychological process, explains the definition of management learning from a manager's perspective, thus, it is relevant to managers. The term 'management learning' was defined by participants themselves and then compared and conceptualised. Such a research practice differs significantly from those preconceived attempts of defining management learning by researchers themselves at the outset. In the case of the latter, definition and associated research problem are not often relevant to managers themselves. In the case of this study, the relevance is earned rather than preconceived (Glaser, 2003). Furthermore, the voices of research participants were not just heard, but also listened to (Glaser, 2001) and can be found in the conceptual behaviour patterns of 'resourcing change'.

Third, given that there are far fewer grounded theory studies in the field of management learning and change, this project has demonstrated the feasibility of adopting grounded theory methodology as a fully-fledged research package from problem formulation to theoretical writing adopted and used creatively by researchers, not just for data analysis as commonly used (McCallin, 2003). As discussed throughout this thesis, it must be clearly stated that grounded theory significantly differs from qualitative data analysis (QDA) over a number of dimensions (Lowe, 2006). For grounded theory, it is about abstract conceptualisation, concept/theory-driven, emergent problem of research participants and their continual resolution, conceptualisation based on all perspectives and voices that are theoretically sampled (Glaser, 1998; 2001). On the other hand, qualitative data analysis (QDA) is often about thick/full/rich description, unit driven, pre-defined research problem by researcher through exhaustive literature review, multiple/joint representation of perspectives and voices that are not always theoretically sampled (Glaser, 1998; 2001). In Lazarsfeld's world of social research which informs the origination of grounded theory, methodology and technology are not the same thing (Cole, 2006). "Methodology emerges from a set of general intellectual attitudes and orientations rather than from a set of rules or principles" (p. 315). On the other hand, technology – the tools of research, "represented in methods used by data analysts, are the products of methodology" (p. 315). Therefore, in order to fully appreciate a methodology, one should go beyond technology in order to understand the underlying attitudes and orientations of the methodology.

Last but not least, this study has shown how the literature could be dealt with systematically and creatively in grounded theory research, both pre- and post-

fieldwork. In grounded theory, pre-fieldwork literature review covers what a researcher has been exposed to both related and unrelated to one's area of research interests, before the fieldwork (Glaser, 1998). Upon the completion of the fieldwork, existing relevant theories are treated just like any other data or perspectives, to be constantly compared and integrated towards the conceptualisation at a more abstract level (Glaser, 1998). The emergent grounded theory is always to be modified should the new data add any theoretical and conceptual weight (Glaser, 1978). However, the review of the literature is handled differently in qualitative data analysis (QDA). Pre-fieldwork literature review is mainly conducted to locate a research problem and associated questions, the answers to which fill in the gaps in the literature. Post-fieldwork literature is conducted, if at all, to aid one's interpretation of the data.

6.5 The irrelevance of cultural differences in the grounded theory of 'resourcing change'

This study is about the discovery of a social psychological process, namely: 'resourcing change'. The abstract conceptualisation of the behavioural patterns of managers is to establish "the grammar of behaviour" (Fox, 2004, p. 10). Thus "the *commonalities*... cut across class, age, sex, region, sub-cultures and other social boundaries" (p. 2, italics in origin). Despite the fact that the primary data sources (two organisations) are culturally different in a number of ways, this study has attempted to conceptually and abstractly identify the "regularities and consistent patterns" in behaviour (Fox, 2004, p. 7) across cultures. This study is not about international business, multinational corporations, international manufacturing, or western-style versus Japanese-style management. The central issue addressed herein is: how can I

conceptualise an abstract theory regarding the managerial process of initiating changes across cultural and organisational differences?

Furthermore, this study has adopted a grounded theory approach in which the key process of 'learning' has emerged from the perspectives of research participants and abstractly compared, integrated and conceptualised by the researcher 'self'. As explained on several occasions in this work, despite the fact that many research participants came from different cultures, their views on 'learning' have been theoretically sampled, conceptually compared and integrated towards the most abstract level possible. Therefore, the concept 'resourcing change' in management learning, cuts across cultures.

Elsewhere, the cross-cultural differences in learning in organisations have been generally discussed. At the level of organisation for example, Hong and Easterby-Smith (2002) explore organisational learning regarding the transferability and reproductability of the "patterns of socially complex, situated and culture-specific learning practices" across national boundaries (p. 1) (see Table 6.1 below). It is considered that the North American dominance in the models of organisational learning emphasises rational information processing and collective vision, and an element of radicalism (Easterby-Smith, 1998).

Table 6.1 Speculations on organisational learning in different cultural contexts

Features of OL	USA/UK	Spain	India	Japan	China
Key processes	Information gathering and collective sensemaking	Problem solving within groups; formal dissemination of ideas and information	Learning through combination of analysis and emotional engagement	Acquisition of tacit knowledge by direct personal experience	Development of relationships between people with mutually useful perspectives
Sources of learning	Formal, and public data sources	Direct experiences of group members	Formal, public and professional data sources	Knowledge of insiders with direct experience	Networks of contacts from established personal relationships
Ideal structures	Informal organisation with good lateral and vertical dialogue	Learning processes incorporated into formal structure	Facilitation of horizontal internal and external communication	Reinforcement of small work groups with good vertical linkages	Small groups with clear support/sanction from higher authorities
Nature outcomes of organisational learning	Greater strategic awareness and internal coherence	Solutions to problems; greater efficiency	Establishment of ideal technical solution to problems	Internal knowledge creation	Acquisition of new information and methods
Hindrances to organisational learning	Internal boundaries to communications; politics and irrationality in processing information	Lack of clear support from top management, and no formal integration	Barriers between levels of hierarchy; over-emotive response to data	Unwillingness to deal with impersonal data; exchange of information between organisations	Sources of information not coinciding with existing relationships

Source: Easterby-Smith (1998, p. 291)

6.6 Further methodological discussions

6.6.1 Conceptual comparison and integration of perspectives in grounded theory studies

This section highlights the key methodological practice of conceptual comparison and integration of perspectives (Glaser, 1978; 1998). Perspectives, in this study include those of the researcher ‘self’, research participants and other researchers. Unlike other methodologies, grounded theory compares, integrates and further develops an even more abstract perspective of perspectives (Glaser, 1998).

The research methodology adopted in this study is neither ethnography nor autoethnography. As explained in the methodology chapter (Chapter 3), this grounded theory study has adopted and followed its methodological approach during the research process to conceptually integrate the perspectives of research participants, the researcher (‘self’) and other researchers (Glaser, 1998). Given that the researcher is the primary research instrument, the term ‘conceptual comparison and integration’ means that as opposed to a complete and full description, the grounded theory researcher compares and integrates his or her perspective with those of research participants and other researchers and then develops a perspective, at a more abstract level, on these perspectives (Glaser, 1998). The grounded theory research outcome is a theoretical and conceptual perspective on perspectives, rather than a descriptive one (Glaser, 2001). Because of its theoretical and conceptual nature, such a perspective is not constrained by time, people or place (Glaser, 1978).

In terms of the perspective of the researcher him/herself, studies adopting other methodologies (e.g. autoethnographic studies) representative of authorial presence separates the researcher from research participants, thus presenting the researcher as “a source of reflection and re-examination, to be written about, challenged and celebrated” (Coffey, 2002, p. 313). The focus upon ‘self’ in research is concerned with “the personal dimensions of... research practice” as “experienced by and embodied through” the researcher, who is part of the research endeavour, on the basis that “the experiences of the researcher are integral to data collection and analytical insight” (Coffey, 2007, p. 1).

In grounded theory studies, however, the perspective of ‘self’, is treated entirely differently. The perspectives of the researcher ‘self’, research participants and other researchers are conceptually analysed and integrated, given the concept that ‘all is data’ and ‘a perspective of perspectives’ (Glaser, 2001). All perspectives (including research participants, the researcher and other researchers) are treated as different slices of data, from which a perspective of perspectives is derived at a more abstract level (Glaser, 2001). The integration of perspectives, as practised in grounded theory is viewed as something missing or lacking in other methodologies. For example, Coffey (2002) shares the concern of lack of integration in autoethnographic studies by suggesting that “usually located alongside the ethnographic text proper, these accounts may actually serve to isolate, rather than integrate, ‘the self’. The confessional genre is one of description rather than analysis, presenting a version of the self as mediating, consequential or problematic – and hence revealing only a semi-detached or partial self.” (p. 319)

To further highlight the methodological differences in dealing with the perspective of the researcher 'self', grounded theory is compared with other methodologies such as ethnography. Unlike ethnographic researchers, grounded theory researchers are not interested in gaining "a true insider's perspective on customs and behaviour" of the people that one is studying (Fox, 2004, p. 3). They are also not interested in how his or her perspective might be affected by that of research participants and other researchers, or vice versa. In ethnographic studies, the researcher intends to find out about both 'self' and others whereby "personal experience and autobiographical text" can be the very sources of meaningful data collection and insightful analysis and interpretation (Mykhalovskiy, 1997, in Coffey, 2002, p. 325). According to Coffey (2002) and Humphreys (2005), the practice of joint or multiple representations (e.g. in ethnographic studies or qualitative studies in general) have a number of objectives including: representation, legitimacy, authenticity, authorship, visibility, originality, reflexivity, exposure, responsibility and audience. Such a research practice has been more recognised and accepted by recent articulations and debates (Coffey, 2002). In relation to other methodologies (e.g. ethnography) concerning perspective, the most noticeable feature of grounded theory is the theoretical sampling, conceptually comparing and integrating of various perspectives towards the generation of a more abstract perspective (Glaser, 1978, 1998).

To recap, the perspective of the researcher is conceptually compared and integrated with that of research participants and other researchers in grounded theory methodology (Glaser, 1998). This is contrary to studies that separate personal accounts from the data and its analysis (Coffey, 2002, p. 318), as well as perspective (theory) generation as in this context. It is also observed that some researchers choose

to document their personal accounts only in the acknowledgement section (Coffey, 2002). In those non-integrative approaches, the perspective of the researcher, research participants and other researchers are often described as accurately as possible, rather than conceptually intertwined. As in the context of this study, the deliberate form of integration (not joint or multiple representations) of perspectives, significantly differs from other methodological attempts (e.g. understanding the culture from a native's perspective by explaining separately the unconscious ethnocentric prejudices and various other cultural barriers of the researcher) (Fox, 2004, p.4).

“The grounded theory research takes ‘all is data’ as opposed to a preferred, preconceived ‘objective reality’” (Glaser, 2001, pp. 47-8). Thus, grounded theory researchers believe that perspectives of research participants are inseparable from the perspective of the researcher, as perspectives from both sources are constantly shaping and being shaped by each other (Watson, 1994a). Aimed at the abstract conceptualisation of all perspectives, grounded theory researchers are not concerned about the “field-blindness” due to over-involvement and enmeshment or failure to maintain the scientific detachment (Fox, 2004, p.3). It is maintained, in company with Coffey (2002), that “there are a variety of ways in which qualitative researchers (authors) have reflected upon and written about ‘the self’ in or as texts of the field” (p. 314). Some consider the perspective of the researcher (‘self’) “as an integral part of the broader research process”; “some pay particular attention to the ethnographer-as-author”; others focus upon “the researcher’s life as subject as well as the researcher and producer of the text” (p. 314).

The handling of perspectives and voices of both research participants and the researcher further makes clear distinction between grounded theory methodology and qualitative data analysis (QDA) methods. “The grounded theory researcher must figure out what the data is, not what it is not” (Glaser, 2001, p. 48). “The grounded theory researcher listens to ‘what is going on’ ‘as is’. Then he conceptualises it, the abstraction of which detaches him from precise descriptions as he generates categories (named patterns). In the process the grounded theory researcher begins to conceptualise the participants main concern and then the core category that continually resolves it. The main concern and its resolving is in the voice and behaviour of the participants, but they do not know it as a conscious awareness conceptually” (Glaser, 2001, p. 51). “The participants just act and talk, a few if any really see the patterns involved in the prime mover of their behaviour. People talk and act in these patterns but the patterns are concepts not behaviour. Their voice is abstracted and constantly compared and modified and therefore fitted and made relevant, so conceptual grounding is constantly verified. Accurate description is moot, the goal is substantive theory to be applied as explanations of behaviour” (Glaser, 2001, p. 51). On the other hand, “a big issue for qualitative data analysis (QDA) research is that data collection from the field gives voice to the participants in the unit being researched. It is their chance to go on record with their opinions, values, perspectives and so forth” (Glaser, 2001, p. 50). “The problem begins for qualitative data analysis (QDA) researchers when they wish to describe accurately what they hear participants say. They have to argue their (the researchers) interpretation of the ‘voice’, their construction, their perception, their rich description, their point of view, their view of constraints and context etc., as what was actually said by many

participants as they heard it. Each qualitative data analysis (QDA) method has developed a method for ascertaining its accuracy” (Glaser, 2001, p. 51).

“The distinction between description and conceptualisation makes a huge difference in how the ‘voice’ of participants is handled methodologically” (Glaser, 2001, p. 51).

“The qualitative data analysis (QDA) problem of what is real in the voice is not a grounded theory issue” (p. 51). “The qualitative data analysis (QDA) researcher listens to the data in terms of a preconceived framework to help him organise it” (p. 157). “Grounded theory generates categories’ labelling patterns, which is merely about what is going on, not for or against and not for corrective action. People disappear into these patterns which abstract their behaviour. Grounded theory is not the participant’s voice, it is the patterns of behaviour that the voices of many indicate. These patterns fit, work and are relevant to the behaviour the voices try to represent” (Glaser, 2001, p. 158).

6.6.2 Methodological implications for management learning, education and research

Balancing relevance and rigour

Starkey and Tiratsoo (2007) discuss two controversial issues in business and management research: “the quality of what is produced, and its relevance (in other words, usefulness to potential end users)” (p. 115). By relevance, it is meant that our learning, teaching and researching about management has to capture and serve the on-going reality in an enlarging and increasingly flat world (Friedman, 2006). This is

radically different from the position taken by others who view learning, teaching and researching about management as an activity in itself. They often begin the journey by having a narrowly-shaped focus that interests them but has no relevance to those practising managers. Starkey and Tiratsoo (2007) similarly argue that business school faculty “are confronted by a culture and an incentive system that hardly seem to recognise the practitioner at all” (p. 135). Thus, Ashkanasy (2006) urges those in the field of management education to adopt a more ‘grounded’ approach, as Mintzberg suggests, that “a lot of management thinking is ‘completely divorced from what’s going on, on the ground’” (Dvorak, 2006, p. 31). A lot of management theories are produced by the armchair theorists, who, in Argyris’s view, should come down from their ivory tower and integrate themselves into business (Witzel, 2003, p. 11). Bennis and O’Toole (2005a) describe the situation as that “today it is possible to find tenured professors of management who have never set foot inside a real business, except as customers” (p. 100). As Watson (1994b) observes, “organisational theory might be in danger of becoming an end in itself” rather than providing a resource of understanding of organisations to members of our societies (p.213). Partly, the very academic system has to blame itself for rewarding rigour over relevance (London, 2005b). The management discipline is not alone in suffering from the relevance problem. Michael J. Novacek, provost and senior vice president of the American Museum of Natural Science, which is about to become a graduate school, argues that universities teaching disciplines like molecular biology and neuroscience “have lost their connection with the natural world” in recent decades (Arenson, 2006, p. B2). The solution to the problem of the lack of relevance in some of the management research produced is to get itself grounded in actual business practices, in order to “strike a balance between scientific rigour and practical relevance” (Bennis & O’Toole, 2005a, p. 98).

One thing that particularly bothers me in my research journey thus far, has been the issue of the lack of relevance in some management research studies, which calls into question the justification of undertaking management research in the first place. As Mintzberg (2004) puts it, “rigour versus relevance has been the greatest research debate of the business schools” with regard to both business/management education and research (p. 398). Furthermore, the theorisation of contemporary organisational practices should emerge from academic researcher’s dialogues with practising managers, rather than imposed by “a ‘holier-than-thou’ radical or critical sociologist” (Watson, 1994a, p. 7). For researchers coming from certain backgrounds, it is a must to identify a focus at the outset of a project – a gap in the existing literature, then developing one’s propositions, collecting data, and testing these propositions. Adopting that approach can be likened, as Mintzberg (2004) suggests, to “hanging your head in the faculty club” (p. 403) or described otherwise as “aiming at increasing the number of publications recorded in one’s resume” (Watson, 1994b, p. 213). So, what is the focus for? For whom is it for? Do people in the practice field really care about that focus? This also has wider implications for measuring academic excellence of business schools, as argued by Bennis and O’Toole (2005a), “instead of measuring them in terms of competence of their graduates, or by how well their faculties understand important drivers of business performance, they measure themselves almost solely by the rigour of their scientific research” (p. 98).

As far as management research is concerned, “the most interesting research... starts from pull, not push – [which] seeks to address an important concern ‘out there’, not to promote an elegant construct ‘in here’” (Mintzberg, 2004, p 402). Business school research can be immediately relevant, contrary to Starkey and Tiratsoo’s (2007)

assertion, by simply addressing important concerns “out there” (Mintzberg, 2004, p 402). This is precisely what orthodox grounded theory methodology encourages researchers to do; for conceptually recognising the behaviour pattern of how people address their concerns “out there” (Mintzberg, 2004, p 402); gaining insight and knowledge “by going to work in organisations other than the academic ones with which they are so familiar” (Watson, 1994b, p. 217). Grounded theory methodology – the methodology adopted in this study, is different from certain other research methodologies that “call for little insight into complex social and human factors and minimum time in the field discovering the actual problems facing managers” (Bennis & O’Toole, 2005a, p. 99). Glaser (1998) urges researchers to go out there first, then come back to the library, as the library won’t disappear and it is always there. Similarly, Mintzberg (2004) notes that the library is not the place to find a research topic; the topic to be studied or researched is ‘out there’ in the world of practice (p. 402). In Jone Pearce’s 2003 presidential address to the Academy of Management, it is pointed out that “many of us...have created these two nearly parallel worlds as a way of coping with the conflicting pressures of conducting serious scholarship and the need to teach experienced managers who pay a lot of money to learn something useful.” (The Economist, 2004b, p. 83) It is further indicated that “part of the problem is the way that management research – like so many areas of knowledge – tends to explore even more obscure topics as scholars seek out an unvisited niche.” (p. 83) One of which that was singled out by Jone Pearce is critical management theory (p. 83). Viewing managers as “practical theorists” (Watson, 1994a, p. 164), Watson (1994b) casts doubts over “the purpose and functions of organisation theory especially with regard to their relevance for people who are organisational practitioners” (p. 209).

Even today, it is highly possible to find “academics as people hiding in ivory towers from the dirty realities of the real world, claiming an expertise about activities which they keep at arm’s length and frequently protecting themselves from challenges with a smoke screen of high flown jargon and references to ‘the literature’” (Watson, 1994b, p. 211) or “tenured professors of management who have never set foot inside a real business, except as customers” (Bennis & O’Toole, 2005a, p. 100). It is further suggested that “by allowing the scientific research model to drive out all others, business schools are institutionalising their own irrelevance. We fear that this will be a difficult problem to correct because many business professors lack enough confidence in the legitimacy of their enterprise to define their own agenda.” (Bennis & O’Toole, 2005a, p. 100) For the junior business academics, it is the passive, non-mutual professional socialisation, involving individuals to fit into the collective, or face sanction and rejection (Moreland & Levine, 2001). Far too often, young academics are not well advised by their mentors, who urge them to “avoid too much work with practitioners and to concentrate their research on narrow, scientific subjects, at least until late in their quest for tenure” (Bennis & O’Toole, 2005a, p. 100).

Both Mintzberg (2004) and Glaser (1998) point out a critical ingredient of research – an uncorrupted passion for finding out what is ‘out there’. I have observed that many of my fellow doctoral researchers experience a diminishing level of enthusiasm in the closing stages of their research whilst I have experienced the opposite effect. I attribute that phenomenon to a number of factors, viz: the excitement of discovering a research interest by the researcher him/herself ‘out there’ and the consequent relevance of one’s research; the ‘I-can-do-it-too’ feeling when discovering one’s theoretical conceptualisations, of both relevance and rigour; the refusal to blindly

follow the 'common' and 'accepted' way of doing research; and last but not least, learning and researching for conceptually theorising the ever enlarging social world of management practice.

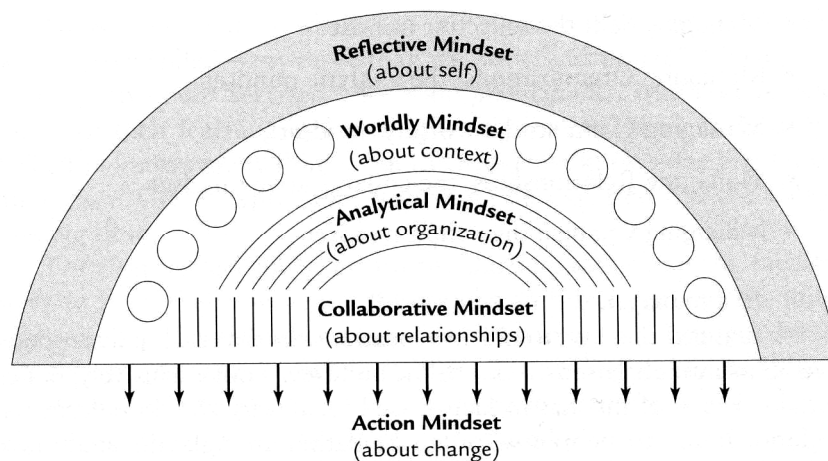
Another point which is worth emphasising is that not all academic research is conducted in a practice-driven manner. The practice-oriented grounded theory methodology makes an important contribution to the body of social science research, realising that the task of theory production must be that which is primarily emerged from the practice field. The objective of theory production and development (or academic research in general) is not for the sake of itself. It is for mirroring and advancing practice 'out there'. Some of the academic research traditions have espoused the contrary, favouring identifying and filling up gaps in the academic literature. This calls into question the relevance of the findings of academic researchers and theorists who study work organisations and behaviour in relation to those who actually work in those fields (Watson, 1994b). Given all that, it is not hard to believe that many practising managers "view consumption of management theory as largely a waste of time" (London, 2006) and "training courses [become] divorced [from teaching] normal things [people need] in order to do a normal day's work" (Kellaway, 2006).

Promoting a deeper level of learning in management education

From a management education standpoint, Mintzberg (2004) provides five perspectives (or mindsets) in the practice of managing (see Figure 6.1). They are: reflective (about self); worldly (about context), analytical (about organisation);

collaborative (about relationship); action (about change) mindsets (Mintzberg, 2004). “For action, the subject is change, across all the other subjects – self, relationship, organisation, and context” (p. 283). Business (or management) schools are therefore, or should be professional schools, since the teaching of business, as a profession, “calls upon the work of many academic disciplines”, e.g. mathematics, economics, psychology, philosophy and sociology (Bennis & O’Toole, 2005a, p. 98).

Figure 6.1 A framework for management education



Source: Mintzberg (2004, p. 283)

It is in my view that the action mindset (about change) (Mintzberg, 2004) should be promoted and cultivated in management education and research because of its holistic nature. The study of self, context, organisation and relationship is not sufficient or relevant unless the interaction among them is fully appreciated. For grounded theory researchers, we place our sole emphasis on the analysis of social process – the interaction of these elements, rather than treating them in isolation. Our process-oriented approach is very much in line with Watson (1994a)’s argument that “getting very close to managers in one organisation is a means of generating about *processes*

managers get involved in and about basic organisational activities, rather than about ‘all managers’ or ‘all organisations’ as such” (p. 7, italics in original). Therefore, the issue of representativeness that worries many researchers is irrelevant in this study. Equally we are not in favour of measurement in business research, as “the things routinely ignored by academics on the grounds [that] matters relating to judgment, ethics, and morality are exactly what make the difference between good business decisions and bad ones” (Bennis & O’Toole, 2005a, p. 100). This is an important realisation for management educators and researchers as it is the way that the world of managerial practices operates. As Mintzberg (2004) suggests, social science disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, economics and political science, “focus on broad issues of society, [whereas psychology] focuses on the individual, [but none pays] serious attention to the important level of human activity between the individual and society (namely, organisations)” (p. 394). The multi-level analysis of organisational and management life calls for a greater degree of inclusiveness and complexity in terms of theoretical relations (Koolhaas, 1982, p. 27).

In the area of management education too, the experience of many management students in different parts of the world has been ‘walking into a classroom and listening to a presentation given by an academic. A year or so later, students will barely remember most of the theories, models, frameworks which had been taught’. As management educators and researchers, we have the duty of seriously challenging this “downloading” mode of learning (Senge *et al.*, 2005, p. 10). What management educators should promote is the kind of “deeper level of learning” – which “creates increasing awareness of the larger whole, both as it is, as it is evolving, and actions that increasingly become part of creating alternative futures” (p. 11). As far as the

employers are concerned, they seem to be discovering and realising that business school professors who taught their new employees “had spent little time in organisations as managers or consultants and that younger faculty members may not even know many business people” (Bennis & O’Toole, 2005a, p. 102). The only thing that they may know more about, rather than the real-life problems of the workplace, is about academic publishing (p. 102). As evidenced by the fact that “the number of citations of article written by academics is dramatically lower than it was a decade ago, ...researchers’ work does not matter even to their peers”, if whose regard is more important, let alone to practising managers (p. 100).

According to Dennis and O’Toole (2005), “business management is not a scientific discipline, [but a practice-oriented and client-focused profession, requiring] both imagination and experience, [both] knowledge and practice” (p. 102). Therefore, management education has been critically urged to place its focus outside the curriculum; things that the business school does not normally teach (Handy, 1996; McCormack, 1994). As Gummesson (2000) illustrates the difference in perspective of management academic and consultant, we should really be doing the opposite of what we are doing now. This is to suggest that theory can be driven by practice. From my point of view, I do not think that such a “division of labour” (between theorising and practising) (Watson, 1994b, p. 213) should exist in the first place. The relationship between practising and theorising management should go hand in hand, not settling fully in either the managerial or the academic world (Watson, 1994b, p. 211).

At this point, I would argue that grounded theory methodology has some insightful answers to our questions surrounding management learning, education and research.

To recap, the position of grounded theory methodology is that it is not against or unfavourable towards scholarly work. The first and foremost task of management learner, educator and researcher is to place the emphasis on relevance, issues or concerns relevant to those in the world of practice. Next, by following the rigorous procedures involved in grounded theory methodology, theories are developed vis-à-vis the way in which individuals deal with issues and concerns of their own – not that of researchers. Inevitably this amounts to an acceptance of the challenge of involvement in social or organisational practices rather than “theorising for its own sake” (Watson, 1994b, p. 212). The theorisation is then made more abstract and conceptual by comparing it with existing ones. The point is made however, that contrary to the views of some academics, this approach in grounded theory methodology does not equate to ‘re-inventing the wheel’. The research product, if grounded theory methodological procedures are followed correctly, derives not just from the setting in which primary data is collected, but also from other settings covered by previous research. Grounded theory methodology is highly empowering (Glaser, 1998) – allowing learners, researcher and educators to become aware of the larger world and the social processes within. At the same time, it can be difficult and challenging – having to suspend what one has known previously; reading materials outside one’s discipline; the fear of being rejected; and learning the methodology itself as something completely new. Last but not least, only if the methodological principles of grounded theory are fully appreciated, will “the gulf... existing between the industrial and academic worlds” (Watson, 1994b, p. 212) be closed and the barriers between “thinkers” and “doers” (Watson, 1994, p. 2) be removed.

6.6.3 Delayed learning of grounded theory for a doctoral project: my experience as an overseas student

Despite my previous acculturation in Europe prior to the doctoral study, I still experienced a culture shock in terms of both the national and academic (research) environment. Perhaps due to the fact that the University is located in the south-west of England, I feel that I have had much more interaction with the English culture than during any other time in the past. Time and intensity of interaction have also certainly contributed to my increased understanding and appreciation of “Englishness” (Fox, 2004; Paxman, 1998). Considering the nature of the research degree programme, it has been necessary to adopt a pro-active approach in association with my supervisor and as with any close relationship (Vaughan, 1986), the lengthy one-to-one interaction between us, has necessitated competent interpersonal skills on the part of us both.

I would suggest that even students who are indigenous to this country, would experience some difficulties in adjusting to the academic culture in their doctoral studies. However, I believe that my ethnic background, with its widely held academic expectations has increased the pressure upon myself and made the cultural adaptation more challenging. In relation to Table 6.2 below, I am of the opinion that my experience and academic expectations did not fully conform to the pattern indicated for other students of my nationality. Among the many differences, one feature of the overall scene was, the misconception and naïve belief that I should produce work that would be bound to please my supervisor, i.e. work output tailored to his satisfaction, rather than adhere rigidly to my beliefs and understandings. Part of that erroneous approach was occasioned by my anxiety that failure to secure supervisor acceptance

might in some way jeopardise my chances of obtaining my doctoral degree and attaining post-doctoral employment. This complete misunderstanding was totally self-induced of course and resulted almost entirely from my cultural background. The result was that, features of 'self' (e.g. individuality and cerebral independence etc.) became of secondary importance.

The true picture is that of individuals asserting their independence, developing their individuality and using their initiative to deal with the social structure within which they are obliged to function. This form of individualism allows one to grow in confidence and become a 'self sufficient entity'. I confess to finding it difficult at first to accept these concepts and I experienced an up-hill struggle with many lessons learnt en route. The major mistake I made was my belief that at all costs I must conform totally to a set of rules within the social structure, trying to 'win' acceptance with my peers and those in senior positions and being fearful of rejection. That approach, which clearly had to be corrected, was detrimental to the early phase of this study. Undertaking research, and indeed, functioning in any environment is not about pleasing everyone.

In relation to grounded theory, the result-driven culture has, to some extent, led some research students and their supervisors to adopt a research methodology which they know best – often the one that they had previously been taught, without considering or learning other methodologies. Other factors explaining this behaviour may include the fact that the one being used was the widely accepted methodology in their publication field and required little or no new learning. The overall doctoral experience including one's choice of research methodology should reflect the view that knowledge and

Table 6.2 Academic culture gaps between the expectations of British university staff and those of some overseas students

British academic expectations	Academic expectations held by Chinese and other groups
Individual orientation	Collective consciousness
Horizontal relations	Hierarchical relations
Active involvement	Passive participation
Verbal explicitness	Contextualised communication
Speaker/writer responsibility	Listener/reader responsibility
Independence of mind	Dependence on authority
Creativity, originality	Mastery, transmission
Discussion, argument, challenge	Agreement, harmony, face
Seeking alternatives	Single solutions
Critical evaluation	Assumed acceptance

Source: Cortazzi and Jin (1997, p. 78)

character grow hand in hand. This character-building exercise often results in the transformation of oneself, permitting one to understand issues beyond the immediate, substantive area of research; it is about becoming a complete, ‘rounded’ person. From an educational perspective, I favour a full and complete appreciation of different methodologies in the social sciences first, and then selecting one amongst them. At the very least, I feel that the way research students and their supervisors choose or agree upon a methodology, reflects one of the defining characteristics of “Englishness” – “empiricism”, which may also imply some difficulties in the adoption of grounded theory methodology within ‘the English psyche’ (Fox, 2004, p. 405). According to Fox (2004), the term empiricism is meant “to include both the anti-theory, anti-abstraction, anti-dogma elements of our philosophical tradition (particularly our mistrust of obscurantist, airy-fairy ‘Continental’ theorising and rhetoric) and our stolid, stubborn preference for the factual, concrete and common-sense. ‘Empiricism’ is shorthand for our down-to-earthness; our matter-of-factness;

our pragmatism; our cynical, no-nonsense groundedness; our gritty realism; our distaste for artifice and pretension” (p. 405).

My decision to adopt grounded theory methodology throughout my study was not viewed favourably at the outset by my (then) supervisors but being convinced of its suitability, I maintained a ‘stand’ on the issue and agreement was subsequently obtained. This I proffer as an example of my metaphorical code of practice in that having learnt by my earlier mistakes of trying to please everyone, I ‘went against the tide’, confronted those who were not in agreement with me, and succeeded in achieving my objective.

6.7 Summary

As a post fieldwork exercise, this chapter has extended the methodological understandings with regard to the perspectives of the researcher (self), research participants and other researchers (Glaser, 1998). Grounded theory, as clearly indicated in Chapter 3, is primarily concerned with the generation of a perspective of perspectives, which is free from place, people or time (Glaser, 1978; 1998). The emerged grounded theory of ‘resourcing change’ in this study was conceptualised through comparing and integrating various perspectives, rather than presenting them separately. In other words, it was a deliberate attempt to intertwine the perspectives of research participants in the two organisations directly involved in this study, myself as the researcher and other researchers. Furthermore, the perspective of the researcher (self), in addition to other researchers is theoretically sampled, in relation to the emergent research focus, thus, it is not intended to separately present the researcher as

‘a whole person’. Aspects of the researcher (self) are only compared and integrated, when they are deemed theoretically significant. This approach differs from other methodologies (e.g. ethnography) in which the perspective of the researcher may be presented in its own right. My approach has therefore addressed the lack of integration of perspective, as noted by Coffey (2002).

The outcome of this study is also compared with its substantive and methodological counterpart (Raffanti, 2005) that also adopted grounded theory methodology in the study of process of change management. In the light of that comparison, the methodological and theoretical strengths and contributions that this study makes are identified and discussed. The comparison and integration of multiple perspectives has broadened the applicability of the concept ‘resourcing change’ beyond the two organisations directly involved in this study. The identification of a managerial behaviour pattern in the form of a social psychological process has placed emphasis on its relevance to managers by avoiding the imposition of research problems upon the research participants. Although others may claim that their research and teaching are ‘grounded’ in practice, they start with a pre-conceived focus rather than attempt to find out what matters most to their research participants. This study has also demonstrated the feasibility of adopting grounded theory as a fully-fledged methodology beyond its widely adopted practice as a set of qualitative data analysis methods (McCallin, 2003). In relation to research outcome, it has also shown how the literature can be handled in a methodologically creative manner, both prior to and after the fieldwork as a source of theoretical strands and conceptual comparison and integration.

In relation to the methodological discussion about the researcher, the outcome of this study – ‘resourcing change’ has been metaphorically used to illustrate the change that I initiated during the course of this study. The concept ‘resourcing change’, including its sub-processes, effectively explains the challenges that I encountered when commencing this project without a pre-conceived focus as methodologically required. It also explains the way that these challenges were dealt with. The conceptual connection between my own research experience as an overseas doctoral candidate and that of research participants within their respective organisations has proven its applicability beyond the direct context of the two organisations involved.

Considering the fact that “the grammar of behaviour” (Fox, 2004, p. 10) is of central importance in this grounded theory study, some apparent cultural, organisational and even industrial differences are regarded as irrelevant. Therefore it is the sole aim of this study, like any orthodox grounded study, to discover “commonalities” cutting across various social boundaries (p.2). Being aware of the research interest that may be engendered vis-à-vis this study, it should be emphasised that, encouraged by a methodological stance, a conscious decision was taken on my part to focus specifically upon the process with which managers were involved during their initiation of change.

Chapter 7 Conclusions

7.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to conclude the entire study, by reiterating its outcomes and highlighting its contributions in relation to the substantive area of study as well as the adopted research methodology. Research problem and questions outlined in Chapter 3 are revisited. It is also intended to identify its limitations and directions for future research and to discuss the implications for management learning, change, education and research. Contained in this chapter are the theoretical and methodological outcomes and contributions of this study (Section 7.2). Limitations of this study are identified in Section 7.3, which also serve as directions for future research. Implications for management learning, change, education and research are discussed in Section 7.4

7.2 Theoretical and methodological outcomes and contributions⁴

7.2.1 Theoretical outcomes and contributions

This study is about management learning in the workplace, as opposed to classrooms and has connected ‘learning’ and ‘changing’, two parts of the literature which are often treated separately (Hendry, 1996). Moreover, the pro-active role of managers (Friedman, 2001) and the human element (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 2000) is emphasised

in their initiation of change. With respect to the level of analysis, the primary focus of this study is on managers. However, as the data suggests, the learning of managers has some obvious effects on other levels of analysis (e.g. group, organisation, inter-organisation). The linkages and interaction between levels of analysis (Crossan *et al.*, 1999) have been addressed. Furthermore, this study is concerned about management initiation of change, a particular phase of the change process. As already emphasised in Chapter 6, it is not the intention to examine a generic change process which may include the implementation phase. At both the substantive and conceptual levels, this study explains various challenges as outlined earlier, in accordance with their global-local significance, that managers encountered during their initiation of changes and their responses to them.

The first outcome of this study is the resultant definition of 'learning' from the perspective of research participants. According to the managers who participated in this study, 'management learning' is viewed as 'their initiation of change at work'. This study then examines various changes that have been initiated by managers in their respective organisations, the changes ranging from local to global significance.

In the case of Cooper Standard (UK), its manufacturing activities were relocated in the East, in countries such as China, Poland and Turkey. In addition to cost saving, such a change will enable Cooper Standard (UK) to get closer to their customers in those areas and to explore the possibility of further business opportunities. Naturally, the move to the East has led to a reduction in the staffing levels in Cooper Standard (UK)'s operation in the West and generated some negative feelings among its workforce. Furthermore, improved standards and quality of components supplied to

the car manufacturers are increasingly insisted upon and more emphasis placed on the early development work of sealing systems. Sealing products have been standardised and sometimes co-developed with competitors, leading to the introduction of a common sealing profile for multiple customers with associated cost savings for both Cooper Standard (UK) and its customers. However, it was suggested that the standardisation approach to design at a central location has led to some loss of expertise within the company. The cost estimating process was also standardised, a change largely driven by one of its major customers.

In Ricoh (UK) – including both RUK and RPL, changes initiated in its sales company (RUK) relate to the transformation in business direction of its Technical Solution Centre, from a cost to profit centre with more emphasis on end users. Ricoh Easy, a web-based direct customer service interface, was also introduced to better serve Ricoh (UK)'s direct customers. Initiated by the senior managers of RUK, the findings of the employee satisfaction survey are now shared among all employees including field engineers, rather than as previously being confined to the board of directors and actions have been taken to address issues arising from the survey. Finally, RUK's invoicing procedures were decentralised to the level of individual business units, allowing for the speedy processing of invoices.

RPL has taken a more pro-active and customer-driven approach in relation to the sales and manufacturing of its reconditioned copiers. As the cost factor continues to put pressure upon its manufacturing competitiveness, the manufacturing process for copiers has embraced different production modes, namely: full, modular and a combination of both. In other areas of RPL, the integration and standardisation of I.T.

systems were introduced, tailored to the operational needs of RPL. Managerial assessment of proficiency was introduced by managers in the human resources department, leading to a variety of management development routes. Supply chain management activities and all manufacturing processes have been refined, which have resulted in greater manufacturing efficiency.

Also identified were the challenges faced by managers during their initiation of change and the way in which those challenges were dealt with. The process with which managers were involved is represented by a number of sub-processes of 'resourcing change', a core social psychology process in this grounded theory study. Across Cooper Standard (UK) and Ricoh (UK), managers have experienced and responded to a number of challenges during their initiation of change. Their challenges and responses have been compared and integrated with their counterparts in the literature and then further conceptualised. For example, role ambiguity in a change situation (Steward, 1983) often contributes to the failure to initiate or subsequently implement change. Another impediment to change initiation is bureaucratic organisational and management culture (Schein, 1984), characterised by multiple layers of hierarchy, a tradition of top-down change, short-term thinking, lack of senior management support, commitment and vision, emphasis on status quo and limited reward (Senge *et al.*, 1999; Quinn, 1996). For change to be initiated, managers also face pressure and resistance from their peers and superiors (Schlesinger *et al.*, 1992) who sometimes "focus on their own interests [rather than] the total organisation" (p. 345). During the change initiation, misunderstanding and lack of trust separates true believers from non-believers (Senge *et al.*, 1999) and leads to the differences in perceiving and calculating the costs and benefits of change (Schlesinger

et al., 1992). In addition to the constant cost pressure, fear (Schlesinger *et al.*, 1992), not having enough time (Senge *et al.*, 1999) and difficulties in working with others, all make the change initiation process more challenging.

Being conceptualised as a core social psychological process – ‘resourcing change’, managers have responded to these challenges, by first and foremost, reducing cost in every possible aspect of the business, although cost reduction itself has in turn contributed to the above mentioned challenges. For changes to be successfully initiated, it is necessary to obtain the approval and commitment of senior managers and potential resisters. Between business units, subsidiaries and even competitors, synergy creation allows organisations to pull together to construct building blocks of global co-ordination that could further cut costs (Kogut, 2004). Managers are encouraged to unlearn through either pro-actively constructing internal crises (Kim, 1998) or deliberately opening up gaps in their organisations (Hurst, 1995). Externally, managers are also encouraged to enter unfamiliar territory to, for example, explore new business opportunities. In addition to providing change readiness, managers are urged to get the basics right in areas such as customer support, communication and staff-related issues.

7.2.2 Methodological outcomes and contributions

The methodological outcome of this study is the conscious choice and defence of the orthodox grounded theory that was originated by Glaser and Strauss (1967). This grounded theory study has also made several significant methodological contributions in researching the learning of managers at work, by emphasising: earned relevance of

research problem, abstract conceptualisation of patterns of behaviour, creative engagement with the literature both before and after the fieldwork, the analysis of social process and the adoption of grounded theory as a fully-fledged methodology (Glaser, 1978; 1998).

Earned relevance of research problem

This study adheres to the principle of ‘relevance’ of doing management research (London, 2005b; Bennis & O’Toole, 2005a; Mintzberg, 2004; Watson, 1994a; Watson, 1994b; Starkey & Tiratsoo, 2007). ‘Relevance’ is then proven by the way that the research problem and questions were formulated (Glaser, 2003, p.45). Relevance, which is earned rather than imposed, keeps the theory of ‘resourcing change’ “parsimonious with breadth and scope and general implications” (Glaser, 2003, p.45). Traditionally, a research problem was formulated by identifying any gaps in the literature, whilst in this grounded theory study, a research problem is an issue that research participants are concerned about and manage to resolve (Glaser, 1978). By so doing, the views of the research participants were heard and listened to (Glaser, 2001). This grounded theory research “takes ‘all is data’ [and accounts how research participants continually resolve their concerns], as opposed to a preferred, preconceived ‘objective reality’ which may not be going on for the researcher” (Glaser, 2001, pp.47-8).

Abstract conceptualisation of patterns of behaviour

Another outcome of this study is the generation of a perspective of perspectives (Glaser, 1998; 2001). This approach differs from who that present joint or multiple perspectives in their research outcome. Considering the aim of grounded theory – abstract conceptualisation (Glaser, 2001), the perspectives of research participants, the researcher and other researchers are conceptually compared and integrated (Glaser, 1998). The conceptual comparison and integration has then led to the broader coverage of the emerged social psychological process identified in this study – ‘resourcing change’. It means that this concept can be applied beyond the direct context of the two organisations involved in this study. It has also demonstrated in Chapter 5, that the research findings from the two organisations were compared and integrated with their counterparts in the literature, and then further conceptualised at an even more abstract level. It is important to remember that the research participants in this grounded theory study are “the data, not the theorists” (Glaser, 2001, p. 17). According to Glaser (2001), “[the research] participants, while having great involvement in resolving their main concern, seldom have a conceptual perception of it as a grounded theory theorist does” (p. 17). It is also crucial to distinguish between conceptualisation and description (Glaser, 2001; 2003), towards the former that this study endeavours to achieve. For this grounded theory, the concept ‘resourcing change’ is “the naming of a social pattern grounded in research... which is carefully [and systematically] discovered by constant comparing of theoretically sampled data until conceptual saturation of interchangeable indices” (Glaser, 2001, p. 10). Conversely for qualitative data analysis (QDA) researchers, they are primarily concerned with accurate description – “to describe accurately what they hear

participants say; ...argue their (the researchers') interpretation of the 'voice'; their construction; their perception; their rich description; their point of view; their view of constrains and contexts etc" (Glaser, 2001, p. 51).

Creative engagement of literature both before and after fieldwork

As suggested by Glaser (1992), there are three types of literature with regard to grounded theory methodology: "(1) non-professional, popular and pure ethnographic descriptions, (2) professional literature related to the substantive area under research, and (3) professional literature that is unrelated to the substantive area" (p. 31). From a methodological perspective, this study has demonstrated the creative engagement with the literature which serves as theoretical strands from which a researcher can draw upon ideas to inform one's research at the outset. This is of course different from "the normal, extensive literature review to ascertain gaps to fill in, hypotheses to test, and ideas to contribute to, in descriptive and verificational studies" (p. 31). It is also shown that the theoretical strands can indeed act as 'data' which is to be theoretically sampled and analysed, and contributes to the further conceptualisation effort of the emerging grounded theory (Glaser, 1992). This approach of engaging theoretical strands contrasts with other approaches in which the literature is reviewed, for instance, to aid and enrich one's interpretation (Glaser, 1992). As "grounded theory is for the discovery of concepts and hypotheses, not for testing or replicating them", this study has confirmed the fact that "the researcher may be hard put to know which substantive field his theory is in until it has emerged sufficiently" (p. 32).

Against the common misconception that one should not read any literature before entering the field (Suddaby, 2006), the initial literature review (Chapter 2) conducted in this study is broadly consistent with Glaser's (1992) view that:

“It is vital to be reading and studying from the outset of the researcher, but in unrelated fields...Reading for ideas, style and support generates sensitivity which in turn stimulates the researcher's preconscious processing when generating categories and properties. This reading keeps him thinking sociologically, holding his grounded against the thinking style of the subjects, and is especially good for stimulating a break in a jam up of both too many and no thoughts, as one is coding and memoing and seemingly coming up with nothing – yet.” (p.36)

Analysis of social process

The methodological approach of this study promotes an abstract and conceptual perspective on the social psychological process that is under study (Glaser, 1978). The focus of this study therefore is upon the generation of a social psychological process that can be, as much as possible, applied to a wide range of people at different times across various cultural, organisational and industrial contexts, as opposed to any context-specific studies (Glaser, 1978). As suggested by Raffanti (2005), grounded theory explains patterns of behaviour in a generalisable manner. In view of the differences of methodological focuses in social science research, this study regards differences across cultural contexts (e.g. national and organisational) as irrelevant and stresses that it is the social process itself that constitutes the thrust of this study. As a

concept indicator, grounded theory goes beyond the context of the data and is not limited by any single theoretical perspective (e.g. symbolic interactionism) (Glaser, 2005a). In relation to the focus on conceptualisation in this study, I agree with Glaser (1992) on that:

“Grounded theory provides a bridge to seeing the same problems and processes in other areas so the researcher can further inform his theory and develop comparative substantive theory and formal theory. Pure description does not provide this ability to build and contribute on more general level of the scientific enterprise, such as to a theory of becoming no matter what the occupation. Pure description is situation specific.” (p. 15)

Grounded theory as a fully-fledged methodology, not method of data analysis

Considering the fact that grounded theory studies are relatively few compared with studies utilising other methodologies, this study has confirmed the feasibility of adopting grounded theory as a fully-fledged methodology in its own right, rather than a set of qualitative data analysis methods (McCallin, 2003). The overlaps and differences with other methodologies (e.g. ethnography, action research) were also discussed in Chapter 3. In this study, I made the conscious decision to adopt the Glaserian grounded theory, not any qualitative data analysis remodelling (Glaser, 2003) or the verificational method later developed by Strauss and Corbin (1990) which “forces the deducting and testing of preconceptions in the service of full conceptual description” (Glaser, 1992, p. 89) - “Basics of Qualitative Research cannot

produce a grounded theory. It produces a forced, preconceived, full conceptual description, which is fine, but it is not grounded theory.” (p. 3)

Similarly, the Strauss and Corbin’s (1990) remodelling of grounded theory methodology is critiqued by Partington (2000). It is argued that:

“The difficulty of applying universal grounded theory prescriptions is borne out by experience with doctoral students working in the field of organisation and management who have attempted to follow the Strauss and Corbin approach but have abandoned it because of its bewildering complexity.” (p. 95)

7.3 Limitations of this study and directions for future research

In this section, a number of limitations of the current study are identified, which may provide directions for future research. The first limitation concerns the level of analysis (i.e. the management population). In this study, the management population is treated as a homogeneous whole, including almost everyone above the junior management level. In future, the segmentation of the management population may be reviewed in order to further substantiate the complex nature of social interaction among various levels in the management population itself. The primary focus of this study is on the learning of managers and their ‘resourcing change’ in the workplace. Further research can also include non-management personnel in addition to managers in order that the social interaction between these two groups may be studied during the process of ‘resourcing change’.

The research participants in this study are drawn mainly from the subsidiaries of the two multinational corporations in the manufacturing sector in the West. Although visits were made to the manufacturing facilities in Poland and China, those companies did not feature predominantly in the context of this study but they could feature as the subject of future study involving managers in a non-Western context and build an even more abstract level of perspective by covering an even wider range of management personnel. In addition to the analysis of social process among different levels in the management population, future research may shed light on the social process in a wider industrial and national context, possibly including managers from both western and non-western backgrounds. These research efforts can theoretically saturate the concept of ‘resourcing change’ at management level by generating more relevant incidents to be theoretically compared and integrated. This also suggests that the current concept of ‘resourcing change’ is always open for modification, should any new insights or indicators arise. I maintain with Raffanti (2005) that “[grounded] theory is limited... only by the ability and willingness of researchers to employ the constant comparative method as they encounter incidents that do not fit within” the previously identified patterns (p. 27).

7.4 Implications for management learning, change, education and research

The grounded theory of ‘resourcing change’ has several implications for those involved in the learning of managers, including management educators, corporate trainers and developers and managers themselves. What is required is a balance between formal management learning (classroom-based) and informal management

learning (in the actual workplace) (Fox, 1997a), i.e. the “knowing – doing gap” (Pfeffer & Sutton, 2000). By achieving the correct balance, it is intended that the classroom teaching and the research upon which the teaching is based should be made more relevant and meaningful for the managers involved.

Furthermore, more emphasis should be placed on the ‘process’, not ‘content’ of learning. During the course of their learning, management initiation of change should be supported, particularly in relation to the challenges already identified in this study, which challenges they are likely to experience. Managers should then be provided with the means by which they may make the appropriate response. Finally, for the learning of managers, it is recommended that focus be placed upon the initiation phase of change, not on the generic process comprising all phases, recognising that a significant proportion of change programmes initiated by managers fail to be implemented.

The adoption of grounded theory methodology in researching management learning in the workplace has also shed light on the practices of management education and research, in order to make the education and research about managers more relevant for managers themselves. I would urge management educators and researchers to understand the concerns of managers and their resolution as a priority and not to pre-conceive a so-called research focus by exhausting the literature. Furthermore, no one should be fooled by the claim that one’s teaching is relevant to managers because the teaching is ‘grounded’ in his or her research. It has to be pointed out that their use of the term ‘grounded’ does not necessarily represent the ‘grounded theory’ approach to research as it has adopted in this study. All research is ‘grounded’ in one way or

another, but not all 'grounded' research is 'grounded theory' research (Glaser, 1992).

According to Glaser (1992), it is stated that:

“Of course all research uses data or is grounded in some way. And of course, one can always apply a standard, pre-conceived concept to data and get a pre-modelled conceptual description...But the work is not based on emergent relevance with categories that fit and work, and the product is not grounded theory. Again, it is pre-conceived, conceptual description, which can be very significant in its own right, but again it is not emergent grounded theory.” (p. 4)

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Appendix 1. Confidentiality agreement with Cooper Standard (UK)

Cooper Standard Automotive

20th February 2006

Global Sealing Systems

COOPER STANDARD AUTOMOTIVE UK SEALING SYSTEMS LIMITED
Cooper Standard House
Redgrave Close
Parkway
Cross Point Business Park
Coventry, CV2 2UU
UK

To whom it may concern

Telephone: +44(0) 24 7658 7100
+44(0) 24 7670 9140

The purpose of this joint statement is to regulate the research conduct of Foster Fei in the context of his doctoral research in Cooper Standard Automotive (UK). It aims to protect the proper interests of Cooper Standard Automotive (UK) whilst research data is in the possession or control of Foster Fei.

Foster Fei, therefore, agrees not to disclose the identity (i.e. name, gender, age) of his interviewees. He also agrees not to disclose proprietary materials and information relating thereto including without limitation specifications, drawings, designs, computer software and know-how.

However, Foster Fei is permitted to include the name and brief description of research organisation, in this case – Cooper Standard Automotive (UK), in his research papers and thesis.

This agreement is made with an effective date of the 20th February 2006 between Foster Fei whose address is School of Management, University of Bath, Bath BA2 7AY and Cooper Standard Automotive (UK) whose registered address is Redgrave Close, Park Way, Crosspoint Business Park, Coventry, CV2 2SB.

Signed:




(Foster Fei)

Date:

14/3/06

Signed for and on behalf of Cooper Standard Automotive (UK):



(Mr Allan Coates, Business Unit Director, UK)

Date:

13/3/06

Appendix 2. Confidentiality agreement with Ricoh (UK)

RICOH

RICOH UK LTD

Ricoh House, 1 Plane Tree Crescent, Feltham, Middlesex TW13 7HG
Telephone: 020 8281 4000 • Facsimile: 020 8261 4004 • Website www.ricoh.co.uk

Direct Line: • email: @ricoh-uk.com

20th February 2006

To whom it may concern

The purpose of this joint statement is to regulate the research conduct of Foster Fei in the context of his doctoral research in Ricoh (UK). It aims to protect the proper interests of Ricoh (UK) whilst research data is in the possession or control of Foster Fei.

Foster Fei, therefore, agrees not to disclose the identity (i.e. name, gender, age) of his interviewees. He also agrees not to disclose proprietary materials and information relating thereto including without limitation specifications, drawings, designs, computer software and know-how.

However, Foster Fei is permitted to include the name and brief description of research organisation, in this case – Ricoh (UK), in his research papers and thesis.

This agreement is made with an effective date of the 20th February 2006 between Foster Fei whose address is School of Management, University of Bath, Bath BA2 7AY and Ricoh (UK) whose registered address is Ricoh House, 1 Plane Tree Crescent, Feltham, Middlesex TW13 7HG.

Signed:  Date: 21/2/2006
(Foster Fei)

Signed for and on behalf of Ricoh (UK):

 Date: 21-02-06
(Mr Takahisa Yokoo, Managing Director)

Directors: K. Togashi (Chairman) • T. Yokoo (Managing)
Registered in England No. 1505381 • VAT Reg No. GB 354 2816 54
Reg. Office: Ricoh House, 1 Plane Tree Crescent, Feltham, Middlesex TW13 7HG

Appendix 3. Examples of emergent topic guide

Version 1: (January, 2004)

1. What do you do on a daily basis?
2. With whom do you normally have contact ?
3. Could you please describe a significant event within your area of responsibility during the past six months?
 - a. What happened?
 - b. Who was involved? What were their roles then?
 - c. What was your role at that time?
 - d. What was the end?
 - e. How did it come to the end?
 - f. How did you see the kind of interaction between yourself and others?
 - g. What was something that you felt that you could not deal with at that point of time? Why?
 - h. Did you manage to deal with it eventually or not? If yes, how? If not, why did you think that you could not do it?
 - i. Was your manager involved in this event? If yes, how?
 - j. How did you view his or her involvement?
 - k. Should the same event happen again, how would you do it differently? Why?
 - l. Is there anything that should be done or dealt with differently at the organisational level?

Version 2: (January, 2006)

1. Any incident whereby managers initiated changes at all levels in the workplace?
2. What are their challenges arising during initiating changes?
3. How do they respond to the challenges?

Appendix 4. An example of interview transcription

Interview with RC

I What's the business context you find yourself in?

RC Basically we produce machines for the UK market. We have one general customer, which is NRG (Nashuatec, Rexrotary, Gestetner). It's part of the Ricoh family and we receive machines back from this customer at the end of their usable life and then through processes we actually turn the machines back into a workable product. The machine is then sold back to the end users at about 50% of our new machine price, but we give the same guarantee as a new machine.

I Do you mean guarantee in terms of the years of service you provide free of charge?

RC That's right. The new machine is basically sold with a one year warranty for parts and labour and we sell the recycled machine with the same warranty as the new machine. So we paint the external covers of the new machine so it looks as new and we also re-brand the machine. The rating plate is the original rating plate but the branding on the front cover is a different brand, so it looks like a new machine that's going back to the field.

I How about inside the machine itself?

RC Inside the machine it's returned to the specification of the new machine, so we have what we call a product specification document and it's about 100 pages and stipulates all specifications of the new machine. So the recycled machine is returned to that document.

I Why is there a focus on the reconditioning business?

RC The main thing is that the new machine business is dictated to by Japan. So there are a number of different manufacturing facilities throughout the world. Historically European production has been produced in RPL and also Ricoh Industries France, which is in Colmar. Two European manufacturing facilities. Over the last ten years we've seen a great influx from China, a great growth there. A lot of European production is now made in China so a lot of our core product is under threat from the Chinese production and therefore we need to understand what our advantage is of being in the marketplace, the European manufacturing side of the market place. It's not economic to recycle machines in China and transport them back to Europe. We need somewhere local. So we see a lot of the importance of recycling and it's our business. Our own purpose for being in the marketplace.

I So when did it actually start, the reconditioning business?

RC We started back in 1992. We've been doing it for quite a long time. However that wasn't in the current guise. We started more of a refurbishment process and

didn't really consider product specifications. We didn't consider returning the product aesthetically back to a new product and we used very low skilled operators. However over the last five years we've reinvented our process. So now instead of a refurbishment machine, which is a very basic and cheap machine which can break down a lot, no warranty, we've actually devised processes now which give us virtually a brand new machine at the end of the process.

I But not just in terms of the look but the function?

RC Functionality, full warranty liability. Similar to a second hand car market. You can get an unscrupulous dealer who will sell you a second hand car with no warranty or anything but if you go to Network Q or something like that you've got the 14 point check and a warranty. Very similar thing in this reconditioning market.

I So it started in 1992. How is the business doing?

RC It started off quite well to be honest. However, because of costs a lot of other local companies started refurbishments of their own, so our margins got eroded and it went down and was basically going to die off about five years ago. So that's when we decided to re-engineer what we were doing, look at new advantages. These were local firms doing the same things as we were doing. So it saved the transportation costs of sending it here, they could do it themselves.

I Are these firms still in the market?

RC Yes they are. So we needed to look at what our advantage was. That's when we decided to re-engineer the process to make it a higher level. So now we're actually getting a much more reliable machine. In essence it's a new machine that we're selling out. The only difference between the new product that we're selling to our product is the fact that technology has moved on, the specification has moved on and is now a lot more enhanced than a recycled machine.

I So in terms of functionality, let's say a model will stay the same in terms of functionality. You won't do an enhancement or anything?

RC The only enhancement that we do is we convert them into a printer machine as well. So if the machine comes back just as a copier then we'll put a printer option onto the machine so you can use it as a printer. Other than the machine is exactly the same as it was.

I How about those models that were made in the past but you no longer make? In terms of the new machines, would you still do the reconditioning?

RC Yes.

I But do you still have the technology or experience of being able to service the old models?

RC We're in a very good situation in the factory. We made a lot of the models new the first time round. Historically the production life of a copier is about two years

before technology moves on and a new one comes out. So the ones to be sold on lease contracts in the field use are between three and five years. So we're producing machines maybe two or three generations below what the new production is now. We produce a lot of the machines from here initially so we still have that technical expertise to carry out the process.

I Because the machines used to be made from scratch here.

RC Yes.

I So you still have the people and expertise available.

RC Yes.

I How about in the future when people retire and leave the firm?

RC Well we have 14 operators at the moment and we've got a very stable workforce. I think the last time somebody left the department was about two years ago. It's very rare. It's a young workforce as well and if somebody leaves then we can get someone else in to replace them and go and put them on a training programme. It's not a case of regular turnover. They're quite well paid, quite highly skilled. It's quite a unique process that they're doing and it's a rewarding job as well so we don't tend to get any turnover.

I So these are the changes you've described to me. What sort of challenges have you faced during this change process?

RC The main challenge is the market because it has two different approaches, new machine and refurbished machines, which are lower grade machines. We did some market research and found that 80% of the market will take new machines and 20% will take refurbished machines. So the 20% is people like business from home and just want a cheap machine, so they'll buy the cheapest machine they possibly can. Of the 80% it's basically saturated. There are lots of manufacturers of putting machines into this 80% new machine. There's been quite a lot of downward pressure on prices. The Ricoh product is quite high end price wise and specification wise. You've got other companies who are targeting the bottom end of the market. So our thinking was that we could take our re-manufactured machine and put in the new market. We identified 15% of that 80% who would buy a cheaper machine. These are people who basically want a reliable machine but aren't too concerned about the latest specification. So we were targeting this 15% of the market and actually trying to get the sales company to sell machines to that market – that 15%. That was the big challenge for us because they had no infrastructure to sell these machines. They were selling new machines and this was a new niche in the market for refurbished machines which they were going to attack. So we started and it was quite slow on the uptake. However, after about 6 – 12 months we started to actually get into that area of the market. The other big change we had was that we didn't want to affect our new machine sales, because obviously our new machine sales is our core business and we were going to supplement it. So we monitored the sales of the new machines and the recycled machines and what we found was that the new machine had basically remained stable, some slight growth in line with the budget, however the recycled

machine gave another 16% sales revenue on top of the new machine. This basically fitted in well with the model we did from the market research.

I My understanding is that if the old machine sales go up the new machine sales go down.

RC No, because we're trying to fit it at a different end. If you can think about maybe the car market – there's a new car market and at the lower end of the market you've got the Nissan Micra and the Ford KA and at the higher end of the market you've got the Jags and Rolls Royces. It's the same with the photocopiers. At the lower end of the market you've got companies (and please don't quote this) such as Konica, Minolta and they're there primarily to go for the lower end of the market, whereas Ricoh are trying for the higher end of the market. So with our recycled machine we're trying to attack the Konica sales, the lower end of the market. Basically it's a product in the lower end of the market. It's not affecting our new machine sales but it is affecting new machine sales of other companies, which is exactly what we were trying to do.

I But it's not affecting the new machine sales for Ricoh?

RC No, not for Ricoh, but for other companies it is attacking their market share. So we've got a win/win situation really.

I How have these two challenges been addressed so far?

RC We're working very closely with sales companies. We're very fortunate in that there's one Sales Director who is a good customer and is very pro-active on this project. He works for NRG, Sales Director for NRG, and he's very pro-active and he's actually forced the programme through with NRG because he saw the benefits of it. But without his involvement I think we'd have struggled. It's basically getting buying from your customer. We had to get that and luckily he could see the advantage of the product.

I What did he do?

RC He actually brought all his sales team into the company here and gave a presentation on what the product is, how reliable it is, they'll get a warranty with it and it looks as new as well. We even went to the extent of getting a new machine and a recycled machine in the presentation and there were 50 – 60 sales people there and we said 'Which one is the new one?' and half went for one and half for the other and that's exactly what you want. So the perception is a recycled machine, the salesman's perception who's never seen the product, who's selling recycled machines is quite poor, because he's seen the refurbished machine which is poor and he thinks he's going to get one of those. So once you get them into the factory and show them what you're doing you can get buy in from them and they've got confidence in what they're selling. So that's the way we actually won it round. But this one guy, the Marketing Director in NRG, he's the one who's actually the link between us and the sales people, so we use him quite extensively.

I Apart from this what else did you do?

RC Well we've got brochures. We produced brochures and sent them out. We've had a number of customers, end users, come in. We did one presentation to Coventry City Council, who were again maybe not sure about taking a recycled machine. So they arranged to visit here. It's all about promotion and showing them what you're doing and advertising yourself and being as flexible as you can to what the customer requires.

I So you said 15% of the 80% - are you any nearer to that target?

RC We're getting about 16% at the moment.

I So for both you and the refurbished machines it's about 36% of the total market share?

RC We're getting about 16% of that 15% at the moment.

I OK.

RC Obviously one of the things we're doing as well is that the NRG group has got two sales channels. The first is dealerships and a dealership – they basically sell the machine to the dealership and the dealership will then sell the machine to the end user. The second sales channel is direct sales and this is where they go for big tenders, so government tenders, schools, hospitals. So we're just trying to break in now to this direct market. I mentioned about Coventry City Council. This was a pilot study for the direct market. So we're trying to break into that market as well and expand the business. We've also got the Ricoh sales group as well which we're trying to use as well, so to expand it. That's the one in Felton. They're not taking this product because they've got a refurbishment programme and when we first went to them they couldn't see the benefit of this type of product in their market, so they didn't take it. However, since we've been working with NRG we've been able to build a case study up and a model to show them the benefits of it and we had our first meeting a couple of weeks ago with directors and it looks as if they will take the product on board now.

I Can I just get this correct – Felton is just a sales company within the Ricoh group?

RC That's correct.

I But NRG is a sales company for RPL?

RC No, NRG is still in the Ricoh Group. Historically NRG was three separate companies, Nashuatec, Rexrotary, Gestetner and they were OEN's for Ricoh. So Ricoh would make Ricoh machines and put a Rexrotary or Gestetner or Nashuatec badge on the front and they would buy Ricoh machines. What Ricoh have done, because their market was so big, is they've purchased all three of those companies and amalgamated them into one, but because they've got such a good sales channel they're keeping their brands open. It's a Ricoh solely owned company but it's just a different brand.

I So one of the ways that these challenges have been addressed is to have that Sales Director from NRG playing a crucial role in bridging.

RC Yes, he's a link between the sales companies and our factory.

I What are the other things that these changes have addressed?

RC The other thing we've done is produce a lot of sample machines. So for example the NRG group had a big sales push and they were showing off all their new products. So what we do on these launch days is that we supply a recycled product to go in with this as well. And that's been very successful as well because you get a lot of people, a big audience coming in and they can actually see the product there. Again it's all about advertising what you're doing.

I Coming to the launch event.

RC Yes. There's been one we did in a hotel in Warwick and one in Madrid as well.

I So that was a launch event for new machines?

RC Yes, and so we put a recycled machine in that launch.

I What was the purpose of that?

RC Again, it's advertising what we're doing. Giving the sales company another tool in their kit they can go away and sell.

I So that launch event was mainly for dealers?

RC Yes. It was. It was leading to two sales channels – the dealer sales channel as well.

I So you brought the refurbished machines. You said something about ?? machines which you give for free?

RC They are free for the event and then they're sold after the event. It's not a freebee as such but they go free for the event.

I For the launch event.

RC Yes, the last one we did the actual sample machine was sold during the event. It is taking off as well. We are getting more and more volume through the area.

I But the direct sales rely very much on the people from either NRG or Felton?

RC Yes. That's correct.

I It's entirely in their hands.

RC Yes. We've got no control whatsoever over the sales of the machine. All we can do is give them all the information and all the confidence to sell it. Once they've got that then they do sell it.

I So you have the Sales Director from NRG, you supply example machines to launch events. What are the other things you've been doing?

RC That's basically it. The actual sales companies themselves do a lot more marketing and advertising. We're a basic support for what the sales companies are doing.

I The sales company is the NRG or Felton?

RC At the moment it's NRG but we will be working with Felton as well. Again, I don't know whether this is going to happen but they want to do a press launch and get a write up in the national press about recycled machines and the greenness of them and we'll do an article in the Telegraph or the Times or something.

I So this is happening?

RC It may. It's what we're trying to set up at the moment, so hopefully it will happen. It's in the pipeline.

I The other thing I understood is that at the managing director level of sales and market people level, their reward system is very much tied up with the sales of new machines.

RC That's correct.

I How would you address that? A lot of things are results driven?

RC Yes the salesman is given a target to sell new machines which he must achieve and the recycled machine isn't in that target. However we structure the pricing as such that he will make more margin on a recycled machine than a new machine.

I So before it was structured on the number of machines being sold.

RC It still is on new machines. However..

I Regardless of the profit margin?

RC Yes, regardless of the profit margin. So when he sells a recycled machine he's got more margin. That's one thing we've done, to restructure the price better to make it more attractive for the sales person to sell the machine. At the same time he's still got to achieve his new machine target.

I But the new machine target is based on numbers.

RC Yes, that's correct, and there's no target selling recycled. ?? You need to sell this amount of machines. He doesn't make a lot of margin on new machines so he's making a lot more margin if he sells recycled.

I Is this happening at the moment?

RC Yes, it is.

I How about senior management? Do you reckon there's a similar move there?

RC I'm hoping so. It's very difficult to change... Ricoh is selling thousands of machines a week and there's a structure set up to sell those machines. So to put in a recycled machine, which is probably less than 1% of the overall business, it's quite difficult to get a structure set up to promote as well as we'd like.

I So these two basically are the major challenges. One is marketing and the other is whether or not it's affecting the new business.

RC Yes, I'd agree with that. We know it's not affecting the new business from the study we've done, but if we get a new customer who wants to promote the machine, for example if he wants to promote the machine to France or Germany or Italy, then the first thing they're going to be saying is 'Surely it's going to affect my new machine sales', so then we need to convince them that it doesn't affect their new machine sales because of this, this and this.

I You have to convince the customer or people within Ricoh.

RC Yes, they're convinced that in actual head on shows with Ricoh is not going to affect the new machine sales.

I I can perceive that there's a conflict between the new sales and the recycled section.

RC That's the initial thinking, but again if you come back to the car market we're pitching it up at a different section. So the cheaper machine is going to attack other manufacturers from Ricoh.

I But on the corporate level is there somebody overseeing both the new machine sales and the refurbished ones?

RC Not at the moment. It's something we've been pushing through and we're just with the one sales company at the moment. Hopefully we can expand it. Ricoh's head sales office is in Holland, Ricoh Europe, and we haven't got any influence in Ricoh Europe with this product. Hopefully that's the step that's going to come in the next few years.

I Say a customer comes to Ricoh and says 'I want to buy a photocopier', so he approaches you for a new machine but in the end the customer has to decide which one to buy. But again, between you and your colleague how would you resolve that kind of tension because obviously you have your own targets.

RC To be honest we wouldn't get involved in that decision because we're the other end of the food chain.

I But the sales people, let's say you look after the refurbished machine sales and the other guys look after the new machine sales, how would they actually do their best to do that?

RC Again, I just think it's a different market. I don't know for sure because I'm too far away from the sales side, but I think it's just in two different market areas. If you go and buy a new machine, if you want a high spec machine you'll buy a new machine. If you want a low spec machine you won't buy a Ricoh anyway, you'll buy a Konica or you've got the option then of buying a recycled machine. But I don't think there will ever be a conflict of whether to buy a new or recycled machine within the Ricoh product range.

I But within the entire marketing or sales force, there should be somebody who should be looking after different sectors of the market, the high end and low end. But this is my speculation – I'm thinking that currently there are people only looking after their own tiny segments. There's nobody actually looking at the whole.

RC There's the same sales force, the same structure, selling the recycled and new machines. So the Sales Director in place in NRG controls the new machines and the recycled. There's not a separate structure. It's the same people selling both.

I So what's the future for the reconditioning business?

RC Well we've established the re-launch product in the UK. We've got the NRG group taking it now, the Ricoh group about to take it. The next thing we'd like to do is actually try and go through Ricoh Europe and put some products through Ricoh Europe to sell Europe wide. That's one thing. The other thing we'd like to see in the long term is to look at what we call the BRICS Market and that's developing countries.

I Oh right the poor countries.

RC That's right. We say five – Brazil, Russia, India, China and Scotland. It's a joke, there are only four countries. Ricoh haven't got many sales in those countries and they're developing markets and there's a big market there. So it's one area that this product could go into in the future.

I I think the Ricoh company in China only make brand new machines.

RC Yes.

I There's no reconditioning business.

RC No, there's none at all. I think China has quite strict laws on anti-dumping. I don't know this for sure but have heard that you can't actually import a used machine into China.

I For environmental reasons, yes.

RC So I think they struggle with legality to actually start to refurbish or re-condition in China. It's what I've heard, but I don't know if it's correct.

I I suspect they could generate some business locally but actually I don't think they have the expertise to do that as you're doing here because you've got people who've been with Ricoh for 14 – 20 years.

RC Yes, I've been over to China to Shanghai??

I It's very different. It's kind of grey and very different to be honest.

RC I enjoyed it.

I The workforce is much younger, like twenties maximum.

RC They come for five years. They work for five years and then they go back to their actual families. So they've never got the stability to do something like this in my opinion. They'll all be in for new machines. There's not the structure there to take on reconditioning.

I The people here are mostly from this area?

RC Yes.

I Whereas in China they've got a workforce from other places, for example from Scotland. They have them on a contract basis for five years and once they've completed the contract they come back.

RC So in my opinion I don't think it's possible for the Chinese factory to do something like this and I don't think there would be an interest there anyway because they're geared for new machines. There's all the new machines going in there and it's just so busy and so rammed.

I They don't have the extra capacity to do the reconditioning.

RC I don't think there would be any interest in doing it there in my opinion.

I But you said something about Ricoh Europe, the research company in Holland. You're hoping that they'll actually take this product and take some of the sales tasks.

RC That's correct. Basically Ricoh Europe has got quite a big responsibility for the whole of Europe, it's got the Middle East, part of Africa...

I So it's not just Europe?

RC No. It's not. And they've got the whole of the Middle East and part of North Africa as well. So there's quite a big market there and again, if you're talking about North Africa, it's an emerging market. It's the top market and it could be used well.

I To summarise, the two challenges you face as far as the new / reconditioned machine is concerned is :

- Which section of the market you're trying to enter

- Whether these refurbished machines will actually be affecting the new machine sales for Ricoh

The things you're doing to address these concerns / challenges is to get commitment from the senior management and also to engage the sales staff from NRG and you're doing things like selling example machines at the large events for the dealers so they can actually see both the new machines and refurbished ones and also you're supporting the NRG occasions for example, hosting site visits.

RC And that's a very important side of the business.

I Why are site visits so important?

RC Because the actual people who are selling the machine can actually see the lengths that we go to and the process to produce the machine and they can see the finished machine at the end of it and it gives them a lot of confidence in what we're selling.

I So it's like seeing is believing.

RC Exactly.

I And also in the near future you're trying to espouse the whole group, trying to enter the BRICS market and also get an involvement from Ricoh Europe in Holland so they actually reach the entire European market and also Middle East and North African market.

RC The Ricoh Europe one is soon and the BRICS market is something more longer term. We plan to do the Ricoh Europe one first and then go into the BRICS market.

I And also Felton is doing some press launches to get publicity.

RC Correct. They're undertaking the product now, they're starting to take the product now. This is just happening now. So I would expect we would start using some sample machines for the Felton operation within the next six to eight weeks.

I As far as you're concerned, you're just looking at the reconditioning side of the business.

RC Yes.

I You don't look at the suppliers?

RC I do look at the suppliers as well but I stay ?? with the machines.

I But is it the same challenges more or less?

RC No it's different. Supplies reconditioning is quite easy compared to the machine because if you can imagine the toner cartridges need to recycle, so there's a collection route established by the sales companies, which come back here and then

we sell them directly back to Ricoh Europe who actually buy the recycled product and sell that on to the end user. So it's much easier to establish. There's a corporate stance on it if you like, so it's much easier.

I It's much more established compared with the refurbished machines?

RC That's correct. If you think about the reconditioning supplies is a corporate decision made in Japan, which encompasses the whole of Ricoh, whereas the machines is something we're trying to do in isolation.

I It's something new.

RC Yes.

I But the reconditioning of supplies has been happening for many years?

RC Not really. Since 2000. No, toner cartridge started in 2000. We were recycling drums from about 1991 but the drums is basically one part, but after 2000 we started recycling toner cartridges.

I I've seen that they're actually taking off the coating and re-coating, the OPC drum.

RC Yes, that's right. Before that there were selenium drums which was had a different Ricoh process doing that.

I What sort of new challenges can you imagine for the near future?

RC We want to develop the process more. At the moment we're actually selling the machine as a reused machine going out for its second life. What I'd like to do is try and make the machine a new machine, an entirely new machine, with a different function. So effectively it's going out a new machine, but into a different target customer as our current new machines. So that would give us more advantage to sell.

I So you mean you'd get an old machine and refurbish that perhaps with more functionalities and sell it again to an entirely different market sector.

RC That's right.

I Currently you're just taking the old machines and returning the function to a lower end of the market.

RC That's right. That's something I would like to work to in the future, especially if we go to the BRICS market. I think that's ideal for the end of the BRICS market.

I Can people argue with you for example if you tried to enter the BRICS market for example? It's much cheaper to actually produce new machines in the BRIC market countries themselves rather than import or buy from elsewhere.

RC The problem with that is that 90% of the cost of the machine in the BRICS market will be the parts. So if we've got all the parts here which we're recycling and we're just putting the label on top it's still cheaper to actually make them do a recycled machine here than a new machine in a BRICS market. The machine comes in with all the parts, so if we've got a good recycling process for the part we don't need to buy the part.

End of interview

Appendix 5. An example of interview note

RICOH
Image Communication

RICOH UK PRODUCTS LTD
Princes Risborough, Bucks HP27 9NS

27/9/86
(Kw)
10.00 - 10.45

new machine
sample machine

- market 80% new → P/L low, covered 20% repaired
- don't want to offer new machine sales for Ricoh

Addressing

- Sales Director NRK John Odeley
- sample machines for tea launch event for dealers
- Supporting NRK Steve

now feature press launch

soon Ricoh Europe want sales to whole Europe Middle East and Africa

- blocks markets (long, VMS)

Sales
no reward system

10 23:51

Appendix 6. Unit v. process in grounded theory studies

	Unit	Process
1. Relative focus	Process is one property of the unit. Analysis focuses on unit itself.	A unit is a place where a process goes on and it provides a set of conditions for its operations. Analysis uses properties of unit, not unit itself. Focus is on process as it explains or processes a problem or behaviour pattern.
2. Freedom from time and place	Unit bound. Rendition of unit is always bound by its time and place during period of study.	Process is free of unit's time and place. These properties of unit are only varying conditions. Another unit varies process differently.
3. Generalising	Finite to unit; analyst can only generalise a study to a similar, usually larger unit. Generalising is difficult and slow as must study large unit to analyse differences or use random sampling of smaller unit. Number of units to generalise to is limited.	Fully generalisable quite easily, as a BSP transcends the boundaries on any one unit by just varying it for another unit's properties. Thus, the analyst generalises a substantive BSP to a generic BSP. BSP is more general as it may apply to all units.
4. Action	Provides the conditions that more or less allow the action. Units rely on BSPs to run. Units are where BSSPs and BSPPs intersect. Units themselves may be a BSSP that processes very slowly, compared to BSPP, and is actuated by BSPP. A static unit a frozen BSPP.	The action of life is always in the process rather than of the unit itself. The unit is actuated <i>by</i> process as it bounds and locates it. The action process is a BSPP.
5. Freedom from perspective	Study of unit is always from perspective of analyst and/or participants. Bias is part of analysis as it is built (the establishment view of a corporation, for example).	BSPs are a separate perspective, irrespective of the perspective of participant or analyst. BSPs go on irrespective of bias of analyst. Purging is always purging. Becoming is always becoming, no matter how perspectived the rendition. Bias is just one more variable in a multivariate analysis.
6. Durability	Time and place change so studies of a unit becomes <i>obsolete</i> , whether unit description, unit theory, or unit formulations of change.	BSPs are quite durable. They transcend the fallibility of units and, while keeping up with unit changes, as units change, BSPs get modified.
7. Transferability	Once out of generalising range, it is difficult and hazardous to transfer ideas or findings of one unit to another unit. Transferring ideas about a nursing school to an Air Force academy probably does not apply.	Since BSPs are fully general, they transfer easily with modification. Becoming applies to both a nursing school and an Air Force academy.
8. Consultation based on transferability	An expert on a unit is restricted to that type of unit, and he requires much knowledge.	An expert on a process can consult on any unit where process is occurring by just knowing general process and applying it to new conditions.
9. Misattribution of source	To describe a process as a property of a unit applies that it is uniquely the result of the people in that unit. <i>This is inaccurate</i> . The unit simply uses a general process. Thus, "women in karate are trying to neutralise sex status" implies they produce this	A BSP implies that it is being used by the unit, not a source of it, and the use varies within it. For example, it is accurate to say that women in karate use one mode of neutralisation of an otherwise differentiating sex status.

	process, which is inaccurate.	
10. Learning	Typical unit studies can be boring unless on a deviant or other particularly interesting group. It is hard to remember the plethora of facts, and understanding the unit is often bereft of intrinsic scope of meaning, because of low generality.	BSPs have much “grab” (they catch interest quickly), because they have high impact in meaning, are easily understandable, and have general ideas that are easiest to remember.
11. Research sampling	Random sampling of unit itself is used so the analyst can generalise to a large unit.	Theoretical sampling of properties is used to generate to the theoretical completeness of process.
12. Research coverage	Full range of representative factual coverage needed to describe that unit accurately, whether for description or verification.	Theoretical coverage requires only theoretical sampling of that segment of all behaviour needed to generate an explanatory theory of a process. The analyst does not need representative coverage of all behaviour.
13. Research accuracy	Units tend to require accuracy so the descriptions will be considered correct. Statements are facts to be believed, and subject to slight correction.	<i>Not crucial</i> with a BSP, since successive comparisons correct categories and hypotheses. Statements are hypotheses, thus claimed as suggestions to be checked out; they are not claimed as facts.
14. Research reading	Read as accurate description.	Unfortunately BSP theory is still read by many as factual description, not as hypothetical generalisations.
15. Historicity	Unit studies are fixed in time. They are static. They are cross-sectional; picking up a moment in time, as if forever, but it becomes outdated, thus temporal scope is severely limited.	A BSP, since it deals with on-going movement, implies both a past and a future that can almost be extrapolated. A BSP has change built into it, as it is modified to incorporate new data. A BSP considers categories as part of larger ongoing process, historical scope. A BSP is in motion, not restricted to time.
16. Theoretical impact	Based on the above differences, unit analysis has limited impact and scope.	Based on above differences, a BSP allows for an expansive amount of grounded theorising about every facet of social life. It has high impact.
17. New data	Typically refutes part of unit study.	Generates more BSP theory by comparing it and modifying theory by extension and densification.
18. Relationability	Units are seen as separate entities with definite boundaries. Theory related to a unit is not theoretically related significantly to other units, except perhaps to a larger similar unit to which it may be generalised. Thus unit studies are non-integrative to social organisation, they make units, which are similar on underlying dimensions, seem separate, which is only arbitrarily so; e.g., normal and deviant studies appear different, not as two dimensions of the same general process. More fundamental patterns are obscured.	BSPs, by cutting across and transcending the boundaries of separate units, provide ways of relating units to each other through the same process; e.g., cultivating clientele, is a way of relating milkmen to lawyers. Thus BSPs tie social organisation together. They are integrating. BSPs also relate to each other within units.

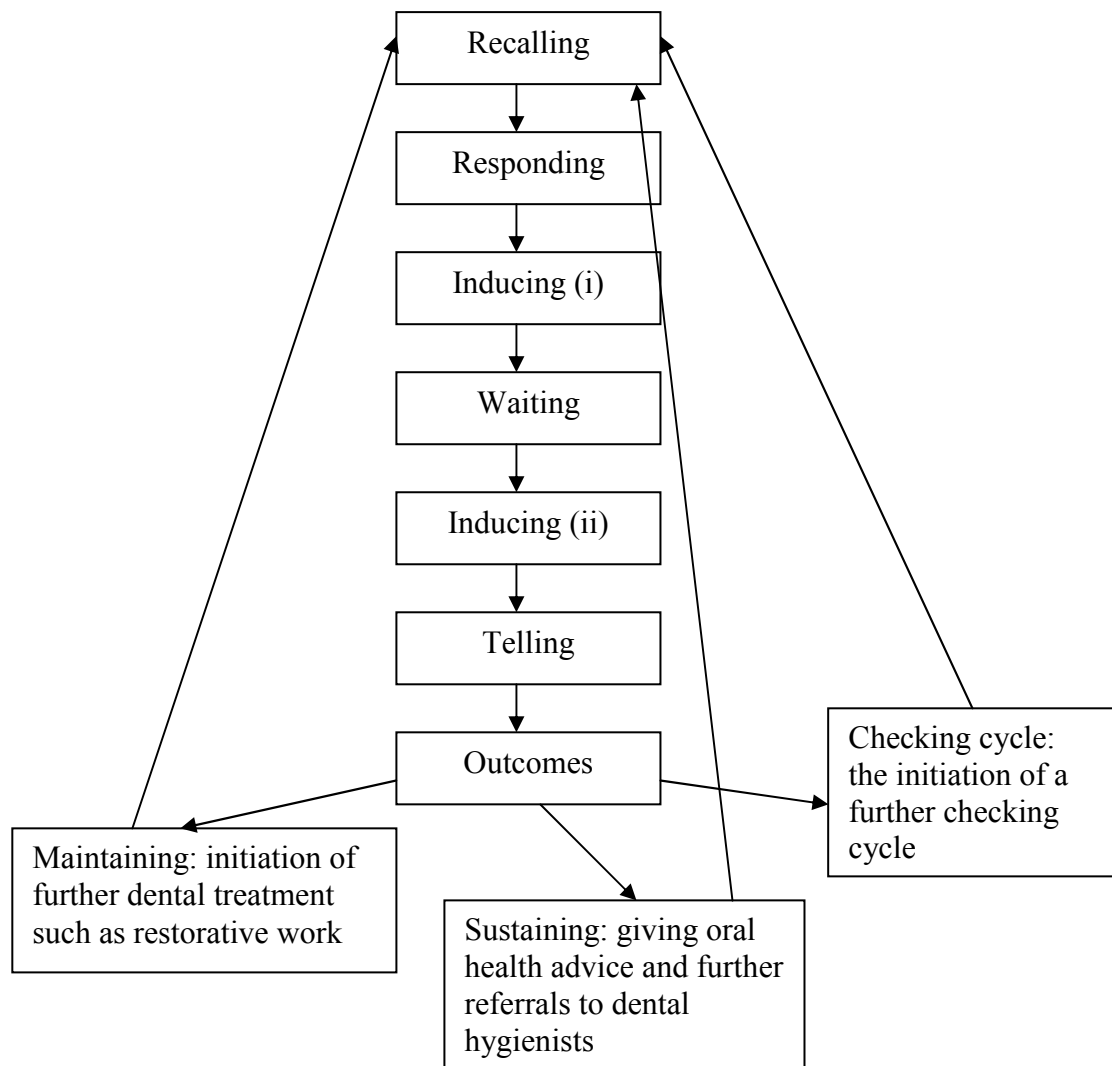
Source: Glaser & Holton (2005, pp. 19-23)

Appendix 7. Substantive and formal grounded theory

An example of a substantive grounded theory is ‘maintaining oral health’ (Gibson & Freeman, 2000) – a social and psychological processes involved in regular dental attendance. It was discovered that “the main concern of those attending for a regular dental visit was checking their oral health” (p. 5). As illustrated in Figure A8.1 below, “the six-month recall was conceptualised as a checking cycle in six phases: recalling, responding, inducing (i), waiting, inducing (ii), and telling” (p. 5). “The possible outcomes of the cycle were maintaining oral health, sustaining oral health, and a further checking cycle” (p. 5). “Variations in checking cycles resulted from reordering and normalising pressures within participants’ lifestyles” (p. 5).

An example of a formal grounded theory is ‘uncoupling’ (Vaughan, 1986) – identifying a series of turning points in intimate relationships as: secrets; the display of discontent; mid-transition; signals, secrets, and collaborative cover-up; the breakdown of cover-up; trying; the initiator’s advantage; going public; the partner’s transition; uncoupling; transition rituals; on telling secrets to a stranger.

Figure. The checking cycle



Source: Gibson & Freeman, 2000 (p. 6)

Appendix 8. Examples of open and selective coding

Data from transcripts, memos, corporate literature, anecdotal	Open coding	Constant comparison and conceptual integration of substantive codes	Theoretical sampling	Selective coding
<p>If Ford came to us, we've got an issue on the ...car,come and have a look at it, we want you to investigate, we have to go, we have to investigate, for the simple reason that if we don't support them on that, then our chances of getting other business, is reduced, because they think, well, they are not supporting us on this...The bigger picture is that, all the work we did is Ford PAG, they all talk to each other. If we piss one of them off, then the chances are we are not going to get favourable ...from the other people. (SS080906)</p>	<p>Attending to customer requests</p>			<p>Paradoxically, it was also reported that Cooper, in fact, was "shipping parts from Europe to China" (IP080906).</p>
<p>there maybe specific reasons, they may have it wrong, you have to check it, argue it, to make sure that you've got the right price. Ford is not cherry-picking the best, you know. There may be technical reasons you can't do something... material reasons. So, I can't imagine Ford can know our product better than we do. There maybe specific technical reasons...they may attempt to over-simplify things and get the best price. (RA080906)</p>	<p>explanation to customer</p>			<p>I asked why Cooper was doing that, given their purpose of bringing the cost down by manufacturing in China. One interviewee explained:</p> <p>It is temporary while we bring the facility on to have the capability to locally manufacture those products. The flip side of that is that if you don't do that, then the customers will go elsewhere... and you don't get it back. (NM080906)</p>
<p>it is always possible...But I thought the place to be is where the vehicle is, where the customer is, where the car needs to work. That is in Germany. (IP080906)</p>	<p>getting closer to customer</p>			
<p>The advantages of his being in the customers' sites in France, Spain and Turkey are as follows: - he was able see the issues first hand, therefore they could be resolved better, - for the Turkish counterparts, they get more involved working with Cooper in order to resolve the problem. It was felt that there was a two-way element in the interaction. - he was in a position of reporting any findings in the customer's sites to the headquarter with regard to proposed protocol modification (e.g. new introduction of glass seals). - due to his physical presence there, he was always constantly available. - as far as he himself is concerned, he also had breadth of fresh air.</p>	<p>advantages of being closer to customer</p>	<p>Serving customers better</p>	<p>To collect more data specifically about "serving customers better"</p>	
<p>I work mainly on the Jaguar, Land Rover side of things. So in that, I am covering, you know, five or six sites I will be covering. What I do is I've got a reasonable relationship with engineers on the projects. The guy on the Land Rover, the guy on the T5, the guy on the Defender, I know them all quite well. You know, in contact with them. So if there is any issue, they will phone me straightaway, I can talk things through with them...We had a good quality engineer with, there, who helps us awful a lot...I've got a close, a reasonably close relationship with the engineers in the customer, which helps...It helps because they understand the situations...I would help them as much as I possibly can. So the time pressure demands on us, as they could be. In terms of, if we've got a good relationship with someone, like the guy I went to see this morning, he rang me up last week, said, ...I need this part, when can you have them? And I said give me a couple of days, I'll come back to you. I took it to him this morning...Whereas other</p>	<p>the reciprocal nature of developing close relationship with customer</p>			

people that you haven't necessarily got the good relationship with, it is more, I need this part, when can we have them? Ok, you have them by then. Or that is not good enough, I need it tomorrow. You know, I can then say, it is going to be a problem for me. I don't care, I need it tomorrow. Because you haven't got the good relationship there. And then they are thinking that you are trying to screw them around... (SS080906)				
In the reconditioning business, it is felt that agreement could not be easily reached between sales and manufacturing. For the sales company (RUK), taking the recycled machines on board means more administrative work and more time for them (MS070606)	Disagreement between sales and manufacturing	Lack of incentive to sell re-conditioned machines	To collect more data specifically about "re-conditioned machines in RPL" by requesting further interviews with managers in the re-conditioning department and surveying RPL's corporate literature	
It's very difficult to change... Ricoh is selling thousands of machines a week and there's a structure set up to sell those machines. So to put in a recycled machine, which is probably less than 1% of the overall business, it's quite difficult to get a structure set up to promote as well as we'd like. (RC270906)	Difficulty in changing new machine sales structure			
for the same reason, the reward system for senior management is based on new machine sales. The senior management has to report total revenue generation to Ricoh headquarter in Japan in numerical format (KY280906)	lack of senior management commitment			
RPL is just pushing one sales company (RUK) at the moment and hoping to expand it. Given that Ricoh Europe group's head sales office is in Holland, RUK has not got any influence in Ricoh Europe with regard to the sales of re-conditioned machines. The influence is expected to be gained in the next few years (RC270906)	absence of influence in Ricoh Europe group			

Endnotes:

¹ Throughout the thesis, Cooper Standard (UK) represents the automotive body sealing products unit of Cooper Standard Automotive (UK).

² Throughout this thesis, a unique numbering system is used to indicate the responses of research participants. In accordance with the confidentiality agreement, the meanings of numbering system are only understood by the author.

³ Throughout the thesis, Ricoh (UK) represents both Ricoh UK Ltd (RUK) and Ricoh UK Products Ltd (RPL). Ricoh UK Ltd (RUK) is a sales company based in Feltham. Ricoh UK Products Ltd (RPL) is a manufacturing facility located in Telford.

⁴ As explained earlier, theoretical and methodological contribution are two sides of the same coin in grounded theory studies. Building blocks of theory development (Whetton, 1989) have been seriously addressed by grounded theory methodology. In light of this, there are some major overlaps between theoretical and methodological contribution. For the purpose of clarification, they are discussed separately in this section.