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**A Study of Interrelationships:
The Way Individual Managers Learn
and Adapt and the Contribution of
Training Towards This Process.**

By

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A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy to the

University of Warwick

Warwick Business School

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List Of Abbreviations

ACIBD	Association of the Chartered Institute of Banking Diploma
ATMs	Automatic Teller Machines
BIM	British Institute of Management
BiS	Business Information Services
CCSC	Centre for Corporate Strategy and Change
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CHAPS	Clearing House Automated Payment System
DIP	Document Image Processing
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
ED	Employment Department
EDAP	Employee Development and Assistance Programme
EFTPOS	Electronic Funds Transfer at Point of Sale
EITB	Engineering Industry Training Board
FIMBRA	Financial Intermediaries, Managers and Brokers Regulatory Association
HR	Human Resource
HRD	Human Resource Development
HRM	Human Resource Management
IiP	Investors in People
IMRO	Investment Management Regulatory Organisation
IMS	Institute of Manpower Studies
IRRR	Industrial Relations Review and Report
IT	Information Technology
LAUTRO	Life Assurance Unit Trust Regulatory Organisation
MCI	Management Charter Initiative
MD	Management Development
MSC	Manpower Services Commission
MTDC	Management Training and Development Committee
NCVQ	National Council for Vocational Qualifications
NEDO	National Economic Development Office
NTI	New Training Initiative
NVQs	National Vocational Qualifications
OD	Organisation Development
PDPs	Personal Development Plans
SFA	Securities and Futures Authority
SIB	Securities and Investment Board
SWIFT	The Society for World-wide Interbank Financial Telecommunications
T & D	Training and Development
TECs	Training Enterprise Councils
TQM	Total Quality Management
TVEI	Technical Vocational Educational Initiative
YTS	Youth Training Scheme

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To

Apostolos my husband and best friend, who is always willing to listen.

and

To

My 'heroes', those who have made a difference in my thinking by inspiring and challenging me through their own example to be in competition with myself.

Declaration

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other University or Institution of learning.

Abstract Of The Thesis

An enduring challenge for organisation theory and research has been the difficulty of explaining the paradoxical nature of organisations and finding ways of articulating and representing their ambiguous nature as complex social systems. There is a significant and growing need to find ways of unravelling the complex patterns of interactions between organisational sub-systems. The study of interrelationships is concerned with the way different organisational sub-systems are in dialogue with one another, how they inform and are informed and the way they affect and are affected from their interaction.

The main research question governing this study is how individual managers learn and adapt in the context of change and the perceived contribution of training and development activities to these processes. The current study has sought to examine this question by exploring the interrelationships between change, learning, training, self and career development using the individual as the unit of analysis. The study has adopted an exploratory orientation and an in-depth approach to track down the interrelationships between the chosen processes. A longitudinal approach has formed part of the research methodology as was the use of case-studies as the main research method for contextualising the analysis of the findings. The thesis presents findings from three organisations in one sector (retail banking) which are discussed in the light of the organisation and industry specific characteristics. The individual manager within each bank remains the unit of analysis, however, emphasis is placed on the interaction of individual and organisational factors to explain why relationships between processes exist, what is the value and significance attached by the individual manager to these relationships and what are the conditions which influence the nature of the interrelationships emerging from the study.

The findings of the present study show that individuals' perceptions of the nature and strength of the dual and triangular interconnections between processes are shaped by the organisational context. Moreover, the findings show how the product of the interaction between individual and organisational factors create conditions which shape the interrelationships between processes. The findings of the present study challenge some of the basic assumptions and hypotheses which have guided our understanding of the interconnections between processes so far. The focus of the current study on the individual's perspective provides valuable insights into the difficulty of reconciling individual and organisational needs by providing a more holistic picture of the multiple factors which affect the interaction between processes. One of the most significant assumptions being challenged by the findings of the present study is the perceived linearity of the interconnection between processes. The thesis presents a map of the dynamic interaction between processes and illustrates the multifaceted and multidimensional nature of processes by uncovering additional dimensions and facets which have not previously been considered. The thesis proposes *synthetic* analysis as a new perspective and approach to exploring the non-linear interaction and potential integration between human and organisational systems.

«Ἔν οἶδα, ὅτι οὐδέν οἶδα»

Σωκράτης (470-399 π.Χ.)

“I only know that I do not know”

Socrates (470-399 BC)

PART

A

Prologue

Overview

The first part clarifies the rationale and focus of the thesis and outlines the structure of the thesis.

CHAPTER ONE

1

Researching Interrelationships: Setting the Scene

1.1. Introduction

This thesis presents and discusses the approach, methodological choices and the results of a study exploring interrelationships between phenomena in the context of changing organisations. The interrelationships are examined between the way individual managers learn and adapt to organisational changes and their perceptions of the contribution of training and development provided by their employing organisation. The objective of this chapter is to provide a prologue to the analysis that follows. It will highlight the central theme that the thesis is seeking to explore, and justify the need for research in this area. This chapter discusses firstly the rationale behind the study and secondly the four main research objectives. The third part of the chapter presents the structure of the thesis and the chapters which follow.

1.2. The rationale behind this study: The complexity of social systems

An enduring challenge for organisation and management theory and research has been the difficulty of explaining the paradoxical nature of organisations and finding ways of articulating and representing the unclear and unpredictable character of organisational life. The way we think about organisations (i.e. the dominant paradigms and metaphors) influences the way phenomena are studied and presented. For example, change as an organisational phenomenon has commanded the attention of many researchers who on the basis of different assumptions about the nature of organisations have described change as planned, emerging,

evolutionary, incremental, revolutionary or transformational (Gersick, 1991). Early theories where the dominant paradigm of organisational analysis has been that of a '*machine*' (organisations as a closed systems in a stable equilibrium) have interpreted change as a planned process. Change from this perspective is frequently associated with disorder and disruption; an unusual event which carries a negative connotation and is to be managed and resolved so that order and stability may be re-established (Taylor, 1911, Fayol, 1949; Weber, 1947; Etzioni, 1966; Lippitt et al., 1958; Bennis et al., 1976). Later studies which have described organisations as '*organisms*' in a dynamic equilibrium have interpreted change as being contained and stochastic. From this perspective, change is interpreted as uncertainty and turbulence and a response to the 'hostile' economic, political and social forces of the environment (Mayo, 1933; Burns & Stalker, 1961; Bennis, 1966; Thompson, 1967; Scott, 1987; Handy, 1989; Hardy, 1994). Change from this perspective is considered to be part of a passing era of discontinuity which is expected to be followed by a state of continuity and harmony within the organisation and the wider business environment. Finally, where organisations have been viewed as '*social systems*' (Gharajedashi & Ackoff, 1984), change has been seen as a natural consequence of the dialectic relationship between the organisation and the environment and between different sub-systems within and outside the organisation. From this perspective change is interpreted as an emergent process which represents transformation and dynamic flux and forms part and parcel of what constitutes organisational renewal and the complexity of co-ordinating various organisational sub-systems. (Emery & Trist, 1965; Katz & Kahn, 1966; Weick, 1979; Wilson, 1992; Goldstein, 1992; Pettigrew & Whipp, 1993; Dawson, 1994; Tsoukas, 1994). In this perspective theories of chaos are employed to describe organisations and their changing nature (Stacey, 1992, 1993).

1.2.1. The assumptions about organisational sub-systems

Different paradigms define and present organisational 'reality' in different ways, which in turn leads to a different set of assumptions about the way various organisational sub-systems operate in the context of change. It is assumed that key organisational sub-systems (the technology, the structure, the task and the people, e.g. Leavitt, 1965) are affected differently by change and play different roles as the organisation responds to change. For example, the paradigm of organisation as '*machine*' assumes that organisational sub-systems are static, fixed and possible to manipulate to meet organisational goals (e.g. Taylor, 1911). The paradigm of organisations as '*organisms*' treats organisational sub-systems as dynamic and

flexible drawing input from the external environment and producing output in terms of organisational goal achievement (e.g. Woodward, 1965). Finally, the '*social systems*' paradigm building from systems theory describes organisational sub-systems as evolving and emergent, because they interact with each other and with other systems within and outside the organisation. From this perspective, organisational sub-systems are considered to be in a constant state of flux as they interpret and construct organisational events and reach their stage of autopoiesis and self-organisation (Maturana & Varela, 1980; Goldstein, 1991; Morgan, 1994). The view of organisations as social systems takes into account cultural, political and social aspects of organisational change and their impact on organisational sub-systems (e.g. Thompson, 1967).

1.2.2. The challenge of human systems

The way organisational sub-systems are conceptualised in turn, influences the strategies that are promoted for implementing change and managing the process of transformation. In other words, the perspective one takes about the nature of organisations and their sub-systems would influence the extent to which organisations could manipulate or control various sub-systems to achieve their own goals. It is here that researchers are confronted with the challenge of making sense of the human aspect of organisations. Unlike other sub-systems people have unique properties which cannot be found in other organisational sub-systems. For example, people either in groups or as individuals are unique entities with dynamic and complicated psychological and sociological dimensions. It cannot be assumed, nor would it be realistic, to treat individuals as passive organisational sub-systems which can be manipulated to meet organisational ends.

Interestingly, however, one finds that a significant proportion of the organisational change literature is doing just that (Coch & French, 1948; Vroom, 1964; Watson, 1966; Zaltman & Duncan, 1977; Kotter & Schlesinger, 1979). Much of what is currently known about the way individuals respond to organisational changes is based on the perspective of the organisation and what the organisation sees as viable strategies for managing individuals' adaptability to change. For example, previous research has argued that to manage effectively individuals' reactions to organisational changes, it is imperative to increase communication in order to persuade individuals of the need to change, to help them acquire the new knowledge, skills and behaviours, to provide educational support to facilitate adaptation to change, and enhance

participation and involvement to allow 'ownership' of the task etc. One of the most frequent 'remedies' prescribed for managing individuals' adaptation to change, is education and training, yet there is limited empirical evidence which substantiates that individuals adapt to change as a result of training or indeed that individuals learn the required knowledge and skills. Therefore, although we currently have some understanding about the way individuals may respond to organisational changes and the factors which influence their reactions, we know a lot less about individuals' receptivity to change, the dilemmas they experience and whether they perceive training as contributing to change and learning.

The preceding paragraphs highlight that the challenge to organisation and management theory and research remains as prominent as ever. If we are to understand more fully organisational life and its complexity we need to treat change as an integral part of the organisational systems and a common factor underlying every aspect of organisations. This perspective encourages us to revisit the dominant metaphors (Marschak, 1993) and paradigms (Sheldon, 1980) of organisational change. If we are to appreciate more fully the complexity of organisation systems perhaps we need to search more deeply to unravel the complex patterns of interaction between organisational sub-systems and their core components (Warfield, 1974; Warfield & Cardenas, 1994). More importantly we need to find ways of preserving this complexity without simplifying it. This means that we need to move beyond linear representations to capture the complex web of reciprocal, non-linear interactions between organisational sub-systems and their core components.

Through such a process it is hoped we will gain a fresh understanding of organisations and their complexity by questioning 'taken for granted' beliefs and challenging existing assumptions about the main sub-systems, their nature and contribution. Indeed our efforts to understand the change and evolution in organisational systems may be better captured by exploring the interrelationships between different sub-systems within the organisation and between these and other systems outside the organisation. The study of interrelationships could enable us to capture the way different sub-systems are in dialogue with one another, how they inform and are informed, the way they affect and are affected by other sub-systems. Moreover, by studying the interrelationships between the sub-systems within and outside the organisation we may be able to identify the various factors which form conditions supporting or inhibiting the interaction between sub-systems. By exploring the interrelationships between

organisational sub-systems we can potentially overcome the restrictions placed by any one organisational paradigm or any one perspective of analysis.

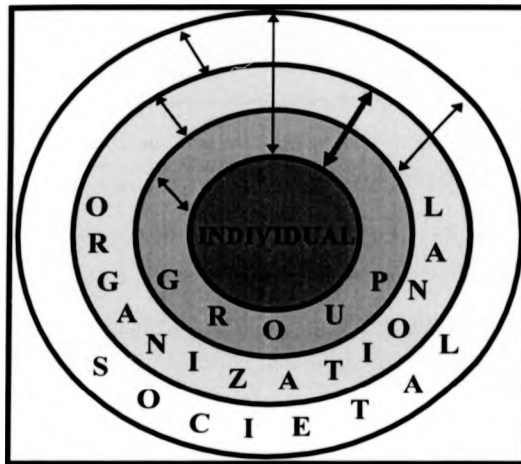


Figure 1.1: The interaction between different systems or levels of analysis.

Perhaps our efforts to articulate and present the complicated character of organisational life may be better served through cross-paradigm thinking and integrative frameworks which concentrate on the interaction between different perspectives, levels of analysis, systems and their sub-systems and between sub-systems and their core components (i.e. the sub-systems of sub-systems). An integrative framework and a multilevel analysis could provide a clearer understanding of the interactions and

interdependencies between different systems and levels which could raise awareness of the nature and strength of interrelationships between sub-systems in the context of changing organisations. In other words, our understanding of the complexity of organisations would be incomplete without an examination of the interaction between the organisation and the wider social environment in which organisations are embedded, or indeed in relation to the group and individual level of analysis which they affect and from which they are affected. Organisational complexity examined from the different perspectives and levels of analysis could raise awareness of the interdependencies between the social, organisational, group and individual levels by illustrating the dynamics underlying their interaction and the way different interpretations at different levels are negotiated (Figure 1.1.).

Finally, by taking into account the multiple dimensions and facets of sub-systems we could sketch the various directions and paths that they follow in the process of interaction in specific contexts at different times and over a period of time. So far attempts to represent this complexity have focused on finding the optimum path of resource maximisation which has often been presented using unidirectional links and treating the interaction between sub-systems as linear and fixed. The study of interrelationships provides a way of exploring the

complexity of the interaction between organisational sub-systems and a means of representing the dynamic, emergent and continuously changing nature of organisations and their sub-systems. This analysis highlights some of the new directions and approaches that may be employed in our efforts to understand the fluid, integrative and self-organising nature of organisational systems. Moreover, it illustrates the many possibilities and the multiple opportunities that can be created to investigate the complicated and puzzling aspects of organisations. The present study chooses to focus on one of these possibilities by exploring the interrelationships emerging from the interaction of individual and organisational systems.

1.3. The focus of the study

This study focuses on the individual manager as the unit of analysis and examines how individuals within changing organisations learn and adapt during periods of change and the perceived contribution of training and development activities provided by the organisation. The study examines how the internal conflict and the dilemmas experienced by the individual affect their perceptions of the relationships between phenomena. One of the most significant dilemmas experienced by the individual is when trying to balance personal and organisational priorities in relation to development and learning in the context of change. Internal conflict describes the competing priorities that the individual experiences as (s)he tries to reconcile psychological and sociological needs. In other words, internal conflict arises when the individual is confronted with events or situations which generate tension between what might appear to be appropriate for the individuals' self-concept, yet inappropriate for the individuals' need for belonging as a member of a social group. Organisational changes generate opportunities and threats for the individual and intensify the tension between the competing needs of the individual in relation to the needs of the organisation.

The way individual managers react to organisational changes (i.e. individuals' receptivity to change) has not been fully explored in the existing literature. Existing research highlights the behavioural, psychological and social implications of change for the individual, however, there is to-date a limited understanding of the emotional and cognitive effects of change for the individual (with the exception of Russ & Broussin, 1996; Marris, 1986; Kanter, 1983; Huff, 1992). The approach adopted in this study to examine these issues is by exploring the impact of the interaction between personal and organisational factors on managers'

perceptions of the interrelationship between training and learning in the context of change. The interconnection between change, learning and training at the individual level is reflected in four specific research objectives which this study has sought to address. The study aims:

1. to explore how managers perceive organisational processes and their interrelationships in the context of change,
2. to examine the impact of the organisational context on the nature and strength of interrelationships between processes,
3. to track, review and analyse the conditions which facilitate or inhibit the interrelationships between processes, and
4. to draw a map of the interaction and integration of human and organisational systems in the context of change.

This research seeks to explore individual managers' receptivity to learning and change and to provide answers to questions such as:

- How do managers interpret organisational changes and what do they perceive as the main effects of change on them and the organisation?
- How significant is organisational provision for individuals' adaptation?
- What do managers perceive as learning and what are the main obstacles to learning?
- What would managers describe as their ideal learning experience and why?
- What personal learning/development goals do managers set and how do they pursue their fulfilment?
- What additional experiences, apart from training and development activities and day-to-day practice, would help managers to be more receptive to learning and changing?

The operationalisation of the research objectives has resulted in certain methodological choices which are deemed to be appropriate for the nature of the study and its objectives. The study has adopted an exploratory orientation and an in-depth approach to track down the interrelationships between the chosen phenomena. A longitudinal approach has formed part of the research methodology as was the use of case-studies as the main research method for contextualizing the analysis of the findings. The thesis presents findings from three organisations in one sector (retail banking) which are discussed in the light of the organisation and industry specific characteristics. The individual manager within each bank remains the unit of analysis, however, emphasis is placed on the interaction of individual and organisational factors. The interaction between individual and organisational factors is

intended to explain why relationships between phenomena exist, what is the value and significance attached by the individual manager to these relationships and what are the conditions which influence the nature of the interrelationships emerging from the study.

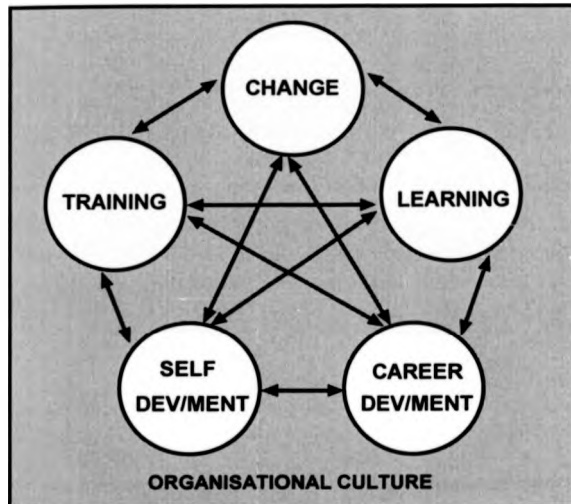


Figure 1.2: The research model exploring the dynamic interrelationships between the chosen phenomena.

It is important to clarify at this point the language used in the thesis to describe the way human and organisational processes (treated in the analysis as phenomena) are connected and secondly the approach used in this study to explore the interrelationships between individual and organisational systems. Firstly, it is important to distinguish between three terms which are used in the thesis to describe the way phenomena are associated.

Throughout the analysis reference is made to the link, the relationship(s) and the interrelationship(s) between phenomena. For the purpose of this thesis the term '*interrelationships*' is used to describe the multiple relationships between three or more phenomena and their potential correlation, the term '*relationship*' is used to denote the dynamic association between two phenomena and the term '*link*' indicates the static (chain-like) association between two or more phenomena.

The second point which is equally important to explain at this stage, is the way this study has initially attempted to present diagrammatically the complexity of the interconnections between the phenomena which it has sought to examine. The concern in this study with the dilemmas experienced by the individual in balancing personal and organisational priorities in the context of change has led to the identification of five key phenomena (variables); namely change, training, learning, self-development and career development. Figure 1.2. illustrates the way these have been diagrammatically presented.

This model was the initial attempt to draw the complexity of the interrelationships between phenomena and to sketch the complicated path that phenomena follow as they interact with other phenomena. The model has sought to avoid a linear representation of the interaction between the chosen phenomena. The connecting lines between phenomena were initially used symbolically to illustrate the potential interactions. The model facilitated the initial analysis of the current state of thinking in the literature and highlighted potential interactions that have not been considered to-date. Moreover, it was a useful means of making sense of the multiple issues emerging from the research findings and obtaining a clearer representation of the interrelationships arising from each of the three banks examined in the study. The model was later adapted to reflect the comparative analysis of the findings across the three banks. The findings of this study provide evidence of the dynamic nature and interaction between organisational and individual factors and challenge some of the basic assumptions held in the existing literature about the way organisational and individual systems are interconnected. A review of the structure developed for the discussion and examination of the main themes presented in the thesis is summarised next.

1.4. The structure of the thesis

The thesis has been organised in five parts to allow a sequential development in the argument pursued. The prologue (Part A) is followed by a discussion of the literature. This part of the thesis (Part B), consists of two chapters which aim to provide a critical appraisal of the relevant literature and identify the specific gaps which the study aims to address. Chapter 2 reviews and analyses the relevant literature regarding the association between change, learning and training. Chapter 3 examines the negotiation between individual and organisational learning needs and explores their interaction in relation to the interrelationship between learning, self and career development.

The third part of the thesis (Part C), consists of two chapters which introduce and defend the methodology adopted for the research. Chapter 4 discusses the main methodological principles which have formed the backbone of the research design and have contributed to the development of the research strategy. Chapter 5 describes and analyses the main phases of the data collection and explains the approach adopted for arriving at the findings.

The fourth part of the thesis (Part D), consists of five chapters which focus on the analysis and presentation of the findings. Chapter 6 provides a brief overview of the main characteristics of the retail banking sector. The main developments during the last fifteen years are discussed, as well as the main principles underlying HRM processes and practices. This discussion sets the context for the presentation and analysis of the data. Chapters 7, 8 and 9 report on the emerging interrelationships between phenomena in each of the three banks. Therefore, each of these chapters is devoted to the analysis of each bank (Bank A, Bank B and Bank C respectively) as a distinct case study. The analysis of the findings addresses three levels: the individual manager, the organisation and the interaction between individual and organisational factors. More specifically the analysis, examines: the individual manager as a learner, the individual manager within the changing organisational context (bank), the organisation as a learning environment and the role of training and development in relation to learning and change. The interaction between personal and organisational factors is discussed in the light of the emerging interconnections between phenomena. Moreover, the analysis of the findings draws together individual responses across organisations on a before and after basis as reflected from the longitudinal approach adopted in the study. The similarities and differences between organisations are explored in Chapter 10, which discusses comparatively the key emerging relationships from the study. This chapter revisits the key emerging relationships and discusses them in relation to the existing literature. The analysis in this chapter demonstrates more clearly the contribution of the study.

Chapter 11 forms the final part (Part E) of the thesis as an epilogue to the preceding analysis and a point of reflection in the thesis. This chapter provides a synopsis of the discussion and reflects on the major lessons learned from the study in the light of the main objectives identified at the onset. The significance and implications of the findings for both theory and practice are discussed. Suggestions for further research in this field are also provided.

Undoubtedly, much remains to be written about the need to understand organisational complexity and possible ways of explaining it. Even more remains to be said about the contribution that the study of interrelationships and the interaction between human and organisational systems can make to this process. It is hoped that the present study provides at least an insight into the multiple possibilities that exist in this field.

PART

B

The Literature

Overview

This part of the thesis reviews the main body of the literature and presents the propositions put forward by exponents in the field in relation to the main phenomena and their interrelationships discussed in this study.

Training - Learning - Change: Their Association

2.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the different perspectives held by the individual and the organisation regarding the nature and purpose of processes such as training, learning and change. The review of the relevant literature is intended to analyse the underlying assumptions supporting the perspective taken by the individual manager and the organisation about each process and their potential interconnection. The emphasis will be to examine the interplay between individual and organisational development needs and its impact on the perceived relationship between training and learning in the context of change.

The chapter is organised in four main sections. The first section is devoted to a discussion of the training and development processes both from the perspective of the organisation and the individual manager. This discussion is embedded in the broader context of education, training and development in the UK and in relation to the human resource management philosophy. The second section explores managerial learning in the context of training and discusses adult learning theories and the factors facilitating or inhibiting managerial learning within organisations. Recent literature exploring learning from the perspective of the organisation is also discussed. The analysis of training and learning identifies the main issues regarding the tension between individual and organisational goals and the difficulty of reconciling each party's needs. Moreover, the internal dilemmas faced by both the individual and the organisation are discussed. The third section explores the link between training and learning

and identifies the gaps in the existing literature regarding individual's perceptions of this relationship. The fourth section concentrates on the relationship between training and learning in the context of change and discusses organisational change from both the perspective of the organisation and the individual. The relationship between learning and change and the relationship between change and training are analysed by indicating the main assumptions which underline their perceived interconnection. The fifth and final part of this chapter explores the interrelationship between training, learning and change.

2.2. Education, training and development in the UK

The contextual analysis pursued in this study makes imperative the need to place the discussion of training and learning in the wider socio-economic and political context of the UK. The discussion of the main principles of education, training and development in the UK will help explain observations about the way training and learning processes are understood and practised by individuals and organisations. This section will concentrate on the underlying principles of the education policy in the UK by reviewing some of the most significant economic, social and political factors which have shaped it over the last fifteen years.

The 1980s and 1990s have witnessed some of the most fundamental changes in education policy in Britain. One of the most significant forces which has triggered these changes in education and training policy was the declining competitiveness of the UK in the world market during the early 1980s. This industrial decline was attributed to the short-term focus and the limited investment in the modernisation of capital equipment, as well as the financial structures which were inappropriate to meet global competition. Moreover, the low investment in human capital, the anti-industrial culture and the class system (i.e. one's worth/status in contemporary society) failed to provide the industry with the talent needed and the flexibility and adaptability necessary to accommodate the changes (Pettigrew et al., 1986; Sparrow & Pettigrew, 1987; Keep & Mayhew, 1996). Studies undertaken during this period report that the UK has been falling significantly behind in education and training (particularly that of managers) in comparison to other European countries (Prais et al., 1991; Handy, 1987). These and other studies have exposed a significantly lower level of formal qualifications in the UK and a relatively sceptical attitude by organisations and individuals towards training

and development (Halsey et al., 1980; Constable & McCormick, 1987; Mangham & Silver, 1986; NEDO/MS/IMP, 1984; Coopers & Lybrand, 1985). More recent studies by Bennett et al. (1992) and Banks et al. (1992) show that social factors such as class, family background and gender create barriers to equality of access to education and influence the choice made by young people about the development of their career and education (i.e. the potential payoffs from their learning). The picture in the wider labour market is also reported by studies to be equally negative. According to Keep & Mayhew (1994) the failure to encourage and reward skill acquisition and the product market strategies based on low cost and low quality confirm once more that the workforce has not been considered as a key factor in economic success but has been treated mainly as a 'commodity' (Hyman, 1987). As a result of these factors education is more likely to be provided to a selected few (usually highly qualified employees and managers) rather than to members of the society regardless of background, gender or position within social and occupational hierarchies.

Efforts by successive governments to change attitudes towards education and training and to improve competitiveness are evident by a series of initiatives aimed at enhancing the provision of vocational education and training. The introduction of the Manpower Services Commission (MSC) in 1973, as a central co-ordinating body for the provision of highly qualified manpower in the UK, was supported by the Employment and Training Act (1981) which endorsed the New Training Initiative (NTI). The NTI had three objectives: to develop skill training, to equip all young people for work and to widen training opportunities for adults (Sparrow & Pettigrew, 1987). The broad aim of the NTI was to develop a more flexible and adaptable workforce and to encourage more commitment to skill development both among the young (16-18 year olds) and adults (e.g. managers). The objectives of the NTI were addressed by several schemes which have been introduced during recent years. These include: the Youth Training Scheme (YTS), the Technical Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI), National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs), British Quality standards (e.g. BS5750); Investors in People (IIP) and the establishment of the Training Enterprise Councils (TECs - in England and Wales), the National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ) and the Management Charter Initiative (MCI) (Keep, 1986; 1989a; 1994). Similar to other 'post-industrialist' societies (Bell, 1973) the UK is currently turning its attention towards becoming a 'learning society' (Ranson, 1992; Ball, 1993; Toyne, 1994), by creating 'learning organisations' and developing 'learning people' (Employment Department/Department of

Trade and Industry, (ED/DTI) 1994; cited in Keep & Mayhew; 1994). The vision of the UK as a learning society is based on the premise that by improving the mechanisms that supply skills and learning (primarily within organisations), this will help change the attitudes of individuals towards education and training. These transformations are expected to contribute towards the improvement of financial performance of organisations and the society at large. Some researchers (Keep & Mayhew, 1996; Bennett et al., 1992) however, question the extent to which an increase in supply of training and education is likely to change attitudes and the demand for it, especially when many of the assumptions upon which the UK education and training policy rests have been criticised as being divorced from reality.

A central assumption upon which recent changes in education and training policy are being built is the belief that training and development are linked to economic performance at the levels of both national economy and individual organisations (Keep & Mayhew, 1996; Sparrow & Pettigrew, 1987; Ball, 1976). However, the perceived link between training and economic performance has been dismissed by studies (e.g. Hayes et al., 1984; Mangham & Silvers, 1986) which show no direct connection between the two and emphasise the complexity and multiplicity of variables influencing (financial) performance (Keep & Mayhew, 1996). Despite this evidence, the belief that there is a direct link between training and performance has encouraged some organisations to reconsider their investment in human capital and to re-examine the strategic contribution of training to the development of human resources.

The transfer of responsibility to organisations for deciding the nature and volume of training has been one of the main objectives of the education and training policy in the UK in recent years. Whether or not this objective has been fulfilled is questionable (and some authors remain critical of its essentially voluntaristic nature - Rainbird, 1994), as is the case with the wider implications of the tensions between the often conflicting priorities and perceptions of the government, organisations and individuals which have not been fully considered. Moreover, there is little indication that existing training policy in the UK considers the interplay between these varied interests (Antonacopoulou, 1996a). Keep (1986:177) argues that the main concern of the government is to ensure a "better educated, better trained, more adaptable workforce", while individual employers are primarily concerned with "improving the capacity of existing employees to perform a reasonably well defined set of activities".

Therefore, organisations are more willing to invest in training which is specific to their needs rather than general training. From the perspective of the individual employee the prime interest is "maximising the returns from skill acquisition, either in financial terms or as 'net advantages' of a more general kind".

The complexity of the policy issues in the UK are further reflected in the lack of agreement as to how education, development and training are conceptualised, defined and distinguished. Part of the problem has been attributed to the assumptions that people make when using these terms, which has led to multiple definitions as to what each entails (Nadler, 1970; Koudra, 1975; Morris, 1978; Mumford, 1985; Kenney & Reid, 1986; Sisson & Storey, 1988; Storey, 1989a, 1990). Although, different criteria are employed by different commentators (such as process, orientation, method, content and the degree of precision involved), it is commonly agreed that education is broader and generic rather than specific. Training on the other hand, is perceived to be more narrow and focused to specific needs. Development is perceived to entail both education and training and to encapsulate the notion of continuous improvement (Morris, 1978; Storey, 1989a).

An observation from the review of the various definitions of education, training and development is that there is little discussion of the objectives, time, methods, content and context of learning (with very few exceptions e.g. Reid et al., 1993). If one is to accept the notion that education, training and development are aimed at different levels of insight, the question would be, where does learning come in? If all three are intended to contribute to this end - enhancing the opportunities for the individual to learn - why does one need to distinguish between them? Considering this, it is difficult to draw a line between where one stops and another begins. If the effort is to contribute towards an individual's growth then by treating education, training and development as separate one overlooks their interconnection and the fact that each of these processes have elements of each other, something which some commentators have acknowledged (Hague, 1973; Pepper, 1984; Mailick et al., 1988; Buckley & Caple, 1990).

It would appear that the context in which education, training and development take place influences their purpose, the way they are defined and the role they play in relation to individual learning. Therefore, when reference is made to education, training and development

in the context of a society the emphasis on individual learning might be quite different from the same processes taking place in the context of organisations. It could be argued that the broader the context and bigger the number of stakeholders and the more difficult it would be to maintain a common definition and a shared set of objectives. Therefore, the organisational context may have a stronger impact on individual's learning as it is the more immediate context in which the individual learner interacts. Having said this, it is important not to lose sight of the fact that despite differences in perspectives between different levels (society, organisation, individual) interdependencies exist. The interaction between different levels is probably best demonstrated by the way the one affects and influences the other. The impact of the recent changes in education and training policy in the UK is evident in the nature and purpose of training and development in the context of organisations particularly from the strategic perspective of Human Resource Management (HRM).

2.3. HRM strategy and the implications for training within organisations

International comparisons and governmental reports published in 1980s have encouraged organisations to reconsider their position towards the value attached to their human capital. Recognising the poor investment in human resources some organisations have responded by seeking means which would enable them to address the economic, social and political challenges contributing to the industrial decline. It is during this period and under these circumstances that HRM (along with other concepts, such as Total Quality Management and the learning organisation) have emerged as the new orthodoxy. Continuous improvement is the common theme underlying these recent concepts. The most significant doctrine underlying HRM in particular, is that people are the key to organisational effectiveness and they are the most important 'resource'. From the perspective of HRM, labour will no longer be considered as a commodity and a cost to be minimised (particularly during turbulent times), but will be a vital investment for organisational success. From this tenet unfold several other principles; namely that HRM is a proactive response to the changing needs of the organisation for human resources. HRM allows more flexibility and easier adaptability which are considered as key drivers for organisation development and a source of competitive advantage (Fombrun et al., 1984; Beer et al. 1985; Hendry & Pettigrew, 1986; 1987; 1990; 1992; Hendry et al., 1988; Garavan, 1991). Another significant principle of the HRM philosophy is the emphasis on the individual rather than the collective. HRM is concerned with the development of individual

capacity and potential so that it may be utilised more effectively. The philosophy of HRM postulates that individuals should be given more autonomy to take responsibility and to become more self-reliant. By valuing the contribution that the individual can make, the organisation could gain more commitment and a willingness by people to contribute towards the fulfilment of organisational goals. Moreover, by enhancing commitment a strong culture could develop, which would help unite all members of the organisation towards a common purpose (Legge, 1989; Storey, 1989b; 1995). Therefore, HRM is promoted as a strategic function, because it could be integrated with the structure and corporate strategy of the organisation and would set out to accomplish internal consistency between HR related activities.

The strategic implementation of HRM is exemplified by the emphasis on the developmental aspects of managing human resources. As part of HRM, human resource development (HRD) is concerned with linking various development activities. Through a rigorous, systematic and coherent approach, HRD aims to interlink recruitment, selection, training and development, performance appraisal, career development, succession planning etc., so that the skills, personality and abilities of individuals are congruent to the requirements of different situations and circumstances (Torrington, 1989; Keep, 1989a; Pearson, 1991). The integration of development activities is intended to provide the quality and standard of human resources needed by the organisation and at the same time facilitate individuals to reach their full potential. In short, HRD aims to translate strategic intent into everyday behaviour demonstrated by people and it is primarily concerned with developing individuals who are motivated, committed and competent to fulfil the objectives of the organisation (Thomson & Maybe, 1994).

Training and development activities are promoted as the cornerstone upon which HRD is being built. As Keep (1989b:114) points out: "...development indicates the basic thrust of HRM in practice, and in so doing, underlines the centrality of the role afforded to training and development within such changes". This view is supported by Torrington (1989; 1993) who believes that HRM has actually made training an important process. From the strategic perspective of HRD/HRM, in particular, training and development are key co-ordinating mechanisms which contribute to better manpower planning (Keep, 1989b). Training and development as part of a systematic approach to HRD would seek to address skill or

performance gaps so that quality standards are maintained. This process promises to maximise returns from the investment in people. Another concern with training in the context of HRD has been to overcome the negative attitudes of individuals and organisations towards training which has been widely discussed in the literature (Coopers & Lybrand, 1985; Sparrow & Pettigrew, 1987; Keep, 1989b).

Studies funded by the Training Agency (during 1987 and 1988) to examine the workings of training system in the UK, explored employers' activities and perspectives of training (CCSC & Coopers and Lybrand, 1989; Haskins & Sells/IFF, 1989) and showed a renewed training activity within organisations. These observations were based primarily on funding levels and training activities and showed a marked increase both in spending and volume of training undertaken. These studies also showed that these changes in organisational 'attitude' towards training were driven by both external factors in the outer context and internal factors in the inner context in which organisations operate. The market forces, government initiatives and legislation and the pressures from the labour market are among the external factors identified, while strategic factors, internal actors, systems, philosophy and organisation were among the internal factors identified (Haskins & Sells, 1989; Pettigrew et al. 1988; CCSC and Coopers & Lybrand, 1989). However, researchers (Keep, 1989b; Ryan, 1991; Finegold, 1991) have questioned the extent to which the findings reported from these studies, particularly regarding the impact of recent governmental initiatives, represent a fundamental change in attitudes. Recent studies by Felstead & Green (1994) and Ashton & Green (1994) show that the impact of government initiatives has not had a lasting effect on organisation's attitudes towards training provision. These studies show that although the amount and level of training has been increasing throughout the 1980s and until 1990, there has been a decline in training provision within organisations in the light of the economic recession in the UK since 1990. Statistical reports by the Employment department provide support for these observations (Employment Department, 1993, cited in Ashton & Felstead, 1995).

The implementation of the HRD philosophy within organisations has been supported by other initiatives such as the competencies framework, self-development, learning contracts, upward appraisal, peer review, mentoring etc. (Schuler & Jackson, 1987; Boak & Stephenson, 1987a, 1987b; Redman & Snape, 1992; Grint, 1993; Bones, 1994). These initiatives set out to facilitate the process of communicating the expected standards of performance and skills,

encourage self-reliance and build a more coherent approach to the development of the organisation and the individual. However, these initiatives despite being adopted enthusiastically by some organisations they have not always proven capable of resolving the multiple priorities of the organisation or indeed the priorities of the individuals for which they were intended. In some instances these initiatives have created more problems than they have actually resolved, however space does not permit an extensive analysis of each of these approaches.

Taking the competency framework as an example it is apparent that it has been promoted by its advocates (Klemp, 1980; Boyatzis, 1982; Cockerill, 1989; Schroder, 1989; Randel, 1989; MCI, 1990; Woodruffe, 1991; Boam & Sparrow, 1992; Spencer & Spencer, 1993) as a system which draws input from organisational plans and delivers outputs in the form of concomitant performance in staff. It is therefore progressed as a device for assessing individual capabilities, skills, behaviour, motives etc. in relation to organisational performance and a key mechanism for improving organisational competitiveness by pursuing quality, cost reduction and profitability through "excellence". It should also be noted that these initiatives are primarily targeted on individual managers. It is not difficult to explain what the impetus is behind the quest for the competent manager and the use of a competency framework. Apart from trying to achieve the right match between tasks and the skills of the workforce, there is also the need to establish a clearer cost-benefit link between training and job performance. The competency framework is projected as a way of enabling organisations to clarify the criteria which could be used to determine the effectiveness of managers or their suitability for their appointment (McBeath, 1990). The competency framework may be a way of handling the complexities surrounding managers and their job which is a widely discussed topic in the literature (Stewart, 1967; Campbell et al., 1970; Mintzberg, 1973; Brown, 1982; Kotter, 1982; Willmott, 1984; Hales, 1986; Whitley, 1988; Hirsh & Bevan, 1988; Torrington et al., 1989; Vinton, 1992; Sayles, 1993). The competency framework however, has not been without its critics (Collin, 1989; Burgoyne, 1993; Antonacopoulou & FitzGerald, 1996), who question the epistemological and ontological assumptions underlying the concept of competency. For example, the competency framework has been criticised for the lack of clarity and precision as to what 'competency' means, which is further complicated by the diversity of purposes. Other criticisms challenge the difficult balance between definition and specification against individualism and creativity (universalism versus standardisation of managerial roles)

(Collins, 1987; Albanese, 1989), competency equated with performance (Jacob, 1989; Brown, 1993; Holmes & Joyce, 1993), the individual divorced from the context (Jessup, 1990; Hyland, 1993; Holmes & Joyce, 1993) and the short term focus of competency in relation to present circumstances.

The criticisms of the competency framework highlight the challenges of implementing the HRD/HRM philosophy in practice. In particular, it uncovers the conflicts between the individual and the organisation and the difficulty of balancing or reconciling their development needs and priorities. For example the competency framework as evident from the previous paragraphs is primarily directed to the development of the organisation and not the individual. Individuals may find it difficult to understand what 'competency' means in relation to their capabilities and personal characteristics and may consider it as an insult to the complexity of their personality and an oversimplification of their personal characteristics (e.g. personality, intuition etc.) which are not included in the framework (Collins, 1987; Antonacopoulou & FitzGerald, 1996).

Similar criticisms are to be found of the HRM approach which despite being promoted as a strategy for bringing the individual and the organisation closer, is according to some commentators, nothing more than a sophisticated means of controlling people. Legge (1989:34-36) puts forward very convincing arguments which show that HRM is a means of exploiting individuals and homogenising their abilities. HRM is criticised for matching people to strategic contingencies and manufacturing consent and compliance and not winning 'true' commitment. Another significant criticism of HRM is that it is heavily biased by organisational definitions and priorities, thus failing to appreciate differences in perspectives at different levels (individual versus group versus organisation). Legge (1989) warns about the internal contradictions between HRM policies and emphasises the difficulty of balancing individualism versus collectivism and the multiple and conflicting values promoted by different HRM activities.

The sections which follow aim to analyse and compare the perspective of the organisation with that of the individual in relation to training and development. By teasing out the various factors which contribute to their corresponding views about the purpose and significance of training and development, the objective is to show the value-laden nature of HRM/HRD

activities. By exploring the various assumptions and values attached to training and development by the individual and the organisation this will help explain why similarities and differences exist in the perspective they take.

2.3.1. The training and development of managers from the perspective of the organisation

To understand the function of training within organisations, King (1969), suggests that one must first enquire more deeply into the question of 'what is training?'. The verb "to train" is derived from the old French word *trainér* meaning "to drag". Interestingly, one finds frequently that training is described as a deliberate provision of experiences which are expected to drag individuals along in the desired direction. In other words, it is a means of causing an individual to absorb some new perspective, understanding, value, attitude, technique or skill and as a result to grow in a desired manner (Stokes, 1966; Landy & Trumbo, 1976). Similar definitions are to be found for development which instead of addressing the advancement of the individual tends to be limited to job-specific experiences. A review of the definitions of management development (MD) confirms that it is a planned and deliberate effort by the organisation to improve the present and future job performance of the individual and to ensure that organisational goals are fulfilled (House; 1967; Desatnick, 1970; Morris, 1975; 1978; Morris & Burgoyne, 1973; Training Agency, 1977; Ashton & Taylor, 1974; Taylor & Lippitt, 1975; Mumford, 1989; Miller, 1991). A central priority of development is the improvement of organisational competitiveness, productivity, and ultimately efficiency and effectiveness (Daly et al., 1985; Barham et al., 1987; Keep, 1989b; Garavan, 1990; Schuler & Walker, 1990). These definitions often neglect that an integral part of the development process is learning. Even when reference is made to learning there is hardly any indication that there is flexibility and that individual differences in learning styles are taken into account (Honey & Mumford, 1982). For example Papalexandris (1988:18) defines MD as "the learning experience which is planned by the organisation and is intended to further organisational goals by improving managerial performance. This is done through the improved abilities, motives or attitudes that the managers acquire from education and training". Papalexandris's definition is one of the few to make reference to individuals' learning, yet even then individuals' learning is controlled by the organisation so that it serves organisational needs. Moreover, the existing literature shows that organisations employ

• A key to engineering, creating and shaping organisational change and in particular as a way to manage a cultural change.	Marsh (1986), Morgan (1988), Mailick et al. (1988)
• A motivational element encouraging managers to recognise and accept the need to change their attitude, their knowledge and skills in order to perform more effectively.	Lewis & Kelly (1986)
• A key to organisational renewal and a process of growing leadership and enabling the organisation to fulfil its business mission.	Lippitt (1982a), Mailick et al., (1988)
• A processes for maintaining organisational rigour, creating a competitive edge and steaming the flow of talent, enhancing the quality of the lives of people in the organisation	Pearson (1987), Mailick et al. (1988)
• A means of obtaining the best fit in terms of effectiveness and economics not only for the organisation as a whole but also for each individual.	Torrington & Sutton (1977)
• A tool in pursuit of quality, cost reduction and profitability through excellence.	Alexander (1987)
• An element forging a common identity, philosophy and management style.	Ashton & Easterby-Smith (1979), Wigel (1987).
• A system which draws input from the organisational environment in the form of manpower plans and organisational diagnoses, and makes outputs in the form of trained staff and information such as succession plans.	Torrington & Sutton (1977), Ashton & Easterby-Smith, (1979)
• A total process involving informal, accidental as well as formal learning experiences.	Mumford (1989)

training and development activities for multiple and often conflicting purposes. Table 2.1. summarises the main statements of purpose for MD.

The way organisations define and apply training and development reveals several contradictions and inconsistencies. These inconsistencies can be identified at three main levels. The first level is the conflicting priorities between the needs and objectives of the organisation against those of the individual. In other words the extent to which MD is about the development of the individual manager or whether it is a key element in organisational development (OD). The second level of identified contradictions within training and development from the organisation's perspective, is the relationship of training to other HRM activities. Inconsistencies exist between the multiple roles of training and the multiple roles of activities such as appraisal, career development, recruitment etc. which promote different values and often conflicting messages and priorities. Finally, the third level of disparity in training and development lies in the conflicting priorities of the organisation itself within the training and development process, which create confusion about the significance of the various objectives sought to be fulfilled. The conflicting priorities of the organisation may have an impact on the competing values of other HRM activities and could affect individual

perceptions about the role of training and development. The effect on individuals' perceptions in turn could well determine how wide the gap is between organisation and individual needs and expectations. The various levels of conflicts within the training and development of managers are not fully discussed in the literature, particularly the internal conflicts within the organisation. Each of these levels of contradiction deserve a more in-depth discussion.

2.3.1.1. The organisational dilemma within management training and development

The internal conflicts within the organisation derive from the multiple objectives and competing priorities that it aims to address through training and development. From the literature review regarding the purpose of training and development it has been observed that the organisation is trying to balance homogeneity in knowledge and skills with flexibility and adaptability. The organisation aims to reconcile organisational identity with organisational renewal. Moreover, the various methods employed by organisations in the training and development of managers (e.g. management games, case-studies, action learning, self-development - Sadler, 1989; Storey, 1994) show that organisations have difficulty in balancing autonomy and control. Self-development is a case in point. Organisations encourage personal responsibility and self-reliance in the development of managers, yet at the same time they want to exercise control on how self-development activities are undertaken and how the organisation will benefit from this process.

Another conflict within the organisation is whether the investment in training and development will justify the cost. Balancing competitiveness and efficiency against quality and effectiveness reveals an additional conflict in the priorities of organisations. Training and development are expected to provide the responsiveness necessary to deal with short-term goals and at the same time to address the future vision and mission of the organisation by setting the grounds for long-term needs. From this contradicting priority also emerges the dilemma of stability versus change at the organisational level. In other words, it is the dilemma as to whether training should seek to improve organisational performance (through individual improvement of people) by avoiding future mistakes or whether it should aid risk-taking and an exploration of performance improvement beyond the existing standards. The dilemmas faced by organisations in relation to training and development help explain why the focus and nature of training provision remains on the short-term needs of the organisation.

Research evidence show that health and safety training, required by legislation, is the most popular type of training funded and organised by employers, followed by induction training for new employees (Skills in Britain, 1994). There is still limited indication that organisations provide training which contributes to the broader development of the individual and encourages employees to have more interest towards education and learning. The only noticeable exception is Ford's EDAP (Employee Development and Assistance Programme) which is a conscious attempt by the organisation to "widen and develop the skills and abilities of the workforce" and develop the "hunger to learn" (Industrial Relations Review and Report (IRRR, 1990:6, James, 1995a; 1995b). The scarcity of such approaches towards training and development confirm that a fundamental change in the attitude of organisations towards training and development has yet to take place (IRS Employment Review, 1995).

The lack of sustainable commitment by organisations for training and development reveals additional conflicts within organisations. The organisation dilemma in this case, is about the difficulty in reconciling the multiple and competing priorities of training in relation to other HRD/HRM activities. Despite the hype of HRM activity researchers (Keep, 1989b; Storey, 1995) argue that training remains a cost rather than an investment and that it is haphazardly undertaken, with limited systematic planning and with no indication that it forms part of a rigorous HRD approach embedded in the wider HRM strategy. Ashton & Felstead (1995:247), drawing from the recent research findings from a study by Felstead & Green (1994), conclude that: "...the main determinant of company training appears to have been 'push' factors such as BS5750, health and safety requirements and occupational regulations, rather than the 'pull' of HRM techniques. Evidence that companies are increasingly looking inwardly to invest in their human resources is lacking". This observation finds support in other studies as well (e.g. Storey, 1995) which report that organisations have implemented the 'hard' elements of HRM more so than the 'soft' aspects. In other words, some organisations have been quick to implement activities which would improve their 'exploitation' (Legge, 1989) of human resources, however they have been very reluctant to change their values towards a genuine investment in human capital. Indeed, as evident in Table 2.1. current descriptions of MD do not provide a clear indication as to how training and development are interlinked with other HR activities (with the exception of Burgoyne, 1988). Critics of the HRM approach have warned against the contradicting values promoted by different HRD activities. These contradictions contribute to the inconsistency of the HRM philosophy and

the conflicting priorities that each activity sets out to fulfil. For example the internal conflicts within training and development discussed earlier may well be the result of an inconsistent association between training and other HRD activities. Therefore, the conflicting priorities of the organisation within training may be exacerbated by the often contradicting needs pursued by other HRD activities. A good example illustrating this level of conflict is the relationship between training and performance appraisal.

The identification of the training and development needs of the individual are often determined by the appraisal process, which acts both as a developmental process and an assessment of individual performance (Randell et al. 1972; George, 1986; Townley, 1989; 1990). Like training and development, appraisal as a HRM process, aims to gain employee flexibility by rewarding good performance, communicating shared norms, developing employee commitment by integrating the goals of the individual with those of the organisation (Barlow, 1989; Carlton & Sloman, 1992; Geary, 1992; Fletcher & Williams, 1992; Townley, 1993). Ultimately, however, appraisal is a means of surveilling and controlling employees' performance by specifying the desired behaviour through explicit rules and implicit expectations which condition individuals' frame of reference and theories of actions. The political nature of the appraisal process and its inherent subjectivity has been debated by commentators (Longenecker, et al., 1987; Grint, 1993; Fletcher, 1993; Bowles & Coates, 1993; Randell, 1994) who have examined the conflicting priorities within the appraisal process. Beer (1981) argues that the multiple and often contradictory purposes of appraisal are a source of conflict within the organisation and within the individual. From the point of view of the organisation, performance appraisal is a process of evaluating the performance of the individual and an opportunity to coach and counsel the individual about the improvement of their performance and help them develop their future potential. Beer emphasises the dilemma facing supervisors who are in the uncomfortable position of having to act both as a "judge and jury" (p. 27). Therefore, the organisation is trying to reconcile what effectively are conflicting roles (assessment and development) within the appraisal process, which are also likely to affect the perceived role of training and development activities. If one was to elaborate more fully on the potential consequences, then one would also need to address the effects on career development and future recruitment and selection strategy. Concentrating on the impact of appraisal on training and development (as space does not permit a detailed discussion), it could be argued that from the perspective of the

organisation the priority in training provision is more likely to be driven by the performance gap identified rather than the development of the individual. The priority attached to performance as opposed to development provides a short-term focus to the training process, and influences the perceived outcome - the change in behaviour and the improvement of performance. In essence, the organisation expects to influence the individual in order to achieve its own ends, and promotes training as a motivation which is intended to provide encouragement and persuade individuals of the need for change. Taking this argument a step further, as the organisation plans future manpower needs, the appraisal process helps determine what the performance gaps for the future are. The conflict in this relationship is again the imbalance between performance priorities for the foreseeable future against broader development and flexibility to meet unpredictable needs in the long-term. The potential impact of this relationship on management training and development is that it may act as an incentive giving false impressions about the potential impact on future needs e.g. associating training with promotion or reward when this may not be possible.

Although, some of the conflicts between different HRD/HRM activities have been acknowledged (Legge, 1989; 1995a), there is as yet limited empirical research findings which explore the relationships between HRM activities within changing organisations. The continuously changing priorities of organisations would make it difficult to maintain the linear and sequential process between HRM activities, which is usually promoted by many of the existing HRM models. Drawing on Wittington's (1993) typology of different perspectives of strategy (classical, evolutionary, processual and systemic), Legge (1995b:104) shows that the strategic view of HRM is influenced by the classical, rationalistic perspective and represented in normative models which suggest that HRM policies "should fit either the stage of development arrived at or the strategic orientation/management style adopted in pursuing survival or growth". The complexities however, and the conflicts discussed so far within training and development represent only part of the picture. The other part is equally complex and concerns the dilemmas of individuals in the training and development process. These conflicts are explored in more depth in the next section.

2.3.2. Training and development from the perspective of the individual manager

From the perspective of individual managers, training can play a significant part in their development. It is a source of information and guidance in relation to the portfolio of skills and knowledge relevant to their present and future development. Training is also a means of facilitating a better understanding of the forces and influences acting upon managers' job performance and the responsibilities of their position (Engineering Industry Training Board (EITB), 1968; Brooks, 1980; Humble, 1973; Management Training and Development Committee (MTDC), 1969; Leggard, 1972; Mitchell, 1990). The extent to which training and development play this or any other role, will depend on managers' perceptions of the level of significance and relevance of training in relation to their own priorities and concerns (Koudra, 1975; Mumford, 1971; Dickson, 1973; Belbin & Belbin, 1972). Transfer of learning has been a major issue in the training and development of managers for many years (Berger, 1977; Huczynski, 1978; Casey, 1980; Mant, 1981; Sparrow, 1984; Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Broad & Newstrom, 1992). Moreover, the wider socio-cultural context at the group, organisational, industry and country level has also been seen to play a determining role in the way managers are being trained, as well as, the attitudes managers develop towards such activities (Rigg, 1989; Syrett, 1990; Maguire et al., 1993; Knell, 1993; Torrington, 1994; Illes & Mabey, 1994). For example, Rigg (1989:53) in his study of training in Britain from the perspective of the individual, found that the biggest proportion (29%) of individuals perceive training (VET) as a means of "getting a job, getting a more interesting job, or opening up a wider choice of jobs". A similar proportion (26%) of individuals perceive training as enabling them to get "better qualified, learning new skills or improving/updating existing ones". Rigg notes that "economic and non-economic concerns" are incorporated in individuals' responses which in his view indicates that "training is generally associated with achieving a variety of goals in relation to work". Individuals' responses to attitudinal statements about self, education, training and work in the same study showed that "the vast majority of adults believe that they are capable of learning and are interested in self-improvement. The majority are interested either in changing occupations, particularly the low paid, or in advancing themselves in their existing employment" (p. 66). One of the observations resulting from Rigg's study is that individuals' negative attitudes towards training are often the result of their previous experiences of education and training, unmet demand for training and the extent to which learning is encouraged in the environment or occupation in which individuals are employed.

These observations are supported by Maguire et al. (1993:8) who conclude from their review of the factors influencing individual commitment to lifetime learning that negative experiences of education and training are associated with "unmet training demands leading adults to develop a low expectancy that effort invested in exploring training options will result in finding an appropriate training course, or will be rewarded by actual entry into training".

Despite the significance of training and development for individuals' growth, one finds that it is an area currently under-researched. The existing studies have informed our understanding about the training activities which managers find most useful. For example, according to Mant's (1981) research managers perceive educational programmes in their own time (reading work related books and journals), on-the-job problem-solving and attending external training programmes (seminars and conferences) as the most useful training activities. Jones's and Cooper's (1980) study showed that informal and continuous methods of updating (e.g. on-the-job problem-solving) are more effective than more formal periodic methods (e.g. attending courses, seminars and conferences). Despite this evidence, researchers report that the training and development of managers tends to be dominated by traditional didactic approaches (e.g. formal courses) employing traditional methods such as: lectures, discussion groups, case studies, tapes, films and video cassettes, programmed instruction etc. (Stewart & Stewart, 1981; Jones & Cooper, 1980). The increase in many in-company type courses, tailor-made for the requirements of organisations (Saunders et al., 1974) has often meant that individuals are precluded from the preparation and design of these courses and are given little choice in deciding whether or not to attend them. Several researchers have proposed models of training and development (Smith, 1977; Laird, 1985; Jones, 1986; Buckley & Caple, 1990; Pont, 1991) which claim to follow a 'systematic' approach. These models incorporate a series of stages/steps (e.g. identifying the training need(s), establishing training objectives, selecting the right training method(s), implementing the training program and evaluating training on completion) which commentators claim can ensure that the training programme is 'effective'. Many of these models however, rarely take into account individual differences in relation to training and learning (e.g. Mumford, 1989; Bramley, 1989; Harrison, 1992). This issue is exacerbated in the content of training and development programmes which provide job-specific knowledge and skills driven by the perceived value of training for the organisation. This approach means that individuals' values and needs are neglected and their personal, social and in particular "meta-skills" are ignored (Burgoyne & Stuart, 1976, 1978b; Stuart &

Burgoyne, 1977). When organisations apply training and development activities in this way they not only create confusion about whose learning goals are being fulfilled; those of the individual or the collective, they also raise expectations about the purpose and significance of these activities which often cannot be met.

Keep (1989b), Finegold (1991) and others argue that individuals are more likely to perceive training as an incentive for increased motivation and a means of getting a better job by acquiring skills and qualifications which act as "positional goods". These perceptions on the part of the individual reveal the political dimensions of the training process and the potentially conflicting values attached by the individual manager in relation to those of the organisation. However, conflict and contradiction are not only contained between the organisational needs for growth against those of the individual. Just as the organisation has conflicting needs and priorities within the training, so does the individual manager. The uniqueness of each manager as an individual, combined with the unique circumstances and experiences they encounter, could lead to a potentially different set of conflicting priorities within training and development activities.

The dilemmas encountered by individual managers in the training and development process are not widely discussed in the literature, yet it is these dilemmas which may determine individuals' perceptions of the significance and usefulness of training in addressing their present and future priorities. The internal conflict experienced by individuals regarding training and development can be located at two main levels. The first level conflict is created by the difficulty of reconciling the personal need of self-actualisation and self-fulfilment against the need for belonging, security and acceptability as a member of a social group. The individual faces internal conflict when competing personal priorities lead to a dilemma about the difficulty of being able to accommodate various priorities (psychological and social needs) at the same time. The second level of conflict emerges from the imbalance between trying to maintain one's self-image against admitting the existence of skills or knowledge gaps. Each of these choices create a different set of emotional reactions which could have positive or negative psychological and sociological implications and could influence whether the individual learns from training.

Overall, the dilemmas experienced by the individual could well have their roots in the inconsistency and lack of clarity which surrounds organisational practices and perceived expectations. Research findings (Preston, 1993; Croft, 1996) confirm that management training and development are 'symbols' of the organisational culture which is a valuable source of information about the organisation, the way it functions and the behaviour considered acceptable. The extent to which the core message is consistently conveyed by other HR activities, may affect whether the individual is likely to have a clearer understanding of what (s)he needs to do in order to 'succeed'. However, as indicated in the previous section, the lack of consistency between different HR activities may provide contradicting messages, and create more confusion and disillusionment for the individual.

A recent study by Taylor & Spencer (1994) has shown that early experiences of the education system influence people's attitudes to learning and training for the rest of their lives. For example, one of the most significant factors influencing individual attitudes towards education and training is the encouragement they receive, and the extent to which they succeed (e.g. in academic achievements) is likely to reinforce a continuing desire to learn. The expectations of family and teachers together with peer group intentions and pressure can exert a powerful influence both on the choices people make about their career and the extent to which they are likely to stay or drop out of education and training. Another study by Park (1994) has shown that although a high proportion (89%) of the sample felt that individuals gain more out of learning they have chosen to do than learning they are made to do, there is a limited indication they would be prepared to take responsibility for their learning. A significant proportion (62%) believe that people should not be expected to learn new skills for their career in their own time and that the Government or the Employer should pay for learning that is to do with the job or their careers. These findings are in sharp contrast to the success of Ford's EDAP programme which has had an outstanding response by employees who appear to see "EDAP as an opportunity to widen their educational horizons...[and] take an interest in personal growth and development" (IRRR, 1990:7). Within the first year of the programme approximately 30% of the workforce have participated in EDAP related activities.

The findings from Park's (1994) study would suggest that a key dilemma for the individual in the training and development process, is the lack of clarity about who carries the responsibility or put differently, who *should* carry the responsibility in training and development.

Undoubtedly, the latter raises a number of ethical and moral issues which deserve serious consideration. Although, space does not permit a discussion of these issues nor are moral issues part of the scope of this analysis, it is important to acknowledge that while recent initiatives by the Government have pointed the finger to the organisation, the organisation itself has been pointing the finger to the individual. For example a central message of 'self-development', as an approach to MD, is that individuals are responsible for their development. The notion of self-development will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter. Suffice it is here to say however, that as yet there is limited indication that the practical implementation of self-development within organisations has created the necessary freedom for individuals to act, or indeed that it has addressed the asymmetries of power relationships within the workplace. As indicated in the previous section, training and development are activities for which managers have limited control. The internal conflict within the individual is shaped by the political dimensions of the training and development processes which create confusion about who carries the responsibility for development. Therefore, it could be argued that the emotional response of the individual in relation to training and development (i.e. their attitudes, motivation and willingness to learn) are the product of the political forces they are experiencing. The dilemma experienced by managers may be due to the disorientation regarding whose priorities does training and development essentially set out to fulfil.

Another significant dilemma facing the individual is that of truthfulness and honesty with the self and others. Several accounts in the literature (Goffman, 1959; Foucault, 1977; Giacalone & Rosenfoeld, 1991; Wayne & Liden, 1995; Rosenfoeld et al., 1995), show that individuals within organisations are often required to portray an image or manage impressions consistent with the organisational ethos or culture. Research has shown that individuals present themselves in ways which are consistent with the image expected by the organisation (Schlenker, 1980; Hochschild, 1983; Mangham & Overington, 1987; Gardener, 1992). The internal conflict within the individual escalates when (s)he conforms as a result of a sincere drive to 'fit in' or creating the impression of 'fitting in' (normative conformity) (Ralston & Elsass, 1991). Taking this analysis a step further, it could be argued that the degree of conflict experienced by the individual may be different, with possibly the former being the more intense between the two. For example, the drive to 'fit in' may become so consuming that the role becomes internalised and changes the individual's own self concept. When impressions

become habits, in the process of social interaction, the dilemma for the individual is how to maintain awareness of who (s)he 'really' is. When individuals project images, they are not only pursuing their self-interests; they are also intending to benefit others by maintaining stability and comfort in daily interaction. However, the hierarchical structure of organisations presents situations where command-obedience relationships exist because one individual directs another. The imbalance of power and knowledge inherent in such relationships and the dependency of lower strata, would shape the extent to which frames are distorted. The individuals in the higher tiers would be in a powerful situation whereby they can conceal strategic secrets from lower tiers. An example of power and knowledge creating impression management strategies in this way, is when management put on a front of concern at the same time as secretly planning redundancies (see e.g. Collinson, 1992).

The internal conflict experienced by the individual may help to explain why training and development interventions are likely to be hurtful, particularly if they expose deficiencies rather than develop potential. The identification of training and development needs through the appraisal process is a case in point. According to Beer (1981) the conflict within the individual during the performance appraisal process lies between the desire to receive positive feedback about their performance against the potential consequences to their self-image and valued extrinsic rewards (promotion and pay), if negative feedback is obtained. The realisation of the need to learn implies that the individual is not as successful as (s)he could be nor as successful as (s)he should be, which can be a considerable shock in self-esteem. The misuse of appraisal as a vehicle for future career development may lead to training which may provide skills which could be redundant and create aspirations which cannot be fulfilled. The limited opportunities provided for the actual utilisation of the knowledge acquired on-the-job may also be a cause of further frustration and disenchantment for the individual and a block to experimentation, particularly when organisation control systems may condemn innovative behaviour (Lathrope, 1973).

From the perspective of the individual manager, training and development ideally would be relevant to the current or anticipated problems or situations they are confronted with and would seek to match their learning needs and goals (Lathrope, 1973, Stewart & Stewart, 1981). Many of the difficulties and challenges of management training and development discussed in the preceding paragraphs are exacerbated by the difficulty of assessing the

effectiveness of training, particularly regarding its contribution to managers' learning. The different perspectives held by individuals and the organisation regarding the role of training and development shape how effectiveness is defined and measured and essentially whether individual and organisational needs can be reconciled. The internal conflict encountered by the organisation and the individual manager are deep-seated in the difficulty of reconciling their development needs.

2.3.3. Organisation development versus management development

The internal conflicts experienced by individuals and the organisation in relation to training and development suggest that each party has different priorities at stake and would therefore, attach a different value to different HRD activities. The differences in perspective influence the expectations and attitudes of each party and form the backbone of how each interprets any attempt at reconciliation. The preceding sections however, have already uncovered that striking a balance between the competing priorities of the organisation against those of the individual is not at all easy, not least because any potential arbitration would have to address asymmetry of power and control and inequality in knowledge and experiences (in terms of information available).

One therefore needs to assess the relationship between organisation development (OD) and management development (MD) and to consider how organisational and individual needs are negotiated. Existing research (Rainbird & Maguire, 1993) suggests that training and development interventions give priority to the needs of the organisation often at the expense of individual needs. One would therefore, be inclined to question the extent to which the notion of MD refers purely to the development of the individual manager or indeed whether it is one of many elements of the OD strategy. The existing literature suggests two main perspectives regarding the relationship between OD and MD. Researchers who take the perspective that organisational and individual goals are compatible perceive MD to be strongly linked with OD. However, researchers who take a pluralist perspective argue that there is a chasm between OD and MD. The analysis presented in the chapter has so far discussed the conflicting priorities of the individual and the organisation in relation to training and development. The paragraphs which follow consider the main arguments of researchers who advocate that joint negotiation, agreement and regulation can contribute to the 'mutual' development of the organisation and the individual.

2.3.3.1. The link between OD and MD

The assumption that MD and OD are strongly interconnected is heavily influenced by the strategic role of MD. Many researchers (Annadale, 1986; Sadler, 1988; Papalexandris, 1988; McBeath, 1990; Wille, 1990) have argued that MD is a strategic function (i.e. it is a key element in corporate strategy development) which contributes to the management of human resources by co-ordinating HRM activities (recruitment, appraisal, counselling, career development, remuneration etc.). This approach towards MD has given rise to multiple models (Ashton & Easterby-Smith; 1979; Burgoyne, 1988; Kilcourse, 1988; Miller, 1991) which explore the connection and interaction between the key elements. A central principle is that any attempt to develop managers in isolation from their context will be futile: individual development and the development of the organisational climate and structure has to be promoted in parallel.

The interdependence between OD and MD is also consistent with descriptions of OD which suggest that it is a means of adapting to new technologies and market challenges. According to Bennis (1969:1-15), OD is a "complex educational strategy", which is intended to change the beliefs, attitudes, values and structures of organisations so that they can better adapt to the internal and external pressures exercised upon them. OD as an exchange of knowledge both internally and externally (within and outside the organisation) is perceived to be the result of conscious and unconscious educational practices and constant social interactions (Mirvis & Berg, 1977). OD described in these terms leads commentators (Lippitt, 1969; Lievegoed, 1980; Easterby-Smith et al., 1980; Lessem, 1990; McBeath, 1990) to conclude that OD and MD are inseparable (in terms of the process). McBeath argues that OD is an activity which focuses on behavioural rather than structural aspects of the organisation, and looks for progress away from hierarchical structures to participative management styles and more flexible forms of organisation. The perceived interdependence between OD and MD is also supported by Frizell & Gellermann (1988), who point out that it is not possible to do the one without doing the other at the same time. They suggest that OD and MD are the alignment of values, beliefs, vision and mission. Therefore, dealing with change demands a carefully planned and designed process which is relevant to the needs of the business and able to inspire the participating managers. Margulies & Raia (1972, 1988), point out that for OD and MD to be so strongly interconnected some core values need to be present. Among others they refer to the opportunity for people to function as human beings and develop to their full potential; the

desire to seek to increase organisation effectiveness to achieve goals; the need for the work environment to be exciting; the existence of opportunities to influence direction and the recognition that human beings have a complex set of needs.

In summary, the link between OD and MD appears to be strong when one takes the perspective of the organisation and assumes that MD is a tool that can be tailored to the particular needs that the organisation has in relation to its managers. The underlying issue however, remains to what extent is it possible to achieve a mutually beneficial development by building a common identity for the individual and the organisation. Even if one is to take the contingent perspective offered by Burgoyne's (1988) model which promotes a more "collaborative career planning approach", it is still unclear whether this may be possible in the light of power relationships dominating the political life of organisations. Consequently, although there may be a strong commonality of interests on the part of both the organisation and the individual manager in MD activities, it cannot be assumed that their interests and views will be identical. Therefore, any process which sets out to reconcile the needs of the individual and the organisation at minimum would need to address the inconsistencies and internal conflicts within each party as the starting point for understanding the interaction between the development of the organisation and the individual manager.

2.3.4. HRD as a learning environment

The tension between OD and MD makes only more clear that activities like training and development provided to managers are dominated by the definitions of the organisation. One would question whether this approach leads to a strong culture which unites everyone towards a common purpose, as the HRM philosophy proclaims. More significantly, one would seek to challenge whether individuals are 'truly' committed to the organisation and its objectives or whether they actually learn a script and become 'successful' actors in the political stage of organisations (Mangham, 1979). The preceding discussion would suggest that individuals are more likely to respond by engaging in behavioural acts and managing impressions. It is therefore, questionable whether HRD has been successful in creating the learning climate it was intended to create. HRD has yet to prove that the political issues of reconciling different and often conflicting perspectives have been fully addressed and there is limited indication that the internal inconsistencies between HRM activities have been or indeed can be resolved (Legge, 1989; Thomson & Mabey, 1994).

The different perspectives held by the individual and the organisation regarding the use and purpose of training reaffirms the subjectivity in defining and assessing the effectiveness of training. The evaluation of training and development is widely debated in the literature and several constraints have been identified (Scriven, 1967; Kirkpatrick, 1967; Hamblin, 1974; Warr et al., 1970; Burgoyne & Singh, 1977; Bramley & Newby, 1984; Bramley, 1986; Brewster, 1980). Part of the problem with assessing the worth of activities such as training and development stems from the difficulty of setting specific objectives and measurable criteria, identifying the internal and external factors that need to be considered and assessing casual relationships in relation to the application of the acquired knowledge. Additional difficulties can be imposed by organisations themselves. The politics of decision-making, power and control over the information generated from evaluation, the differences in what stakeholders consider as 'valuable', 'objective', 'reliable', the organisational policy and strategy, the extent to which resources (people, money and time) are committed for such activities, the level of support by top management are just some of them (Parker, 1986; Weiss, 1986; Bramley & Newby, 1984; Smith, 1980; Connolly, 1983; Bradenburg, 1982).

Evaluation provides one of the major sources of knowledge in the organisation and it could be viewed as a learning process focusing on the analysis of why a programme is failing or succeeding (Datta & Perloff, 1979). Evaluation within the policy area could be a key to progress and a platform for learning on which future policy can be based. On the other hand, it may also be a threat, the warrant to admit failure and a mode of accountability (Jenkins, 1978). The political sensitivity of assessing the value of activities such as training and development, may explain why organisations rarely evaluate training, and even when they do their focus is driven by short term changes (primarily in behaviour) rather than long-term benefits through continuous improvement. For example the political dimensions of the appraisal process are partly due to the difficulty of arriving at a concrete definition of effective performance and objectively measuring the various elements which constitute it. As Fletcher (1984) explains, part of the problem lies in the attribution of performance and success. When performance is attributed to internal factors it is often by reference to factors such as ability and effort, whereas when performance is explained in terms of external factors reference is usually made to luck or the difficulty of the task. Fletcher argues that while there is a tendency to take into account external, circumstantial factors in explaining performance we tend to

neglect social and contextual factors which are equally significant. Fletcher (1984:22) concludes that: "Our perceptions of what is real and valid in the world rest on a consensus of shared beliefs; appraisals of performance are no exception to that rule". Similarly, the effectiveness in training is not easy to assess, because emphasis is given to the behavioural outcomes, rather than the learning process itself. Therefore, as with appraisal, the success of training is measured by the ability of the individual to absorb the new information and to demonstrate a marked change in behaviour. The attribution of training effectiveness to internal factors neglects the impact of the context prior and after training and the social dynamics during the training event. As Lumstaine (1975) suggests the evaluation of training becomes an act of judgement.

The multilevel analysis presented in the previous sections has uncovered primarily the tensions within and between the individual and the organisation in relation to training and development. The impact of the social, cultural and economic factors underlying the education and training policy in the UK has also emerged as a significant factor affecting the attitude of organisations and individuals towards these processes. From the discussion it has become more apparent that the existing literature on management training and development is dominated by the perspective of the organisation, thus often neglecting the individual's disposition towards training. Probably one of the most significant consequences of this neglect, is that the training and development literature is losing sight of the role of learning in the training and development process. The section which follows explores managerial learning in the context of training.

2.4. Managerial learning in the context of training

The way managers construct reality within their organisations depends to a large extent, on how and what they learn from the experiences they encounter and how that learning informs their understanding, perceptions and attitudes towards events. This section aims to discuss the existing body of literature in relation to managerial learning particularly in relation to training. The aim is to explore how our understanding of the way managers learn, based on principles of adult learning, may provide more insight into the dilemmas facing individuals receiving training and how these dilemmas shape their perceptions of the relationship between learning and training.

2.4.1. How do managers learn?

An interest in how people learn has preoccupied the attention of many researchers over the years (Harris & Schwahn, 1961; Crow & Crow, 1963; Foucault, 1972; Habermas, 1972; Friere, 1972; Knowles, 1973; Bandura, 1977). Efforts to understand learning have given rise to at least two major categories of learning theories. These have been termed as *pedagogy* and *andragogy* respectively (Knowles, 1984:55); the former addressing issues of children's learning, the latter focusing on adults' learning. On the basis of adults' distinctive characteristics (Smith, 1988), namely their roles, responsibilities, life experiences and their overall social development, many theorists and researchers (Knox, 1977, 1986; Knowles, 1980; Brookfield, 1986; Simpson, 1980; Apps, 1985) propose several characteristics about the way adults learn. Although the views vary, there are several common themes. These are summarised by Jones (1995: 117) and illustrated in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2: Assumptions about adult learning
• Adults seek autonomy and self-direction in learning.
• Adults learn through using their own and each others' experiences.
• Adults want to start learning when they experience a need to know or to do something in order to perform better in some part of their lives.
• Adults tend to be task-oriented or problem-oriented in their approach to learning.
• Adults are far more motivated by self-esteem, increased self-confidence, and personal recognition than they are by such things as salary, promotion, status, or pay grade.

The principles of adult learning inform our understanding of individuals' approach and potential attitude towards learning opportunities. For example, a unique characteristic of adult learning is that individuals do not approach learning with the straightforward intention to soak up knowledge. Adults compare a new piece of information with what they already know and test it against their views and prejudices in relation to their own working situation (Hague, 1973, 1979; BIM, 1984). Adult learning principles are governed by different theories of learning which have a different set of assumptions and orientation regarding the way adults learn.

Theories of adult learning have had a significant impact in the development of theory and research in relation to how managers learn within organisations. In an extensive review of the learning theories, Burgoyne & Stuart (1977, 1978c) identified at least eight "schools of thought" which they discuss using metaphors in relation to their main principles and applications, as well as, their assumptions about the nature of people. In similar fashion,

Table 2.3: The main learning theories and their basic orientation

	<i>Behaviourism</i>	<i>Structuralism</i>	<i>Functionalism</i>	<i>Humanism</i>
<i>Initiators</i>	Pavlov (1927), Thorndike (1932), Skinner (1953, 1971)	Levi-Strauss (1963), Ausubel (1968, 1985)	Gibb (1960), Miller (1964), Hilgard & Bower (1975)	Rogers (1961, 1969), Boydell (1979), Argyris. (1982)
<i>Basic Assumptions</i>	New behaviours can be caused and shaped with structures around the learner.	The mind is like a computer; the teacher is the programmer.	People learn only if they want to learn and if they perceive the task practical.	Learning is self-directed. The essence is discovery, meaningfulness and autonomy.
<i>Orientation to Teaching & Learning</i>	Reward-punishment, stimulus-response, behaviour modification.	Design content carefully and fed to the learner in small portions to be retained in memory.	Learner involvement, hands-on problem-solving, building confidence.	Freedom to learn, individualistic approach, experiential and spontaneous, understanding.

Brostrom (1979) discusses four main theories of learning - behaviourism, structuralism, functionalism and humanism - and discusses their main principles in relation to training and learning. Table 2.3. summarises the main characteristics of each of these theories and the basic assumptions about how adults learn. Table 2.3 shows that the orientation of different learning theories over the years has moved from notions of conditioning and indoctrination, towards autonomy and self direction. In relation to training in particular, as discussed in the previous section, it is evident that the responsibility is moving away from the teacher (trainer) towards the individual who is held responsible for their learning, because (s)he can determine whether learning actually takes place. From this view it follows that the individual is perceived to have the 'power' to choose whether or not to learn therefore, more emphasis should be given in understanding what motivates an individual to learn. Juch (1983:18) emphasised this point when he stated that:

"man is a Homo discriminator who senses only what he/she wants or needs to perceive i.e. the tendency to reinforce one's own innate or initial preferences, while neglecting those abilities which are harder to develop".

The recognition of the fact that individuals cannot be forced to learn has been further developed by researchers (Mumford, 1971; Honey & Mumford, 1982; Sutcliffe, 1988; Lessem, 1991) who have sought to examine managers' preferred style of learning. These researchers have identified several types of learners ranging from activists, reflectors, theorists, pragmatists, energised, harmonic, inspired etc. The various types of learners identified in the literature enhance our understanding both about the way individuals may

approach learning and what may be the underlying triggers to managers' learning. For example, Sutcliffe (1988) explains that *practical learners* are those who use known facts to solve problems. They are the ones who enjoy the practical application of ideas and they usually approach events by seeking to explore how something works. *Analytical learners* on the other hand, are those interested more in ideas than people. Their strength is in creating intellectual concepts, because they examine everything with "What ... ?" whereas, *action learners* often learn by trial and error and they examine everything with an "If ...". Finally, *concept learners* are the ones interested in people. They are imaginative and good at listening and sharing ideas and approach learning by seeking to understand why something happens.

Moreover, research into the nature of a manager's learning (Burgoyne & Stuart, 1976; Stuart 1984; Burgoyne & Hodgson, 1983; Davies & Easterby-Smith, 1984; Mumford, 1986a; Park, 1994) - in particular whether this learning is "on-the-job" or "off-the-job" - has reaffirmed that the bulk of managers' learning takes place in the work place, as a result of their work and role activities. Not only does on-the-job learning appear to be the most prevalent, but if one accepts the argument of management researchers like Casey (1980), Hague (1979) and Revans (1977) it is the most effective form of learning. Thus, it is argued that whilst on-the-job learning is "real", "effective", "lasting", and "useable", much off-the-job formalised learning activity, for example on training courses, seminars etc. tends to be far removed from the real world of managers. Moreover, it is claimed that when off-the-job learning does occur, it presents the manager with major difficulties in transferring knowledge back to the work environment. The recognition that managerial learning consists of unstructured, discontinuous and often unconscious aspects has generated more interest in the experiences managers encounter and the actions they take.

Experiential learning and action learning theories aimed to address this issue by placing importance on the social, cultural and political aspects surrounding the learning process. The main characteristics of each of these theories are summarised in Table 2.4. Experiential learning theory has not been without its critics (e.g. Holman & Pavlica, 1994). It has been criticised for replicating several aspects of cognitivism (e.g. the dualism between mind/body, organism/environment) which fails to explore sufficiently the transactional and reciprocal relationship between the person and the external world from a social constructivist, activity theory perspective (which gives more emphasis to the interaction of the learner with the

Table 2.4: Experiential and action learning theories

	<i>Experiential learning</i>	<i>Action learning</i>
<i>Initiators</i>	Kolb & Fry (1975), Kolb (1984), Mant (1981), Mumford (1986, 1988) etc.	Revans (1966, 1971, 1980, 1982), Boddy (1980), Robertson & Cooper (1983), Lessem (1984).
<i>Basic Assumptions</i>	Learning follows a four-stage cycle (concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation) which engages the 'whole' person, self-actualisation.	Learning by doing, with and from others. Learning involves awareness of one's own values and taking action towards their fulfilment.
<i>Orientation to Teaching & Learning</i>	Learning is a dynamic process involving active participation. Compatibility with individual preferred learning style important.	Developing individual's ability to learn - learning to learn - and raising self-awareness and the search for new knowledge.

context or events in which learning takes place). The review presented here of the various management learning theories and models illustrates the difficulty of capturing the complexity and diversity of individuals' learning from any one single perspective.

The development of theory and research in this field has encouraged a reconsideration of what learning actually entails. Earlier theories consider learning as a change in behaviour which results from the acquisition of knowledge and skills. Many researchers have actually defined learning in these terms (e.g. Kimble 1961; Jones, 1967; Bass & Vaughan 1969). The definitions of learning assume that the change in behaviour is relatively permanent and that practice and experience are an important ingredient. Learning defined in these terms is often associated with taking action towards resolving problems (e.g. Argyris, 1982; Thomas & Harri-Augstein, 1985). However, as researchers increasingly recognised that learning is not always a structured, continuous and conscious process, learning has been defined as a process of gaining a broader understanding and the awareness of the personal meaning of experiences which does not necessarily result from the acquisition of the new knowledge as much as a rearrangement of the existing knowledge (e.g. Revans, 1971; Walker, 1975; Juch, 1983; Gagné, 1983). Learning has been increasingly defined in broader terms to capture the complexity of thinking as well as acting and researchers have more recently described learning as a process of reframing meaning, transformation and liberation (e.g. Schön, 1983; Mumford, 1986a; Kolb et al., 1991; Kim, 1993; Antonacopoulou, 1995).

The recognition that learning is a dynamic and emergent process encourages a more integrative framework of interacting variables. From this perspective, learning emerges from the interconnection of various personal and contextual factors. In other words, learning does not only depend on the individual's motivation and personal drive, but on the reinforcement of learning within the environment as well. Several learning models have discussed the significance of both personal and contextual factors in the learning process (Dollard & Miller 1950; Gintzberg & Reiley, 1964; Klatt et al., 1985), however, to-date there has been limited research exploring the interaction between personal and contextual factors. It could be argued that many of the 'myths' (e.g. DePhillips et al., 1960; Harri-Augstein & Webb, 1995) regarding the nature of managers' learning are partly due to the fact that learning theory has not explored thoroughly the interconnections between personal and contextual factors. For example, the proposition that people learn by their mistakes has been criticised for failing to recognise that people do not learn by being unsuccessful, they learn by being successful and by reinforcing that success (Revans, 1971; Lathrope, 1973). Gagné (1983) points out that learning begins with the intake of stimulation from the receptors and ends with the feedback that follows the learner's performance. This example shows that learning incorporates psychological and sociological dimensions and it is the product of the interaction of personal and contextual factors. If we are to understand the complexity of the learning process for individual managers within changing organisations then it is not enough making sense of HOW people learn but equally important we need to find out WHAT do managers learn and WHY do they learn in the context of organisations. A first step is to examine the factors which facilitate or inhibit managerial learning within organisations.

2.4.2. The factors facilitating and inhibiting managerial learning

The interest in what facilitates or inhibits manager's learning has attracted the attention of many researchers over the years (Stewart & Stewart, 1981; Humble, 1973; Roberts, 1974; Koudra, 1975; Stuart, 1984; Temporal, 1978; Jones & Cooper, 1980; Lyons, 1985, Mumford, 1989; Salaman & Butler, 1990; Jones & Hendry, 1992). These studies demonstrate the impact of both personal and organisational factors on managers' learning. The discussion in the previous paragraphs has established that people cannot be forced to learn against their will. The learning process will be most effective when managers themselves recognise a learning need and decide to engage in this process (Humble, 1973; Lloyd, 1990). According to Stewart & Stewart (1981), there are four conditions that facilitate learning: Firstly, the learner must

see a connection between what (s)he takes as the learning task and the potential consequences. Secondly, there must be feedback on performance if it is to improve. Thirdly, opportunity to practice is very important, especially when learning a new skill and fourthly, help with a poor vocabulary can be useful in those areas where people's analytical capabilities are impoverished - interpersonal skills, the language of unfamiliar specialities, etc. Gagné (1983), points out that the capabilities that already exist in the individual before learning begins are also significant in facilitating learning.

Table 2.5: Factors facilitating learning

• encouraging managers to identify their own learning needs
• reviewing regularly performance and learning
• encouraging managers to set learning goals for themselves
• providing feedback both on performance and learning
• reviewing managers' performance in developing others
• assisting managers to see learning opportunities on the job
• providing new experiences from which managers can learn
• providing or facilitating the use of training on the job
• tolerating some mistakes
• encouraging the review and planning of learning activities
• challenging the traditional ways of doing things

Although, it is generally perceived that every individual would have some capacity to learn, the significance of the context in which learning takes place has been receiving prominence. Researchers (Roberts, 1974; Koudra, 1975; Lyons, 1985) have argued that a basic requirement if learning is to take place, is a climate which encourages, facilitates and rewards learning. The context in which learning takes place could determine what and why the individual chooses to learn (i.e. the underlying motive behind learning) as well as how the individual is likely to go about learning. In the context of organisations in particular, a constructive organisational climate would encourage individuals to have positive attitudes towards learning and recognise the need to develop learning, to overcome their own resistance to change, to understand their own shortcomings as learners and to be more open to experiences and ready to learn from them. Mumford (1989) emphasises the 'learning culture' of an organisation and provides a list of factors which in his view should be present in any organisation which is said to encourage learning (Table 2.5.).

Personal and organisational factors do not only facilitate management learning, they also inhibit it. Previous research shows that mental defences, emotional, cultural and motivational factors inhibit managers' receptivity to learn (Argyris, 1990, 1991; Juch, 1983, Stuart, 1984, Hague, 1973, 1979, BIM, 1984). Many researchers have observed that some of the barriers to learning are self-imposed by the individual (Gibb, 1960; Knowles, 1973, 1989; Simpson,

1980; Block, 1984; Brookfield, 1986; Smith, 1988; Rogers, 1992; Daines, 1993). Stewart & Stewart (1981) propose five factors affecting managers' learning negatively. Firstly, they point out that learning is a skill that can be learned and can be forgotten. Managers that are out of practice i.e. have forgotten or never have acquired learning skills may be found in shock. Secondly, some people would rather be comfortable than efficient, and they may do whatever they can to ensure that nothing interferes with their comfort. They therefore, reject anything that is likely to change their ways or more significantly, expose or threaten them. Managers may be in a comfort zone in relation to their present level of knowledge and may feel that by acquiring additional learning this will expose their incompetence and will uncover that what they were doing before was wrong. Thirdly, Stewart & Stewart (1981) point out that managers are sometimes 'overmotivated' to perform well which as a result may inhibit their actual learning (both in terms of quantity and quality), because they aim to achieve too many things at once. This obstacle is closely related to the fourth factor which is the uncertainty surrounding training and its purpose. Managers attend training courses for all sorts of reasons. Besides the need to improve performance, such courses are often used as rewards, punishments, and opportunities to keep people busy, while their future is being decided. Such hidden agendas inhibit learning and affect managers' perception of the role of training to their development. The fifth factor identified by Stewart & Stewart (1981) is the jargon used by trainers and that their main preoccupation is often to prove that what they teach is the "one and only" right way of doing things, thus failing to show empathetic understanding towards the needs of the individual which may consequently be a block to their learning. The factors identified by Stewart & Stewart (1981) suggest that personal and contextual factors interact in shaping individuals receptivity to learning. However, it is also evident that the subconscious and implicit nature of some of these barriers create defences embedded in the individual's unspecified inner self. In other words, the interaction of personal and organisational factors shapes managers emotional reaction to events.

Juch (1983), proposes four barriers to learning based on man's unspecified inner self. He argues that the first barrier is a *window* which represents the individual's conscious effort to focus receptively on something. It is related to the sensitivity, the keenness or reluctance with which a person makes his/her attention available. It is called a window because it symbolises a person's mental state of openness. Another block according to Juch (1983) is the *skin*, which is a filter within an individual's inner world. It determines whether the empirically sensed data

Table 2.6: The obstacles to managers' learning

<i>Personal factors</i>	<i>Organisational factors</i>
• perception of the need to learn	• internal organisation of work
• perception of ability to learn	• organisation systems e.g. training
• cultural values and believes	• culture and climate
• emotions-feelings/reactions	• decision-making processes
• attitude towards updating	• communication and feedback
• intellectual-mental capability	• politics and aversion to risk
• age	• instability and change
• memory	• economic position, competition
• ability to communicate	• power and control

which passed through is considered to be relevant. Its main purpose is to serve as a second line of defence against outcomes of analyses that would change the person for

better or worse. The *gate*, is the barrier between the thinking and the addressing stage of learning. It represents the opening through which an individual goes out mentally into the outer world. Finally, the "*rubicon*" is the point where a follow-through, a commitment is required, or inversely where people can opt out, may desert the plan, can call it off at the last moment. It is the mental barrier of assuming responsibility, of being committed to go through the "point of no return".

Social, cultural and political factors, have long been seen as the critical external factors affecting learning (Temporal, 1978; Stuart, 1984; Roberts, 1974; Koudra, 1975; Lyons, 1985, Salaman & Butler, 1990; Jones & Hendry, 1992; Jones, 1994). More recently, organisation structure, culture and communication are found to have a major significance in the learning process and to act as organisational barriers to manager's learning. Salaman & Butler (1990) for example, argue that the organisation's structure and culture may be a block to learning if they contradict the message provided during formal training sessions. Moreover, with reference to the hierarchical structure they emphasise the political dimension of learning within organisations. Similarly, communication and dialogue may inhibit the learning process if the message is inconsistent and there is little trust in the information available (Argyris, 1994; Schein, 1993). The main obstacles to managers' learning are summarised in Table 2.6.

The discussion of managers' learning and the factors which facilitate or inhibit it, shows that the existing body of knowledge in this field is dominated by the psychological perspective. In other words, what motivates individuals' to learn and how this shapes the various stages of the learning process has been a central theme in theory and research in this field. However, there is currently limited empirical research which explores the internal conflict encountered by individual managers regarding their decision to learn or not and the perceived purpose of

learning. The internal conflict experienced by the manager in relation to training, discussed in section 2.3.2., has shown that many of the contradictions experienced by managers result from the social dynamics in the context of their employing organisation. In order to be able to explore fully the complexity of learning as a human activity, one would have to appreciate that learning is a social as well as psychological process.

The sociological perspective of the learning process has been discussed by researchers like Bandura (1977, 1986), Vygotsky (1962), Freire (1972), Habermas (1972) and others who have considered the impact of others in the learning process and the importance of social values and norms as factors influencing how learning is defined and applied in different contexts. The interaction of self and context in relation to learning could influence the perceived objective(s) of learning and the extent to which the opportunities provided within the context are sufficient for fulfilling them. Moreover, by exploring this interaction it may be possible to explain how the competing learning goals between different parties are negotiated. In the context of organisations in particular, it would provide a better understanding why efforts to encourage self-development and learning may not produce the expected outcomes. The sociological perspective of learning is more likely to provide the framework for exploring the nature of learning at levels, beyond the individual level of analysis which has so far dominated that analysis of learning theory. As Marsick (1994) points out the challenge in understanding managerial learning is to explore it at various interconnected levels. The social aspects of learning are particularly relevant in the debate of learning at the organisational and societal levels.

2.4.3. Learning at the organisational and societal level

The interest in learning at the organisational and societal level has emerged in recent years with the popularisation of the concept of the 'learning organisation' (Senge, 1990; Garvin, 1993; Stata, 1989; Pedler et al. 1991; Jones & Hendry, 1992) and the 'learning society' (Toyne, 1994; Husen, 1986; Hayes et al., 1988; Ball, 1993; Ainley, 1993; Ranson, 1992; Carley, 1992; Keep & Mayhew, 1994). A key theme underlying both concepts is that learning is a means for responding to the challenge of change and a medium for achieving competitiveness. Learning has also been promoted as the new source of wealth (Bell, 1976; Badaracco, 1991; Ball, 1991; Bennett et al. 1992; Jones & Wallace, 1992; Drucker, 1993) and as pointed out in section 2.2., at least in the UK it has sparked a series of activities (TQM,

HRM etc.). Despite the appeal of the image of the organisations and societies as learning systems there is little agreement about the nature of learning and indeed whether it is possible to claim that organisations or societies learn. Key questions about the nature of learning within organisations remain unanswered. For example, how learning develops within organisations, how it is to be conceptualised and demonstrated and what factors facilitate or inhibit learning within changing organisations although extensively debated in the literature (Argyris & Schön, 1978; Hedberg, 1981; Fiol & Lyles, 1985; Carley, 1992; Argyris, 1993) remain unresolved.

One of the basic concerns, is whether learning at the organisational level is the sum total of individual and group learning or an integral part of organisational functioning regardless of whether people learn. Some researchers for example, have argued that organisations and societies learn (Cyert & March, 1963; March & Olsen, 1976; Argyris & Schön, 1978; Hedberg, 1981; Fiol & Lyles, 1985; Rheem, 1995; Korten, 1980). Other researchers have discussed organisational learning as the collective learning of the individuals which constitute the organisation (Pedler et al., 1991). The lack of agreement about the nature of learning at the organisation or societal level has led to different propositions about the way learning unfolds and the different types of learning that may be sought. For example, some commentators (Argyris & Schön, 1978; Sitkin, 1991; Ulrich et al., 1993; Nevis et al., 1995; Jones, 1995) argue that learning within organisations develops through different stages or episodes, takes place along a continuum from superficial to substantial, is the result of many small failures or that it follows a predictable set of processes. Moreover, learning within organisations is categorised into different types and levels including among others; single, double-loop learning, deuterio, rote versus meaningful learning, adaptive versus generative, strategic versus tactical learning etc. (Bateson, 1972; Argyris, 1976; Boydell, 1976; Hilgendorf & Welchman, 1982; Mumford, 1989; Senge, 1990; Marsick & Watkins, 1990; Huber, 1991; Fulmer & Graham, 1993; Kim, 1993; Wills, 1994).

The diverse perspectives provided in the existing literature regarding the nature of learning at the level of the organisation and society, confirm that there is a long way to go before agreement can be reached about what is learning within organisations and how it may (or may not) differ from individual learning. A more critical question to ask in this context is to what extent is learning always a good thing. It appears that the present body of literature

particularly from the organisations' perspective assumes that learning may be the answer to competitiveness and profitability (which is the same assumption underlying training provision as discussed in section 2.2.). However, when considering the emotional and psychological dimensions of learning from the individuals' point of view one can also appreciate that learning may be potentially a demotivating experience, particularly when one is confronted with one's incompetence (Antonacopoulou, 1996b). An important issue however, which is not sufficiently addressed in the existing literature is to what extent individual learning goals are compatible with the learning goals of the organisation. An understanding of the dilemmas experienced by individuals and organisations in relation to learning and the way organisations and individuals utilise learning to fulfil their objectives is of particular significance in this field if we are to understand the conflicting priorities within and between them. March (1991) is one of the few researchers to have exposed the conflict between 'exploitation' and 'exploration' in relation to learning and undoubtedly this issue deserves more attention particularly in our understanding of the complexity of the relationships between processes such as training and learning.

The analysis of training and learning within organisations has uncovered several issues. At the most basic level it is evident that training is an activity driven primarily by the organisation and the perspective of the individual is relatively under-explored. From the discussion of the learning literature it is evident that the dominant perspective is that of the individual because the existing literature is primarily dominated by the psychological perspective and less so by the sociological perspective. A common theme in the analysis of training and learning is that in order to explore more fully the complexity of the interaction between individual and organisational goals and needs, there is a need to explore the internal dilemmas faced by the individual and the organisation both in relation to learning and training. The focus in this study is the perceived relationship between training and learning from the individual manager's perspective. The section which follows explores the main themes in the literature regarding this relationship.

2.5. The perceived relationship between training and learning

The relationship between learning and training is a challenging one. Interpretations and propositions about their association abound and are often conflicting depending on the

perspective one takes. From the point of view of the organisation, learning and training are strongly interconnected, because training serves as a learning opportunity and learning is a central aspect of the training process. The underlying assumption appears to be that an organisation would provide training so that individuals will become more competent and therefore, more effective in their job (Bass & Vaughan, 1969; Luthans & Davis, 1981; Dixon, 1982; Kopp, 1988; Sims, 1990; Fairbairns, 1991; Hurley & Cunningham, 1993). This assumption underlines the objectives of training interventions and the expectations from the training strategy (Werther & Davis, 1986; Thomason, 1988; Majchrzak, 1988). Therefore, training aims to ensure that performance is maintained and improved in relation to the present job and to prepare individuals for a change of job or for substantial modifications to their jobs. Training and learning are perceived to be related, because they are both intended to change the behaviour of the individual (Argyle et al., 1962). A related assumption is that training can provide the conditions for effective learning. However, as more attention is given to the difficulty of transferring learning back to the work environment, there is a recognition that individuals have different learning styles and consequently that training cannot be assumed to produce learning, nor that learning is always an integral part of training.

From the individual's perspective, a prerequisite of any training activity, would be that the individual is motivated to learn and perceives what is to be learned as relevant to the achievement of his/her personal goals (Gagné 1970). According to Noe (1986), trainees will be more motivated to perform well in training if they perceive that high effort will lead to high performance in training which will lead to obtaining desired outcomes and avoiding undesirable outcomes. Research has demonstrated that the individual's motivation to learn from training is influenced by personal factors such as career planning and job involvement (i.e. whether individuals derive their identity from the job situation) (Noe, 1986; Noe & Schmitt, 1986) and situational influences such as the degree of choice in attending a training programme (Hicks & Klimoski, 1987; Baldwin et al., 1991) and the way individuals perceive the work environment in relation to the constraints and characteristics of the work situation (e.g. transfer of learning) (Campbell, 1989; Goldstein, 1991). Moreover, it is likely that the political forces underpinning the training and learning process may affect individuals' willingness to admit ignorance and approach training with the intention to learn. Several examples in the current literature suggest that individuals manage impressions and suppress their 'true' emotions during training in order to protect their self-image (Markwell & Roberts,

1969; Mumford, 1971; Hirschhorn, 1988; Harrison, 1992; Al-Maskati & Thomas, 1994). For example, empirical findings from Al-Maskati's & Thomas's (1994) study showed that trainees are worried that they might be evaluated and their weaknesses could get back to their superiors via the instructors/trainers of the course which may potentially affect their promotion.

Finally, researchers who have devoted attention to the link between training and self-efficacy (i.e. a person's estimate of his/her ability to perform a task) have argued that training influences individuals' perceptions of their self-efficacy concerning work performance (Gist, 1987). A cross-cultural study by Earley (1994) in particular, has shown that the individual's cultural background (i.e. whether individualistic or collectivist culture) affects how individual or group training influences self-efficacy and performance. For example, the study shows that for individualists, self-focused training has a stronger impact on self-efficacy and performance than group focused training and for collectivists, group-focused training has a stronger impact on self-efficacy and performance than individual-focused training. Therefore, collectivists (e.g. Chinese) respond best to group-based training, whereas individualists (e.g. Americans) respond better to training focused at the individual level. These findings are significant in this discussion in two ways. Firstly, the findings show that employee's cultural orientation influences their use of training information and secondly it may be argued that the cultural background of British managers in the current study and in particular the reported negative attitude towards education, training and learning could influence their perceptions of the relationship between training and learning.

Although, Burgoyne & Stuart (1977, 1978c), have shown that (adult) learning theories have influenced the design of management development programmes, the challenge remains that formalised training cannot guarantee that the individual will learn. There are basic differences between training and learning which may inhibit their association. A basic difference between learning and training is that the former implies autonomy, independence and critical reflectiveness, whereas the latter is often based on the notion of control and prediction of outcomes and the belief that individuals are not all that different when it comes to learning (DePhillips, 1960). Dearden (1992:93) points out that whereas learning as an educational process is intended to broaden understanding and liberate, training, he argues, is "very illiberally conceived". He concludes that training is not only 'uneducational' but may be 'anti-

educational' as well. This is consistent with the idea put forward by observers like Gintzberg & Reiley (1964), Lloyd, (1990) and others, namely that: effective education is not about teaching, it is about providing effective learning opportunities. Yet what one finds most of the time, is that training is considered as a means of teaching trainees the cultural norms of the organisation which would make questionable whether it allows the space for individuals to learn more liberally (Legge, 1989; Preston, 1993).

Another significant issue in the relationship between learning and training is the extent to which organisations 'really' want employees to learn. Keep (1989b:123) points out that: "Traditional styles of management, based on authoritarian, non-participatory tenets are unlikely to sit easily alongside demands to communicate with and to involve employees...bearing in mind the education and training of British managers, it is open to question how genuine would be their welcome for a better-educated, better trained, more self-reliant and questioning workforce". Therefore, it appears that a combination of personal and organisational factors may interact and influence the perceived association between learning and training. Mathiew et al., (1992) argue that personal and organisational characteristics influence the level of motivation and reactions which in turn influence the individuals' receptivity to learning during training. On the basis of research findings the authors argue that reaction to training is a moderator of the relationship between training motivation and learning. Reactions to training act as measures or criteria for assessing the effectiveness of training.

From the review of the relevant literature there is clearly a need to explore individual managers' perceptions of this relationship. It is important to understand whether training serves as a learning opportunity and indeed whether managers perceive that learning is a central 'aim' of training provision. Moreover, the differences and similarities in objectives between the individual and the organisation will be more clear and the factors which support or hinder the perceived relationship between training and learning may be clarified. The nature and impact of the interaction between individual and organisational needs may help to explain the way relationships are developed. The discussion in the previous sections would suggest that the corporate culture has a strong influence on the way learning and training are defined and applied. A contextual examination of this relationship is expected to provide a more in-depth insight into the complexity and the dynamic negotiation which shapes

organisational and individual expectations. The relationship between training and learning cannot be taken for granted nor can it be assumed to be static and fixed given that different factors shape their relationship at different times and in different circumstances. The investigation of individual's perception of the interconnection between training and learning needs to be embedded in the context of change.

2.6. The relationship between training and learning in the context of change

This section will explore the significance of organisational changes to the relationship between training and learning and the potential impact on individuals' perceptions of the association between training and learning. Organisational change, like training and learning, is a complex process which may be triggered by a combination of factors within or outside the organisation. The factors contributing to the initiation of change could shape the way change unfolds and the focus it is likely to take. Whether change is planned, emerging, evolutionary or incremental, revolutionary or transformational, to some extent it will depend on the meaning attached to change and consequently the perceived implications and means of responding to it (Gersick, 1991). Organisational changes present a challenge both to the organisation and the individual regarding their receptivity and potentially their ability to adapt. The following paragraphs will explore the impact of change from both the perspective of the organisation and the individual manager. The objective is to explore the tensions within and between the individual and the organisation in relation to change and to tease out the factors which may influence their reactions to change and consequently their perceptions of the importance of training and learning in the context of change. This section sets out to explore the perceived relationship between change and learning and that between change and training. The interrelationship between training, learning and change is also discussed.

2.6.1. Organisational change and individual adaptability

Despite the widespread interest in organisational change, there is no agreed definition as to what is change or how it is to be described. The difficulty of arriving at a common definition is acknowledged by Kanter et al., (1993:9) arguing that:

“Certain words and phrases, [however] create special problems. Though they sound specific and are generally treated as if everyone used them identically, they often

Table 2.7: The various frames of reference in organisational change

<i>Logic</i>	<i>View of change</i>	<i>Proponents</i>
<i>Formal</i>	Making something different.	Lippitt et al., 1958; Etzioni, 1966; Judson, 1967; Bennis et al., 1976; Plant, 1987; Lawler, 1988; McLennan, 1989; Carnall, 1990; Burnes, 1992; Eales-White, 1994.
<i>Dialectics</i>	Managing contradictions.	Lewin, 1947; Schein, 1965; Lippitt, 1982b; Leigh, 1988; Morgan, 1986; Wilkinson, 1989.
<i>Trialectics</i>	Exploring relationships.	Watzlawick et al., 1974; Alderfer, 1976; Tichy, 1983; Kanter, 1983; Pettigrew & Whipp, 1991; Kanter et al., 1993.

generate more heat than light. This exactly describes the common experience of people discussing "organisational change".

Not surprising then, the literature on organisation change provides an abundance of definitions and perspectives on change. The various propositions in the literature regarding the nature and purpose of change within organisations can be classified according to three main perspectives or "logics" (Ford & Ford, 1994): *Formal logic*, which assumes that change is the result of altering the state and condition of something, into something else; *dialectics*, which sees change as the outcome of contradiction and conflict and *trialectics*, which assumes that change is achieved through different points of attraction. In other words, while formal logic assumes that change is moving from point A to point B, dialectics assumes that because of some potential tension between point A and B a new point C may be the product of change. The trialectic perspective, however, proposes that change does not necessarily occur because of tension and conflict, but because the relationship between different points (A and B) may provide more attractive possibilities (i.e. multiple points C, D, E etc.) (Ford & Ford 1994:778).

This classification is useful in this discussion in two ways. Firstly, it provides a useful framework for summarising the various perspectives in the literature about the way in which organisational change is defined and understood (Table 2.7.) and secondly, the trialectic perspective in particular, captures the dynamic interconnection between phenomena within a context. In this study it is particularly relevant in examining managers' perceptions of the relationship between training and learning in the context of changing organisations. It is also

relevant in exploring managers' perceptions of other important relationships, such as the relationship between training and change, as well as that between learning and change. It is acknowledged, that this classification has not been without its critics (Carini et al., 1995), nor is it the only attempt to classify the various views underlying our present understanding of change. Van de Ven & Poole (1988; 1995) for example, offer a different classification, by distinguishing between four "ideal-type" developmental theories; namely life-cycle, teleological, dialectical and evolutionary theories. Ford's & Ford's classification is used in this analysis because it provides more opportunities for interpreting the complexity of the interaction between individual and organisational factors by taking into account attraction and not just conflict as the basis of explaining the relationships between processes. Moreover, this classification provides the space for exploring additional attractive possibilities from the interaction between two or more processes.

Change takes different shapes and forms and has a different level of significance within different contexts and for different stakeholders. The study of change within organisations needs to embrace the multiple and diverse active and attractive possibilities produced by the interaction of various contributing factors. Therefore, the perspective or frame of reference which one adopts in the study of organisational change would influence what is observed. As Pettigrew (1987:649) points out: "Where we sit not only influences where we stand, but also what we see". As evident from the discussion of training and learning processes in the preceding sections the perspective of the organisation differs from that of the individual. Unlike, the training and learning literature, however, the organisational change literature is not dominated by any one perspective (either the organisation or the individual). In fact change is seen as a multidimensional process which can be analysed at least at three different levels; namely change as input (e.g. what is the individual expected to change), change as process (i.e. how is the individual going to respond) and change as output (e.g. how is the result of the change demonstrated - behaviour). Theorists and researchers in this field have been concerned both with the significance and impact of organisational change from both the perspective of the organisation and the individual. Workplace changes exacerbate the tension between organisational and individual priorities, particularly when the changes introduced are intended to serve organisational priorities and individuals are expected to accept and adapt to them. Organisational change is rightly described by some researchers as a highly political process (Mangham, 1979; Pettigrew, 1985d; Hardy, 1990; Nadler, 1993; Beer et al., 1993; Morgan,

1993). Organisation change could shape the perception of both the individual and the organisation regarding what each has to offer and how organisationally- and individually-driven processes (e.g. training and learning) may be associated. Before exploring these issues, a review of the present body of literature regarding the study of organisational change from the perspective of the organisation and that of the individual manager is necessary.

2.6.1.1. The study of change from the perspective of the organisation

Organisation theorists have argued that the balance between stability and change is a major dilemma facing organisations (Buchanan & Huczynski, 1985; Handy, 1985; Carnall, 1995). This dilemma has challenged the underlying assumptions about the way organisations operate in the business environment namely; the extent to which they can control their destiny or the predictions of change in their environment (Beckhard & Pritchard, 1992; Burnes, 1996). Earlier theories and models of change within organisations have promoted a rational and systematic approach to solving organisational problems. A central premise of these models is that change can be planned and managed by following several stages, steps or phases. For example the action research model (Lewin, 1947; Lewin, 1958; French & Bell, 1974) later developed as the three-step model (unfreezing, moving, refreezing) is based on the proposition that managing change in organisations requires action which should be based on a correct diagnosis of the problem/situation, identifying all possible alternative solutions and choosing the most appropriate to the situation at hand. Other models which followed (e.g. Lippitt et al., 1958; Bullock & Batten, 1985; Cummings & Huse, 1989) may have increased the number of stages, however their premise remained fundamentally the same. These models of change are governed by formal logic and the main objective is seen as the shift from one state (A) to another (B). Moreover, although action is a central aspect in managing change, these models tend to neglect reasoning and assume that the individual is a passive recipient whose behaviour may be modified in the desired direction (Skinner, 1974). Furthermore, these models have been criticised for attempting to predict and control the outcome of the interaction between the organisation and the environment, thus failing to provide the necessary flexibility and adaptability to unpredictable and radical circumstances (Miller & Friesen, 1984; Dunphy & Stace, 1993).

The rational models of organisations have given way to the contingency approach and the systems theory perspective (Burns & Stalker, 1961; Trist et al., 1963; Emery & Trist, 1965;

Leavitt, 1965; Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967; Thompson, 1967; Emery & Thorsrud, 1969; Emery, 1969; Habermas, 1971; Roeber, 1973; Ackoff, 1974; Checkland, 1981; Nadler, 1981; Scott, 1987; Senge, 1991; Lessem, 1993; Bailey, 1994). These theories describe organisations as open systems consisting of sub-systems which are dynamically interconnected and identify the link between internal forces within the organisation and external forces in the environment to be equally dynamic. Therefore, organisations are perceived as dynamic systems which struggle for effectiveness, seek to adapt to external pressures in their environment (e.g. the introduction of HRM within organisations in response to the economic and political pressures in the UK discussed in section 2.3.) and try to co-ordinate internally the multiple and often competing priorities of their sub-systems. Researchers who take this perspective have sought to understand the interaction between the content, context (outer and inner) and process of change (Pettigrew, 1987) and to explore the interdependence between cultural, technical and political aspects of change (Tichy, 1983). These theories and models are based on the proposition that change is an emergent process which evolves from the interaction of various interrelated components. It is thus continuous, unpredictable and non-linear and builds on the co-ordination of both strategic and operational aspects (Johnson, 1992; Wilson, 1992; Pettigrew & Whipp, 1993; Clark, 1994; Dawson, 1994). The emergent models of change promote a more contextualist analysis of organisational change (Pettigrew, 1985a, 1985b; 1990a). Instead of defining the nature and purpose of change in terms of any given solutions, change is embedded in the interaction between the historical, cultural and political context of the organisation, which is linked to the business, economic, political and societal context in which the organisation operates (Whipp et al., 1987; Johnson, 1987). The vertical and horizontal levels of analysis proposed by these theories explore the interconnection between change and various organisational processes (Wilson, 1992). Many researchers for example, have argued that organisational culture is a significant factor in the change process (Marshall & McLean, 1985; Meyerson & Martin, 1987; Pettigrew, 1990b; Legge, 1994) and have sought to explore the interaction between culture and change. Culture is seen both as a vehicle to change and a platform for change (Williams et al., 1989; Frost et al., 1991; Bate, 1995). Another significant aspect of this perspective of organisational change is that it encourages a "bottom-up" rather than a "top-down" approach to the change process (Burnes, 1996:189). In other words, responsibility for change is devolved and organisational members are perceived as important contributors to the success of the change effort. Therefore, these models of change give more emphasis to the factors which motivate individuals and facilitate the

development of skills and knowledge which will enable them to take responsibility for the change process. Individuals' receptivity to change becomes a prominent organisational concern.

From the individual's perspective, however, organisational change involves several challenges that the organisation does not always have the capacity to address, because the objective of the organisation is to ensure that individuals adapt to change without creating disruption. Managing organisational changes present the individual manager, in particular, with a significant challenge. The section which follows discusses the main issues in relation to organisational change from the perspective of the individual manager.

2.6.1.2. The challenge of organisational change for the individual manager

It is evident from the previous paragraphs that although theories and models of organisational change are driven by the perspective of the organisation the individuals' receptivity to change is an important dimension for the success of the change programme. Different theories however, assume that the individual will perform a different role. For example, rational theories of organisational change assume that the individual plays a reactive role and adapts to change by modifying their behaviour, whereas the emergent theories of organisational change perceive that the individual can take a proactive role and instead of just adapting to change they can initiate it as well. The latter perspective has encouraged some researchers to explore the significance of organisational change from the perspective of the individual (Handy, 1984, 1985; Morgan, 1989; Wilson & Rosenfeld, 1990). An important contribution to this field has been the work of Kanter (1983), who argues that the human element is significant in the change process because of the intellectual effort required. Moreover, Kanter proposes that change is essential to man and that individuals create and maintain change consequently, change is potentially within human control (Kanter, 1983:10). This proposition however, appears to be based on different assumptions about the way individuals function within organisations (e.g. what motivates them, how they feel, how they relate to others, what is their thinking process etc.). Using Schein's (1965) classification (the rational-economic man, the complex man, the social man and the self-actualising man) it could be argued that Kanter's claims are based on the model of the self-actualising man, which assumes that the individual's receptivity will be shaped more by the personal (e.g. motivation and will) and less by organisational factors (e.g. rewards and punishments). However, if one takes the perspective

of the rational-economic man the reverse may be the case; in that organisational policies and practices (e.g. financial rewards) may be more influential in individuals' behaviour than personal factors (e.g. emotions).

These assumptions have influenced our understanding of the way individuals are likely to react to change. The organisation change literature, distinguishes between adaptors and innovators, defenders and reformers, analysts, facilitators and organisers etc. (Kirton, 1979, 1980, 1984; Mangham, 1979; Löwstedt, 1993). For example, adaptors bear a close resemblance to the "organisation man" of Whyte (1957), because they function more effectively in bureaucratic environments, where agreed definitions and specifications exist and where the change effort is concerned with improving current practices. Innovators resemble Rogers's (1959) "creative person" whereby individuals are concerned with creating a new adjustment which extends beyond the status quo (Kirton 1979:622). Although, the broad dichotomy between adaptors and innovators is useful it does not explain why individuals may react in particular ways, nor does it represent the complex interplay between internal (within the individual) and external (in the wider organisation, social context) factors which shape individuals' receptivity to change.

Individuals' reactions to change vary substantially, ranging from acceptance and enthusiastic co-operation and support to active resistance and deliberate sabotage (Watson, 1966, Judson, 1967; Kotter & Schlesinger, 1979). Some researchers have explained these reactions on the basis of the identified behavioural, psychological, social and emotional effects of change (Judson, 1967; Drucker, 1974; Burgher, 1979; Kanter, 1983; Marris, 1986; Lawler, 1988). Depending on the extent to which the effects of change are perceived by individuals to be positive or negative researchers have categorised these reactions as readiness for change (Beckhard & Harris, 1987; Beer & Walton, 1987; Armenakis et al., 1993) and resistance to change (Coch & French, 1948; Albanese, 1973; Lawrence, 1973; Zaltman & Duncan, 1977; Leavitt, 1978; Kotter & Schlesinger, 1979) respectively. It should be noted that more of the current literature presents the factors which describe individuals' negative rather than positive reactions to change. Both positive and negative reactions to change however, are explained by a range of personal and contextual factors. For example the literature on individuals' resistance to change provides multiple explanations of the reasons individuals may not accept change (Leigh, 1988; Bedeian, 1980; McMurry, 1973; Zander, 1973; Klein, 1973; Davies &

Snell, 1994; Clarke, 1994). Some researchers have argued that individuals resist change because the changes introduced challenge their assumptions and what they previously used to take for granted and exposes them to an unfamiliar and potentially threatening situation. Moreover, other researchers have argued that the tension between different groups (e.g. management versus employees) may be the cause of suspicions which could lead to low trust and scepticism about the impact of change which could affect negatively individuals' receptivity to change.

Table 2.8: Factors influencing individuals' resistance to change
<i>Parochial self interest</i>
• Fear of failure - fear of looking stupid
• Fear of loss of power, security, skills
• A threat to social relationships
• Reluctance to let go
• Culture bound
• Strong peer group norms
<i>Misunderstanding and lack of trust</i>
• Low trust
• Complacency
• Lack of information
• Misinformation
• Poor relationships-no co-operation
• Management vs. employees
<i>Contradictory assessments</i>
• No perceived benefits
• Disagreement with purpose of change
• Previous bad experience of change
<i>Low tolerance of change</i>
• Reluctance to experiment
• Fear of the unknown
• Inability to perceive alternatives
• Inherent conservatism

A significant contribution in the study of individuals' reactions to change, is that of Isabella (1990), whose work indicates the different interpretations given by individuals at different stages of the change process. Isabella's work and more recently Marchak's (1993), Westenholz's (1993) and Reger et al. (1994a, 1994b) illustrate how individuals' existing mental maps, meaning, perceptions, frames of reference and cognitive structures, influence the way they interpret organisational events and show that at different stages of the change process the individual is likely to be guided by a different set of assumptions and expectations. A summary of the main factors identified by previous researchers to affect negatively individuals' receptivity to change

is provided in Table 2.8. An important observation regarding existing interpretations of resistance to change is that they are dominated by the perspective of formal logic which suggests that resistance is the difficulty of modifying one's values and beliefs. Where researchers have discussed individuals' reactions to change from a dialectic logic they have tended to interpret resistance to change as a natural part of individuals' disagreement or opposition to the change primarily arising from the political aspects inherent in the change process.

However, a less developed perspective, the trialectic logic, could offer a completely different interpretation of resistance by reframing the concept of resistance and considering it as a statement of not being attracted to the changes introduced, thus seeking a more engaging solution (Morgan, 1986; Goldstein, 1988; Fritz, 1989; Ford & Ford, 1994). This perspective illustrates that individuals are not simply reacting to the changes introduced by organisations. Indeed, a central aspect of an individuals' receptivity to change lies in our understanding of the dilemmas individuals experience, the perceived level of fit and the perceived implications of the changes introduced. The individual manager is probably in the most vulnerable group and is likely to be the one faced with the most significant challenges.

Although, the complexity of managerial work would suggest that change is part and parcel of the manager's job (Beckhard & Harris, 1987; Torrington et al., 1989; Wilson & Rosenfeld, 1990; Vinton, 1992; Sayles, 1993) researchers have argued that organisational change presents the manager with a big challenge and potentially a significant threat (Brooks, 1980). Organisational changes alter the familiar and secure "way of doing things" and distort an established network of personal relationships. Managers are exposed to unfamiliar practices which demand new knowledge and skills and often question their personal values and beliefs and more practically their status and job security (Humble, 1973; Larthroe, 1973). Jones & Cooper (1980:8) argue that the biggest challenge for managers in the context of change is "obsolescence". They define managerial obsolescence as "the extent to which a manager's knowledge and skills have failed to keep pace with the current and likely future requirements of his job". Therefore, organisational changes present managers with the need to learn how to cope best and adapt to the pressures and demands for change (Hague, 1979). The extent to which managers are able to recognise the nature of change and the way they themselves choose to interpret it, is a significant issue. For example, fear of change causes many managers to ignore or fight change, instead of attempting to deal with it constructively (Soltis, 1979). Jones & Cooper (1980), suggest that the key elements in helping managers to cope with or prevent the onset of obsolescence, are to engage in continuous learning activities whether formal or informal, to move from passive (reading, attending lectures etc.) to active learning (on-the-job problem-solving, assignment, project work etc.) and change from learning of facts, to learning to learn. Organisational processes such as training and development, thus need to be carefully reconsidered particularly regarding their impact in shaping managers' reality of change within their organisation.

Understanding the cognitive processes through which individuals within organisations construct their reality about the changes experienced, necessitates an exploration of the various formal and informal processes which contribute towards deriving knowledge and understanding which underpins individual's actions and reactions. In other words, this issue signals the need to explore how managers perceive the association between change and learning, as well as the relationship between change and training. Currently, the existing literature is heavily influenced by the perspective of the organisation regarding the association between these processes. The sections which follow discuss the main assumptions and propositions which underline our present understanding of the relationships between these phenomena.

2.6.2. The perceived relationship between change and learning

The link between change and learning, has attracted a lot of attention in recent years particularly with the focus on organisations as learning systems and the efforts to respond to change by creating learning organisations (see section 2.3.1). Many of the proponents of this relationship, (Handy, 1989; Heywood, 1989; Clark, 1991, Lessem, 1993; Dixon, 1994; Cunningham, 1994) argue that learning is important for surviving the challenge of change. For effective change to take place organisations and individuals must first learn. As Beckhard & Pritchard (1992: 9) point out: "Probably the most important single process involved in effective change is the process of *learning while doing*" (original emphasis). The underlying assumption in this relationship is that learning will provide the new knowledge necessary to deal with the demands of change. Swain (1990:3) offers a convincing argument stating that:

"Learning, knowledge and change form an essential chain. To break it at any point, by missing out one of the three, becomes a nonsense. Learning without knowledge is useless; knowledge without learning is impossible; and change without knowledge is chaos".

Commentators presenting the relationship between change and learning in these terms draw from the laws of ecology and some refer specifically to Ross Ashby's *law of requisite variety* (1958, cited in Boisot, 1995), which states that for an organism/system to survive, its rate of learning must be equal or greater ($L \geq C$) than the rate of change in its environment (Lessem, 1993; Dixon, 1994).

Very few researchers however, see the relationship, the other way round, i.e. learning as leading to change, although some of the definitions of learning do incorporate an element of change (Harris & Schwahn, 1961; Knowles, 1973; McLagan, 1978; Klatt et al., 1985; Landy, 1984; Pont, 1991). For example, Crow & Crow (1963:1), suggest that "learning involves change. It is concerned with the acquisition of habits, knowledge, and attitudes. It enables the individual to make both personal and social adjustments". David King (1969:6), defines learning as "that which enables the person to adapt to the changing demands of the environment". It has been pointed out in section 2.4.1. however, that when reference is made to the content of learning it tends to be related to the (permanent) modification of behaviour. Some researchers (Daft & Weick, 1984; Smircich, 1983; Shrivastava & Schneider, 1984; Gioia, 1986; Johnson, 1990; Weick, 1995) have indirectly supported a relationship between learning and change, by concentrating on meaning, frames of reference and sense-making as activities which enable organisations and individuals to interpret events in their environment. The argument is that an understanding of events may lead to changing them by redefining the environment.

The perceived relationship between learning and change is probably most vividly presented by writers who perceive that they are inseparable (Dixon, 1994; Beckhard & Pritchard, 1992; Handy, 1989; Friedlander, 1984). Learning and change are seen as synonymous and self-reinforcing, and are perceived as part of each other. For example, Handy (1989:44) states that: "if change is another word for learning, then the theories of learning will also be theories of changing". Alderfer & Brown (1975: 27, 217) are probably among the first to have recognised this interdependency through their study of a boarding school - the Gaight School. Reflecting on the research experience the authors point out that:

"We would not have learned what we did without being committed to constructive change at Gaight; we could not have been helpful to constructive change without being committed to learning.....We are all called upon to understand and to act in irreducible ambiguity; we are all perforce learning from changing and changing from learning".

In summary, the existing literature suggests that there is a strong link between change and learning. Some commentators attribute this link to the perceived role of learning in the change process, what may be described as the '*learning to change*' perspective. On the other hand, other commentators consider the link between the two on the basis that change (primarily

behavioural change) is an aspect of the learning process, what may be described as the '*change from learning*' perspective. Very few commentators propose that the link between change and learning also lies in change being a learning experience (i.e. the '*learning from change*' perspective). From the review of the literature it appears that an integrative interconnection between change and learning is rarely taken (i.e. the '*learning to and from change*' perspective) with the exception of (Alderfer & Brown, 1975).

Although the significance of this relationship has been actively promoted in recent years, currently there is limited empirical substantiation to these claims. Moreover, the existing analysis of the link between change and learning takes primarily the perspective of the organisation and there is as yet little indication of the interconnection between learning and change from the perspective of the individual manager. Therefore, there is a need to explore whether in fact managers perceive change as a learning opportunity and the extent to which change always results from learning. Moreover, there is a need to consider in more depth whether learning from change is always a positive experience and indeed what are the underlying assumptions guiding managers in the way they form their perceptions about this relationship.

2.6.3. The perceived relationship between change and training

The relationship between training and change has attracted attention both at the organisational and individual level of analysis. At the organisational level, the interest in exploring the link between training and change, can be traced through the organisation development (OD) literature and the emphasis placed on developing strategies to respond to change (Schein, 1969; Beckhard, 1969; Bennis, 1970; Frank & Margerison, 1978; McKenna & Yeider, 1991). Training is therefore, perceived to facilitate the acceptance and implementation of change and to play various roles in the change process (Leigh, 1973; Morgan, 1988; March, 1986; Lippitt, 1982b; Pearson, 1987; Williams et al., 1989; Belasco, 1990; Stewart, 1991, 1993). Table 2.9. summarises the perceived contribution of training to change.

Table 2.9: The contribution of training to change

• an agent of change
• a vehicle for adapting skills and knowledge of staff
• an aid to adopting new values and behaviours
• a source of innovative feedback for change
• a means for developing ability to cope with change
• a process of informing people about the change
• a process of persuading people to change
• a means of gaining commitment to change
• an aid to acquiring ability to confront change
• a vehicle for diagnosing the need for future change
• a mechanism for achieving culture change

Talbot. (1993:26) distinguishes between three main roles of training in strategic change management which he terms as "adaptive", "adoptive" and "innovative".

In its adaptive role, training is perceived to facilitate individuals' adaptation to change by identifying the new knowledge and skills arising from the change and

providing the means for responding to the demands of change. The role of training is to make sure that individuals are able to do what they are expected to do (Carter et al. 1984). In its adoptive role, training is seen to form part of the culture change effort which involves developing new attitudes by acquiring new values and consequently becoming committed to the change (Williams et al. 1989; Atkinson, 1990; Brooks, 1980). Training is seen as a means of enabling individuals to understand and act upon change, therefore, to train individuals is also to persuade them of the need for it. Finally, in its innovative role training is perceived to provide feedback which can lead to changes in other processes and to the overall sustainability and effectiveness of change. According to Talbot (1993:26), by providing feedback training contributes to the evaluation exercise and could provide individuals with the opportunity to question the objectives of change. This view however, assumes that political issues in the training and change process are resolved and that there is a common understanding and agreement between the individual and the organisation regarding the role that training could play in the change process. Another assumption underlying the innovative role of training as promoted by Talbot (1993) is that training can play a proactive rather than a reactive contribution to change (Stewart & Hamplin, 1990; Clark, 1991). The current link between training and change takes a unidirectional perspective. In other words, training makes a contribution to change, but there is no indication how training may trigger change. Some researchers (Kenney & Reid, 1986; Pepper, 1984; Harrison, 1992) have been critical of the latter view and argue that because of the political sensitivity of training interventions which often fail to meet the needs of the individual and the insular nature of internal training providers it is doubtful if training can trigger change at the organisational (or individual) level.

At the individual level of analysis the link between training and change has been dominated by the view that training can modify individuals' behaviour and provide them with the knowledge and skills needed to adapt to change (Stewart, 1991; Wallance, 1991). This view is evident in the perceived contribution of training to change illustrated in Table 2.9. Although the roles identified take the perspective of the organisation, it is evident that the focus of training in relation to change is to modify the behaviour of the individual. Studies conducted during the late 1960's early 1970's (Bradford et al., 1965; Buchanan, 1969; Blake & Mouton, 1969; Mangham & Cooper, 1969; Golembiewski, 1972) have sought to explore this proposition particularly in relation to laboratory and T-Group training. The work of Mangham & Cooper (1969) for example, has shown that individuals' behaviour may be modified after T-Group training. Brooks (1980), however, argues that in devising a strategy for management training within an organisational change effort, certain necessary conditions must be fulfilled for training to be effective. The perceived value and contribution of the training to the job, the actual testing of relevant skills, the recognition of how the learning can be applied on the job and finally, the receptivity and response of people in the manager's working environment, in terms of allowing managers to apply the knowledge and skills they have acquired, are all important factors influencing the contribution of training to change. It is significant to point out, that T-Group training is an unstructured learning setting, whereas the focus of this study is structured, formalised training interventions and for that there has been little empirical research.

The above review suggests that much of what is currently known about the relationship between training and change is mainly from the perspective of the organisation in which management training and development is a key device for engineering organisational change. Therefore, individuals are being trained *for* change. Currently, very little is known whether individuals actually change as a result of training, and indeed if they do what type of change does training produce at the individual level. Moreover, there are no empirical findings from the perspective of the individual to show whether training *to* change is possible. Furthermore, the competing objectives of management training and development coupled with the difficulty of reconciling individual and organisational priorities make imperative the need for closer examination of the objective of training in the context of change as perceived by individuals. The review of the relationship between training and change and that between learning and

change is likely to influence the relationship between training and learning and vice versa. As evident from the preceding analysis there is currently limited information to draw from regarding the relationship between training and learning in the context of change. A challenging interconnection worth exploring is therefore, managers' perceptions of the triangular interrelationship between training, learning and change.

2.6.4. The interrelationship between training, learning and change

The nature of the relationships discussed in the previous sections would suggest that potentially a triangular interrelationship may be emerging. If one accepts the proposition that to manage change learning is imperative, that training may be a learning opportunity and finally, that training can make a contribution to change, then it is possible to propose that to manage organisational change, individuals would benefit from participating in training courses, from which they would be expected to learn, in order, to be able to adapt change. It should be pointed out that this sequential and linear association between the three phenomena would be possible if one was to accept the description of change as a process of doing something differently, learning as the acquisition of knowledge and skills, and training as the teaching of knowledge and skills necessary in relation to a specific job. This proposition finds some support in the current literature, because it is one of the assumptions underlying the way each of these processes are applied from the perspective of the organisation. For example Bass & Vaughan (1966:4) point out that: "Since the primary objective of training is to bring about certain desired changes in behaviour as efficiently as possible, and since the essence of learning is change in behaviour, the importance of understanding of the principles of learning to any training endeavour becomes obvious". Taylor & Lippitt (1975:3-11) argue along similar lines and point out that:

"...management development is a social influence process of change, dealing with change of attitudes and understanding to affect managerial behaviour, job performance, and operational results. Any management development effort aims - through learning - to increase change, management development is a planned effort to generate learning - well defined in its scope - to help the organisation as a whole to monitor more effectively its change process".

Therefore, the aim of training is to fit people to a described role and equip them with necessary knowledge and skills. The developmental approach to training is to use current problems and issues as the vehicle or opportunity for learning. The actual process of solving problems and adapting to change can then provide the necessary experiences for learning to



Figure 2.1: The linear interrelationship between change, training and learning.

occur (Bristow & Sarth, 1978; Jones & Cooper, 1980). Although, this representation of the interrelationship between training, learning and change provides a rational approach of their potential interconnection, it does not do justice to the complexity and unpredictability of organisations and pays no due attention to the idiosyncratic nature of different contexts. The linearity of the model proposed in the current literature (illustrated diagrammatically in Figure 2.1.) could further be criticised for failing to provide any indication of what are the conditions which support or hinder the interconnection between the three phenomena. The picture would become more complicated when one seeks to explore individual managers' perceptions of these issues. There is therefore, a need to explore in more detail the nature of these relationships with the individual as the unit of analysis and to examine the conditions which managers indicate as supporting or hindering their interconnection. It is equally important to consider however, the context in which these interactions take place to be sensitive to the multiple situational issues which give meaning and significance to these relationships. By paying attention to the dynamic way in which personal and contextual factors interact we may be in a better position to explain less perceptible elements (beyond mere indications of learning behaviour) which underlie individuals' reactions and consequently their perceptions of the relationships between processes.

2.7. Summary

The analysis developed in this chapter has presented the different perspectives held by the individual and the organisation in relation to the training, learning and change processes. The differences in perspectives can be located in the tension between individual and organisational needs and the internal conflicts and dilemmas generated by competing objectives and goals. A significant theme emerging from this discussion is that by taking a one-sided perspective about the nature and role of training, learning and change (dominated by either the individual or the organisational point of view) we fail to explore their interaction and the way

organisational and individual needs are negotiated. By exploring the interrelationships between training, learning and change, this study seeks to explore how the interaction between personal and organisational factors create conditions which affect individuals' perceptions of their interconnection. This analysis is also expected to uncover the factors which underpin (i.e. facilitate or inhibit) the nature and significance (strength) attached to the interconnection between the chosen phenomena. The chapter which follows explores the interplay between personal and organisational factors as evident in the career and self-development processes and its impact on the perceived interconnection between learning, self and career development.

CHAPTER THREE

Learning, Self and Career Development: Their Interaction

3.1. Introduction

This chapter explores the relationship between learning, self and career development in the context of change. The chapter elaborates on the key themes from the analysis of Chapter 2 by concentrating on the dilemma experienced by the individual when trying to balance self and career development in relation to their learning in the context of change. This chapter builds on the notion of interaction between the individual and the organisation and examines how their development needs and goals are negotiated. The negotiation process can be examined from different angles, such as who is the winner or the loser, what is the impact of power, the level of interdependence between actors, the social context of negotiation etc. The analysis of the interconnection between learning, self and career development is expected to show how the dilemma experienced by individuals when balancing self and career development may influence the choices they make in relation to their learning and the way they interpret the opportunities provided by the organisation. In other words, the interconnection between learning, self and career development is expected to provide more insights into managers' receptivity to learning and changing through training.

The chapter begins by discussing negotiation as a social process and relating this to the interplay between individual and organisational priorities. Career theory demonstrates more clearly the negotiation between individual and organisational development needs by comparison to training or learning theory, because it pays more attention to the duality of the

process and the interplay between individual and organisational needs. The second part of the chapter is devoted to the analysis of the main issues in career theory from both the perspective of the organisation and the individual. The individual manager remains the focus of the analysis and the third section of the chapter explores how the interaction of personal and organisational factors shape individuals' perceptions of the choices available in order to develop. The way the individual interprets (agrees or disagrees with) the choices and boundaries provided within the context in which they operate will have an impact on his/her reaction and the techniques (s)he might choose to employ in order to reach a more acceptable arrangement balancing personal and organisational priorities. Self-development has been promoted in the literature, as a self-directed approach to learning which enables individuals to take more responsibility towards their development, without being solely dependent on the organisation. The analysis of self-development is useful in discussing the way individuals may approach their career development particularly in the context of change. The fourth section of the chapter explores the interrelationship between learning, self and career development in the context of change.

3.2. Negotiation as a social process

This section explores briefly some of the underlying issues which define and support negotiations in the social context of organisations and is intended to show how individuals as social actors are influenced in the decisions they make and the actions they take to improve their personal gains. Negotiation in the context of this discussion, is defined as the dialogue and social exchange which underpins the relationship between the individual and the organisation. As evident from the discussion in the previous chapter, the dialectic relationship between the individual and the organisation is characterised by tension, conflict, disagreement and asymmetrical power. The negotiation between individual and organisational needs emerges from their conflict and occurs against the backdrop of social and cultural factors which shape their expectations, norms, values, perceived duties and obligations towards each other (Greenhalgh & Chapman, 1995; Kramer & Messick, 1995). According to Greenhalgh & Chapman (1995:167) negotiation is one of three alternatives for pursuing one's interests in the conflict; the other two being power (the ability to impose a solution) or the ability to resolve the tension (by reconsidering the conflict as not being divisive). Negotiation however, is different from the other two alternatives, in that it does not involve the use of power and it

does not resolve the incompatibility of interests between the two parties. Greenhalgh & Chapman (1995) argue that negotiation involves the voluntary commitment of parties to the agreed course of action and the acceptance of an outcome that may only partially serve either party's interests. In other words, with reference to the individual and the organisation, negotiation is the on-going interaction and the personal and collective effort to pursue the fulfilment of the unique goals and priorities of the individual and the organisation. Therefore, the negotiation of the individual and organisational development needs involves their voluntary commitment to the employment relationship and the acceptance that the solutions offered may not fully satisfy the needs of either party. The nature of the negotiation as described here partly justifies why both parties persistently seek to maximise their personal gains from their interaction. The negotiation of individual and organisational development needs is therefore embedded in their connection and interdependence.

Greenhalgh & Chapman (1995:170) argue that exploring negotiation in the context of the relationship between two parties, in which it occurs and is given meaning ("the relationship-based model"), is qualitatively different from other approaches such as the "economics-based model". The latter defines the interdependence between two parties as a constraint on the maximisation of resources and a deviation from the state of independence. The authors argue specifically that: "the individuals' experience of their relationship is better understood as psychic and social connectedness than as economic interdependence" (p.170). Individual and organisational development needs and goals are therefore, socially negotiated and both parties attempt to fulfil their own priorities while they are affected by the actions of the other. Pruitt (1995:44) points out that working relationships between negotiators are guided by "collective scripts" which help them address the divergence of interests between parties. Pruitt explains that the working-relationship script involves a four-part routine; namely *inquiry* (i.e. assessing the value of available options to each party), *problem-solving* (seeking a win/win solution if there are differences in the preference of solutions), *mutual responsiveness* (choosing the option which satisfies the party with the strongest feelings) and *reciprocity* (rewarding the party who falls behind in benefit). Collective scripts serve as mediating mechanisms or norms that regulate the interaction between two or more parties.

Another important element in the negotiation of individual and organisational goals is the level of information available to each party and the way that information is processed. The

“information-processing model” provides an account of the various stages that individual negotiators go through in processing information (Bazerman & Carroll, 1987; Carroll & Payne, 1991). This model is particularly relevant in this discussion, because it helps explain how negotiation is perceived by the individual and how the social context in which negotiation takes place shapes the meaning and significance attached to it by individual actors in the social context. According to Thomson et al. (1995:7-9), the social context in negotiations refers to social factors such as the negotiation parties (i.e. the configuration and nature of the relationship between actors), the social knowledge and goals (i.e. the information that negotiators have about others in the negotiation), social norms (i.e. the beliefs held by members of a particular culture which defines acceptable and unacceptable behaviour) and communication (i.e. the mechanisms by which negotiators interact). These social factors influence the various stages of processing information. Thomson et al. (1995:10-30) identify five stages or sub-processes; namely: *information distribution* (shared or unshared information and significance to decision-making), *encoding* (evaluation and interpretation of information), *representation* (structuring of information, implicit theories, conflict frames, cognitive schemata, shared mental models etc.), *retrieval* (memory and acquisition of previously stored information) and *judgement* (forming views which guide behaviour and actions).

The information-processing model and the sub-processes identified are useful in understanding the dynamics of negotiation in terms of information exchange and the emotional (feelings), psychological (motivational), and cultural (values and beliefs) factors which affect the interpretation given by negotiators to the information available (Lawler & Yoon, 1995). In the context of this discussion, it helps explain why managers perceive relationships between phenomena in particular ways and how these perceptions generate expectations about the outcomes sought, which in turn may affect their judgements regarding the actions they should take. It is important to note however, that the processing of information is not quite so linear as the sub-processes referred to here may suggest. Negotiations according to Greenhalgh & Chapman (1995:168), are characterised by “imperfect rationality”, because individuals are biased in their reasoning and judgement by their emotions, values and beliefs and other social factors which influence the decisions they make and the actions they take.

The models discussed in this section inform our understanding of the nature and types of negotiations and the various factors which influence the perspective each actor is likely to take in the negotiation process. However, the complexity of the interaction between contributing factors cannot easily be captured in a linear model. A significant issue about negotiation in relation to the current study is that the nature of the relationship between negotiators (i.e. the relative dependence, or interdependence) is also based on the corresponding power each negotiator has over the other (Lawler & Yoon, 1995). Moreover, the degree of dependence increases if each actor in the negotiation process values the outcomes, resources, or issues at stake, and the extent to which such outcomes or resources may be found elsewhere.

Therefore, the relative dependence of the individual on the organisation is closely related to the value attached by the individual to the outcomes (e.g. development) and resources (e.g. development opportunities) provided and the fact that such outcomes or resources may not be easily accessible elsewhere. The organisation is dependent on the abilities of individuals in order to achieve its own objectives. However, the diversity of individual preferences and styles in relation to learning, would render inadequate the contribution of the organisation to the negotiation process. The often limited range of development opportunities available, coupled with the organisationally-focused orientation of training activities, as discussed in Chapter 2, may well mean that the organisation's contribution would be insufficient to meet the diverse needs of individuals. The individual may value the training resources available within the organisation, if (s)he perceives that the outcome (i.e. the acquisition of knowledge and skills) is likely to serve their own priorities of and expectations from development (Rigg, 1989; Maguire et al., 1993).

The inadequacy of the development opportunities provided by the organisation to meet the diverse needs of individuals provides an exegesis of the significance of ownership by the individuals to develop themselves. Aligned to the philosophy of HRM, individuals are 'empowered' to develop themselves. However, it is questionable whether the introduction of self-development (along with other initiatives) has made the negotiation of individual and organisational development goals any easier. It is also doubtful whether the individual has benefited from this arrangement and indeed whether self-development has improved the individual's ability to make better judgements about their growth. It should not be forgotten

that this negotiation takes place in the context of change which alters the social factors underpinning negotiation. It is in the light of these complexities that this chapter seeks to explore the interaction (negotiation) between individual and organisational development needs and its impact on individual's perceptions of the interrelationship between learning, self and career development when pursuing their personal priorities.

3.3. Managing careers in a changing context: Negotiating individual and organisational needs

This section will discuss the existing body of knowledge in relation to career theory from both the perspective of the individual and the organisation. The aim is to provide an overview of the main factors which underpin how the organisation and the individual perceive career and on this basis to explore what is currently known about the negotiation of each party's career development goals. The analysis will seek to tease out in particular the difficulty of balancing the tensions between stability and flexibility, specificity and ambiguity, individual and organisational needs. The discussion begins by reviewing the main principles of career theory concentrating on the analysis of career from the perspective of the individual and the organisation. The main issues which arise in any attempt to reconcile organisational and individual career needs particularly in the context of change are discussed.

3.3.1. Career theory and practice

The interest of many researchers in studying the evolution of career theory has contributed to our understanding of the multidisciplinary nature of this phenomenon and the difficulty of arriving at an all-encompassing description (Arthur & Lawrence, 1984; Arthur et al., 1989). This complexity is evident in the various theories that have been developed over the years. Attempts to organise the various perspectives on career theory have led to multiple classifications. For example, some researchers distinguish between theories which take a psychological perspective against those which emphasise the sociological dimension of career (Law, 1976; Daws, 1981; Roberts, 1981), while a third category develops from the synthesis of psychological and sociological dimensions (Law, 1981). Another classification has distinguished between theories which emphasise the significance of understanding the differences between various stages of career development and those which emphasise the difference between individuals or groups (Keil, 1981; Kidd, 1981; Watts et al. 1981). A further classification by Super (1981), distinguishes between matching theories (which

include differential approaches, situational issues and phenomenological dimensions (e.g. Gintzberg et al., 1951; Super, 1953; Holland, 1973; Roberts, 1977), developmental theories (which concentrate on life stages, e.g. Gintzberg et al., 1951; Sewell & Hauser, 1975; Jordaan & Heyde, 1979) and decision-making theories (which consider the nature of career decisions and the interplay between personal style and situational factors influencing the decision-making process (e.g. Jepsen & Dilley, 1974; Arroba, 1977).

In summary, the various career theories appear to concentrate mainly on one of two main dimensions; the internal (personal) and external (environmental, societal, organisational) factors, what Gunz (1989) describes as the macro and micro aspects of career. The emphasis on either dimension has often failed to recognise the duality of the career phenomenon and to explore the interaction between the internal and external factors, although, it is evident from the literature that a relatively superficial mention of the interdependence between internal and external factors has been briefly considered by some theorists (Super, 1957; Elder, 1968; Holland, 1973). A summary of the main career theories classified by their emphasis on internal or external factors, is illustrated in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: The various perspectives on career theory

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • external influences on individuals' career economy, labour market, social structure, social mobility, organisational and occupational structure and mobility (tournaments), culture, politics, family etc. 	Rosenbaum, 1979, 1984; Pfeffer, 1989; Blau & Meyer, 1971; Schein, 1971, 1978; Baron et al., 1986; Goldthorpe, 1980; Grandjean, 1981; Osterman, 1984; Sheridan, 1992.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • internal influences on individuals' career age, gender, life-span development, self-concept, personality, cognition, interpretation of subjective experiences, stress, level of control, perceptions, anchors, learning styles, future orientation etc. 	Gunz, 1989; Super, 1986; Shamir, 1990; Rousseau & Parks, 1993; Gallos, 1989; Lawrence, 1984; 1988; London, 1983; Schein, 1978; Kolb & Plovnick, 1977; Derr, 1986; Kohn & Schooler, 1982; Veiga, 1981.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interaction of internal and external influences decision-making, socialisation, job mobility, matching process. 	Super, 1957; Elder, 1968; Holland, 1973; Chatman, 1989; 1991, Hall, 1987; Granrose & Portwood, 1987, Pazy, 1988.

At the macro level - emphasis has been given to the social, political, economic and environmental factors which influence career. This level has raised our awareness of the role of career in the social context and its correlation with individuals' social class, family background, education and wealth. In the context of organisations in particular, attention has been given to the nature of career as a social process which aims to integrate the individual into the social system of the organisation. This perspective links career strongly with the

cultural and political system of the organisation and shows that career provides some clues about the organisation's expectations, the level of autonomy and the distribution of power and control. Moreover, career forms an integral part of the human resource development activity and plays a significant part in the structural and strategic orientation of the organisation.

At the micro level - the internal factors influencing an individual's career have informed our understanding of the personal characteristics of the individual and their impact on the way career may be interpreted and the level of significance attached to it. For example, personality affects the choice of work, how individuals are motivated in relation to specific jobs, the impact of career anchors on individuals' career direction, how and why individuals develop their career orientations and logic towards present and future opportunities etc. This perspective suggests that individuals are actively engaged in the career development process by trying to make sense of the present and future rewards from the job they do. Individuals have feelings about their careers which may be expressed through their aspirations, expectations, career interests and knowledge. Therefore, when referring to career at the individual level of analysis, as Hughes (1937) points out, attention should be given to both the "objective" and "subjective" career. The former, refers to the various positions an individual has held in the course of their employment, while the latter, refers to the way individuals relate to particular jobs and the way individuals develop themselves in relation to the job opportunities they come across in the course of their employment.

The interaction between the internal and external factors is not widely debated in the existing career theory. Theorists who have referred to the interdependence of internal and external factors have interpreted these mainly in the light of the socialisation process and in relation to the decision-making process (i.e. the impact of both personal and situational factors in reaching a decision regarding an individual's career direction). Therefore, much of what is currently known about the relationship between organisational and personal career has at most emphasised the fact that career is a dual phenomenon which depends on both internal and external factors. The nature of the interaction between individual and organisational factors and the impact on individual's perceptions of the phenomena and their relationships to other phenomena is not widely discussed (e.g. the relationship of career to learning and self-development). Moreover, although it is acknowledged that the relationship between individual and organisational career changes over time, there is little indication of the nature of the

negotiation process and the different levels of significance and contribution of different factors in different circumstances. This is of major significance in the way career theory has been practically applied, because it indicates the challenge in balancing the needs of the individual, as well as those of the organisation (Herriot, 1992; Herriot et al., 1996). This issue is dealt with in more detail in the section which follows.

3.3.2. The reconciliation of organisation and individual needs: The challenge for career development

The challenge in practically implementing career theory lies in the balancing acts necessary to address the individual and organisational dimensions of the phenomenon. In essence, it is not possible to consider career by concentrating either on the organisation or the individual alone. Consideration must be given to the meaning of career for each party and the way their interpretations affect their negotiation.

3.3.2.1. Organisational career

From the organisation's perspective, managing careers forms an integral part of the overall development of the organisation by managing the development of human resources. Organisational career is strongly related to the demographics of human resources and in particular, career planning which involves among other things the tracking of career paths and ladders (DeCenzo & Robbin, 1994, Cutteridge, et al., 1994; Hall, 1986). For the organisation, career management aims to ensure that the "right people, with the right skills at the right time" will be available to meet the needs of the organisation (Mayo, 1992:37). Essentially the contribution of career development, is to ensure that the manpower needs of the organisation presently and in the future are adequately planned and managed. Techniques such as career reviews, career counselling, formal or informal mentoring schemes, fast-track programmes, assessment centres etc. are all intended to facilitate the organisation in responding and maintaining the necessary balance between the demand of human resources and the supply (Illes & Mabey, 1993; Thomson & Mabey, 1994).

In relation to managers in particular, career systems serve as a means of planning how individual experiences, knowledge and skills may be better utilised to meet the present and future needs of the organisation. Career programmes for managers are therefore, primarily intended to serve succession planning purposes. They provide a sense of the movements (horizontal, vertical, circumferential - Schein, 1971) that may be possible and the likely

Table 3.2: The systematic methodology for managing careers in organisations

• Assess the needs of the organisation.
• Understand and review the organisational culture.
• Review and revise the overall framework of processes.
• Analyse the structure of the organisation and its opportunities.
• Review and revise those processes which involve the individual.
• Work out how to hold, manage and use the data.
• Review & revise the opportunities for learning through experience.

contribution of the manager to the achievement of organisational goals at different stages of their career progression and consequently how managers may be rewarded (Pahl &

Pahl, 1972; Diprete, 1987; Gunz, 1989). It is evident from the above that career from the perspective of the organisation is dominated by a bureaucratic notion which aims to systematise and co-ordinate the direction of human development to serve the needs of the organisation (Watts, 1981). This is explicitly demonstrated by Mayo (1992:37) in what he describes as a “systematic methodology for creating and managing a suitable career process”. The main steps incorporated in this process as described by Mayo (1992) are illustrated in Table 3.2.

This view of organisational careers suggests that its ultimate purpose is to maintain a sense of stability and predictability in order to secure smoothness in organisational growth. Therefore, as a process of renewal (Gunz, 1989) organisational career acts as an autopoietic process (Maturana & Varela, 1980) which aims to maintain the balance within the system. One would be inclined to question the extent to which this approach to career development for the organisation is appropriate given the continually changing nature. Career interpreted as a political process is as Rosenbaum (1979) describes it, a “tournament” which will lead to winners and losers. This issue will be discussed in more detail later in this section. First, a review of the present understanding in the literature of the nature of career development from the individual’s perspective is necessary.

3.3.2.2. Individual career

Examining career with the individual as the unit of analysis, provides a rich picture of both the ‘soft’ and ‘hard’ aspects constituting career development. The individual perspective of career allows an appreciation of the internal/subjective, as well as the external/objective aspects of career. The patterns that individuals follow in the course of their career and the changes that they choose to make in relation to their occupation have been described by commentators (Super, 1957; Richardson, 1977; Watts, 1981; Gunz, 1989) who have proposed

various typologies to capture the different types of career patterns and to address the various factors which contribute to the nature of the job mobility (vertical - between occupational levels or horizontal - within and between occupational fields) observed. For example, research has demonstrated that age and life-stage are factors influencing individuals' career development (Miller & Form, 1964; Levinson et al., 1978, Super, 1984; Arthur & Kram, 1989). On the other hand, organisational factors such as hierarchical structure, level of clarity of career progression and growth patterns and the extent to which individuals have control of their career, influence whether individuals are willing to move. Changes in the organisation's external environment have been recognised by some researchers (Schein, 1971; Pahl & Pahl, 1972; Gunz, 1989) as having an impact on the method and rate with which individuals choose to move between jobs and occupations. It should be noted here, that for the individual life and career choices are inextricably linked, which is not the case for the organisation.

The career development of the individual is underpinned by subjective factors which influence the way individuals make decisions about their career. Researchers have demonstrated that the factors which constitute individuals' subjective career are influenced by their perceptions about their talents, their motivations and expectations and their values in relation to their job (Super, 1986; Shamir, 1990; Rousseau & Parks, 1993; London, 1983; Schein, 1978; Derr, 1986; Kohn & Schooler, 1982, Veiga, 1981). The way individuals think about their career affects their attitude and may be demonstrated by the underlying logic which guides their present and future orientation about their career (Gunz, 1989). The subjective and objective dimensions of individual career indicate the intrinsic and extrinsic factors which motivate individuals and the interests or expectations of individuals in pursuing a career. These factors illustrate individuals' frame of reference and the information that individuals depend upon in directing their career efforts within the organisation (Rapoport, 1970; Pahl & Pahl, 1972; Holland, 1973; Katz & Kahn, 1978; Law & Ward, 1981). The analysis of career from the perspective of the individual and the organisation shows the differences in their interpretation and the position they are likely to take in the negotiation process between individual and organisational career development.

3.3.2.3. The interaction between individual and organisational career.

From the preceding analysis it is evident that the term career is subject to different interpretations. For the organisation, career management like other HRM processes, is

intended to facilitate organisational development in relation to present and future needs. On the other hand, for the individual a career is both the sequence of jobs they experience and how they choose to develop themselves in relation to the opportunities they are presented with. Despite the difference in the way career is perceived by the individual as compared to the organisation, some commentators have argued that there is congruence between the individual and organisational values in relation to career (Holland, 1973; Ansari et al. 1982; Schneider, 1987; Burgoyne, 1988; Chatman, 1989, 1991). For example, Herriot (1992:112) argues that: "Development by the organisation without reference to the individual, and development by the individual without reference to the organisation, are both dead ends". There is a level of interdependence between individual and organisational input in the process of development and growth; organisation career affects individual career and vice versa. The discussion in Chapter 2 has shown that issues of power and control could well determine the nature of this relationship and the level of interaction between the individual and the organisation. For example the perceived level of dependency and reliance by the individual on resources and information provided by the organisation may affect the choices an individual is likely to make and the alternatives that (s)he may be able to consider. It is more likely that individuals would perceive themselves to have more control over personal factors than organisational factors, which suggests that individuals are more likely to be dependent on the organisation's direction for their development.

On the basis of research findings Gunz (1989) argues that organisation career processes affect individuals' frames of reference and ultimate experiences. Moreover, he argues that individual career processes affect the nature and shape career development practices within organisations. He demonstrates this issue in relation to the way individuals express their future orientation towards their career development by deviating from the organisation's existing career pattern and searching for new opportunities. Schein (1978) was probably one of the first writers to have considered the interaction between organisational and individual career. Treating organisations and individuals as dynamic evolving systems, Schein acknowledges that the development needs of the individual and the organisation change, because of the changing internal factors and the changing environments. Schein argues that career development is equally dynamic and changing as individual and organisational needs are re-negotiated. The reciprocal interaction of the individual and the organisation creates the conditions of their negotiation and the nature of the psychological contract (Argyris, 1960).

In the context of changing organisations career paths are increasingly being dismissed and the process of interaction and negotiation becomes even more significant and at the same time more difficult. In some cases the psychological contract has been broken as some organisations respond to changes in their environment through delayering and introducing flatter hierarchical structures which remove the job security, and the promotional opportunities initially promised. The psychological contract has been transformed from being “relational” (i.e. based on mutual commitment) to being “transactional” (a purely instrumental exchange relationship) (MacNeill, 1985; Rousseau, 1990; Herriot & Pemberton, 1995b). It is therefore, imperative to understand the changing nature of career within organisations and the impact on the negotiation approach between the individual and the organisation when basic elements (continuity, harmony, mutual benefit etc.) in their relationship are being distorted. A review of the main issues in relation to the changing nature of careers could shed some light to the difficulties in the interaction between the individual and the organisation.

3.3.3. Managing changing careers

The negotiation of individual and organisational career goals as evident from the previous sections is becoming increasingly more difficult as the benefits and rewards from their interaction are less clear and the terms and conditions which have monitored their relationship in the past are no longer applicable. A major challenge is the fact that career is no longer what Wilensky (1960:554) described as: “...a succession of related jobs, arranged in a hierarchy of prestige, though which persons move in an ordered, predictable sequence”. Early theories assumed that careers follow a fixed course and incorporate a sense of continuity and harmony in relation to themes or manifestations over time. The evolution of career theory however, as Sonnenfeld & Kotter (1982) observe, has shifted from a static to a relatively dynamic theory. Careers have come to be recognised as fluctuating phenomena which “offer many opportunities for change” (Katz, 1973:94). The sense of continuity and harmony according to Katz, lies in the “self-concept of the decision maker”. Some researchers argue that the whole concept of career is changing and new career theory is necessary (Weick & Berlinger, 1989; Arthur, 1992). More recent theories of career define it as “the evolving sequence of a person’s experiences over time” (Arthur et al., 1989:8). The way individuals perceive the sequence of attitudes and behaviours associated with work-related experiences and activities over the span of their life influences how career is understood and how continuity and change may be

balanced (Hall, 1979). Career is therefore, an evolving phenomenon which acquires its meaning and form from the on-going interaction between the changing demands of the individual and the organisation. The interaction between individual and organisational factors affect the choices that individuals ultimately make in relation to their career.

Murray et al., (1971) have considered the individual and organisational pressures affecting an individual's disposition to change jobs and have identified four types of work-history motivational patterns which show the relative influence of organisational and individual pressures and their impact on the direction and intentionality of job changes. Figure 3.1. illustrates the four career types. According to Murray and his colleagues, a *routine* career pattern is relatively stable in that it is probably characterised by a sequence of jobs which do not involve major changes. The *situationally determined* career is where changes take place primarily in response to pressures exercised by the present circumstances within the organisation or the wider business environment. Economic pressures are one example

		Pressure from the self	
		Low	High
Pressure from the organisation	Low	Routine career	Self-determined career
	High	Situationally determined career	Self-directed accommodation career

Figure 3.1: Typology of work-history motivation patterns (adapted from Murray et al. 1971:6 cited in Watts, 1981:242).

whereby managerial careers may be subject to change with the individual having little control or direction. The *self-directed accommodation* career pattern is the case where the individual shapes his/her career in the light of environmental pressures. For example, managers determining the direction of their career in the light of organisational changes.

Finally, the *self-determined* career is the case where the individual takes control and determines the direction of his/her career without paying too much attention to the environmental factors. The issue of autonomy and self-direction in career development incorporates the self-actualisation, self-fulfilment and self-development (Maslow, 1970; Rogers, 1961) dimensions of individual career which shows that there is space for a sense of ownership and independence, although this may not be possible in all organisations.

Watts (1981) observed that most people follow routine or situationally determined careers. Recent studies into the nature of managers' career in the changing context of their organisations (Nicholson & West, 1988; Gaertner, 1988; Kanter, 1989b; Goffee & Scase, 1992; Salama & Easterby-Smith, 1994; Herriot & Pemberton, 1995a; Newell & Dopson, 1996) suggest that career is no longer routine. However, it remains situationally determined. In other words, career within changing organisations may no longer follow a predictable upward direction that many hierarchical models used to postulate. Instead, a characteristic of careers within changing organisations is their downward movement (Hall & Isabella, 1985). Moreover, as discussed in section 2.5.1. in the previous chapter, many changes introduced within organisations tend to cater primarily for organisational goals and are often introduced with limited prior consultation or involvement by the individuals affected. The careers of managers are often determined by the situational (organisational) factors with limited input by the individual. This observation is confirmed by empirical evidence from studies (Pahl & Pahl, 1972; Richardson, 1977; Feldman & Weitz, 1988; Chao, 1990; Newell & Dopson, 1996; Herriot et al. 1993, 1996) which show that managers often find it difficult to plan or influence their careers and tend to react to opportunities as they are presented to them, instead of actively seeking to create opportunities for themselves. Goffee's & Scase's (1992) study showed that the fundamental changes in career alter managers' career attitudes and affect their job security. The authors describe the frustration and disillusionment of managers and the coping strategies managers have developed in response to these changes. For example, some managers are said to have suffered resentment and depression, stress and loss of self-confidence because of the self-perceived failure and to have redefined their commitment and loyalty to the organisation etc. Goffee and Scase (1989; 1992) observe that these feelings and attitudes towards their career and the organisation have an impact on their future career strategies.

Newell & Dopson (1996) in their recent study, of changing careers of middle managers found that managers experienced great difficulty planning their future career, and some managers in particular felt that they had to leave the organisation if they were going to improve their career prospects for the future and feel more content with themselves. The study shows more clearly the loss of control, demotivation and job insecurity experienced by managers as a result of the changes within the organisation. These changes have breached the psychological contract which was the basis of the interaction between the managers and the organisation in the past.

Despite attempts by the particular organisation reported in the study, to persuade managers that the psychological contract had been re-negotiated, managers were not convinced that the terms were acceptable. Consequently, managers decided to review their 'side of the bargain' and to change their priorities in relation to their future career development.

These studies show that changes in the business environment can be a catalyst for change both to the objective and subjective careers of managers (Stephens, 1994). Managers respond to their changing careers by reassessing the psychological contract and readjusting to their new role by modifying their orientation in relation to their career. The way individuals are likely to react to the changes of their (objective and subjective) career is likely to be influenced by their perceptions of the career deal. Their negotiation with the organisation could influence their judgement about the potential benefits of maintaining the employment relationship and the actions that they need to take in order to improve the potential benefits for themselves and their personal goals. Currently, however there is limited research exploring why some managers may be more receptive than others in relation to their career development. Moreover, there is a need to understand what are the difficulties individual managers encounter in taking more responsibility for their career particularly in the changing context of their employing organisation. Undoubtedly, organisational changes may exacerbate the uncertainty and lack of clarity about the alternatives that may be available, which may well be due to the lack of information and support from the organisation. It may also be the case that some managers find planning for a career an over-rational process which does not allow room for their emotions, particularly in reaching a decision about their career. Another explanation may be that they may not wish to take any of the responsibility that career planning entails. Career planning may be too restrictive given the changing nature of careers and the continuous changes taking place within organisations (Watts, 1981). Finally, the role of conditioning in relation to career development may help explain managers' reactions. For example, the extent to which the organisation encourages managers to take responsibility for their development may affect their perceptions of how much control they have to determine the direction of their career, and consequently the actions they are likely to take.

3.4. Self-development and career growth within changing organisations

It has been discussed in Chapter 2 that in recent years there has been a growing acceptance by organisations that in order to address the economic, political and social changes in their environment they need to invest in their human resources. Although the introduction of the HRM philosophy has sought to address this concern, organisations still encounter the difficulty of managing the multiple and diverse needs and learning styles of individual employees. In the light of the continuously changing needs of individuals and organisations, self-development has been promoted as a promising strategy for developing managers (Pedler, 1988). Unlike other development methods, self-development allows the necessary flexibility and self-direction in the learning process and facilitates a more immediate response to the changing needs of individuals and organisations (Stewart, 1991). As Burgoyne (1977:17) points out:

“...the self-development concept offers a solution to the dilemmas of obsolescence and an unknown future, of how to do something to ensure that managers have the competences appropriate to the future rather than the past, when the future is not known and cannot be guessed with any certainty. The ‘self-developing manager’ could be expected to develop and adapt his competences in ‘real time’ to meet the situations that confront him”.

Based on the principles of adult learning (discussed in section 2.4.1.) self-development emphasises choice and self-direction and aligned to the tenet of HRM it concentrates on the development of the individual rather than the collective. The message to individual employees is that if they are to survive and grow in the changing context of their organisations they must consciously seek to create opportunities for themselves and to remain informed. The organisation carries no responsibility for the development of the individual and some commentators even argue that the organisation has no obligation to do so (Drucker, 1955). According to Williams (1983; 1987) the only input the organisation should have is to provide encouragement, support and ‘facilitation’ during the self-development process and to help managers help themselves to develop and improve themselves.

It is interesting to note that HRM activities, such as training and development, are redefined in relation to self development. For example, Williams (1987) argues that MD should be equated to self-development and seen as a conscious response by the individual to deal with what (s)he recognises to be a developmental need. This view is supported by researchers who point out

that real development can only take place when individuals see for themselves the need to modify their behaviour, change their attitude, develop new skills, acquire new knowledge, improve their performance or prepare themselves for a different role (Argyris, 1960; Hague, 1979; Mumford, 1979; Huczynski, 1983). According to Lewis & Kelly (1986), this approach to development would make MD a challenging and rewarding process, because it requires managers to question their level of competence and effectiveness and can create substantial improvements in performance which could be a source of personal satisfaction. Pedler et al. (1978:4), raise the same point as the philosophy and fundamental premise of their book; *A Managers Guide to Self-development*, in which they argue that “any effective system for management development must increase the manager’s capacity and willingness to take control over and responsibility for events and particularly for himself and his own learning”. Self-development is defined as: “personal development, with the manager taking primary responsibility for her or his own learning and for choosing the right means to achieve this” (Pedler et al., 1986:16).

Unlike traditional development methods, self-development shares much in common with experiential and action learning theories which emphasise reflection, experimentation and a ‘meta’ level of understanding (Argyris & Schön, 1978; Revans, 1980; Mumford, 1988). From the perspective of theories of learning, as discussed in Chapter 2 (section 2.4.1.), self-development is a self-initiated process of learning. It is the conscious effort on behalf of the individual to seek to learn and develop from the experiences they come across every day. Therefore, key elements in the process are self-awareness, reflection and experimentation. Elaborating on this point Delf & Smith (1978: 495) suggest that self-development is a process by which individuals: “identify their personal goals, consciously take responsibility for planning and taking appropriate action to reach these goals, develop and use methods of monitoring progress and assess outcomes, reassess goals in the light of new experiences”.

However, in comparison with other learning theories self-development is not concerned with particular techniques of learning, but with the underlying attitudes and motivation of the learner (Hague, 1979). The uniqueness of self-development as a process of growth probably lies in the synthesis of three important dimensions; namely the concept of development, the notion of the whole person and that of personal responsibility (Pedler & Boydell, 1980; 1981;

Pedler, 1984; 1988). Each of these dimensions are discussed briefly, in order to allow a consideration of the significance of self-development for the individual and the organisation.

3.4.1. The main dimensions underlying the meaning of self-development

Development

The first dimension underlying the meaning of self-development is the association with the broader concept of development (i.e. the changes in the social structures which affect the individual's life span - Werner, 1940; Baltes et al., 1980; Haareven & Adams, 1982). Researchers exploring the structure of development process have argued that development is a life-long process which involves gradual, incremental improvements and brusque revolutionary steps (Langer, 1969; Lievegoed, 1980) and that each step influences the way individuals construct meaning about themselves and their experiences (Alderfer, 1972; Pedler & Boydell, 1981; Boydell, 1982; Fisher et al., 1987). The significant issue about the existence of stages is that they demonstrate the influence of internal (personal) and external (environmental, organisational) factors. Moreover, the notion of qualitative and quantitative change in the process of development suggests that growth does not only take place within a particular stage, but between stages as well. Fisher et al. (1987: 259) point out that:

“As each step is taken a new self emerges with a new way of constructing the world, and the new inner experiences of the world result in a new way of expressing ideas, feelings and purposes. At each step the corresponding world view deeply influences what the person chooses to see, and how he or she interprets and reacts to what is seen”.

According to Pedler & Boydell (1980, 1981) if experiences are going to result in developmental outcomes, the individual must be able to employ the necessary skills and resources to seek such experiences and to turn them into meaningful learning events, which is also the line of argument that Kolb (1984) follows. Therefore, the notion of development in the context of self-development can be conceptualised as having a structure consisting of goals and stages. Moreover, the focus of development within the self-development process is the change, innovation and learning that takes place and not just the quantitative, incremental acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes (Reese & Overton, 1970; Pedler, 1984; 1988; Collin, 1994).

The whole person

The second dimension of self-development is the emphasis on the whole person (i.e. the development 'of-self'). Self-development emerges as a process when the individual as a whole is engaged in it. This dimension of self-development suggests that development is meaningful to the individual when personally significant goals are being pursued. Pedler & Boydell (1980:171) point out specifically that self-development takes place when the individual finds significance and personal meaning from particular events or experiences resulting from their actual or symbolic interaction with some part of their environment. Therefore, when setting self-development goals, the individual cannot be divorced from what they are doing. Self-development is the integration of the person and the job role. The development process acquires meaning from the integration of the specific knowledge and skills relevant to the particular role and the feelings, intentions and actions of the individual. This perspective is closely related with the third dimension of self-development, the issue of personal responsibility (i.e. the development 'by-self').

Personal responsibility

A central characteristic of self-development is choice on the part of the individual. Unlike conventional development processes (e.g. training) which treat individuals as passive recipients, self-development places the individual at the forefront of the development process. The underlying argument is that development is not a matter of expertise (i.e. something that is done by an expert to the developer - trainer to trainee) (Pedler, 1984, 1988). Self-development is a matter of a personal willingness and determination to commit oneself to a process that the individual values and believes in (Burgoyne, 1977). The individual is therefore, free to choose the goals, decide how to achieve them, initiating action for achieving them and evaluating success (Rogers, 1961; Roberts, 1974; Pedler, 1984). This dimension of development places the individual in control (in theory at least) of the self-development process.

Although the preceding paragraphs suggest that the individual is the protagonist in the self-development process, some commentators have argued that self-development would have wider applicability at the collective level of organisations. For example, Jackson (1990b) and Herriot (1992) point out, that self-development could involve all employees across all levels of the organisation and that the process of helping one another is one of the most significant

strategies for self-development. Supplementary activities such as development centres, open learning facilities, self-development plans and contracts would reinforce the organisational commitment for self-development and contribute to the mutual development of the individual and the organisation. As Smith (1990: 17-19) points out: "Individuals will need to create and use self-development opportunities as an integral element in their organisation's development". Self-development is therefore, promoted as a developmental strategy which is beneficial both to the individual and the organisation.

3.4.2. The perceived benefits from self-development

According to Temporal (1984) from the individual's point of view, self-development can enhance self-confidence and help them become more mature. It could enable individuals to develop latent abilities and do a better job by improving their initiative and work performance. Self-development could help individuals become more forthcoming and be more prepared to speak their minds which may improve their ability to solve problems and provide them with a broader outlook. Finally, self-development can encourage individuals to be more constructive in their relationships and motivate them to improve themselves.

Self-development is equally beneficial for the organisation (Temporal, 1984). Self-development enables the organisation to keep up with the dynamics of change as it encourages managers to think about change and improvement positively. Moreover, self-development encourages participation and may increase individuals' commitment to the organisation. As part of 'strategic HRM' self-development can simplify MD and succession planning by clarifying individuals' strengths, weaknesses, expectations, ambitions, preferences and experiences. Selection and promotion decisions may also improve and may be more readily accepted by individuals who have contributed towards evaluating their own achievements. Moreover, self-development can be a cost-effective way of developing human resources. The 'do it yourself' (DIY) approach to development could potentially address one of the most significant concerns of organisations in the UK. As discussed in section 2.3.1. the negative attitude held by many organisations in Britain towards training and development is that it is perceived as a cost. Self-development could therefore, offer a very attractive possibility in that respect. Finally, according to Juch, (1983) and Nixon & Allen (1986) self-development can provide the company with 'learning managers'.

The benefits perceived by the organisation in introducing self-development could affect whether self-development is practically implemented and the way it is integrated with other HRD activities. Therefore, as is the case with other HRD approaches which seek to balance OD and MD, one returns to the interaction of individual and organisational factors even within self-development. The negotiation between individual and organisational priorities in relation to self-development is useful for discussing the main obstacles to self-development.

3.4.3. The main obstacles to self-development

As a process self-development reshapes the nature of the existing relationship between the individual and the organisation by redistributing the responsibility (and power) for development. In principle self-development encourages the individual to be more independent and self-reliant. Essentially, the concept of self-development transfers the responsibility and indirectly the control for development to the individual with the organisation taking a more passive role. However, the organisation's priorities will still be high on the self-development agenda of the individual. Thus, there are several contradictions within self-development which challenge both the principles upon which it is founded and raise issues about its applicability and suitability to different organisational contexts.

One of the most significant issues which is likely to determine whether self-development takes place is the culture of the organisation. The attitude of the organisation towards self-development will have an important impact both on how self-development is understood and how it is applied. Ultimately, the attitude of the organisation is likely to affect the attitude of individuals towards self-development. Researchers have argued that one of the most common blocks to self-development is top management, who may welcome such initiatives, only so long as they do not involve costs or do not imply any change which may disturb current practices (Mumford, 1979; Pedler & Boydell, 1980; Temporal, 1984). If the culture of the organisation does not allow mistakes, does not welcome ambition and does not create the space for initiative to grow, then self-development efforts cannot progress. Moreover, if there are limited opportunities for promotion and the individual cannot see the space for advancement this is also likely to limit self-development attempts (Pedler & Boydell, 1980; Temporal, 1984). It is yet not clear how self-development can be effectively integrated with other HRM/HRD activities and whether it could resolve the existing inconsistencies and address the competing priorities of the organisation or indeed exacerbate them. One example

to illustrate the potential difficulties in relation to this issue, is whether organisations would actually reward the new behaviours that self-developing managers are likely to demonstrate. Experience in relation to training and development suggests that organisations fail to reward new behaviour, because training and development are not integrated adequately with performance criteria and the appraisal system. One of the consistent arguments in the training literature is that employees do not seek training because the organisation does not reward them for it (Rigg, 1989; Keep, 1989a). In relation to career development there are clearly additional issues which are relevant to this study. The changing careers and the loss of job security experienced by many individuals could have an impact on the direction that individuals are likely to take concerning their development and learning and whether they are likely to be as much influenced by organisational values and goals as they have been in the past. As Kanter (1989a:321) points out "if security no longer comes from being *employed*, then, it must come from being *employable*" (original emphasis).

The redefinition of the relationship between the individual and the organisation raises the issue of whether the transfer of responsibility for development also implies a transfer of power. Essentially, the question is *who is arguing for self-development?* If self-development is a new deal between the individual and the organisation, how does the negotiation between the two parties resolve (if at all possible) the 'passive' involvement of the organisation when it remains one of the immediate beneficiaries from the improvement of the individual. Does the negotiation process recognise the potential benefits and costs to each party? Even when the organisation endorses self-development, there is the issue of whether individuals would support it. The concept of self-development is based on the assumption that the individual is capable of taking the responsibility that self-development entails. In the light of their existing experiences of development and learning, which may have expected them to rely (often passively) to the activities provided by the organisation, one would be inclined to argue that some individuals may not be forthcoming. As Williams (1987) suggests, the next level up in the hierarchy often serves as the best excuse for the individuals who choose to deny their responsibility for their own development.

This point indicates that some of the potential obstacles to self-development are imposed by individuals' themselves. The personal dilemma experienced by managers in relation to their self-image and self-perception could cause self-development to become a demotivating

experience as managers are confronted with their ignorance and the difficulty of becoming self-questioning. Individuals may be reluctant to accept the responsibility for self-development if self-esteem and self-image is likely to be damaged (Mumford, 1979; Pedler & Boydell, 1980). In other words, the individual's personality and self-efficacy may affect their willingness to accept their shortcomings and to be receptive towards the responsibility to improve themselves. Moreover, lack of self-development may stem from the person's perception of the freedom they have in personally determining how they develop, as well as their temperament i.e. whether they are pessimistic or optimistic by nature.

When considering the individual obstacles to self-development, Hague (1979) argues that it is possible to identify differences in the way individuals at different levels in the hierarchy respond to the need for self-development. For example 'high-flyers' are perceived to be self-motivated, still in the promotion hunt and therefore, keen to develop themselves. 'Top managers' on the other hand, who may well have risen to the top without any systematic self-development process may not only be disinterested in self-development, but may also be unsympathetic to the developmental needs of subordinates, who may potentially be seen as a threat. Finally, those described as 'middling performers', may have no expectations to provide impetus to self-development. According to Hague (1979) 'middling performers' may be further distinguished into *Earnest Plodders* (middle managers who gradually exercise less and less judgement as they are presented with the same problems), the *switched off* (managers who might have been bitterly disappointed at some stage, e.g. missed a promotion and have ceased to put forward suggestions, to seek promotion, or indeed seek to do anything other than react after events) and the *needlessly impotent* (managers who feel powerless to influence their situation).

Lewis & Kelly (1986), suggest that managers' receptivity towards self-development may be affected by: their level of motivation towards increasing their effectiveness and the extent to which they are prepared to recognise and accept the need to change their attitude (what they need to feel about their job, their level of competence and their relationships with others), their knowledge (what they need to know in order to perform the job more effectively), and their skills (what they need to be able to do in order to be more effective). It is interesting to note that the obstacles to self-development bear several similarities with the identified obstacles to learning discussed in section 2.4.2., namely that both personal and organisational

factors interact and that it is the product of this interaction which shapes individuals' attitudes towards learning and self-development. Individuals' perceptions of learning, self and career development as separate processes, may have an impact on what individuals may be prepared to offer in their relationship with the organisation and indeed how they are likely to perceive their interconnection.

The analysis of each these processes suggests that there are certain common factors which influence them. For example, the significance of organisation culture and individuals' perceptions of their abilities are two important factors in the learning, self and career development processes. Moreover, it appears that learning, self and career development influence each other and in some respects it could be argued that they may form an amalgam of interdependent elements. For example, the analysis of the objective and subjective career show the inextricable link between personal choices which develop the self (i.e. in relation to one's life) and career choices (i.e. in relation to one's employment). The discussion of self-development indicates that individuals develop themselves by taking personal responsibility to improve their abilities which would enable them to widen their opportunities in relation to their job. Finally, learning as evident from the discussion in Chapter 2 is also about choosing how to utilise opportunities and experiences which would provide a more informed understanding of the challenges one has to respond to, and the possible actions one can choose to take. A critical question which results from the analysis of learning, self and career development is whether individuals perceive they are interconnected and what are the conditions supporting or inhibiting this interrelationship. These issues are explored in more detail in the light of the existing literature in the next section.

3.5. The perceived interrelationship between learning, self and career development

The review of the main characteristics underlying self and career development, indicate that there is a level of interdependence between individual and organisational input in the process of development and growth. The individual derives meaning about what they do from the opportunities provided within their organisation and the organisation provides the career framework which could align individual's career aspirations with the succession plans of the organisation. Despite the proposed interdependence between the individual and the organisation their development goals and needs are continuously negotiated and re-defined as

they respond to the changes in their environment. The disruption caused by changes to the previously stable and predictable career structure exaggerates the competitiveness between individual and organisational objectives and increases uncertainty and confusion about the alternatives available. Depending on how the individual interprets the changes taking place (positively or negatively) this is likely to affect how the individual may attempt to balance personal and career development in relation to other concerns such as the implications to their family and social life (Isabella, 1990). The way individuals prioritise personal and career development goals may provide an insight into the choices they make in relation to *how* they learn, *what* they learn and *why* they learn. This is an area identified in Chapter 2 has rarely been considered by researchers in the past and one that has much to offer in any attempts to understand the way individuals learn and adapt during periods of change. Exploring the interrelationship between learning, self and career development is also expected to enhance our understanding of the interrelationship between change, training and learning.

3.5.1. The relationship between self and career development

The discussion of objective and subjective career from an individual's point of view, suggests that as a process of development, career incorporates both the notion of differentiation and integration. In other words, like self-development it is a process whereby the individual seeks to reflect on previous experiences in order to make sense of the future. For the individual self and career development make an important contribution to maintaining his/her identity, because they provide the individual with the ability to look back and forward into their life-cycle and make sense of their aspirations and hopes, achievements and failures and future prospects (Sofer, 1970). This process enables the individual to link past, present and future experiences and derive a more coherent understanding of the significance of their actions. The interaction between self and career development according to Schein (1978) provide the individual with a sense of who they are, what they are capable of and what they need to do in order to be successful (success here taken to mean the best utilisation of the opportunities available which will allow the individual to reach their career anchors, which is likely to differ for men and women e.g. see Gallos, 1989). The interaction between self and career development, provides a more complete picture of the whole person by "integrating into the total self-concept what one sees oneself to be more or less competent at, wanting out of life, one's value systems, and the kind of person one is" (Schein, 1978:171). Therefore, self and career development are closely interconnected, because their interaction enables the individual

to discover themselves, their abilities and talents and to be more in touch with their values and needs. The interconnectedness of self and career in the development process indicates the significance of inner forces within the individual as powerful mechanisms influencing the alternatives perceived and the choices likely to be made. External forces within the organisation still have an impact by providing opportunities and challenges and accurate feedback (Schein, 1978:208).

Although many researchers (Bolton & Gold, 1994; Pedler et al., 1990; Hirsh, 1990, Stamp, 1989; Juch, 1983) argue for an integrated career management process which links into the self-development of the individual, few have actually recognised that from the perspective of the individual self and career development may not actually be as complementary as they appear to be. The competing priorities of the individual and the organisation in times of rapid change may complicate self and career goals to the point where they may be in conflict. What may appear to be an opportunity suitable for career development, may be inappropriate for self-development and vice-versa. For example, Schein (1978: 65) considers such a situation in relation to a case whereby an individual is offered a promotion which involves another transfer. In analysing this problem, Schein challenges whether the problem is a conflict between work and family or whether the 'real' problem is a conflict between self-development concerns and career concerns. He raises the following questions:

“...I may be unsure about whether or not I want the promotion; I may not be confident that I can do the next job; I may feel that I have not had enough time on the present job to prove myself, though it is flattering to be promoted again, I may feel some resentment at being uprooted so quickly from my present job situation. Or, perhaps such a move is an event I may actually have precipitated myself because I was not entirely comfortable in a settled situation”

The underlying feelings towards external events influence an individual's internal reactions and this would suggest that in order to understand whether self and career development complement and support each other, one possible dimension to consider, is their interconnection in relation to learning.

3.5.2. The interconnection between self and career development in relation to learning

The dilemma experienced by the individual in prioritising and balancing the frequently conflicting demands of his/her work and personal life could have an impact on the way (s)he

chooses to respond to the opportunities and challenges they are presented within the changing context of their organisation. As evident from the discussion in Chapter 2 a significant factor influencing individuals' responses to change is their ability to gain a new perspective and frame of reference. Although the significance of learning in relation to self and career development has been discussed in the literature, as yet there are no empirical evidence which shows how the relationships are perceived by the individual manager or if there is an interrelationship between the three processes. In relation to the relationship between self and career development learning is a means of addressing their present and future development needs and a vehicle for driving their objective and subjective career forward. Collin (1994:303) puts the following argument forward:

“As individuals become more skilled and flexible, they gain more opportunities for promotion or other intra- or inter-organisational moves: their learning and development affect their objective career. This learning and development also influences the way they view themselves, the rewards they gain from their work, their relationship with their employer, and the role of work in their lives: their subjective career”.

Exploring the interrelationship between learning, self and career development would facilitate an understanding of the complexity of individual learning in relation to self and career development in the context of change. Work experiences offer individuals some of the most fundamental learning opportunities which have an impact on the way they derive meaning about their role and a sense of what it is that they need to do in order to develop. Several studies confirm this point (Burgoyne, 1988; Sadler & Barham, 1988; Kakabadse & Margerison, 1988; McCall, et al. 1989; Mumford, 1988). Schein (1978:102) describes the link between learning and career development as the process of forming a perspective about the organisation and one's role in it. He points out specifically: “The perspective one forms is what gives meaning to one's work and one's career; its the subjective inner learning which accompanies one's external work life and influences one's future behaviour in the organisation”. Learning is therefore, an integral part of the career development process. It could further be argued that at different stages of a person's career, different learning may be taking place or may be appropriate and necessary (Super, 1957; Hall, 1976; Levinson et al., 1978; Hall & Seibert, 1992). When examined in the light of individuals' objective career, it is possible to argue that in the early stage of socialisation in the organisation the individual learns the rules and regulations of the system and how (s)he is expected to progress. As the individual progresses and becomes more experienced learning takes a different role and may

become a coping process (Schein, 1978). Seen from the individual's subjective career it is possible to argue that as the individual passes through different stages in their life, they experience different challenges which provide and require different learning. For example, at the stage of exploration, socialisation is a central learning process as individuals learn to understand themselves in relation to others. On the other hand, once established as a member of a social group, individuals try to balance family and other life concerns in relation to their career which provides them with new learning experiences and which require a different approach to learning in order to make the right choices about themselves (Schein, 1978).

Research evidence suggest (Mayo, 1990; Hirsh, 1990) that some organisations apply different learning strategies in their career planning. The link between learning and career development is mainly applicable to managers who are targeted for senior positions - the so called high-flyers or fast-track managers (Kovach, 1986; Cox & Cooper, 1988; White, et al., 1992). Hirsh (1990) describes six organisations where they adopt a fast-track scheme which basically moves the selected individuals through a varied series of cross-functional and cross-business jobs which are intended to provide them with the opportunity to learn and develop the necessary knowledge and skills which will prepare them for senior positions. The extent to which such career development programmes are conducive to individual managers' learning is questionable, particularly as there is lack of clarity about what exactly has been learned from particular job experiences. Some studies (Hirsh, 1990; Kovach, 1986; Thomson et al., 1985) suggest that such programmes may prove to be harmful as managers rely increasingly on the organisation in order to identify their learning and development needs. These studies also suggest that fast-track managers are among the most complacent when it comes to their learning and self-development.

It would appear that "strategic management development" approaches such as those promoted by Hall & Seibert (1992:259), which "emphasises the *deliberate management* of candidates' learning and development" (emphasis added), are unlikely to address individual managers' learning needs. Although such approaches aim to reconcile individual and organisational needs, it could well be argued that they exacerbate the tension between the two parties, turning career development to a highly political process. As a result, the individual is more concerned with knowing the rules of the game rather than enhancing their knowledge of themselves and the tasks they are involved in (Rosenbaum, 1979; Sternberg, 1985). A critical

need is to share information; not only to keep individuals informed of possible changes, but to provide them with feedback which will allow them to consider how their learning efforts could be directed (Schein, 1978, Burgoyne & Germaine, 1984).

Similarly, from the point of view of self-development, as discussed in section 3.5.2., learning is an integral part of defining the scope and focus of the self-directed approach to development. It is learning which gives self-development efforts meaning and significance. Likewise, self-development does not embrace learning in a narrow sense (i.e. acquisition of knowledge and skills). Learning is a process of development and growth which may lead to changes in the meaning individuals acquire as they reflect on the past and progress to the future. Development (be it self or career orientated) is part and parcel of learning (conscious or unconscious) as a process of growth. This view of development and learning supports Rogers's (1961:280) argument that learning "interpenetrates with [a person's] very portion of existence". In the context of organisations in particular "what one learns is not only a function of what one brings to the work situation, but also reflects the opportunities provided and the feedback obtained" (Schein, 1978: 171).

The discussion in the preceding paragraphs indicates that the available literature supports a strong relationship between learning and career development, as well as learning and self-development. The relationship between self and career development is equally strong, although it is evident that there is a need for more in-depth research to consider the way individuals prioritise and reach a balance between the frequently conflicting demands of their work and personal development. Unresolved issues remain and this study seeks to explore the complicated negotiation between personal and organisational factors and the impact on individuals managers' perceptions of the interconnection between learning, self and career development. Exploring the interrelationship between the three phenomena could provide some insights into the intricacies of individuals' learning in relation to self and career development in the context of change. This is a much needed perspective and one which is currently missing from the existing literature. It certainly highlights the significance of understanding the complexity and indeed the difficulty of resolving the conflicting priorities of organisations and individuals. The factors which contribute to the negotiation of individual and organisational needs are clearly multiple and varied and it is very risky to assume that they can remain constant or that they can be addressed individually in isolation. Exploring the

interrelationships between phenomena is concerned more with the challenge of making sense of the dynamic negotiation between personal and organisational factors and less with their reconciliation.

3.6. Summary

This chapter reviewed the main body of literature on career development and self-development. The aim was to explore in more depth the interaction and negotiation between personal and organisational factors which affect individuals' receptivity to learning during periods of change. The discussion of the nature of career and self-development from the perspective of the individual has revealed some significant commonalities regarding development and growth. The existing theories and models discussed show that development is a life-long process, however, some of these models may be criticised for taking a positivist perspective to the notion of development which treats these processes as fixed. Self and career development do not follow a specific pattern. They are dynamic phenomena which are the product of the continuous re-negotiation of personal and organisational factors. For both phenomena learning is an integral part of the process of growth. For the purpose of this study the relationship between learning and career development as well as that of learning and self-development is very important in that it allows a better understanding of the way individuals learn and adapt during periods of change. For this reason, a better understanding of the way learning, self and career development are interrelated is vital, as it is an issue currently missing in the literature and one in need of empirical investigation. Finally, this interrelationship is expected to shed some light on the difficulty of reconciling individual and organisational priorities and to demonstrate more clearly the complexity of their interaction.

PART

C

Methodology

Overview

This part of the thesis presents and discusses the methodological considerations which guided the research design, the data collection, the analysis and interpretation of the findings.

Exploring Interrelationships: The Research Design

4.1. Introduction

The review of the relevant literature presented in Chapters 2 and 3 makes explicit the issues which this study has sought to address. As a reminder from Chapter 2 the emerging issues were: to what extent training is perceived as a learning opportunity, do managers learn from formal training, is training perceived to be a means of managing change, do managers change as a result of training, is change an opportunity for learning, do managers perceive learning as a means of adapting to change, how do managers perceive the interconnection between training, learning and change?

From the discussion in Chapter 3 and in the light of the changing career structures in organisations the key emerging issues are: why are some individuals better able than others to plan their career development, how do managers perceive the relationship between self and career development and what are the dilemmas experienced by individuals in the development process, how does learning affects and is affected by self and career development.

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the main methodological principles which have formed the backbone of the research design and have contributed to the development of the research strategy. The discussion will concentrate on the methodological choices made which were deemed to be appropriate in relation to the scope and objectives of the study.

4.2. The scope and objectives of the study

The main research question governing this study, is how individual managers learn and adapt in the context of change and the perceived contribution of training and development activities to these processes. The study has sought to examine this question by exploring the interrelationships between change, learning, training, self and career development using the individual as the unit of analysis. For the purpose of this thesis the term '*interrelationships*' is used to describe the multiple relationships between three or more phenomena and their potential correlation, the term '*relationship*' is used to denote the dynamic association between two phenomena and the term '*link*' indicates the static (chain-like) association between two or more phenomena.

The current study seeks to move beyond dual links presented in the existing literature to explore the interconnections between three or more phenomena. The study of interrelationships does not seek to simplify complexity nor to describe some systems by holding some of their sub-systems constant, in order to study other sub-systems. The interrelationships between phenomena is a way of representing the complex patterns which arise from the interaction between systems and their sub-systems, and the interaction between sub-systems and their core components. Therefore, the study of interrelationships seeks to explore the continuously emerging interconnections which exhibit non-linear dynamics.

The study of interrelationships is concerned with the way individual and organisational factors interact and how the product of this interaction creates conditions which shape the individuals' perception of the association between phenomena. Inevitably, the nature of the interaction between individual and organisational factors is likely to produce a different kind of interrelationship. Different kinds of relationships and interrelationships (i.e. their nature) may be distinguished in relation to their strength. The *strength* of a relationship describes the intensity or potency of the interaction between sub-systems. Seen from the individual's perspective strength shows the significance attached to a particular relationship and the way individuals may potentially act upon the perceived association between phenomena.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the dual and triangular interrelationships between the main phenomena and to draw a map of the complex and multifaceted interactions between them in different contexts and in relation to organisational changes. The scope of the research

is reflected in the specific aims and objectives of the study. As set out in Chapter 1 this study pursued the fulfilment of the following specific objectives:

1. to explore how managers perceive organisational processes and their interrelationships in the context of change.
2. to examine the impact of the organisational context on the nature and strength of interrelationships between processes.
3. to track, review and analyse the conditions which facilitate or inhibit the interrelationships between processes, and
4. to draw a map of the interaction and integration of human and organisational systems in the context of change.

Instead of hypothesising about the nature of relationships this study takes on a more challenging task to question if and why particular relationships exist, how they are formed and what are the conditions which facilitate or inhibit them. These questions highlight some of the issues which have contributed to the methodological decisions which guided the design of the research and the development of the research strategy.

4.3. The explication of the research design

The nature of the research question, the type of data necessary for generating answers to the main research objectives, and the wider practical considerations of feasibility, time and resources have been the main issues which influenced the design of the research. The research design incorporates the researcher's philosophy about conducting research as well. The body of literature on research design (Davis, 1971; Daft, 1983; Morgan, 1983; Doyal & Harris, 1986; Hakim, 1987; Bryman 1988; Allan & Skinner, 1991; Easterby-Smith et al., 1991; Czarniawska, 1992; Sayer, 1992; etc.) provides two main traditions. On the one hand, phenomenology and on the other hand positivism. Phenomenology promotes the view that the world and reality are socially constructed and given meaning by people (Easterby-Smith et al. 1991:24). Emphasis is placed on understanding and explaining why people have different experiences and how they respond to them. Positivism on the other hand, takes a different perspective. It suggests that reality is not affected by people i.e. it is external to people. As such, knowledge is only of significance if it is based on observations of this external reality.

The nature of this current study is what Evered & Lewis (1981, cited in Bryman, 1988:3) describe as "inquiry from the insight". This is otherwise termed as 'qualitative' research (Van Maanen, 1979, 1983; Mintzberg, 1979; Morgan & Smircich, 1980; Taylor & Bogdan, 1984; Walker, 1985; Marshall & Rossman, 1989; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, Patton, 1990; Tesch, 1990, Gummesson, 1991; etc.), because the research question aims to answer the 'why' and 'how' of social phenomena and not just the 'what'. These characteristics fall in the phenomenological tradition, which suggests that the researcher enters the field of study with an open mind to explore, interpret and understand social phenomena as these are described and explained by the social actors. This approach is in accordance with the overall purpose and rationale of this piece of research. It allows the necessary flexibility to develop themes from the data collected about the nature of managerial learning during periods of change, and to establish the perceived contribution of training.

The main processes incorporated in the study are conceptualised as individual phenomena which are socially constructed and are given significance and meaning as social actors negotiate their conflicting priorities and interests. Individuals' perceptions of the interrelationships between phenomena are embedded in the social context in which individuals interact as social actors. The perceptions of individuals regarding the relationships between phenomena, are shaped by the interaction of personal, organisational and societal factors. Therefore, individuals' perceptions of the interrelationship between training, learning and change is embedded in the context of their employing organisation and the wider social norms in Britain. Robinson (1995:186) makes the following point:

"Organisations parallel and reflect our changes as a society. They mirror our culture, our assumptions about the workings of things both material and meta-physical, and our models of economic and social exchange, and they embody the codes of behaviour,...to which society subscribes...an understanding of the ways in which our society is changing will instruct managers and practitioners alike as to the future challenges and points of friction they can anticipate".

Finally, the phenomenological tradition is most appropriate in this study, because of "its ability to look at change processes over time, to understand people's meanings, to adjust to new issues and ideas as they emerge and to contribute to the evolution of new theories" (Easterby-Smith et al., 1991:32). These considerations have guided the development of the research design and the overall research strategy. Key decisions at this stage of the research

were the choice of the organisations and sector and the criteria for composing the managerial sample.

4.3.1. Selection of industry and organisations and gaining access

A critical decision at this stage of the research was the choice of the most suitable organisations and the sector to concentrate on. As pointed out in the preceding paragraphs individuals' perceptions of the interrelationships between phenomena would be affected by several contextual factors within their employing organisations and the broader context of the society. A related issue here was the characteristics of the industry and the extent to which it would be appropriate to concentrate on one industry or adopt a cross-sector approach. Industry-specific characteristics could well influence how organisations manage the changes in their environment and the impact of their response to the management of their human resources. Moreover, studies of organisational change processes have indicated that the size of organisations affects the ease with which changes are introduced and managed (Pettigrew, 1985d). For example, large organisations tend to be more difficult to manage and are likely to be more difficult to change. Based on these considerations a set of criteria were developed to guide the selection of the industry and the organisations. The organisations and the industry would be: 1) undergoing a process of reconstruction, 2) fast responsiveness to change would be important, 3) there would be a high need for learning, and 4) there would be a positive culture of educating staff.

The sector which satisfied all these criteria was the banking/financial services sector. Banks have been undergoing numerous changes over the last few years. The way they operate, as well as, the nature of business they are involved in demands fast response to change. For these organisations the ability to learn quickly the new trends in the market is very important because competition is severe. Moreover, banks are known to be operating in an unstable environment due to the economic, political and social factors that constitute and surround them. Furthermore, banks have a historically structured training system; a systematised approach, usually specific in content, which aims primarily to fulfil organisational objectives. A detailed discussion of the main characteristics and most significant changes in the sector (historically and over the last fifteen years specifically) is presented in Chapter 6.

The size of the organisation was the main criterion which influenced the choice of banks which were approached. The ease of accessibility was the other factor which determined which banks formed the organisational sample. The first five Banks (Barclays Bank, National Westminster Bank, Midland Bank, Lloyds Bank and T.S.B. Bank) as indicated from the Financial Times Market Valuation (1990 of the top 1000 largest UK companies) were approached. The initial contact with organisations was made in the last part of September 1991. It is worth noting at this stage, that during the period of negotiating access to these organisations the economic climate in the UK was entering a period of turbulence and upheaval (recession). This strengthened the timeliness of the research, but made the process of negotiating access more difficult. After a period of discussions two banks agreed to go ahead with the research while the other two banks despite being interested in the study, felt that the timing was not in their favour as they were about to introduce a number of changes. The secrecy regarding the changes these organisations were introducing provided valuable indications about the culture of the sector and confirmed the relevance of the criteria in selecting this industry. The banks which initially refused access were kept on file and were re-approached at a later stage and eventually one of them decided to join the study. With three organisations on board the next stage was to decide upon the composition of the managerial sample.

4.3.2. Managerial sampling procedure

The focus of the research was the individual manager. Particular attention was placed on the selection of the managerial sample in order to ensure that the data collected would provide a representative picture of individuals' perspective across each bank. Although, the qualitative nature of the research called for a relatively small sample, the concern was to ensure breadth in the composition of the sample so that results from the study could form indicators for generalisation. For this reason a set of criteria guided the composition of the sample. Managers were selected randomly across different regions, based on a broad spread of age, seniority, background, specialisation and gender. Managers classified by the organisations as elite (fast-track or high-fliers) were incorporated in the sample on the basis that they are more likely to receive different educational opportunities. These managers were to be compared with non-elite managers in order to enhance comparative data on the phenomena under study. A total of 26 managers from each participating organisation and across a spread of regions (six to eight different regions) in the UK were randomly selected. This number was

appropriate given the need to balance time and availability of participants in the study and practical issues of feasibility and resources to complete the research.

The choice of organisations and industry and the decisions on the managerial sample were influenced by additional principles of research design which supported the qualitative perspective taken in this study and would ensure that the research objectives, research methods and overall research structure were "scientifically sequential" (Clark & Causer, 1991:165). A review of the literature on methodological decisions (Patton, 1980; Van Maanen et al, 1982; Morgan, 1983; Van Maanen, 1985; Kirk & Miller, 1986; Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Allan & Skinner, 1991; Gummesson, 1991; Gleshne & Peshkin, 1992) raised awareness of the need to clarify the level of involvement of the researcher, the choice of case-studies, the historical and longitudinal dimension of the research and the balance between theory and data.

4.3.3. Involvement of the researcher

The decision to be actively involved in the research process was necessitated by the in-depth understanding sought in the study. This approach would enable the researcher to provide a more accurate and reliable interpretation of individuals' perceptions of the interrelationships between phenomena. At the same time, this approach presented several challenges for the researcher. This choice challenged the researcher to make a case about her epistemological and ontological orientations and how these were consciously or unconsciously introduced in the research process (section 4.5. discusses more extensively this issue). Moreover, the choice to be actively involved in the research introduced issues of personal subjectivity of the researcher, and the ability to overcome the impressions that individuals were likely to manage during the discussion. Furthermore, it was imperative that on entering a particular community/social system the researcher would be familiar with the social, political and cultural agenda of the specific industry.

The concepts of "critical subjectivity" and "co-operative inquiry" (Reason, 1988) were particularly useful in addressing these issues. The former enabled the researcher to challenge her perceptions of reality throughout the research process, whereas the latter facilitated a more in-depth understanding of the different meaning attached by different actors to the same phenomena. For example, in the early stages of the research the interrelationship between training, learning and change was perceived by the researcher to be linked in a sequential

manner. As the project progressed the researcher recognised the complexity of the dynamic interaction between phenomena and the contingent nature of their interrelationship. The views expressed by individuals participating in this study provided additional dimensions which were not previously recognised.

4.3.4. The choice of case-studies

The nature of the researcher's involvement raises awareness of the need to develop a suitable approach which is relevant and appropriate for the nature and density of the sample. The objective here, was to ensure that the social complexity underlying individuals' perceptions of the interrelationships between phenomena was preserved and maintained. As pointed out earlier in section 4.3.1., this approach called for serious attention to the context in which social complexity is embedded. The use of case-studies offered the best medium in fulfilling this objective. Case-studies provide the opportunity to study phenomena in their real-life context and to understand the boundaries between phenomena and their context (Yin, 1981). In this study each bank was approached as a separate case and the aim was to understand how and why individuals perceive the interconnection between phenomena in particular ways and what are the conditions which support or hinder these interrelationships in their specific context. This line of thought is supported by the propositions offered from both advocates of and commentators on the use of the case-study for similar purposes (Miles, 1964, 1979; Alloway, 1977; Hagg & Hedlung, 1978; Kennedy, 1979; Patton, 1980; Kemmis, 1983; Hakim, 1987; Yin, 1981, 1993, 1994; Stake, 1981; 1995). For example, in relation to the phenomenon of change, case study research would provide the necessary knowledge of the organisation and the actors studied and would help create the language and concepts appropriate to the specific context (Kjellen & Soderman, 1980 cited in Gummesson, 1991; Pettigrew, 1985a). The case-study approach would facilitate an informed understanding of the complexity of the particular organisational and wider societal context from which individual managers develop their views and derive meaning for their actions.

The decision to use a case-study approach was consciously made on the basis of its merits and de-merits. The current study presents individual managers' perceptions drawing from three organisations. The relatively small sample of organisations could well be criticised for the difficulty of generalisability of results, which is a strong argument against the use of case-studies (Miles, 1979; Taylor & Bodgan, 1984; Kirk & Miller, 1986; Gummesson, 1991). The

researcher felt that even though generalisability of results would be important, as a means of ascertaining the validity and reliability of results, this was not the main priority in this study. The nature of the research placed more emphasis on the particular features of the phenomena under examination in their context and less on generating an all encompassing model for describing them. Therefore, by virtue of the fact that the study is a qualitative inquiry this renders it more likely to provide indicators for generalisation and not sweeping generalisations. The researcher found support for this position towards generalisation in the propositions offered by several commentators (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1978; Patton, 1980, 1990; Argyris et al., 1985; Gummesson, 1991; etc.) who state that generalisation should not really be the issue in conducting social research.

The decision to use multiple case-studies in this research intended to address the potential criticism of generalisability and representativeness. Multiple case-studies provide the opportunity to achieve replication of findings from which to draw comparisons (Hakim, 1987; Yin, 1993, 1994). Moreover, multiple case-studies offer the benefits of diversity and strengthen the distinctive, as well as, common features of the organisations under study (Platt, 1988). The choice of concentrating on a limited number of case-studies is not without its methodological pitfalls. However, the decision to concentrate on a small number of case-studies provided the necessary depth and richness appropriate to explore the interrelationships between the chosen phenomena both historically and over a period of time. Moreover, the use of multiple-cases is appropriate for the inductive approach sought to theorise. Both issues were deemed to be necessary for the soundness of the research design and both were addressed as separate yet complementary design principles.

4.3.5. Historical and longitudinal research

Any form of investigation of a particular phenomenon needs to be examined in its wider historical context and where possible followed through over a period of time. Both the historical and processual elements are aspects to be found in case-study design. These features are particularly relevant in studies of change (Smith & Steadman, 1981; Pettigrew, 1985a, 1985b, 1990; Hakim, 1987; Gummesson, 1991) as they enable a social system to be explored as an entire blend of past, present and future elements. Moreover, the longitudinal perspective i.e. the fact that the investigation takes a long-term view of events and not just a snap-shot, addresses concerns of reliability and validity in research. Both the historical analysis and the

longitudinal perspective were of particular importance to this research as they were considered to be appropriate strategies for addressing the research question.

4.3.5.1. Historical analysis

Historical analysis is considered to be a powerful analytical tool, because it indicates the social, political and economic forces which underpin historical events, which can be used both to interpret and to understand present circumstances and potentially predict future events (Arbnor & Anderson, 1977:85, cited in Gummesson, 1991). The historical analysis in this study aimed to gather background information regarding the idiosyncratic nature of the retail banking sector. The review of the main developments in the sector over the last fifteen years provided an understanding of the social context and its actors and highlighted the most significant economic, political, social and cultural factors which have influenced events at different points in time (these issues will be discussed in Chapter 6). The historical overview of organisations and the sector enhanced the interpretation of the organisational culture (which is also based on historical elements, and defined as an active, living system of meanings which responds to the challenges of "internal integration" and "external adaptation" (Schein, 1991; Martin, 1993; Meek, 1988; Sackmann, 1992; Morgan, 1986) and its sub-cultures and enlist a fresh account of the underlying behaviours or sediments in the particular organisation and industry-specific context.

A historical analysis of each bank provided useful background information about the development of the organisation, the main milestones and significant changes during different periods and the influence of past practices on the philosophy and ethos of the bank to the present day. Kjellen & Soderman (1980, cited in Gummesson, 1991), argue that organisations can be better understood by analysing the historical processes that led to the present conditions and that this analysis can help provide clearer patterns of possible recurring events. Historical analysis in this study was useful for gaining an in-depth understanding of the conditions which influence the way organisations in the chosen industry respond to change. It enabled the researcher to become more sensitive to the feelings of long serving managers in the organisations studied. Moreover, the historical analysis enabled the researcher to use background information, embedded in the long and short history of the organisation and the individual, and to track possible developments (Smith & Steadman, 1981:171). This account offered a platform for investigating the relationships of the various phenomena in the study.

The longitudinal approach as a time series of events within the organisational context examined, was also intended to enhance the understanding of the interrelationships between phenomena over a period of time.

4.3.5.2. Longitudinal research

A challenge in any study concerned with change, is the ability to identify the links between the content, context and processes of change over time. The study of change needs to be embedded in the context of interconnected levels of analysis, so that the process of changing can be uncovered, instead of narrow aspects of it (Pettigrew, 1985c, 1990:269). This is feasible through longitudinal comparative case-study research designs (Pettigrew, 1990:271). This approach allows a better understanding and interpretation of the process of change by revealing the multiple sources and causes of change and their connection. This is particularly relevant to the present study, because the dynamic interaction between phenomena is more likely to be revealed over time. Designing therefore the data collection on a longitudinal basis, enabled the researcher to explore the relationships between the chosen phenomena in relation to the past, the present and the emerging future.

Timing was particularly important in this instance and a major dilemma was when to start and finish the research. This project was well timed in that it was initiated when changes were already introduced and additional changes awaited both individual organisations and the industry at large. Beyond these concerns one of the most fundamental considerations was a clarification of how was change to be interpreted in the context of time (Plewis, 1985). The nature of the research question guided the decision to concentrate on organisational changes introduced in response to external pressures such as competition. This choice emphasises the process of change as experienced by individual managers and aims to unveil the underlying logic behind the events and the basis of the social construction of time (Morgan, 1986; Pettigrew, 1990). The longitudinal aspect of the research design is reflected in the approach adopted for collecting the data and the length of time the researcher spend in the field which are discussed in more detail latter in this chapter. The relationship of data and theory was also approached in the same vein.

4.3.6. Theory and data

Another vital component of the research design concerned the nature of data to be collected and the way it would be interpreted, in order to provide answers to the research question. On the basis of the preceding line of thought, generating a theory grounded in the data collected from the research was another equally fundamental design principle (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This choice was made on the basis of the wider philosophical stance adopted by the researcher. A grounded approach was appropriate for the exploratory nature of the research examining the interrelationships between phenomena. The research intends to demonstrate analytically and meaningfully the relationships between phenomena over time and in relation to the characteristics of the context. This approach would inform the transition from a "substantive" to "formal theory" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967:79-99). Formal theory would offer the fresh insight sought concerning the nature of the interrelationships between phenomena and could potentially uncover additional issues which have previously not been considered or were taken for granted. The interest in generating formal theory grounded in the data was consistent with the principles of the research design discussed so far and guided the development of the research strategy (i.e. the approach employed for collecting, analysing and interpreting the data).

The main design principles discussed in the preceding sections, have informed the way the research was structured and shaped the research strategy. The research principles have resulted in a staged data collection process which consisted of five main phases (discussed in detail in the next chapter) and which commenced in the second half of 1991 and was completed in the late part of 1994.

4.4. Developing the research strategy

The research strategy comprised of the approach and methods of collecting the data and other considerations which would enhance the validity and reliability of the findings and were appropriate for the orientation of the investigation (Firestone, 1987). The nature of the research question necessitated the use of multiple research methods (Clark & Causer, 1991:171). This section discusses the main considerations which guided the approach adopted in this study for collecting the data.

4.4.1. The approach to data collection

A broad classification of research methods distinguishes two approaches to data collection; desk and field research methods (Wilmshurst, 1987; Kotler, 1988; Baker, 1991). The former uses data already available (secondary data) whereas the latter incorporates processes of collecting data (primary data) from the field for a specific purpose. Both approaches were adopted in this study at different stages of the data collection process. The stages of data collection will be discussed extensively in the next chapter, however, this section will focus on the role these approaches played in the structuring of the research process and the development of the research strategy.

4.4.1.1. Desk research

As part of the review of relevant literature on the key concepts in this study an extensive review of secondary sources enabled the researcher to become familiar with existing theoretical concepts and other information about the main phenomena. This process enhanced understanding and contributed to the development of thought in the chosen field of study by clarifying the precise focus of this investigation. The review of the existing literature particularly regarding the perceived interrelationships between phenomena, indicated more clearly the gaps in the present body of knowledge and showed the contribution the study was intending to make. Another dimension of the desk research was the historical analysis of the retail banking sector which was a means of familiarisation with the industry and the participating organisations. This process involved the retrieval of historical and more current information about the industry and the organisations. Sources of information included, published reports by Governmental bodies (e.g. the Department of Employment), Trade associations (e.g. the Chartered Institute of Bankers (CIB), the Business Information Service (BIS) and organisational sources (e.g. company records and annual reports). This process prepared the ground for the development of the field work. The desk research continued throughout the investigation and along side the field research.

4.4.1.2. Field research

The collection of primary data enabled the researcher to address the research question and fulfil the objectives of the investigation. The methods used in this study are: interviews, observation and questionnaires. The choice to adopt any one of these would largely be based on its suitability in providing an accurate understanding of the phenomena examined. The nature of the research question and the aims and objectives in this study, suggested that the

use of a combination of primary data collection methods would be more appropriate. As Van Maanen (1983:9) argues, qualitative techniques seek to "describe, decode, translate and other wise come to terms with the meaning not the frequency of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world". With this in mind the field research was designed using a combination of qualitative techniques which provided additional information and helped identify discrepancies in the data.

The main strand of the field research strategy was the qualitative interview (semi-structured), while observations, questionnaires and the critical incident technique were supplementary data collection methods employed. The qualitative interview was chosen as the main data collection method because of its appropriateness for the in-depth understanding sought in managers' interpretations of phenomena and their interconnections. The quality and credibility of the interview was enhanced, by conducting the interview face to face. This approach sensitised the researcher to observe verbal and non-verbal signals such as gestures and facial expressions which signified the meaning attached by individuals. Questionnaires were also incorporated in the data collection process, as a means of providing supplementary information and following through developments in managers' perceptions of individual phenomena and their interrelationships over time. Each of these techniques will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter. The discussion will first concentrate on the interview as the main method of data collection and the main issues which prepared the ground before entering the field. Before embarking on the data collection attention was given to key issues about the process of conducting the interviews and addressing potential problems of bias, confidentiality and trust etc. The section which follows will discuss briefly the most significant considerations which formed the framework for collecting the data.

4.4.2. The preparation for the data collection

The literature on qualitative techniques supports the use of interviews as the main vehicle for data collection (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983; Whyte, 1984; Burgess, 1984; Hakim, 1987; Jones, 1985; Jones, 1991; Denzin 1988, 1989; Shaffir & Stebbins, 1991; Gummesson, 1991; Gleshne & Peshkin, 1992). According to Burgess (1982:107) the interview is "the opportunity for the researcher to probe deeply to uncover new clues, open up new dimensions of a problem and to secure vivid, accurate inclusive accounts that are based on personal experience". The appropriateness of interviews as the main data collection method in this

study was judged on the basis that the aim of the interview was to develop an understanding of the respondents' 'world' by clarifying the constructs that interviewees use as a basis for their opinions and beliefs about a particular matter or situation (Easterby-Smith et al., 1991:74). These factors are in accordance with the nature of the research question and the overall research design.

However, the use of interviews is not without its critics. As a method of data collection interviews are criticised for the involvement they allow the researcher to have in the research process and in particular with the data collection (Whyte, 1982; Finch, 1984; McLaren, 1991; Kleinman, 1991; Jones 1991). Oakley (1986:231) goes as far as saying that: "interviewing is like a marriage: everybody knows what it is, an awful lot of people do it, and yet behind each closed door there is a world of secrets". This quote shows the intimacy of the interviewing process especially if it is conducted by the researcher on a one-to-one basis. This approach challenges, as well as strengthens the validity of the data obtained. It challenges validity by pointing to the researcher's close involvement as a source of bias. Moreover, the relatively small numbers interviewed makes this method open to criticism regarding the generalisability of the data provided, even when care is taken to choose a representative sample. On the other hand, it strengthens the validity of the data by indicating the significant depth of the data collected. By focusing on small numbers the researcher was able to examine the factors which underpin managers' perceptions of the interrelationships between phenomena, which otherwise would not have been possible.

In summary, the choice to adopt interviews as the main research technique was consciously made acknowledging the strengths and weaknesses it presents. Moreover, great care was taken when the interview questions were developed to ensure that length and structure of the questions were balanced against the focus of the research. Furthermore, all questions were piloted before finalising the structure of each interview. Each of these considerations are discussed briefly next.

4.4.2.1. Developing the interview questions

The significance of asking the right questions cannot be overemphasised. The sequencing and wording of questions can significantly affect the quality of the data collected. According to Wilmshurst (1987:144) there are three main types of questions. Dichotomous, multiple choice

and open-ended. The first two types of questions adopt a positivist perspective by restricting respondents to a set of predetermined and unexplored answers. Open-ended questions on the other hand, fall towards the phenomenological tradition which encourage the respondent to be more analytical, thus provide a more complete answer with shades of meaning. Open-ended questions reduce the possibility of bias and may overcome the reluctance of some respondents to answer direct questions. However, they pose a challenge in that they tend to take longer to complete and may yield answers which are perhaps irrelevant or incoherent. The nature of the research objectives of this study meant that open-ended questions were more appropriate. In formulating the precise questions it was important that they were short, easily understood and did not 'lead' the respondent and that consideration was given to the length (i.e. how long would the interview last) and the structure (i.e. degree of flexibility) of the interview.

The level of structure of the interview raised two main considerations. Firstly, the need for flow and scientific sequence of both the interview itself and the questions, and secondly the degree of freedom of the researcher to move between issues in a flexible way. The present body of literature suggests three types of interviews; namely "structured", "semi-structured" and "unstructured" interviews (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983; Manning, 1987; Gubrium & Silverman, 1989; Easterby-Smith et al, 1991; Jones, 1991; Atkinson, 1992; Ellis & Flaherty, 1992; Thomas, 1993; Hobbs & May, 1993). The first promotes the view that the researcher has a set of specific questions which she wants to ask and hence is guided by the structure of the interview. The opposite approach adopted in an "unstructured" interview where the interviewer has a broad idea of the ground to be covered, but the discussion is guided by issues arising from the conversation rather than from a set of specific questions. "Semi-structured" interviews fall between the two, with some degree of structure yet with more flexibility to move to different directions as generated by the discussion during the interview. The latter approach reflected the nature of the research design and structure and was deemed to be the most appropriate way of conducting the interviews.

The choice to develop semi-structured interview questions generated additional issues in relation to probing and bias. Interview bias could arise from the way the researcher framed the question, as well as, from the way the interviewee interpreted the question. This problem may be exacerbated when probing may be necessary either to clarify the question or the answer. Therefore, in order to avoid leading the interviewee in the direction the researcher felt was

appropriate or misinterpreting interviewees' answers, the researcher reiterated where appropriate and necessary what she understood interviewees as saying and sought to establish whether her interpretation was in accordance with the response of the interviewee. Another important measure in preparation for the data collection was the piloting of the interview questions.

4.4.2.2. Piloting the questions

In order to ensure that the questions (for both the interviews and the questionnaires) were well designed, the researcher put them to the test. The piloting of questions was a necessary stage in the preparation for the data collection, because it enabled the researcher to try things out in a safer environment tackling a number of issues, such as the clarity and precision of the interview questions. Moreover, problems which prior to the piloting had not been identified (such as the actual length of the interview) were identified and improved. In order to ensure that the comments provided from the piloting of the interview questions reflected the views of actual interviewees, volunteer bank managers were used. These managers were selected on the basis that they fulfilled the criteria employed in the selection of the managerial sample to participate in the study, however they were not subjects for the data collection. The researcher had no previous contact with these managers prior to the pilot interview, which reflected more accurately the actual interviewing process. Another purpose of the pilots was the opportunity of the researcher to practise her interviewing skills and gain confidence in her ability to conduct the interview successfully and to work out how information might best be recorded. The researcher explored the possibility of using a tape recorder, being aware of the possible effect this may have on interviewees' attitudes towards the study. Despite the fact that this approach did not present any problems in terms of the way managers have reacted to its presence during the interview, the transcription process proved to be very time consuming. As a result, the researcher decided to take notes during the interview for each question, which proved to be less time consuming yet equally effective.

4.4.2.3. The social interaction: Confidentiality and trust

The interviewing process can be considered as a social act where interviewer and interviewee interact in the process of exchanging information. Interviewer and interviewee enter this relationship with different expectations and requirements. Interviewees in particular may interpret their participation in the research in different ways and it is therefore, imperative that the researcher (interviewer) is sensitive to the expectations and requirements of participants as

this is likely to affect their willingness to collaborate and their perception of the importance of their contribution (Measor, 1985). Guaranteeing anonymity of organisations and interviewees was vital in this study in ensuring that a constructive relationship between the researcher and the various parties was developed. Building trust between the researcher and the participating managers was a challenge, because the interview often expected managers to be critical about their employing organisation and themselves. Confidentiality became a major issue in the research, because the study looked at comparing competitive organisations at a time when many of these banks were experiencing financial crisis due to the economic and political changes in the UK. With these considerations in mind the researcher aimed to maintain managers' motivation and commitment throughout the study by keeping them informed regularly, respecting their views and treating any information they disclosed as strictly confidential.

4.4.3. Supplementary methods of data collection

The considerations discussed so far in relation to interviews as the main method of data collection, reflect the principles of the supplementary data collection methods adopted in this study. As well as interviews this study employed where appropriate and necessary some aspects of observation, questionnaires and critical incident technique to complement and supplement existing research data. Each of these is discussed briefly next.

4.4.3.1. Observation

Observation is usually adopted as a device for understanding how individuals spend their time, how they allocate their resources and in general how they operate in their work environment. In this study observation was used as a tool for sensitising the researcher to both verbal and non-verbal signals, which were important clues to individuals' feelings, beliefs, values and perceptions. Verbal and non-verbal signals were powerful indicators of the meaning individuals attach to the main phenomena and their interrelationships. The observation technique enabled the researcher to read deeper into individuals' behaviour, in order to understand not only how they act and interact within the social system, but also why they respond in their particular ways. At the organisational level observation enabled the researcher to gain a better appreciation of the organisational culture by noting how things were done, how 'outsiders' were treated, how offices were decorated to indicate status etc. Observation was therefore, a means of strengthening the understanding of the way social

actors derive meaning and the impact of contextual characteristics on their perceptions, values and emotions.

4.4.3.2. Questionnaire

Questionnaires are usually used for large scale investigations. They are useful means for obtaining answers to the 'what' and sometimes the 'how' but not the 'why'. They overcome the problem of time as they are comparatively easier to administer. Questionnaire design however, is not simple (Youngman, 1984). Two short questionnaires were administered in the research. The first one was used in conjunction with the first interview with individual managers. In this instance the questionnaire was sent to participating managers prior to the interview, and managers asked to complete it before the meeting. This questionnaire was integrated into the discussion during the interview and aspects of it were explored in more depth, which enabled the researcher to save time and obtain additional information. The second questionnaire was administered as part of the final phase of data collection. This questionnaire intended to reinforce the longitudinal nature of the research and to enable participants to reflect on their practices. Both questionnaires aimed to complement the data collected from the interview and were both short in length and designed to be simple in nature using open-ended questions. The information obtained from both questionnaires was used as a mechanism for enhancing the validity and reliability of the data collected from the interviews.

4.4.3.3. Critical Incident technique

According to Flanagan (1957, cited in Easterby-Smith et al, 1991) the critical incident technique can help explain interviewees' motives and actions in relation to an instance they describe which they perceive as being significant (i.e. critical). The critical incident technique was employed during the interviewing process in order to establish how a specific incident perceived by interviewees to be critical, may have influenced their views about phenomena and their interrelationships. One example is when managers were asked to describe an incident from their experience which they would consider as an ideal learning experience. They would then be asked to provide an explanation as to why this incident was so special in comparison to other experiences they had had in the past. This technique enabled the researcher to form an understanding of the factors individuals value, the way individual managers learn from different opportunities and the way they use these experiences to develop themselves and to respond to organisational changes. In some instances the critical incident technique expects interviewees to draw on past experience often historically based. In this

study the technique was used as a means for teasing out the significance of additional elements and not a way of examining individual managers' ability to recollect a specific incident in their past experience.

The discussion so far, has indicated the way in which the research questions have been generated and how various methodological considerations shaped the research strategy and structure. The issues examined so far, indirectly show some of the ontological and epistemological considerations faced by the researcher in this study. In other words, it spells out the pre-suppositions of the researcher prior to and during these stages of the research. Awareness of these issues early in the research process, enabled the researcher to attempt to address them in the subsequent stages of the research process.

4.5. Epistemological and ontological issues

This section exposes the underlying ontological and epistemological issues and discusses them in the light of a personal critique of the choices made. The rationale of this research is no different from other investigations in that it seeks to provide an account of what is termed as 'reality'. The rationale of the study is to explore the perceived interrelationships between phenomena. The discussion of the current literature in Chapters 2 and 3 has illustrated that previous attempts to deal with the complexity of interrelationships between phenomena have naively pre-supposed that organisational and individual reality may be identical. Moreover, relationships between phenomena have tended to be concretised and taken for granted. Existing theories about the links between phenomena fall under the ontological realism perspective which mistakes abstractions for concrete reality (Whitehead, 1949) and they are dominated by representationalism as the means for indicating reality, which is based on the epistemological objectivism perspective.

The design principles and the considerations which formed the research strategy, discussed in the previous sections, show that this study has chosen a different approach to examine the interrelationships between the chosen phenomena. The exploratory approach which this study has chosen to follow, promotes the view that phenomena need to be looked at relatively. In other words, perceptions of the interrelationships between phenomena represent partial reality, because they represent the interpretation that individuals as social actors claim to be true.

Therefore, the present study did not seek to concretise relationships between phenomena, but has sought to understand how interrelationships emerge from the interaction of different factors (individual and organisational) in different contexts. The complexity and the dynamic interaction between phenomena cannot afford a narrow positivist analysis nor a realist, reductionist perspective. The complexity of the interrelationships between phenomena, is perhaps more suitably addressed by an approach which captures the emergent, situational and holistic features of individual phenomena in their context and is sensitive to the ambiguities and perplexities generated by the multiplicity of factors which shape their interaction.

Undoubtedly, whilst one is actively involved in trying to make sense of the multiplicity of issues surrounding the study of interrelationships it is very difficult to remain impartial at all times. The need for frequent intervals of distancing oneself from the research process is of particular importance. This approach provided the researcher the space to reflect upon the task and the approach adopted to make sense of the interrelationships between phenomena as perceived by individual managers. The dependency of the researcher on the participants of the study for ensuring that all the 'laws' of validity and reliability were accurately applied, remains a significant challenge in this study. Even though, precautions may be taken, factors beyond ones' immediate control can pose major ontological and epistemological challenges on the researcher's practice. The major ontological challenge of this research is the way the researcher came to know the world of participants. The major epistemological question attached to this, is how the researcher interpreted individual's perceptions of the interrelationships between phenomena. Both issues call for a research approach which recognises the relative and multifaceted nature of truth regarding the interrelationships between phenomena. Such research approach would need to locate the differential perceptions of social actors in the wider intra-organisational and socio-economic context in which they operate and in relation to past, present and future time. Interrelationships between phenomena are continuously in the process of becoming. They emerge, take shape and meaning as actors and systems interact.

4.6. Summary

This chapter discussed the structure of the research by explicating the design principles and the various issues which contributed to the development of the research strategy. The nature

of the research question, the type of data necessary for generating answers to the research objectives and the wider practical considerations of feasibility, time and resources have contributed to the methodological choices made. Having considered the main methodological options and their corresponding strengths and weaknesses, a phenomenological approach has been adopted with emphasis on contextualism, interpretation and a relativist epistemological and ontological stance. This approach was deemed to be appropriate for the purpose and scope of the present study and was consciously chosen acknowledging both the opportunities it creates and the challenges it poses. The choice of methodological design of the research affected subsequent stages of the data collection process and the approach adopted for the analysis and interpretation of the findings. These issues are discussed in the next chapter.

Exploring Interrelationships: The Process of Data Collection, Analysis and Interpretation

5.1. Introduction

The various issues which influenced the methodological design of the research, discussed in the previous chapter, have been important preparatory stages for the actual data collection and its subsequent analysis and interpretation. This chapter describes and analyses the main phases of the data collection process and explains the approach for arriving at the findings. The main principles guiding the data analysis and its main phases are discussed and the approach to data interpretation is explained. The resulting model representing the interrelationships emerging from the study is also considered, to show the development of thought at this stage of the research process.

5.2. The phases of data collection

Despite the focus in this study on the individual manager as the unit of analysis, it was imperative to compare the main phenomena and their perceived interconnection both from the perspective of the organisation ('provider') and the individual manager ('recipient'). A comparison of their perspectives would be expected to highlight potential differences and similarities in perceptions and constructions of reality over time and in relation to organisational changes. The longitudinal dimension of the study (discussed in the previous chapter) meant there was a need to stage the data collection in order to be able to track down

potential changes in managers' perceptions of the interconnections between phenomena. These considerations shaped the procedure for collecting the data, which unfolded in five main phases and took approximately three years (August, 1991 - October, 1994) to complete. Each of the five phases of data collection is discussed in the sections which follow.

5.2.1. Phase 1: A historical analysis of the industry and the organisations

The familiarisation with the sector was the first phase of the data collection. A review of mainly secondary sources, introduced the researcher to the most significant milestones in the history of the sector in the UK since its formation, which provided an understanding of the main characteristics of banks and the banking system in the UK. A more in-depth review of the main developments in the sector during the last fifteen years shed light into the major internal and external changes (their causes and consequences) that banks have experienced. This review provided an insight into the way banks are organised and managed as organisational systems, indicated the nature of their HRM practices and offered an initial feel of the culture of organisations in this sector particularly, in relation to education and training. A more detailed analysis of the main lessons learned from this stage of the data collection is provided in Chapter 6.

5.2.2. Phase 2: The organisation's perspective - Interviews with senior HRM managers

The field work began with a review of the background of the participating organisations and the main policies and practices they adopt in relation to the main phenomena and their relationships. Such data was collected from organisational records and archive material and supplemented by a series of two hour interviews with senior HRM figures. A total of six to eight 'providers' were interviewed from each organisation. This sample was selected on the basis of the criteria employed for selecting the managerial sample (discussed in Chapter 4, section 4.3.2.). Given the restrictions of time and availability in relation to the constraints of feasibility and resources the aim was to ensure that the sample of HRM managers interviewed would provide a representative account of the perspective of the organisation as reflected in the HRM policies and practices of the bank. Training providers were selected across different levels of seniority, background and specialisation and across a broad spread of age, years of service with the bank and gender. A set of structured open-ended questions provided information on the philosophy and practices of each organisation regarding HRM practices

and the approach to management training and development. The intention was to establish individually and comparatively across the three banks, the importance attached to these processes in the context of change. The investigation at this level was therefore, expected to provide an overview of what training was done, what methods of training were being used and why (particularly during periods of change), how training effectiveness was defined and measured etc. Moreover, issues on how organisational and individual learning goals and objectives were identified and reconciled were also addressed, as well as, the perceived interconnection between phenomena from the perspective of the organisation. Appendix II provides a copy of the interview questions used during the second phase of the data collection. The data collected from this phase of the field work was expected to provide the necessary information to enable the researcher to explore specific issues comparatively across recipients from the perspective of the individual manager during the third phase of the data collection.

5.2.3. Phase 3: The individual's perspective - Interviews with individual managers

This phase of the data collection aimed to explore individual managers' perceptions of the main phenomena and their interrelationships. A series of one and a half hour interviews were conducted with a total of seventy-eight managers spread across the three organisations. A copy of the interview questions which guided the discussion with individual managers is provided in Appendix III. It was anticipated that a broad outcome of this process would be an understanding of the way different combinations of factors (personal and organisational) are likely to produce different conditions which would influence managers' perceptions of the association between phenomena. Some of the issues which were explored from the organisation's perspective during the interviews with HRM managers, were examined with individual managers as well, to obtain the perspective of the individual on the same matter. In the light of the organisational changes underway during the time of the data collection, it was anticipated that some of these issues needed to be followed through in subsequent discussions with the managers.

5.2.4. Phase 4: Follow-up interviews with individual managers

As part of the longitudinal research design, the fourth phase of the data collection revisited the same sample of managers interviewed during the third phase. The aim of this phase was to follow through the discussion of the main phenomena raised during the first interview (during

phase 3) and to unravel additional issues regarding managers' perceptions of the interconnections between phenomena. The follow-up interviews were an important means of complementing and supplementing the initial interviews and examining possible changes in manager's views on the phenomena in question. It was also an important stage for checking the interpretation of managers' comments from the discussion during the previous phase of data collection. The follow-up interviews were scheduled to take place six to nine months after the initial interview. This time gap was felt to allow managers sufficient space to reflect on the initial meeting and the issues raised and to take action (e.g. pursue the fulfilment of an immediate learning goal they identified). Moreover, this time gap was the most appropriate according to previous evaluation researchers (Scriven, 1967; Kirkpatrick, 1967; Hamblin, 1974; Bramley, 1986) who indicated that earlier attempts (between one to three months) to record possible developments would not be sufficient for such processes (e.g. learning, change, training) to take place.

The interview questions were designed to allow managers to be self-critical of their activities and actions. Appendix IV provides a copy of the interview questions used during this phase of the data collection. Managers were asked to reflect on the discussion during the first interview and in particular to recollect their views about the perceived learning goal(s) they had identified at that time. The intention was not to challenge their ability to recall, but to use this as a point of departure for a more in-depth analysis of managers' perceptions of the relationship between the identified need to learn in relation to the changes that were taking place and the perceived contribution of training provided by the organisation. Moreover, this interview was intended to explore the dilemmas experienced by individuals when pursuing their learning goals amidst the change and uncertainty in their context, particularly in relation to self and career development. The perceived interrelationship between learning, self and career development was further explored in the light of the existing and anticipated future changes and in relation to the future direction of management training and development.

5.2.5. The fifth and final phase of the data collection

The fifth phase of the data collection was a further extension of the longitudinal dimension of the study. It consisted of a short questionnaire which was administered with the same managerial sample used in the third and fourth phase of the data collection. The questionnaire was sent to all managers six to nine months after the second interview which took place

during the fourth phase of data collection. The aim of this questionnaire was to establish whether there have been any significant changes within the three organisations which have affected managers' learning, self and career development. This questionnaire invited managers to provide additional information as they felt necessary on the main phenomena in question. All questions encouraged individuals to provide additional details and explanations on how and why these developments took place and how they were affected. A 60% (47 out of 78) response rate was recorded from the entire managerial sample participating in the third and fourth phase of the data collection. Although, the questionnaire was the final phase of data collection the researcher observed closely further developments within the industry and the participating organisations through the media and other secondary information available from libraries and the organisations themselves. Occasional meetings were held in each organisation to discuss specific issues arising from the research and new initiatives or changes taking place within each organisation, while contact was maintained with participating managers.

The process of collecting the data has sought to gather information which would provide answers to the research question. Data analysis was the process of making sense of and finding meaning from the data collected. The main principles and phases of the analysis and interpretation of the data are discussed in the next section.

5.3. The principles and phases of analysis and interpretation of the data

According to Glesne & Peshkin (1992:127) data analysis is a means of 'finding one's own story'. The analysis of the data incorporates a number of stages for organising and storing both hard and soft data and observations in the light of interpretations made and the shape given to the study (Miles & Huberman, 1984; Strauss, 1987; Denzin, 1989; Tesch 1990). A significant dimension in the process of analysing and interpreting the data is the sensitive balance between openness and flexibility against the need to maintain a methodical and systematic approach for organising and finding out what the data suggests about the phenomena under examination. In the present research, openness and flexibility were important aspects in the analysis and interpretation of the data, in order to explore how the data fits together and how relationships between the phenomena in question can be explained.

At the same time, this process needed to be systematic and methodical in order to ensure that the interpretation and understanding of the phenomena was not subjected to any form of bias. The need to be systematic was paramount, because it ensured that the researcher challenged the impressions she held about the way phenomena are interconnected by searching for evidence which disconfirmed existing pre-suppositions. This process ensured that the analysis of the data provided a valid interpretation of events beyond mere impressions. Guided by these principles the process of analysis and interpretation of the data progressed through four main phases. Each phase of the data analysis was designed to take place after each phase of the data collection. The intention of this approach was to enable the researcher to remain focused on the primary aims and objectives of the study, which helped structuring the data analysis in systematic phases.

5.3.1. Phase 1: The transcription of individual interviews

The fieldwork was structured so that each phase of the data collection would be followed by a phase of initial transcription and analysis. In other words, on completion of all interviews conducted within Bank A, during phase two of the data collection, an initial attempt to make sense of the information provided by each individual interviewee was made. Each individual interview was transcribed separately. After each meeting with a manager, the researcher concentrated initially in producing additional notes on key issues observed during the course of the conversation. The researcher made a conscious effort to recall expressions, the tone of the voice, attitude, and overall appearance of the interviewee, in order to draw a mental picture of that person. The objective here was to create a picture of the unique characteristics of the particular individual in relation to their personality, background, age, gender etc., factors which also guided their selection. The intention was not to put a frame about the individual, but to develop an initial understanding regarding the meaning they attached to the phenomena examined during the interview and the way they projected their understanding of the phenomena and their interrelationships. This process was useful when transcribing the data collected during the interview, because it helped explain why the particular individual may perceive issues in specific ways. The outcome of the transcription process were long scripts on each individual interview, noting responses and highlighting comments made by interviewees in relation to their understanding of the phenomena in question. These scripts were the initial raw material which was subsequently analysed in the second phase of the data analysis.

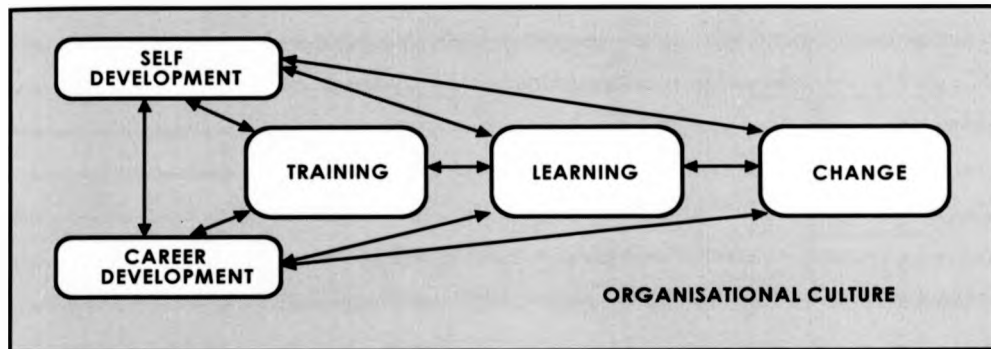


Figure 5.1: The initial research model.

5.3.2. Phase 2: First level analysis of data collected

The raw data from each individual interview was subsequently reviewed and analysed in the light of responses from other individual interviews in the same organisation. For example, once all interviews in Bank A were completed and their transcription took place, the first level of analysis of the raw material available from the transcription commenced. This process involved a content analysis of the data collected from all interviews in each organisation separately. In other words, each question was examined across all responses obtained from the managers interviewed. The purpose of this analysis was to identify possible patterns in managers' responses to the same issue, so that an initial indication about the views expressed in different environments (regions) and contexts (organisations) may be obtained. The outcome of this process were three analytical files for each of the participating organisations. Each file contained a synopsis of the content analysis of the questions raised in the interview. Particular attention during this stage was given to interpreting accurately managers' responses so that they were not contaminated by the way the researcher attempted to make sense of the information. Each individual interview was already given a code (e.g. 1, 2, 3, ...26) which was referred to during the analysis especially when direct quotes were transferred in the text.

Another outcome of the first level analysis of the data was the initial model summarising the main phenomena and indicating the possible interconnections between them (Figure 5.1.). The diagrammatic representation of the phenomena enabled the researcher to reaffirm her appreciation of the complexity of the social phenomena in the study. This process sensitised the researcher even further to the detail of the individuals' responses and enabled her to obtain

an understanding of the diversity of interpretations provided by different individuals in the same context. The richness of the data and the complexity of the explanations individuals provided about the perceived relationships between phenomena offered an entirely new insight to the researcher's appreciation of what might constitute 'reality'. This process raised awareness of the need to embark on an in-depth, yet more reflective approach to the analysis of the data. This formed the second level of analysis of the data collected.

5.3.3. Phase 3: The second level of data analysis

The aim of this phase of the data analysis was to take a step back and to approach the understanding of the data collected from a fresh perspective. This process was less systematic and deductive and more reflexive and inductive, which revealed some of the contradictory themes and patterns in the data. The researcher was guided by the notion of "grounded theory" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Turner, 1983), which according to Jones (1987:25, cited in Easterby-Smith, 1991), "rather than focusing data within logico-deductive derived assumptions and categories, research should be used to generate grounded theory, which "fits" and "works" because it is derived from the concepts and categories used by social actors themselves to interpret and organise their worlds". This principle was vital in the research process, because it reflected the choice of research design and was consistent and compatible with the overall research strategy necessary for the accomplishment of the research objectives. The second level of analysis was initiated some time after the first level of analysis, in order to enable the researcher to re-enter the data analysis with an open mind. The researcher reflected critically on the initial indications emerging from the data in the light of previous research in the field. The initial research model was revisited and the relationships between phenomena were reconsidered and it was decided to adopt a more integrative framework for presenting the dynamic nature of the interrelationships between phenomena. The revised model (Figure 5.2.) enabled the researcher to overcome the linearity in the initial model and to embrace the understanding of the chosen phenomena beyond a cause and effect approach. Moreover, in the process of conceptualising the explanations given by managers regarding their perceptions of the relationships between phenomena, indications which confirmed or disconfirmed these explanations were sought.

The analytical framework developed up to this point contributed to the process of triangulation of the data (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983; Taylor & Bodgan, 1984; Fielding &

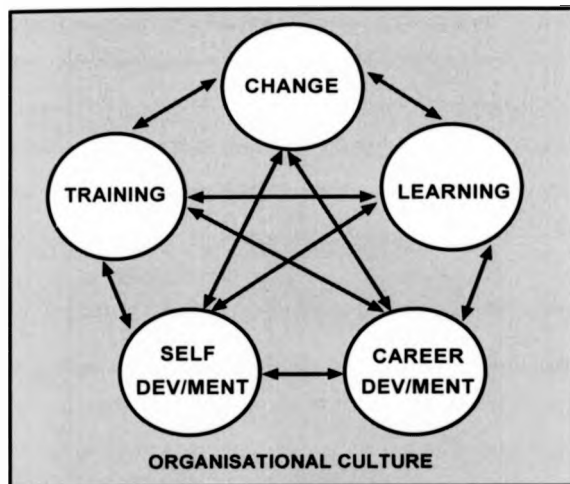


Figure 5.2: A revised research model exploring the dynamic interrelationships between the chosen phenomena.

Fielding, 1986; Shakespear et al., 1993). According to Fielding & Fielding (1986:15), "comparison between instances of a phenomenon is an important procedure in taxonomy, classification, and any work involving the designation, illustration, and verification of categories". The underlying objective behind attempts to link data across a number of sources was to increase confidence in its validity. This process involved a rigorous check for

links between concepts and indicators by using other indicators (Fielding & Fielding, 1986:24). Moreover, this process aimed to identify recurrent combinations of conditions which may affect a single circumstance and through that to identify instances which confirm or disconfirm a phenomenon and its conditions. The nature of differences identified between the types of data enabled the researcher to address social and cultural elements distinct in each case. This process enhanced further the identification of multiple causes to a phenomenon, attributed to the specific context in which these relationships were explored. Specifically, this process involved an extensive dialogue between the researcher, her ideas and the data in order to ensure that emerging indications of evidence were not taken at face value, but were examined rigorously to avoid a subjective interpretation of similarities or differences across the case-studies. The triangulation of the data enabled the researcher to acquire a more critical perspective to the understanding of the phenomena and the complexity of their interrelationships, by recognising the differences between sets of data. From this process the key themes began to emerge.

5.3.4. Phase 4: The comparative analysis of the data across different levels

The comparative analysis was developed at various levels. The first level of comparison was between individual managers in the sample, on the basis of their individual characteristics and the responses they provided. For example, similar or different responses on a specific issue were examined in the light of the individual manager's background, seniority, specialisation,

years of service in the bank, gender etc. Comparisons between managers were extended between fast-track and non-fast-track managers to establish possible causal links or contingent factors which may have influenced their perceptions and attitudes towards training and learning. Further comparisons were drawn between the views expressed by senior HRM managers (representing the perspective of the organisation) and individual managers to establish similarities or differences in the perspective each took. The comparisons at these different levels within each organisation provided a more informed 'contextual' understanding of the nature of phenomena and their interrelationships and highlighted social, political and cultural characteristics unique to each organisation as a distinct social system (Pettigrew, 1985a, 1985b; Svensson, 1985; Johansson et al, 1985). The contextual analysis was further enhanced by an 'intentional analysis' (Ihde, 1977; Deetz, 1992; Sandberg, 1994) of individual managers' responses which ensured that the interpretation of managers' responses was in line with the responses of participants in the study. The contextual analysis of phenomena in this study would not have been complete without investigating the variations in different contexts. The themes arising from each individual case-study were further developed and enriched by examining them comparatively across the three case-studies.

The comparative analysis of the three organisations provided useful indicators of common patterns specific to the retail banking sector and different approaches which show the unique cultural, social and political forces within each bank. The comparative method was used in the study as a way of diagnosing the characteristics of the conditions which were seen to produce specific outcomes and in particular the way they facilitated or inhibited relationships between phenomena. The comparison of the three case-studies was approached as an inductive inquiry in order to ensure that findings were not subjected to different forms of bias, but were grounded in the data collected. This process extended the analysis to a search for a meaningful way of representing that diversity, without contaminating particularities in individual case-studies. The issue was not just interpreting accurately the multiple conditions and determine the various combinations associated with specific outcomes or processes, but also to identify the causal links between variables when the outcome results from several different combinations of conditions (Ragin & Zaret, 1983). The difficulty mainly arises from the fact that it is not easy to "identify the decisive causal combination across a range of causes, especially when the patterns are confounded" (Ragin, 1987:20). Ragin (1987:23-24) points out that "human understanding of causation and of events in general is fundamentally holistic.

Parts are not viewed in isolation but in context of the whole they form. To change one or more elements often changes how the whole is perceived and understood, which, in turn, has an impact on the meaning of each individual part".

This appreciation had fundamental implications to the way change both as a cause and an outcome was interpreted in relation to the other phenomena. In this respect phenomena themselves were seen as the product of the interaction between certain factors/conditions. In practical terms this was pursued by identifying comparable instances of the phenomena under consideration and then analysing the theoretically important similarities and differences among them. The explanations given to the interpretation of these conditions was supported by citing surrounding circumstances or drawing on common themes running throughout the drafting of the individual case-studies. This was further achieved by linking data across a variety of methods adopted during the process of data collection. A rigorous cross-checking of results within and between methods facilitated a diagnosis of contradictory findings. Contradictions and discrepancies between different types of data collected were addressed in order to ensure that ambivalence and ambiguity would not influence the interpretation of the findings. The process of merging data from different sources and interrogating the data comparatively across different levels (within and between individuals and organisations) enabled the researcher to reach more concrete indications which represented the emerging research findings.

5.4. Arriving at the research findings

The process of arriving at the research findings was pursued by firstly drafting each individual case-study focusing on the main phenomena and their interrelationships in relation to the characteristics of the context in which they develop. A significant stage in arriving at the findings was the interpretation of social behaviour and actions as evident in individual managers' responses. This issue posed at least two major challenges for the researcher. On the one hand, how the researcher familiarised herself with the social system and the rules prevailing it and on the other hand, the researcher's theoretical pre-suppositions and background which affected the way she approached their interpretation (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Harré & Secord, 1972; Miles & Huberman, 1984; Doyal & Harris, 1986; Ellis & Flaherty, 1992; Kirk & Miller, 1986; Shipmann, 1988; Gubrium & Silverman, 1989; Shaffir

& Stebbins, 1991; Tsoukas, 1989, 1991a, 1991b, 1991c; Bryman & Burgess, 1994). The understanding of the social and cultural laws which influenced the meaning attached by managers' to the phenomena in question, necessitated a familiarisation of the language they use in order to describe phenomena and their interrelationships. The researcher was faced with a number of socio-political puzzles which needed to be resolved in order to be able to understand and interpret the enigmatic nature of the episodes individual managers called upon in describing their views and actions. A related issue here was the truthfulness in their statements.

The researcher was conscious of the inevitability of subjectivity on behalf of participating managers and thus decided to employ Argyris & Schön (1974:6-7) action theory and its two fundamental concepts of "espoused theory" and "theory in use", to identify discrepancies in their statements, the logic of their claims and the mental attitude towards them (Needham, 1983). This process suggested at the same time that the researcher herself would be closer to the preconceptions or pre-suppositions (personal or theoretical) guiding her judgements and her consideration of what was right or wrong, valid or invalid.

The considerations which guided the approach to arriving at the research findings have influenced the approach of presenting them in the thesis. It was decided that the richness of the data should not be sacrificed for simplicity. This decision coupled with the emphasis on contextualism, influenced the choice to present findings from each organisation as a separate case-study. The researcher decided to present the exploratory foundation of the data collection and analysis by presenting the different levels of analysis in each case and the various levels of conditions and causal factors identified. This approach would be supported by representative quotations from the empirical data which would indicate the way individual managers attach significance and meaning to the phenomena in question in their particular organisational context. The researcher recognised that this approach to presenting the findings would need to concentrate on the most significant indications arising from the analysis and was conscious of the fact that she could be criticised for choosing among findings. The choice of material to be presented however, was made on the basis that that this choice would not affect negatively the validity or reliability of the conclusions reached. Unless these choices were made it would have been impossible to articulate the complexities and the richness of the data into a meaningful and manageable set of explanations. Moreover, in as much as the

researcher acknowledges that this may have neglected findings of relevance to the less obvious causal factors, the researcher is confident that the findings presented in the thesis are sufficient in explaining the diversity of the phenomena and the qualitative depth with which she approached the understanding and interpretation of the various factors.

A further decision in the presentation of the findings was to move from a case study analysis to a thematic discussion of the key relationships emerging from the comparative analysis across the three banks. By presenting the comparative analysis of the three case studies on the basis of the key emerging themes the intention is to preserve the particularities of individual organisations and to draw out their distinctive characteristics which explain the differences in the nature and strength of the interrelationships observed. At the same time a thematic presentation of the findings emphasises more strongly the similarities between the three organisations which form a more reliable foundation for discussing the findings in relation to the industry-specific characteristics. Taking this point a step further the key emerging themes show the common and unique conditions across three organisations which may facilitate or inhibit the interrelationships between phenomena. This process provides indicators which may be relevant and applicable to other contexts beyond the retail banking sector.

5.5. Summary

This chapter discussed the various phases of the data collection process and the main levels of analysis and interpretation of the data. The main principles underlying the process of analysis and interpretation have been discussed and the approach to reaching the findings indicated the main considerations which justify the way they are going to be presented in part D of the thesis. Preparing the ground for the presentation of the findings and concluding the analysis of the methodological considerations of this study, the researcher acknowledges that the choices made and the approach adopted for researching this topic is not without its limitations. The analysis hopefully has shown that the researcher recognises the challenges presented to the research and has made every effort to overcome them. However, it should be noted that currently interrelationships between phenomena are not widely researched and therefore, there are limited methodological guidelines or directions to draw from.

PART **D**

The Findings

Overview

This part of the thesis presents firstly a review of the main characteristics of the sectors and the key developments over the last fifteen years. Subsequent chapters present findings from the three case-studies. A comparative analysis across the three banks is also provided. The key emerging themes from the study are revisited in the light of the propositions in the existing literature in order to show more clearly the contribution made to the field.

Banks and the Banking Industry in the UK: Continuity and Change

6.1. Introduction

It has been pointed out in Chapter four that the retail banking sector has been chosen as the focus of this study, because it fulfilled the main criteria which reflected the main issues the research has sought to address. The retail banking sector provides an interesting example of an industry which has undergone a process of reconstruction, which demanded fast responsiveness to change and a high need for learning. To understand change in this sector it is important to be aware of the key parameters and monitor closely the dynamic interactions between them. At an organisational level, it is significant to understand how internal and external changes in the industry influence the approach towards managing human resources and the perceived interconnection between related HRM activities. An understanding of the main characteristics of the context in which interrelationships take place is necessary for appreciating how individuals form their views and take action.

The purpose of this chapter is to review and discuss the main characteristics of the banking sector and those of banks as organisations in the light of the main historical events, the key external and internal changes that have taken place in the last fifteen years. The analysis is intended to set the scene for presenting the findings from each organisation in subsequent chapters. The impact of recent changes on the role, skills and expected behaviours of managers within banks will also be discussed in relation to the main characteristics of the

HRM approach adopted by these organisations. The chapter begins with a brief overview of the basic tasks and role of banks and banking in the economy.

6.2. Banks and banking: Their basic tasks and role

In order to understand the main characteristics of the sector, a review of the main tasks it performs and the role it plays in the economy is necessary. According to the contemporary dictionary "banking, involves keeping the money and paying on demand". It is responsible for the main part of the payments mechanism in the economy and its influence reaches into all corners (Revell, 1980). Banking belongs to the service industry. According to Katz & Kahn (1966) banking is: "a system which is designed to achieve certain goals through the provision of financial services in a socially responsible manner". According to Stanton (1984), for an institution to be recognised as a bank, the following criteria must be fulfilled:

1. It must enjoy high reputation in the financial community.
2. It must provide either a wide range or a highly specialised banking service.
3. It must effectively be under the direction of at least two individuals.
4. It must possess net assets amounting not less to £5 million, in the case of a wide ranging bank, and not less than £250,000 in the case of highly specialised banking service.

These criteria indicate some of the basic functions of the banking system and the way it works.

Stigum & Branch (1983) suggest that banks carry out a wide range of important functions. Banks create money, they make loans, they allocate credit and they influence interest rates. Similar to other enterprises, banks produce services as private firms that operate in a largely capitalistic economy, and their main responsibility to shareholders is to maximise profits. Banks offer a number of services ranging from basic transactions in the domestic or international market to different types of commercial credits (Channon, 1986). The main services offered by banks are summarised in Table 6.1. On the basis of the type of services they provide, financial institutions can be classified into: Merchant banks, Discount houses, Finance houses, Foreign & consortium banks, Post Office Giro banks and other deposit or loan making institutions (e.g. building societies, credit unions, national savings banks) (Perry, 1975).

Table 6.1: The main services offered by banks

<i>1. General banking services</i>
• Domestic transfers
• Cheques and credit transfers
• Standing orders
• Direct debits
• Banker payments
• E.F.T. transfers
• Lock Boxes
<i>2. International transfers</i>
• Mail & E.F.T. transfers
• Customers cheques
<i>3. Commercial credits</i>
• Clean credits
• Documentary credits
• Import and Export credits
• Foreign exchange services
<i>4. Specialist services</i>
• Consulting services
• Money management
• Invoicing Centres
• Treasury management
• Pension fund
• Management advice
• Insurance management advice
• Exchange rate forecasting
• Banking education
• Trust Services
• Stock & Bond purchases
• Executorships & Trusteeships
• Investment portfolio advice
• Stock registrars
• Dividend payments
• Safety deposit services
• Estate planning
<i>5. Other services</i>
• Payroll management
• Data processing services
• Factoring
• Travel arrangements
• Correspond banking services
• Non life insurance
• Economic studies services
• Customer banking services

More recently, Grady & Weale (1986) argued that financial services institutions may be classified into *maturity matching* or *maturity transforming* on the basis of how they manage risk and how they make their profit. The former include life assurance and pension funds which tend to match long-term liabilities with long-term assets, whereas the latter include institutions such as banks, building societies and finance houses which tend to make their profit on the basis of the liquidity premium which differs in relation to the judgement they make regarding the credit risk involved. In other words, these institutions are willing to accept deposits on terms which none of the people who borrow from them would be willing to accept.

At the local level, banks play a role in community affairs. They give help and advice in their attempt to attract new ventures to a particular locality and take part in or make a contribution to local sports and charitable events. Nationally, banks support a variety of government opportunity programmes and often take the leading role in encouraging the development of specific areas. Their help is not only financial but in manpower use as well. Banks employ a considerable number of people and provide expert support. Banks also contribute to the nation, through the taxes they pay and their support for industrial innovation and development. The operation of banks influences the total spending and the pressure of total demand, since they affect the amount of purchasing power (Sayers, 1967). Banks are affected by the monetary system they

help create. For example, the government may restrict their freedom to promote their own profit-oriented interests for the sake of promoting its own economic policies.

At a more practical level, banks like other organisations depend on their customers and their demand for the services they provide. Personal customers as a source of savings, have contributed to the development of personal and retail banking and have strengthened the importance of banks in the community, the economy and the monetary system in particular (Wright & Valentine, 1991; Cox & Fardon, 1989; Braddick, 1987; Leigh-Pemberton, 1980). In recent years, this seemingly stable income source has placed many of the banks' services under scrutiny (as exemplified by reports e.g. Folly, 1990). No longer are 'new' customers and sales the most important determinant of business success. Instead, the emphasis has switched to the virtues of customer retention (Metzger & Dey, 1986; Gwin & Lindgren, 1986; Carroll, 1992). Therefore, as banks are increasingly faced with a new set of requirements, some commentators have argued the need to rethink the basics of (retail) banking (McCormick & Rose, 1994; Cappon, 1994; Carroll, 1991). The reconstruction of banking marks one of the most significant changes in the sector in the 1990s. In order to put this and other changes in perspective it is important to review the main historical developments in the banking system in the UK.

6.3. A historical overview of the banking system in the UK

The UK banking system of today consists of several distinct characteristics (Pringle, 1973) which are embedded in the political, economic, social and financial history of the UK. Although, some rudimentary forms of banking have been practised in England since the 15th century, mainly by outposts of Italian houses, the roots of modern banking are traced back to the late part of the 17th century, in the period between 1650-1700, where banking saw two main developments: first the transformation of some goldsmiths into bankers and second the foundation of the Bank of England. The first few decades of the 18th century, were years of political and financial uncertainty. The Bank of England was deeply affected by the war and had to withstand several financial difficulties, one of which was the creation of the Joint-stock banks. Examples of such formations are the Bank of Scotland in 1695 and the Royal Bank of Scotland in 1727. During the remainder of the century the Bank of England gradually consolidated its position as the Government's bank and increasingly as the Banker's bank.

The 19th century opened with a succession of financial crises. These were caused partly by the lack of large banks brought about by the Bank's of England monopoly, the defective organisation of the banks, and the strains of war and the industrial revolution which transformed the country's economy. This period witnessed the foundation of some bigger banks. The larger banks of today mainly date from this period. By 1918-1920 the "Big Five" banks had emerged (Barclays Group, National Westminster Group, Midland Group, Lloyds Group, and the National Provincial). Major mergers during 1967 to 1969, left only four big banks to provide the bulk of England's "retail" banking services. The growth of the big deposit banks in the 19th century, was associated with several changes in the financial habits. These changes have led to the development of other kinds of banks such as the Clearing Houses, Merchant Banks, and the Savings Banks. The 20th century witnessed few big changes in the institutional structure of services and the deposit expansion of the branch network. The political and economic situation of those times (after the first World war) led to the introduction of foreign exchange departments and the offer of finance for foreign trade. These developments were followed by the establishment of representation of banks abroad (this mainly in Europe). During this period banks turned their attention in a short space of years to Insurance brooking, Life assurance, advisory services, Merchant banking, Leasing, Factoring and almost any other legitimate financial activity (Hanson, 1979). The breaking down of barriers between the business, formerly undertaken by specialist categories of institutions, has contributed to the increasing competition in the industry during this period. These developments owe much to changes in the business environment - international competition, securitisation, deregulation, technology, and supervisory arrangements, and have important implications for the way in which banks will be organised in the future (Bain, 1986).

The various changes over the centuries have formed milestones in the life-cycle of the industry and have shaped and reshaped the environment and the structure of the industry as a whole. The brief historical overview of the banking system in the UK shows that one of the main characteristics of this industry has been the struggle to balance continuity and change. Despite the numerous and diverse changes in the sector, some basic issues remain unchanged. The nature of banking and the underlying character of financial institutions remains highly inflexible, bureaucratic and conservative. The major changes in the sector and their underlying triggers are discussed in the section which follows.

6.4. The major changes in the banking sector and their triggers

Many commentators have sought to discuss the changes that have taken place in retail banking (Llewellyn, 1989; 1990; Howcroft, 1989). However, few have analysed thoroughly the content, context and process of the changes that are taking place and their implications for the future of banking in the 21st century. This section considers initially the content of change and the inner (internal to the sector) and outer (external to the sector) forces which contributed to the changes that are taking place during the last fifteen years. Unlike any other period in the history of banking the last fifteen years (1980-1995) have probably witnessed one of the most turbulent eras in the industry. The rate of change has been unprecedented and the recent changes have threatened to redefine the business of banking. The main changes over the last fifteen years have been triggered both by external and internal forces. The external forces arise from the trends in the world economy, whereas internal forces within the sector arise from changes in the market and the intensification of competition. The sections which follow discuss the main external and internal triggers to change in relation to the retail banking sector.

6.4.1. The external forces of change

Banks do not only influence the economic, political and socio-cultural context in which they operate, they are also affected by it. Economic, political and socio-cultural factors have been significant forces for change in the retail banking sector in the UK. Moreover, the trends in the world economy have forced retail banks to be more international and global in outlook. Finally, the changing structure of the industry at large, is a trigger to many of the internal changes identified within the sector. Each of these factors are discussed briefly next.

6.4.1.1. Economic factors

The two major periods of economic recession in the UK, that of the early 1980s and the most recent in the early 1990s, both created a period of upheaval for retail banks with significant consequences to their profitability. Moreover, the high and often volatile rates of inflation increased banking risks, by creating more unpredictability and uncertainty. These economic forces have been a trigger to further changes in the market which have virtually redefined supply and demand and have created new pricing formulas and new lending techniques. Retail banks have not only been victims, but they created some self-imposed economic pressures which have negatively affected many other organisations less powerful and certainly more

vulnerable. The economic factors however, cannot be considered in isolation from the regulatory framework set by the government. Economic changes can be better understood in relation to the political forces underlying them.

6.4.1.2. Political factors

The political factors are dominated by the monitoring framework set by the government to ensure that economic structures of oligopoly and cartels on interest rates and competition would be controlled. Moreover, the intention has been to ensure that the financial services market would not be dominated only by the core clearing banks but would become more embracing of 'non-bank' organisations, such as building societies, trustee savings and the post

Date	Control mechanisms
1971	• Competition and credit control
1974	• Consumer Credit Act
1976	• TSB Act and Post Office Act
1979	• Banking Act
1980	• Abolition of CORSET
1983	• Stock Exchange - Big Bang, 1986
1984	• Data Protection Act
1986	• The Building Societies Act
1986	• The Insolvency Act
1986	• The Financial Services Act
1987	• Banking Act
1989	• Companies Act

office who would now be allowed to provide a comprehensive range of 'bank' services. The implementation of this framework has taken the form of a series of deregulation acts introduced by the Bank of England and supported and enforced by self-regulating organisations such as the Securities and Investment Board (SIB) and its members (FIMBRA, IMRO, LAUTRO, SFA). Table 6.2. summarises the main acts and their

corresponding focus. The 1980s therefore, saw a shift to more liberal market policies and a reduction in the role of the state. Deregulation, tax cuts, privatisation, and the easing of economic and financial controls, became politically fashionable (Gardner, 1986; Grady & Weale, 1986; Frank & Mayer, 1989; Jones, 1991). Clarke & Guscott (1986: 92) describe the implications of deregulation most aptly saying that:

"Deregulation places at risk the market share of existing participants, creates clashes between participants in previously separate markets and gives the prospect of new profits to those previously excluded altogether. The classic result is a dual pressure to reduce costs and also to improve customer service".

Others however, disagree and argue that the regulatory system in the UK is ill considered (Veljanovski, 1988), unduly costly (Lomax, 1987) and stifling for competition and innovation (Goodhart, 1988). Although, some of these acts have been introduced in the early 1970s their total impact was probably most heavily felt during the 1990s. Apart from reshaping the

structure of the banking industry and the nature of its main players, these political factors have given competition a new meaning for the industry. They have certainly contributed to one of the most significant cultural shifts in the sector and have forced banks to reconsider their social responsibility.

6.4.1.3. Socio-cultural factors

Banks have historically played a significant social role in their community. As a force of economic development and a means of restoring community self-confidence, banks have been key investors in the future of the community they served. This commitment has been demonstrated in several ways, however the most prominent has been by extending credit to the hard-working people who recognised their power (Grzywinski, 1991). Social changes however, and in particular the changing requirements of customers are challenging the traditional role of the bank in the community and are forcing a reconsideration of the attitude of banks towards its customers. Customers are increasingly becoming disenchanted with deposits as savings vehicles (Bowen, 1990). Moreover, customers no longer do as they are told, they are now more knowledgeable and have a more sophisticated approach in choosing service providers (Love, 1991). Therefore, the previously "paternalistic" culture, is giving way to new "entrepreneurial" culture which is more flexible and more responsive to the needs of the increasingly sophisticated customer (Gray, 1991). Retail banks have been forced to reconsider their entire approach to doing business and to catch up with the changing expectations of their customers. They can no longer afford to be large, reliable, lazy lions. They need to develop the smart, flexible and active image of the dolphin (Laurie, 1989). The changing socio-cultural trends are mainly attributed to the increasing competition in the market nationally. However, increasingly the impact of globalisation of financial services and the influence of international competition, in the development of the new banking culture in the UK, is becoming more severe. Therefore, retail banks have to respond to the needs of the sophisticated national and international customer.

6.4.1.4. International factors

As banks in the UK are increasingly faced with a stagnant national market like their American, European and Japanese counterparts, they seek to diversify into different markets in order to meet their development needs and to remain on the global financial services map as an active international trader. Therefore, an international orientation has emerged in the last fifteen years both as a threat challenging survival, as well as an opportunity with potential

strengths worth exploring. The increasingly integrated nature of the international financial system is another major trigger contributing to the changes already discussed. The provision of security services is one example where international integration is becoming strong, thus creating all sorts of competitive and structural changes in the retail banking sector. In the absence of exchange controls, business tends to move to the centre in which costs are lowest and even if residents are precluded by exchange controls, it is virtually impossible to prevent non-residents from dealing in securities where it suits them. Multinationals and major national corporations and institutions are now in a position to borrow or lend in the currency and the financial centres of their choice and to invest in international markets (Turner, 1983; Bain, 1986; Bryan, 1993). As a result of the international pressures, retail banks are developing different distribution vehicles such as overseas branches, representative offices, offshore funding locations and/or joint venture consortiums (Bleeke & Johnson, 1988). At a European level, the Commission's proposal to create a single market in financial services is creating further opportunities, as well as threats for UK retail banks. The liberalisation of capital movement completed in 1988 and the vision of the single European market (which was due to take place in 1992) are two examples of the direction of integration in the financial services market in Europe. The pattern of regulation likely to emerge in Europe is however, still unknown (Fassbender & Wuffi, 1990; Dixon, 1991; Rugman et al., 1992; Fitchew, 1993; Dermine, 1993). The European and international orientation of retail banking is increasingly reflected in the changing structure of the banking industry which itself is a force of further change.

6.4.1.5. Structural factors in the industry

Mergers and acquisitions have been a dominant feature throughout the 1960s when the most significant reduction in the number of clearing banks took place. From the eleven clearing banks that existed in 1960s, six remained by 1969 (Howcroft, 1989). This trend has subsequently resulted in a significant branch rationalisation programme during the 1970s. During the 1980s the number of building societies declined from 273 in 1980 to 138 in 1987 (Llewellyn, 1990). The 1990s are increasingly recording mergers and acquisitions between the major clearing banks and the formation of new alliances with international financial institutions which are expected to offer the competitive advantage needed in the global market of the future (Purves, 1991; Hine, 1993; Blanden, 1995a; Blanden, 1995b). Despite these changes the structure of UK banking has been criticised for being overcrowded and inefficient

(The Economist, 1991). The need to streamline the industry is consistently reinforced by the sluggish profitability indicators and reports arguing that only the fittest will survive. The restructuring in the industry remains a major contributing factor to the changes retail banks are currently encountering. These and the other external forces discussed in the preceding paragraphs play a significant role in the way internal forces to change shape the way individual retail banks respond.

6.4.2. The internal forces of change

The changes that have taken place in the retail banking sector in the last fifteen years have also been caused by internal forces within the industry. The intensification of competition and the continuous developments in information technology (IT) have forced a new era of efficiency in the sector and have triggered a new orientation towards the basic principles of banking. The changing market has contributed to new marketing and management techniques and a renewed attention to the way organisations in the industry are structured. These factors are discussed in more detail in the sections which follow.

6.4.2.1. The redefinition of the financial services market

A significant force for change has been the redefinition of the financial services market which has eroded the traditional business demarcation and has made the previously effective barriers to entry obsolete. The retail services market has been fragmenting substantially with the increasing involvement of non-financial institutions providing banking services. Building societies, insurance companies, real-estate agencies, foreign banks, and even store groups have become financial services providers. Stores like Marks & Spencer (with in-house unit trusts) and Burton (with mortgages and insurance) are moving into personal financial services, whereas banks have moved into real-estate agency (Middleton, 1987; Rothschild, 1988; Bliss, 1988; Blanden, 1989; Howcroft, 1989). This change has removed the main distinguishing characteristics of banks in relation to other institutions and threatens their core business. Another example which exemplifies the redefinition of the financial services market is the rise of financial services providers (including banks, thrifts, insurers and credit companies) all competing directly against each other for loans. Local lenders are forced to compete with the largest national concerns on terms and price. Insurance companies and Investment banks that once had been friendly business partners with Commercial banks are now competing head on, by offering attractive loans to the bank's long established customers. This situation put

pressure on banks to cut their loan pricing so as to keep their best customers from going elsewhere (Davidson, 1990).

Taken together these developments opened up competition within and between sub-sectors. In essence these changes in the market have redefined the nature of 'banking' and have made the distinction of a 'bank' more difficult. Moreover, the changes in the market have triggered a renewed interest in the personal sector which was previously relatively neglected. The change in focus has encouraged banks to seek more innovative delivery systems with less reliance on the traditional branch network which was proving increasingly more costly. These changes have also triggered a different kind of internal competition in the market.

6.4.2.2. Internal competition

Competition has been historically and presently one of the most significant triggers for change in the sector. Unlike other periods however, such as the 1960s and 1970s, the last fifteen years have witnessed an unprecedented intensification of competition in the sector. Retail banks are no longer competing just to control credit access and loan pricing to borrowers and maintain highest quality credits, nor are they just competing on technological developments. They are now competing on efficiency (The Economist, 1991; Hislop & Lanyon, 1988; Bowen, 1990). Retail banks are realising that to survive they have to improve efficiency by critically reviewing their practices and seeking to reconsider their operations and how well they perform. As Hislop & Lanyon (1988: 81) point out:

"The banking sector is reaching a critical point in its development. Banks are learning that, as competition increases and margins diminish, the only way to greater profits is to improve efficiency and pull out of low-return business....Only by introducing super-efficiency distribution and administration will it be possible to survive".

This change has forced many retail banks to reconsider their product and service differentiation strategies. Banks are moving away from traditional distribution channels and are now developing a more tailored approach, which reflects the targeted market segments they serve. The backbone of competition for efficiency has been the realisation that banks can no longer be all things to all people and therefore, need to concentrate on developing comparative advantage by exploiting what they can do best. This notion of efficiency is also closely associated with the realisation that the good cosy days of profitability and high spending are over. Thus, many retail banks have been forced to become efficient by cutting

costs substantially. The sharp reduction in staff numbers and the consistent closure of branches are examples of the impact of this approach (Llewellyn, 1990; Sippel, 1989). Competition through efficiency, has encouraged a reconsideration of the role of technology and the way it is employed.

6.4.2.3. Technology

Historically, technology has been central to the operations of the banking system, however, more recently it has contributed to the increased sophistication of the financial market. Technological developments have brought greater speed, easier access, improved services and economies of both scale and scope and it is evident that it is at the root of many of the changes taking place in Britain's financial structure (Scarborough & Lannon, 1988; Gart, 1992; Scarborough, 1992; Knights et al., 1991; Sturdy, 1989).

The examples of technological advancement are many. Among others, the introduction of CHAPS (Clearing House Automated Payments System) since 1984, has provided an electronic system for transferring funds in excess of £10,000 between members. Funds transferred through the system are treated as cleared funds. EFTPOS (Electronic Funds Transfer at Point of Sale) promises to do the same for retail transactions. The same goes for the supply of cash. The arrival of ATMs (Automatic Teller Machines) has made it just as easy for building societies as for banks to supply cash at any time of day or night. The advent and ever increasing penetration of credit cards (VISA, ACCESS, MASTERCARD etc.) has also eroded the banks' position in the payments system. At the same time, the huge volume of foreign exchange trading depends on secure message transmission services for international payments such as SWIFT (The Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunications). More recently, Document Image Processing (DIP) is promising to alleviate problems of document handling, by producing digitised images through optical scanning systems which capture, store, analyse and can transmit electronically checks, deposit slips, loan applications, credit card receipts and other paper documents (Talmor, 1995b; The Banker, 1991; Wilsher, 1991; Kelly, 1990; Hastie, 1990; Maxwell, 1990).

The technological developments are expected to continue at the same rate in the future. Some commentators (Howcroft, 1989; Heuter et al., 1990) predict that they may well constitute significant barriers to entry in the financial services market and determine the very nature of

future competition. Some even argue that virtual banking and multimedia are more likely to provide "a new life for dinosaurs...helping to save the traditional retail banks from extinction" (Talmor, 1995a:75; Perlman, 1995). Computer technology might have offered substantial scale economies with automated maintenance of accounts, automatic sending of statements and cheque books, and automatic administration of personal loans etc. However, it has definitely brought a lot of problems and organisational challenges as well. The diversity of systems hinders companies which wish to respond to market conditions and makes adequate risk management virtually impossible. Terminal illness, memory disruptions, infections spreading to the network are all examples of computer viruses which make administration and organisation of the system more difficult. The heavy reliance on technology, has made some commentators (Klein, 1990) question its proposed economic contribution when many economic assumptions no longer hold true particularly as customers do not always approve of the way technology is being implemented. The recognition of the importance of customers has forced banks to develop their technological orientation jointly with their marketing philosophy.

6.4.2.4. Marketing orientation

There are three main phases in the development of marketing orientation in the retail banking sector that can be identified. The first phase during the 1970s has been primarily concerned with mass. Its main role was seen to be primarily the management of demand. Marketing was generally perceived as a means of influencing consumers' behaviour which might be achieved by offering suitable and attractive products and services (Watson, 1982; 1984). The second phase of marketing during the 1980s and early 1990s maintained an equally narrow view. During this phase, marketing was equated to selling. Faced with increasing competition, particularly from new players in the market, retail banks considered marketing as a tool for winning the fight over new sales. These developments led to the introduction of the marketing function and marketing activities which were intended to manage demand and to co-ordinate the bank's resources. Moreover, the personal customer regained momentum and strategies such as market segmentation were adopted to manage the diverse expectations of customers (Watson, 1984; Meidan, 1984; Tansey, 1985; DeMoubray, 1985; Dibben, 1986a; Howcroft, 1991).

Table 6.3: The main structures of a bank

• Retail - Commercial branch based structure.
• Customer - Service based structure.
• Customer based structure.
• Small business transaction based banking.
• Corporate accounts of large corporations.
• Niche approach - a particular customer group.
• Subdivided by geography in serving the market.
• Subdivided by industry in serving the market.

The culture has shifted from being operational to becoming more sales oriented (Bignall, 1991). This shift has been reflected in the redesign of the banks' premises and in particular the branch network, the technology for delivering services etc. The sophistication of the customer meant that

they would no longer keep quiet about their relationship with their bank and would be keener to voice their dissatisfaction (Brooks, 1988; Gray, 1991). Banks responded to this by trying to differentiate themselves from other similar financial services institutions and were forced to rethink their approach to doing business and in particular the image they wanted to project. Banks are beginning to realise that: "there can be no return to the complacency of previous years which led the industry to consign the customer to the back seat" (Bignall 1991:20). However, the close similarity in products and services between banks makes it difficult for customers to differentiate them (Hendry, 1987; Research International, 1992). Some retail banks have become increasingly more aggressive in their attempt to differentiate themselves from other financial services providers by providing high quality of service at the counter. This approach has not always proven successful, because the service has become impersonal, leaving customers unconvinced of the bank's true commitment to customer care. Branch managers have been resisting the sales orientation which has exacerbated the difficulty of implementing this new philosophy (Brack, 1977). A key factor which differentiates banks according to Channon (1986), is in the way they serve the market in which they operate. This is reflected in the organisation structure adopted in their attempt to implement their strategy of becoming more customer focused. The major forms of bank structure identified are summarised in Table 6.3.

The third phase of marketing orientation in the retail banking sector has been developing in recent years, where the emphasis has now switched from attracting new customers to retaining existing customers (Hart, 1990; Carroll, 1991; Howcroft & Hill, 1992). As customer loyalty is increasingly becoming a thing of the past, banks find that this change is forcing their marketing orientation in new uncharted directions which sometimes conflicts with their historical profile and identity. These changes have also affected the banks' management philosophy.

6.4.2.5. Management philosophy

The changes in the management philosophy of retail banks is probably the hardest to pin down. Despite the various external and internal triggers to change discussed earlier, management philosophy remains affected by the prevailing paradigms which have dominated the character of retail banks. Sippel (1989) argues that although changes in the structure of the dominant paradigm have taken place over the years, recent "anomalies" (e.g. the changes in lifestyle, technology, changing economies of the business, products and services etc.) in the industry are making it very difficult for them to be accommodated in the traditional paradigm (Sippel, 1989).

Table 6.4: The factors differentiating organisations in the retail banking sector

• The origins & historic development of the business.
• The economic circumstances available to each bank.
• The leadership style and attitude of top managers.
• The policies and practices of the organisation.
• The values of the organisation.
• The structure of the organisation.
• The characteristics of the work force

This is a useful example, which shows the tension between continuity and change in this sector, because despite the internal and external changes in the industry, many traditional values are still strongly maintained. For example, the conservative and risk-averse character of management in banking remains fundamentally the same. Despite the emergence of an increasingly marketing oriented culture, few retail banks wholeheartedly apply marketing principles. Few financial institutions meaningfully engage in marketing practices purely because they believe that the customer is the 'king'. Despite the improvements in managing their products and services, few retail banks have become more flexible and flatter in their structures, although, some have moved away from broad divisional structures to more functional structures (Whyte & Plenderleith, 1990; Coult, 1990). These observations are further reflected in the organisational culture, of some retail banks which despite becoming more sales oriented remains highly non-entrepreneurial and risk-averse (Howcroft, 1989; Sippel, 1989). Some of dominant paradigms of the industry are influencing the way banks perceive reality and gain a sense of security and understanding regarding what they need to do and how they need to respond to changes taking place (Huff, 1982). These characteristics explain some of the similarities to be found among banks. Although organisations in the sector may be different on the basis of their unique characteristics (such as those referred to by Braddick, 1987; summarised in Table 6.4.), they exhibit several similarities which help reinforce stability instead of change. Some of the common characteristics of organisations in

this sector act as means of preserving the familiar ways of doing things while blocking the development of new directions. The long and successful history of banks in the UK is probably one of the most significant barriers to change and potentially one of the most vital contributors to their demise (Howcroft & Lavis, 1986).

Traditionally, banks have tended to react relatively slowly and incrementally to external changes. The nature and extent of change taking place in the banking industry today, calls for radical change. These changes create the need for banks to move from a logical, quantitative approach to problem-solving, to a more qualitative approach. One of the factors which potentially may determine whether banks are able to make this shift could be the approach towards managing human resources.

6.5. Organisational change and implications for HRM in banks

The various internal and external changes are fundamentally transforming the role that staff are expected to play within the organisation. A critical concern for banks during the 1990s is the ability of the workforce to change and to manage the new technology. Banks realise that it is necessary to develop policies which will ensure that once skilled people are in position, they are retained and grown to meet the future needs of the business. Banks have recognised that decisions about human resources are at the cutting edge of the business, because unless people are carefully invested in, there is a real possibility of commercial failure (Higgs, 1988; Blanden, 1991). As a result, banks find themselves with an expanding mix of interrelated HRM problems to manage, ranging from training and development, career progression and manpower planning, reward structures and industrial relations particularly in relation to redundancy (Dixon, 1987; Hendry, 1987; Schenck, 1990). Two of the most significant HRM processes of particular relevance to the present study are management training and development and career development. These are discussed in more detail next.

6.5.1. Management training and development in banks

Training within banks has two main objectives, firstly to develop experience and know-how in banking techniques (Eason, 1964) and secondly to provide a broad/generalist perspective of banking (Hendry, 1987). Banks have a reputation for providing most of the specialised training skills required in the sector which according to Perry (1975), gives banking a remarkable degree of loyalty and esprit de corps (Jones, 1991). This characteristic partly

explains why traditionally banks recruited school-leavers, who were trained through a formal disciplined classroom approach and had to pass professional qualifications (such as the Association of the Chartered Institute of Banking Diploma - ACIBD) in order to meet the immediate needs of the bank. This philosophy has come under attack particularly with the recent changes which have meant increasing specialisation (Quinton, 1986a). Despite the commitment of UK banks to training their staff, they have been criticised for not spending sufficiently on training and development (Murphy, 1989; Bournois & Torchy, 1992). Investment in training to keep abreast of new developments is increasingly linked to profitability and is argued as being significant to competitive success (Gould, 1988; Murphy, 1989).

Whilst the major banks have always been considerable trainers of their junior staff, managers have often been left largely to themselves to find their own approaches to managing. The banks have relied on the professional bodies to oversee the basic professional education of their future management. However, the skill requirements are widening and the core of professional knowledge traditionally taught, becomes less and less relevant and sufficient to sustain the performance demanded. Management training for substantial numbers is relatively new to banks. In the early 1970s management training was frequently undertaken by attendance at external management centres and the University Business Schools and was largely restricted to an elite of individuals heading to the top (i.e. High Flyers) (Gould, 1988). Since then, banks have devoted more effort to training and retraining their managers themselves, often with the assistance of external management teachers (Timewell, 1992; Flemington, 1992; Laurie, 1990). Management training provided by the organisation places emphasis on technical skills, products, services, selling and professional updating.

The developments in the sector over the last fifteen years have shifted the emphasis from technical skills training towards management skills training with particular emphasis on sales and marketing (Livy, 1980; Cowan, 1982; Donnelly et al., 1988; Howcroft, 1989). While formal training is intended to match the individual's speed of learning and assist them in their promotion ladder, informal on-the-job training is also increasingly encouraged as a means of acquiring the basic banking skills. Computer assisted learning, outdoor management development and open learning are also techniques more recently introduced in the sector

(BiS, 1991b; Issac, 1991). However, individuals rarely participate in the identification of their own training and development thus, are not fully committed to its outcomes (Mosson, 1986).

6.5.2. Manpower planning and career development

Given the rate of change and the degree of uncertainty in the sector, it is difficult to be clear as to the precise shape of future jobs and managerial responsibilities. This uncertainty has disrupted the traditional model of manpower planning and career development in banking and has had an impact on the system of rewards in many organisations in the sector (Thomas & Tilston, 1987; Hague, 1986). Traditionally, banks could structure their manpower needs, because of the comparatively consistent growth in their business. Recent changes make planning staff numbers very difficult, and with the increasing cost-consciousness and staff redundancies as a result, many organisations find it difficult to co-ordinate the development of their existing staff. Moreover, as a result of the recent changes the nature of managerial jobs have been substantially transformed from managing money and people to 'selling'. The criteria for career progression are no longer age and experience, but customer service and performance in meeting sales targets (BiS, 1991a). Furthermore, the career of graduates is managed through the fast-track programmes, which affects their expectations regarding career possibilities. However, in the light of all these changes banks can no longer maintain their paternalistic approach to career development (for fast and non-fast track managers), nor is it possible for the head office, regional office, or the personnel department to determine with any certainty the career pattern of any individual (Perry, 1975). Clearly, the psychological contract in banking careers is changing it is no longer based on loyalty, commitment and life-long employment (Herriot et al., 1996). The new deal that is being struck between the bank and its future employees will shape the way effectiveness is going to be defined in the future and the expected behaviours that managers will be expected to demonstrate.

6.5.3. The characteristics of the 'effective' bank manager

The internal and external changes in the industry and along side these the introduction of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) in the UK are affecting how 'effectiveness' is being defined in the sector and are forcing a redefinition of 'effective performance'. The common view of the core future skills and abilities of managers in the retail banking sector is that they will be required to be flexible and adaptable, commercially aware, able to learn rapidly, to be intellectually dexterous, decisive, effective communicators and able to take a

broad view. Moreover, they will be expected to be effective in interpersonal relationships and international affairs and technically competent, forward thinkers, and innovators, marketers and salespeople (Donnelly, et al. 1988; Higgs, 1988; Gray, 1991). Personal qualities such as people skills, communication skills, team skills, leadership skills, accuracy, enthusiasm, initiative, ambition and integrity are highly valued in the sector as well (BiS, 1991b). The Banking Industry Lead Body is already looking at the NVQs in relation to the banking industry and it is anticipated that bank staff will have the opportunity to achieve NVQs in the workplace at levels 2, 3 and 4. The new image of the bank manager is redefining their skills and main characteristics, as well as their ultimate role. It is clear that the new set of behaviours and skills reflect the changing nature of banking in the years to come.

6.6. The future of retail banking

If bankers recall the 1980s as the most turbulent era (since the Great Depression), the 1990s have proven to be just as challenging. Markets expand and shrink overnight, forcing banks to become niche players focusing on one or more businesses or product lines and becoming more willing to cut prices to gain critical market share (Schenck, 1990). If the beginning of this century has seen large amounts being invested on newer technology and state of the art services and facilities, the end of this century is seeing a reinvestment in the most valuable asset of banks; its people. The years to come will be ones of new learning and new ways of making the system work. The European competitors, as well as, the major American and Japanese competitors will be the ones to force UK banking into a new era of developments. English banks will have much to learn if they are going to survive!

As many commentators predict, the structure of the industry will continue to change, as will the products offered and the relationships with personal and corporate customers. However, the challenge remains whether the end result will be the emergence of a banking sector with a new stability. If the primary objective of each bank has been to preserve its reputation and position within the industry through achieving steady growth in pre-tax profits, maximising the return to its shareholders and offering good prospects to its staff (Quinton, 1986b), this is unlikely that it will guarantee sustainable success in the future (Saurais, 1995; Wanless, 1995). Coopers & Lybrand in researching "tomorrow's leading retail bank" argue that in the future, success in the industry will depend on the ability of banks to respond to the challenges

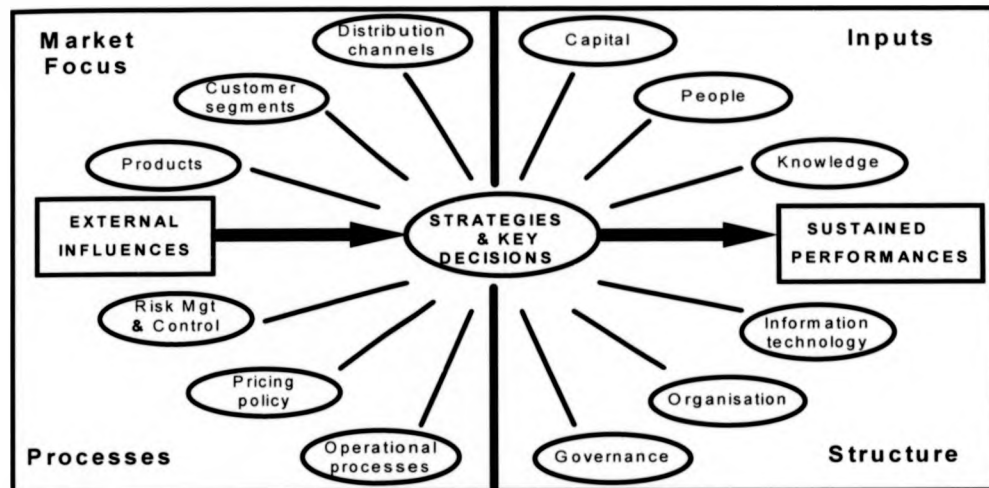
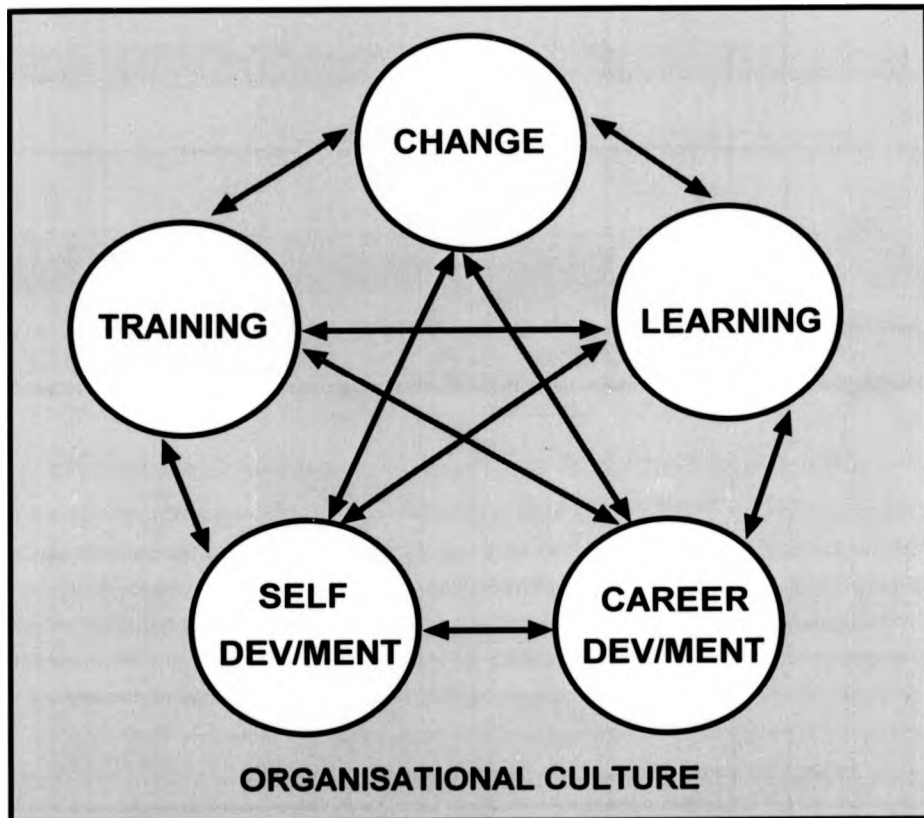


Figure 6.1: The key parameters in tomorrow's leading retail bank (source Coopers & Lybrand, cited in Hislop, 1995:36).

facing them in a clear, consistent vision which captures the key parameters (market focus, inputs, structure and processes, Figure 6.1.) in tomorrow's banking (Hislop, 1995).

6.7. Summary

This chapter reviewed the main characteristics of the UK retail banking sector and discussed the major internal and external changes that have taken place in the industry in the last fifteen years. A key observation from this analysis is that the major triggers for change and their consequences form an array of interdependent events which is best reflected in the emerging pattern of change in the sector. This observation suggests a much more complex approach of change that extends beyond the existing models in the organisational change literature (Lewin, 1947; Schein, 1969; Greiner, 1977; Bennis et al., 1976). To understand change in this sector it is important to be aware of the key parameters and to be able to closely monitor the dynamic interaction between them. The preceding analysis exemplifies the appropriateness of the sector for the focus of the study and in particular for exploring the perceived interrelationships between phenomena in the context of change. The changes discussed in this chapter reflect some of the challenges that the three banks examined in this study have experienced. The main characteristics of organisations in this sector and the historical background of the industry in the UK are a useful backdrop for presenting and analysing the key themes emerging from each of the three case-studies presented in the chapters which follow.



The reader is reminded that the presentation and analysis of the findings will be based on this model which shows the possible interconnections between the phenomena explored in this study.

CHAPTER SEVEN

7

Case Study One: Bank (A)

7.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the main findings in relation to phenomena and their interrelationships within bank A. The chapter begins with an overview of the main characteristics of bank A both historically and presently. The review of the characteristics of the corporate culture and structure provide a back-cloth for discussing the HRM policies and practices and the bank's approach to management training and development. The third section analyses managers' perceptions of the learning process and the main obstacles to learning. The sections which follow concentrate on managers' and training providers' perceptions of the relationships between phenomena. The fourth section explores the perceived relationship between training and learning. Section five examines the perceived importance of training and learning in the context of change and explores the relationship between learning and change and that between training and change. The interrelationship between learning, self and career development is considered in the sixth section. The chapter concludes with a summary of the key emerging interrelationships within this bank.

7.2. A profile of Bank A

This section reviews the main milestones in the bank's history, before considering the most recent changes within the organisation. The main characteristics of the corporate structure and culture are also discussed in the section, in order to provide the necessary background for discussing the HRM policies and practices.

7.2.1. A historical overview of bank A

Bank A was created in 1970, from one of the most significant alliances in the banking industry during the twentieth century. Despite being in the high street under its present name for twenty six years, its origins can be traced back as far as the 1818. What began after the Second World War as an alliance between two equally powerful banks of the time, later developed into a full amalgamation which has since placed bank A among the top five banks in the UK. The amalgamation of two experienced banks with strong performance was an enormous knowledge gain for bank A. The bank inherited an established presence in the home

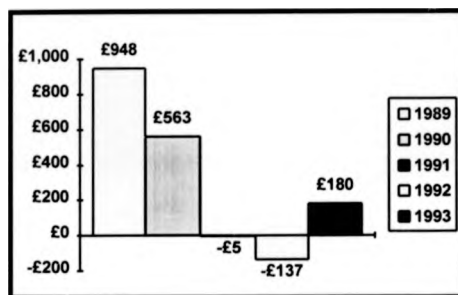


Figure 7.1: The financial position (profit/loss before tax) of bank A.

market and an equally strong international outlook. As a result, bank A entered the 1970s in a very strong competitive position, with a healthy financial outlook and a continually expanding presence both in the UK high street and abroad. The financial strength of the bank has enabled it to take a leading role in the introduction of technology which has remained one of its main areas of investment.

The 1980s was an era of development and change for the bank. The first half of the 1980s saw an increasing expansion in international operations in the USA and Europe. The second half of the 1980s saw major internal restructuring programmes which aimed to focus the bank's operations on the needs of private and commercial customers. The restructuring operation that took place aimed to replace the two-tier (Region-Area) structure with a single tier of twenty-two smaller regions. Moreover, during the same period the divisional structure was completely reorganised into three sectors, namely UK Financial Services, International Business and Corporate and Investment Banking. It is during this period that the bank reached its maximum profits (£1,000 m) for the first time. This financial prosperity was difficult to maintain however, as the bank had its fair share of third world debt which exposed it for the first time to a period of financial strain. The traditions and experience of three centuries of banking proved to be insufficient in managing the challenges in the industry during the 1990s. The economic recession of the 1990s had a severe financial effect on the bank, in that for the first time it had experienced financial loss (Figure 7.1, in £m). The bank initially responded to the economic recession of the 1990s with the attitude of the 1980s, and this has been the cause

of a record level of bad debts during this period. With the benefit of hindsight, the Chairman and Group Chief Executive at the time (1991) admitted that the bank's prosperity during the 1980s had not prepared it sufficiently to respond to the crisis of the 1990s. In one of the annual reports (1991) they point out that:

"the way in which we responded to the economic climate of the late 1980s has contributed to the problem. We shared in the optimism for continuing growth that characterised that period and consequently there were undoubtedly some departures from the principles of sound lending".

In the light of the difficulties encountered, the bank entered a major reorganisation programme which was aimed at refocusing its practices in order to control costs, whilst building new income streams.

7.2.2. Recent developments and changes within the organisation

The last five years (1990-1995) have witnessed some of the most significant changes within bank A. The bank embarked on a major cost-cutting exercise and an extensive reduction in staff numbers in order to improve its financial position. Nearly 10,500 staff were made redundant during 1990-1994, bringing the number of staff currently employed to 56,300 (as at 1994). Moreover, the bank's presence in the high street has been affected by the closure of approximately 600 branches during the same period. At the same time the bank continued its investment in technology and introduced systems which were designed to enhance efficiency and effectiveness in customer service. This reorganisation included a major review of the organisation of work and the specialisation of units. Customer service has had a central role in the bank's strategy since its early days. In recent years however, it has gained a renewed importance as part of the bank's mission to become "a world class financial services institution with a major and profitable presence in all chosen markets...by the year 2000...to be the first choice for customers, staff and investors". In order to prepare the ground for the fulfilment of this mission, the bank's operations have been closely reviewed leading to a significant cultural change programme. The last five years have therefore, witnessed a slow and somewhat painful process of changing the corporate culture. During this period there has been no major re-structuring of the organisation, because the emphasis was mainly the consolidation of structural changes introduced in the late part of 1980s. Figure 7.2. illustrates the current organisation structure of bank A. Despite these changes, however, bank A remains a relatively conservative company with a traditional outlook. Today, bank A is a member of a

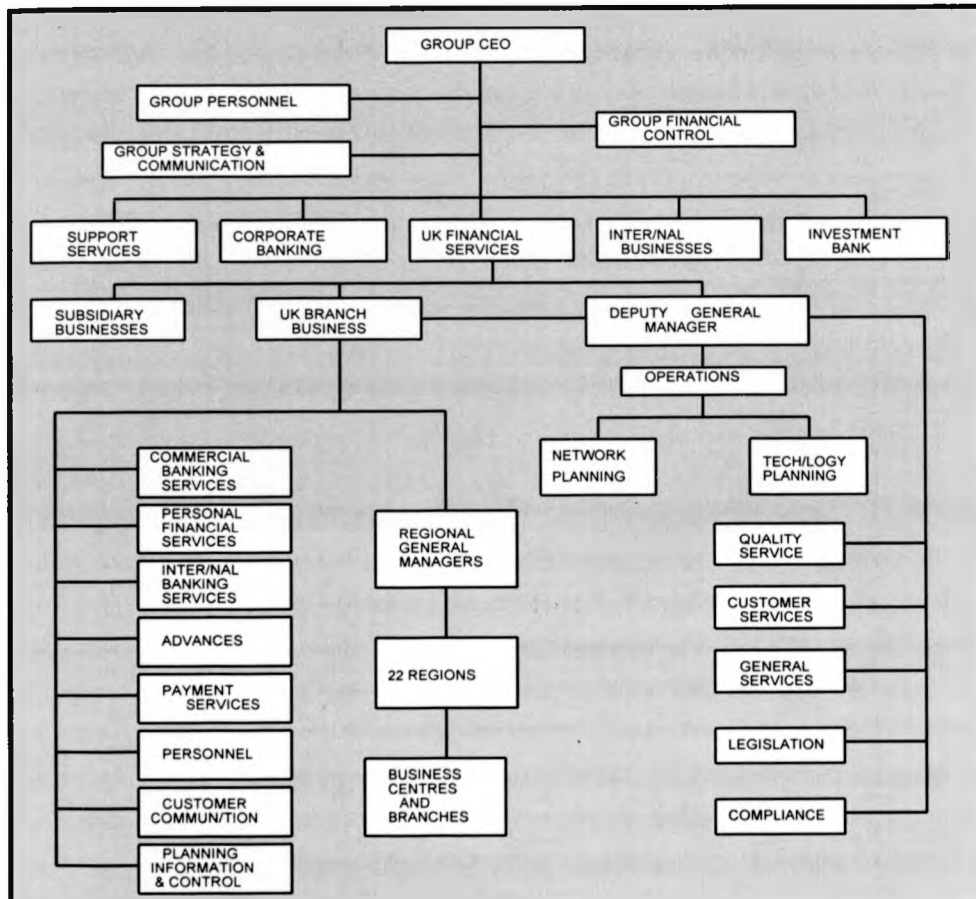


Figure 7.2: The organisational structure of bank A and the branch network.

strong Financial Group with international representation across the four continents and turnover of £767m as at 1994.

7.2.3. Corporate culture and top management

Bank A gives the impression of a prestigious bank with a traditional way of doing business. Probably the most striking feature of bank A is the formality which dominates the organisation's surroundings and its people at all levels. The historically strong financial position of the bank is evident in several aspects. For example, the bank's premises have an imposing outlook and a strategic positioning which confirm that both historically and presently the bank has been a predominant player in the market. Despite the fact that different specialist units demonstrate the existence of sub-cultures, it is important to note that the

corporate culture of the Group is deep-seated and therefore, acts as a common code of practice for different parts of the business. The highly centralised approach of the bank partly explains why despite the unprecedented rate of change within the bank, the organisation as a whole presents a convincing picture of relative stability and continuity. This characteristic may be attributed to the relative stability of top management. In the twenty-six years since its formation, bank A had only four different Chairmen and five different CEOs. The fact that there has been no extensive variation in top management has preserved a relatively immutable approach to doing business. Comparing the emphasis placed on customer service and shareholder benefits by different CEOs over the years, one can identify several similarities in their approach. Clearly, the emphasis shifted to reflect the trends of the time, however, there is a fair amount of consistency. This is probably more evident in the bank's HRM policies and practices.

7.3. HRM strategy and the implications for training

The HRM function in bank A is highly centralised and consists of a relatively large number of units which cater for HRM related issues such as negotiations, payment system, pension funds, health and safety, sports club, personnel planning, equal opportunities, management development, and group training. Each of these units contributes towards achieving the bank's HRM strategy which aims to ensure that the bank is equipped with "the right people, with the right skills, in the right place, at the right time to meet the requirements of the business" (Internal publication). The training function is seen as holding a key role in this process. This is explicitly stated in the Group's training mission statement which says that the aim of training is:

"To provide focused, cost effective, proactive, and high quality training, which supports the needs and priorities of the business by improving the performance of staff and contributing to the profitability, productivity and quality service provided by the Group".

During the last couple of years, there has been a major review of the HRM function in the bank, which has led to the introduction of a new appraisal system and a new emphasis in the bank's approach to training and educating managers. The old system of reporting, and the grading system, have been abolished and have been replaced by an on-going process of reviewing individuals' performance which is intended to raise motivation among staff by encouraging a more active involvement in self and career development. This initiative is

closely related to the introduction of performance related pay and the adoption of the competency framework which has led to the redefinition of jobs. The rationale behind these changes in the HRM strategy is the increasing emphasis on customer service outcomes, which are usually measured in financial terms (e.g. sales figures). These are only recent developments (during 1993) in the HRM arena and are met in some instances with cynicism and disappointment among managers, because HRM policies are not seen as capable of restoring job security (in the light of redundancies). In fact managers feel that recent developments in HRM exacerbate political issues in the appraisal of managers (i.e. judging and developing - see Beer, 1981). As one manager pointed out:

"I feel let down and disappointed being removed from an area I felt my competencies fitted with. The gap is widening as messages are not translated into action...long-terminism is gone, loyalty is blown out, there are lower reward packages and no more job security".

These changes affected the way training is being organised and provided. Training is now starting to be delivered more locally and in relation to training plans produced by individuals.

7.3.1. The organisation of the training department

Training within bank A is centrally undertaken by the Group training department, although according to training providers the various divisions have responsibility for meeting their specific training needs and requirements. Group training operates both in a group role and as a service company provider. In its group role, it assists General Management in formulating the training policy, monitoring national/international initiatives and advising General Management on the implications of corporate strategy. Moreover, Group training reviews developments in training methodology and audits and evaluates the training provided by delivery units and external suppliers. In its service company role, Group training undertakes research into training needs and develops technical or management training to meet the requirements of the business units. Through the two main delivery units (Staff College and training centres) Group training is responsible for providing courses and workshops in departments and regions. The two main roles of the training department are illustrated diagrammatically in the structure of the training department in relation to the HRM function (Figure 7.3.). A unique feature of the way the training department is organised in this bank, is that in its service company role, it operates on a cost recovery basis by charging for the services it provides. At the moment approximately £70 million is spent on training and over

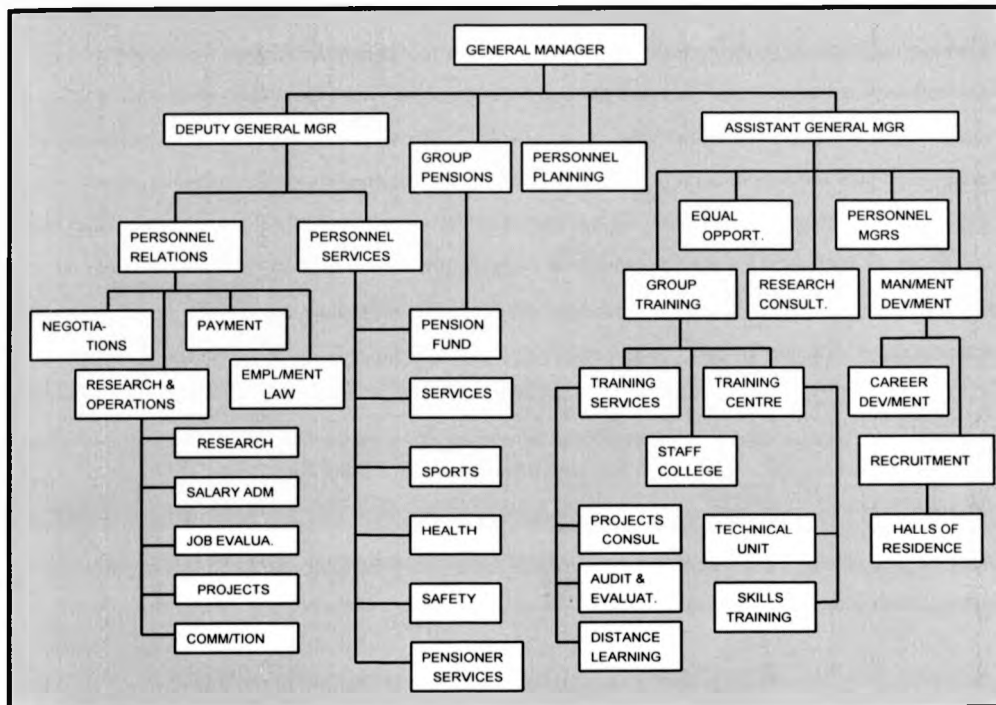


Figure 7.3: The organisation of the training department in relation to the HRM function within bank A.

7,000 people are said to be trained in a year. The members of the training department are primarily bank staff who are there to serve a turn of duty for 2-3 years. These people are usually found in the lower levels of the department's hierarchy. They are usually trained as tutors and at the end of their placement to the training department they return to the line function. Only a small number of human resource specialists exist. These individuals are usually found at senior levels of the training department.

7.3.2. The training process within bank A

The hierarchical structure of this bank and the way the training department is organised help explain the centralised and systematised training process in bank A. Although there does not appear to be agreement among training providers as to what training is, a common theme in their responses is the distinction between training and development. Training is described as the "technical input" to improve job performance, whereas development is the "personal" and more "general development of competencies" (Senior training provider). The distinction is better illustrated in the words of a training provider who explained that:

"Training is aimed at improving somebody's current performance at work and therefore tends to match the skills necessary to do the job. Development is aimed at a medium to long-term improvement in competencies".

According to training providers, the overall objective of training is to improve workplace performance which is achieved through a "systems approach". This approach to training is said to ensure that training is relevant and continually up-to-date. This claim is reflected in the bank's training and development policy and other related pamphlets which point out that:

"training should be linked to the business objectives of the bank and it is by this systematic approach to training that the organisation is able to check the cost effectiveness of training and its relevance to the needs of our staff... The systems approach to training is a discipline designed to keep training economical, adaptable and relevant to the needs of all those who work in the bank".

The systems approach to training identifies specific steps which should be followed. These are illustrated in Figure 7.4. Some training providers hesitatingly admitted that the systems approach is not always followed, because it tends to be very time consuming. Therefore, in practice, the main mechanism for identifying training needs is the performance appraisal

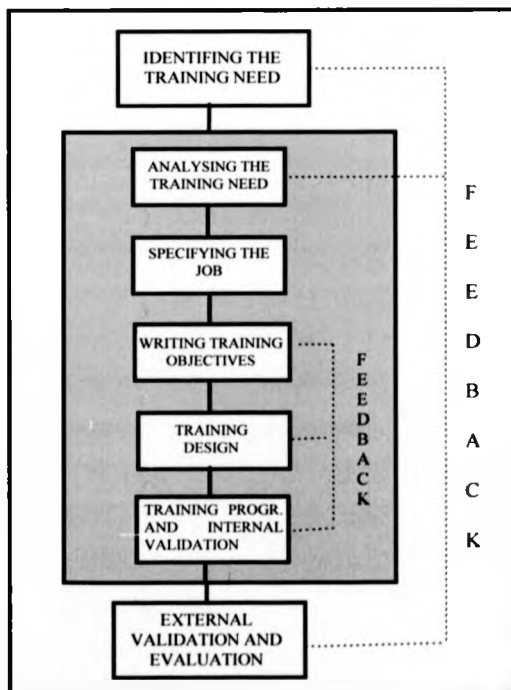


Figure 7.4: The systems approach to training in bank A.

system. Training providers explained that the annual appraisal process assesses individuals' on their current level of skills, competencies and performance, which in turn indicate any emerging training need(s) (Randell et al., 1972; Barlow, 1989; Townley, 1990). As a result of this process the line manager has access to information which indicates "what is on the shelf" (i.e. what training already exists) and what is suitable for the needs of each individual. In addition to this process, training is provided when individuals move to a new role, acquire a new title or when they are being transferred to a new position either temporarily or permanently. These circumstances are considered by training providers as the easiest way to identify a

training need, because the knowledge gap can be addressed immediately from the menu of training courses available. According to training providers the tradition in the bank is that a lot of training involves 'sitting with Nelly' which is based on instruction. However, in recent years the emphasis has been placed on a learner-centred approach to training and a mixture of training methods is said to be employed. Training providers referred to interactive video, role playing, computer-based training, workshops, courses (residential/outside) action learning, secondments and job rotation as the main training methods employed within bank A. There was not any consistency in the providers' descriptions of the methods adopted. Moreover, some providers could not easily relate to the current training approach nor explain how or why the different methods are adopted. The remarks of a senior provider illustrate the point:

"The menu of training courses is wide and continuously changing and I have to say that I haven't got a good enough information base as to the effectiveness of different methods. I know what the staff college does, what it attempts to do and certainly there are a number of courses, where the individuals come back extremely motivated to do a good job...but I haven't got a feel for whether a course replaces six months experience, or whether six months experience is better or worse than...I do know that most of our training is designed to be complementary to work experience rather than a substitute".

According to training providers, training has undergone considerable change in recent years, both in terms of volume and quantity. Recent changes in training policy have given particular attention to the analysis of individual training needs. Training providers describe future training as a "a joint partnership" with line managers and individual members of staff. A senior training provider pointed out that:

"...more and more training will have to be done by members of staff in their own time and at their own expense in order to continue to qualify for their job...the organisation will not be able to afford the sort of money that it has been to train for the future".

Self-development as an approach to management training and development has been introduced within bank A on the assumption that a DIY (do it yourself) approach to development will be less costly and more efficient (Temporal, 1984). According to training providers the future style of training delivery is expected to be shorter in duration and more focused on specific needs. There will be a shift from courses and workshops, to "modular training" which will provide training on demand. Moreover, there will be a shift from residential training to local training. More training will be delivered at the work place and

greater reliance will be placed on "peripatetic teams of tutors" travelling outside the Staff College to deliver training. According to training providers there will be heavier reliance on technology-based training as part of the new training approach. It is evident from the above that the new training delivery strategy is the result of changes in the product range offered by the bank, customer segmentation, layout changes in the branches and general changes in the staffing and operations. These changes are also expected to affect the training content. At the moment the content of training is described by training providers as being 50% technical or business skills and 50% management skills. However, in view of the current changes, more investment is said to be placed on business skills (technical) training. This is the result of the changes in the point of sale (delivery of service) strategy and product mix changes at the retail outlets of the bank, as well as, the failure to achieve profit targets for 1991. A senior figure in the bank said that:

"...the effect of the changes is a shift from management skills training to technical skills training, because the crucial thing here is various individuals who are actually up front in our points of delivery. There is therefore, a shift in terms of priority, because it needs to happen like tomorrow. So management skills training is less important".

The view expressed by another training provider contradicts this. He said that: "management training probably contributes more in its ability to help people manage change and more and more we expect the organisation to turn on their existence and more and more we will expect managers to be participative in their management style...and you cannot do that unless you have the training".

These contradictions show that the preconceived views of senior managers influence the value attached to training as well as the level and direction of the changes introduced in the training arena. One manager's comments illustrate this point: "training is being perceived as just sending people on courses, this is the way it has always been done...the stuffy image that managers don't need to learn, all they need is experience". Although training providers suggested that training is moving away from a "teacher-centred" approach towards a "learner-centred" approach, it is evident that abandoning old practices will not be easy in this bank. The description of one provider shows this point more clearly:

"Its a paradox in a sense; what you find is that the better a manager is the more likely they are to identify their development needs and the poor management performers really would tend to be reluctant to come forward... in general the policy

of the bank has been that managers in the bank get nominated for management training as a result of selection being made probably at a distance, by a senior HRM manager and will be selected based on whether they had recent management training or whether they have any specific needs. That is not to say that there are not cases when individuals might say; I would actually like to attend this certain course, because I need it and think it is useful to me. That does happen, but it is not the normal I would say. I think the more senior they are the less likely to do it".

A new scheme which now seems to be gaining ground in the training arena is "competency profiling". The use of specific competencies within bank A differs from that in other organisations. According to the bank's appraisal guide, competencies "have been designed to encompass performance and provide an indication of potential. Although there is an interrelationship between competencies in many of the tasks undertaken by managers and other appointed staff, each competency is capable of being assessed in isolation in terms of the individual's performance and the relevance of the competency to the job". The bank employed the services of a known researcher in this field and funded studies which aimed to establish the main skills and knowledge needed now and in the future. The outcome of this process was a list of thirteen competencies which describe the standards of ability expected by individuals across a range of jobs in the bank. The identified competencies are: information search, analytical skills, solution finding, interpersonal search, decisiveness, leadership, team skills, staff development, personal impact, presentation skills, need for excellence, customer orientation and management control. So far competencies are mainly adopted for recruitment and selection. The adoption of the competency framework for performance appraisal and training are expected to be gradually introduced. In terms of training, this scheme is intended to operate on the basis that individuals will assess themselves, then repeat this process jointly with their line manager and with their trainers. This three stage process for identifying individual training needs is expected to aid communication between training providers and recipients and improve the training offered. Despite these developments, individuals' training needs are significantly constrained by the strategic needs of the organisation. As one training provider explained:

"In the identification of organisational and individual training needs, attention initially is placed on the organisational strategic needs...From the strategic point of view, you tend to start with a tactic and say what do we need to do in order to get people up to speed in a particular area. From the other angle you say, we've got a manager or an individual with a defined set of competencies and you have a vision of what they need now and what it is likely that they may need in the future and you tailor make the training for the individual. Hopefully the two meet".

It appears from training providers' accounts that management training and development in bank A is heavily biased by the priorities of the organisation and that there is limited space for individuals' development needs (Rainbird & Maguire, 1993). Moreover, the approach of identifying training needs described by training providers suggests a focus on current needs and an emphasis on behavioural outcomes (Argyle et al., 1962; Bass & Vaughan, 1969). For example the introduction of recent initiatives such as the competency framework and self-development are themselves narrowly defined to meet organisational priorities and are focused on demonstrable outcomes (e.g. improved performance, change in behaviour etc.). The contradictions observed in managers' accounts illustrate the multiple purposes that training is seeking to fulfil which set boundaries to the way training is defined and the way its effectiveness is measured. This issue is evident in the way training is evaluated.

7.3.3. The evaluation of training in bank A

Although definitions of evaluation vary substantially among training providers, they tend to emphasise the perceived benefits to the organisation. Remarks such as: "are we getting value for money", "are we getting a return on investment", reaffirm that evaluation aims to identify the 'tangible' contribution of training to the organisation. Evaluation is distinguished from validation on the basis that the latter examines whether training has fulfilled its objectives. A senior provider explains the distinction between validation and evaluation saying that:

"... in validation I am looking to see whether the objectives set in the outset have been achieved. That is relatively straight forward. By evaluation I am taking a total picture of whether it is cost effective... It is almost like saying, validation is to set out to get from A to B. Did you arrive at B is your validation. Your evaluation examines, was your journey necessary in the first place? Has it been justified and achieved what the organisation wants to achieve? Evaluation is a much broader view".

According to training providers evaluation of training is done in two ways. One way is through the central Audit and Evaluation function at the Head Office. This unit reports to the Head of Group Training and using a computerised system it evaluates systematically all courses delivered centrally. The evaluation is based on two questionnaires completed by the trainee before and after embarking on the training course. The latter questionnaires are known as "reaction questionnaires" or else "happy sheets" and are designed to obtain the immediate response of trainees as soon as the training course is completed. A related objective of these questionnaires, is to measure the effectiveness of the tutors and their ability to pass the "right"

message across. This is established by measuring the knowledge of the trainee at the end of the course. Further feedback is sought six to eight weeks after the course and sometimes after six months. This part of the evaluation process takes place between the line manager and the trainee who review the effectiveness of the training in terms of its relevance to the current job and in relation to changes in performance as a result. The second and less formal evaluation is when trainees write back to trainers describing the impact of the course to their knowledge and skills and how they personally benefited and what has been the impact to the organisation.

Training providers' descriptions of the evaluation process within bank A suggest that the criteria for assessing the effectiveness of training are not always clear and tend to vary. This observation explains why there is a lack of consistency in definitions and the views of some providers who dispute whether evaluation actually takes place. The response of one of the providers confirms this point:

"...in very simple terms we don't evaluate, but having said that we rely upon the accumulated wisdom of many many years, in that the training we produced in the past seems to have aided the development of the majority of staff and at the same time we have used training for a variety of purposes".

Table 7.1: The evaluation criteria in bank A

• practical application of the course material
• obstacles to implementation of knowledge
• whether course objectives were met
• any change in trainees' ability
• trainees' perceptions of course benefits
• the timing of the course
• level of confidence in applying material

Table 7.1. provides a summary of the main evaluation criteria described by training providers. Although the various criteria used to establish training effectiveness suggest that importance is attached to different aspects of training there is no clear view among training

providers as to what happens when an individual returns to their work environment. As one of the providers pointed out:

"what trainees do when they return back to their job, ... in all honesty we don't know. What I do know is that if trainees did not perform better when they went back to their job, I would have their line managers straight on the phone. I know that".

The limited knowledge about the impact of training on individuals' performance on return to the job is attributed to the difficulty of measuring performance particularly in relation to management skills, which by comparison to technical skills, are more difficult to recognise and measure. The difficulty of measuring performance outcomes causes some training

providers to question the objectivity of the evaluation process and limits their confidence in the reality and validity of results. As one provider pointed out:

"The information provided is subjective, because all individuals will be asked to do, is to answer a questionnaire for a program they had attended six months ago. The questions may ask whether the programme was at the right time, relevant to the job, ...but they mean nothing, because am I going to tell you that I utilised only 2% of the skills I learned, on the job? No, of-course not. So it is not effective...most of the results are hypothetical".

The evaluation of training in bank A, shows again that the priority is on organisational needs and it does not appear to provide the space for individual managers' views of the value attached to different training methods or different aspects of training provision (Hamblin, 1974; Bramley & Newby, 1984). When managers were asked to describe what they consider as the main contributing factors to training effectiveness, unlike training providers who define

<i>Training content</i>	<i>Method of delivery</i>
• high quality	• match learning styles
• relevant to needs	• professional standard
• applicable	• maintain interest
• easy to understand	• encourage questioning

training effectiveness in terms of outcomes (often monetary), individual managers evaluate training effectiveness on the basis of the quality of the content and the method of delivery. Individual

managers explain that in terms of course content, quality is measured in relation to its relevance and significance to participants' needs, while the quality of delivery method is assessed in terms of its flexibility in matching individuals' learning styles. Moreover, maintaining interest and encouraging questioning are perceived to affect the quality of training methods. The criteria employed by managers in evaluating effectiveness of training within bank A are summarised in terms of frequency in Table 7.2.

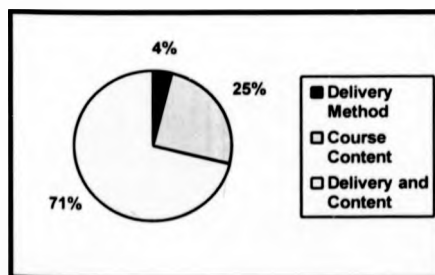


Figure 7.5: The importance attached by managers to the training content versus the method of delivery in bank A.

The majority (71%) of individual managers within bank A attach equal importance to both the method of delivery and the content of training and perceive that for a learning experience to be complete both aspects of training must be in place. The interdependence of the method of delivery and the content of training is evident in the comment of one manager saying that: "a good content can be

destroyed by a bad method". Another manager added that: "a good delivery can make a content look better". The picture developed in this organisation regarding this issue is illustrated diagrammatically in Figure 7.5. When managers were asked to explain the perceived significance of external aspects of training (such as the venue, the facilities, the equipment etc.) in relation to their impact on training effectiveness more than half of the managers (54%) said that the internal factors of training (i.e. the training content and the method of delivery) are the most important. External factors are perceived as "a nice add on", however, they are not as influential in the quality of training. Figure 7.6. shows the proportion of managers who attach more importance to internal factors by comparison to external factors.

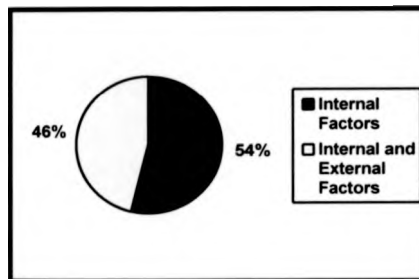


Figure 7.6: The importance attached to external factors by comparison with internal factors of training in bank A.

This analysis reveals the differences in the perceptions between training providers and training recipients (i.e. the perspective of the organisation in comparison to the perspective of the individual). These differences are further evident in the large proportion (65%) of managers in this bank who consider the current training provision as being inadequate in terms of meeting their learning needs. Managers expressed frustration regarding the highly technical orientation of training and they consider the current training provision to be ineffective, because it does not address the personal needs of individuals. Moreover, managers perceive the training process as highly bureaucratic which is considered as an obstacle to their personal development. Managers in this bank expressed a need for guidance on how to develop themselves in relation to the learning opportunities provided within the organisation (particularly training). Managers perceive that training should be able to motivate and empower them to assist the organisation in achieving its objectives. As one manager pointed out: "if the organisation wants to achieve its goals it must be able to help individuals understand them, conceptualise them, practice them, implement them, own them. Training is the key to every single activity".

When asked what managers perceive training should be able to do, managers in this bank referred to several issues (Table 7.3.) which combine personal priorities such as "providing confidence and insight on how to increase knowledge" and organisational concerns such as

Table 7.3: What managers in bank A perceive training should be able to do

• identify weaknesses and provide information to improve
• equip with technical & management skills to perform competently
• provide confidence and insight on how to increase knowledge
• enhance knowledge and understanding of the self and the context
• prepare in advance for unexpected future developments on the job
• help individuals' move away from old ways of doing things

“equip with technical and management skills to perform competently”. It has been noted that managers in this bank perceive that personal and organisational needs go

hand in hand. It appears that despite the criticism of training provision, managers believe that training could address personal and organisational needs simultaneously. This issue suggests that managers in this bank associate their personal development closely with the development of the organisation, consequently they perceive that training could reconcile their needs. This observation is further evident in the large proportion of managers (83%) in this bank who believe that organisational and individual learning needs can be reconciled. A comparison of managers' and training providers' views of the perceived association of training to other HRM functions provides further examples of the way training is understood and practised within this bank, and indicates potential differences in perspectives which could inhibit their mutual development.

7.3.4. The relation of training to other HRM activities

This section will briefly discuss the relationships (or lack of) between training and other HRM activities. The objective is to establish whether the organisation integrates HRM activities and what is the impact in the way training is perceived by individuals who experience it. The hierarchical structure of the HRM function and the centralisation of units is expected to affect individual managers' perceptions of the relationship of training to other HRM activities. The way training is provided influences managers' perceptions of its intentions. Within bank A managers and training providers associate training strongly to motivation and reward and to a lesser extent to performance appraisal. Training is only indirectly related to promotion and career development within this organisation.

7.3.4.1. Training in relation to motivation and reward

This issue has been raised with both providers and recipients of training, in order to establish potential differences or similarities in the perspective of the organisation and the individual on this matter. On a practical level the way training is related to motivation and reward is intended to show how the organisation practically implements training and what are the

implicit or explicit messages that training carries for the individual (Keep, 1989b; Finegold, 1991). The relationship of training to motivation and reward is highly significant within bank A and is acknowledged by 52% of the managers interviewed and hesitatingly admitted by some training providers as well. Training is perceived by managers to be motivational and rewarding because it is not readily available and it tends to be directly related to specific grades and jobs. Therefore, managers feel motivated and rewarded when attending training, because it signals the organisation's intention to develop and to prepare them for specific roles. Managers point out further that being selected to attend a specific training course increases personal satisfaction, because it enhances knowledge and improves the possibilities for career development in the future. This view however, assumes a traditional approach to career development based on the certainty provided by the hierarchical career ladder which may no longer exist in this organisation.

Training providers explained that training has an element of both motivation and reward. A senior HRM manager said: "in all training there is a motivational and reward aspect to it that is seen by individuals. The human resource function is using this as a motivational tool, so it works both ways". Another training provider explained further that:

"...we provide specific training events which will either be delivered locally or some distance away from where the individual works...to a certain extent there is an element of reward and recognition. If one is placed in an external course is like getting brownie points if you like".

The link between training, motivation and reward is attributed to the training philosophy of the organisation which assumes that if training is motivational and rewarding then the desired level of performance could be achieved. This message is reiterated by the association of training to performance appraisal. As pointed out in section 7.3.2. the annual appraisal is the main approach for identifying individuals' training needs. Although competencies are employed to assess individuals and to identify their weaknesses, they are not utilised to guide their development or future training. This approach contributes to the perceived limited relevance of training to promotion. However, there is confusion as to whether training itself is the reward or whether training as learning leads to rewards such as promotion.

7.3.4.2. Training in relation to promotion and career development

Managers within bank A argue that there is hardly any link between training and promotion, primarily because individuals may be promoted to a position and then be provided with the training. This view is shared by training providers who argue that attendance on a training course does not imply that managers will be promoted as a result. A senior provider specifically explained that: "... the Union and the Staff bodies have for a long time wanted to relate training qualification with salaries and positions and the actual possession of a qualification or the attendance on a course doesn't confirm promotion". The lack of a clear link between training and promotion is further evident in the limited association of training with career development. According to managers training is not related to career development, because attendance to a training course does not guarantee promotion. Consequently, managers find difficulty planning their career development in relation to the additional knowledge they may acquire by attending training. Managers' responses suggest that individuals in this bank perceive career development as equated to promotion (i.e. moving up the hierarchical ladder, Wilensky, 1960). For fast-track managers the situation is different. Bank A has a very structured management development programme in relation to managers who are selected for executive positions. Once chosen, these managers follow a specific development programme which includes training courses which are provided by the organisation or an outside body. Some of these training opportunities are only available to these managers, thus widening the distinction between them and other managers. In summary, training within bank A is mainly related to motivation and reward, and only vaguely associated with promotion and career development.

The analysis of bank's A approach to management training and development in the preceding sections has indicated the following main characteristics: firstly, it is evident that within management training and development priority is given to organisational needs as opposed to individuals' needs. Secondly, the centralised approach of training provision limits input from the individuals. This observation is evident in the narrow definition of training effectiveness which emphasises outcomes (e.g. performance, behaviour etc.) instead of process. Thirdly, training within this bank has been used as a means of motivating and rewarding managers, however, it is not strategically linked to other HRM activities. Overall, the evidence regarding management training and development in this bank suggest an approach which indoctrinates individuals to the organisation's way of doing things, thus influencing the perspective they

take in relation to other issues. This observation is confirmed in managers' perceptions of the learning process within the context of this organisation which are reviewed in the following section.

7.4. Managerial learning in bank A

Managerial learning within bank A has some unique characteristics, which confirms yet again the traditional culture of this organisation. Managers within this bank rarely talk about learning. They mainly refer to specific training courses when describing learning experiences.

7.4.1. General perceptions about the learning process

Managers were asked to discuss their views of the way people (in general) learn. The learning process within bank A is perceived by managers to result from four activities; namely experience, training, modelling and coaching. According to the managers, people learn mainly by exposing themselves to experiences. A learning experience is not clearly defined because managers perceive that it stems from diverse sources, the most significant being life and the work environment. A central aspect of learning from experience is socialisation. Managers feel that "observing, listening, talking, and comparing one's self in relation to others in the social environment" is a source of experience which provides learning. Moreover, "personal willingness to improve" constitutes a learning experience, because it is perceived to encourage people to "reflect on their successes and mistakes and consider other ways of dealing with the events" they come across. Therefore, learning from experience is related to experimentation and reasoning.

Classroom interventions are perceived to be the second most important learning process for individuals. Training courses are perceived to be the traditional approach to learning and it is greatly valued by managers in bank A. "Modelling" is another approach to learning which is considered to be important because it involves copying others. The process of using models as a learning vehicle is perceived as a safer way of overcoming some of the anxieties and risks involved in the learning process. A unique feature of learning through modelling within bank A is that managers admire and trust those they choose to imitate. Finally, formal coaching is perceived to be an integral part of the learning process, because it is perceived to provide the personal attention and to offer a different dimension to the learning process. According to managers taking this view, coaching includes apprenticeship and close supervision and the

sense of being cared for and being looked after which some managers consider very important in the learning process.

When managers were asked to discuss the factors which they perceive affect the way individual managers learn better, they referred to a mixture of personal and organisational factors. It should be noted that personal factors were perceived as more significant than organisational factors. Among the personal factors managers referred to were "personal interest in the subject to be learned" and "commitment of the individual to learning". Managers perceive that "understanding the need to learn", "having the desire to learn", "being willing to admit mistakes", "being motivated" and "removing prejudice" are all factors deriving from the individual which contribute to better managerial learning. The most significant organisational factor perceived to affect learning is "feedback". Managers explain that "providing and receiving honest feedback and constructive criticism" is important in the learning process. Another important factor in their view is the organisation culture, "the climate for learning". Managers explain that "being encouraged to learn", "tolerating mistakes" and "providing a safety net" for the individual in the process of learning and experimenting are important aspects of a "learning culture" which facilitates learning. A third factor which is perceived by managers to affect managerial learning is training provision. Managers perceive that if "training is relevant to the job", "provided at the right time", "is personalised to specific individual needs" and "possible to put into practice" then it can influence positively managers' learning.

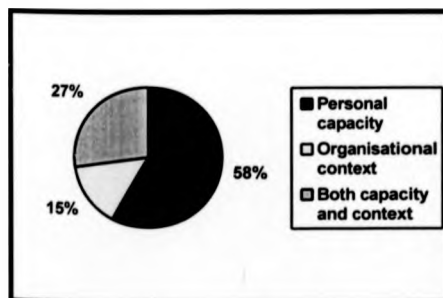


Figure 7.7: The significance attached by managers to personal capacity by comparison to the organisational context in the learning process in bank A.

When managers were asked to rate the significance of personal and organisational factors in relation to their effect on learning, a large proportion (58%) of managers in this bank rated personal factors as more important than organisational factors to the learning process. Managers were asked specifically to explain the significance they attach to personal capacity to learn by comparison to the organisational context in which learning takes place and to distinguish the effects of each in the learning process. Figure 7.7. illustrates diagrammatically

the variety of perceptions regarding the significance of personal against organisational factors with specific reference to personal capacity and organisational context. Personal capacity is perceived by managers in bank A to constitute an individual's ability to learn. It is perceived to incorporate an "individual's self motivation", "will", "ability to absorb information", "intelligence", "enthusiasm" and "the ability to learn how to learn". Managers consider that personal capacity is the starting point in the learning process. As one manager put it: "its the will to want to find out, not accepting no as an answer...looking for opportunities to learn. The more you do the more you want to learn". Personal capacity is seen to perform several functions in the learning process which are considered to affect the effectiveness of the learning process. According to managers personal capacity creates the need and the willingness to learn and a positive attitude towards learning which boosts individuals' self-confidence and enables them to be more in control of their learning. Moreover personal capacity is perceived to affect the acquisition and retention of information and to encourage overcoming fears in the learning process. Furthermore, it encourages individuals to be willing to take advantage of the learning opportunities that are available to them by influencing their receptivity to opportunities. Finally, it is perceived to affect the pace and rate of learning, and to determine how flexible, adaptable and responsive one is to different learning and teaching methods. In summary, managers who consider that personal capacity is the most important factor in the learning process, argue that it is a necessary prerequisite for learning. Personal capacity is described as the "raw material" in the learning process and it is therefore perceived to be a powerful component in the learning process. Personal capacity is perceived to be difficult to change, reinforcing the view that personal capacity consists of some inborn or inherent characteristics.

According to managers the organisational context is the "climate" and "atmosphere" which constitute the environment in which learning takes place. It consists of "the opportunities which help learning to be effectively utilised". As with personal capacity it is seen to play an important role in the learning process. One of its most important contributions is that it identifies the "right match between the job demands and the individuals' capacity". Moreover, it provides the "encouragement and support to do more and to try harder". If positive, the organisational context is perceived to help increase the pace of learning or to create the ability to learn by providing the necessary skills. As one manager pointed out: "the better the context the quicker people learn". Others said that: "it gives you the kick to do more", "its the extra

stage beyond personal capacity”, “it provides the safety net to fall back on to”. Another important contribution of the organisation context to the learning process is that it provides the time for practising and “sets a statement of purpose” to the learning event. According to managers the organisational context “sets guidelines for performing the job and determines how things are done by clarifying the work ethos”. The characteristics of the organisational context indicate why some managers perceive it as being more or equally important to personal capacity (Figure 7.7.).

The analysis of the importance of personal capacity and the organisational context shows that managers’ perceptions of the learning process are the product of the interaction between individual and organisational factors. Managers’ perceptions of the way people learn and what contributes to the learning process is also reflected in the critical incidents they describe as ideal learning experiences.

7.4.2. An ideal learning experience

When managers were asked to describe learning incidents which they perceive as ideal, managers in bank A referred mainly to training experiences on courses provided internally (i.e. within and by the organisation) as well as courses provided externally (i.e. by an outside body). Moreover, a relatively high proportion of managers (33%) described experiences of modelling someone as being an ideal learning experience. A very small number of managers referred to specific events such as a secondment, the level of responsibility in a new role, a poor report from the line manager etc. Figure 7.8. presents diagrammatically the proportion of managers in each category within this bank. More than half (52%) of the managers in bank A suggest that internal training courses provided at the Staff College, were an ideal learning

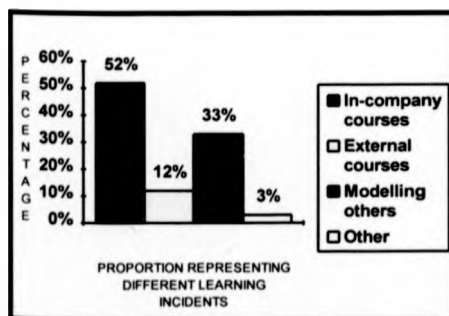


Figure 7.8: Ideal learning experiences of managers within bank A.

experience. Managers holding this view explained that the uniqueness of this experience was due to the fact that the training was provided at the right time, it was the appropriate content and delivery, it improved knowledge, skills and morale and gave managers more clarity about their future direction. A significant contributing factor to the uniqueness of the event was that it increased managers’ self-

confidence and the ability to talk more openly about personal aspirations and problems. As one manager explained: "I started to learn and believe in myself when I realised I could set goals and achieve them...the recognition of a trigger point which enabled me to get on to a self-development process which boosted my self-confidence". Managers who considered external courses as their ideal learning experience (12%), explained that these courses enabled them to be among people from other organisations and backgrounds and hence to be away from the bank's surroundings. Some managers described this experience as "a refreshing change" from the traditional courses they had attended in the past. They referred specifically to the freedom that these courses created for them, by enabling them to have autonomy in the learning process and to operate in a democratic team. Some claimed that as a result of this learning experience they became more receptive and better able to conceptualise the material on the course. Modelling was another significant learning experience for a high proportion of managers (33%). These managers referred to a specific individual who was charismatic and inspired them. As one manager pointed out: "...his example set me high standards". The inspiring managers are described as being energetic, enthusiastic, committed to developing their staff, emphasising detail, challenging individuals and their assumptions without shaking their self-confidence. Moreover, these individuals were described as being honest and willing to share power.

Managers' descriptions of their ideal learning experiences provide insights into the perceived impact of learning on their personal development. One factor which appears to be common among the learning experiences described by managers is an increase in self-confidence. Managers refer to an increase in self-awareness, and a greater willingness to embrace learning more consciously. As one manager claimed: "The learning experience widened the knowledge of the self and enabled me to understand how I fit in the bank's structure, recognising my strengths and weaknesses and trying to find ways of developing them". A significant proportion (53%) of managers claimed that their ideal learning experience affected their capacity to learn. According to managers the capacity to learn consists of the desire and willingness to learn, the enthusiasm, commitment and open-mindedness which affect the inclination to learn. Moreover, personal capacity is perceived to enhance the ability to absorb and retain information and to be receptive to new ideas. The impact on learn capacity was attributed by some manager to the realisation that they can learn from other learning resources and not just traditional courses. One manager specifically pointed out that: "I was impressed

by the ability to learn from other people and not necessarily a structured teaching process". Others attributed the impact on their learning capacity, to a change in their attitude towards learning. These managers argued that they learn more "fully" now, because they became more conscious of detail and more selective. Despite the positive effects of learning experiences, according to managers these were often not possible to sustain due to the organisational and personal factors which inhibit learning. The main personal and organisational obstacles to learning in bank A are discussed next.

7.4.3. The perceived obstacles to managers' learning

According to managers in bank A learning is restricted primarily by organisational factors and less by personal factors. A central aspect underlying managers' perceptions, is that organisational factors are less controllable by individuals, than personal factors. The organisational factors perceived to restrict learning according to managers are processual and cultural aspects and the way training is organised within the bank. A unique aspect of the organisational obstacles in this bank is that some of the restricting factors described are considered to be an unavoidable consequence of the nature of the organisation. The structure and size of the organisation, as well as its culture, are factors which managers consider as learning obstacles. The organisation structure is perceived to be an obstacle to learning, because being bureaucratic and highly centralised it restricts information flow and limits learning from day-to-day experiences. According to managers, the hierarchical nature of the organisation "encourages formality" and "restricts progress". A related issue is the organisation's size which according to managers limits communication and "does not provide everyone with the same opportunities for learning". A manager pointed out specifically that: "not everyone is sharing the same opportunities or is aware of what is going on...location affects how well informed and up-to-date you are in policies and training provision". Moreover, the large size of the organisation is an obstacle, because it does not provide the opportunity for personal input to policies and practices in relation to learning. As a result some managers feel helpless and powerless. A manager pointed out specifically that: "you can easily get lost within this organisation".

The corporate culture is perceived to be an obstacle to learning because it does not encourage or allow change. The traditional orientation of the culture does not provide much freedom to act. The culture of bank A is described as being "too rigid and stuffy" (senior manager).

Managers taking this view provide examples to illustrate this. A manager explained, that the line manager in some instances may block learning by being "negative or unwilling to share responsibility and power". Lack of personal initiative and willingness on behalf of managers to learn and change is perceived to be the result of the corporate culture. Some managers blame the ambitious strategies of the bank which are changing very rapidly. This is perceived by managers to increase the work pressure which consequently leaves limited space and time for learning. These factors are seen to perpetuate the lack of encouragement for learning and the limited learning opportunities available within the bank which are factors perceived as blocking learning. The culture of the organisation according to managers "does not place high value on learning" and "does not reward achievement". Managers argue that the lack of encouragement for learning is evident both in the practices of the organisation as well as the messages it provides. Regarding practices, managers explain that day release for training is not something the organisation provides gladly. This is reinforced in the organisation's perception that "good performers do not have time to go on courses" (Branch manager).

In addition to these factors, learning is constrained by some of the organisation's practices particularly in relation to training. The lack of individualism in training is perceived to be an obstacle to learning. The words of a manager confirm this point: "no training map is drawn for each individual, training is not tailored to individual needs". Moreover, the timing of courses

Table 7.4: The perceived organisational obstacles to learning in bank A
• organisation structure-bureaucracy
• organisation size- communication
• organisation culture & change
• lack of encouragement for learning
• limited learning opportunities
• bad organisation of training

often fails to address individuals' learning needs, because courses may be provided either too soon or too late. The lack of synchronisation applies to current job needs and the limited relevance of the training content. The quality of tutors is considered to be poor, thus presenting some managers with another obstacle.

This analysis shows the diverse issues within the context of this bank which are considered by managers to inhibit their learning. A summary of the organisational obstacles to learning is provided in Table 7.4. This analysis indicates the frustration among managers within this bank and shows a gap between the organisation's policies and practices. As discussed in section 7.3.2. although the training process is intended to be more learner-centred, in practice managers' descriptions suggest that this is not always the case.

Table 7.5: Managers' perceptions of the personal obstacles to learning in bank A

• personal life and family commitments
• lack of self confidence in learning
• other priorities and social relationships
• lack of proactivity - laziness
• fixed ideas and mindset
• perceptions and value attached to learning
• personal learning style

Managers within bank A are also critical of the personal factors which they perceive to influence learning. They appear to be honest and strict in their assessment of the personal obstacles to learning. Their own levels of self-confidence and self-esteem are perceived to be obstacles to learning, because by underestimating themselves and their abilities managers do not fully exploit the opportunities with which they are presented. In relation to this issue, a manager pointed out that: "I usually assume that others always know more than I do". According to managers, such feelings generate fear of failure when trying new knowledge and skills. This is also related to the fear of making mistakes and the fear of being punished, which are messages of the organisational culture. A person's state of mind is perceived to be an obstacle to learning, because as managers explained "fixed ideas" sometimes make the filtering of information difficult. Being brainwashed is perceived to negatively affect receptivity to learning. Another factor is the value attached to different learning methods and individual perceptions about the learning environment, the need to learn and the preferred style of learning. Managers refer to laziness and not being proactive on their part as factors which inhibit learning. Previous experiences and the way individuals have learned how to learn are perceived to be important obstacles to learning. A manager specifically pointed out that: "by being spoon-fed in the past, I lost the energy for self-directed learning". Finally, personal life style and other priorities in life (e.g. family commitments and other social relationships) restricts the time that is available for them to engage in structured learning activities outside their office hours. The various personal obstacles to learning perceived by managers in this bank are summarised in terms of their frequency in Table 7.5. Despite recognising intrinsic aspects of the self as being highly significant, managers in bank A, perceive extrinsic factors (e.g. family and social commitments) as being more influential. It should be noted that no gender bias was evident in this observation (cf. Gallos, 1989).

The discussion of managers' perceptions of the learning process and the factors which facilitate or inhibit learning shows the contribution of personal and organisational factors to the learning process and as is the case with training, both processes acquire meaning and significance as a result of the negotiation between individual and organisational development

needs. The interaction between personal and organisational factors is further evident in the perceived relationship between training and learning.

7.5. The perceived relationship between training and learning

The analysis of the training and learning processes within bank A in the preceding sections has indicated that both individual managers and training providers perceive a strong interconnection between the two processes. This section concentrates specifically on the perceived relationship between training and learning within bank A. From the perspective of individual managers training and learning are "inseparable". This view is held by the majority (88%) of managers interviewed. As one manager pointed out: "you can't have the one without the other. Learning is a distinct part of training. Learning is one of the aims of training". According to managers in this bank, the relationship between training and learning depends on certain characteristics of the training process. For example, training and learning are

Table 7.6: The conditions supporting the perceived relationship between training and learning within bank A

• training provides information
• teaching additional knowledge & skills
• training a chance for experimentation
• training shapes up ideas and aspirations
• training provides guidelines for action

associated because training provides "information", "additional knowledge and skills" and "guidelines for action". A unique characteristic of this relationship within bank A is that training is seen as "providing an opportunity for experimenting".

Managers perceive training to be a learning opportunity, because it enables them to practice away from the pressure of the work environment and helps them to learn more about themselves and others. As one manager explained: "training is a chance to improve capabilities and assess your strengths and weaknesses. It offers an environment in which you can afford to make mistakes". A summary of the main conditions which are perceived to underline the relationship between training and learning within bank A is provided in Table 7.6. Managers' perceptions of this relationship are based on the assumption that the individual will learn from formal training interventions, which is essentially the basis on which this organisation provides training.

A small proportion (12%) of managers however, who reflect more critically on this relationship suggest that there might be no relationship between training and learning because training is perceived as "time for relaxation and socialising". Interestingly, the view that training may be perceived as a time for relaxation and socialising is supported by training

providers as well. A senior provider made the following remarks in relation to this issue. He said:

“my experience of training within the bank is that there are certain expectations by trainees, from training. One of them is that they wish to be entertained. It is classic that when people go to training they want to feel entertained, encouraged and generally to have a good time. Whilst not solely feeling that it is a time when they should be working hard, because they have something to learn”.

Another factor seen by managers to restrict the relationship between training and learning is that “if trainees feel that the content of training is unrealistic and impossible to put into practice, then the opportunity for learning is lost”. A manager made the following remarks in relation to this issue: “...people usually unconsciously switch off when they realise that the material is unrealistic”. Some managers argue that by teaching the bank’s way of doing things, training “restricts horizons hence, it does not enhance learning” (cf. Legge, 1989; Preston, 1993; Croft, 1996). In summary, the perceived relationship between learning and training within bank A, is influenced by the historical and cultural factors which form the context in which training and learning take place. Moreover, as evident in the views expressed by managers and training providers training is perceived as an opportunity for learning, however, it should be noted that training has traditionally been the sole learning opportunity available. This observation explains why the relationship between training and learning is assumed to be linear and constant. In the light of recent changes within the bank it is important to consider the importance attached to training and learning in the context of change.

7.6. Training and learning in the context of change

This section will explore managers’ perceptions of the importance of training and learning in the context of change. The objective is to explore how managers and training providers in this bank understand the relationship between learning and change as well as that between training and change. From this analysis it is expected that the perceived relationship between training and learning in the context of change will be clearer. In order to contextualise the analysis it is important to discuss in more detail the recent changes in this banks (over the last five years) and to consider the perceived effects on the organisation and on individual managers.

7.6.1. Organisational change and individuals' adaptability

The recent developments in this bank discussed in section 7.2.2. show that the last five years have had a significant impact on the bank. Both external, as well as, internal forces have contributed to the organisational changes that have taken place. Competition is perceived by managers and training providers as one of the most influential external factors. It is closely related to the increased public awareness of financial instruments, as well as, the change in customers' perceptions and attitudes. The intensification of competition in the financial services is also attributed to the introduction of Governmental regulatory systems. Internally, the continuing investment in technology has caused several strategic and operational changes which have influenced employees' perceptions of their work. The move away from "traditional banking" towards a "sales oriented" approach is seen as the most significant change of this period. The impact and significance of the various organisational changes as interpreted by individual managers are discussed in the next section. The perspective managers take influences their understanding of the implications these changes have for both themselves and the organisation. A brief discussion of the different perceptions of managers and training providers indicates their interpretations and the factors shaping their understanding.

7.6.1.1. The perceived effects of change on the organisation

This section presents the views of individual managers in relation to the perceived positive and negative effects of change on the organisation. According to managers recent changes have meant that the bank has had to "rearrange staff levels and composition" and to "deal with a diversity of demands being exercised by different stakeholders". One overall implication was the need to change the way of thinking, especially the "old traditional mindsets", and "the attitudes of senior people within the organisation". Such implications, according to individual managers have affected the organisation negatively in several ways. One of the most significant negative effects of the recent changes is that "there is no life-long employment any more". Individual managers perceive that as a result of recent changes, the organisation acquired a "non-caring image" and "an attitude which is more business like and less friendly". This effect had further negative implications in that the organisation's expectations of employees have increased yet without the appropriate rewards. Changes in the policies of the organisation have negatively affected promotion and career prospects and have disrupted the career development approach used previously. The external pressures on the organisation to

change quickly is perceived to have "forced the organisation to change too quickly", without assessing all the implications. The rate of change is seen as contributing to the current disorientation and the "lack of clarity in terms of the direction the bank is taking". As one manager put it: "the bank lost its way and direction and now is in the mist of uncertainty and lacks scope". The changes in the culture of the organisation brought with them a short-terminism and an increased emphasis on cost reduction. A manager made the following comment in relation to this issue. He said: "the bank is no longer in the cosy cartel which was the case twenty years ago, now it chases profits". Table 7.6. summarises the perceived negative effects of change on the organisation.

Table 7.6: Managers' perceptions in bank A of the negative effects of change on the organisation

• no life-long employment
• a non-caring organisation. less friendly more business like attitude
• job security largely shaken due to redundancy levels
• increased expectations on employees without appropriate rewards
• changes in the policy have affected promotion & career prospects
• pressure to change quickly without attention to the consequences
• the organisation disorientated
• the change in the culture brought short terminism
• more emphasis now placed on cost-reduction
• communication has decreased

A significant observation from the analysis of the negative effects of change on the organisation, as interpreted by managers, is the impact of collectivity on the individual. As noted in Table 7.6. although managers are asked to describe the perceived effects on the organisation, they refer to the impact on individuals. This observation reinforces the comment made in section 7.3.3., that individuals within bank A identify themselves very closely with the organisation. In this instance managers perceive the negative effects of change on them as individuals, as being equally negative for the bank. Their interpretation of the effects of change on the organisation mirror their personal concerns and anxieties. This is confirmed by their perceptions of the positive effects of change on the organisation.

The most significant positive effect of recent changes on the organisation according to managers, is the introduction of younger people. Younger people are perceived to "bring a different perspective" because "they have different perceptions and styles" which provide the organisation with "new ideas". They are also perceived to be "more flexible to change". Moreover, managers explain that as a result of young people joining, there has been a change in management style and the bank has now become less autocratic. Age is perceived by both

training providers and individual managers to be a major plus in managing the change process. A training provider made the following comments specifically.

“As the old school are moving out and the young Turks are coming in, it helps change. Young people are now joining a changing bank and get used to having to change continuously. Older employees still remain with the old ways of doing things. They consider themselves as a bank manager whose role is only restricted to financial issues. A common attitude among these managers is; I am a bank manager I don't sell anything”.

The changes in the organisation's policy specifically in terms of recruitment, promotion and career advancement are perceived to have had a positive effect, because they illustrate that “more effort is being placed in achieving the right match between people and jobs”. These internal changes are perceived to have “generated more opportunities” and “more movement” which in turn have “facilitated the development of women in management roles”. Furthermore, another positive effect described by managers is that the consolidation of the changes in the structure of the organisation have resulted in “a more open system of communication” which is believed to have contributed to making the organisation “more

Table 7.7: Managers' perceptions in bank A of the positive effects of change on the organisation

• a younger population
• a less autocratic management style
• more responsive and competitive
• more open system of communication
• closer to customers and their needs
• more opportunities for development
• more effort in matching people to jobs

competitive”, “efficient” and “more responsive to customers and their needs”. Table 7.7. summarises managers' views of the positive effects of change on the organisation. The perceived positive and negative effects of change on the organisation raise awareness of the social and political factors which influence managers' interpretation of organisational changes and the meaning attached to the events as they unfolded (cf. Isabella, 1990). Managers' perceptions of the positive and negative effects of change on the organisation can be better understood by reviewing their views of the effects of change on them individually.

7.6.1.2. The perceived effects of change on individual managers

Managers were asked to consider how the organisational changes affected them personally. Organisational changes are perceived by managers to have had a mixture of effects on individual managers. For some managers change generated “ambiguity”, “insecurity and fear”, while for others it has generated “commitment”, “a sense of vision” and “enthusiasm”. However, individual managers perceive that the negative effects outweigh positive effects. In particular, they argue that change has affected them negatively, because it has generated

“more pressure and stress on the job”, “it has increased the expectations of the organisation” and “it has limited promotion opportunities and career prospects”. The lack of job security is for many managers a difficult issue to come to terms with. The realisation that the job is not for life anymore makes managers realise that they cannot be complacent. A manager specifically pointed out that: “the changes around us make you realise that you should stop having the illusion that being a manager is going to be easy”. Job insecurity has affected managers’ “loyalty and commitment to the organisation” and has influenced their motivation and morale. Some argue that they no longer have “faith or trust in the bank”. It is noticeable in bank A that there is a bitterness and anger which underlies managers’ views of the negative effects of change, which in some respects are common reactions when the psychological contract is breached (Newell & Dopson, 1996; Herriot et al., 1996). Another observation is that managers relate the negative effects of change at the personal level with those referred to at the organisational level. As noted in the previous section (Table 7.6.) managers in this bank identify themselves closely with the organisation and in effect, what is bad for them as individuals is perceived to be bad for the organisation as well and vice versa. Similar observations apply in relation to the perceived positive effects of change.

<i>Negative effects</i>	<i>Positive effects</i>
• increased pressure and stress	• more responsibilities
• limited promotion-job insecurity	• more opportunities to progress
• decreased loyalty & commitment	• more recognition
• decreased morale & motivation	• more self-aware

The most significant positive effects of change identified by managers are: “the increase in responsibility” and “the opportunity for job

expansion”. Recent changes are also perceived to have provided “more recognition of one’s efforts” and “a greater self-awareness”. An observation which is unique within this organisation is that the positive effects of change tend to be perceived more by senior and fast-track managers. Some of these managers welcome change, because they feel that: “it is for the good of the bank”. A senior manager specifically pointed out that: “changes were long overdue, the bank should move faster, more changes are needed”. The perceived positive and negative effects of change on individuals are summarised in Table 7.8. The positive and negative effects of change have had an impact on the factors managers perceive that facilitate faster and easier adaptation.

7.6.2. The factors assisting faster and easier adaptation to change

Individual managers and training providers do not share common views regarding the factors which assist faster and earlier adaptation to change. Training providers promote factors relevant to the needs of the organisation, such as "good leadership" and "clear sense of direction", "communication of corporate goals", "more autonomy for managers to act in their own discretion" and "a culture which rewards high performers, while encouraging some risk-taking". Individual managers on the other hand, argue that "the quality of the staff employed" is significant in managing change. "A skillful and motivated workforce" is perceived to make the difference. Some managers taking this view, point out specifically that: "staff who do not move with the organisation should be dismissed". The most significant factor rated by a large proportion of managers is "the need for more decentralisation and a flatter structure which encourages participation in decision-making". This view is closely associated with the perceived need for "simpler procedures" and "more accountability at all levels". It is interesting to note that this is a view shared by managers and training providers. Both managers and training providers believe that more autonomy and responsibility can facilitate responsiveness to change by allowing greater ownership. Training providers argue, that "individuals should be allowed to exercise their own discretion" and should be "rewarded for their initiative in taking acceptable risks". A training provider said:

"...there is a need to devolve responsibility, accepting risk, something that the bank is still averse to; but it has to happen. People should be allowed to make mistakes if they are given responsibility. The mistake is not giving responsibility. This is our culture; never do it unless you are exactly certain that there will not be any problems".

Managers acknowledge that more autonomy and responsibility is a cultural change issue and they perceive that this is a major challenge for the organisation in terms of changing its philosophy and removing threats which currently restrict people from playing a more active role in the change process. Another factor which is commonly perceived by managers and training providers as important in achieving faster and easier adaptation to change is "education and training". It is evident however, that education and training are rated differently in terms of its impact on individuals' adaptability to change. Managers believe that education and training would enable managers and staff to understand "what the organisation needs to achieve and why, and how they can be of help". Managers perceive training as an aspect of this education process, whereas training providers in bank A perceive training

Table 7.9: The factors perceived to assist faster and easier adaptation to change within bank A

<i>Training providers' perspective</i>	<i>Individual managers' perspective</i>
• autonomy & responsibility	• flatter structure
• leadership & clear direction	• accountability
• cultural change	• quality of staff
• training	• culture change
• flatter structure	• education and training

training as “the way managers translate the vision into operational reality”. Table 7.9. summarises the factors managers and training providers consider important in assisting faster and easier adaptation to change.

This review of managers' and training providers' views regarding the change process and the perceived effects on the organisation and the individual provides the necessary background for exploring the perceived importance attached to training and learning in the context of change. The perceived relationship between change and learning is explored first and is followed by the perceived relationship between change and training. The analysis is focused on managers' perceptions of these relationships and where possible these are compared to training providers' perceptions.

7.6.3. The perceived relationship between change and learning

In the context of change, learning is perceived by managers within bank A as “a means of adapting to change”. When managers were asked to discuss their views of the role of learning in relation to present and future job changes managers explained that learning is a means of “remaining abreast of changes”, “maintaining an open mind”, “a means of facing uncertainty and job insecurity” and “understanding how to keep up with the pace of change”. These

Table 7.10: The functions of learning during periods of change

• remain informed and up-to-date
• understanding change and adapting
• overcoming present uncertainties
• acquire more knowledge

statements capture the perceived contribution of learning to the change process. Table 7.10. provides a summary of the main functions of learning in relation to change. It has been noted that although managers unanimously (100%) consider learning as being very important in relation to current job changes, a smaller proportion (81%) of managers argue that learning is less important in relation to future changes. The relative importance of learning in relation to present and future changes is illustrated diagrammatically in Figure 7.9.

primarily as “a communication tool for achieving a shared understanding of the change process”. Training providers perceive

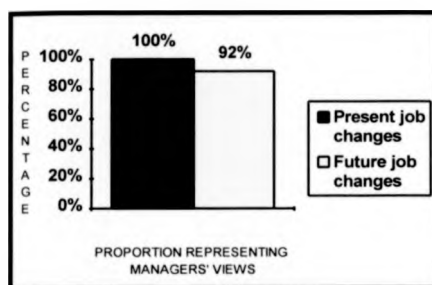


Figure 7.9: The importance attached by managers to learning in relation to present and future job changes in bank A.

Managers taking the view that learning is less significant in relation to future job changes explained that they face a dilemma as to whether they should be investing time in learning when they are not sure what the future holds. These managers pointed out that because of the relatively limited opportunities for career development within the organisation, in the light of recent changes - redundancies, they feel that "learning is very unlikely to secure their future

employment". Moreover, it was noted that managers' perceptions of the limited role of learning in relation to future job changes is shaped by the organisational culture which is not considered to be supportive of learning particularly for individuals at more senior levels. A manager said: "the bank places less importance on learning when you reach a certain level". This factor reflects the impact of the negative attitude of the organisation towards learning and the implicit or explicit messages of the organisational culture of this bank on the importance attached by managers to learning in the context of change (Rigg, 1989; Maguire et al., 1993). The analysis of the perceived relationship between learning and change suggests a unidirectional link between the two phenomena. Managers' descriptions suggest that they perceive learning as a means of adapting to change. Learning in relation to present and future job changes is perceived as a means of survival rather than an opportunity for self-development. Managers in this bank do not perceive change as an opportunity for learning. Managers perceive learning as a vehicle for coping with change and not as a proactive means of planning their development and growth. Similar characteristics are to be found in managers' perceptions of the relationship between change and training.

7.6.4. The perceived relationship between change and training

The perceived relationship between change and training has been explored both from the perspective of the organisation (as described by training providers) and that of individual managers. The analysis of this relationship will consider first the perspective of the organisation. Training providers were asked to describe a recent major change introduced and to describe the role of training in this process. The responses provided by training providers suggest that both historically and presently training and change have been strongly

interconnected in this bank. From the perspective of the organisation training is perceived as the obvious arena for overcoming the internal and external forces of change. According to training providers, training is the means for the "effective implementation of the change". The recent changes have been supported by the introduction of new training courses which aimed to "make the transition easier". Senior managers in the bank perceive training as "a means of rebuilding trust and communicating to people what is happening and what the future holds". Training providers explain that a central function of training during periods of change is to encourage a "change in behaviour". A senior provider pointed out specifically that: "training can assist and cause change in people's behaviour. Therefore, we first need to decide how we like people to behave".

A small proportion of individual managers (12%), however, are not convinced that this is the role of training in relation to change. In fact, some managers argue that "training cannot achieve behavioural change". A manager specifically pointed out that: "Training could be a change agent, but it cannot achieve behavioural change. People are changeable within bounds. Few people can cover the distance. Some are already there, others cannot come at all". Despite this view, the majority (88%) of managers in bank A, overall perceive that training makes a significant contribution to the change process. The most significant contribution of training in relation to organisational change is in "clarifying the purpose of change" and "enabling people to understand how they can manage it". Training is primarily seen as an "essential communication tool" which should take different forms and "enable managers to convey, inform and explain messages to their staff".

Table 7.11: Managers' perceptions of the contribution of training in relation to change within bank A

• define and explain change
• an essential communication tool
• facilitate adaptability in change
• ensure a uniform direction

The strong link between training and change is further evident in managers' responses who describe training as "the only" way of enabling people to accommodate change. Managers perceive that training is a means of "helping everyone understand what their role will be in the new set up". Moreover, training is considered to "facilitate development and adaptability" and to "enable a speedier response" to organisational changes. The words of one manager illustrate the close relationship between training and change within this organisation. He said: "training is change and change is training. The changes in the branch network in the bank are

a training programme". A summary of the perceived contribution of training in relation to organisational change, as seen by managers in bank A are summarised in Table 7.11.

On the basis of the longitudinal analysis of relationships within this bank, managers were asked to explain whether they always maintained these views about the relationship between training and change. From managers' responses it appears that managers within bank A have not always held the view that training and change are strongly interconnected. More than half (54%) of the managers interviewed claimed that their views about the relationship of training and change have been shifting particularly in the light of the recent organisational changes they have experienced. The majority of the managers taking this view claim that they are now clearer about the role of training in relation to organisational change and realise that training is only "one of the elements which may facilitate change". The words of a manager capture this most aptly. He said: "I now understand that there are more ingredients to change not just training". Another manager with reference to the last training course he attended said: "it did not help adapt to change. Discussions during the course tend to be negative, because often people don't have something to compare it with". Managers who claimed that their perceptions of the relationship between training and change are not the same as in the past, pointed out that the shift in their views is the result of the changing views of the bank and the cultural change which is taking place.

In summary, the analysis suggests that the link between training and change, as is the case with the link between training and learning and the link between change and learning, is perceived to be linear and unidirectional. Training is perceived to perform certain roles in relation to change, however, there is limited indication as to whether managers change as a result of training. The different perspectives taken by training providers and individual managers, regarding the relationship between training and change, show the diversity of assumptions and the multiple and conflicting expectations of different stakeholders. In other words, the perceived relationship between training and change, as is the case with the other relationships examined so far, reflects the often conflicting priorities of the organisation and individuals. Moreover, it shows that in some instances individuals are conditioned to believe that an association between two phenomena exists, because they many not have been given the opportunity to experience other possibilities. However, when managers reflect critically on the perceived relationship between processes, they begin to question the nature of the

relationship and recognise additional factors which act as conditions facilitating or restricting the relationship. Therefore, it is possible to observe a different level of significance attached to different relationships. For example it is evident that the link between training and learning is stronger than the relationship between change and training or the link between change and learning.

The importance attached to different relationships is also influenced by the way personal and organisational development needs are negotiated. The section which follows explores the interaction between organisational and individual needs and the impact on individuals' perceptions of the interrelationship between learning, self and career development. By exploring this relationship the aim is to seek to understand more fully the factors which influence the importance attached to training and learning in the context of change.

7.7. Creating a learning environment

The contextual analysis of the preceding sections has indicated the significance of historical and cultural factors as determinants of the meaning attached by individual managers to processes (i.e. change, training and learning) and their interconnections. A relatively recent change in the bank's training philosophy has been the interest in a "learner-centred" approach to training (see section 7.3.2.). Initiatives such as self-development and competencies have been introduced, in order to facilitate this approach to management training and development. As part of the longitudinal analysis pursued in this study individual managers were asked to consider the three most important factors which they regard as essential for a learning environment to be created. The objective was to examine the extent to which recent training initiatives introduced by the bank have had an impact on managers' perceptions about the learning process. Moreover, the aim was to examine the actions managers take when planning and pursuing a learning goal in relation to their personal and career development and in the light of the uncertainties within their organisational context. From this analysis several important issues emerged about managers' perceptions of the organisation's encouragement to learn, to take responsibility for their personal development and to be creative. The perceived impact of the organisation's policy on managers' willingness to engage in further education and learning is also discussed.

Table 7.12: The factors perceived as necessary in creating a learning environment

• provide time for learning
• generate enthusiasm and motivation
• the organisation culture-conducive to learning
• effective, open communication and feedback

Managers' views of the factors which are essential for creating a learning environment suggest that training is not perceived as a primary factor contributing to a learning environment. According to managers a

significant factor in creating a learning environment is "having the time for learning away from the work environment and the day-to-day pressures". It is interesting to note that although training is seen by managers to provide the space for learning away from the work environment, it is not perceived to be sufficient. Managers argue that more "flexible training processes" are necessary to create a learning environment. A manager specifically pointed out that: "...not having to follow prescribed routes. Self-tailored resources should be made available to meet specific needs". A "clearer training policy" which provides "wider availability of learning resources and not just training courses" is perceived to be important. "Enthusiasm" and "motivation to learn" are perceived to be important in a learning environment, because they facilitate learning and enable individuals to "act as a sponge". A manager said: "motivation to learn is the recognition that learning is hard work and it is easier not to do it". Willingness and motivation to learn is perceived by managers to consist of a shift in people's attitudes. As one manager argued, "there is a need to overcome the stigma of those people seen to be trying to improve themselves". This point is very significant because it shows that managers' attitudes towards training and learning reflect the cultural attitudes within the organisation and the political aspects surrounding training and learning in the UK (Keep & Mayhew, 1996; Coopers & Lybrand, 1985; Sparrow & Pettigrew, 1987). A summary of the main factors perceived by managers as being important in creating a learning environment is provided in Table 7.12.

It has been noted that managers' descriptions of the factors contributing to a learning environment concentrate mainly on organisational issues. There is limited indication that managers in this bank explore the impact of personal factors. In fact when managers were asked to consider the role they could play in creating a learning environment, the majority of the managers provided broad statements such as "making recommendations for improvement", "being involved", "sell ideas to others" etc. These statements suggest that managers do not feel that they can make a substantial contribution. Some managers confirm this point explaining that they feel that their role in creating a learning environment is limited.

A manager said: "I am a small cog in a big machine". These findings show once again that individuals within this bank depend on the organisation for direction both in terms of their learning as well as their development (self and career related). The fact that managers identify themselves closely with the organisation is reflected in their views that personal and organisational learning needs can be reconciled, which (as pointed out in section 7.3.3.) is a view supported by the majority (83%) of the managers interviewed. Managers' reliance on the organisation for direction is further evident in managers' views regarding the organisation's encouragement towards learning, self-development and creativity.

7.7.1 Organisational encouragement: The impact on learning, self-development and creativity

The interaction between personal and organisational factors can be understood by reviewing managers' perceptions of the organisation's encouragement. Managers were asked to describe whether in their view the organisation encourages them to learn, to take personal responsibility for their development and progress and to be creative. Figure 7.10. illustrates diagrammatically the proportion of managers who feel that the organisation encourages them to learn, to develop themselves and to be creative. It is evident from managers' responses that

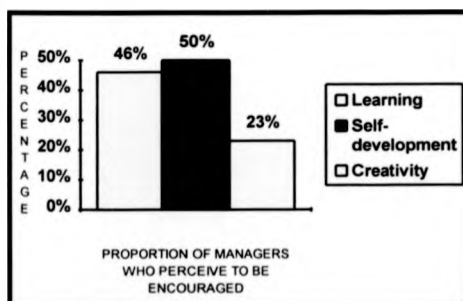


Figure 7.10: The perceived encouragement by the organisation in bank A.

less than half of the managers interviewed perceive to be encouraged to learn, while an even smaller proportion (23%) of managers perceive to be encouraged to be creative. Finally, only half of the managers' interviewed perceive that the organisation encourages them to take responsibility for their personal development. It has been noted that a large proportion of the managers who feel that the

organisation encourages them to learn, tend to be senior and fast-track managers. In some instances, these managers acknowledge that their position or status influences positively their perceptions of these issues, and even consider themselves as being "lucky", because they have been given more opportunities to participate actively in each of these activities. To some extent, this issue is acknowledged by training providers as well. A senior provider made the following comment: "...for fast-track people it is more difficult to get off the track, because once a potential is identified it is hard to stop where one feels comfortable".

Managers attribute this limited encouragement for learning to three main factors. Firstly, to the fact that opportunities for learning, as is the case with training, is often related to one's level of seniority. Junior managers are said to be treated differently from senior managers. A manager specifically pointed out that: "senior levels have more means available and their status determines how many and how frequently opportunities for learning are available". The apparent hierarchical system in learning is attributed to the differential levels of power and control. Senior managers are said to be the ones who determine what learning opportunities should be made available and "if they have mindsets which consider learning non-important then no one else does anything" (Branch manager). Secondly, the task orientation of the organisation is perceived to discourage learning, because learning is primarily associated with improving performance on the job. As one manager explained: "the organisation does not encourage individuals to learn, but to perform better at a certain job. The responsibility to determine how one improves is left to individuals themselves who rarely know what exists or what is available". Thirdly, historical factors and in particular attitudes towards learning are viewed by managers as a factor contributing to the perceived lack of encouragement. The "rigidity of the banking system" and the need to "follow rules and regulations which cannot be easily changed" are perceived by managers to discourage learning. The expected obedience to the rules of the system "hinders experimentation and making mistakes". A manager said: "the bank does a reasonable job in encouraging you to learn the organisation way. It is not how to change it".

This analysis reveals some contradictions in managers' perceptions of the link between training and learning and shows that managers in this organisation have been conditioned to perceive training as a learning opportunity. The organisation's encouragement for learning is limited to the training procedures and the policy of the organisation regarding professional qualifications. Moreover, the encouragement for learning is seen in terms of the opportunities the organisation provides in "understanding how it [the organisation] works and how different functions operate" (Branch manager).

Perceptions concerning the organisation's encouragement for self-development are divided. This division indicates the confusion that exists among managers regarding this issue. The arguments put forward by managers supporting the view that the organisation encourages self-

development show that it is a process which has only recently been initiated within this bank. Therefore, some managers perceive that the organisation "has started to" encourage self-development. However, encouragement for self-development is closely associated by some managers, with the level of seniority and consequently the relative level of power and authority. Others argue, that the encouragement for self-development is available only "if individuals push for it actively". As one manager put it: "...it forces you, because if you don't develop yourself nothing happens". According to managers the organisation's support for self-development is evident in certain specific procedures, such as the performance appraisal which in managers' view, "provides guidance on the areas managers need to develop". During the performance appraisal, managers are expected to report on the activities they have been involved in developing themselves. Managers claim that this approach forces them to "think of something". Some managers see this approach as a "psychological contract" between the organisation and the individual, in that it encourages managers to "define a career path". If managers are not seen as developing themselves they may get a "black mark". These views are reinforced by the increasing emphasis on Personal Development Plans (PDPs), as well as, the line manager's attitude on a day-to-day basis.

One would be inclined to question whether the fear underlying individuals' descriptions can be classed as encouragement. This observation indicates that individuals' interpretation of the organisation's encouragement is defined primarily in relation to the way the bank expects individuals to behave as a result. This observation suggests a strong link between organisation expectations and individual reactions and shows a strong level of dependency by individual managers on the organisation and a lack of personal initiative.

The factors restricting learning are perceived by managers to be accountable for restricting creativity as well. In addition to these factors, historical and cultural aspects of the organisation are perceived to be the most significant blocks to creativity. According to managers, creativity is "against the rules". A manager explained this point saying: "individuals who have attempted to be creative were considered as being trouble makers and their career was affected". The rigid and bureaucratic decision-making process is seen to restrict creativity, because it does not provide the opportunity for ideas to reach top levels in the hierarchy. As one manager argued: "Even if good ideas are recognised there is a "rigid" and "bureaucratic decision-making process" which involves a lot of people and which

Table 7.13: The factors managers in bank A perceive as indicating the limited encouragement of the organisation for learning, self-development and creativity

<i>Learning</i>	<i>Self-development</i>	<i>Creativity</i>
• learning is statutory	• annual reporting	• history of organisation
• task orientation	• encouragement to draw PDPs	• culture of organisation
• historical attitudes	• line manager's attitude	• rigid and bureaucratic system
• rules and regulations	• psychological contract	• opportunities at senior levels

eventually dilutes ideas". Table 7.13 summarises the main factors perceived by managers to illustrate the limited encouragement by the organisation for learning, self-development and creativity.

This analysis uncovers several contradictions between the organisation's "espoused theory" (i.e. its policies) and the "theory in use" (i.e. the practice) in relation to learning, self-development and creativity. Although the organisation, as presented by training providers' responses (section 7.3.2.), would like to believe that it encourages managers to learn and develop themselves it has been shown that the 'reality' is far from the desired state. The relative consistency in managers' responses regarding these processes within the context of bank A, shows that managers' perceptions are the result of their experiences and a product of the organisation's policies and practices. The impact of the organisation policy on learning is another significant finding shaping managers' perceptions of the significance of learning and training in the context of change.

7.7.2. The impact of the organisation's policy on individuals' learning

Managers' perceptions of learning and self-development as demonstrated in sections 7.4.1. and 7.7.1., appear to have conformed to the bank's way of doing things which restricts them from making choices for themselves. This observation is further confirmed, in the relatively large proportion of managers (60%) who claim to be influenced by the policy of the organisation in their decision to undertake further education and learning (i.e. to pursue the fulfilment of an identified learning goal). Another unique element is that a large proportion of managers perceive that the organisation's policy is the only means for "finding out more about their job" and "acquiring the necessary skills". These perceptions show yet again the dependency of managers on the organisation. The remarks made by one manager illustrate the point: "...if the policy of the organisation did not include the provision of courses I would not have taken the initiative personally". This dependency on the organisation is further evident,

in that managers interpret organisation policy as enabling them to pursue the educational opportunities that are available. Managers referred to sponsorships, time off and even psychological back up, as part of the organisation's policy.

Table 7.14: The factors influencing choice of activities in pursuing a learning goal

• accessibility & convenience
• personal preference
• operational requirements of job
• personal perception
• line manager's choice

The impact of the resources of the organisation on individual managers' approach towards learning is evident from the longitudinal analysis which showed that the most significant factor which influenced managers' choice of the activities they employed in their pursuit of an identified learning goal, were "convenience and accessibility" of learning resources (see Table 7.14). Despite the diversity in learning goals the majority of managers either attended a course organised by the organisation or relied on day-to-day experiences in pursuing their learning goal. The choice was affected by their personal preference and style, which confirms the observation that managers within this organisation are guided by the experiences they have had and the direction provided by the organisation presently and in the past. This finding helps explain the perceived disassociation between learning, self and career development by managers in this bank.

7.7.3. Learning in relation to self and career development

Although as evident from the preceding analysis managers in bank A perceive learning in relation to present and future job change primarily as a means of survival, findings from the longitudinal analysis within this bank suggest that in pursuing a learning goal managers recognise the need to develop themselves and to change their attitudes towards learning. When asked to explain the factors which influenced their decision to set a learning goal, managers provided the following responses. For example, a manager said: "It was the recognition, that if I was to play a part in the organisation in the future I needed to change". A senior manager added that: "It was the realisation of my weaknesses, insufficiencies and strengths and I made the decision to prioritise and improve those elements which were the most important at the time". These findings suggest that managers are beginning to see learning not just as a means of reacting to change, but as a vehicle for planning more effectively self-development. Figure 7.11. illustrates diagrammatically the factors which managers identify as influencing their decision to pursue an identified learning goal. The diagram shows that one of the most significant factor influencing managers' decision to

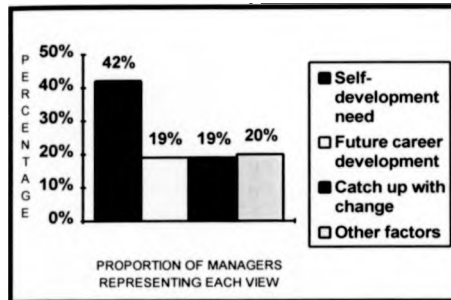


Figure 7.11: The factors influencing the decision to pursue an identified learning goal in bank A.

pursue an identified learning goal is the recognition of the need to develop themselves which 42% of the managers claim as the most significant factor influencing their decision to pursue an identified learning goal. However, it is evident that managers have a short-term focus in relation to self-development, because they are more concerned with “current priorities” and “the need to survive change”. A relatively smaller proportion of managers in this bank related learning to their future career development. Therefore, in pursuing a learning goal, managers within bank A are not clearly aligning learning goals to their career development. At most, they express a desire to see themselves “moving forward”. These responses suggest a willingness by managers to manage career development by avoiding redundancy rather than enhancing their possibilities for wider employability. The words of a manager are relevant in this context: “I recognised that my old way of learning would not enable me to move forward. I want to be promoted and have a good career”.

The limited association of learning with career development can partly be explained by reviewing individual managers’ perceptions regarding the extent to which they feel they are able to influence their career progression. Within bank A a very large proportion of managers (75%) feel that they cannot control their future career. As one manager pointed out: “the structure of the bank has a lot to do with your progress...its a matter of the changing politics of the organisation”. This issue is consistently emerging in this analysis as an important factor reinforcing the centralisation of processes and practices within this bank. For example it was raised in section 7.5.2. when reference was made to the relationship between training and performance appraisal and promotion. This is a very significant finding which may help to explain the negative attitude of managers in bank A towards learning and self development. The perceived lack of control on behalf of individual managers regarding their career, is demotivating them and does not encourage them to want to actively pursue their self-development. Managers in this organisation feel helpless and disorientated and the lack of future career orientation indicates that managers within bank A do not relate self-development with career development, because of the lack of clarity about their future career development

and their future responsibilities. The words of a manager illustrate the point: "I am not sure that I will be able to utilise the current knowledge and skills, because I may be doing a completely different job. The skill I need for the future is the ability to learn".

The analysis in this section enhances the observations about the nature of individual phenomena and their interconnections discussed in previous sections, by providing additional findings which show the contradictions between policy and practice at the organisation level and the gap between 'espoused theory' and 'theory in use' at the individual level. The analysis suggests that the relationship between learning and self-development is mainly individuals' survival strategy in relation to the current job changes. The lack of awareness about future learning needs, restricts the relationship between learning and career development. This observation is also evident in that self-development gives priority to current issues and less to future career development aspects. Therefore, within this bank managers do not associate learning, self and career development.

7.8. The key emerging interrelationships in bank A

From the contextual analysis of the main phenomena within bank A several relationships emerge. It is evident from managers' responses that the strongest relationship lies between training and learning. Managers believe that training is one of the most important means of learning. The significance of this relationship is influenced by the implicit and explicit messages of the organisation, as evident from the management training and development process and the association of training with other HRM activities. The organisation's policies and practices have influenced managers' perceptions of the relationship between learning and change and that between training and change. These relationships are similarly strong as the relationship between training and learning. However, a common characteristic of these relationships is that they are unidirectional and they are described by managers in mechanistic terms (i.e. training and learning performing certain roles in relation to change). Managers associate these processes by assuming they are linked on the basis that they are means to an end. In other words, training and learning are perceived to be a means of surviving change and facilitating adaptation. There are no indications from the findings that managers in this bank change as a result of training or that change is perceived as an opportunity for learning.

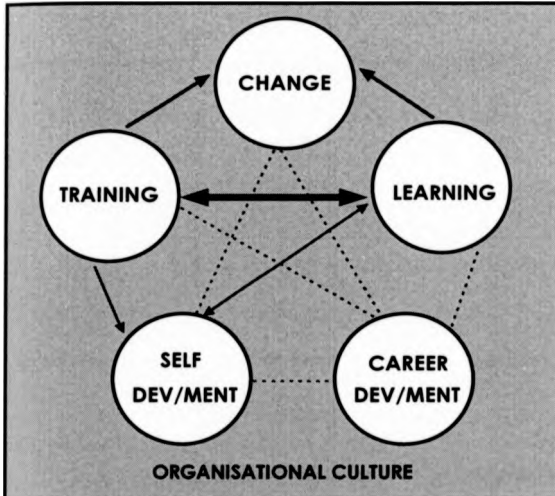


Figure 7.12: The emerging interrelationships between phenomena within bank A.

A central theme running throughout the analysis of this bank is the dominance of the organisation's perspective. This dominance is evident in managers' dependence on the organisation and their perceived lack of control to make choices for themselves regarding their learning, self and career development. As a result managers in this bank are not in a position to explore the interconnection between learning, self and career development. Managers'

short-term orientation limits their

perceptions of the relationship between self and career development and the association between learning and career development. There are indications however, that managers are beginning to recognise the need to take responsibility for their personal development and to change their attitudes towards learning. The main relationships emerging in this bank are illustrated in the research model presented in Figure 7.12. The different lines indicate the level of strength (i.e. level of significance attached by managers) of different relationships. Where dotted connecting lines link phenomena (e.g. self and career development) this suggests that managers in this organisation do not perceive that these phenomena are interconnected. Overall, the interrelationships identified in bank A are unique in that they show how the centralised structure of this bank has forced many managers to depend solely on the resources of the organisation. Managers identify themselves closely with the organisation and derive meaning about phenomena and their interrelationship by being indoctrinated to take the perspective of the organisation. The majority of managers interviewed do not question the organisation's assumptions and do not challenge the interconnection between phenomena. Therefore, they tend to take these relationships for granted and they passively respond to them.

CHAPTER EIGHT

8

Case Study Two: Bank (B)

8.1 Introduction

This chapter follows a similar structure to the one adopted in Chapter 7 for the presentation of findings in bank A. This bank (bank B) demonstrates several differences and similarities to bank A on individual phenomena and the perceived interrelationships between them. The contextually-specific nature of the findings from bank B will be discussed in the light of the historical as well as current developments. The chapter begins with a brief overview of the historical developments in this bank and the most recent changes.

8.2. A profile of bank B: A historical overview

Since its formation in 1810, bank B, has had a unique approach to the provision of financial services. Its founder saw its role mainly as a haven for the savings of the poor and a means of encouraging self-sufficiency by the promotion of thrift (Internal publication, 1994). During the first 160 years of its life (1810-1970) bank B remained dedicated to servicing solely personal customers, however, as the needs of customers began to change and the competition in the industry intensified (during the 1960s), the bank started to grow in size and complexity. The 1970s and 1980s were characterised by continual change which has been a major feature in the bank's growth throughout its history. During the 1970s there was a widening of services to incorporate lending to personal customers, insurance services and commercial business. During the 1980s the bank continued its expansion strategy by investing in existing businesses and selectively acquiring other financial services organisations, in order to expand its customer base. During the mid-1980s the Board made an offer for sale to the public. This offer formed the beginning of a new era for the bank, dominated by the attempt to live up to



Figure 8.1: The financial position (Profit/Loss before tax) of bank B.

its claims to be on a par with the big four banks across the full range of businesses. The 1990s continued the process of change under the new Chairman, who introduced further structural changes which shook the bank down to its foundations. (Figure 8.1. shows diagrammatically the bank's financial performance from 1989-1993 in £m). These changes have affected both the bank's size and

image and transformed it into a retail bank and a member of a group of companies with recorded profits of £504m (as at 1994).

8.2.1. Recent developments and changes within the organisation

The last five years have witnessed the most significant structural changes in the bank's history. These changes (1990-1995) were intended to provide a clear focus and a cohesive strategy for the future. The bank was restructured from 7 regions and 54 districts, to 3 regions and 21 areas. Customer Services Centres were established and began to take a large part of the administrative work out of the branches. This arrangement was intended to free up more staff for customer service and provide more physical space for the customer within the branch. Apart from the layout changes and the refurbishment of branches, to accommodate these changes, the new structure was intended to bring together sales and services under a single management. This change involved the merging of the retail banking and insurance operations of the bank, to forming what has now come to be known as "bankassurance". The statement of the Chairman in a recent annual report (1992) explains the change more clearly:

"The principal element of [Bank B] business continues to be retail banking and insurance in the personal sector. This has come to be know as 'bankassurance' and is a formula which [bank B] has found to be successful for a number of years and is now being further developed...[Bank B's] position of leadership in bankassurance was further extended during the year with the total integration of the management of the banking and insurance businesses at its head office in Birmingham. This streamlining will enable [bank B] to better meet the financial needs of its customers through banking and insurance products."

The aim of the bank during this period has been to lower costs and raise income, through investment in technology, the provision of quality goods and services and a strong staff base.

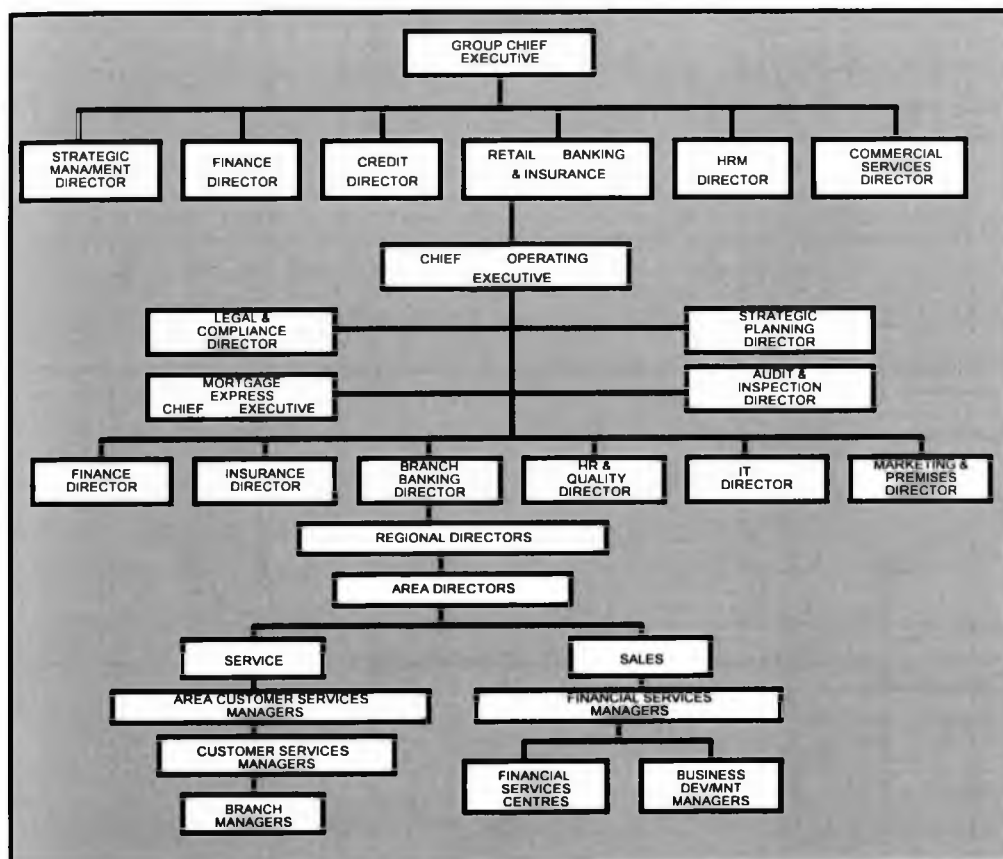


Figure 8.2: The organisation structure of bank B and the branch network.

These changes are intended to fulfil the organisation's mission "to be the UK's leading financial retailer through understanding and meeting customer needs and being more professional and innovative than our competitors". The recent changes have resulted in a substantial reduction of over 9,000 staff since 1989. The composition of the bank's staff has changed dramatically as well. The bank lost many of the older and more experienced managers and became a 'younger' organisation (most managers are in their mid-thirties). Nearly 400 branches have been closed down during the last five years. The present structure of bank B is illustrated in Figure 8.2.

8.2.2. Corporate culture and top management

Bank B has the image of a modern "money shop". Its surroundings have a blend of aristocratic and modern style. The physical layout of the offices and other areas both at the

bank's head office and in other regions and branches portray a relatively informal environment. Open space layouts make distinctions of hierarchical status less obvious. Moreover, verbal communication between senior and junior members of staff appears to be comparatively more friendly and open. A central feature of the bank's culture is its active commitment to change and improvement. This is an element embedded in the bank's history and evident in the rate of progress over the years. An additional contributing factor has been the strong leadership and the consistency in the philosophy of top management. The vigorous leadership of top management (the Chairman and CEO) during the 1970s through to the 1990s has been a major factor in the changes recorded during this period. The most recent Chairman (1988) when taking up his position said: "the changes are by no means complete...". In one of the annual reports at the time (1989) he made the following statement:

"It was clear to me, on my appointment as Chairman, that in many ways the Group was not yet in the right shape to take the maximum advantage of its strengths for the future benefit of shareholders. The Group has come a long way in its evolution, but it had not come far enough to be sure of flourishing in the fast-moving and competitive market-place and there had not, in some areas of operation, been adequate rigorous controls of its expansion. This was not an easy situation to have to tackle against the background of a deteriorating trading environment. But it had to be tackled. There were many areas in which change was necessary...I am glad to say that I found widespread support and enthusiasm for change throughout the Group".

Although, different Chairmen and CEOs have had their own unique approaches a common theme pursued by top management throughout the years, has been the continuous improvement and expansion of the bank, and a strong emphasis on its human resources. The bank has been committed to providing support for people to manage change. This commitment is evident in its HRM approach.

8.3. HRM strategy and implications for training

The bank's HRM strategy aims to provide the bank with "skilled, motivated and professional staff. We recognise that staff are our key resource and have the power to differentiate us from the competition in the minds of our customers". The HRM function in bank B is organised in four main units: Human Resource Planning, Training & Development, Employee Relations and Personnel Operation. Training in particular, has been seen as a central platform for implementing the HRM strategy both historically and presently. According to training providers the commitment of the bank to supporting staff development is demonstrated by the

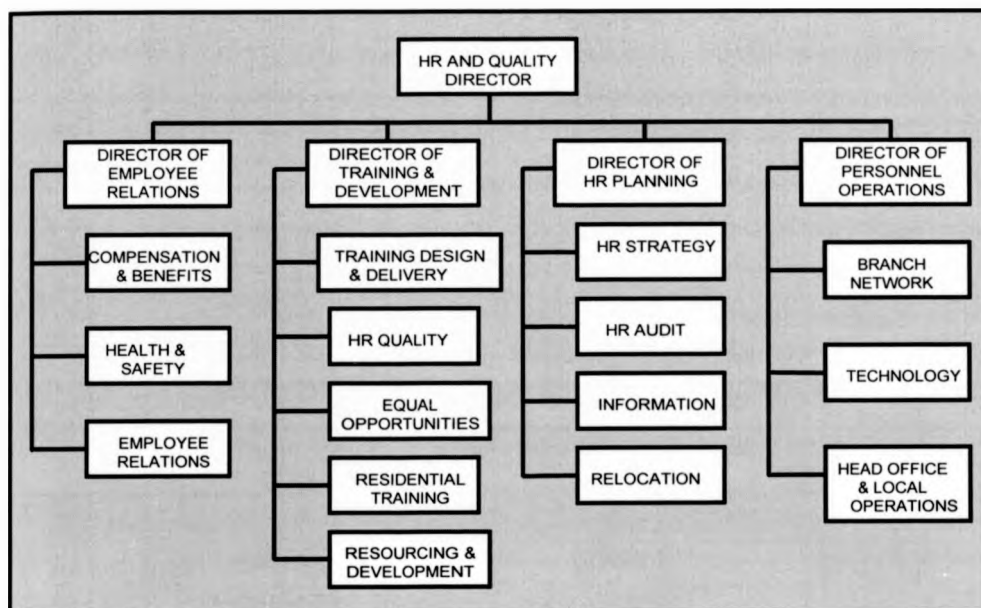


Figure 8.3: The organisation of the training department in relation to the HRM function within bank B.

investment in training particularly during the difficult days of the last five years. The training budget during 1993 was £17 million which is said to have increased by comparison to previous years. Training providers explained that approximately 25000 training days have been allocated during the same year. Moreover in 1993 approximately 5600 managers have gone through a training programme in one of the bank's staff colleges.

The structure of the training & development (T & D) department is fairly flat and consists of five main units; namely Resourcing and Development, HR Quality, Training Design and Delivery, Equal Opportunities and Residential Training. The department is responsible for the design and co-ordination of training programmes both centrally and locally. The structure of the training department in relation to the HRM function is illustrated in Figure 8.3. As is the case in bank A, the training department in bank B consists of people from a broad mix of backgrounds including training specialists from other organisations, as well as, a bank staff. Unlike other banks however, the T & D department in bank B incorporates recruitment, succession planning and performance appraisal as part of its portfolio of activities under the Resourcing and Development unit. It appears that an integrative framework is in place, which

seeks to explore more fully the interdependencies between training and other related HRM activities. This observation is reflected in the bank's approach to training managers.

8.3.1. The training process within bank B

According to the training and development policy statement the purpose of the bank's training and development investment is:

"... to ensure that we have an appropriately skilled, highly motivated and professional staff who deliver consistently to required national standards. To do this we ensure that:

- each individual understands exactly what their job requires
- each individual is trained to perform their current job to required standards
- staff are prepared for future challenges created by the business
- each individual is enabled to develop his/her potential".

A unique feature of the training process within this bank is the emphasis placed on learning. This is a recent (1992) change in training orientation which has resulted from survey findings, conducted within the organisation during the same period, which suggested that 60% of the bank's population feel that "training is attending courses". These results encouraged the organisation to reconsider the training methods (such as computer-based training, residential and non-residential courses, seminars, interactive video etc.) and to introduce a wider range of flexible approaches (e.g. self-development and self-directed learning, learning resource centres) which enable managers to have access to learning material and packages (e.g. books, video-tapes, audio tapes, self-study packages, work-based learning activities i.e. coaching, job shadowing, job rotation, secondments, project work etc.). The shift to more flexible training methods is expected to encourage staff at all levels to explore other learning opportunities and not rely on training courses alone in order to learn. The new training policy explains that:

"Learning is not just about going on courses, it is about consciously using your work activities to develop yourself... Making the most of other support and learning resources now available. Taking responsibility for your own learning means you will be able to fulfil your development needs."

Training providers point out that training over the last couple of years has been related to competencies and NVQs. As with other organisations, the bank embarked on an active programme of reviewing current and future skills and has developed its own list of competencies. Unlike the other banks however, bank B has been very cautious in adopting a competency framework and has started to investigate its use in the last three years. In this

bank a competency manager has been appointed with the prime responsibility of identifying the performance standards required for specific families of jobs and from this analysis to specify the knowledge and skills necessary to perform these jobs. Internal research projects aimed at describing the “effective manager” have been undertaken, in an attempt to identify supporting performance criteria. The outcome of these studies has been a list of eleven competencies, each consisting of several indicators of expected demonstrable managerial practice. According to training providers the use of competencies is intended to enable people to do their current jobs to the required standard and to allow a clearer distinction between training and development. This approach is intended to support the bank’s objective “to move away from a ‘push’ strategy towards a ‘pull’ strategy”. In other words, instead of sending

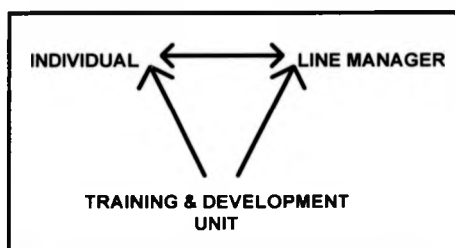


Figure 8.4: The training partnership in bank B.

people on training courses, because their line manager believes they need it, the individual would seek more actively their self-development and would take responsibility for it. To use the words of a senior provider: “The challenge for us is to move to a situation where

it is not the business training the staff, but it is the business providing opportunities within which the staff can learn and grow”. The recent changes in training philosophy within bank B have sought to create a triangular partnership (Figure 8.4.) between the individual, the line manager and the T & D department. The training policy states explicitly that:

“The responsibility of line managers is to guide individuals in how best to equip themselves for their current and future roles. They are also responsible for ensuring that appropriate action takes place... The prime responsibility for learning rests with individuals in partnership with their line manager”.

Although the emphasis on self-development, as a new approach to management training, appears to be similar to bank A, in this bank the interest in introducing self-development is not purely the improvement of the financial performance of the organisation, but a concern with changing individual attitudes towards training and learning. The transition towards more self-directed learning approaches is recognised by training providers as a cultural change for the bank, because “managers are not used to taking responsibility for their self-development”. One of the mechanisms which aims to assist this transition is the “continuous learning” project. The project aims to develop a package of audio-visual aids, as well as a booklet

guiding managers and staff on how to utilise the various opportunities that are available to them. A key mechanism facilitating this process is the introduction of Personal Development Plans (PDPs) and specialist development programmes designed to cultivate responsibility for self-development at all levels. The success of these initiatives is not yet known to the organisation, partly because they have been introduced very recently, but also because there is no systematic evaluation of training provision within this organisation.

8.3.2. The evaluation of training in bank B

Despite the vigorous effort of the bank to improve training provision, evaluation does not appear to play a significant part in the training process. Evaluation has not been undertaken in the past and it is only recently (1992) that the bank has established an evaluation unit as part of the HRM function. The lack of systematic evaluation is attributed by training providers to “the lack of time and resources” and “the complexity in measuring ‘soft’ management skills”. Training providers’ descriptions indicate clearly that there is currently a lot of confusion about the evaluation process and its purpose. Similar to bank A, there is a tendency to distinguish between evaluation and validation. According to a training provider, validation is: “...whether the course achieved its objectives i.e. have we done the thing right?” Evaluation on the other hand is: “Has the course moved that individual’s behaviour?”. Another provider categorically pointed out that the organisation has been validating, but not evaluating training programmes. He specifically pointed out that:

“Historically we’ve done very little of it (evaluation). We have done a lot at the end of a course; people filling forms and we’ve got records to go back and look at...We haven’t been evaluating training as such so far, what we have been doing, is at best validation whereby on completion of a course we would ask people whether that training has met its objectives and people would say yes...but I see them as superficial evaluations. I don’t believe that you evaluate if all you are evaluating is the style of the trainer or whether they thought the food was good. We are not actually evaluating the result of what individuals are doing back in the workplace.”

The fact that evaluation is something new to the T & D department is also evident in the diverse opinions obtained from training providers regarding the purpose of evaluation. Table 8.1. summarises training providers’ descriptions when asked what they believe evaluation should be able to do. An observation from training providers’ responses, apart from the lack of consensus, is contradiction. Senior training providers for example tend to argue that an on-going evaluation process is in place, while more junior HRM managers directly involved in

Table 8.1: Training providers' perceptions of the purpose of evaluation in bank B
• identify where money is being spent on training
• show the benefits obtained as a result
• assist in the prioritisation of the training effort
• provide a measure of productivity
• inform whether there has been any sustainable effect
• provide a measure of incremental change in skill
• confirm that the right training method is being used
• whether training is contributing to business objectives

the design and delivery of training argue to the contrary and are much more critical of the current training practices within the bank. For example, some training providers explain that there are no evaluation criteria and that limited feedback is

provided to trainees before or after training. This issue is confirmed by a significant proportion of managers (54%) who point out that feedback mechanisms tend to be only one-way. Therefore, it appears that within this bank there is only a vague idea of what constitutes 'effectiveness' in training. As is the case in other banks, effectiveness is defined differently by training providers when compared to individual managers. For training providers, in bank B effectiveness tends to be broadly defined as "the return on investment" and "the fulfilment of trainees' needs". Individual managers, however, perceive that the method of delivery is the most important factor influencing the effectiveness of training.

8.3.3. Managers' perceptions of training effectiveness

Managers in bank B, unlike managers in bank A, perceive that the method of delivery is more important in training by comparison to the actual content of a training course. Figure 8.5. illustrates diagrammatically the importance attached by managers in bank B to each of these factors. A delivery method is deemed to be effective if it is short and sharp to avoid boredom and if it is able to maintain interest and attention. The use of a variety of learning approaches and their suitability to individuals' learning style is perceived to affect training effectiveness. Moreover, if the delivery method is participative and facilitates the understanding of

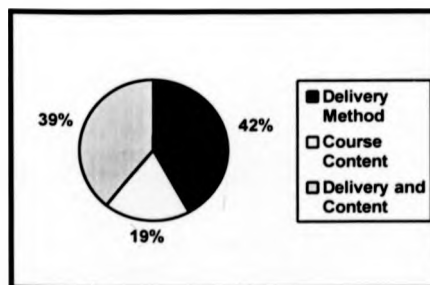


Figure 8.5: The importance attached by managers to the training content versus the method of delivery in bank B.

information, this is also perceived to affect training, because it motivates trainees and increases their willingness to learn. Overall, individual managers perceive that delivery affects enthusiasm and commitment and can build up the quality of the course. In the words of a manager: "Delivery adds the final touch, it gives the sense of professionalism". The method of delivery is also perceived by managers to affect the

<i>Training content</i>	<i>Method of delivery</i>
• relevant to the job	• maintain interest and attention
• related to trainees' needs	• suitable to learning style
• interesting to maintain attention	• use a variety of learning means
• challenging to learn form it	• increase willingness to learn

effectiveness of the training content. As one manager pointed out: "A good content may be destroyed by a bad

delivery". Table 8.2 summarises managers' views when asked to explain the importance attached to the training content and the method of delivery in the training process. When managers were asked to compare the significance of these factors (i.e. the training content and delivery - internal factors) to factors such as the venue, the facilities, the equipment etc. (i.e. external factors), a bigger proportion (58%) of managers in this bank perceive that the training content and delivery are more important (Figure 8.6.).

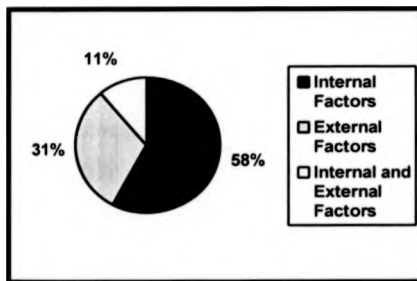


Figure 8.6: The importance attached to external factors by comparison with internal factors of training in bank B.

Managers' expectations from training in bank B are similar to those of managers in bank A, particularly regarding the significance of training as a source of knowledge and skills and a means of improving performance. However, unlike managers in bank A, managers in this bank expect that training would cater for the improvement of the individual as a person. When asked to explain what they perceive training should be able to do, managers in bank B

said that training should be able "to improve the individual for the benefit of the individual and the organisation", "assist individuals in their own development and show them how they can develop themselves". A manager said: "it should give individuals what they want, not what the organisation wants. If it gives the individual it will give the organisation as well". A fast-track manager said: "training should help us understand how the personal development plan can work in practice". Managers explain further that they expect training to provide them with "additional knowledge and skills", "improve understanding", "enable people to do the job to the required standard", "improve their performance", "remove uncertainty and fear and provide more motivation". In relation to the last point a manager said: "its good to think that someone got into the trouble of having you trained". Managers' expectations of training are summarised in Table 8.3. It is evident that managers in this bank emphasise more strongly personal development in the training process and appear to give more priority to personal

Table 8.3: What managers in bank B perceive training should be able to do

• assist individuals own development
• provide further knowledge & skills
• improve performance
• develop the individual as a person
• provide motivation and confidence
• equip people for the job
• remove uncertainty and fear

development in comparison to organisational development. Despite this observation managers do not appear to be totally self-reliant. This issue will be discussed in more detail in section 8.7. However, there are evidence of the dependence of managers on the organisation in their view of the relationship of training to other HRM activities. The analysis of management training and development in bank B has examined managers' and training providers' perceptions of the relationship between training and other HRM activities.

8.3.4. Training in relation to other HRM activities

In bank B, training bears some link to motivation and reward, as well as promotion and performance appraisal. However, there is no clear indication of how significant this connection is because both training providers and individual managers are unclear about the association of training to these processes. Unlike bank A, training in bank B is more closely related to career development and succession planning from the perspective of the organisation. However, individuals are not fully convinced of the association of training with career development.

8.3.4.1. Training in relation to motivation and reward

The perceived association of training with motivation and reward is not explicit in bank B. Training providers perceive that training is related to motivation and reward however, there is no agreement whether the organisation seeks to motivate or reward managers through training. The view expressed by a senior training provider proves the point:

"It (training) is certainly wholly connected to motivation. Being selected for a training course is a reward and therefore, it is motivational... The fact that the business takes interest in people generally, and we speak very loudly about training and development being an investment rather than a cost, it is one of the five key areas of focus within this business; cost, quality, information, products and people.... I want people to feel motivated but I want them to feel that the company wants to work with them to develop themselves to become what ever they want to become. What I don't want it to be is attendance on a course is a reward. In other words the end point of something. Reward implies it is retrospective, you are being given this because you did that. I don't want that. I want you are partaking in this because of that".

The lack of clear connection between training as a motivation or a reward is also evident in managers' responses. Managers perceive that training has some motivational and reward aspects to it, however, 65% argue that their motivation is not affected by training nor do they perceive training as a reward. As far as training and motivation are concerned, managers explain that they "do not expect to maintain motivation from training" and that "if someone takes an interest in me this is a positive indication by the organisation, but not a motivator". A manager specifically said: "I never relied on training to create motivation and commitment". Some managers argue that training may be motivational if it leads to job enrichment. Nomination and attendance on a course is perceived to be a recognition of one's abilities and commitment to the organisation. This issue is particularly strong with courses which are popular and are only attended by a selected few. In this case managers would perceive training as a reward. A manager explained this point saying: "participation on courses motivates and shows that the bank has faith in you". Another manager added: "it is making you feel you are worth sending and investing in". In relation to the perception that training is a reward a senior manager said: "training is a reward in terms of recognition of potential and being put forward to have a future". The different interpretations among training providers and individual managers in bank B regarding the relationship of training to motivation and reward shows more clearly their own priorities and expectations from training and highlights some of the conditions which shape the negotiation of individual and organisational development needs within this organisation. From the perspective of the bank there is clearly a hidden agenda which is not openly admitted. This is confirmed by managers' interpretations which shows their confusion and disorientation.

8.3.4.2. Training in relation to performance appraisal and promotion

The relationship of training to performance appraisal and promotion is equally problematic as the relationship between motivation and reward. The lack of clarity and consensus seems to boil down to what each party has at stake. From the provider's perspective, the majority feel that training is related to promotion and performance appraisal, because during the annual appraisal, people are assessed among other things on their managerial practices and HRM issues. Managers are expected to provide an account of the training they have undertaken and identify any additional training needs. According to a senior provider:

"there are some issues of training linked to promotion, because effective performance on the job, assuming that we have some stability in the individual and

requires development through training or other forms of development, that would lead to promotion and obvious job satisfaction and reward.”

Individual managers provide a completely different picture. Despite the fact that their training needs are identified through the performance appraisal process, the majority (81%) of the managers do not perceive that training is related to performance appraisal or promotion. Managers taking this view believe that “there is no guarantee that attendance at training can lead to promotion”. Managers however, recognise that “training can facilitate promotion” because “it may enable managers to qualify for a vacant job”. A manager said: “Unless you use training to develop and improve your skills then you will not have a lot of chances to progress”. Those who believe that training is related to promotion, tend to be senior managers at head office and fast-track managers. A fast-track senior manager made the following remark: “if you are approached in the right manner, this implies that your potential is explored, but that ultimately promotes you to a position which benefits the organisation”. Another fast-track manager added that: “If you are the type of individual who seeks to grow, by having more information, if you are seen as motivated and committed there is a reason behind training”.

8.3.4.3. Training in relation to career development

From the providers’ perspective, training is related to career planning in that specific career development programmes are in place, in order to address business needs as part of succession planning. This is explicitly described in the Development Partnership Guide published by the bank which states that:

“We have recently launched a brand new framework of Development Programmes which encourage conscious, continuous learning by combining residential modules with work based activities... The framework consists of two complementary types of programmes which are aimed at all levels and linked to business and succession needs. (X) series is designed to assist people whose roles have recently changed and those looking to broaden their potential within their current job... (Y) series is designed for people with identified potential for appointment to the next level. Numbers will be limited by organisational needs and nominations will therefore be instigated by Personnel and Training & Development (Head Office)...People who are successful in the future will have benefited from TRAINING to reach the performance requirements of the job and will have made the most of PERSONAL and CAREER DEVELOPMENT opportunities available”.

This initiative is part of a new approach designed by the T & D department to address career development in the future (Figure 8.7.). The aim of this approach is to create a long-term

orientation for development and to provide direction to the career development efforts of individuals. There remains a grey area however, because career development programmes often create expectations which they cannot meet. A training provider elaborated upon this issue saying:

“... career development programmes create expectations, but they are therefore, considered for high potential people who will be considered for more senior positions. Unfortunately over the last 2-3 years a lot of people have been through these programmes but have not received senior positions.”

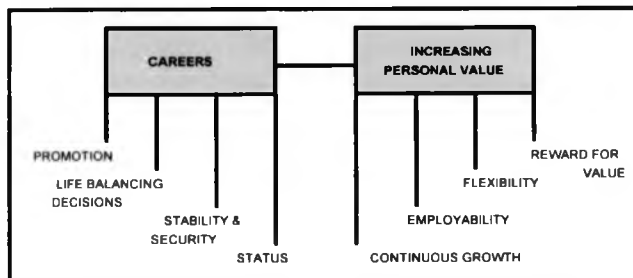


Figure 8.7: The new perspective to career development in bank B.

This point is further reinforced by individual managers who are beginning to question whether training can lead to career development. As already indicated in the previous sections training is not perceived to be strongly related to promotion in the minds of the majority of managers interviewed. One reason is the fact that the numerous structural changes have introduced dramatic changes to jobs. New roles have been created, new job titles have been introduced and new tasks are now expected to be performed. These changes create an additional confusion as to how training may facilitate specific career development/succession planning processes. A senior training provider's comments confirm this point:

“... Banking was traditionally been very static, with very clear progression requirements. People knew what that job was, what they should do, how you prepare yourself for that job. We haven't got that certainty anymore. We are now living in a dynamic environment within which people need to be able to manage change. They need to be able to deal with ambiguity”.

The lack of consistency in the message of the organisation is creating confusion among individual managers and training providers as to the way training is associated to HRM activities. The observed contradictions among managers' and providers' interpretations confirm that this bank has been undergoing a major upheaval in recent years. The various changes introduced at corporate level and in relation to training in particular, have disrupted the approach previously in place and have created disorientation both at the individual and

organisational level. These findings show the conflicting priorities between HRM activities and the way these affect the perceptions and expectations of managers (Legge, 1989, 1995a).

8.4. Managerial learning in bank B

This section reviews individual managers' perceptions and understanding of the learning process and the factors perceived to restrict learning within bank B. In the light of the preceding analysis and the observations regarding the organisation's approach to educating managers, this section aims to explore what has been the impact on individuals' perceptions of the learning process.

8.4.1. General perceptions about the learning process

Managers' perceptions of the learning process in bank B are very similar to those described by managers in bank A. Managers perceive that people learn primarily as a result of experiences on-the-job, modelling or copying others and traditional teaching through training. In their view, people learn from these main sources. 62% of the managers suggest that practical experiences on-the-job are the most significant, because they provide "hands on learning", "coming across new situations and acting upon them". These managers believe that an experience provides learning when managers try to do something themselves. In the words of a manager this would involve: "putting theory into practice and seeing how you can expand on it". Managers extend experience to the social context and suggest that discussion with others is an important learning experience. This view explains why managers consider modelling as part of this type of learning. Managers argue that modelling involves learning from other's example. Observing, listening and copying are important activities in this learning process. Managers taking this view of learning recognise the influence of other managers in their immediate work environment. The line manager featured in the majority of the instances as the most influential. Finally, managers in this bank perceive that learning takes place in formal teaching environments, traditionally known to most of them, as training courses. These managers favour short, structured sessions which gain and maintain their attention. They also maintain the attitude derived from their school years, namely that learning is about "being taught". One manager supporting this view pointed out that: "people learn because they are told to. People do not often take the initiative". A small number of managers recognise that the nature of the context may have forced them in some ways to develop similar learning patterns. A manager made the following comments:

“Individuals learn very much in the same way; by absorbing information, by making it interesting, relating it to real life situations. Absorption involves recollection, using key words, revision, competition and reward in the end”.

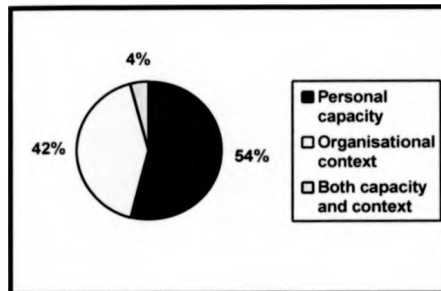


Figure 8.8: The comparative importance attached by managers in bank B to the personal capacity and the organisational context in the learning process.

When managers were asked to discuss the factors which they perceive as affecting the way managers learn they referred to a combination of personal and organisational factors, similar to those discussed by managers in bank A. Managers in this bank gave particular emphasis to the individual's "willingness and desire to learn" and "the commitment to improving ones' self". Managers perceive training issues as one of the most significant organisational factors

affecting learning. They referred specifically to "participative training methods where everyone can have an input and can gain a broad perspective". When managers were asked to rate the significance of personal and organisational factors in the learning process they rated their personal capacity as more important than the organisational context (Figure 8.8.). Managers believe that personal capacity provides "the desire and willingness to learn", because "it facilitates understanding the need to learn" and is therefore "the starting point for learning". According to managers in this bank personal capacity provides the "enthusiasm", "commitment" and "openness" to the learning process and constitutes "the ability and the inclination to learn". As one manager put it: "its the raw material, the starting point". Personal capacity is perceived to affect the success of the learning task, because it sets the limits on how much one learns. Managers believe that the personal capacity "determines the speed and volume" of learning and "influences the attitudes and responses to the personal responsibility to learn". Finally, personal capacity is related to "ambition", because it is perceived to "influence the personal goals of the individual and to affect how learning opportunities are explored". According to managers "no matter how hard the organisation tries to encourage learning, at the end of the day its the individuals' commitment that counts". These views emphasise that managers as adults cannot be forced to learn (Knowles, 1984; Jones, 1995). A manager said: "if you are told you have to learn, you don't always learn".

A significant proportion of managers (42%) feel that the organisation context makes all the difference in managerial learning. According to these managers, the organisational context creates the environment and the atmosphere conducive to learning. As one manager put it: “it is the learning environment whereby people are encouraged to challenge and be creative”. The organisation is perceived to “provide the resources and the space for learning” and “to set the boundaries and the standards that individuals need to follow”. Therefore, the organisational context “channels ability into the direction which is in line with organisational needs”. According to managers the organisational context helps “identify the special abilities of individuals and build on them”. Moreover, managers believe that it “enables individuals to put knowledge into practice” and “build upon their learning experiences” which “enables individuals to improve” and “affects their attitude towards events”. According to some managers, the “organisational context affects not only what individuals choose to learn, but the pace of learning as well”. Managers taking the view that the organisation context is more important than the personal capacity argue that “all people have some capacity to learn, however the organisation provides the encouragement to move forward”. A manager specifically said: “it forces you to learn systematically and to practice, to get your hands dirty”. Others feel that there are limits to personal capacity and that organisational support can make the difference. To use the words of a manager: “long-term there are limits to individual capacity, that if the organisation support is not there, then personal capacity many not go very far”. Managers’ descriptions of the learning process show the interaction of personal and organisational factors and more broadly the psychological and sociological dimensions of learning (Argyris, 1982; Bandura, 1986). Moreover, managers’ perceptions of the learning process indicate that the significance of a learning experience is largely affected by the expectations individual learners have of the learning process and the value attached to the nature of the learning opportunity. Managers’ perceptions of the learning process help explain the incidents they describe as ideal learning experiences.

8.4.2. An ideal learning experience

Managers in bank B refer to internal training courses, a specific appointment and following someone else’s example as their ideal learning experiences. It is interesting to note that the identified learning experiences are similar to those described by managers in bank A. 58% of the managers in bank B refer to a specific internal training course as their ideal learning experience. According to managers, the specific training course “employed a variety of

learning methods” and “enabled managers to relate the knowledge acquired to real life”. Moreover, this specific experience allowed them to “understand their role as a manager” and in some instances “change their perception about management”. Furthermore, the use of a variety of learning methods facilitated the “development of a team spirit” and “encouraged participants to share experiences with other participants and to learn from each other”. Managers taking this view claim that it was a “back to school” experience, because it enabled them to “dedicate time to education without being interrupted”.

The experience of a specific appointment is another significant learning incident described by a proportion (27%) of managers in bank B. Managers described this learning experience as “a process of exploration”, because managers had “no knowledge of the particular job neither a particular agenda for learning”. This incident offered some managers a challenge which they

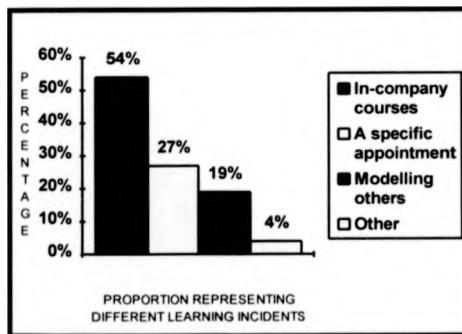


Figure 8.9: Ideal learning experiences of managers within bank B.

had to “muddle through in order to survive”. Others added that they were “stretched by being given responsibility and accountability”. As one manager put it: “...being given responsibility over and above my position and the challenge to manage through was an ideal learning experience”. Finally, 19% of managers described incidents of modelling others, “following the example of someone else”, within their work environment as an ideal learning experience. Managers explained that “working with someone who is good at their job” had an impact on them. Managers “systematically observed the actions” of their ‘model’ and attempted to “imitate” them. The ‘model’ enabled managers to “learn from their example some basic elements of management”, in what managers describe as being a “simple and lasting way”, which they feel it would not have been possible to gain otherwise. A manager specifically pointed out that: “No course would have provided me with this learning. He was an inspiration, a model to me”. Figure 8.9. illustrates diagrammatically the proportion of managers who consider each learning experience as being ideal.

Managers’ descriptions of ideal learning incidents are very similar to the incidents described by managers in bank A as ideal learning experiences. 54% of the managers interviewed in

bank B feel that their learning experience had an impact on their capacity to learn. Although, the effect on learning capacity is interpreted in relation to "increased self-confidence", some managers point out that the learning experience "broadened their mind" and gave them "direction". Managers claim that the learning experience affected "the way future learning opportunities would be approached". As one manager put it: "I came out of a lonely mist and was reassured of myself. I became more focused". Others added that they acquired "a new way of looking at things" and realised what they could actually do. A manager specifically pointed out that: "...from being blinkered I realised the freedom I could create for myself". As a result of the learning experience, some managers said that they "started to look for new ways and avenues to learn and planned learning in advance". A manager was encouraged by the experience to realise that he would "never stop learning" and hence decided to "accept learning from whatever source". To use his words the experience "woke up my appetite for learning". Others claim that their "ability to learn has been enhanced, because they realised how much they have learned". A manager made the following comments:

"It enhanced my ability to learn, because I was aware how much I learned. It sensitised me in understanding how much I can learn and I recognise that there is still a lot to learn... I gained more confidence to handle a wider range of situations".

Finally, managers argued that the learning experience enhanced their ability to analyse themselves and increased their confidence both in themselves and in the organisation. The learning experience is said to have "increased knowledge and skills", "enhanced motivation and willingness to learn", "changed the attitude to learning" and "broadened their mind". Similar to managers in bank A, managers in bank B perceive that both organisational and personal factors restrict learning. The main obstacles to learning identified by managers in bank B are discussed next.

8.4.3. The perceived obstacles to managers' learning

Some of the organisational and personal obstacles described by managers in this bank are very similar to those identified by managers in the other organisations. However, managers' descriptions show some obstacles unique to this bank. The most significant organisational obstacle identified by managers in bank B is lack of time. This obstacle arises due to the "increasing work load" and "the pressure to meet deadlines". Managers explained that: "organisational expectations do not include any time allocation for learning. Therefore, there is little time left for systematic learning". Managers point out further that: "as a result of the

Table 8.4: The perceived organisational obstacles to learning in bank B

• lack of time
• continuous change
• no due recognition for learning
• limited room for manoeuvring
• lack of individualism in training
• lack of consistency in training
• lack of clear direction in training

organisational downsizing staffing levels are at 'knife edge', which creates extra work load that needs to be managed". The lack of time to reflect from learning experiences encountered on a day-to-day basis makes matters worse. Managers explain that "there is no time for standing back to see what has been achieved and to plan the way forward in terms of learning". The "high volumes of information supplied" is considered "time-consuming" and often "unnecessary". Another major obstacle is the "continuous change and uncertainty". The "shifting horizons of the bank" and "the constant restructuring" is seen by managers as an obstacle, because it hinders their "ability to define the boundaries of their work and learning". The uncertainties prevent "a clear understanding of what is required" and in their view, this "creates a non-conducive environment for learning". As one manager pointed out: "learning requires a consistent approach". Moreover, "the changing requirements of the job make knowledge questionable". The "limited recognition for learning" is an added source of "de-motivation" and "reduces willingness to learn". Managers perceive that there is no link between training and future career development which is considered to be another restricting factor to their learning. A manager said: "...the higher up the organisation one gets, the less assistance is provided. The assumption is that once you reach a certain position you know it all". In addition to these factors, the "lack of freedom in exercising the necessary flexibility and creativity" makes managers feel they "do not have the necessary power or control" over their learning. The main organisational obstacles to managers' learning within bank B are summarised in Table 8.4.

At the personal level, managers point out that "the shortage of time" is their major obstacle to learning. Lack of time in this instance is the result of "bad time management" and "inadequate time planning". Family commitments are perceived to be equally restrictive, because managers find it "difficult to maintain life balancing decisions consistent with their development efforts". The need to "maintain an active social life" is perceived to be equally important, as time spent on learning. Another personal obstacle identified by managers is the "personal perception and attitude towards learning". Some explained this obstacle in terms of the "swing in commitment towards learning goals" due to "laziness" and "not making the effort to learn". Feelings of "boredom" and "lack of confidence" were referred to by managers

Table 8.5: Managers' perceptions of the personal obstacles to learning in bank B

• lack of time
• family commitments
• social commitments
• other interests and hobbies
• laziness
• commitment to goals and learning
• personal perception about training
• personality and learning style

to describe their attitudes towards learning. Boredom is primarily due to the “lack of satisfaction with the present job”, while low confidence derives from “the future uncertainty” which “creates insecurity” and makes some managers limit their learning to “things the bank indicates as being appropriate”. As a result managers feel “less keen to learn”, hence they “do not give priority to learning”. These factors lead to a “negative attitude towards training”, because managers feel that “as a learning opportunity it is not always useful”. A manager said: “...deciding whether I can sacrifice two days for training, when what I need to do is to produce results”. Finally, some managers consider their “personality” and their “learning style” as a personal obstacle to learning. Some feel that “shyness” restricts their learning, while others consider, what they describe as their “slow tempo of learning” as an obstacle. For example, a manager explained that he finds difficulty relating to written material and utilising experiences which involve time pressure. Table 8.5. summarises the personal obstacles to learning identified by managers in this bank. It has been noted that managers within bank B are relatively more forthcoming about the personal and organisational obstacles. It appears that there is a feeling of openness on the issue of learning and managers do not hesitate to expose organisational and personal shortcomings. The review of the personal and organisational obstacles to learning indicate the conditions which are likely to influence managers' perceptions of the learning process and more specifically the perceived association between training and learning.

8.5. The perceived relationship between training and learning

The analysis of the main characteristics of training and learning in the context of bank B is important for discussing the perceived interconnection between training and learning. The relationship between training and learning is one of the strongest relationships identified within bank B. 77% of managers in this bank support a strong connection between learning and training primarily because they consider training as an opportunity for learning. Training providers explain that managers' perceptions of this relationship is evident in the recent (1991 & 1992) surveys conducted within the organisation, which showed that people within this

bank feel that “they have not been trained, unless they have attended a course”. A training provider with reference to the survey findings explained that:

“...quite a few do feel that learning comes only through training. Last year (1991) the perception was that training is on courses...if it is not a course they won't associate it with learning”.

From the perspective of individual managers, the relationship between learning and training is perceived to be based mainly on the fact that training broadens knowledge and allows the development of new skills, which is how learning is understood. The words of a manager illustrate the point:

“with training you acquire the new skills in probably a better way than from other ways of learning...individuals react better when someone takes interest in their personal development. They feel part of the organisation. The worse is to be thrown a manual”.

One of the conditions which managers identify as influencing the association of training and learning is if they “learn something new”. In fact, this is how the majority of the managers define learning in terms of training. To use the words of one manager: “...that's what training is all about; learn something you don't know”. Another manager said:

“if training is teaching a new skill or providing individuals with information they did not have before then this is learning...you only learn through training if it has made a difference for you”.

Others point out that the idea of training is to reinforce information already in place. In the words of a manager, “you may not learn something new, but it ensures that learning is in place”. For some managers “training and learning go hand in hand”. They consider training and learning as being “one and the same thing”. When asked whether they perceive training as an opportunity for learning a manager responded saying: “obviously yes, the very word training implies that you will learn from the process”. Another manager added that: “it is a specific time to learn, you know you are there to learn”. The fact that one is taken away from the work environment is seen by some managers as a factor enabling them to be in the “right frame of mind for learning”. A manager said: “being taken out of the normal environment allows you to focus and apply new things”. Training is also seen as an opportunity to “share experiences with others”. A manager supporting this view explained that:

“most definitely it helps you learn with other people, learn from others, share problems find out about different experiences. It builds up the knowledge and improves performance. There are tangible learning effects”.

According to some managers, the extent to which training is a learning opportunity depends on the “open-mindedness” of the individual. Open-mindedness is perceived to affect the extent to which one can utilise a training intervention as an opportunity to learn. A manager

Table 8.6: The conditions perceived by managers in bank B to support the relationship between training and learning

• learning something new
• personal perception
• the training method
• open-mindedness of the individual
• training as a motivation tool

explained that: “When individuals are forced to attend a training course without their consent they are likely to be negative, therefore less inclined to learn”. Another manager supporting this view said that: “open-mindedness can influence the extent to which one would be willing to try things out. If you have an open mind it can become a learning experience”. Finally, a

manager asserted that: “if training is going to involve learning it will have to involve a great deal of motivation”. Table 8.6. summarises the main conditions perceived by managers in this bank to support the relationship between training and learning.

This analysis shows that the relationship between training and learning is not as strong as is the case in bank A. This observation is evident from the various factors which support or hinder the relationship, which suggest that in bank B individual preferences and organisational provision are more actively negotiated (Greenhalgh & Chapman, 1995). Moreover, in bank B a comparatively larger proportion of managers (23%) are sceptical about the relationship between training and learning. Managers who take this view argue that training gives people “pointers and cannot be expected to provide people with skills”. A manager made the following remarks: “you can’t claim to be proficient after a five days course”. Some managers explained also that training may not be related to learning if the individual is “forced” to attend it. Under these circumstances the individual is more likely not to be open to the learning opportunity. A manager said: “if training is going to involve learning it will have to involve a great deal of motivation”. These responses suggest that managers in this bank are more critical of the relationship between training and learning which in turn may have affected the importance they attach to training and learning in the context of change.

8.6. Training and learning in the context of change

The recent organisational changes discussed in section 8.2.1. have altered the bank's image from a savings bank to a retail bank and have shifted the attention to customer orientation. These changes have resulted in new roles and new responsibilities for managers and have altered the work environment. The new training and development philosophy discussed earlier reflects the organisation's perspective of the importance of training and learning in managing change. This section explores managers' perceptions of the effects of recent changes and aims to examine the importance attached to training and learning in the context of change. Managers' perceptions of the effects of change for the organisation and for them personally are useful for considering the way managers in this bank understand the relationship between change and learning and that between change and training.

8.6.1. The perceived organisational and personal effects of recent changes

Managers perceive that the recent organisational changes have had a positive impact on the organisation. Managers feel that the bank has benefited from the recent changes by becoming "more competitive", "stream lined" and "more profitable". Moreover, the organisation is said to have become "more united" and "less bureaucratic", therefore "more efficient" and "dynamic". Overall, managers perceive that the

Table 8.7: Managers' perceptions in bank B of the positive effects of change on the organisation

• became more competitive
• became stream lined and leaner
• became more profitable
• became more united
• became less bureaucratic
• became more efficient
• became more dynamic
• became more honest & open about change
• increased communication
• removed the fear from expressing views
• became more professional
• became more informal and dynamic
• changed its culture

bank has changed its culture and became "more informal" and "more professional" in its approach to doing business. The perceived positive effects of change on the organisation are summarised in Table 8.7. Managers' descriptions of the positive effects of change suggest that they agree with their introduction and consider them an appropriate response to the external economic and political environment in which the bank operates (Ford & Ford, 1994).

At the same time, managers argue that negative effects were inevitable. The most significant of these is perceived to be "the reduction in staff numbers" and "the loss of experienced managers". According to managers the changes have led to a "decrease in labour resources" and consequently "the downgrading of managerial roles". The pressure for results has led to

Table 8.8: Managers' perceptions in bank B of the negative effects of change on the organisation

• reduction in numbers of staff
• policies and practices more arbitrary
• insular decision-making
• downgrading managerial roles
• short-term orientation, sales vs. service

“an increasing short-term orientation” which has created “a new attitude towards staff and customers”. Managers describe this shift in attitudes and management style from one which was “caring” to one which is “aggressive”. The perceived negative effects of change on the organisation are summarised in Table 8.8. Unlike bank A, managers in bank B are more objective when assessing the effects of change (both positive and negative) on the organisation. Managers do not appear to interpret the effects of recent change to the organisation from their personal perspective although, there are indications that like managers in bank A these managers associate themselves closely with the organisational effects.

When managers were asked to consider the effects of recent changes to them as individuals, the majority (77%) explained that they have been affected negatively by the recent changes. The main explanation they provided was the “insecurity” which has resulted from the recent changes for both the present and future. Managers described feelings of uneasiness because of “the loss of control over future career development” and in particular “having to come to terms with the fact that there is no longer life-long employment”. These changes in the psychological contract (Herriot et al., 1996) make managers feel “less confident” about themselves and “disappointed” that the organisation has let them down by “not living up to its promise to provide life-long employment”. As one manager put it: “I don't fear change, but I feel nervous about not knowing what will happen to me and my job”. Managers explained that they feel “angry” and “insecure”, because of the “disruption in the way their work is being carried out” and as a result “the new expectations” that they feel they have to fulfil. These factors have shaken their trust in the organisation and its intentions. The words of a manager sum this point up aptly:

“managers feel that they are being used to manage change, but following completion of their role, they and their role will vanish...I have resigned to the fact that there is no more life-long employment”.

The shaken career prospects have forced many managers to reconsider their career aspirations and their approach to the requirements of their job. The increased work load has added to the pressure and has been the cause of increased stress. As one manager pointed out: “I had to become more aggressive in sales to maintain my position in the bank”. Moreover, managers

Table 8.9: The perceived negative effects of change on managers in bank B

• insecurity about the future
• increased volume of work & pressure
• becoming more aggressive in sales
• disrupted career path and prospects
• more stress
• shaken commitment
• lack of authority

feel “frustrated by the lack of involvement and ownership” in the change process. They explained that they feel they have “little say as to the direction they are asked to follow” and that they feel increasingly “distant from the organisation”. As one manager put it: “I find it difficult to relate to the organisation any more”. The “loss of experienced managers” is also perceived to have had a negative effect on them, because they feel that “there are few people to turn to for help” which makes them feel “isolated”. Table 8.9. summarises the perceived negative effects of change on individual managers.

However, not all change has been negative. Managers referred to positive effects as well. As with negative effects, the positive effects described by managers stem primarily from their personal experiences. The most significant positive effect is that due to change, career progression has become faster. A manager specifically gave an example to illustrate that people in the organisation are given responsibility to run a branch at 23 years of age. Others also pointed out that their “accountability had increased” as their “responsibilities grew” and the experience of change broadened their perspective. This is seen in two main ways. On the one hand, change implied that they had to respond to the new skills requirements, hence they acquired additional skills. On the other hand, they argue that through change they developed in different directions, hence feel that they have developed themselves as “full bankers”.

Table 8.10: The perceived positive effects of change on managers in bank B

• increased opportunities
• increased accountability
• increased skills levels
• broadened perspective
• increased motivation & confidence

Finally, managers pointed out that a positive effect of change has been an “increase in confidence in themselves and the organisation”. The perceived positive effects of change on individual managers are summarised in Table 8.10. By comparison to those managers claiming that change has affected their confidence negatively, the responses of these managers point out the benefits of change once individuals have survived the challenge of change successfully. At the same time, it suggests that change can be perceived positively if managers are in agreement with the organisational changes introduced. Managers’ perceptions of the impact of change also shapes their predisposition regarding the factors likely to assist faster and easier adaptation to change.

8.6.2. The factors perceived to assist faster and easier adaptation to change

Training providers and individual managers share some common views regarding the factors which assist faster and easier adaptation to change. Training providers argue that the most significant factor assisting faster and easier adaptation is experience and practice which is perceived to depend partly on training and learning. According to training providers, experience and practice can provide the background knowledge, which can then be build upon in a training setting. A senior training provider said:

“...if you experience change it does help you to cope with the next one. So, if you’ve been through change you’ve gathered some experiences which help... we provide help through training people along the way, but the other thing is that we throw people at the deep end and some of those who can swim come through”.

Other important factors referred to by training providers is “leadership” and “youth”. The latter is perceived to be important, because the younger managers are better able to change, as they are less embedded in old practices. Finally, the organisational culture and processes (e.g. communication) are perceived to be significant. From the perspective of individual managers, “education” and “a better trained workforce” is perceived to be “more in tune with the need for change” and “better able to respond to change”. Managers explained that “a positive attitude from staff, willing to be more flexible to change” is very important. Like training providers, managers believe that “younger staff are less familiar with traditional values, and more likely to change with the organisation”. Managers emphasise the importance of “communication which is open and honest”. According to managers communication would “enable people to have input by understanding what goes on and responding quickly to internal and external demands”.

“Commitment in the approach followed” is another important factor. Commitment is perceived to be demonstrated by several factors, one of the most significant being evaluation. Managers argued that “by reviewing the change after its implementation it is possible to understand its implications for all parts of the business”. Commitment is demonstrated by “top managers’ realisation and acceptance of the need to change as well”. Moreover, commitment is seen as “an integral part of the organisation culture”. Commitment to change in this respect is, according to a manager, “having a culture that increasingly appreciates the importance of change in order to remain competitive”. Competition is perceived by some managers to be another factor facilitating adaptation, because it determines the speed of

Table 8.11: The factors perceived to assist faster and easier adaptation to change

<i>Training providers' perspective</i>	<i>Individual managers' perspective</i>
• experience and practice	• staff - education and attitudes
• training and learning	• communication
• leadership & direction	• commitment to change
• age - youth	• competition
• culture & communication	• organisational structure

change. “Being aware of competitive movements” and “recognising the influences exercised by outside factors” can assist the organisation and individuals to be more alert. Finally, the organisation structure is perceived to “allow easier manoeuvring if less bureaucratic, more lean and stream lined”. Table 8.11. summarises the main factors perceived by managers and training providers to assist faster and easier adaptation to change. This review shows that a combination of individual and organisational issues is necessary for managing change. It is evident that in this bank despite the different perspectives taken by managers and providers, there are several common factors which are considered to be important. For example the common emphasis attached to education is likely to have affected managers’ perceptions of the relationship between change and learning, and that between change and training.

8.6.3. The perceived relationship between change and learning

The emphasis of this organisation on learning in recent years appears to have affected managers’ perceptions of the relationship between learning and change. Learning is perceived by managers as performing a number of functions in relation to change. Its most significant contribution is perceived to be that of “enabling individuals to keep up with the pace of change”. Learning is considered as “a means of remaining abreast of new procedures and new developments”. It is a means for “remaining open-minded” and “more flexible to evolve with the organisation”. According to managers, learning is a “means of survival in a changing environment”. As one manager put it:

“you can’t afford not to be open to learning new things, because this is the culture of the organisation and learning influences your ability to survive in the organisation. Unless you learn new things to be able to do new roles, that’s it you’re out”.

Learning is perceived to be an on-going process of “keeping up with the pace of change and the changing demands of the job by acquiring new skills to maintain credibility”. A manager pointed out that: “this is a prerequisite for managers in dynamic organisations”. He said specifically that: “you need to continue to learn, otherwise you can’t understand or anticipate what happens next”. Learning is considered to be important in order to “maintain high

Table 8.12: The functions perceived by managers in bank B to be performed by learning in relation to change

• keep up-to-date
• respond to changes on the job
• keep up with the pace of change/survive
• help prepare in advance for change
• personal development
• maintain good performance
• enhance career prospects

performance". It is perceived to "facilitate career development", because it "enables individuals to move forward", "to progress and fulfil their career aspirations by improving and upgrading skills in preparation for future roles". A manager said: "its crucial to keep my C.V. fresh and warm to prospective employers...to be seen to be energetic and practical". Another manager added: "learning is going to be an extra skill for the future". A summary of the main functions of learning in relation to change is provided in Table 8.12. From this analysis it is evident that the relationship between learning and change is perceived to be linear and unidirectional. Similar to the findings in bank A, there appears to be little indication that change is perceived by managers as a learning opportunity. Therefore, the perceived relationship between the two phenomena tends to be mechanistic and superficial.

The perceived link between learning and change is supported by findings which show the importance attached by managers in relation to present and future job changes. A unique observation in bank B is that a bigger proportion (85%) of managers attach importance to future job changes instead of present job changes. Figure 8.10. illustrates managers' responses

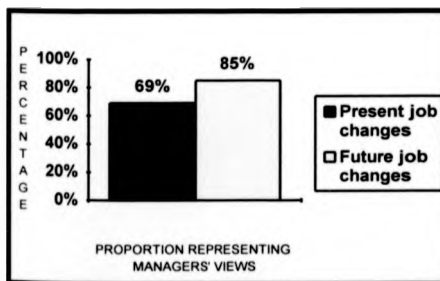


Figure 8.10: The perceived importance of learning in relation to present and future job changes in bank B.

diagrammatically when asked to explain the perceived importance of learning in relation to present and future job changes. In relation to present job changes, learning is perceived to be less important, because of several factors, such as "familiarity with the job", "computerisation and disskilling", "the lack of clear career path", "personal initiative" and the "value of learning", which managers describe as factors influencing the importance attached to learning. According to managers these factors justify the limited priority given to learning in relation to their present job. Managers explained that learning is not important in relation to the changes of their present job, because they "feel that they possess the required knowledge and skills" and that they "have reached a learning plateau". To use the words of a manager: "I am always learning but currently I feel I don't need to learn, because I know the job and the procedures". It has been noted that managers taking this

view have been doing the specific job for the last 3-4 years. One might expect that in view of the organisational changes their job may have been affected. However, change in the past within this organisation tended to be more incremental than radical, hence managers may have not been severely affected. Some managers admit that they “do not have the personal initiative” and argue that “there is not much to be learned in the present job for the moment”, because “the job is fairly well defined and there are no new technical aspects to be learned”. A manager gave the following explanation:

“...the importance of learning has been decreasing over the years. Self-development has also been declining over the years, because of lack of time and feedback on what has been the factors which enabled me to do it. Task orientation allows little practical learning, hence I attach little attention and importance to it as a result”.

The emphasis placed by the organisation on achieving results (profit) and the associated fear of job security have forced some managers to consider learning as a low priority. The words of a manager confirm this. He said: “the learning circle does not count, profitability will judge my future career”. The lack of a clear career path within this organisation is another factor influencing the importance attached to learning in relation to the future job changes. Some managers feel that “it is not possible to plan in advance what is to be learned because it is not possible to predict what knowledge and skills will be needed”. A manager made the following comments: “in view of the lack of clear career path, you don’t know or plan your learning. You don’t know the skills that you need to have to plan in advance”. The increasing use of technology and the deskilling effects raise additional uncertainties which restrict learning. A manager said: “in view of the current uncertainties learning carries little value, because one does not know whether one will need it or will be able to use it”. Finally, the way managers define and understand learning influences the importance they attach to learning in relation to change. It is worth noting, as discussed in section 8.4.3., that change is perceived by managers in this bank as an organisational obstacle to learning. According to some managers “learning is experience” and as such its role is “to enable people to survive rather than develop”.

In summary, from this discussion it could be argued that the relationship between change and learning is not as strong as the relationship between these two phenomena in bank A. The relationship between change and learning is conditioned by the factors which managers perceive as supporting or restricting their association. The relationship appears to be supported by the perceived functions of learning in relation to change. On the other hand, it is

restricted by the perceived relevance of learning in relation to change and the view that change restricts learning by not allowing a sense of continuity. These conditions are likely to have an impact on managers' perceptions of the relationship between change and training.

8.6.4. The perceived relationship between change and training

The relationship between change and training is examined from both the perspective of the organisation (as reflected in training providers' responses) and that of the individual manager. Training is perceived by training providers and individual managers as a fundamental element in the change process. Training providers perceive that the main purpose of training in relation to change is "to provide the means for bringing change about". Training is perceived as "facilitating the implementation and management of change". A training provider said that:

"In an ideal world people would be trained to cope with change. I think in practice yes, you do train them to cope with change, but you actually have to train them for some of the specifics associated with that change. When we've got a lot of change, we have dedicated specific training budgets to help those particular areas; for example redesign of branches, more space for sales, more training of people to exploit that to know how to work in that area. So, when we are changing people's jobs we have a duty to commit training expenditure towards that".

From the perspective of individual managers the role of training in relation to change is perceived to be more wide ranging. The majority (77%) of managers perceive a strong connection between change and training on the basis that training performs certain functions in relation to change. Table 8.13. summarises the main functions perceived by managers in bank B to support the relationship between training and change. Training is perceived as "a

Table 8.13: The perceived functions of training in relation to change in bank B
• a major communication tool
• a support mechanism for managing change
• a vehicle providing knowledge and skills
• a source of motivation and direction

major communication tool for keeping people abreast of developments so that they can change at the pace of organisational changes". Managers perceive training a "a means of making sure that everyone understands the need

for the change and is aware of the effects on their role". A manager pointed out that: "training can clarify what is required and prepare the ground for change to take place, avoiding surprises". Another manager added that:

"you can't change unless you train. Communicate the change. Training is a large part of the communication. It is a good opportunity to introduce people to change, to remove fear and make change understandable. The manner of doing it will determine success."

Training is perceived to determine success or failure of change, therefore it is considered to be “a support mechanism which can prepare people for change” and “enable them to cope with its effects”. Training is seen as a means of increasing receptivity to change by “helping people foresee the problems and be prepared for the unexpected”. As part of education, training is perceived as “a mechanism for improving efficiency” and “a device for acquiring the necessary knowledge and skills to meet the new demands in their job”. A manager said:

“Training should be able to prepare us to learn and adapt and be flexible. Training should be more generic, yet more focused to the specific change. There must be honesty about the fact that change is constant”.

It is important to note that a proportion of managers (23%) hold a different view regarding the relationship between training and change. These managers feel that training has little contribution to make to change. Some argue that “there is no expertise in organisational change” and that “the organisation does not train people in organisational change issues”. Others believe that “training can only make a limited contribution to change, because changes are initiated at the top of the organisation, with little consultation from individuals”. According to these managers the lack of consultation and involvement creates “resistance to change which cannot easily be overcome by training”. A manager expressed this view with the following remarks:

“I think training has very little contribution to change, because organisational and cultural changes come from the top. A change in the culture of the organisation, tends to be knocked down if top management create an atmosphere of fear and suspicion. Training cannot overcome that”.

Another factor which managers consider to affect the contribution of training to organisational change is that “training provides knowledge, but cannot be expected to instantaneously develop the necessary skills to put that knowledge into practice”. Therefore, managers perceive that the acquisition of skills derives from experience and other learning opportunities which are less structured and systematised. The skills for managing change are considered to fall in the category of soft skills such as leadership, team building, communication etc. One manager made the following comment concerning this issue: “No training can actually contribute to change. Skills development can. Technical skills are very much on the decline... I find hard to think that management skills such as leadership can be taught”. On the basis of the longitudinal analysis in this organisation, a very large proportion (77%) of the total sample of managers claim that they have always maintained these views regarding the relationship of

training with change. This finding suggests that a proportion (23%) of managers were convinced of the lack of relationship between training and change a long time ago, and their perceptions are not the result of a recent experience.

The emerging relationship between change and learning and that between change and training are very similar to those identified in bank A, in that the relationships between phenomena tend to be superficial and mechanistic. However, the identified relationships in bank B are not as strong as in bank A. Managers in bank B are beginning to question these relationships and challenge the way they have been conditioned by the organisation to perceive them. The analysis of the relationships emerging from the interaction of individual and organisational factors reveals additional issues which are discussed in the next section.

8.7. Creating a learning environment

A unique characteristic of this bank is the interest in becoming a “learning organisation”. Recent initiatives such as the “continuous learning” project discussed in section 8.3.1. indicate the bank’s commitment to creating a learning environment. The bank has developed its own working definition for what being a learning organisation means. The learning organisation is about “creating an environment where the behaviours and practices involved in continuous learning are actively encouraged”. The commitment of top management to creating a learning environment is evident in the vocabulary used. One instance is when a senior training provider was asked to define training and its objectives he gave the following response:

“... I would rather talk about learning. We have some very well established training mechanisms... I would define training in terms of inputs, but actually I am trying to get to the position where we are actually trying to define learning by the outputs”.

Although this vocabulary does not appear to be used by the average branch manager, individual managers in this bank were forthcoming when they were asked to provide their views regarding the factors necessary in creating a learning environment. According to managers the most significant factor in creating a learning environment is “a relaxed and open atmosphere”, “a culture which encourages people to question”, “having the freedom to speak”, “ a blame-free environment which accepts mistakes and removes fear”, “a culture which actively encourages people to learn from whatever means”. Managers describe this

culture as “the place where everyone can act as a learner and a teacher” and where there is “openness and honesty by both the individual and the organisation”.

Table 8.14: The factors perceived by managers in bank B as necessary to create a learning environment

• a relaxed and open environment
• positive attitude and willingness to learn
• the right learning facilities
• the quality of training intervention
• commitment and support from all levels
• consistent communication and feedback
• availability of time & resources for learning
• job security

Another significant factor for creating a learning environment is perceived to be “the attitude of individuals”, their “motivation and willingness to learn”, their “enthusiasm and commitment to learning” and their “confidence to learn”. According to managers the “right learning facilities” are equally important. Managers emphasise “the suitability of learning

methods to individuals’ learning styles” and “the adequacy of resources to put knowledge into practice” as very significant factors. Some managers referred to training and in particular “the relevance of training to peoples’ jobs and needs” as a significance factor in creating a learning environment. Table 8.14. summarises the factors perceived by managers in bank B as necessary to create a learning environment. It is evident from managers’ responses that more importance is given to organisational factors rather than personal factors, which has also been observed in managers’ responses in bank A. For example the organisational culture is perceived by a much bigger number of managers as more significant than the personal willingness to learn. The emphasis on the organisational factors over personal factors in creating a learning environment may be explained with reference to managers’ perceptions of their contribution. When managers were asked to consider their personal contribution in creating a learning environment, a small proportion (19%) of managers said that the scope of what they can do is limited because they feel that they do not have control over the necessary factors. A manager explained this point saying:

“... the scope of what I do is limited by the constraints set on me as a branch manager. I would like to think I can provide my staff with the opportunity to take additional learning. I can only maintain my commitment to training”.

Another observation worth noting is that as with bank A, a similarly large proportion (81%) of managers in this bank perceive that organisational and individual learning needs can be reconciled. Managers taking this view explained that “organisational and personal learning needs are naturally related”. A manager said: “if what I want to learn and what the bank wants me to learn is different, then I will not be able to develop in the eyes of the bank”. The

perceived “complimentarity” of personal and organisational learning needs helps explain managers’ perceptions of the organisation’s encouragement to learn, take responsibility for their self-development and creativity.

8.7.1. Organisational encouragement: The impact on learning, self-development and creativity

Managers within this bank perceive that the organisation encourages them to learn and to develop themselves. However, they feel that they are not greatly encouraged to be creative. Figure 8.11. shows the proportion of managers in bank B who perceive that the organisation encourages them to learn, to take personal responsibility for their development and to be creative. Compared to managers’ perceptions in bank A, a much larger proportion of managers in bank B feel that they are being encouraged across all three issues, and in

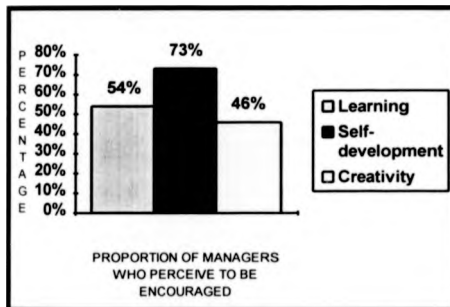


Figure 8.11: The perceived encouragement by the organisation in bank B.

particular self-development. This finding suggests that the emphasis placed by this organisation on learning and self-development may be better understood by managers and possibly may be more convincingly demonstrated. On closer examination, however, it is evident that managers interpret the organisation’s encouragement for learning and for self-development as an “expectation”.

In other words managers feel that “the organisation expects them to learn, to remain up-to-date and to be able to respond positively to the new requirements set upon them”. According to managers, “the changing job roles and the continuously changing procedures make learning necessary for individual adaptation and survival”. These points reinforce the conditions which support the perceived relationship between learning and change and in particular one of the main functions of learning in relation to organisational change.

Managers perceive the organisation’s encouragement for learning in terms of the learning opportunities available. The majority of managers explained that learning opportunities centre around training provision, and in particular training courses. This finding confirms the relationship between learning and training and the reliance of managers on training in order to

learn. This finding supports also the survey results of the study conducted by the organisation regarding managers' attitudes towards learning and training and shows that despite the attempts by the organisation to change staff attitudes, managers appear to maintain the same view about the association of learning and training. Finally, encouragement is understood by managers to be the result of the nature of the job they are held responsible for. For example, a manager reflecting on his newly assigned role as a customer services manager, feels that the nature of the job is such that it encourages learning.

A large proportion (73%) of managers in bank B feel that the organisation encourages them to develop themselves. However, as with learning, managers in this bank perceive taking responsibility for their self-development is an "expectation". This view derives from the association of self-development with performance appraisal. Managers explained that during the performance management process they must demonstrate that they recognise their strengths and weaknesses and are clear about what they need to do in order to improve themselves. A manager made the following remarks: "In the performance management system, individuals are asked to identify personal development initiatives. In some respects it forces you to think of something". Another manager explained that because of the link between self-development and performance appraisal "you have to show you do something otherwise you are scored low and your salary is affected". A senior manager said: "you're not encouraged, you're expected to. You're expected to know things...you do it for your own protection".

The use of PDPs is another factor which according to managers indicates the encouragement of the organisation for self-development. Managers taking this view argue that because PDPs have been introduced by the organisation recently, they are perceived to be a positive indication that the organisation holds individuals responsible for their self-development. A senior manager however, has some reservations and argues that they are inappropriate for fast moving individuals, because they are unable to address long-term career objectives. The view that self-development is a new term in the organisation's vocabulary is also interpreted by managers to be an indication of its encouragement. Managers explained that "self-development has been a major theme over the last couple of years", as evident through "the company's magazine", "internal circulars", "conferences" and "team meetings". Managers' perceptions of the organisation's encouragement to learn and to develop themselves shows

that the way the organisation has introduced learning and self-development has not only affected the perceived encouragement by the organisation, but individuals' interpretations of what learning and self-development means. Therefore, the position taken by the organisation regarding individual development and learning signals what the bank values which gives managers clues about what they are expected to do in order to progress. This approach makes managers interpret encouragement as an expectation. Managers' perceptions of the organisation's encouragement influences their views about the learning opportunities available and which they are more likely to seek to develop themselves. This observation helps explain why managers may be limiting themselves to learning and developing primarily from sources provided within organisational settings.

Managers' perceptions of the organisation's encouragement for learning and self development helps explain why managers perceive that there is limited encouragement by the organisation to be creative. Senior managers in bank B argued that "creativity at senior levels is not just encouraged, it is an expectation". However, for managers at middle and junior levels encouragement for creativity is interpreted mainly as "the way individual managers decide to achieve the targets set by the organisation, such as how managers pursue the achievement of sales targets". A manager pointed out that: "creativity comes down to improving sales and processes through quality management techniques one has already been trained for". Another manager added that "you can do something in addition to procedures, but you can't replace them, because if you change them you are criticised by inspectors". A common denominator in the factors discussed by managers is that the present organisational culture is not conducive to the notion of creativity. A manager in particular pointed out that "creativity is not in the bank's vocabulary". This is further enhanced by the fact that creativity is not founded in the roles managers perform neither in the example of their line manager. A manager said that: "If the line manager is not creative it is perceived as a threat for a manager to be creative". This point indicates the underlying fear and the accompanied risks of being creative. A fast-track manager pointed out that: "creativity can get you fired". Managers explained that they are "tightly controlled by having to follow rules and regulations which do not allow any scope for personal initiative". To use the words of a manager: "Individuals are tightly controlled and have to follow so many procedures and acts that at the end of the day you can't be bothered". The perceived factors indicating the limited encouragement by the organisation are summarised in Table 8.15. The analysis of the factors describing the perceived encouragement

Table 8.15: The factors perceived by managers in bank B to indicate the organisation's encouragement for learning and self-development and the limited encouragement for creativity

<i>Learning</i>	<i>Self-development</i>	<i>Creativity</i>
• changing practices	• the use of PDPs	• language issue
• learning opportunities	• the organisational culture	• change
• responsiveness to enthusiasm	• career related courses	• lack of direction in the job
• the nature of the job	• support for external courses	• no scope for initiative

for learning, self-development and creativity shows the way organisational signals are interpreted and how these affect managers' reactions. The perceived encouragement from the organisation affects individuals' perceptions of the opportunities available and consequently provides direction as to where their efforts may be focused. Moreover, it influences which opportunities they may be inclined to explore. This observation reinforces the dependency of individuals on the organisation for their development. This dependence is also confirmed by the perceived impact of the organisation policy on managers' development and learning.

8.7.2. The impact of the organisation's policy on individuals' learning

The impact of the organisation policy on individuals' decisions to undertake further education and learning is illustrated in managers' accounts of their self-development goals and career development plans. 50% of managers claim to be influenced by the organisation policy, because they consider it as a significant guiding force in their decision to engage or in some instances abandon a learning goal. For example, several managers admit that they qualified for the Association of the Chartered Institute of Banking Diploma (ACIBD), because it was one of the qualifications the organisation valued. A manager explained this most aptly saying: "when I first joined, the emphasis was on examinations (ACIBD), not so much now...I am not pushed, I am not motivated to do it". Another manager said that he did not complete the ACIBD qualification once it became clear to him that it was no longer considered important by the organisation. He said: "I would be more keen to pursue marketing qualifications rather than complete and qualify for the banking exams, because this is now the focus of the bank and they are more relevant". These examples illustrate how the shifting emphasis brought about by internal and external changes affects what the organisation values and perceives to be relevant and consequently the way individuals react in terms of their learning priorities in response to these changes. Managers explain that they are affected by the organisation's policy in terms of its impact on career progression. Managers argue that if there is no indication that by pursuing a specific learning route there will be a reward, they disregard organisational signals. A senior manager pointed out that:

“after so many years in the bank, I feel I know enough and find it difficult to start all over again. With job jeopardising, its not giving you enough incentive to do more. The bank does not appear to encourage anyone to take any exams at all. Even if the encouragement was there for the MBA, I wouldn’t do it”.

Another manager added: “I’ve heard it so many times and I am aware of the reality. I don’t believe it anymore...no policy made me think one way or another about what I learn. Self-development is down to me, its up to me to make it happen”. Similar to managers in bank A, managers in bank B feel that they cannot afford to be totally divorced from the organisation, primarily because they depend on the organisation for financial assistance. This is particularly the case for fast-track managers. A fast-track manager said:

“...the policy is not very clear so it cannot be used as a basis to plan education. But I feel that even if it was the case I would still do what I feel necessary despite the policies... The financial support however, plays a part in the decision”.

Despite these comments overall, managers in bank B are becoming increasingly more independent in their learning and self-development and rely less on the organisation’s provision. By comparison with managers in bank A, a smaller proportion of managers in this bank rely on the organisation policy in their decision to undertake further education and learning. This observation is confirmed from the longitudinal analysis in this bank which shows a stronger interrelationship between learning, self and career development in this bank.

8.7.3. Learning in relation to self and career development

The preceding analysis shows that increasingly managers in bank B recognise the need to develop themselves and seek self-directed approaches. This observation is further supported by longitudinal data which shows that in pursuing a learning goal managers in bank B are guided by both their self and career development priorities. Considering their future employment and survival in the business environment, managers in bank B recognise that they need to learn (i.e. acquire additional knowledge and skills) so that they may be employable. A comparatively bigger proportion (54%) of managers in bank B feel that they have control over their career development, thus feel that their career plans will affect their career progress. Managers in this bank feel more confident about their future development, because they believe that they have some control over their destiny. As one manager put it: “within reason your destiny is in your hands”. Another manager added: “...I am the one who will determine it (career development) by being determined”. The perceived ownership for self and career development is indicated in managers’ descriptions of the factors which

influence their decision to pursue a learning goal. Figure 8.12. illustrates diagrammatically managers' responses in this bank when asked to explain the factors which influenced their decision to set a specific learning goal.

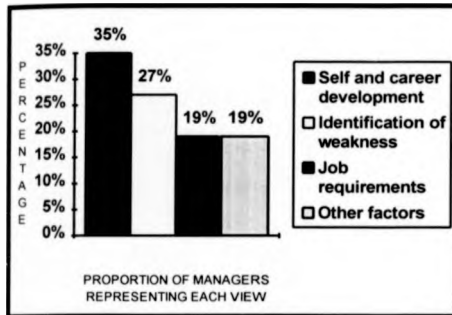


Figure 8.12: The factors influencing the decision to pursue an identified learning goal in bank B.

Managers' responses show that a significant factor in their decision to pursue the identified learning goal was their recognition of the need to develop themselves and to prepare the ground for their future career. This observation suggests that managers in this bank are comparatively clearer about their future direction and better able to pursue career development as part of their self-development.

For example, in setting a learning goal managers aim to address both present and future needs and likewise intend to utilise the knowledge acquired both in their present and future job. A manager made the following point in relation to this issue. He said:

"Anything you learn is going to be helpful even if you don't use it immediately. It is always used in and outside the work environment. It's always going to be there in varying degrees...It will need to be adjusted in the light of continuous experiences."

In summary, managers in bank B perceive a relationship between learning, self and career development and are beginning to explore it. Although, they are becoming less dependant on the organisation's resources for learning, managers in this bank are not fully self-reliant, because they are only just beginning to learn how to be self-directed in their learning. Moreover, it could be argued that some managers are superficially claiming to be taking responsibility for their self and career development. As indicated in sections 8.6.1. some managers engage in learning and self-development because the organisation expects them to do so and less because they wholeheartedly believe in it. From this analysis it is evident that there is a gap between "espoused theory" and "theory in use" at the organisational and individual levels. The introduction of a learning-centred approach to training by bank B does not appear to be 'truly' learner-oriented. Although the bank has comparatively a more active commitment to learning and self-development, managers have not interpreted this commitment in the same way. The fact that managers translate organisational encouragement as an expectation explains why some managers may be 'forced' to perceive a connection

between learning, self and career development. Moreover, the perceived link between training and learning could also be seen in the same light which justifies why comparatively more managers are beginning to question what is the 'real' relationship between these phenomena.

8.8. The key emerging interrelationships in bank B

This case-study examined the key interrelationships between the main phenomena in the context of bank B. The evidence from the data collected suggest several interconnections between phenomena. Some of the relationships identified are similar to those in bank A, however, their significance and strength differs in the context of this organisation. The analysis also shows some new relationships which have not been observed in bank A. For example, it is evident that there is a strong link between training and learning and that in the context of change, training and learning are perceived to be important. However, similar to bank A the relationship between change and learning and the relationship between change and

training are perceived to be linear and unidirectional. Therefore, managers in bank B, as is the case with managers in bank A, perceive that training and learning make a contribution to managing change, however there is no indication that they perceive change as an opportunity for learning or that managers actually change as a result of training. A unique characteristic of these relationships in this bank is that they are not perceived to be as strong as in bank A. Managers in bank B are beginning to challenge whether

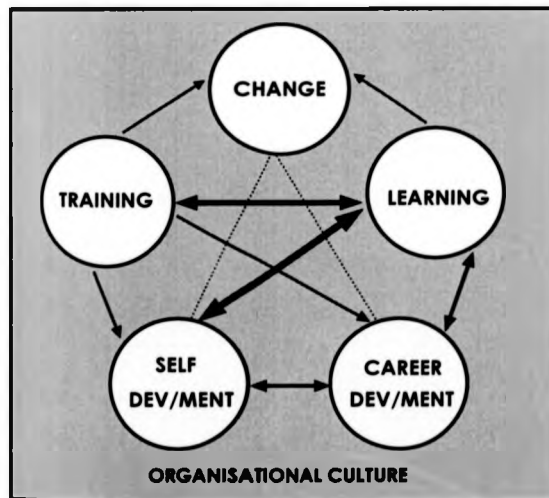


Figure 8.13: The emerging interrelationships between phenomena within bank B.

training can make a contribution to change and whether learning is significant given the uncertainty and insecurity about the future. Another relationship emerging from this case study is the perceived interconnection between learning, self and career development. The findings suggest that the increasing emphasis placed by the organisation to learning and self-development has "forced" managers in bank B to explore their interconnection. The strongest

relationship identified within this bank lies between learning and self-development. Managers in this organisation actively plan their learning goals in relation to their personal and career development. From the longitudinal analysis it is evident that managers in this bank are becoming less dependent on the organisation and are exploring other opportunities for learning. Figure 8.13. summarises the key emerging interrelationships within bank B. All the relationships identified, are shaped by the organisation's approach and philosophy which has affected individual managers' perceptions of the value and significance of each phenomenon within this organisation.

Case Study Three: Bank (C)

9.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss the key emerging interrelationships from the analysis within bank C. The discussion in this case study will focus on the most significant similarities and differences in comparison to the findings from the previous case studies. A profile of the bank is initially described to enable a contextualisation of the analysis of the key emerging relationships in subsequent sections.

9.2. A profile of Bank (C): An overview of historical and current developments

This section begins with a historical overview of the bank, in order to establish some of the most significant milestones in its life-cycle to-date. Some of the recent developments and changes are then discussed to provide the background for reviewing the corporate strategy in the light of the present organisational structure. The final part of the section examines the organisational culture in relation to top management.

Established in 1836, bank C is one of the oldest banks in the UK. In the 159 years of its development, it has experienced several acquisitions and amalgamations which shaped both its size and outlook. The most intense amalgamation era (1891-1919) strengthened its position and representation in the UK market. The scale and speed of the bank's acquisitions during that period have earned it a reputation as the "most formidable negotiator in British banking" (Internal publication). The intensified expansion strategy of the bank during this period and subsequent years (1909-1980), formed a strong high street branch base in the UK and widened

opportunities for expansion internationally, by deploying a group of subsidiary companies for different markets. The affiliation of bank C with other established organisations in the UK and abroad have contributed to its expertise in different areas of specialisation and the formation of a group of specialised companies. The diversification strategy of bank C during the late 1960s and 1970s was not only an effort to move away from the narrow confines of traditional banking, it was also a response to marked changes on the British banking scene. During the 1970s the bank gave more emphasis to meeting the volume and variety of business and to maintaining efficiency in customer service at the branch network. During this period and the

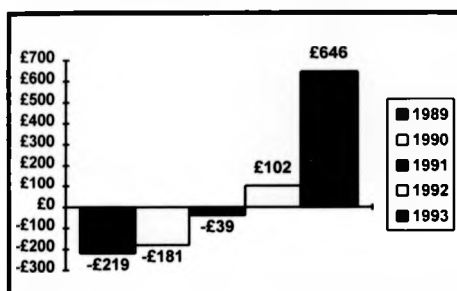


Figure 9.1: The financial position (Profit/Loss after tax) of bank C.

early part of the 1980s the bank introduced several innovative services (telephone banking) which gave prominence to the constant updating and rigorous marketing of its enlarged range of services. During this period (late 1970s to mid-1980s) of increasing competitiveness in the home market, the bank responded to international competition through a series of alliances with European and International organisations. However, not all alliances worked to the bank's advantage. During the late 1980s and early 1990s the bank faced deep disappointment and a prolonged financial strain. This is evident in its financial performance during this period (Figure 9.1. in £m). The poor economic performance of the bank was exacerbated by the depressed economic environment of the British market during the same period. The bank entered the 1990s with a new alliance from which it emerged as a member of the 10th largest banking corporation in the world (in terms of primary capital - The Banker, 1993), with 99,148 staff world-wide (as at 1992) and responsibility for assets of over £170 billion (during the same period).

Over the last five years the bank has implemented a series of changes in all aspects of its business which aimed to rectify previous mistakes and to establish a healthier, economic and service approach nationally and internationally. The most significant change has been its acquisition by a strong international Financial Group. This acquisition was primarily initiated due to the poor financial performance of bank C during the early 1990s which threatened its long-term survival. The alliance has given bank C a renewed sense of direction, a stronger competitive outlook and a much healthier financial position. Unlike previous alliances

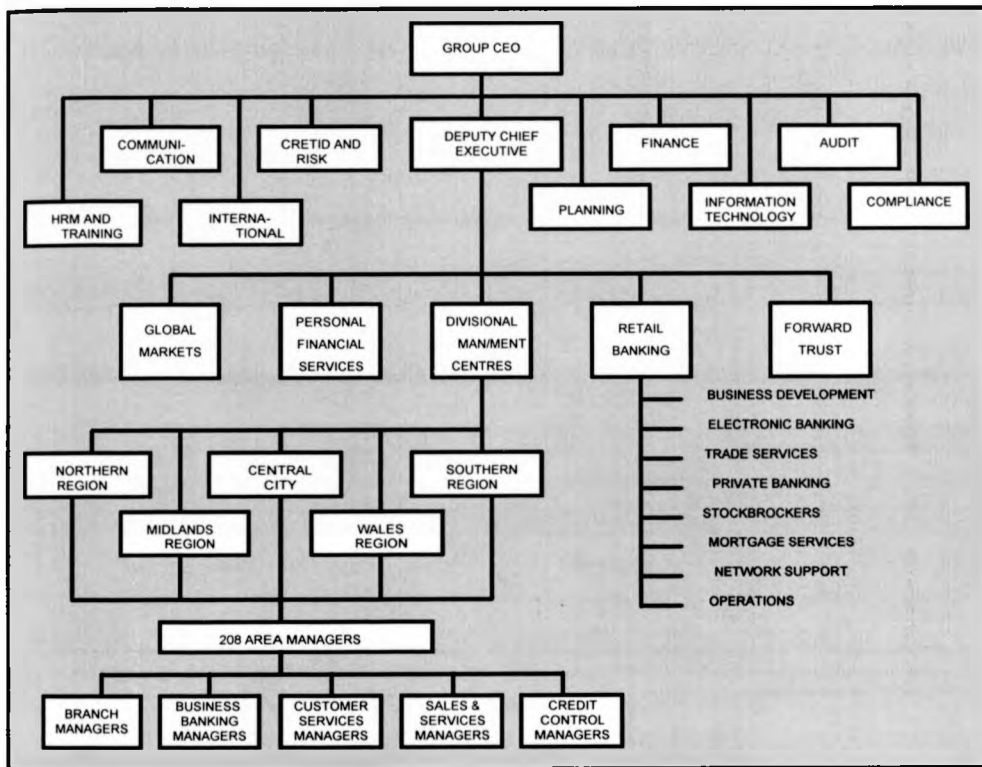


Figure 9.2: The organisation structure of bank C and the new branch network.

however, this alliance has had a major impact on bank C. This impact has been evident in its changing orientation towards customer services and numerous internal reorganisations which have reshaped both its culture and structure. A significant challenge of the recent alliance has been the reconciliation of two strong but different, national/organisational cultures. From the recent changes, bank C regained confidence in its ability to compete and it has started a rigorous programme of reshaping the style and content of the branch network. The emphasis on customer orientation and sales gave a "new image" to traditional branches particularly as routine work was shifted to highly-computerised and cost effective District Service Centres .

These changes have been significant triggers to the redefinition of the bank's corporate strategy and mission. The bank's focus under the direction of the then Chief Executive (1993) was to become "the most recommended UK bank". The implementation of the corporate mission has been supported by a series of internal structural changes and two major

programmes which were initiated at corporate level. The first programme was introduced during 1992 and involved a transformation of the bank's reporting lines and a reorganisation of its activities. Five self-contained divisions were set up each corresponding to one major region in the UK (namely Central-City, North, South, Midlands and Wales). This restructure was followed in 1993 by a "reintegration programme" which brought together corporate and retail banking which reshaped the branch network and introduced new roles and job titles. Figure 9.2. illustrates diagrammatically the structure of bank C and the new branch network (as at 1994). The poor economic performance of the bank in the early 1990's and the need for cost-consciousness led to a major cost-cutting exercise. This exercise involved downsizing the branch network and the numbers of staff across all levels of the hierarchy. Nearly 5,000 staff have been made redundant since 1991 and the number of branches in the high street was reduced from approximately 2,000 to 1,700. These changes were accompanied by the increasing influence of the recent alliance, which is affecting the management style and the corporate culture.

9.2.1. Corporate culture and top management

Being one of the oldest banks in the industry, bank C has a unique character in its own right. It combines both the experienced image of an organisation which has survived the most challenging upheavals during the late 1980s, while it also portrays itself as a re-awakened giant, ready to enter the 21st century more confident and wiser, having learned from the lessons of the past. The bank's premises vary from old Victorian buildings, landmarks of its presence in the late 19th century, to recently refurbished branches and business centres, which suggest that it is carefully investing in re-establishing its image and actively working to catch up with the trends of the late part of the 20th century.

The various CEOs over the years gave a slightly different flavour to the bank's presence in the sector and have largely shaped the orientation of the organisation. For example, during the upheaval of the late 1980s the then CEO gave more emphasis to sales and service. The CEO who followed (during the early part of 1990s) attempted to rectify some of the problems created previously and to take the organisation forward with more emphasis on quality. The recent international alliance of the bank has increasingly influenced the corporate culture and has given more weight to the role of the bank in the community. The new culture resulting from the recent alliance has been the cause of several changes in the HRM strategy of the

bank. Top management at different times have attached varying levels of importance to training and development of staff. CEOs during the 1980s and 1990s have made every effort to indicate clearly their "commitment towards an educated workforce" (Annual reports, 1984-1994). The recent changes in top management have greatly influenced the HRM strategy and have given training a renewed sense of purpose. According to managers and training providers, "recent changes have given training a different flavour" and have significantly affected "the focus and importance attached to training". Moreover, "the amount", "diversity" and "participation" in training interventions is said to have increased. It is argued, that the new top management has positively affected people's attitude towards training. The changing orientation towards training and HRM is discussed in more detail in the section which follows.

9.3. HRM strategy and the implications for training

The importance attached to staff (including managers) as a major "asset", is central to the bank's HRM strategy. The bank's training and education strategy is closely related to the corporate strategy. A guide explaining the bank's education strategy shows that:

"one of [bank's C] principal aims in the next few years is to achieve high quality customer service. We can only accomplish this if we develop the skills and talents of our employees to the full. Training and education are crucial elements in this development process...Adding value to people adds value to the business".

The influence of recent changes (1992 onwards) have focused HRM provision on the needs of individuals and the organisation. Six core "competences" form the backbone of the bank's HRM strategy. The six competences are central to the bank's aim of "maintaining a stable employee base" and "developing the means of differentiating bank C from its competitors". A senior provider made the following remarks in relation to this issue. He said: "Competencies are an integral part of the education strategy. If we do not invest in people then we are not capable of running a business". The identified competences are used mainly as a means for "developing a common language between the organisation and its employees", regarding their "mutual development". This point is explicitly made in the training policy which indicates that: "effective employee development, which achieves the desired return on investment for both bank C and the individual requires a common language to describe the skills and knowledge needed by the organisation". The bank has therefore, identified six "qualities or abilities necessary to the business, which have been called core competences". These are:

Leadership, Management, Customer Focus, Sales and Sales Management, Risk Management and Operations and Process Management. These competences have been selected in relation to the perceived "areas of skills valued by the organisation currently and in the future" and are therefore broadly defined. The introduction of managerial competences by the organisation at the late part of 1992 was seen as "a means of improving the value of training and developing a more focused training delivery", which meets "an identified need resulting from the demands of the job" (Education and Training Guide). Each of these competences relate to a series of training programmes which correspond to the desired knowledge and skills that individuals would be expected to demonstrate as a result. This approach to management training is a major shift in emphasis for the bank and to an extent a consequence of the recent alliance. The HRM approach shapes the way the training department is organised as well.

9.3.1. The organisation of the training department and the training process in bank C

Training within bank C is managed at two levels. Centrally there is the Group's training and development services, mainly responsible for co-ordinating the central training and development activities and providing support to the divisional training managers. At the divisional level, training is organised by a group of trainers who report to the Human Resource Manager of the division and are responsible for developing the training strategy of the division in consultation with the Area Personnel Managers and the local Area Managers of the region. Management training is one of the main activities of the central training and development services of the bank. Management training issues are also addressed within each division by the management trainers who cater for managerial needs across the six competences locally. The training department consists of a mixture of professional trainers, as well as traditional bankers who make a permanent or short-term transition to training. A budget of £16 million (as at 1993) is centrally held for training and a proportion of that (15%) is devoted to management training specifically. More than 45,000 managers have attended training events during 1992 across the five regions. Figure 9.3. represents the layout of the training department and the reporting lines within bank C.

According to training providers, the main purpose of training is "to deliver high quality, relevant courses to ensure that delegates have the opportunity to increase performance". Three main forms of training are said to be delivered within bank C; namely "vocational,

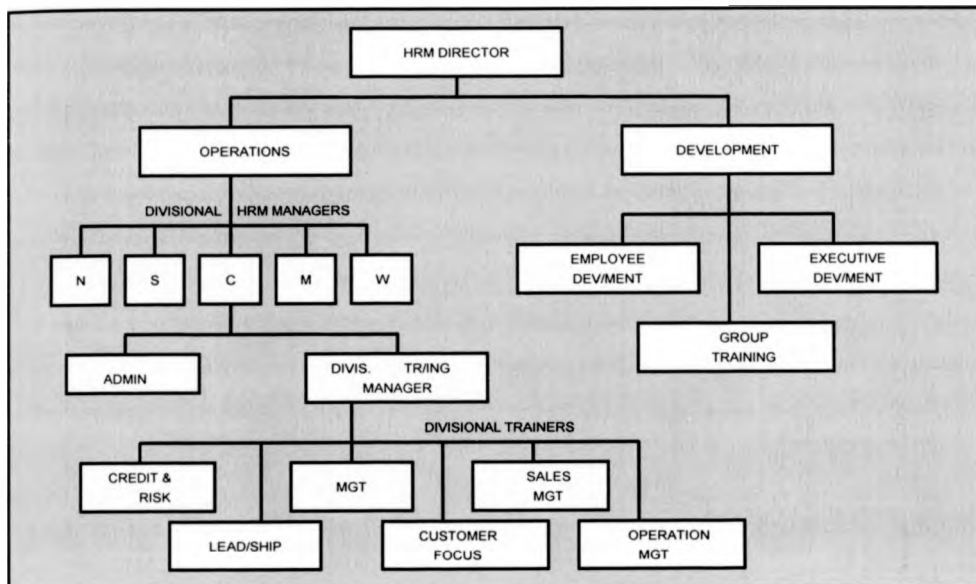


Figure 9.3: The organisation of the training department in relation to the HRM function within bank C.

developmental and educational training” (HRM manager). Training providers described vocational training as “the provision of knowledge and skills to perform the current job role”. “Developmental training is not necessarily job related, but it provides general skills for the future”. Finally, “educational training involves general management skills which aim to enhance an individual’s understanding”. This differentiation according to providers offers a clearer distinction between training, development and education. According to one training

Table 9.1: The objectives of training within bank C

• to provide people the skills to perform their role effectively
• to make the business more successful and profitable
• to make individuals realise their full potential
• to increase job satisfaction
• to improve, enhance people & meet competence deficiencies
• to ensure a better understanding of what is expected of people
• to bring people together and help them learn from each other

reflected in training providers’ descriptions of training objectives (Table 9.1.) and the way strategic/business needs are identified in relation to individual managers’ training needs. A training provider explained that:

“the identification of the strategic needs of the business is not achieved through a specific process. They tend to be identified on the basis of the organisation’s mission and vision and day-to-day requirements. The emphasis shifts in relation to the

provider: “Education gives people a broader picture, development is the next step up - the long term view, and training is what you give people to do the job today”.

This view of training is also

economic, social, political and environmental factors preoccupying the industry at different times.”

For example, during the mid-80s when there was high emphasis on differentiation, sales and lending were most heavily invested in. During the early part of 1990s (the period of economic recession), credit and risk were high on the agenda, whereas currently the emphasis has shifted to quality of service and fraud protection. Despite being influenced by these external factors, training in bank C is based on the six identified competences. Moreover, providers argue that the purpose of training, is “to develop generalists and not specialists and to provide

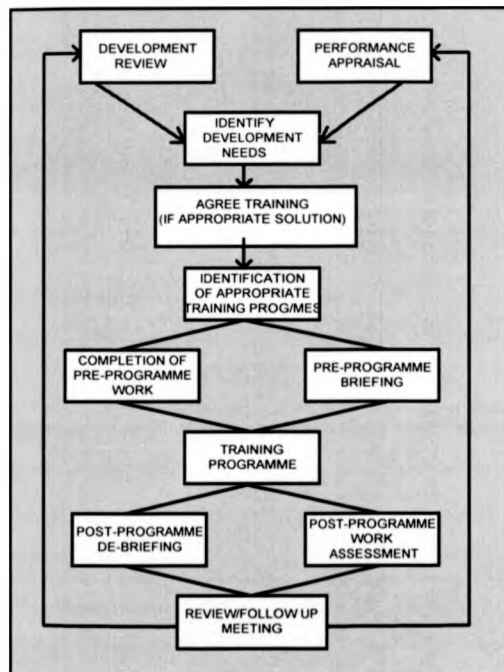


Figure 9.4: The training process cycle in bank C.

a broad range of skills”. Similar to the other two banks the identification of individuals’ training needs involves several steps. Figure 9.4. illustrates this process diagrammatically. Unlike the other banks however, training providers place a lot more emphasis on clarifying the nature of the development need before deciding how to pursue it. This philosophy is reinforced by the variety of mechanisms employed. As is the case in the other banks a central theme of the training strategy is the responsibility of the individual for self-development and the close relationship between the individual, the line manager and the training department. Unlike the other banks however, this theme has been

central to the training strategy of the bank for a much longer period of time (since the late 1980s) and has been strengthened by various practical approaches which have demonstrated the bank’s commitment. Training providers strongly emphasise the diversity of training and development methods employed by the organisation, which aim to “encourage individuals to take responsibility for their self-development”. The training methods employed in bank C incorporate traditional approaches, such as computer-based training, apprenticeships, (non)-residential courses and interactive video. However, by comparison to the other banks, greater emphasis is placed on interactive methods such as seminars and workshops, management

Table 9.2: The methods employed in bank C to identify individual managers' training needs

• performance appraisal-interim and annual report
• training and development review every 2-3 years
• dialogue of individual with line manager
• individual self-perception of development need

games and outward-bound training. Table 9.2. summarises the main methods employed in bank C to identify individuals' training needs. A unique characteristic of the approach of this bank to identifying

individuals' training needs is the "Training and Development Review". The training and development review takes place every two to three years and is initiated by the individual. This review is intended to reflect the commitment of the organisation to management training, by setting time aside specifically for reviewing the development needs of the individual. A significant objective underlying this approach to identifying individual's training and development needs is the organisation's belief that individual should not associate training and development with assessment. Therefore, this approach sets out to overcome some of the contradicting priorities in the appraisal process (Beer, 1981) and to communicate the emphasis placed by the bank on personal responsibility for development at all levels of the organisational hierarchy. According to some training providers, this approach "enables managers to be actively involved in all the stages of the training process". Managers are encouraged to "raise demand", "make suggestions when a training programme is written", "provide feedback at the end of the course" etc. Individual managers' responsibility is evident according to training providers, in "the success of the organisation in creating an environment where initiative can grow".

Another unique approach in management training and development within bank C has been the introduction of an internal library (LEAP) of training and development resources. The aim of this library has been to facilitate a positive attitude towards self-development. Established since 1988, LEAP is a comprehensive library consisting of books, audio tapes and video cassettes on 40 different subjects and around 850 different titles. Material can be borrowed by all employees and it is free of charge and according to the training providers "at least 60% of the bank's staff use this facility". A help line is also available for any queries on items included in the library. According to the information booklet LEAP has four specific objectives:

- To provide an additional resource for the training, development and learning of employees.

- To be used either voluntarily by individuals for their own personal interest, studies or development, or as part of training/development objectives agreed with their manager.
- To benefit the individual personally by enhancing their knowledge, self-awareness, self-confidence, skills, and competence levels.
- To benefit the organisation as a result of its employees having access to resources which have relevance to their work, and which improve their motivation, performance, and contribution to the effectiveness of our business operations."

This and other initiatives (e.g. learning centres initiated during 1993 and modular programmes in collaboration with established Business Schools), aim to demonstrate the bank's commitment to investing in its employees' development and training and to reinforce the importance attached by the organisation to individuals taking responsibility for their development. Training providers emphasised that bank C is "moving away from instructor-led courses towards facilitator-led training". A senior training provider said: "Training is based on a learning circle which begins by engineering experience, establishing individual expectations from the course, and finding out if individuals are right on the course". Another significant difference in the training process in bank C is the approach towards establishing the 'effectiveness' of training.

9.3.2. Establishing training effectiveness: Training providers' and recipients' views

Although, training providers in bank C argue that evaluation is an integral part of the process of identifying training needs and developing training programmes, in practice the evaluation process does not differ greatly from that followed in the other two banks. Questionnaires ("smile sheets"), evaluation forms and review days with delegates and sponsors are the main evaluation techniques employed. However, a different characteristic of evaluation in this bank is that it is an area of great concern among training providers, who are evidently more anxious about the difficulty of undertaking evaluation and the way it's being organised within the bank. Training providers in bank C are actively seeking to develop ways of addressing the difficulty in determining the knowledge acquired through participation on a training course. They pointed out that "knowledge and in particular soft skills take a while before they can be displayed". They are however, optimistic that "they can be identified in individual managers' action plans through observation and feedback from their line manager and others working close to them". A training provider pointed out that: "if people have something on their action plan, they've learned something". Another provider is less optimistic and asserted that:

"Evaluation of management skills is very difficult. Only people themselves and those very close to them know how well. Action plans are easily forgotten on return to the work ... getting others involved in the equation is important ... feedback is key".

The confusion about the evaluation process is evident in the lack of consensus on what evaluation is, what the evaluation criteria should be, and what evaluation should be able to provide. Firstly, evaluation is subject to multiple definitions. Some providers argue that "it is a means of assessing the worth and effectiveness of training and the training experience". Others point out that evaluation is "simply reviewing, changing and ensuring training is meeting what we (providers) and delegates set out to do". Others believe that evaluation is "measuring the difference that results from the training activity both financial and in behavioural terms". Finally, there are others who believe that evaluation is often confused with validation. In attempting to clarify the difference between the two, one senior provider pointed out that:

"... certainly we validate all our courses ... in evaluation we look from the organisation's and individual's point of view. Evaluation examines the success or not of a training i.e. has it met its objectives, has it enabled the organisation to move forward. For the individual has it given you additional experiences and the opportunity to practice the skills now and in the future. Not how good was the content and the trainer. This is validation."

The diversity in perspectives of what constitutes evaluation raises multiple expectations as to what evaluation should be able to do and the actual criteria which should be used in assessing the fulfilment of the training objectives. Evaluation is primarily the responsibility of divisional trainers and management trainers, which exacerbates the politics underlying the evaluation process. The main evaluation criteria described by training providers in bank C are summarised in Table 9.3.

Table 9.3: The evaluation criteria employed by training providers to establish training effectiveness in bank C

• the training environment
• material effectiveness - content
• quality and effectiveness of delivery
• achievement of delegates' needs
• applicability and relevance to the job
• course administration and management
• evaluation of trainers
• ascertaining the improvement

Despite the lack of consensus in training providers' responses, a unique characteristic within bank C is that training providers and recipients appear to give priority to similar factors when discussing the effectiveness of training. Unlike the other banks, within bank C training providers' responses show a relatively greater familiarity with what individual

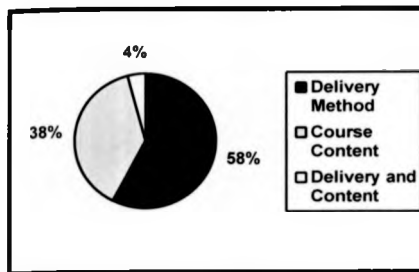


Figure 9.5: The importance attached by managers to the training content versus the method of delivery in bank C.

managers perceive to be important. Training providers consider effective methods those which enable managers to share experiences with each other and which are related to the actual environment and job. Moreover, effective training methods are perceived to be those which enable individuals to achieve their learning goals and provide knowledge which can be used as a personal experience e.g. time management techniques. Individual managers provide a similar picture, however they indicate several criteria for assessing the effectiveness of training. At the micro level, managers attach more importance to the method of delivery in comparison to the training content (Figure 9.5.). The method of delivery is considered, by a comparatively bigger proportion of managers (58%) to be the most important in determining the effectiveness of the training. The method of delivery is perceived to "create and maintain interest in listening". Moreover, managers pointed out that: "a good method of delivery facilitates learning and enables participants to absorb the information provided by the course content". A manager said: "A boring subject can be made more interesting if the delivery is good". A senior fast-track manager added that: "no matter how good the content is, if not put across well you won't gain as much". Others said that "the delivery method is a means of establishing the credibility of the trainer by persuading participants that they have mastery of the subject". Finally, a good delivery makes the training effective if it "creates an atmosphere which supports learning from each other". The main criteria employed by managers in bank C to assess the effectiveness of training are summarised in Table 9.4.

<i>Training content</i>	<i>Method of delivery</i>
• relevant to training objectives	• create and maintain enthusiasm
• applicable to present & future needs	• allow participation and practice
• should offer something new	• provide variety
• should be professional & up-to-date	• should be professional

At the macro level managers in bank C consider the method of delivery and training content (i.e. the internal factors) as being more significant when compared to factors such as the venue, the facilities and the equipment (i.e. the external factors). The relative importance attached to each set of factors is

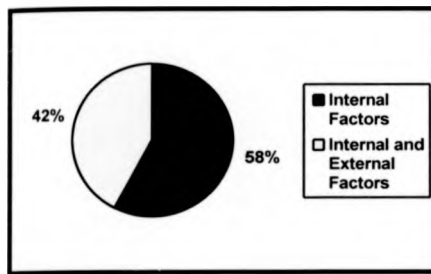


Figure 9.6: The importance attached to internal factors in relation to external factors of training in bank C.

illustrated diagrammatically in Figure 9.6. However, in this bank a larger proportion of managers (42%) perceive that external factors must be in balance with the internal factors of training. Managers argue that the external factors play a role in training, particularly in terms of "making people feel comfortable", "relaxed" and "open to learning". Some managers argue that the venue, the facilities and the equipment

facilitate the learning process by "avoiding distraction" and "aiding concentration". Moreover, these factors are perceived to affect individuals' "level of interest" and their "perception of the training quality". Finally, these factors "make people feel important in that environment" and "feel looked after, which builds up the learning spirit by adding to the excitement". Managers' perceptions of the significance of various internal and external factors for assessing the effectiveness of training reveal some of their expectations.

Managers' expectations from training provision in bank C emphasise more strongly the individual benefit in relation to the contribution of training to the organisation. Individual managers argue that: "the benefits for the organisation are a by-product of the individual's improvement". Training is seen as "an opportunity for improving the person in terms of their knowledge and potential" and is expected to "provide more confidence and motivation and to act as a platform for further development". Training is also perceived as a means for "reinforcing individuals' learning habits" and "giving people the right attitude" and "a better understanding of their worth in the organisation through a clearer sense of purpose". Moreover, training is expected to "act as a skill base from which to draw, in order to develop one's self in their present position and to enhance career development for the future". The expectations of managers from training are most aptly summarised in the words of a fast-track manager who said that:

"training should see itself as a service, almost as a restaurant with a menu you could go along to select what you want at short notice...provide variety, not only should it cater for the skills, but that different people have different ways, knowledge-based learning styles".

Table 9.5: What managers in bank C perceive training should be able to do

• grow the individual as a person
• improve & expand learning, knowledge & skills
• equip individuals for their present job
• deliver better results for the organisation
• facilitate change and adaptation

Table 9.5 summarises managers' expectations from training within bank C. Managers expectations from training within this bank are similar to the expectations of managers in bank B. In both banks the emphasis on training is the development of the person instead of the acquisition of specific knowledge and skills in relation to the present job, which is the case in bank A. A unique characteristic in this bank is that the emphasis on developing the person is also a theme running through training providers' responses. Another similarity in managers' and training providers' views of training effectiveness in this bank, is the importance attached to learning which is not as strong in the other banks. The emphasis on learning has influenced the way training is perceived to be associated with other HRM activities in this bank.

9.3.3. The relation of training to other HRM activities

In bank C training is vaguely related to motivation and reward as it is hardly associated with performance appraisal. However, training is strongly related to career development. Training is vaguely related to motivation and reward within bank C. Training providers argue that training may have some relationship to motivation and reward, because they assume that "being selected for a training programme is perceived by individuals as a form of recognition and an indication that they are being invested in". As a senior provider pointed out: "attendance is seen as an endorsement for the long-term in the organisation". However, training providers in bank C, unlike other banks, are quick to assert that "training is readily available to all staff and, hence it is not a means of rewarding people, because it is not linked to incentives. Moreover, "motivation is seen more as the outcome of training rather than the reason for it". The words of a provider confirm this point: "training is part and parcel of the working life...training is expected and received as part of development". This view is held by a comparatively bigger proportion (54%) of managers in bank C. Managers explained that they are "self-motivated and do not depend on training for motivation". Managers in bank C emphasise their belief that "it is a personal responsibility to fill a knowledge gap" and that they would "seek additional learning alternatives rather than wait for the organisation to provide them with the training". A manager's response illustrates this point: "I am not looking for a carrot at the end of the stick". These views suggest that training in bank C is not as strongly related to motivation and reward as it the case in the other two banks. It is also

evident that managers in bank C are more self-reliant in their development compared to managers in the other banks.

The limited association of training with performance appraisal is propounded by both training providers and individual managers, because both promote the view that "performance appraisal is a means for identifying knowledge gaps and establishing an individual's training needs". Performance appraisal is not perceived to be a means of assessing individuals' training performance. As one training provider pointed out: "...we are of the belief that we want people to go (training attendance) to learn, not go to be assessed". This is a unique feature of this organisation which lies in the fact that the identification of individual training needs is not entirely the outcome of the performance appraisal process. As pointed out earlier (section 9.3.1.) the Training and Development Review has been introduced by the organisation in order to provide support for individual development. This approach has contributed to the strong connection, perceived by managers, between training and career development (promotion). 60% of the managers in bank C support this link, however unlike managers in the other two banks, the relationship between training and promotion is interpreted by managers as "a natural consequence of growth" and not as a means to an end (i.e. training in preparation for a specific job). A manager said: "if you become more capable you will end up in a higher grade and earn more money and be more motivated and have more self-satisfaction". The perceived role of training, as a means of growing the person is the backbone of the perceived association of training to career development and succession planning.

The link between training and career development is one of the most significant relationships identified within this bank. The bank's effort to rebuild a coherent career development path for employees has been demonstrated recently (1993) by the introduction of a "Career Development Guide" which describes each job in relation to the six core competences. Moreover, training programmes have been designed in relation to the identified competences and individuals are encouraged to pursue their development in relation to the relevant competences of the role they aspire to perform. This initiative has been a major step to overcoming the insecurity of organisational change and emphasise the link between training and career development. According to a training provider it is intended to "influence individuals' approach to self-development and learning". As far as the relationship of training

to succession planning is concerned, training providers pointed out that depending on the business needs currently and in the future, selected managers (usually fast-track) are being put through a series of training programmes, which aim to prepare them for executive positions. This confirms to some extent the claim by fast-track managers that specific training programmes may be connected to promotion. Unlike other organisations however, managers within bank C are not permanently labelled as fast-track. Managers may be on and off the fast-track route, depending on the organisation's needs and the perceived contribution of that individual. The review of the HRM strategy of bank C and the organisation of training in relation to the other HRM activities reveals the unique characteristics of management training and development in this bank. The next section explores managerial learning in bank C.

9.4. Managerial learning in bank C

Managers' perceptions of the learning process and the way people learn within bank C is very similar to the views expressed by managers in banks A and B. A unique characteristic in bank C is the different priority given to issues in the learning process and the significance attached to different learning opportunities. Experience, training and modelling are the main sources of learning described by managers in bank C, which are identical to those described by managers in the other banks. However, the priority and emphasis given to these learning sources is slightly different in this bank. For example, managers in bank C place more importance on "training as a source of learning". Experience is seen as consisting of a diversity of "on-the-job activities", as well as, "life and personal events". Managers explain that "interacting with staff" and generally "being exposed to different situations" are all part of the learning process. Managers in bank C perceive that managerial learning is affected by a combination of personal and organisational factors. Similar to managers in the other banks the most significant personal factor is the individual's "willingness to learn" and the "motivation to pursue a learning need which is personally significant". With reference to the organisational factors managers in this bank place a lot of emphasis on training issues and in particular to "interactive and participative" approaches which provide "relevant and applicable learning". When asked to rate the relative significance of personal and organisational factors in the learning process (Figure 9.7.) a comparatively (with other banks) bigger proportion of managers (62%) in bank C perceive that the personal capacity is more important than the organisational context.

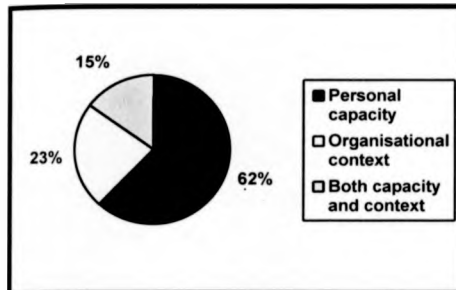


Figure 9.7: The comparative importance attached by managers in bank C to personal capacity and the organisational context in the learning process.

Personal capacity is perceived by managers in bank C to be the individual's "willingness", "motivation" and "interest" in learning. It is closely related to "a person's commitment and openness to learn", and "the personal desire to improve and progress". According to managers personal capacity entails "the ability to learn, to absorb new information" and "the ability to feel confident and equipped to approach a

learning experience without fear". Finally, personal capacity in this bank is perceived to be directly related to "varying levels of intelligence". On the basis of these characteristics, managers believe that the personal capacity may determine the "speed", "quality and quantity" of learning. In other words, "it influences how one approaches the learning task" (i.e. selecting from a variety of ways to learn from), "how much one learns" and "how pleasant the learning process is". Some managers argue that "the personal capacity can overcome the shortcomings of the organisational context". Others point out that "unless people have the personal capacity to learn they cannot be forced to learn". As one manager put it: "without it you can't learn whatever the environment. If you don't want to learn, you don't learn". Managers' perceptions of the importance of personal over organisational factors suggest that in this bank managers rely primarily on their resources to learn.

Organisational factors such as the context in which learning takes place may provide the "right environment and atmosphere which are conducive to learning", it may provide "encouragement and guidance to learn", however, whether individual learn or not is perceived to be entirely up to the person. A manager made the following remarks: "if you want to do it (learn) badly, you will do it whatever the environment". According to managers the organisational context "affects peoples' behaviour and helps them to accept the need to learn". It "affects what is learned, because it determines what is relevant to the task at hand". As a result it is perceived as "a source of learning and the starting point in individuals' learning curve". A fast-track manager pointed out that: "Unless the organisation provides the stimulation to learn, individuals will not do anything".

A significant observation from managers' views of the learning process, which is common across all banks, is the perceived superiority of personal over organisational factors. It is also evident however, that organisational factors (such as training provision) influence the significance of a learning experience and present managers with major obstacles to learning. Organisational factors as evident from managers' responses influence not only how they learn, but what they learning and why they choose to embark on the learning process in the first place. This observation is significant for interpreting managers' perceptions of their ideal learning experiences and the perceived obstacles to learning.

9.4.1. An ideal learning experience

Managers' descriptions of their ideal learning experiences in bank C are very similar to the descriptions of ideal learning experiences of managers in the other two banks (Figure 9.8.). Training courses by the bank are perceived to be the ideal learning incident described by 46% of managers in this bank. A common theme in managers' responses is that such interventions

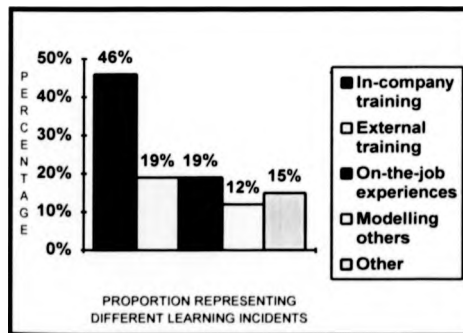


Figure 9.8: Ideal learning experiences of managers within bank C.

“build up confidence” and “enable managers to devote their time and effort solely to learning”, which is an issue raised by managers in the other two banks as well. Table 9.6. summarises the main factors identified by managers in bank C as explaining the significance of internal training interventions as ideal learning experiences. On-the-job experiences are also critical to managers' learning in bank C. Practical experience - “learning from doing” - as some described this experience, enabled them to “resolve problems and questions instantaneously” and “provide them with a better understanding of why and how things work”. Moreover, it is perceived to allow more experimentation and making mistakes which some find it more compatible to their own learning style. Furthermore, experiences on-the-job make managers feel more self-sufficient. As one manager put it: “its very relevant to the real learning needs. You can't turn the blame on others. You become self-sufficient”.

Table 9.6. summarises the main factors identified by managers in bank C as explaining the significance of internal training interventions as ideal learning experiences. On-the-job experiences are also critical to managers' learning in bank C. Practical experience - “learning from doing” - as some described this experience, enabled them to

Table 9.6: The factors described by managers within bank C to explain internal training courses as ideal learning experiences

• open and honest feedback
• informal interaction with others
• team dynamics & teamwork
• suitability of training methods
• isolated and concentrated to learn
• opportunity to think & understand
• increased confidence & satisfaction
• good timing of course

Similar to the other banks, managers in bank C perceive that working with a “skilful man” is an ideal learning experience. These managers refer specifically to incidents where they were inspired by another manager (often more senior), because of some identified characteristics possessed by that individual. Managers pointed out, that these experiences happen accidentally and the identified “model is very much subject to the criteria set by the individual who

chooses them”. A manager characteristically pointed out that his model provided him with “support and the breathing space to take initiative and to explore different avenues” which caused the manager to feel more confident about himself and his abilities. To use his words: “...it made me realise the extra potential I had and he took time to discuss and develop me. He unlocked the potential in me”. Finally, some managers describe more individually specific learning experiences, such as a particular placement, reading a certain book, and being involved in a specific project. The learning experiences identified by managers in bank C (as with managers in banks A and B) had an impact on them.

A comparatively bigger proportion (66%) of managers in this bank claim that the identified learning experience had an impact on their ability to learn, as well as, their approach towards learning. Managers assert that the ideal learning experience “increased their capacity to learn”, “stimulated enthusiasm and willingness to learn”. A manager pointed out that the learning experience made him realise that he can still learn. He said specifically: “you’re never too old to learn”. Another manager described it differently saying: “a good learning experience, is like a good meal, you want to eat it again”, while for a senior manager the learning experience was critical because: “it took me to another planet”. Managers also point out that the learning experience “broadened my perspective”, “provoked thought” and “acted as a catalyst to find out more information about the particular topic of interest and through that to find out more about myself”. As a result some managers realised how narrow minded they were and how much more they can do. This realisation induced some of them to become more positive about their abilities and to reflect more from the learning they acquire. An interesting observation from this analysis is that managers in bank C, unlike managers in the other organisations, do not seem to emphasise ‘tangible’ effects of the learning experience i.e. skills or competences.

They appear to concentrate mainly on the 'intangible' and more personal effects of the learning experience and devote more time to reflecting on the impact of learning on their self confidence rather the improvement of their performance. Similar to managers in the other banks managers in bank C identify both organisational and personal factors as obstacles to learning.

9.4.2. The perceived obstacles to managers' learning

The most significant organisational obstacle to learning, according to managers in this bank, is the "increasing work pressure" accompanied by the "expanding work load". As one manager put it: "everyone wants everything yesterday". Another manager explained the dilemma many individuals face in the light of such pressures. He said: "having to work towards tight objectives and performance targets forces self-development to be set aside in order to get the pay rise". Another obstacle to learning, according to managers is "the way the organisation manages training provision". Some managers argue that an "unstructured

Table 9.7: The perceived organisational obstacles to learning within bank C

• work load and work pressures
• lack of time
• bureaucratic environment
• bad organisation of training provision
• poor administration of training resources
• lack of individual orientation in training
• limited long-term orientation

approach" to training is adopted, which "fails to recognise how people learn" and as such, "does not cater for the varying styles of learning". Moreover, training provision is perceived to be "badly administered", because priority is given to training which addresses the business needs rather individual needs. In relation to this point one manager said that: "training is like a tap on the cooker; turn the heat up and down and it boils over". The perceived mismanagement of training provision is considered to restrict learning, because "training is not effectively planned with long-term objectives in mind". In other words, managers feel that "training is not coherently integrated with self-development opportunities and career progression". Table 9.7. summarises the perceived organisational obstacles to learning in bank C.

The perceived obstacles to learning resulting from training provision reveal an interesting contradiction, bearing in mind that managers perceive training provision as an ideal learning experience. These data may be interpreted as a gap between organisational policy and practice, which has also been identified in banks A and B. This observation needs to be considered in the light of comments provided by a small proportion of managers who argue

Table 9.8: The perceived personal obstacles to learning within bank C

• lack of time
• family commitments
• social commitments
• hobbies and other interests
• laziness and other physical limitations
• personal perception of ability
• personal learning style

that there are no organisational obstacles to learning within this bank. These managers believe that learning is a personal issue and that individuals should be prepared to overcome the obstacles to learning. A senior manager made the following comment: "If I want to learn, the organisation does not provide obstacles, because there are different ways to learn". Another manager added that: "No one is stopping me from doing what I feel I want". The position taken by these managers indicates that their perceptions have been affected by the changing philosophy and approach of the organisation and that unlike other banks the message concerning self-direction and self-reliance in learning is reaching more managers in bank C.

At the personal level, learning is said to be restricted by the "lack of time due to disorganisation" or "ineffective time management" on the part of managers. Family commitments are considered to be an "unavoidable obstacle to learning". Managers taking this view argue that "striking the balance between the time devoted to the family in relation to learning is difficult". Family commitments affect the "amount", "speed" and "frequency" of learning, as do social commitments in some instances. Some argue that "laziness" is an obstacle, while others explain that their perceptions of their "ability to learn", influences their "willingness to engage in a conscious learning process". Table 9.8. summarises the personal obstacles to learning identified by managers in bank C.

9.5. The perceived relationship between training and learning

The expectations of individual managers in relation to training discussed in section 9.3.2. and their perceptions of the learning process analysed in the previous section (section 9.4.) show that training forms an integral aspect of managerial learning in this organisation as is the case in the other banks. A common theme running through managers' responses to these issues is that training is perceived to be a major vehicle for development and one of the most significant learning experiences that a large proportion of managers claim to have come across. Managers within bank C, unlike other banks claim unanimously (100%) that they perceive training as an opportunity for learning. Like managers in bank A and bank B,

Table 9.9: The conditions perceived by managers in bank C to support the relationship between training and learning

• attending training with the intention to learn - improve self
• being taken away from the pressures of the work
• becoming more relaxed and more receptive to new ideas
• acquiring knowledge and skills - learning something new
• exchange of ideas and experiences
• a direct message from the bank

managers in this bank argue that the relationship between training and learning is very strong and they consider the two processes as synonymous. A manager said: "In the bank we perceive it one and the same. Training equals learning...that's what you are told you go there for". Managers explained that "the whole purpose of undertaking training is to learn". A manager said: "I can't see the purpose of going to a training course, unless I am going to learn. For me training is part of educating". A detailed analysis of the underlying preconceptions supporting managers' understanding of this relationship, reveals some of the criteria which influence managers' perceptions of the relationship between training and learning. These criteria/conditions are summarised in Table 9.9.

A unique factor underlying managers' perceptions of the relationship between training and learning in bank C is that training is considered as a means of "improving one's self within the organisation and outside". For managers in bank C, the relationship between training and learning is based more on the notion that training can provide "the space to assimilate information", and less because training provides additional knowledge and skills. For example, a manager pointed out that: "Training provides knowledge and confidence even if you know the material...you can relate training to life in general". These views suggest, that the different approach to management training and development in this bank has encouraged managers to associate training as part of their self-development which is not the case in the other banks. However, a similar issue with managers in the other banks, is that despite the move towards learner-centred approaches, training interventions are still perceived to be the main and often safer means to learn. The words of a senior provider indicate this point aptly:

"it very much depends on the individual. Some regard it as no opportunity to learn, others are totally committed to training, perhaps because this is the only avenue they have experienced".

This comment confirms the observation across all banks, that training is often a form of indoctrination and conditioning and less a means of encouraging individuals to exercise their own choice. On the other hand, it may be argued that training in bank C is moving towards a more flexible approach which is more conducive to learning and self-development. This

proposition however, contradicts the findings reported in section 9.4.2. which show that training is perceived to be an obstacle to learning. The two sets of findings show an inconsistency in managers' perceptions and the fact that training despite its criticisms remains a significant opportunity to learn which is a finding common across the three banks. The significance attached by managers in this bank to the relationship between training and learning suggests that it is a means of striving some stability and continuity and enables managers to make sense of themselves and their experiences. It is equally important to examine how managers in this organisation understand the role of training and learning in relation to organisational change.

9.6. Training and learning in the context of change

Individual managers' perceptions of the recent organisational changes affects their perceptions of the contribution of training and learning towards their adaptation. This section explores the perceived impact of changes on the organisation and on individual managers and discusses the relationship between, change and learning as well as the perceived relationship between change and training.

9.6.1. The perceived organisational and personal effects of recent changes

Recent organisational changes are attributed to both external and internal factors. Managers and training providers in bank C perceive that the most significant change has been the recent alliance and in particular the cultural differences between the two organisations. A common view between managers and providers is that the bank has now "moved away from traditionalism and has become more flexible and able to change". A training provider said: "Bank C has been a bank of change in the last 10-12 years. It has learned to live with change. Staff feel that change is positive...we are the leader in the management of change". Individual managers however, argue that: "the bank has become too prone to change", "it changes, for change's sake", "it became disillusioned with change and allows no time to evaluate change, therefore its going full circle". The negative effects of change for the organisation are perceived to outweigh positive effects. The organisation is perceived to have been affected negatively, because of the "reduction in the numbers of staff", and the "introduction of inexperienced managers". The bank is said to have "received poor publicity" and as a result to have "lost its credibility in the eyes of staff and customers". As one manager put it: "it became a laughing stock for a long-time". As a result of these effects further "disorientation" and

Table 9.10: The perceived negative effects of change on the organisation

• reduction in numbers of staff
• poor publicity
• customer and staff confusion
• loss of credibility in the eyes of staff
• loss of loyalty & confidence in the bank
• negative effects on performance
• lack of clear career ladder
• culture shock

“confusion” among staff has been created which has led to “low morale” and a “loss of confidence in the bank’s intentions”. The bank is said to have become “more cynical” and “less forgiving”. Finally, managers believe that the recent alliance caused a “major cultural shock”, because of the different approach to doing business. The main negative effects of change on the organisation are summarised in Table 9.10. Managers’ perceptions of the negative organisational effects of change entail primarily individual’s concerns (i.e. the impact on employees), which has also been observed in bank A and to a lesser extent in bank B.

Table 9.11: The perceived positive effects of change to the organisation

• more professional approach to management
• improved customer service
• increased profits
• better quality of management base
• improved communication
• better relationships among staff
• became more efficient and cost-effective
• became more friendly to staff and customers
• more scientific in dealing with staff development

The organisation is said to have been positively affected by the recent changes (see Table 9.11.), because the bank improved the services it provides to customers and in its financial position. According to managers, bank C has become “more efficient”, “flexible” and “cost effective”, and is perceived to have “acquired a better quality of management” which has substantially “improved communication” and “created better relations among staff and management and a better working environment as a whole”. The bank has become “more professional” and “less paternal” and it “has adopted a more participative approach to management” which is perceived to have “opened-up more areas for all people in the bank”.

An important observation from the perceived positive and negative effects of change, is that the negative effects of internal and external changes tend to be attributed mainly to the social and political events and the top management up until 1992. In fact many of the negative effects of change are explained in the light of the constant changes in top management and the lack of clear direction as a result. On the other hand, the perceived positive effects of change appear to focus more on recent changes and in particular the change in top management. Some of the positive effects are specifically attributed to the recent alliance and its impact on the

way the bank is doing business. A manager specifically pointed out that the recent alliance, "has changed the language". This point confirms the observation in other banks, that the extent to which managers agree and approve of the changes introduced colours their perceptions of the effects of change. This observation is evident in managers' interpretation of the positive and negative effects of change on them as individuals.

Managers in bank C perceive that the positive effects outweigh the negative effects of change on them as individuals. This finding is unique to this bank. Managers believe that they have benefited from change mainly, because of the "additional opportunities" that have been created. This is a view supported by several fast-track managers who pointed out that change has provided them with a good opportunity to develop themselves. As one senior manager put it: "I thrived from the changes. They provided confidence and a marvellous opportunity for

Table 9.12: The perceived positive effects of change on individuals in bank C

• created more opportunities
• self and career development
• raised self confidence
• increased motivation & loyalty

self-development". This is a view shared by non-fast track managers who explain that change created additional opportunities which otherwise would not have been possible. Some managers argue that organisational changes enabled them to "have more control over their career and personal life". Others feel that change has "increased

motivation and loyalty to the bank", because they are "stimulated by the new challenges and feel happier with the direction the bank is taking". Table 9.12. summarises the perceived positive effects of change on individual managers. The positive effects of change on individual managers indicate how managers have benefited from the recent changes and why they agree with the introduction of some of these changes.

As far as the negative effects of change are concerned, the most significant negative effect has been "the job insecurity", "the uncertainty of future employment policy" and "the lack of clarity about the possibilities for career progression". The "radical reduction in the numbers of staff" and the "confirmation that there is no longer life-long employment increased uncertainty and insecurity". The structural changes are perceived to have altered their career aspirations and have clouded their career paths. As a result, managers feel "disappointed" and "disorientated". A manager made the following comment: "I don't know where to aim for...what am I equipping myself for?".

Table 9.13: The perceived negative effects of change on individuals within bank C

• job insecurity
• disorientation and confusion
• disruption of career aspirations
• decrease pride in job
• disagreement & job requirements
• increased work pressure
• increased workload

The changes have made some managers “feel less pride” in their job. These feelings are associated with the “downgrading of the branch manager’s job” and “the introduction of a sales culture”. A manager explained that he felt that his role was no longer of importance to the organisation, which affected his attitude towards his job. To use his words: “it is a different role to the one I envisaged when I joined...the branch manager’s job is not looked upon in the same light as in the past”. Another manager said: “sales is not part of banking. Banking is about lending. I can’t sell things customers don’t want. I wasn’t trained as a sales man”. Finally, managers indicated that change “produced more pressure in the work” and “increased work load”. Table 9.13. summarises the negative effects of change on individuals. The positive and negative effects of change as perceived by individual managers have influenced managers’ perceptions of the factors facilitating faster and easier adaptation to change.

9.6.2. The factors perceived to assist faster and earlier adaptation to change

It has been observed that a unique characteristic within bank C, which keeps reappearing, is that individual managers and training providers emphasise similar issues. This point is confirmed in the perceived factors which facilitate faster and easier adaptation to change. “Good communication” is perceived by both managers and providers to affect change positively, by ensuring that “there is a common understanding and agreement of the purpose of change”. Moreover, it is seen as “a means for bringing top management closer to staff and customers”, which would enable “more collaboration and better results by exchanging ideas and reaching better decisions”. Another important factor shared by both individuals and training providers is “people” and in particular their “education” and “attitude”. A manager made the following comment: “A well educated workforce will be able to manage change

Table 9.14: The factors perceived to assist faster and easier adaptation to change within bank C

<i>Training providers' perspective</i>	<i>Individual managers' perspective</i>
• better communication	• better communication
• education of staff	• education of staff
• attitude to change	• attitude to change
• consistency in approach	• uncertainty & insecurity
• decentralisation/autonomy	• quick decision-making
• strong top management	• autocratic management style

more effectively, by having a more positive attitude towards change”. Another manager said: “the organisation must create opportunities for people to express and apply their skills not to make them

feel they have reached their full potential". A training provider pointed out further that it is important to "expose people to an educational experience which enables them to practice their ability to develop alternative solutions - creative thinking - not predictable solutions". The factors perceived by managers and training providers to affect the speed and level of ease in managing change are summarised in Table 9.14. This analysis is useful for discussing the importance attached by managers to learning and training in the context of change.

9.6.3. The perceived relationship between change and learning

The picture in bank C is not significantly different from the relationship between change and learning identified in the other banks. Learning in this bank is perceived by managers to perform certain functions in relation to organisational change (Table 9.15.). By comparison with the views expressed by managers in the other banks, managers in bank C rate differently the perceived functions of learning in relation to change. For example, in bank C learning is

Table 9.15: The perceived functions of learning in relation to change within bank C

• manage change
• keep-up-to-date
• enhance career prospects
• assist in personal development
• maintain and improve performance
• deal with new job requirements

perceived as "a means of adapting to the demands of change", rather than as "a vehicle for preparing for change", which was the case elsewhere. Having said this, the perceived link between change and learning is stronger in bank C in comparison to the other banks. For example, a manager who claimed that learning is a means of managing change made the following remarks

to explain his view. He said: "you never stop learning. The world is changing continuously. Learning a set of rules to administer over and over again is not good". The strong link between learning and change is further evident in the importance attached by managers to learning in relation to current and future job changes.

As it is the case in other banks, managers in bank C consider learning as being important in relation to current and future job changes. The responses obtained to this issue are presented diagrammatically in Figure 9.9. Similarly to bank B, the majority of managers in this bank attach more importance to learning in relation to changes in their future job as compared to the importance of learning in relation to changes in their current job. Learning in relation to current job changes is more strongly associated to personal development, whereas learning in relation to future job changes is mainly concerned with career development. A unique feature of the importance attached by managers to learning in relation to present and future job

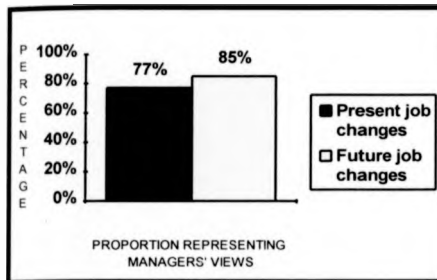


Figure 9.9: The perceived importance of learning in relation to present and future job changes in bank C.

bank C have different views about the relationship between change and training.

9.6.4. The perceived relationship between change and training

The relationship between training and change in bank C, as is the case in the other banks, is perceived by managers and training providers to exist because training is considered to perform certain functions. From the perspective of the organisation, training is serves as a tool for communicating the change process and providing individuals' the means (mainly knowledge and skills) to implement the change. Similar views are expressed by individual managers, however, unlike managers in the other banks, in bank C training is expected to "stimulate action" by "providing confidence to deliver the change". Moreover, training is expected to "create consistency and smoothness during the transition process". As one manager put it: "it's got to focus on individuals, educate them on what the bank expects them to do. Explain what is sought of them". The main functions of training in relation to organisational change, as described by training providers and individual managers, are summarised in Table 9.16. By comparison with the other banks the link between training and

Table 9.16: The perceived functions of training in relation to change in bank C

• provide knowledge and skills
• enhance understanding of change & its purpose
• enable consistency and smoothness in transition
• provide support for coping with change
• a major communication tool

changes, is the perception that "learning is a life-long issue". One manager emphatically pointed out that: "the day we stop learning, is the day we'll stop living". Another manager added: "we learn something new everyday...one never stops learning, its an on-going thing". It is evident that in this bank managers are beginning to explore change as an opportunity for learning, which is not the case in the other banks. Managers in

change is not as strong, because a significant proportion (38%) of the managers question whether training can make a contribution to change. Managers taking this view, explain that "training tends to be reactive, hence incapable of providing the support as and when it is needed". A manager said: "its reactive...they put the change in place and then discover they need training to give people the skills". Managers feel that training has little contribution to make, because it often offers "a shelf-picked solution" rather than providing "the basis for assessing the situation at hand".

Therefore, training is perceived to be “superficial” and “unable to get to the core of the problem”, which is about “changing attitudes and creating systems of sustaining them”. This view is supported by training providers as well. A senior HRM manager argued that: “training might change the behaviour of people, but unless it changes the organisation at the same time and the perception of those at the top then its contribution to change is minimal”. Managers believe that training is “one of many supporting processes” and that “on its own it does not have a sustainable role during change”. This finding suggests that a bigger proportion of managers in bank C, in comparison to the other organisations, believe that whilst training may be important and relevant to organisational change, it is not sufficient in itself. Moreover, comparing managers’ views from a longitudinal perspective it is evident that a much higher proportion (84%) of managers in this bank claim that they have always maintained this view about training in relation to change. This observation suggests that managers who are critical of the contribution of training in relation to change have maintained this view for a long time which would mean that training would have had a limited contribution to their efforts to manage various organisational changes. Managers’ views of the relationship between change and learning and the link between change and training are also reflected in their views of the factors necessary to create a learning environment.

9.7. Creating a learning environment

The factors perceived by managers within bank C to be important in creating a learning environment are similar to those described by managers in the other banks. However, managers in bank C attach different priority to these factors. What is interesting to note, is that managers consider training as an integral part of a learning environment and by comparison with other factors, training is perceived to be the most significant. It should be noted however, that more emphasis is placed on the factors constituting a training experience e.g. right blend of attendees, informal atmosphere on courses etc. rather than the training intervention itself. Moreover, in creating a learning environment managers tend to relate training to the time and resources available to learn. Furthermore, “having the space to learn” and “the time to reflect” are perceived to be important. As one manager put it: “...allow people to create a learning environment for themselves...not fire fighting, but serious learning”. Managers in bank C refer to “commitment and support for learning from all levels”, “encouragement and support for self-development”, “recognition and reward for learning”, “a culture which perceives learning

Table 9.17: The factors perceived to contribute to creating a learning environment in bank C

• training factors and set up
• time and resources to learn
• commitment & support from all levels
• the organisational culture
• individuals' willingness to learn

as part of the job" as factors which they perceive as important for creating a learning environment. Finally, according to managers in bank C a learning environment is created if individuals are willing to learn. As one manager put it: "believing in what you are doing...a want to, rather than a have to". Table 9.17. summarises the factors perceived by managers in bank C to be necessary in creating a learning environment. A significant observation from managers' responses to this issue is the emphasis they place on the individual's willingness to learn as a factor affecting the creation of a learning environment. Moreover, it is evident that the majority of managers (81%) in bank C feel that they can implement the suggested factors both as part of their self-development and in helping their staff. Managers taking this view said: "I can help by being actively involved in modifying things. Ensure that they (the identified factors) occur in my team", "I will practice what I preach", "I will encourage my staff to develop themselves more". Another unique characteristic in this banks is that a comparatively smaller proportion (69%) of managers in this bank believe that their learning needs can be reconciled with those of the organisation. This is an important finding which shows that despite the emphasis on the organisation's input for learning, managers in this bank recognise the tension between their own learning priorities and those of the organisation and are more likely to engage in a dynamic negotiation, with the organisation (Greenhalgh & Chapman, 1995).

Managers in bank C recognise the difficulty in developing mutually beneficial training & development and argue that: "it is difficult to establish a common understanding between the individual and the organisation of each others' expectations and needs". Managers believe that a reconciliation between personal and organisational learning needs "should not really be an issue", because as one manager pointed out: "the one fuels the other. The more successful the organisation, the more people want to learn how to maintain success". Managers argue that the lack of reconciliation between individual and organisational needs is "unavoidable", because of "the size of the organisation and the inherent difficulty of being able to address everyone's needs". A manager said that: "its difficult because of the size of the organisation...a lot of issues to address; cost, time and effort...trying to be all things to all men, but its not possible". Others argue that there is generally a hidden agenda behind training interventions which distorts the message and makes individuals disillusioned about the actual

purpose of training and the way that they should best sort their priorities (self versus organisation). A manager made the following point in relation to this issue: "we will always struggle to do that. Not many individuals have the foresight to develop themselves for the good of the organisation. There is a natural imbalance between individual aspirations and organisation commitment". Managers' views of the learning environment and the reconciliation of organisational and learning needs is also reflected in their interpretation of the organisation's encouragement to learning, develop themselves and be creative.

9.7.1. Organisational encouragement: The impact on learning, self-development and creativity

A comparatively bigger proportion of managers in bank C believe that the organisation encourages them to learn, to develop themselves and to be creative. Figure 9.10. illustrates managers' views diagrammatically. A unique feature of this organisation is that managers perceive unanimously (100%) that the organisation encourages them to take personal responsibility for their self-development, while a very large proportion (81%) believe that they are being encouraged to learn. A comparatively smaller proportion of managers (31%) believe that they are being encouraged to be creative.

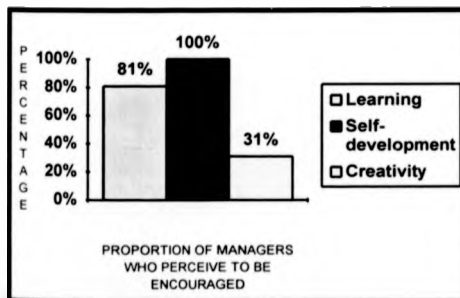


Figure 9.10: The perceived encouragement by the organisation within bank C.

A comparatively larger proportion (81%) of managers in bank C argue that the organisation encourages them to learn. Managers interpret this encouragement in two main ways. The most significant indication of the organisation's encouragement for learning is the LEAP system. According to managers, "this is the prove that the organisation supports learning", because it is "free of

charge", "it provides a variety of ways to learn" and "it is flexible to meet individuals' needs". The second most significant factor which illustrates the organisation's encouragement for learning, is "training provision". According to managers this is evident in the "good quality of training provided to all levels of management", "the availability of courses throughout the year", "the regular review of training needs" and the fact that "training is non corrective or disciplinary".

There is consensus among all managers (100%) that the organisation is very supportive of individuals taking personal responsibility for their development and progress. This is a significant finding which is unique to this bank. The encouragement of the organisation is perceived by managers to be demonstrated by the "emphasis on self-development as part of the organisations' policies and practices", "the use of development reviews", "personal development plans" and other development programmes available such as "LEAP". With reference to LEAP a manager said: "its a first class library, a self-development package...the organisation would love you to do something for yourself, and not to tell you what to do". The encouragement for self-development is also strongly emphasised according to managers, in several publications of the bank (such as the Training and Education Guide, Career Development Guide, Professional Qualification Guide etc.) which also show the emphasis placed by the organisation in taking ownership for their personal development. Finally, managers explained that they are "encouraged to think about their career development" and to actively pursue it which encourages them to think more actively about their personal development and learning.

From this analysis it is apparent that managers interpret the organisation's encouragement from the consistency in the message and the practical indications which show the importance of and the need for taking self-development seriously. Although practical approaches encouraging self-development are evident in the other banks as well, the uniqueness in this bank lies in the consistency of the message and the continuing emphasis attached to self-development by introducing mechanisms (such as LEAP and development reviews) which have resolved some of the political issues in the link between training and performance appraisal (Beer, 1981).

Despite the perceived encouragement to learn and to develop themselves only a small proportion of managers in this bank believe that they are encouraged to be creative. Managers attribute the limited encouragement for creativity to the "rule-bound" nature of the banking system which is perceived as "rigid in formality and guidelines". Managers argued that although the need for creativity is recognised and encouraged, creativity is restricted by having to follow rules and regulations. A senior manager said:

Table 9.18: The perceived factors indicating the organisation's encouragement for learning, self-development and the limited encouragement for creativity within bank C

<i>Learning</i>	<i>Self-development</i>	<i>Creativity</i>
• LEAP programme	• part of company policy	• nature of business
• training provision	• the LEAP programme	• rules and regulations
• organisation culture	• emphasising ownership	• organisation structure & size
• line manager support	• providing facilities & support	• rigidity environment
• grading structure	• performance & promotion	• risk-averse atmosphere

"peers and management want to encourage creativity, because this can help competitiveness, but the way we run the business restricts it. Rigorous control of banking business restricts innovation and creativity. The system requires discipline".

The limited encouragement for creativity is also attributed to the structure and culture of the organisation which is "procedurally based" and "risk-averse". A fast-track manager explained that: "the organisation's practices expect you to conform rather than create...some feel that creativity is autonomy and in a large organisation you have to follow rules and regulations". The nature of the job and the duties allocated tend to discourage managers from what some of them term as "free thinking". Table 9.18. summarises the factors which managers perceive to indicate the organisation's encouragement for learning, self-development and the limited encouragement for creativity. This analysis suggests that bank C is not significantly different from the other banks in relation to creativity. The limited encouragement for creativity reveals a contradiction within this organisation. Although the organisation is perceived to be committed to learning and self-development, it provides limited freedom for creativity. Managers perceptions of the organisation's encouragement for learning self-development affects their level of dependency on the organisation's policy in their decision to undertake further education and learning.

9.7.2. The impact of the organisation's policy on individuals' learning

From the preceding analysis it is evident that managers in bank C, like managers in the other banks, are influenced in their approach to learning by signals from the organisation. A significant finding in this organisation, however, is that a larger proportion of managers (62%) claim not to be influenced by the organisation's policy. Among the managers propounding this view are senior and fast-track managers. Managers explained that the organisation policy has no influence in their decision to learn because they perceive that further education and learning is a "personal choice" and "solely driven by their personal willingness and self-motivation". Managers taking this view pointed out that the guiding force is their perception

Table 9.19: The factors which influence managers' choice of activities for pursuing a learning goal

• personal perception, preference & learning style
• availability of learning resources
• time element-efficiency and effectiveness
• nature of learning goal

of the need to learn and not the organisation policy. However, managers acknowledge that they have been affected in the past by the policies of the organisation. For example, some managers explained that they have "abandoned the ACIBD qualification as soon as they realised that the bank no longer valued it". Unlike managers in bank B, managers in this organisation did not rush to embark on another learning task which appeared to be more valuable in the eyes of the bank. Instead, they critically assess their needs and are "more keen to develop general skills" which increase their "employability". As one manager pointed out: "I would do it regardless of the organisation policy, for my self, for personal satisfaction". Another manager added: "personal development is instigated by the personal need to have something to strive for".

This finding is evident from the longitudinal analysis in the organisation which reviews the way managers pursue the fulfilment of their learning goal. Managers' responses suggest that those who are not influenced by the policy of the organisation tend to be more self-directed in the activities they choose for pursuing the identified learning goal. For example, managers argue that the factors influencing their choice of activities is primarily "a matter of preference" and "suitability to [their] learning style". These managers are guided primarily by their "perception of how the learning goal can best be tackled". As one senior manager pointed out: "the activities are self induced. I am in control of them, I can be flexible with them and I can meet the personal and organisational objectives". Table 9.19. provides a summary of additional factors influencing the choice of activities in pursuing a learning goal as described by managers in this bank. The unique characteristic about the relationship of organisational policy and individual learning in this organisation is that managers in bank C are moving to a more liberated and self-directed approach of managerial learning. This observation is also evident in the strong interrelationship between learning, self and career development.

9.7.3. Learning in relation to self and career development

The preceding sections show that managers in this bank are more concerned about their learning and self-development by comparison with managers in the other banks. Moreover, managers in bank C perceive the relationship between learning and current job changes as part

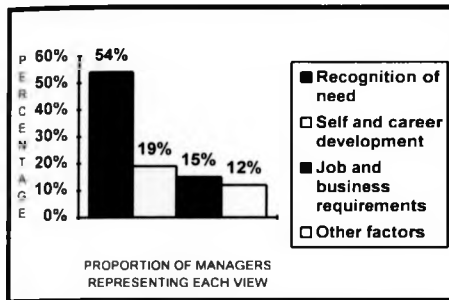


Figure 9.11: The factors influencing managers' decision to set a learning goal.

of the self-development while future job changes are associated with their career development. This observation is confirmed by longitudinal data which shows that 54% of the managers in bank C argued that the factors which influenced their decision to set a learning goal were primarily "a recognition of the need to bridge an identified learning gap" and "a willingness to improve". A manager said: "it was a willingness to be better at what I do and to perform to a higher standard". Others saw the learning goal as "another stepping stone in career development", while a smaller proportion were driven by the "business priorities at the time and the signals of the organisation". Figure 9.11. summarises the proportion of managers representing each view. It should be noted that managers in this bank do not discriminate self and career development, as clearly as managers in the other banks. For managers in bank C setting a learning goal is intended to serve the priorities of the time. These priorities tend to be more strongly driven by their personal perception of the need to fill a specific knowledge gap. The fact that this goal serves both self and career purposes is in some respects considered to be unavoidable. The strong interrelationship between learning, self and career development is supported by data which suggests that a large proportion (62%) of the managers argue that in pursuing the fulfilment of their learning goal they had both their present and future needs in mind.

Moreover, a very large proportion (85%) of managers explained that they would be able to utilise the knowledge acquired from the fulfilment of the learning goal both presently and in the future. These findings provide useful indicators about the nature of learning goals managers set in the light of the continuously changing context of their organisation. With reference to the future utilisation of the knowledge gained from the learning goal, managers argued that they set a goal which enabled them to acquire "transferable skills beneficial both to personal and business life". From this analysis it is possible to argue that in bank C managers indicate a strong interrelationship between learning, self and career development because they take into account self and career concerns in their learning and try to balance the priorities that personal and career development present them with. The unique nature of the relationship between learning, self and career development in this bank is further confirmed

by the comparatively larger proportion (73%) of managers who feel that they are in control of their career development and their career plans can affect their career progression. For example a manager said: "If I see a goal, I would see to it". Another manager added: "my plans will affect it [career], because it is up to me to explore opportunities and prove I can do it". Finally, a fast-track manager said: "its like snakes and ladders. You have to plan your career, but be aware of external factors such as competition".

9.8. The key emerging interrelationships in bank C

This case study discussed the main findings emerging from the contextual analysis of the main phenomena and their interrelationships within bank C. From this analysis several key interrelationships emerge. Some of the relationships identified are similar to those identified within banks A and B, however there are also some which are unique to this organisation. Among the relationships identified which are similar to those of the other banks is the strong relationship between training and learning. This relationship is the strongest within this bank and in comparison to the other banks. The link between change and training is also similar however it is not as strong in this bank as is the case in bank A. The relationship between learning and change on the other hand is stronger in bank C in comparison to the other banks. This relationship shows that managers perceive an interacting interconnection between change

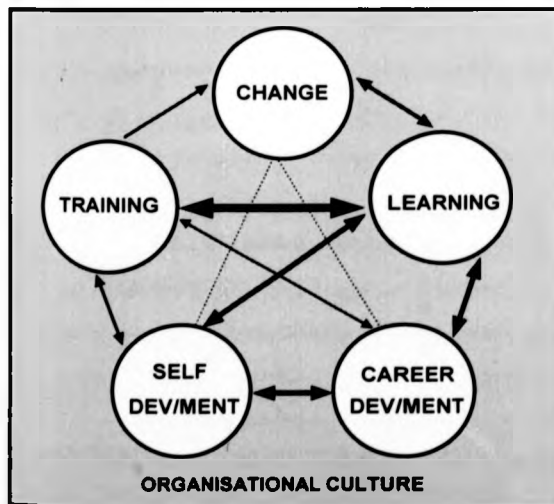


Figure 9.12: The emerging interrelationships between phenomena within bank C.

and learning. In other words, managers in bank C believe that learning facilitates adaptability to change, and are beginning to view change as an opportunity for learning (i.e. they are beginning to explore learning from changing and changing from learning). The triangular interconnection between learning, self and career development is very strong in this bank, because managers actively related self and career development and direct their learning both in relation to their personal

development currently and their future career development. This interrelationship is encouraged and supported by organisational policies and practices which have brought closer the bank's "espoused theory" and "theory in use" in relation to managers' learning and self-development. Unlike managers in the other organisations, managers in bank C are more self-reliant and self-directed in their learning. The key emerging interrelationships within bank C are summarised in Figure 9.12.

The Main Interrelationships Revisited: A Comparative Analysis Across Case Studies

10.1. Introduction

This chapter revisits the key relationships emerging from the analysis of the findings from each bank and concentrates on the variations and similarities between them. The discussion of the main findings comparatively across organisations will seek to re-examine, in the light of organisation and industry-specific characteristics, the nature and strength of relationships between phenomena and the conditions which support or restrict their interconnection. The aim is to reflect on the findings from this study in relation to the underlying assumptions in the literature and to discuss the contribution to the field. The analysis in this chapter is presented on the basis of four main themes. A thematic presentation of the comparative analysis is deemed to be more appropriate for discussing the identified interrelationships, because it facilitates a more integrative analysis of the various factors which explain the findings emerging from this study. The four themes discussed in this chapter reflect the four objectives of the research stated in Chapter 1. The chapter begins with a discussion of the impact of the organisational context on the nature and strength of relationships. The interaction of personal and organisational factors as creating conditions facilitating or inhibiting the development of relationships is the second theme discussed, while the third theme concentrates on the contribution of the individual's perspective to our understanding of interrelationships between phenomena. The chapter concludes with a critical appraisal of the research model and the diagrammatic representation of the complexity of interrelationships

proposing *synthetic analysis* as a new perspective capturing the interaction and integration of human and organisational systems and potentially a new approach for the study of the complexity of social systems.

10.2. The nature and strength of different relationships

The findings across the three banks suggest that the relationship between training and learning is perceived to be the *strongest*. The findings suggest that there is diversity in the way managers in each bank associate change and training and relate learning and change. In the light of these findings the interrelationship between change, learning and training is relatively *loose* across all three banks in the study. However, a significant variation exist in the

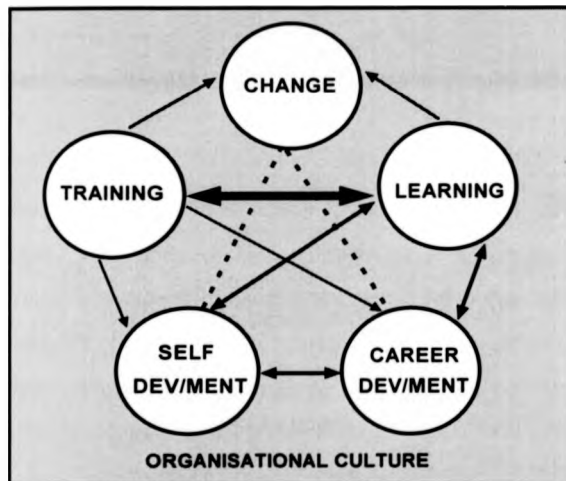


Figure 10.1: The key emerging interrelationships across the three banks.

interrelationship between learning, self and career development in each bank. The key relationships identified across the three banks are illustrated in Figure 10.1. (the various linking lines indicate the strength of the relationship across all three banks). As indicated in Chapter 4 for the purpose of this thesis the term '*interrelationships*' is used to describe the multiple relationships between three or more phenomena and their potential correlation, the

term '*relationship*' is used to denote the dynamic association between two phenomena and the term '*link*' indicates the static (chain-like) association between two or more phenomena. The degree of *strength* of a relationship describes the intensity or potency of the interaction between processes. In other words it shows the significance attached to the relationships by individual managers and the way they potentially may act upon the perceived association between phenomena. For example, when describing a relationship as *strong*, this suggests that managers perceive a close association between two phenomena, whereas when describing a relationship as *loose*, this would suggest that phenomena may not be closely associated because the multiplicity of factors affecting their interconnection does not allow a linear or

sequential association. The distinctions made between varying degrees of strength in relationships emerges from the identification of the conditions which support or inhibit the interaction between phenomena. The proportion of managers supporting a particular relationship is an additional measure employed in drawing distinctions. The sections which follow discuss the nature of the main interrelationships emerging from the findings with reference to the impact of the organisational context.

10.2.1. The impact of context

The main phenomena examined in the study and their perceived interrelationships are heavily influenced by the context in which they take place. The contextual analysis of the main phenomena (processes) examined in each case study explains that the way managers perceive organisational processes, the meaning and significance attached to them and the way they practically relate to them are affected by historical and cultural factors within the organisation and the industry at large, the policies and practices in place and the implicit or explicit messages of the organisation about its expectations. These factors affect the nature (reciprocal/dynamic, unidirectional/mechanistic) of the relationship between phenomena and whether a relationship is strong or loose. This observation is evident across all the main relationships emerging from the findings, however it is particularly clear in the *strong* relationship between training and learning across the three banks, the *mechanistic* relationship between change and training and the *varied* interrelationship between learning, self and career development. The impact of context on these interrelationships highlights more clearly the similarities and differences observed comparatively across the three banks.

10.2.1.1. The strong relationship between training and learning

A relationship between phenomena is strong when organisational/cultural factors coupled with historical factors within the organisation and the industry at large promote a consistent message about the value attached to particular processes and the purpose for which they are employed. The relationship between training and learning is an example where historical factors inherent in the industry, as well as, organisational/cultural factors within each of the banks have contributed to their strong interconnection. The relationship between training and learning is the strongest common relationship identified across all three banks.

At the industry level, the assumption that training is an opportunity for learning is a consequence of the way training has historically been employed in the sector and the functions it has been perceived to perform. As discussed in Chapter 6, the bureaucratic and relatively stable nature of the industry in the past has influenced the way banks adopted training as part of their practices. Training is characterised by its structured and highly systematised approach to staff education. It is perceived as a means of providing the necessary knowledge and skills in relation to specific tasks or jobs (Eason, 1964; Perry, 1975, Hendry, 1987). The characteristics of the sector in relation to management training and development are reflected in the practices of the three banks and the attitudes of individual managers towards training and development. This observation suggests that the characteristics of the sector have had an impact on the policies and practices of banks which in turn have affected individuals' perceptions of the nature of training and learning and the significance of their perceived interconnection. The existing literature provides support for this observation, particularly in relation to the impact of external factors such as market forces, government initiatives, legislation etc. on the attitude of organisations toward training (Coopers & Lybrand, 1985; Sparrow & Pettigrew, 1987; Robinson, 1995).

At the organisational level, the findings of the study suggest that the learning structures (defined as the conventional and unconventional systems of knowledge which consciously or unconsciously are socially accepted as valid sources of information - Antonacopoulou, 1996a) in place aim to serve primarily the needs of the organisation often at the expense of individuals' needs (Stevens & MacKay, 1991; Buckley & Caple, 1990; Pettigrew et al., 1989; Keep, 1989a, 1989b; Rainbird & Maguire, 1993). For example, it is evident that in banks A and B (and less so in bank C) management training and development seek to balance competing priorities of the organisation with limited attention being paid to individuals' needs. Moreover, the teaching orientation of training is evident in the relatively greater emphasis on technical skills as compared to management skills. A central aim of training as described by managers across the three banks in this study is to provide knowledge and skills in relation to the specific job/task with the intention of improving performance. In other words, the prime objective of training has been perceived as indoctrinating "the bank's definition of good practice" (Branch manager).

The approach of the three banks to management training and development shape managers' perceptions of the learning process. A common feature across the three banks is the strong teaching culture that dominates training interventions. The way training is being delivered and the overall atmosphere which dominates training is depicted by managers as a 'back to school' experience. One of the underlying assumptions of training provision in banks A and B (and less so in bank C) is that trainees learn in the same way. There is no indication that training in these banks caters for different learning styles or that it treats trainees as adult learners (Honey & Mumford, 1982; Brookfield, 1986; Knowles, 1984; Smith, 1988; Jones, 1995). It has been observed that training neglects andragogical principles and assumes that managers absorb information without questioning it. The culture of the banking sector has

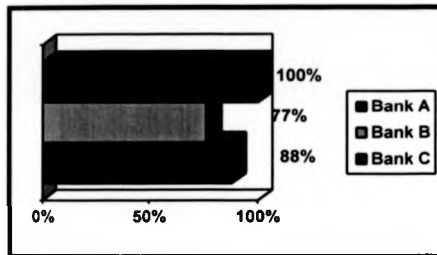


Figure 10.2: The importance attached by managers across the three banks to learning through training.

disciplined managers to be receptive to learning in the context of training. This observation is reflected in the way managers define/understand both training and learning. A common definition of training includes the "provision of knowledge and skills", while learning, is defined as the "process of acquiring knowledge and skills".

Managers have been conditioned to believe that training is the most significant/valid source of

learning and that learning is about acquiring knowledge and skills. In effect, learning is defined in terms of training and training is circumscribed in terms of teaching. The words of a training provider confirm this point: "...learning has traditionally been something which happens away from the job, away on a course...". Against this background, managers have grown up to believe that learning is training and more specifically that learning is going on courses. Figure 10.2. illustrates diagrammatically the proportion of managers in each bank supporting this view.

This issue is further evident in the homogeneity (within each bank and across banks) in managers' perceptions of how people learn. Managers' descriptions of the learning process across the three banks show that they view learning in very narrow terms and as resulting from experiences (life or work related), training interventions and modelling others in the work environment. A big proportion of managers across all three banks refer to specific training interventions, mainly provided within the organisation, as their ideal learning

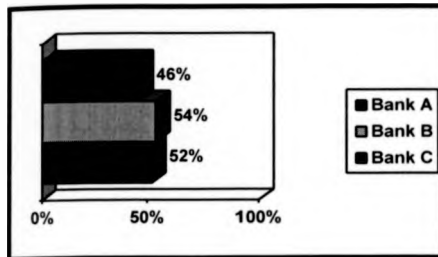


Figure 10.3: The proportion of managers across the three banks who perceive internal training courses as an ideal learning experience.

experience (Figure 10.3.). The descriptions of managers across the three banks to explain why a particular training course was an ideal learning experience reveal some common issues. Table 10.1. summarises the main factors identified by individual managers across the three banks when they described their views of what makes internal training courses an ideal learning experience. These factors indicate some of the conditions which support the relationship between training and learning as perceived by managers across the three banks.

The data suggests that managers feel insecure about learning if it is not through training, because they have been brought up in an environment which has 'spoon feed' them. As one manager argued: "managers do not feel confident to learn from methods other than formal training courses, because of historical reasons". Another manager added that: "the training

Table 10.1: The factors described by managers across the three banks to explain why internal training courses are ideal learning experiences

• acquiring new knowledge & skills
• being part of a team
• changing perceptions
• increasing self-confidence
• friendly atmosphere
• receiving honest feedback
• the use of specific methods
• geared to the needs of the current job

function clearly state that development depends on the self. I would have preferred a more structured training input. I would then be able to take things on board".

This point is echoed in the remarks of training providers as well. A senior provider pointed out that: "The average manager waits for the organisation. At senior levels in particular...The culture of the organisation is paternalistic". Another training provider added: "...sometimes the culture of the

organisation has been that people do as they are told. They attend management courses, because they are told to come". A manager confirms this point saying: "People learn because they are told to. People do not often take the initiative". In effect, managers have developed a sense of dependency on the organisation and they perceive training as an opportunity for learning because "you are forced to learn" (Branch manager). It is evident that managers across the three organisations, perceive training and learning as closely interconnected, because this is one of the main learning opportunities they have had available to them and it is highly valued by their employing organisation.

These findings demonstrate the contextual nature of training and learning and the impact of context on the way training and learning are defined and conceptualised and the value attached to their perceived interconnection. The findings confirm the observations of researchers (Bass & Vaughan, 1966; Gagné, 1970; Burgoyne & Stuart, 1976; Mumford, 1988; Noe, 1986 and others) that personal factors such as individuals' motivation, perception of the value of training, personal goals, ability to learn etc. influence managers' perceptions of training as a learning opportunity. The present study confirms the situational factors identified by researchers (such as Hicks & Klimoski, 1987; Baldwin et al., 1991; Campbell, 1989; Goldstein, 1991) and shows the impact of contextual factors (such as the organisation's policies and practices, the signals of the organisation and the organisational culture) on personal factors. In other words, managers' perceptions of the learning and training processes are shaped by contextual factors which give these processes meaning and significance. The present study supports the observations of Croft (1996), Al-Maskati & Thomas (1994), Legge (1994), Preston (1993) and others that training as a learning event provides the opportunity to find out more about the organisation, strategies for surviving in the organisation and passing as an adequate employee of the organisation by demonstrating acceptable behaviour.

Although the findings would suggest that this relationship is a unique characteristic of the retail banking sector these characteristics are evident in other contexts (sectors) as well. For example, a recent study looking at organisational learning processes in a utility company in comparison to a private training organisation (Jones, 1994), suggests that the historical and cultural factors were equally influential in shaping individuals' learning. The study showed specifically, that individuals in these two organisations perceived learning as training, because the organisations had shaped individuals' perceptions. In conclusion, managerial learning and training are contextually specific and are largely shaped by the philosophy and the assumptions underlying the provision of learning resources within organisations. Training as a source of learning is evidently the result of the banks' perception of how individuals *should* develop. Therefore, managers perceive a strong relationship between training and learning, because this is how the organisation has conditioned them to understand this relationship. It is significant to note that individuals' perceptions of this relationship is heavily biased by the perspective of the organisation to which individual managers closely subscribe to.

However, the fact that individuals may subscribe to the organisation's perspective does not always mean that a strong relationship between phenomena is likely to emerge. The findings provide evidence which suggest that if individuals perceive a particular relationship because they subscribe to the organisation's perspective and less because they personally believe that a relationship exists it is more likely that such a relationship may be *mechanistic* (i.e. superficially perceived and rarely practised) or likely to break down completely (become loose). This observation is evident in managers' perceptions of the link between change and training.

10.2.1.2. The mechanistic link between change and training

The link between change and training is described as mechanistic because the association between the two processes is very structured across the three banks and individuals associate these processes in a linear fashion. The findings show that training has been adopted by the three banks as a means of facilitating the strategic or operational changes pursued at different times. Training from the perspective of the organisation is perceived to have an important contribution in managing the change process, by acting as a communication tool, a vehicle providing the necessary knowledge and skills, a supporting mechanism for coping with the consequences of change (i.e. facilitating implementation and adaptability) etc. These roles of training in relation to organisational change are reflected in managers' descriptions across the three banks and are summarised in Table 10.2. The findings of the present study support the

Table 10.2: The perceived contribution of training to change across the three banks
• essential communication tool
• provide knowledge and skills
• facilitate adaptability to change
• define and explain change
• ensure uniform direction
• a source of motivation
• smoothness in transition

proposed association of training with change described by other commentators in the existing literature (Brooks, 1980; Lippitt, 1982b; March, 1986; Atkinson, 1990; Talbot, 1993). The findings suggest that training may perform an "adaptive" (i.e. facilitating adaptation to change by identifying new knowledge and skills arising from the change) and the "adoptive" (i.e. part of the culture change effort) role described by Talbot (1993:26). However, unlike Talbot (1993), Stewart & Hamplin (1990), Clark (1991) and others who propose that training can play a proactive rather than a reactive contribution to change (i.e. "innovative" role - providing the opportunity to question the objectives of change) the findings across the three banks suggest that the way training is organised in these banks cannot perform this role. A key theme emerging from the findings regarding the link between training and change is that because the implementation of

training programmes in relation to specific planned organisational changes proved to work well in the past, structured training is perceived as an important vehicle for implementing future (planned) changes. This observation helps explain why the link between training and change is mechanistic and therefore why individuals are trained *for* change. Similar to the perceived relationship between training and learning, the perceived association between training and change across the three banks is influenced by the perspective of the organisation which has failed to take into account the perspective of the individual manager. By neglecting the perspective of the individual, the organisation has enforced a unidirectional association between change and training to serve its own priorities, thus failing to provide the space for individuals to explore training *to* change (i.e. training as facilitating individuals' adaptability to change).

Why a relationship becomes a mechanistic link

The association between two phenomena may become a mechanistic link when individuals associate phenomena superficially (i.e. do not wholeheartedly believe in their interconnection) or feel that the proposed relationship does not work in practice and the assumptions upon which the relationship rests are unrepresentative of their 'reality'. The present study provides evidence which suggest that from the individuals' perspective training does not always fulfil the roles advocated in the existing literature in relation to organisational changes. The analysis of the perceived link between change and training across the three banks suggests that managers have been conditioned to believe that training can contribute to managing organisational change. The majority of managers across the three banks believe that training *should* facilitate acceptance and adaptability to change, because this is the reason they are being sent on training during periods of change. Therefore, the perceived relationship between change and training is based on the perspective of the organisation which consequently shapes managers' predisposition toward these processes and their association. An integral aspect of the relationship between training and change is to enforce behavioural and attitudinal change on the individual (Leigh, 1973; Morgan, 1988; March, 1986; Lippitt, 1982a, 1982b). Therefore, individuals are trained *for* change. However, this assumption does not mean that individuals actually change as a result of training (training *to* change).

When managers across the three banks were asked to explain what they perceive as the contribution of training to change a relatively high proportion of managers in banks B and C

Table 10.3: The factors identified by managers in banks B & C as indicating the limited contribution of training to change

• no expertise in organisational change
• no training on organisational change issues
• no consultation and involvement in change
• training cannot overcome negative feelings
• knowledge is not always actionable
• soft skills cannot be taught
• reactive training does not provide support
• not able to address the core of the problem

(23% and 38% respectively) were critical of the role of training in relation to change arguing that training has little contribution to change. Managers taking this view identified several factors to explain why they believe training has a limited contribution to change (Table 10.3.). A central theme running through managers' responses is that training is one of many

supporting processes and therefore, it is not sufficient when used on its own. This observation is further evident in managers' perceptions of the factors which facilitate or inhibit faster and easier adaptation to change. It is evident in managers' responses across the three banks that a common factor which is perceived to facilitate individuals' adaptability to change is the broader education of staff instead of structured training interventions. Some managers across the three banks relate broader education to external training and argue that such training is more appropriate during periods of change by comparison to internal training provision. One manager made the following comments: "I suspect from what I've seen, this [change] is not best suited to internal training, in as much as it is to external training, from that one gets a broader perspective". Another manager added: "Training courses delivered externally tend to give you an insight into the outside world. Internal courses are good, but lose the ability to be objective".

Moreover, managers across the three banks value, the quality of staff and their attitudes, communication, accountability, flatter structures, faster decision-making, competition and stronger management style as significant factors contributing to faster and easier adaptability to change. The analysis has shown that managers do not always change as a result of training and that training does not always make a contribution to individuals' adaptation. Training in relation to organisational change is merely adopted as a vehicle for moving individuals from point X to point Y (Y being the desired state by the organisation), however, it is perceived by managers as unable to address the diverse personal (psychological, social, cognitive and emotional) needs of each individual (Judson, 1967; Drucker, 1974; Kanter, 1983; Marris, 1986, Lawler, 1988). Moreover, a small proportion (12%) of managers in bank A point out that training cannot change the behaviour of individuals. The findings of this study support Schein's (1973:138) assertion that:

"It is not at all uncommon for training programs in human relations to arouse resistance or to produce, at best, temporary change because the expectations of co-workers operate to keep the individual in his "normal" mold. Management development programs which ignore these psychological resistances to change are likely to be self-defeating, no matter how much attention is given to the actual presentation of the new desired attitudes".

Therefore, the findings from this study do not support previous notions in the literature and widen the debate in this field by introducing a neglected perspective. Exploring the link between training and change with the individual as the unit of analysis encourages a reconsideration of the underlying assumptions supporting existing theory in relation to the association of training and change. The study does not support the assumption that organisational change at the individual level can be managed through structured training (Brooks, 1980; Williams et al, 1989, Atkinson, 1990; Wallance, 1991). The findings indicate that structured training is not always perceived by managers as facilitating adaptability to change, because it is not proactive enough nor does it provide the necessary platform for experimentation and reflection. Therefore, the assumption that structured training can indicate to an individual what they need to change or can induce their readiness to change finds no support in this study. The findings of this study confirm the observations of previous researchers who point out that unless individuals are motivated and ready to change, perceive some need for changing themselves and are able to change then it is unlikely that they will change (Lewin, 1947; Barlett & Kayser, 1973; Beckhard & Harris, 1987; Beer & Walton, 1987; Armenakis et al., 1993).

Moreover, the findings of the present study support the observations of researchers (Isabella, 1990; Westenholz, 1993; Marchak, 1993; Reger et al. 1994a, 1994b) who illustrate that individuals' mental maps, meaning, frames of reference and cognitive structures influence the way they interpret organisational events. An observation common across the three banks is that individual managers identify themselves very closely with the organisation and interpret the negative effects of change on them personally as equally negative effects for the organisation. For example managers across the three banks referred to issues such as the "reduction in staff numbers" as a negative effect of change to the organisation. These findings suggest that the organisationally-focused approach of training restricts adaptability to change because it only serves to reinforce the organisation's perspective which increases the dependence of individuals on the organisation for direction.

In summary, training *to* change particularly at the individual level remains a major challenge for the three organisations in this study. There is no indication of training being a process of acquiring transition skills which are transferable to other changing situations. The short-termism of training creates an imbalance in its association with change which explains the lack of a sustainable interconnection. The findings show that this relationship is currently unexplored by the three banks. Failing to recognise this issue the three banks do not realise that individuals' attitudes as a result of training are characterised, as Schein points out quoting Kelman (1958), more by "compliance" and overt behaviour, than genuine acceptance and commitment to the change process and its overarching purpose. It could be argued that such superficial change in behaviour does not incorporate 'genuine' learning (defined as liberating activity - Antonacopoulou, 1995). The findings illustrate that there are instances where formalised training as a learning mechanism may be inadequate and inappropriate for the changing needs of individuals and the continuous changes within these organisations and the industry.

This issue reveals some of the political issues underlying the training and change processes which influence how effectiveness in training is defined. Moreover, this point indicates a potential dilemma experienced by managers within the training process; namely that of being truthful and honest with themselves and others about the contribution of training to change. Managers appear to hide their real feelings and to conform to organisational expectations and to manage the impressions that will enable them to get by within the organisation (Goffman, 1959; Giacalone & Rosenfield, 1991; Wayne & Liden, 1995 etc.). The concerns of managers in these banks to 'fit in' or creating the impression of 'fitting in' (normative conformity - Ralston & Elsass, 1991), in this case using training as a mean of adapting to change, in some instances it has become more important than the relationship itself. As is the case with the perceived relationship between training and learning, managers may perceive that training has a contribution to change, because the association between these processes has become internalised as managers have habitually conformed to the organisation's view that training *for* change is possible and that training is a (the) learning opportunity.

Interestingly, Stewart (1991:172) makes a similar point, although, he does not go far enough in his analysis. Building on the proposition that individual involvement is critical in the

training and development process, particularly during change, and that individuals' capability and willingness to act independently is important, Stewart argues that traditional approaches to training and development (which are founded on models of direct instruction) are inappropriate in managing change. He asserts specifically that:

“Such approaches can be valid for the maintenance needs of an organisation..... However, they are less valuable where it is difficult to define performance requirements and where the nature of the job and the organisation is dynamic...Traditional approaches have a further weakness in that the processes adopted have the effect of 'teaching' dependence. This means that individuals do not learn to think and act independently but rather learn to rely on others to provide direction. They also learn not to take responsibility as it is exercised for them by the Trainer”.

On this basis Stewart, argues that methods which build on the principles of self-development are more suitable for managing change and encouraging more responsibility and independence. Stewart, however, does not address the issue of whether traditional, structured training is a means of change for individuals. Even if one was to accept Stewart' proposition there is still a need to consider whether self-development within organisations can possibly be free from the perspective of the organisation and the context in which self-development takes place. The findings of this study suggest that this is not possible. The impact of context in relation to managers' perceptions of the organisation's encouragement for self-development has an impact on the nature of the interconnection between learning, self and career development discussed in more depth in the next section.

10.2.1.3. The variations in the interrelationship between learning, self and career development

One of the significant interrelationships emerging from this study is the perceived interconnection between learning, self and career development. Managers' perceptions of this interrelationship varies across the three organisations. For example in bank C the interrelationship between learning, self and career development is very strong, because managers perceive that the organisation encourages learning and self-development practically and over the last few years. In bank B, where the emphasis on learning and self-development has recently become part of the bank's philosophy for staff development, the interrelationship between these phenomena is beginning to emerge and is not as strong as in bank C. Finally, in bank A the interrelationship between learning, self and career development is unexplored, because even though the bank has recently encouraged more attention to self-development as

an opportunity for learning, managers do not feel confident taking responsibility for their learning and personal development, because they have never taken this responsibility in the past.

These variations indicate some of the unique cultural characteristics of each bank and can be explained with reference to the learning structures in place, the length of time that these have been embedded in the bank's approach to management education and the underlying motives for introducing them. Moreover, managers' interpretation of the signals of the organisation are evident in their perceptions of the organisation's encouragement to learn and to take responsibility for self-development.

The learning structures in place and the length of time these have been embedded in the organisation's management education philosophy

In bank A the emphasis on self-development has only been a feature of recent years, whereas in banks B and C the emphasis on self-development has been maintained for much longer. In bank C in particular self-development has been part of the organisation's management education philosophy since 1980 and has been gradually enhanced by the new initiatives and the practical indications by this bank of the importance attached to self development. Bank C has sought to remove any relationship of training to assessment and has invested in flexible learning resources (e.g. LEAP) to demonstrate its commitment to staff learning and self-development.

The underlying motives for introducing self-development

It is also evident that the underlying motives behind the introduction of self-development vary among the three organisations. For banks B and C, the introduction of self-development was due to a major culture change which has brought a greater emphasis on learning and a stronger orientation towards addressing the needs of the individuals. On the other hand, bank A introduced self-development as a mechanism for reducing costs and as a means of managing the crisis of the economic recession and the freezing of the training budget. These findings show that even within self-development the perspective of the organisation dominates and more emphasis is given to the perceived benefits for the organisation rather than the individual (Temporal, 1984). This observation varies across the three banks and it is particularly strong in bank A.

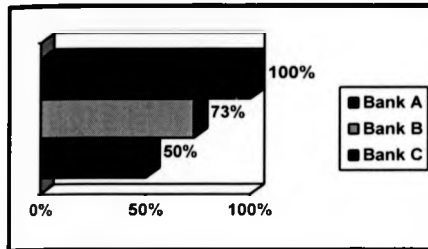


Figure 10.4: Comparing managers' perceptions of the organisation's encouragement for self-development across the three banks.

The unique characteristics of each bank help explain this observation. For example, bank A is comparatively more traditional in its approach and appears to encounter greater difficulty abandoning old ways of doing things. It appears that its philosophy is based on the premise of preserving what has worked well in the past. Bank C on the other hand, is perceived by managers as a "bank of change", "the leader in

the management of change", because it has survived various changes which have enabled it to become less traditional in its approach and more receptive to new ideas.

The impact of the organisation's encouragement on individuals' learning and self-development

The differential development in the way each bank has introduced self-development and learning has evidently affected managers' perceptions of what constitutes self-development and how it may be associated with learning. The relative importance attached by managers to learning and self-development and the extent to which they choose to engage in these processes, is affected by the perceived encouragement of the organisation. Comparing managers' perceptions in each bank regarding the organisation's encouragement for self-development and learning (Figure 10.4. and Figure 10.5 respectively), it is evident that managers in bank A, by comparison to managers in the other two banks are the least encouraged to learn and to develop themselves. The attitude of senior management in bank A

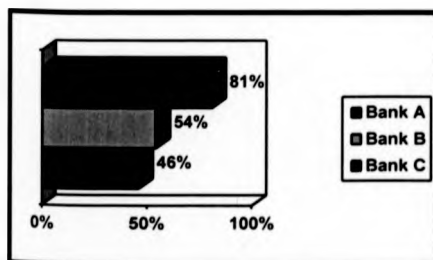


Figure 10.5: Comparing managers' perceptions of the organisation's encouragement to learn across the three banks.

towards learning has influenced managers' understanding of what learning is and what it entails. In bank B the encouragement of the organisation to learn is acknowledged but it is often interpreted as an expectation. Despite the emphasis of this organisation on learning and self-development and the introduction of systems to support this (such as PDPs and the continuous learning project), managers do not interpret these

initiatives as providing a wider personal choice. It is evident in the case study (Chapter 8) that the annual appraisal process assesses individuals on their personal development activities and the learning they claim they have undertaken. Therefore, managers in this bank engage in learning and self-development because the organisation expects them to do so, rather than because they personally understand the significance of this relationship. A manager's comments illustrate this point : "...it was survival instinct. I reached cross roads and decided to do something about it. The bank pushed and signalled good indications". Moreover, it is evident that because the message of the bank is inconsistent (as is largely the case in bank A), managers in bank B explore the interrelationship between learning, self and career development superficially.

Managers in bank C present a more unified understanding of the interrelationship between learning, self and career development, because they demonstrate more clearly that in pursuing a learning goal they take into account their personal development and their career growth. Moreover, managers in bank C appear to explore this relationship because they have come to recognise the existence of this interconnection rather than because they are expected to do it, which is the case in bank B. By comparison to managers in the other banks, a much larger proportion of managers in bank C perceive that the organisation encourages them to learn and to take responsibility for their personal development. The emphasis on ownership has been a central feature of the bank's education strategy and the message of the bank has been consistent and has been gradually enhanced by additional measures such as the introduction of competencies. Moreover, the recent emphasis on developing more coherent career paths for individuals, has been carefully placed in the context of personal development, thus making managers feel empowered.

The perceived locus of control over career development

It appears from the findings that the more managers have a clear view of their future development and feel in control of their career development, the more likely they are to relate learning and self development. Failing that, managers seem to pursue learning and self-development in a more unstructured and opportunistic manner. For example, it is evident that there is great variation across the three banks in managers' perceptions of their locus of control in relation to their career development (Figure 10.6.), which consequently affects their decision to engage in further education and to pursue the fulfilment of their identified learning

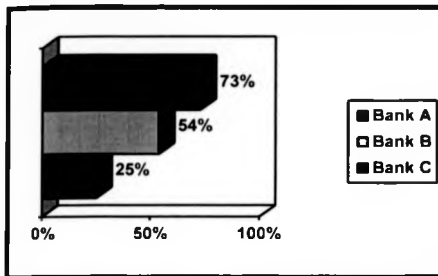


Figure 10.6: Managers' perceived locus of control over career development across the three banks.

goal. Moreover, it is evident from the findings that the introduction of self-development in banks A and B has been a more sophisticated means of indoctrination. Therefore, even within self-development it is possible to detect the organisational dilemma of balancing flexibility and adaptability, autonomy and control. The organisation may encourage personal responsibility and self-reliance in development

and learning, however as evident from the findings (particularly in banks A and B) it has sought to control how self-development activities are undertaken and how the organisation will benefit from this process. This finding supports the observations of Mumford (1978, 1989), Pedler & Boydell (1980), Temporal (1978, 1984), Williams (1987), Salaman & Butler (1990), Roberts (1974), Lyons (1985) and others, namely that the organisational culture and the attitude of top management towards learning and self-development are significant obstacles determining whether learning and self-development take place.

In summary, the variations of the interrelationship between learning, self and career development across the three banks show that the organisation's message regarding the importance attached to learning and self-development and the signals it gives about their impact on individuals' progression, affect the way individuals may develop an understanding about their association. The consistency in the organisation's message is fundamentally important. In organisations (e.g. Bank A) where the message is not well communicated or practically supported, managers are less willing and able to explore the interrelationship between learning, self and career development. A related issue concerns the underlying motives of the organisation in encouraging individuals to pursue self-directed approaches to personal growth. Although each of the three banks introduced several mechanisms in support of self-development - some more structured than others - all are characterised by an element of control to different degrees. In encouraging managers to become responsible for their self-development, these organisations indirectly expect managers to develop themselves mainly in relation to areas which are relevant to the context of their organisation and the industry at large. There is little indication that these banks (possibly with the exception of bank C) are

encouraging learning and self-development with a view of broadening individuals' perspective and consequently their wider employability.

Indeed one would be inclined to question whether these organisations can afford to allow 'genuine' learning to take place, which is a point that Keep (1989b:123) has raised in relation to the "authoritarian and non-participative" style of traditional management approaches. This point highlights some of the issues which are important in our understanding of learning at the organisational level (section 2.4.3. - Senge, 1990; Garvin, 1993; Stata, 1989; Jones & Hendry, 1992; Argyris, 1993 etc.) and in particular the extent to which individual learning goals are compatible to the learning goals of the organisation (Torbert, 1994; Kim, 1993; Pedler et al., 1991). The findings of the study, indicate the tension between 'exploitation' and 'exploration' in relation to learning discussed by March (1991) which suggest that learning and self-development are not always suitable or applicable in different contexts. The three banks examined in this study demonstrate that in attempting to maintain control of the career development of individuals, they inhibit individuals' freedom to explore the variety of interconnections between learning and self-development. By doing so they shape individuals' attitudes toward learning, self and career development and their perceptions of the interconnection between these processes.

These findings are consistent with other recent research findings of a study by Herriot et al. (1996:189), which examined the career attitudes and intentions of managers in the financial services sector. This study showed that the career policies, development practices and the overall organisational culture had a significant impact on managers' career expectations, beliefs and intentions. These researchers concluded that:

"...certain career management processes and systems may be of help...Experience suggests, however that it is *how* such systems are operated rather than their existence which is important for outcomes. A career culture which, for example, accepts that individual as well as organisational interests need to be taken into account in career management decisions, may be a pre-requisite." (original emphasis)

These authors suggest that although the organisations studied are in the same sector they demonstrate significant differences between them in terms of their career culture and/or career management practices. The evidence from the present study provide support for this observation and show that although the three banks belong to the same sector and share

several characteristics in common, they have unique characteristics which distinguish them from each other. The variations in the perceived interrelationship between learning, self and career development illustrates the different context of each bank and the unique approach adopted in encouraging managers to learn and take responsibility in developing themselves.

The nature and strength of the relationships between phenomena discussed in this section has shown the impact of the organisational context on managers' perceptions. It is evident from the analysis that managers' perceptions of the interconnections between phenomena are shaped by the perspective of the organisation. In other words, the extent to which managers perceive that two or more phenomena are interconnected to a large extent depends on the message communicated by the organisation both in its policies and practices and the overall organisational culture. Moreover, the extent to which the organisation's message is consistent and integrated with other HR processes which reinforce the same message (e.g. encouragement for learning being consistent and practically demonstrated in relation to other HR processes e.g. training, appraisal etc.) influences the importance attached by the individual on each of these processes and shapes their perceived interconnection.

The impact of context on the nature and strength of interrelationships between phenomena makes only more clear the asymmetrical power between the individual and the organisation and the dominance of the organisation's perspective. The interrelationships discussed in the preceding paragraphs illustrate the power of the organisation over the individual and the relatively limited appreciation by most of these banks of the differences between personal and organisational needs and goals. The failure to address the complexity of different priorities between the individual and the organisation by the banks examined in this study shows more clearly the difficulty experienced by organisations in reconciling their competing priorities and their internal conflicts which present them with dilemmas that are difficult to resolve. These dilemmas create inconsistency and contradicting messages which in turn create more confusion and disorientation for the individual manager. The inconsistency and lack of clarity of the organisation's intentions and expectations are one of the most significant sources of the dilemmas experienced by individuals. The dilemmas experienced by the individual influence how relationships between phenomena are understood and more importantly how the perceived relationships are practically acted upon. The internal conflict experienced by the individual illustrates another important theme emerging from the findings; namely the

interaction of personal and organisational factors as creating conditions which facilitate or inhibit the interrelationships between phenomena.

10.3. The interaction of personal and organisational factors as conditions facilitating or inhibiting the interrelationships between phenomena

The impact of contextual factors on the perceived association between phenomena has shown that the environment in which managers operate influences the meaning attached to phenomena and their interconnection. However, it is evident that individuals have their own concerns which stem from their attempt to balance competing priorities. One of the most significant conflicts experienced by the individual is balancing psychological and sociological needs. In the context of organisations, the conflict within the individual is how to balance the need for self-fulfilment and self-actualisation, against the need for belonging as a member of a social group. Effectively this dilemma is reflected in the tension between personal and organisational development needs. Therefore, managers' perceptions of the interrelationships between phenomena emerge as they negotiate personal priorities with those of the organisation.

However, as evident from the preceding analysis, it is often the case that individual's priorities are subordinated to those of the organisation which leads to a greater dependence of the individual on the organisation's resources (Lawler & Yoon, 1995). The findings from the study show that the value the individual is likely to attach to the resources of the organisation is influenced by the interaction of personal (willingness, perceptions of the need etc.) and organisational factors (culture, policies and practices etc.) which shape the individual's assumptions. The interaction of personal and organisational factors creates conditions which facilitate or inhibit the way interrelationships between phenomena are perceived by managers. This interaction is evident in the difficulty of balancing organisational and individual development needs, the organisational hegemony and individuals' dependency as a result and finally, the limited (if any) negotiation between the competing needs of the organisation for development against the development needs of the individual. The sections which follow discuss each of these issues in more detail.

10.3.1. Balancing organisational and individual development needs: The dilemma within and between the organisation and the individual

The competing priorities of the organisation against those of the individual is a major dilemma for both parties. The tension between organisational and individual development needs is intensified because of the internal conflict experienced by the individual and the organisation when trying to balance the multiple and often contradicting objectives that each party aims to address through HR processes (see Chapter 2, section 2.3.1.).

10.3.1.1. The internal conflict within the organisation

It is evident from the findings across the three banks that there is tension between trying to balance homogeneity in knowledge and skills of managers with flexibility and adaptability. Moreover, it is evident that the three banks in this study aim to reconcile organisational identity with organisational renewal, balance autonomy and control, justify investment in training in relation to the costs, balance competitiveness and efficiency against quality and effectiveness and reconcile the need for change with the need for stability. These issues highlights only more clearly the internal conflict within the organisation when trying to reconcile competing priorities and the value-laden nature of HRM/HRD activities. The findings illustrate the difficulty experienced by the organisation when trying to implement and integrate the 'hard' and 'soft' aspects of HRM (Storey, 1989b; Torrington, 1989; Pearson, 1991; Thomson & Maybe, 1994). The findings from this study support Legge's (1989) criticisms of the internal contradictions between HRM policies. It is evident from the findings that the attempt by each of the three banks to reconcile the multiple roles of training in relation to the multiple roles of activities such as appraisal, career development, reward etc. have exacerbated the inconsistencies within training and between training and the way it is related to other HRM activities which promote different values.

It is evident in each bank that training has a different association to motivation and reward, performance appraisal, promotion and career development. For example, in bank A, training is closely related to motivation and reward, because it is not readily available and it is related to status/grade. Within bank A training is a means of motivating individuals and signalling that being chosen to attend a training course is rewarding them by improving their performance and preparing them for the next job. Within this bank training and development act as "positional goods" (Keep, 1989b; Finegold, 1991). In bank B, there is confusion about the association of training to motivation and reward, because of the lack of clarity in the

organisation's message and intentions. In banks A and B the performance appraisal remains the main vehicle for identifying individual's training needs, consequently training is more strongly related to motivation, reward and promotion, because training is driven primarily by the performance gap rather than the development of the individual. The priority attached to performance as opposed to development in these banks (Bank A and B) provides a short-term focus to the training process emphasising the change in behaviour and the improvement of performance as the desired outcomes from the training process.

In bank C training is vaguely related to motivation and reward. Bank C has sought to remove the hidden agendas in the training process by not associating training to incentives and rewards while clarifying and distinguishing the purpose of training from other HRD activities. For example, it has introduced Training and Development Reviews as a means of identifying individuals' training and development needs which has sought to avoid the confusion in performance appraisal between assessing and developing individuals (cf. Beer, 1981; Randell, et al. 1972; Fletcher & Williams, 1992; Townley, 1989; 1990; Barlow, 1989; Carlton & Slowman, 1992). Moreover, whereas in bank A there is no relationship between training and career development, in banks B and C there is a strong relationship, with bank C demonstrating the strongest relationship between the two. It is evident that by comparison to banks A and B, bank C has sought to create a more integrated HRM strategy by clarifying and distinguishing the focus of training, performance appraisal and career development, while indicating their association.

These findings confirm some of the theoretical propositions in the literature (Legge, 1989; 1995a; Keep, 1989b) and provide empirical evidence which demonstrate the complexity of the conflicting priorities of the organisation as reflected in the multiple and competing objectives of different HRM/HRD activities. The competing priorities within the organisation create more confusion and disorientation for the individuals who have their own priorities as well.

10.3.1.2. The internal conflict within the individual

The perceived association of training to other HRM/HRD activities influences managers' perceptions of what constitutes training and shapes their expectations of what should be the result of training. For example, it has been observed in bank A that managers' perceptions of training as a reward affects their predisposition towards training interventions and their

expectation that they will be promoted as a result of training. This is in sharp contrast to managers in bank C, who perceive that training bears no relationship to motivation and reward, because the organisation has not given any indications that training is linked to incentives. Managers in bank B are very confused in relation to this issue because of the changes within the banks and the conflicting messages they receive.

In the light of the continuously changing priorities of the organisation managers feel more disorientated about what the organisation expects and what they need to do in order to be successful. The confusion created by the frequently contradicting messages of the organisation are a source of conflict within the individual in relation to striking a balance between personal and organisational priorities. In relation to learning through training the dilemma experienced by managers is balancing psychological and sociological needs in the learning process. This dilemma is evident in the way individual managers try to maintain their self-image against admitting ignorance. This internal conflict within the individual is further exacerbated as they try to play by the rules of the political game. In other words, the individual manager recognises that his or her future development may be affected if (s)he receives a poor report by the line manager during the appraisal process or is asked to attend training to improve his or her performance (Beer, 1981, Lathrope, 1973).

This observation is particularly evident in bank A where training is strongly associated with motivation and reward, performance appraisal and promotion. It is evident from managers' descriptions that there is an element of fear which inhibits individuals from being open about their true feelings and consequently their expectations from training (cf. Goffman, 1959; Hochschild, 1983; Mangham & Overington, 1987; Hirschhorn, 1988; Harrison, 1992; Al-Maskati & Thomas, 1994). A manager in bank A said: "One must be careful how much one discloses [during the appraisal process], because career progression may be affected negatively". A senior manager in the same bank added: "Often I am afraid to ask my line manager for a refresher course, because I am expected to know it by now". The political aspects of the training and learning processes within bank A are illustrated by the remarks of a manager who said that: "Adults are more reserved with new learning, because of fear of failure...Status should not be the block to learning and practising". As a result of these factors a large proportion of managers in bank A remain passive towards their learning, because they

do not know how best to co-ordinate their self-development in order to facilitate their career advancement (hence the loose association between these processes).

The perceived interrelationship between learning, self and career development sheds light into managers' expectations from the learning process, their perceptions of the purpose of learning and their orientation (short versus long-term) towards development. Moreover, this interrelationship shows what is the impact of the organisation and how its policies and practices shape individuals' reactions (Mumford, 1978; Pedler & Boydell, 1980, Temporal, 1984). Placed in the context of change, the interrelationship between learning, self and career development, shows more clearly the dilemma experienced by the individual when trying to balance their personal needs with those of the organisation (Hirsh, 1990; Hampden-Turner, 1990; Bolton & Gold, 1994). The findings also support Schein's (1978) observation that self and career development present the individual with a dilemma. The evidence from this study however, suggest that the difficulty of balancing self and career priorities do not only represent the tension in balancing work and family responsibility, but also reflect the conflict within the individual when evaluating opportunities which may be beneficial for personal development yet are not in line with the organisation's expectations and priorities. The tension in balancing self and career development presents the manager with another set of competing psychological and social needs.

The analysis of the interaction of personal and organisational factors and its impact on managers' perceptions of the purpose of learning provides clearer insights into the reasons *why* managers 'don't' or 'won't' learn (Salaman & Bulter, 1990; Al-Maskati & Thomas, 1994). The findings illustrate the complexity of managerial learning within changing organisations, the politics underlying the learning process and show the richness of learning as a process which entails both psychological and sociological dimensions (Harris & Schwahn, 1961; Revans, 1971; Hague, 1973; Argyris, 1982; Juch, 1983; Gagné, 1983; Vygotsky, 1962; Habermas, 1972; Friere, 1972; Bandura, 1977 etc.). The findings of this study support the personal and organisational obstacles to learning identified by previous researchers (Koudra, 1975; Stewart & Stewart, 1981; Lyons, 1985; Salaman & Butler, 1990; Jones & Hendry, 1992). However, the findings of the present study show more clearly how the product of the interaction of personal and organisational factors affects managers' attitudes towards learning and the significance of training as an opportunity for learning (Antonacopoulou, 1995).

Moreover, the findings of the present study support the observations of previous researchers (e.g. Noe, 1986; Noe & Schmitt, 1986; Lathrope, 1973; Gagné, 1970) who demonstrated that individuals' motivation to learn through training is influenced by personal factors such as their ability to plan their career and whether individuals derive their identity from their job. Finally, this analysis shows how the interaction of personal and organisational factors shapes managers' perceptions of the interconnection between HR processes.

10.3.2. Organisational hegemony and individuals' dependency

The difficulty of balancing individual and organisational development needs discussed in the previous section demonstrates the dialectic relationship between the individual and the organisation and sheds some light into the nature of their interaction. It is evident from the findings that the relationship between the individual and the organisation is characterised by tension, disagreement, asymmetrical power and control and inequality in knowledge and experiences (in terms of information available). The interaction between the individual and the organisation occurs against the backdrop of social and cultural factors which shape their expectations, norms, values, perceived duties and obligations towards each other (Greenhalgh & Chapman, 1995).

The social and cultural factors underpinning the interaction of the individual and the organisation are evident, in this study, in the HR philosophy of the retail banking sector (Higgs, 1988, Blander, 1991; Dixon, 1987; Hendry, 1987) which promotes loyalty and esprit de corps (Jones, 1991) and is reflected in the way each bank has historically communicated and organised its human resource policies and practices. These factors in turn influence individuals' perceptions of the career deal they are being offered when joining a bank. For example it is evident that the traditional image of banking offering security, stability and consistent progression is one of the factors which individuals expected when joining the bank. However, as the changes in the banking industry are transforming the role, skills, and expected behaviours of managers within banks and are re-establishing a new image for banks as organisations, the social and cultural norms which underpinned the relationship between the individual and the bank (the organisation) are being redefined.

The findings from the present study show that as a result of these changes there is confusion about the perceived duties and obligations of the individual and the organisation towards each

other which in turn causes a re-definition of the collective scripts which have mediated so far as mechanisms or norms which regulated the interaction between the individual and the organisation (Pruitt, 1995; Thompson et al., 1995). For example it is evident from the findings that the three banks no longer see as their duty or obligation to develop the individual and are seeking through the introduction of new self-directed approaches (e.g. self-development) to transfer the responsibility for development to the individual. It is also evident from the study that these changes provide new information about the employment relationship which affects individuals' perceptions and judgements about the decisions they would make and the actions they would take in order to achieve their own objectives (Lawler & Yoon, 1995).

In short, the changes in the relationship between the individual and the organisation influence the perceived level of interdependence and exacerbate the tension between organisational and individual development needs. Despite the fact that both the individual and the organisation depend on each other to achieve their own objectives, the superiority of the organisation in terms of power and information create an imbalance in their interaction which often results in the individual becoming more dependent on the organisation as (s)he feels vulnerable and unable to exercise any control over the outcomes and resources that (s)he values and which are essentially at stake (Lawler & Yoon, 1995). The organisation's hegemony and the individuals' dependency reflect the nature of the relationship between the individual and the organisation. This imbalance interaction increases the organisation's capacity to manipulate and exploit the individual in the direction which best fits its own concerns and priorities (Legge, 1989). From the perspective of the individual this unequal relationship with the organisation creates a sense of helplessness and insecurity which often results in giving up their personal goals and deriving their identity from the goals of the organisation to which they subscribe to.

These observations emerge as significant themes from the findings of this study which are evident in the reliance of the individual on the training provided by the organisation in order to learn, the impact of the organisation's policy on individuals' learning and the influence of the organisation's encouragement on individuals' perceptions of the interrelationship between learning, self and career development.

10.3.2.1. The reliance of the individual on the organisation's resources in order to learn

From the perspective of the individual manager training is a source of information and guidance in relation to the knowledge and skills needed to perform successfully their present job. The findings of this study support the views of researchers (Humble, 1973; Mitchell, 1990, Mumford, 1971; Casey, 1980; Mant, 1981b; Koudra, 1975 and others) who report that training plays a significant part in managers' development by helping them understand better the forces affecting their job performance and the responsibilities of their position. Moreover, as evident by other studies (Rigg, 1989) individuals associate training with achieving a variety of goals in relation to work and is perceived as a means of getting a better job (a more interesting job) or opening up a wider choice of jobs. Therefore, as Keep (1989b) and Finegold (1991) point out knowledge and skills acquired through training act as "positional goods". This analysis reveals the level of dependency of the individual on the training provided by the organisation in order to learn which partly explains why managers perceive that they *should* learn from training. Moreover, the fact that until recently the banks in this study have not provided any alternatives for learning (i.e. managers knew that training was their sole opportunity to develop) has strengthened the power of the organisation and has increased the significance attached by managers to learning through training.

The difficulty experienced by managers in balancing personal and organisational needs has been a cause leading managers to identify themselves closely with the organisation. In other words, it is evident from this study that managers identify their personal development needs in relation to the needs of the organisation and that managers' expectations of training are aligned to the organisational expectations. For example, when managers in bank A were asked to explain what they believe training should be able to do they highlighted the need for training to improve performance and to provide the technical and management skills needed. In banks B and C where training has been more closely related to the development of the individual, managers in these banks expect training to assist individuals in their own development and to grow the individual as a person. The observation that individuals identify with the organisation is also evident in managers' interpretations of the positive and negative effects of change to the organisation and them personally. The findings across all banks suggest that managers perceive issues such as no life-long employment, job insecurity due to redundancies, loss of confidence and loyalty in the bank etc. as indications of the negative

effects of change on the organisation. Similarly, managers associate the positive effects of change for the organisation with issues which demonstrate how they have personally benefited from the changes. In other words, the extent to which individuals agree with the changes introduced and have personally benefited from them appears to affect their receptivity to change.

The dependency of the individual on the organisation's resources in order to learn is further evident in managers' perceptions of the learning process and the factors which affect learning, which reveals some interesting contradictions. Even though managers across the three banks rate personal factors (e.g. personal capacity) as more important than organisational factors (e.g. the organisational context, training as an important dimension of the way people learn)

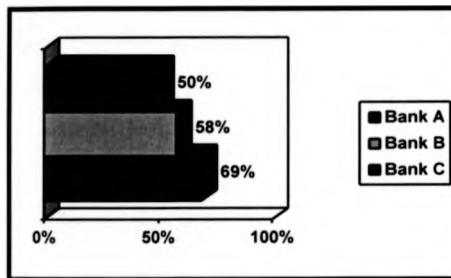


Figure 10.7: The proportion of managers across the three banks who perceive that training provision is inadequate to meet their learning.

as facilitating the learning process, the opposite appears to be the case when managers identify the factors which inhibit learning. It is evident that managers feel that organisational obstacles supersede personal obstacles to learning. On closer examination it appears that one of the organisational obstacles to learning is the way training is designed and delivered. Training is perceived as an organisational obstacle to learning, because it is "not well timed" and it is "usually provided too late". Moreover, training is criticised for being poorly administered and organised, failing to cater for individuals' needs, being inconsistent and lacking clear direction. These findings are further supported by evidence which show that a relatively large proportion of managers across all banks, perceive the current training provision as being inadequate to meet their learning needs (Figure 10.7).

These contradictions suggest that despite the fact that individuals recognise the inefficiencies in the training system within their organisation they feel unable to influence it, therefore have little choice but to accept and conform to it, because their development and progress is important to them and training is often the only means available to facilitate their growth. The organisation's hegemony and individuals' dependency is further evident in the impact of the organisation's policy on individuals' learning.

10.3.2.2. The impact of the organisation's policy on individuals' learning

The findings from the study suggest that the significance attached by the individual on the organisation's education policy is a factor influencing their decision to engage in further education and learning. Figure 10.8. illustrates diagrammatically the findings on this issue as evident from managers' responses across the three banks. It is evident from the diagram that comparatively a larger proportion of managers in bank A feel that the organisation's policy influences their decision to engage in further education and learning, whereas a much smaller proportion of managers in bank C feel that the organisation's policy has an impact on their decision to learn. The differences observed across the three banks in relation to this issue may be explained with reference to the perceived encouragement in each bank towards learning and self-development (discussed in section 10.2.1.3.).

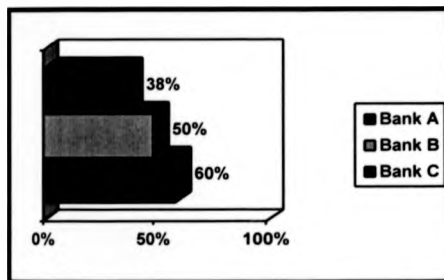


Figure 10.8: The proportion of managers across the three banks which believe that the organisation policy influences their learning.

Managers' descriptions of their identified learning goals show that managers who are more reliant on the organisation's resources and direction are more likely to pursue learning goals which are perceived by the organisation to be important. For example managers in bank A are more likely to pursue a qualification which is valued by the bank and acquire skills which are likely to enhance their career

prospects within the organisation. On the other hand, managers who are encouraged by the organisation to take responsibility for their learning and self-development and to be more self-reliant are more likely to pursue learning regardless of the organisation's policy. Managers in these organisations would tend to pursue learning goals which are personally developmental and which widen their employability. Put differently, self-reliant managers are more likely to seek to broaden their perspective through a dynamic interconnection between their learning needs for personal development and their needs for career growth. This proposition is supported by findings which show that in bank C where managers are comparatively more self-reliant the majority feel that their learning goals serve both their personal and career development. These findings show that organisational factors do not only affect *how* managers approach learning (e.g. training, self-development etc.). They also affect *what* managers choose to learn and *why*.

10.3.2.3. Organisational career versus individual's career

In relation to Murray's (1971 - see Chapter 3, section 3.4.) typology, managers across the three banks examined in this study have primarily a "situationally determined" career or a "self-directed accommodation" career. In other words, very few managers in this study could be said to have a "self-determined" career, because few of them take autonomy or determine the direction of their career without paying attention to the organisational and environmental factors. The findings from the study show the difficulties experienced by managers when planning their career and the tendency to react to opportunities as they are presented to them instead of actively seeking to create them. Having said that, it is evident from the study, that two banks (B & C) which have demonstrated more active commitment to learning and self-development, have encouraged their managers to seek a more self-directed approach to their self and career development. The culture of these organisations has been changing with the introduction of new initiatives and development programmes and this has had an impact on individual managers' attitudes towards their career development.

These findings support other recent research findings from studies of managers' career development in the context of change (Newell & Dopson, 1996; Herriot et al., 1993, 1996). They also support the observations in the existing literature regarding the changing nature of career development in organisations, in particular the emphasis on the dynamic nature of the career process and the interaction between internal and external factors which forms the basis of the continuous re-negotiation of the psychological contract (Nicholson & West, 1988; Goffee & Scase, 1992; Salama & Easterby-Smith, 1994; Schein, 1978; Rousseau, 1990; Herriot & Pemberton, 1995a). In relation to career development, the present study informs our understanding of the nature of the negotiation between personal and organisational factors particularly in the context of change. The difference in the power between the individual and the organisation in determining the direction of career widens in the context of change and as a result organisational factors become even more predominant, influencing the individuals' objective and subjective career. As evident in the study, individual managers' perceptions of their current and future job are influenced by the implicit and explicit signals they receive from the organisation, to which they respond.

As discussed earlier (section 10.2.1.3.) the perceptions of managers regarding the impact of their career plans on their career progression (see Figure 10.6.) affects their assumptions about

the interconnection between learning, self and career development. The findings show that managers in bank A are the least empowered in terms of having an impact on their future career development. This observation partly explains why managers in this bank cannot see any connection between learning and career development, or self and career development. The uncertainty and insecurity within this bank gives managers little initiative to take risks. The picture in the other two banks (banks B and C) is different. A much bigger proportion (with the largest being in bank C) of managers in banks B and C believe that their career plans can affect their career development, partly because these banks have sought to promote a more integrated HRM strategy and it is evident that recent initiatives in relation to training and self-development have been linked to career development.

For example, bank C has been encouraging managers to consider their career development more actively by redefining jobs in competency terms. This bank has published a guide to assist individuals in planning how to enlarge their career growth and future prospects. This initiative enabled managers to recognise that they can no longer depend on the organisation to provide them with a structured career path. Unlike other banks, managers in bank C have become more self-reliant in their learning and self-development and appear to be more in touch with the reality of the changing careers in their organisation and to have adapted their expectations to the new employment practices within their organisation and possibly in the wider employment market. The interaction of personal and organisational factors in bank C has led to a stronger interconnection between self and career development. On the contrary, in bank A self and career development appear to be in conflict because managers have been conditioned to perceive these processes from the perspective of the organisation, consequently feel that their personal development may not fit the organisations' career development agenda.

Despite the variations in managers' perceptions of the relationships between learning, self-development and career development, a common characteristic across all banks is the impact of the organisation's career on individuals' career. From the analysis it could be argued that even in organisations (e.g. Bank C) where managers appear to be more self-reliant in relation to their career, managers' career plans still derive from the direction given by the organisation. This observation is particularly strong among fast-track managers across the three banks who by comparison with non fast-track managers, tend to be more complacent about their learning

and development needs. Fast-track managers feel more secure that someone else will create the opportunities for them to learn and develop. This finding supports the observations of Hirsh (1990) and Kovack, (1985) who also found that fast-track managers are among the most complacent when it comes to their learning and development needs. The findings of this study show that fast-track managers are more dependent on the organisation because they are ambitious and wish to reach the top and know that the unique opportunities offered by the organisation cannot be found elsewhere. Therefore, these managers often lose sight of their personal development and career growth, because they passively await the organisation to create the opportunities for them. These managers allow the organisation to control and direct their career.

10.3.3. Individual development versus organisational development: A process of joint negotiation?

The analysis in the preceding section shows that because of the difficulty of reconciling the competing priorities within the organisation and between the organisation and the individuals there is limited negotiation of individual and organisational needs (Greenhalgh & Chapman, 1995; Lawler & Yoon, 1995). In fact the organisation (as the more powerful actor in the relationship) enforces its own perspective on people's perceptions. The findings show that an underlying assumption of the perspective that these banks take in relation to management training and development, is that organisational and individual needs are the same. Management training and development within these banks (with the possible exception of bank C) is dominated by the *control* exercised by the organisation over individuals' development and the exploitation of individuals' learning for organisational development. As a result of this approach to management training and development the organisation imposes its definitions and priorities on individuals and creates a level of dependence on the part of the individual over the resources and direction provided by the organisation.

The significance of this finding is that it shows how organisational development supersedes management development and in some instances forces managers to believe that their needs are the same as those of the organisation (Rainbird & Maguire, 1993). This issue influences managers' perceptions of the reconciliation of personal and organisational learning needs. Figure 10.9. illustrates diagrammatically the proportion of managers in each bank who believe that personal and organisational learning needs can be reconciled. Comparing managers'

views on this issue across the three banks it is evident that in banks A & B a much bigger proportion of the managers interviewed believe that personal and organisational learning needs can be reconciled. On the contrary, in bank C it has been observed that the learning structures in place have encouraged managers to become more self-reliant which appears to have enabled managers to recognise the difficulty in reconciling their learning needs with those of the organisation.

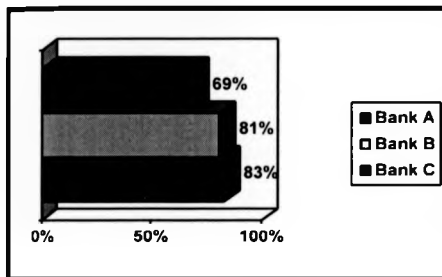


Figure 10.9: The proportion of managers across the three banks who perceive that a reconciliation of personal and organisational learning needs is possible.

These findings provide no support to claims in the existing literature (such as those of McBeath, 1990; Frizell & Gellermann, 1988; Lievegoed, 1973, Lippitt, 1969; Easterby-Smith et al., 1980; Lessem, 1990 and others) that OD and MD are strongly interconnected or indeed that personal and organisational needs are compatible. This study shows that individuals are regulated and indoctrinated to pursue organisational goals as their own. Moreover,

given the opportunity to broaden their perspective managers are more inclined to recognise the difficulties of reconciling their development needs with those of the organisation. From this discussion it is possible to understand better why the identified interrelationships exist, what is significant about them and how the identified conditions facilitate or inhibit these interrelationships. A significant issue about these observations is that they provide valuable insights about HR processes from the perspective of the individual manager.

10.4. The contribution of the individual's perspective

The tension between and within the individual and the organisation as reflected in the way the main phenomena are interconnected highlights the difficulty of integrating HR systems by indicating the different perspective of the individual as compared to the organisation's perspective. Managers' perceptions of the interrelationships between phenomena are an important indication of the way individuals make sense of the complexity of their environment, the way they understand and relate to the policies and practices of the organisation and more broadly how they react to different processes and are likely to associate

them. It has emerged from the review of the literature that the individual's perspective is relatively unexplored in relation to HR processes.

The significance of the individual's perspective as evident from the findings of the present study is that they provide a more holistic picture of the multiple factors which affect the interaction between HR processes. The analysis of HR processes from the perspective of the individual provides some explanations about the difficulty of reconciling the development needs of the individual and the organisation by indicating their differing views and the factors which contribute to the way each party interprets the same processes. The analysis of HR processes from the individual's point of view highlights the political issues underlying individuals' perceptions, expectations and actions and shows the internal conflict within the individual as they try to balance psychological and social needs. Moreover, the individual's perspective provides an exegesis as to why organisational policies and practices are not always aligned. The relationships between processes from the individual's point of view shows more clearly the gap between perceived and actual relationships between processes. Finally, the individual's perspective provides new insights about the nature of relationships between processes by challenging the assumed linearity advocated in the existing literature and indicating the dynamic interaction between processes.

10.4.1. Why individuals have different perspectives

The findings across the three banks show that the individual managers' perspective is rarely the same as that of the organisation. Despite the conditioning by the organisation about the nature and significance of various HR processes and their association, individuals' responses often indicate a different perspective to that of the organisation. For example, it is evident across the three banks that individuals' perceptions of the training process differ from those of the organisation (as described by training providers). This observation is evident in the criteria managers use when assessing the effectiveness of training and their expectations from the training process. It is evident that whereas the criteria employed by the organisation for assessing training effectiveness are primarily concerned with *outcomes* - often monetary (i.e. was the course cost effective) or behavioural (i.e. the observable improvement in performance), managers give more emphasis to the *process* of training. A common characteristic across all banks (Bank A:54%, Bank B:58%, Bank C:58%) from the individual's perspective, is that training effectiveness is primarily judged on the quality of the

training content and the method of delivery, instead of external factors to training such as the venue, the facilities and the equipment. This finding would suggest that the emphasis by all three banks to creating luxurious staff colleges or training centres, while paying insufficient attention to the timeliness and relevance of training to individuals' learning needs, may in fact be missing the point.

This issue highlights the political sensitivity of assessing the value of activities such as training and the differences in what various stakeholders may define as 'valuable', 'objective', 'reliable' etc. (Hamblin, 1974; Jenkins, 1978; Parker, 1986; Weiss, 1986; Bramley & Newby, 1984; Bradenburg, 1982). The difference between the perspective of the individual and the organisation in relation to training effectiveness does not only stem from the difficulty experienced by the organisation in setting specific objectives and measurable criteria. Another important factor which also contributes to the differences in perspective (and is applicable to other HRM activities e.g. performance appraisal - Fletcher, 1984) is the difficulty of arriving at a concrete definition of 'effectiveness'. As indicated from the findings effectiveness across the three banks is defined differently by different stakeholders and is perceived to consist of different elements.

The difference in the perspective of the individual about training effectiveness shows that managers have different priorities which correspond to their own 'reality' in the workplace. As evident from managers' criticisms of training, the structured training interventions provided by the organisation do not always reflect their experiences nor do they address their learning needs. Individual managers perceive that training should provide them with more than just the skills to perform their present job. Managers' expectations of training across the three banks suggest that individuals perceive training as providing confidence and insight on how to increase their knowledge, enhancing self awareness, developing the person, helping individuals abandon old ways of doing things and preparing people in advance for unexpected future developments etc.

The different perspective of managers across the three banks shows that individuals have their own priorities within training which derive from their need for self-actualisation and self-fulfilment. However, as evident from the analysis in the preceding sections the psychological need of the individual for personal growth and achievement is often compromised against the

social need of belonging. The latter implies that in order for the individual to maintain social acceptability and security they often have to set their own priorities aside and play by the rules of the political game which in practice means learning the script and becoming effective actors in the political stage of organisational life (Mangham, 1979; Mangham & Overington, 1987). This issue would imply that individuals' perceptions of processes and their relationship is not necessarily what they would actually do.

10.4.2. Perceived versus actual relationships

The impact of contextual factors on managers' perceptions of the relationships between processes and the dependency and reliance on the organisation to learn and develop, discussed in the previous sections show that managers have been conditioned to believe that certain relationships exist. For example, managers have been conditioned to believe that they *should* learn from training and that training *should* facilitate their adaptability to change. However, the contradictions observed in managers' comments would suggest that individuals do not always learn from training and that in some instances training is not a learning opportunity. Moreover, according to managers across the three banks, training does not always facilitate their adaptability to change nor does it offer the platform to change. The contradictions observed in managers' descriptions of the relationships between phenomena, raise the critical question of whether managers *actually* learn from training and whether training is *actually* a learning opportunity. These contradictions indicate a gap between managers' "espoused theory" (as defined by the organisation) and "theory in use" (as determined by individuals' actions) (Argyris & Schön, 1974: 6-7). Therefore, it appears that individual managers may associate mechanistically two or more processes purely because they are concerned with portraying an image consistent with the organisational ethos and culture (Schlenker, 1980; Gardner, 1992; Hochschild, 1983; Preston, 1993). Therefore, if the organisation provides signals which suggest that individuals attend training in order to learn, acquire the skills to implement the changes then in theory this is what managers believe they should be doing. However, as managers attempt to put the theory into practice and realise that it does not always work, they manage impressions in order to protect their self-image and to preserve their social relationships.

The political dimensions in the learning and training processes, discussed in section 10.3.1., support this contention. It is evident in managers' descriptions that training is interpreted as a

means of increasing motivation and a means of recognition and reward. This may provide an exegesis as to why managers may hesitate to request or refuse training. It is evident in managers' descriptions that there is a fear of revealing inadequacies. The limited participation by the managers in the training process often means that managers are forced to attend specific training that their line manager chooses (as a result of the appraisal process), which managers feel they do not need. The words of one manager illustrate the point: "Sometimes I have been on courses that I felt I didn't need, but I did not refuse to go, because of insecurity and fear".

Moreover, managers' criticism of training being irrelevant and unsuitable to their individual needs and their specific circumstances may explain why managers may in fact not learn from training. These arguments are evident in the views expressed by a small proportion of managers in banks A and B (12% and 23% respectively) who question whether training is linked to learning. Managers taking this view argue that "training teaches the bank's way of doing things" which is perceived in some instances to "limit horizons". A manager made the following remarks: "there is a big difference between delivery and learning. Banks are good at delivery of information, but it is questionable whether staff learn". These findings support the observations of DePhillips (1960) and Dearden (1992) who point out that there are basic differences between training and learning which may inhibit their association. The analysis highlights one of the most significant differences between training and learning, which is that the former is based on control and conditioning of individuals' understanding, whereas the latter is about broadening and liberating understanding. The training provided by the three banks examined in this study is a means of teaching the cultural norms of the organisation and enforcing the organisation's definitions and perspective (Croft, 1996; Preston, 1993). This narrow and blinkered approach to training managers inhibits questioning and experimentation and provides limited freedom for the individual to un-learn and re-learn. Therefore, as Dearden (1992:93) points out training may not only be "uneducational", but it may be "anti-educational" as well.

This view is supported by Brown (1988:141) who argues, on a more radical tone, that training should be abandoned as a word because it is inappropriate in describing individual learning. He makes the following point specifically: "First of all drop the word 'training' - humans are not rats you train to run through mazes". The challenge of balancing learning and training in

Brown's view is expressed in the difficulty of reconciling organisational and individual development needs. On this basis, he distinguishes between "remedial", "developmental" and "strategically relevant" learning to show where individual development falls in relation to organisational goals. The challenge according to Brown (1988:144), is for people to be able to see the relevance of training in relation both to their personal objectives as well as the organisation's goals, which he describes as "motivated, relevant and supported learning". He makes the following point which also reflects the findings of this study, namely that:

"People must be able to see the relevance of material in the light of organisational and personal objectives. The learning content and objectives must also be seen to be relevant by the learner's colleagues, so that they encourage him to put his newly acquired or improved skill into practice. Otherwise the learner returns to the work-place only to face an attitude of 'Don't mind him - he's just been on a course!'. In other words, any change in behaviour is seen as a temporary aberration which will pass shortly. And it usually does. The new skill often fails to transfer back to the work-place".

The analysis shows the multiple array of possibilities, assumptions and interpretations that individuals are likely to give to any one event, phenomenon and interrelationship. In other words, the findings from this study unveil the complexity underlying phenomena and their interconnections and inform our understanding of the 'fuzziness' and unpredictable nature of interrelationships. More importantly the findings challenge some of the basic assumptions which have guided our understanding of the interconnections between processes so far. One of the most significant assumptions being challenged by the findings of the present study is the perceived linearity of the interconnection between processes.

10.4.3. The dynamic interconnection between processes

The differences between perceived and actual relationships discussed in the previous paragraphs illustrate the dynamic interconnection between phenomena. It is evident from the findings that managers' assumptions of the nature of phenomena and their interrelationships are evolving and emerging as managers interpret organisational reality and try to make sense of the bewildering array of conflicting issues confronting them. The gap between managers' perceptions of relationships and the extent to which these relationships are practically acted upon, reveals the ambiguities and paradoxes of contemporary organisational life and the impact on managers' construction of their reality. The dynamic interconnection between processes is reflected in the relationship between training and learning in the context of

change, the evolving relationship between change and training and the emerging relationship between change and learning. The loose interrelationship between change, training and learning from the perspective of the individual challenges the perceived linearity between the three processes promoted in the existing literature.

10.4.3.1. The relationship between training and learning in the context of change

The analysis shows that the relationship between training and learning from the perspective of the individual cannot be taken for granted nor can it be assumed to be fixed as is the case from the perspective of the organisation (Bass & Vaughan, 1969; Luthans & Davis, 1981; Kopps, 1988; Fairbairns, 1991 etc.). It is evident from the preceding discussion that training and learning are dynamic processes and so is their potential interconnection. Exploring managers' perceptions of the relationship between learning and training in the context of change, raises awareness of additional factors which influence the importance attached by managers to learning and training in the context of their changing organisations.

The present study shows the impact of change in the way these phenomena are interrelated, which has not previously been considered. The analysis has examined organisational changes an input, context and output in relation to the interrelationships explored. In relation to the relationship between training and learning, organisational change as input (i.e. a source of information) influences what is to be learned and how quickly individual managers need to learn. Change as a context demonstrates the tension between personal and organisational needs and the difficulties of reconciling them. Finally, as the outcome organisational change indicates whether in fact training as a learning opportunity facilitates individuals' adaptability. It is evident from the findings that structured training is not always a learning opportunity, because the rate of change requires a proactive response which the present relationship between learning and training does not cater for. Formalised training either tends to be provided too late, or the knowledge and skills acquired are not sufficient to support the continuous learning that is taking place. These issues challenge the assumptions promoted by researchers who take the perspective of the organisation and show that the relationship between training and learning from the perspective of the individual, provides valuable insights into the difficulties of balancing personal and organisational priorities in relation to learning and training in the context of change.

10.4.3.2. The evolving relationship between change and training

Similar dilemmas are experienced by managers across the three banks when relying on training to respond to change. The discussion of this relationship from the perspective of individual manager (section 10.2.1.2.) has shown that a proportion of managers across the three banks (Bank A: 12%, Bank B: 23%, Bank C: 38%) believe that training has little contribution to change because of a number of reasons identified (and summarised in Table 10.3.). The interesting issue about individuals' perceptions of this relationship is that managers appear to be changing their views and are beginning to accept that training is only one of many supporting processes. Managers are increasingly of the view that training is not sufficient on its own to facilitate adaptability to change. The change in managers' views is supported by longitudinal findings which show that managers are changing their views about the relationship between training and change.

On the basis of the longitudinal analysis of relationships within each organisation managers were asked to explain whether they have always maintained the belief that training contributes to change. Although, managers in bank A initially perceived a strong relationship between the two processes they appear to be changing their views, as a significant proportion (54%) of managers in bank A now feel that training is only one of the elements which may facilitate change. As managers realise that structured training does not always lead to change and does not facilitate their adaptability to change they are revising their assumptions. The observed shift in managers' perceptions of the association between training and change in bank A may be explained in the light of the recent emphasis by the organisation on self-development which may have encouraged managers to reconsider the role of training in relation to change. Comparing the longitudinal findings on the same issue across banks B & C it appears that managers in these banks have maintained the view that training has a limited contribution to change much longer as they claim that they have maintained a critical view of the association of training and change for many years.

10.4.3.3. The emerging relationship between change and learning

The relationship between change and learning is strongly supported by managers across the three organisations and is founded on the assumption that learning will aid surviving the change process. Table 10.4. summarises the main functions perceived by managers across the three banks to be performed by learning in relation to change. The most significant role of

Table 10.4: The perceived role of learning in relation to change across the three banks

• remain informed and up-to-date
• understand change and adapt to it
• overcome present uncertainties
• acquire more knowledge
• prepare in advance for change
• assist personal development
• maintain and improve performance
• enhance career prospects

learning according to managers is to enable them to remain informed and up-to-date with the changes that are taking place. Learning is seen as a means of making sense of organisational change, overcoming uncertainty and maintaining high performance. Although this relationship is supported by the majority of managers in each bank, there are variations in the level of significance attached to learning in relation to present and future job changes. As illustrated in Figure 10.10., managers in bank A unanimously perceive that learning is important in relation to current job changes, while in banks B and C a comparatively smaller proportion of managers attach importance to learning in relation to the changes in their present job. These variations may be explained with reference to the differences in the context of each bank. It is evident from the previous discussion that learning is perceived by managers in very narrow terms and it is mainly understood as a process of acquiring knowledge and skills.

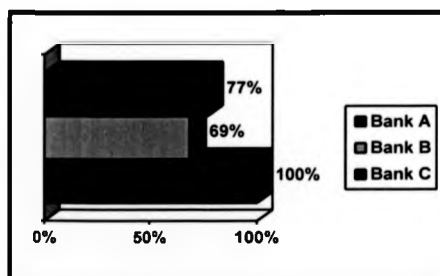


Figure 10.10: The importance attached by managers across the three banks to learning in relation to current job changes.

This perception about the learning process stems largely from its close association with training. However, it is evident that managers in banks B and C are beginning to see learning more broadly and to associate it with self-development and self-improvement in relation to change. Several managers in bank C in particular, point out that they value learning regardless of the changes in their job. For example a manager said: "learning is quite key, because it is one of the core skills required in my profession", while a fast-track manager added that: "learning is fundamental. Every hour is a learning opportunity especially in my job". This observation suggests that in organisations (such as bank C) where the emphasis on self development is stronger and practically demonstrated, this has affected managers' perceptions of the relationship between learning and change. The view held by managers across the three banks is that learning *to* change is possible, however (Figure 10.10.) there are indications across the three banks that managers who lack personal initiative fail to explore fully the relationship between learning and the changes in their present job. Managers

attribute the lack of interconnection between learning and change, to their familiarity with their present job and the pressure to manage change, which provides little space for learning. Therefore, although managers may believe that learning may facilitate their adaptability to change, change itself is perceived as a block to learning which means that some managers do not actually learn in order to change. It is more likely that these managers learn in order to maintain stability.

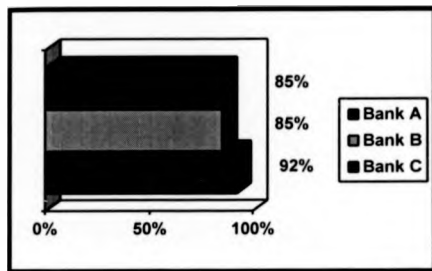


Figure 10.11: The importance attached by managers across the three banks to learning in relation to future job changes.

Moreover, it is evident from managers' perceptions of the relationship between learning and future job changes that managers perceive learning primarily as a means of coping with uncertainty and the insecurity that future job changes entail. As one manager in bank B remarked: "...you can't afford not to be open to learning new things, because this is the culture of the changing organisation and learning

influences your ability to survive. Unless you learn new things, to be able to do new roles, that's it you're out". Figure 10.11, illustrates diagrammatically the proportion of managers in each bank who attach importance to learning in relation to future job changes. A common theme underlying the perceived importance of learning in relation to future job changes is the association with career development. A manager in bank C said that: "I am constantly learning to equip myself with all I need. The next job up is the Divisional Director and I would look to equip myself, but I haven't done that for a little while. If you think you know it all you will drown". Another manager in bank B added: "it's crucial to keep your CV fresh to prospective employers. To be seen to be energetic and practical". In comparison to managers in banks B and C, managers in bank A do not emphasise career development as strongly. The main purpose of learning remains the same for them; to survive change. It should be noted that, some managers across the three banks associate learning with future job changes because they want to "be seen to be active" rather than because they personally recognise this relationship as being important.

The lack of a clear career path, makes some managers across all banks feel that learning has little value in relation to future job changes because of the uncertainty of whether learning will

be appropriate or necessary. Thus, managers are not prepared to commit themselves to learning when they are unclear about the prospective use of the knowledge they are likely to acquire. The words of a manager in bank A illustrate the point: "its not learning in isolation...because of the current uncertainties learning carries little value, because one does not know whether he or she will need it or use it". Another manager added that: "in view of the lack of clear career you don't know or plan your learning. You don't know the skills that you need to have, to plan in advance". These responses reinforce managers' perceptions of the learning process (i.e. the way learning is understood and consequently defined). In the context of change, managers perceive learning mainly as a means of acquiring the new knowledge and skills which are expected to enable them to deal with the new requirements. The words of one manager indicate the point: "learning equals experience therefore, it enables you to survive rather than develop as a person. But you can't cope with the things you are expected to learn. You have to select and do what you feel is enough".

From this analysis there are no indications that managers across the three banks perceive change as a learning opportunity (with the possible exception of managers in bank C). The analysis shows that the relationship between change and learning from the perspective of the individuals is mechanistic and superficial and bears similar characteristics to the unidirectional association of training and change. Learning is primarily perceived as a means aiding survival rather than as an opportunity for development and growth in the context of change. The present study highlights another significant dimension in the way individuals perceive the relationship between learning and change. The perceived interconnection between the two phenomena depends apart from the organisational culture and learning structures in place, on managers' personal initiative and their willingness to learn from the changes that are taking place.

Learning to change versus learning from change

These observations offer a much needed perspective of the way individuals within organisations approach learning and change and the factors which influence their interpretation of their significance and the way they may be employed. It is evident from the study that learning and change are narrowly defined, thus constraining managers across the three banks from exploring fully the potential benefits of their interaction. Managers in these banks are more familiar with learning *to* change which is based on the notion of what

additional knowledge and skills are needed in order to adapt to the new demands placed upon them. There are limited indications to suggest that these managers actually perceive change as a learning opportunity or that they seek to change as a result of the learning they experience. Therefore, it could be argued that managers in the three banks rarely learn *from* change (with the possible exception of managers in bank C who appear to begin to explore learning from change). Managers in the three banks do not seek to transform themselves through learning. Instead they seek through learning, to maintain their security and to protect their self-image, which partly explains why un-learning incorporates fear and uncertainty, which in turn leads to resistance (Kimberly & Quinn, 1984; Tichy & Ulrich, 1984; Antonacopoulou, 1996b). This observation helps explain why managers across the three banks perceive that the role of learning in the context of change is to maintain survival instead of introducing a fundamentally different interpretation of organisational events.

Individual versus organisational learning and changing

The findings of the present study provide no support for the proposition, that learning and change are interdependent or synonymous, advocated by some theorist and researchers (Dixon, 1994; Beckhard & Prichard, 1992; Handy, 1989; Freidlander, 1984). The findings show that learning is perceived by individuals as a mechanism for responding to change by producing continuity and taking small incremental steps by maintaining where possible the status-quo. The findings support the observations of Jones (1994), Cook & Yanow (1993) who point out that the link between learning and change aims to enhance stability rather than transformation. Cook & Yanow, (1993:377) with reference to this relationship from the perspective of the organisation point out specifically that:

“Although change is often associated with individual learning, it seems clear that some forms of learning entail little or no change that is meaningfully discernible, particularly in observable behaviour...Likewise, we can learn new knowledge that is not linked at all to behavioural change.... We will argue however that change does not always accompany learning by organisations, and moreover, equating learning with change may leave out much of interest”.

The findings of the study provide no support to the central argument of recent theories in relation to the ‘learning organisation’ which assume a strong relationship between learning and change (Cyert & March, 1963; Hedberg, 1981; Fiol & Lyles, 1985; Lant & Mezias, 1991). Many of these dominant theories lack empirical substantiation and fail to see the interaction between the two phenomena. Learning is primarily seen to derive from

organisational processes and practices and the way these alter as a result of organisational change. Such a perspective fails to acknowledge how learning may initiate the necessary changes and lead to more appropriate organisational structures (Morgan, 1989; Tsoukas, 1994; Jones, 1994).

The findings of the present study show that organisational policies and practices in some instances fail to encourage 'genuine' learning to take place, because of the short-term orientation and the focus on outcomes instead of process. Moreover, it is evident from the analysis that individuals' learning goals are not always compatible to the learning goals of the organisation (Torbert, 1994; Kim, 1993; Pedler et al., 1991). Our efforts to understand learning at the organisational (and societal) level perhaps may be better informed by exploring why individual and organisation development needs are rarely negotiated and what restrict individual learning to be diffused to the rest of the organisation. The three banks examined in this study demonstrate that by attempting to maintain control of the development of individuals, they inhibit individuals' freedom to be creative and willing to delve into uncharted waters by exploring other possibilities other than those prescribed by the organisation. A significant issue related to this observation is the significance of the richness of learning as a process which does not always results into observable or demonstrable outcomes.

Changes resulting from learning at the individual level

The findings from this study show that from the perspective of the individual learning may lead to change, however, the nature of the change is not necessarily restricted to the demonstrable behaviour as the existing literature suggests (Kimble, 1961; Bass & Vaughan, 1969; Argyris, 1982; Landy, 1984; Pont, 1991). The findings of this study suggest that changes resulting from learning are more subtle and complex than the resulting behaviour may convincingly demonstrate. Managers' responses across the three banks when asked to describe the perceived impact of their ideal learning experiences show that the learning experiences increased their self-confidence and increased their self-awareness, provided them with greater willingness to embrace learning more consciously and understand better their role within the organisation. For example, a manager in bank A said: "the learning experience widened the knowledge of the self and enabled me to understand how I fit in the bank's structure, recognising my strengths and weaknesses and trying to find ways of developing

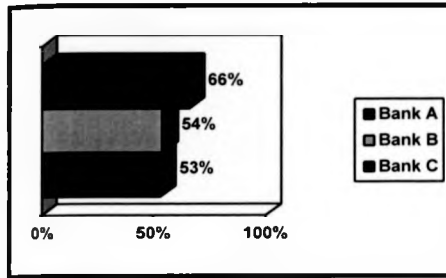


Figure 10.12: The proportion of managers across the three banks who consider that the learning capacity has been positively affected as a result of their ideal learning experience.

them". Moreover, a significant proportion of managers across all banks (Figure 10.12.) claim that the learning experience has affected their capacity to learn. Managers described this change saying that they realised that they were able to learn from a variety of sources, their attitudes towards learning have become more positive, they felt better able to learn more "fully" etc. In relation to the latter point a manager said: "it woke up my appetite for learning".

It is important to note that managers' descriptions of the changes resulting from a learning experience are further evident from the longitudinal findings and in particular managers' descriptions of the effects of the learning goal they have pursued. Some of the effects of learning described by managers include: an increase in their self-confidence and personal satisfaction, an enhancement in personal development and improvement of performance and a greater job satisfaction. A significant proportion of managers across all three banks (56%) pointed out specifically that their motivation has increased as a result of their learning experience. For example a manager in bank B said: "I feel a bit wiser now. I don't need a shoulder to cry on. I am more confident now to handle situations. I now realise I am stopping myself from learning. I pick myself from the ground and I exercise better self-analysis". An equally significant proportion across the three banks (51%) describe that pursuing their identified learning goal has changed their perceptions and attitudes towards learning and they are now more positive and open to learning. For example a manager in bank C said: "Competence stimulates learning. It emphasises the need for learning, not knowing it all. It told me that I am not too old to learn". A manager in bank A said: "It brought home to me the need to remain continuously up-to-date". In relation to their future approach to learning managers made the following comments. A manager in bank B said: "I realise that I was neglecting my development. I was sitting back on my ACIBD qualification almost to the extent of arrogance. I realised that I have to think more". A manager in bank A said: "I recognised the need to be more proactive with learning. Self-development is the way forward. Taking learning as a personal purpose and taking personal responsibility for self-development.

It is easy to think one is right and does not need to learn, but that's wrong, one should always be open to new ideas".

The analysis suggests that learning is more likely to generate new emotions, lead to different attitudes and perceptions about the self and the learning process, rather than produce observable behavioural changes. In other words the changes resulting from learning are more likely to be subtle and intangible, therefore by focusing on 'hard', tangible evidence of behavioural change organisations and individual are missing much valuable information about the multiple and varying factors which shape the process of changing *from* learning. It would be equally critical that organisations shift their emphasis from outcomes of learning and change to the process of changing and learning. In the light of the emotional and attitudinal changes resulting from learning it may be more appropriate that organisations seek to understand why is it that positive emotions and attitudes towards learning cannot be sustained. The findings from this study show that personal and organisational obstacles to learning inhibit the change in individuals' perceptions and attitudes towards learning to be maintained. Therefore, the changes resulting from learning are short-lived and unexplored.

10.4.3.4. The loose interrelationship between change, training and learning

The preceding analysis shows that the paired relationships between the three phenomena (training, learning and change) examined in the context of the three banks, are based on a common set of assumptions taking the perspective of the organisation. The paired relationships between change and training, training and learning and that between learning and change, from the perspective of the organisation, assume that to manage change attendance at a training programme would enable individuals to learn (i.e. acquire the necessary knowledge and skills) in order to adapt to the new requirements placed upon them. Figure 10.13. illustrates diagrammatically the one-way direction which describes the perceived association of change, training and learning. This sequential association between change, training and learning reflects the theoretical propositions found in the literature propounded by commentators who take the organisation's point of view (Taylor & Lippitt, 1975; Bass & Vaughan, 1966).

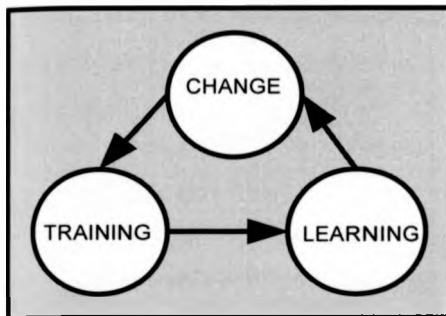


Figure 10.13: The perceived interrelationship between change, learning and training from the organisation's point of view as evident in the findings of the study and reflected in the propositions in the existing literature.

However, there are also instances in the existing literature where commentators who take the perspective of the individual propose the same sequential association between the three phenomena. For example Stewart (1991:150) supports this interconnection by saying that: "Training and development is essentially concerned with achieving individual change through learning. Change within organisations requires such learning to occur". This proposition is also supported by commentators

who perceive a strong link between training and change (Talbot, 1993; March, 1986; Lippitt, 1982a, 1982b). The findings of this study provide empirical substantiation to these theoretical claims and show that the interrelationship between the three phenomena from the perspective of the organisation is linear and unidirectional. The three banks in this study associate these process in a linear and sequential fashion because this interconnection enables them to manipulate individuals to meet organisational needs. However, there have been limited empirical findings to-date to substantiate this contention from the perspective of the individual. The findings of the present study provide no support for this linear association between the three processes and show that from the individual's point of view (as discussed in the preceding sections) the interrelationship between change, training and learning is *loose*.

Why individual managers fail to learn and adapt from structured training?

The present study has focused on the individual manager as the unit of analysis and it is evident from the findings that this perspective provides new insights into the nature of the interrelationship between these three processes. On the basis of managers' responses it cannot be confidently argued that individuals will be able to adapt to change as a result of learning which has taken place during a structured training intervention. In other words, the underlying assumption that training can help individuals learn and adapt during periods of change is not supported by the findings of this study. When examined from the perspective of the individual the interrelationship between change, training and learning is not quite as linear or unambiguously clear as the existing literature suggests (Figure 10.14.).

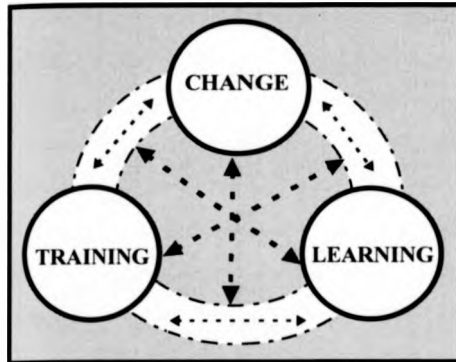


Figure 10.14: The loose interrelationship between change, training and learning from the perspective of the individual managers emerging from the findings of this study.

As this study has shown, individuals do not perceive change as an opportunity for learning, training does not always facilitate individuals' learning and finally, training is not always sufficient to enable individuals to change, because it does not provide the necessary flexibility. The day-to-day changes experienced by managers are far more complicated and idiosyncratic which render the prescribed solutions offered during a training intervention insufficient. The evidence suggest that training

may only guide people in making small incremental steps in the direction of change, whereas change requires a quick response and for that structured training is not always adequately equipped. Moreover, managers may not learn from change because of fear and the tendency to learn in order to maintain stability and to survive. The fact that training tends to be organisationally focused does not always provide a liberating learning experience for the individual which consequently explains why individuals may take a narrow view of learning and change and their relationship. The tendency of managers to depend on the organisation's direction and resources to learn, makes their effort to adapt to change more difficult, because such processes enhance their reliance on the organisation and do not provide them the space to experiment and explore different opportunities or courses of action. Training provided by the organisation serves as a reinforcement of the status quo and a means of imposing the organisation's definition of good practice. Therefore, the triangular interrelationship between change, learning and training is not as strong (it is loose) as it is assumed in the existing literature, because from the perspective of the individual manager the complexity of their interconnection is based on various conditions which shape how managers perceive their association and the importance attached to their interrelationship.

These findings do not only question existing assumptions about the way phenomena are interconnected, they also challenge the existing hypotheses about the nature of interrelationships between phenomena. The current literature assumes that phenomena are strongly interconnected in a rational manner as long as they serve organisational priorities. It is also hypothesised that the interrelationships between phenomena are linear and predictable.

Based on the evidence from this study however, these assumptions and hypotheses are unfounded and ignore the dynamic conditions which have been shown to affect the interconnection between phenomena. Moreover, the findings show that phenomena are dynamically interrelated which means that the nature and strength of their interconnection is more likely to be different at different times, in different contexts and circumstances. Moreover, it is evident from the longitudinal dimension of this study, that phenomena and their interrelationships are different at different points in time and over a period of time. Their evolving and emerging character elucidates the argument that phenomena and their interconnection to other phenomena are dynamically negotiated as various systems and their sub-systems interact and as the systems themselves are shaped and reshaped from this interaction. This analysis illustrates more clearly the multidimensional nature of phenomena and their chaotic evolution.

For example, the study shows that change exists in a variety of domains; as input, context and output. Change as input affects the relationship between training and learning as reflected in individuals' perceptions of training as an opportunity for learning. However, this relationship is shaped by the perceived need to change and managers' views about the potential contribution of training to adaptation and learning. Change as context affects the learning objectives set by individuals and the perceived suitability of training as a means of learning. As indicated by individual managers, training may be perceived as inappropriate if it does not cater for individual learning objectives and learning style. Finally, change as output (i.e. individuals' adaptability) is seen to be influenced by the value attached by individuals to learning from training in relation to its compatibility with self and career development.

10.5. Syschetic analysis: A new approach to the study of the interaction and integration of human and organisational systems

The rationale of this study to explore the interrelationships between phenomena by seeking to understand how they are in dialogue with one another (i.e. how they interact), the impact each has on the other and the conditions which support or hinder their association suggests that this approach extends beyond a systems approach or a systemic analysis. The present study offers a new perspective in analysing the complexity of systems (social systems - organisations, individuals and their interaction). This new perspective extends beyond the identification of

the main elements which constitute a systems (i.e. their sub-systems). The perspective promoted in this study is the concern with the *synthesis* of systems, their sub-systems and their core components. This perspective may be defined as *syschetic* (i.e. concerned with *syschetisms* - from the Greek word *syschetismos* which means interrelationship) between and within systems and sub-systems. Defining this perspective as syschetic allows a focus on the interrelationship between systems and a concern with unravelling and preserving the complexity which characterises their interaction with other systems. The syschetic perspective is built on the notion of varying levels of attraction or contradiction between systems and sub-systems and examines the way contributing factors form conditions which affect the nature of their *schesis* (i.e. relationship) and the potential path that the interaction between systems is likely to follow. The larger the number of elements one incorporates, the more complex the interrelationships become, however, the richer and more complete a map is sketched representing the way systems, their sub-systems and their core components are integrated (synthesised). For example, in this study the syschetism between learning, self and career development emerged as a significant interrelationship which helped to explain why the interrelationship between change, training and learning examined in this study from the perspective of the individual managers is not as strong as the existing literature assumes.

The recognition that phenomena and their interrelationships are dynamic, evolving and fluid makes imperative the inadequacy of existing linear models of representation. There is a need for a non-linear, dynamic representation which could capture the interplay between phenomena and their interrelationships, as well as the interactions between contributing factors which form conditions affecting the way interrelationships are shaped. Therefore, the representation of the interrelationship between change, training and learning would be incomplete without locating training in the broader HRM context and in relation to other HRD activities. Equally, learning could not be represented in isolation from the self and career development concerns of the individual in the context of change. The analysis of the interrelationship between learning, self and career development has shown that the extent to which individuals within the organisation associate their learning with their personal and career development is influenced by the organisational context (the policies and practices in relation to staff development - training, career etc.) and the interaction of personal and organisational factors which form conditions which facilitate or inhibit the interrelationship between phenomena. The interaction between personal and organisational factors was evident

in the level of dependence of the individual on the organisation in order to learn, managers' perceptions of the organisation's encouragement for learning and self-development, the perceived level of control in determining career development etc. The polythetic nature of phenomena and their interrelationships makes imperative the need to re-examine the model introduced in this study.

It is apparent from this analysis that the model (see Figure 1.2.) which has been introduced in the beginning of the thesis and which formed the basis for presenting the relationships emerging from the three case studies does not capture fully the dynamism and fluidity of phenomena and their interrelationships. The model introduced in the beginning of the study has intended to facilitate the purposes of the initial analysis in an effort to make sense of the interconnections between phenomena. The preceding analysis however, has shown that there are multiple factors which intervene in the interrelationships between phenomena which the present model does not represent.

The diversity of intervening factors and the complexity with which they participate in the construction of connection(s) between phenomena is very difficult to capture. It could be argued that the sheer complexity of phenomena and their interrelationships cannot possibly be represented in any specific diagrammatic form. In fact it may well be better that one does not seek to represent complexity, because it is more likely that one would be imposing one's simplified interpretation. However, our efforts to understand the complex nature of phenomena and their interrelationships by sketching possible paths that phenomena may follow as they interact could provide some indications of the paradoxical nature of phenomena and could broaden our understanding of the multiple possibilities in exploring the nature of phenomena and their relationships to other phenomena.

The findings of this study illustrate the multifaceted and multidimensional nature of phenomena and uncover additional dimensions and facets which have not previously been considered or possibly were missed due to the concern of previous research with simplifying phenomena, so that they may be easier to comprehend and manipulate. Figure 10.15. presents the amorphous nature of phenomena and their interrelationship as evident from the findings of the current study. The new model highlights the dynamic nature of phenomena and their interconnections and shows the possible paths that their interactions are likely to follow. The

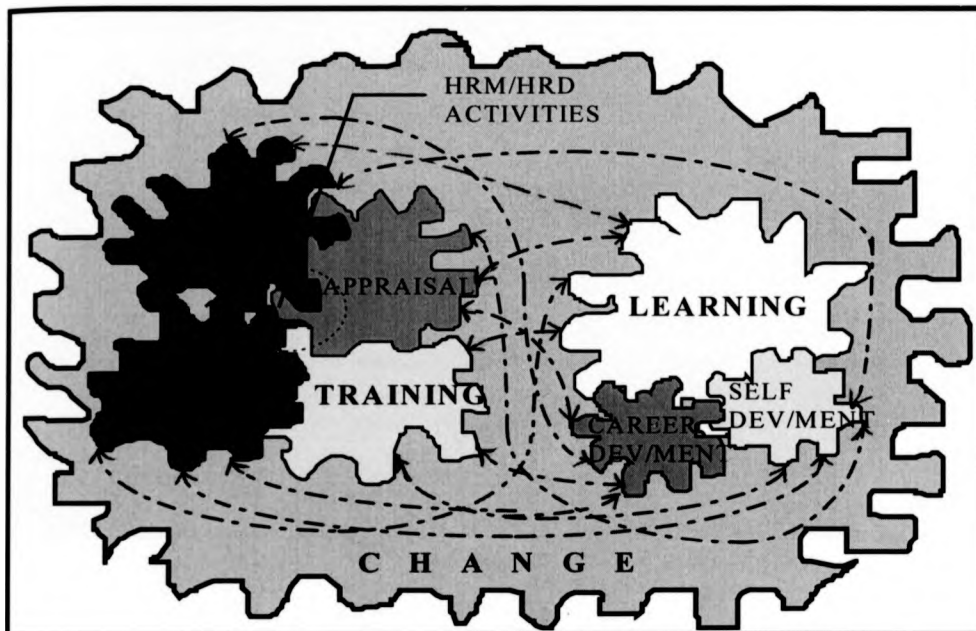


Figure 10.15: A non-linear representation of the complexity of individual phenomena and their interrelationships.

amorphous nature of individual phenomena emphasises their fluidity and indicates that they are shaped and reshaped as contributing factors influence them and as phenomena themselves interact with other phenomena (similar to an amoeba).

For example, learning as presented in the model is intended to show its dynamic nature resulting from the interplay of psychological and sociological factors and in relation to self and career development concerns. Learning is also defined and redefined in conversation with HRM/HRD activities which influence what, why and how learning takes place. Moreover, the model shows the interconnection between learning, self and career development and the potential overlaps between the three phenomena depending on the strength of their interrelationship. As evident from the findings the strength of their interconnection may be determined by the interaction of each phenomenon (learning, self and career development) with other phenomena (training, career development, appraisal, reward etc.). The dotted lines illustrate the potential interconnections and the possible paths that learning may follow in its interaction with other phenomena. It should be noted that from the diagram it is also possible to observe some additional relationships which this study has not explored in great depth and

which are worthy of further investigation (e.g. the relationship between appraisal, self and career development in the context of change). This and other suggestions for further research in this field will be discussed in the final chapter of the thesis.

Finally, the model shows the interaction between organisational (HRM/HRD activities) and individual (learning, self and career development) factors. The distance between individual and organisational factors is intended to show the tension between the priorities and needs of each party. The distance between individual and organisational factors could widen up indicating the difficulty of reconciliation or it could be narrowed down indicating the negotiation between individual and organisational priorities and the interdependence between individual and organisational systems. Lastly, it is imperative to emphasise that phenomena, their interrelationships, the interaction between individual factors and the negotiation of personal and organisational needs, all take place in the context of change which itself is a complex phenomenon with multiple facets and dimensions.

10.6. Summary

This chapter has set out to revisit the main findings from the research and to spell out more clearly the contribution of this study. A key theme reappearing from this analysis is that relationships between phenomena and their corresponding significance and strength very much depend on the perspective one takes. Much of what is currently known about the association between phenomena takes the perspective of the organisation and assumes that phenomena are connected in a linear fashion. The limited empirical findings to-date, particularly from the individual's perspective have restricted our understanding of the various possibilities available. The contribution of this study is that it provides a fresh perspective using the individual as the focus of analysis, which provides an in-depth investigation of the interconnections between phenomena in the context of change. The study enhances our understanding of the underlying individual and organisational factors which support or hinder relationships between phenomena and the tension within and between individual and organisational priorities and needs in the context of change. Moreover, the study shows that the relationships between phenomena are contextually-specific. Although, similarities between the three banks have been identified, which to some extent may be explained in relation to the dominant culture of the industry, there are unique characteristics within each

bank which influence individuals' perceptions of the nature and strength of the connection between phenomena. These observations emerged by choosing a more complex approach to researching the association between phenomena which offers a potentially new perspective (the syschetic perspective) in the study of the complexity of social systems. Overall, the study of interrelationships between phenomena introduces to the field the multiple possibilities that exist in the way phenomena are interconnected in the context of change. Therefore, a significant contribution of this study, is that it lays down the first steps of what appears to be a complex map in an infinite journey of rediscovering relationships and interconnections between phenomena.

PART

E

Epilogue

Overview

This section provides a point of reflection in the thesis and a critical appraisal of the research objectives and the research practice. The implications of the findings are discussed for both theory and practice and suggestions for future research directions are provided.

The Continuing Odyssey: Reflections and the Way Forward

11.1. Introduction

The purpose of the final chapter of the thesis is to take a step back and to reflect on the problematic addressed in this study, by critically reviewing the objectives of the research, the main challenges experienced by the researcher during the research process and the main lessons emerging. The significance and implications of the findings are discussed and future research directions in this field are suggested. The discussion begins with a synopsis of the train of thought developed in the preceding chapters and the central argument pursued throughout the thesis.

11.2. A brief synopsis of the thesis

This section summarises briefly the argument build up in the preceding chapters. By taking a higher view point this section aims to re-examine the train of thought developed throughout the individual chapters in the thesis and to summarise the main arguments raised.

This study has been concerned with the way individual managers learn and adapt and the contribution of educational processes such as training and development. A central consideration of this study has been the internal conflict experienced by the individual when trying to balance personal and organisational learning and development needs in the context of change. The dilemmas experienced by the individual are embedded in the tension between the development of the organisation and the individual. The analysis in Chapters 2 and 3 has

sought to unravel the different perspectives held at different levels of analysis about processes/phenomena and their potential interconnection. The choice to focus on the individual as the unit of analysis was made having established from the critical review of the existing literature that to-date the dominant perspective has been the perspective of the organisation. Moreover, it was apparent that existing research did not sufficiently explore the differences in the perspective taken by the individual as compared to that of the organisation. Therefore, the present study has recognised that in order to explain the perspective of the individual and the way it may be similar or different to that of the organisation one would have to locate the analysis within the broader social context of the country, the sector and specific industry under examination.

In addition to this consideration a prevailing issue has been that one was essentially exploring the interaction between different levels of analysis (i.e. social, organisational and individual level). Chapter 2 has illustrated this interaction with reference to education and training policy in the UK in relation to the introduction of the HRM approach within organisations and the impact on managers' perceptions and attitudes towards learning and self-development. This is an issue which has been further elucidated by the findings of this study and in particular the relationship between learning and training. The interaction between the development needs of the individual and the organisation indicate the nature of the negotiation between the two parties. Chapter 3 has elaborated on this issue with reference to the negotiation literature and the social dimensions characterising the interaction between social actors. This interaction was illustrated with reference to the interrelationship between learning, self and career development, which also informed the relationship between learning and training in the context of change. The interest of this study with the internal conflict of the individual in the context of change, made imperative the significance of exploring managers' perceptions of the relationships between these processes.

All the above issues (elaborated in length in the corresponding Chapters) have informed the research question and have contributed to the development of the research strategy. From this rigorous analysis emerged the main objectives of the study which guided the methodological choices made about the way this study would unravel the complexity underlying managers' perceptions of the nature of processes (such as training, learning, change, self and career development) and their association. Therefore, a unique aspect of this study has been the

decision to examine the dual and triangular interrelationships between phenomena seeking to challenge existing assumptions about their association and to overcome their static and linear representation that was a feature of their descriptions in the existing literature. The various methodological considerations and challenges, as well as the scientific choices made by the researcher were discussed in relation to the relevant literature on methodology in Chapters 4 and 5. Each of these chapters has dealt with a set of issues which formed the main methodological stages of the project, from the point of generating the research question to the stage of interpreting and presenting the findings. The individual case studies (i.e. Chapters 7, 8 and 9) presented findings specific to each of the three banks (bank A, B & C respectively) building on the review of the main characteristics of the banking sector in the UK presented in Chapter 6. The comparative analysis of the key emerging interrelationships across the three banks was presented in Chapter 10.

11.3. Reflecting on the research practice

This section takes a critical perspective to the research practice adopted in the course of this study and reflects on the impact of the research objectives and the role of the researcher as an individual, on the approach adopted and the findings presented in the thesis.

11.3.1. A critical appraisal of the research objectives

Throughout the various stages and milestones this study has been guided by the four specific research objectives as presented in the first chapter of the thesis. These are:

1. to explore how managers perceive organisational processes and their interrelationships in the context of change,
2. to examine the impact of the organisational context on the nature and strength of interrelationships between processes,
3. to track, review and analyse the conditions which facilitate or inhibit the interrelationships between processes, and
4. to draw a map of the interaction and integration of human and organisational systems in the context of change.

The four research objectives were intended to facilitate the process of researching interrelationships between phenomena, by giving direction when dealing with the complexity and plethora of issues involved in the relationships examined across the three banks.

However, the focus on the contribution of training to individuals' adaptability and learning in the context of change presented the researcher with some limiting boundaries, particularly when additional issues were emerging from the study that did not reflect the scope of the present research. Therefore, even though the research question acted as the terms of reference throughout the study, in some instances they did not represent fully the diversity of issues that the study was exploring and the complexity of factors that it was unearthing.

Moreover, another challenge presented by the research objectives was the difficulty of describing the relationships between phenomena and their complexity. This difficulty was reflected in the attempts by the researcher to balance flexibility against a clearly defined set of research principles. This issue is related to the concern with developing a methodologically sound approach for tracking down the evolving interaction between phenomena in different contexts over time. The uncertainty of the appropriateness of the chosen research methods for capturing the complexity of relationships while trying to hold on to the various contributing factors was an additional issue. This problem was exacerbated with the limited guidance available from the existing literature on appropriate methodologies for the study of complexity. After all, complexity theory is currently emerging as potentially the new science for the study of organisations (Meyer et al., 1996; Carley, 1995; Stacey, 1995; Kauffman, 1993; Waldrop, 1992; Cheng & Van de Ven, 1996).

An added difficulty in researching interrelationships is the evolving nature of relationships and the context in which they emerge. Therefore, tracking down relationships over time proved to be equally problematic, as the changing nature of relationships and their context revealed additional issues which added to the complexity of the picture being drawn. Trying to make sense of all the contributing factors and their impact at different contexts produced additional difficulties about their presentation. These difficulties justify why this study has not fully escaped from a structured and often systematic representation of the various issues (i.e. the use of the research model for representing the relationships between phenomena - Figure 1.2.). Although, this approach was the researcher's attempt to deal with complexity, on reflection it may not have always done justice to the findings and the interrelationships discussed. The approach adopted to arrive at the key interrelationships in each bank, was deemed to be necessary for the comparative analysis across banks. This approach however,

suffers from the limits of standardisation and cannot be considered as being entirely flexible to reflect the changing nature of relationships in the light of the changing practices within each bank. Moreover, the study may also be criticised for adopting a systematic and structured approach for presenting the emerging triangular interrelationships across cases. The thesis approached this task by meticulously examining the dual relationships between phenomena to justify the significance and degree of strength of the interrelationships identified. Although this approach enhanced and substantiated the claim that an interrelationship between three phenomena exists, in some respects it has limited the perspective with which interrelationships between three phenomena were interpreted.

The challenges and difficulties experienced throughout the research process do not have their source only in the nature of the topic, the methodological approach chosen to examine the topic or indeed in the limitations imposed by the research question which guided the research. A reflection on the research practice undoubtedly would need to address the challenges and difficulties resulting from the way the researcher engaged in the research act and the roles that she has played throughout the research process.

11.3.2. The research act and the research roles played

This section reflects on the use of self in the research process and is based on a critical development of self-awareness and self-discovery as intricate parts of the research process. As Gleshne & Peshkin (1992) argue, researchers have to clarify their roles in relation to the context they operate during the research process, the identities of others and their own personality, values and norms. The researcher acknowledges the responsibility for the overall quality and integrity of her research and discusses the key balancing acts among interchangeable roles that had to be managed during the course of this work.

11.3.2.1. Learner and investigator

Undoubtedly this piece of research has been a journey of exploration. The term 'journey' has been used by other commentators to describe the underlying ideology of doing research (e.g. Gummesson, 1991:79); namely that research is not a destination nor an end in itself. The research process here is described as an exploration to emphasise the unexpected discoveries that have been made along the way as the researcher unravelled the mystery surrounding a particular situation, event or relationship. This view is consistent with the perspective of

"research as learning" (Russ, 1995:57); namely that the process of undertaking research is a "developmental process"; a "personal process motivated by the individual, a "lived experience" and a "reflexive process". The research process is described here as a journey of exploration to denote two important roles that the researcher has been engaged in throughout the course of this work; firstly the role of the learner and secondly that of being an investigator.

The role of the learner has been a tricky one in the course of this work, because the researcher had to subordinate her views to enable herself to gain as much as possible from the experience and insight of the participants in the study. During the data collection process and in particular the interviews with individual managers the researcher engaged in her role as a learner, in order to listen and understand what the interviewees were trying to communicate. Her personal views and theoretical beliefs were a useful background which enabled her to appreciate the way social and cultural factors interwoven in the research process may affect the interpretation of the data thereafter (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983:14-19; Jones, 1991:210-212). Aware of the negative implications to the quality of the research findings, the researcher as an adult learner needed to re-consider her approach to interpreting the managers' world. To do so she recognised the need to set her personal views aside and approach the data collection process with an inquisitive mind.

However, being a learner was not an easy role to balance in relation to her role as an investigator. As an investigator, the researcher had to remain close to the original plan of action and the principle milestones set out in the methodological map of the journey. As an investigator the researcher had to maintain a clear sense of direction about the way ahead even when the events with which she was confronted were complex and difficult to make sense. Although the two roles (learner and investigator) often presented the researcher with competing requirements, on reflection they were both useful in maintaining a clear sense of direction regarding the line of inquiry followed, while at the same time taking stock of the unexpected issues emerging as the researcher was exploring other possibilities and relevant directions.

11.3.2.2. Detective and scientist

It is one thing understanding the meaning of individuals' responses and quite another to be able to interpret them accurately. The argument here is not whether understanding precedes interpretations or the other way round (see Gadamer 1975:274; Fielding & Fielding, 1986:36-37), but rather to acknowledge how the researcher arrived at the findings and explained the events she has investigated. The researcher often engaged in what has been called 'detective work' (Mintzberg, 1979; Yin, 1981, 1994). She has initially attempted to create patterns of events resulting from the responses managers provided. These were initial leads, to the discovery of the conditions and causes of the phenomena in question. The real issue for the researcher in her role as a scientist, however, was to uncover what produced those phenomena in the first place. As a scientist she was more concerned with identifying the structures, generative mechanisms and contingent factors responsible for the patterns observed (Tsoukas, 1989; Outhwaite, 1983; Benson, 1983; Keat & Urry, 1982). Instead of closing the case (study), as a detective would have done, once initial explanations were derived, the researcher delved into a more in-depth scientific inquiry to enhance her understanding. As a scientist the additional knowledge acquired enabled her to move beyond a deterministic approach in her evaluation of the situation. In other words, the case remained open until all possible causal links and laws were identified and explained. As a result the idiosyncratic nature of the subject she investigated was treated with suspicion so that the conditions and casual factors which constitute them could be revealed.

Moving from the role of the detective to the one of scientist benefited the research outcome, in terms of its validity and reliability. The comparative analysis between the case-studies enabled the researcher to move beyond establishing similarities and differences between the embedded units of analysis. The aim was to re-describe the relationships between the chosen phenomena by developing a formal theory. This theory recognised the existence of multiple mechanisms which are potentially responsible for the occurrence of the events under study. In so doing, the researcher transformed her personal appreciation of the way she would give due justice to the understanding and interpretation of the phenomena she investigated. This process went some way in enabling her to clarify in her own mind her ontological and epistemological stance.

11.3.2.3. Analyst and catalyst

According to Shipman (1982:26), "each social researcher is a pioneer because the data that he collects is likely to change the theoretical model that, overtly or covertly, forms the basis of

the work. New data exhaust old theories". New data however, may be a means of expanding and improving existing theories (Gummesson, 1991:79). In as much as the role of a researcher is primarily seen as being that of an analyst, there are instances where the researcher can take the role of a catalyst, an advocator for improving the situation. The nature of this investigation and the level of involvement that this pre-empted, enabled the researcher to form a view and to develop some ideas for suggestions as to how the problems identified may be improved at the individual and organisational level.

It was therefore, very hard for the researcher to distance herself from the concerns and problems raised by the managers interviewed. There was a zeal on behalf of the researcher to provide through the study suggestions which may help resolve these problems. In one such instance, the researcher was invited by one of the participating banks to report on the interim findings regarding a specific issue (e.g. how individuals perceive the organisation's encouragement for self-development). The researcher provided an account of what the data suggested and how she interpreted it and through that indicated possible directions the organisation or individuals may choose to follow as alternative approaches for managing the specific issue. The suggestions offered were contextually-specific and in direct relevance to the social and cultural environment of the particular organisation. These were welcomed by the organisation and where taken on board. Probably one of the rewards of being able to act as a catalyst, is the fact that one can extend the analytical elaboration of a phenomenon beyond the development of a theory primarily relevant to the academic community, towards its utilisation by the participating organisations as well, a characteristic mostly suited to case-study research (Gummesson, 1991).

The interchanging roles performed throughout the research process have not left the researcher as an individual unaffected. The fact that an individual experiences these roles indicates some of the personal changes encountered by the researcher in the course of this experience. The personality of the researcher played an intricate part in the way these roles were performed. In the first instance in allowing herself to be a learner and an investigator, the researcher exercised a great deal of self-control to gain insight into the meaning attached by participants to the phenomena under study. In her role as a detective the researcher's personality enabled her to overcome some of the initial barriers of gaining acceptance into the social group (male dominated banking sector) while in her role as a scientist, she frequently

challenged her own ontological and epistemological assumptions and her concern with achieving high quality research. Finally, it was her ambition to see progress and results which introduced her to her role as a catalyst.

The researcher's personal characteristics have both facilitated the research process and coloured the research outcomes. Like every other qualitative research this study has the personal touch of the individual who conducted it. The researcher's attempt was to provide a clarification of the structures and their associated generative mechanisms which have been contingently capable of producing the observed phenomena in the specific organisations under study. The way one can expect to gain this insight is not by treating phenomena superficially, through gathering facts and examining their frequency. Instead, one stands more chance to achieve the necessary depth, by treating them as complex and multifaceted entities, as they deserve to be treated. Direct involvement on behalf of the researcher was necessary and appropriate in this instance. Despite the identified pitfalls the researcher is confident that the research practice adopted for the investigation of the chosen phenomena is appropriate for the nature of this inquiry.

On reflection the study of interrelationships between phenomena despite its difficulties and potential pitfalls, broadens the debate about the way personal and organisational factors interact and the impact on individuals' actions and reactions in the context of change. The findings from the study show that the objectives specified at the onset of the study have been accomplished and that several significant lessons have been learned.

11.4. The significance and implications of the findings and the way forward

The contribution of this study as evident from the findings has been analysed in depth in Chapter 10. This section discusses the significance and implications of the findings and provides suggestions for further research. Although it has been shown that the findings from this study enhance our understanding of the nature of phenomena and their interrelationships, probably the most significant contribution they make is that they challenge some of the basic assumptions that have guided our understanding of the association between phenomena so far. The uniqueness of this study lies in the attempt to move away from paired relationships, towards a more complex analysis of the interrelationships between three or more phenomena.

The focus on the individual manager as the unit of analysis strengthens the significance of the findings, because it provides a much needed perspective on processes and practices within organisations which have so far been taken for granted. Much of what is currently known about the way phenomena interact is based on the assumption that the phenomena and the context in which they operate is stable. Therefore, the significance of the findings from this study lies in the emphasis placed on the changing nature of the particular phenomena and their interconnections across time and over a period of time.

It is arguably the responsibility of any researcher to inform not only theory but practice as well. For this reason the findings are intended to have a theoretical and a practical contribution. The implications of the findings for theory are: firstly, that they begin a deeper chapter of research exploring the complexity of phenomena and their interrelationships in the context of changing organisations and from the perspective of the individual. This study has shown that by exploring the interaction between individual and organisational factors which facilitate or inhibit relationships between phenomena one overcomes disciplinary boundaries and narrow definitions and is better able to explore the multidisciplinary and interdisciplinarity of phenomena. The phenomena examined in this study have been shown to exist within and between disciplines and to resist the restricting range of definitions and objectives set by any one discipline (e.g. organisational behaviour, sociology, psychology). The parallel development and interaction between disciplines has been described more recently as "neodisciplinarity" (Reed & Burrell, 1996; C  las & Smircich, 1996). According to Reed & Burrell (1996:3,9) "Neodisciplinarity rejects intellectual diaspora and institutional normalisation as the unavoidable price to pay for cognitive consensus... Neodisciplinarity can take shape as a distinctive ethos and style of inquiry that reaches beyond the stultifying limitations imposed by disciplinary rectitude and control". It could be argued that the study of interrelationships is embedded within neo-disciplinarity, because to understand the complexity of phenomena and their systems it is important to draw from different disciplinary perspectives and to find ways of integrating them. This approach to research encourages us to seek to learn from different perspectives without limiting ourselves to the perspective offered by our disciplinary specialism. Our efforts to articulate complexity and self-organisation in (social) systems as Allen (1994:596) contends "demonstrates that there are serious limits to our scientific knowledge which hopefully teaches us *humility*" (emphasis added). This issue has implications for how we as researchers view the very process of doing

research and our role throughout the process and our responsibility to the wider academic and practitioner community which have contributed to our learning in the first place.

In relation to our efforts to understand organisational and individual complexity the study of interrelationships demonstrates the co-existence of often antagonistic forces, the dilemmas and contradictions between and within the individual and the organisation. More significantly a *syschetic* analysis shows that the employment relationship cannot be treated as being unproblematic. As the findings of the study have shown the study of interrelationships between phenomena unveils the tensions within and between the individual and the organisation and brings to the forefront the moral and ethical issues underlying their interaction, which more often than not are suppressed or ignored altogether.

On a practical level, the findings urge organisations to seek a better understanding of individuals' interpretation of events and the way the negotiation of personal and organisational factors shapes their perceptions and the actions they take. Moreover, equally important is for organisations to consider ways which would enable them to come closer to individuals' reality, which would allow them to create a more conducive context for the development of processes and practices able to address the concerns of individuals. There is startling evidence across the three banks that they all have complex and expensive structured training mechanisms. However, the evidence also suggests that these organisations perceive training provision as a vehicle for multiple organisational ends, rarely questioning their appropriateness for the individual. The findings from the study could assist these banks to recognise the significance of individual perceptions and their impact on the success of structured training interventions. Moreover, there is a clear message to the banks participating in the study, about the need to examine vigorously the relationships between phenomena from both the individual and organisational perspective before subscribing enthusiastically to new ideas, such as the learning organisation and the competency framework, without fully assessing their effects on individuals and collectives. Another important issue is that they should be prepared to challenge their assumptions regarding the relationships between phenomena and not presuppose that the way it works for the organisation is likely to be appropriate for individuals as well. A key issue which organisations need to carefully reconsider is that organisational and individual needs are rarely the same.

Finally, a mutual implication of the findings for both theory and practice is that the complexity of systems and sub-systems cannot be understood by studying their parts in isolation. One way of addressing this issue (as this study has attempted to do) is to seek to develop a more integrative analysis by examining the nature of phenomena and their interconnections in the context of change. The interrelationships explored in this study are only the first steps in broadening our understanding of the possible connections and interactions between processes. There remains plenty more opportunities to explore other dimensions which may reveal additional issues currently unknown, and which could form the basis of future research in this field. The findings show that there are several interrelationships with different characteristics and strength in different contexts. The analysis however, indicates the loose interconnection between phenomena, such as the one between training and self-development and that between change, training and learning. Although, the study has provided some explanation for this observation, there is clearly a need to look more deeply into the factors contributing to the lack of interconnection between phenomena. Similarly, future research could explore other interrelationships between the phenomena incorporated in this study. For example further research could contribute to our understanding of the interrelationships between learning, training and career-development, the interrelationship between training, learning and self-development as well as, that between training, self and career development.

Future research could also aim to challenge and reconsider the very basis of the revised model (Figure 10.15.) and the interrelationships it represents and seek to find a better way of representing the dynamics between phenomena reported in this thesis. One of the issues this study may be criticised is that it presents individuals' perceptions of the relationships between phenomena from one industry. Although, in defence of the choice made, it would be argued that this enabled the in-depth analysis of the phenomena that the research set out to explore, it is acknowledged that different relationships may emerge if the same study is to be repeated in different industries and organisations. Therefore, another suggestion for future research is that the interrelationships between phenomena are explored in other contexts which would provide additional information from which comparisons may be drawn. Similarly the study of interrelationships within different cultural contexts may provide an international analysis of differences and similarities in the nature and strength of relationships in relation to different cultures and national characteristics. The present study has sought to explore the

interrelationships between five phenomena (change, training and learning, self and career development). It would be useful if future research would seek to explore the interrelationships between other phenomena or different combinations of phenomena which the present study has not considered. For example, the impact of employee selection and reward may be two such processes to consider. Future research could seek to develop additional paths in this map of relationships that this study has started sketching.

11.5. Concluding remarks

The interaction between personal and organisational factors affecting the interconnection between phenomena, shows the richness of the bigger picture and the difficulty of any attempt which tries to comprehend what effectively is a labyrinth of issues. The interrelationships identified are 'emergent' and evolving, therefore resist a reductionist analysis which attempts to describe their interconnections by holding any of the processes constant. This study begins a new chapter in the field and widens the debate about the way phenomena may be understood in the context of changing organisations. The lessons emerging from the study indicate only more clearly that there is much more that needs to be learned in relation to this topic and that the way forward holds much more learning in store! This is only the end of the beginning!

Appendices

APPENDIX ONE

Correspondence with Organisations and Managers

- Copy of the letter addressed to Directors of Personnel and HRM in each Bank to invite participation in the study.
- Copy of the letter addressed to HRM managers in each Bank to set up the first phase of interviews.
- Copy of the letter addressed to individual managers in each Bank to set up the second phase of the interviews.
- Copy of the letter addressed to individual managers in each Bank to set up the third phase of the interviews.

Dear,

Subject: The way individual managers learn and adapt and the contribution of training towards this process.

I am a researcher working in collaboration with Warwick Business School at the University of Warwick, for my Doctorate.

Both the Group (Industrial Relations and Organisational Behaviour Group), of which I am a member, as well as the School at large have a long established reputation in developing research on Organisational and Human Resource Development issues. Moreover, there is a background of previous work undertaken with the banking sector.

As the title of the project explains, I am interested in exploring the way individual managers respond to organisational changes and the role training plays in their adaptation and learning.

The Retail Banking sector is one of the sectors which has always interested me and in which I have already done previous research. An appreciation of the uniqueness of banks as powerful and profitable organisations has been among the many things that attracted my interest and willingness to seek to study them in more depth. The long established power and prosperity of banks is not threatened by the multitude of changes that surround their environment. Acknowledging the complexity and uncertainty surrounding banks today, the need for fresh knowledge through new ways of learning, becomes pertinent. The importance attached to new skills is obvious, especially in maintaining the bank's competitive edge, in the light of the open market of 1992 and its economic, political and social consequences.

Banks are known for providing most of the specialised training skills required within banks. This characteristic contributes to the remarkable degree of loyalty and esprit de corps that distinguishes banks from other organisations and has been one of the determinant of their success so far. However, as business transactions become more complex and sophisticated, training could be a means of transformation from the old to the new and unknown, while still maintaining a strong corporate culture. Appreciating the structure and culture of banks and the approach towards training and learning, the aim of this study is to assist these efforts to become more open and more flexible to meet the needs of the organisation, its members and the general environment.

The intention of the study is therefore, to analyse the training provided to managers in the banks, to investigate the way individual managers learn in the banking sector, and to explore the extent to which managers benefit from the use of the learning means provided to them.

Considering the above, I wonder if I could have a short meeting with you, wherein, I would like to expand on the aims and methodology of the project and explore the possibility of collaboration with you.

The purpose of this letter, is to give you time to consider the matter and in the following 10 days I will be contacting you to discuss whether we can pursue the matter further.

Thank you in advance.

Yours sincerely

Elena P. Antonacopoulou.

Dear

Subject: The way individual managers learn and adapt and the contribution of training towards this process.

I am a researcher, working in collaboration with Warwick Business School at the University of Warwick for my Doctorate.

Bank X have kindly offered me the opportunity to develop my research and provide feedback that will reinforce how training and development initiatives are provided and supported in the future.

As the title of the project explains, I am interested in exploring the way individual managers in the retail banking sector respond to organisational changes and the role training and development activities play as means of support provided by the organisation.

The data collection process, involves a series of semi-structured interviews with managers directly involved in the design and provision of learning opportunities, as well as managers who are undergoing training (i.e. individual managers). The objective is to gain an understanding of the factors that assist or hinder learning experiences being retained and implemented in the work place.

Our meeting which is expected to last approximately two hours, will aim to discuss in detail issues of individual managers' learning and the current organisational policies and practices with particular attention to aspects of training, learning, self and career development particularly in the current context of change within your organisation.

It would be very useful if you could have information on specific issues such as the structure of the training department, the current training budget, findings of training evaluation studies etc., available for me to collect on the day of our meeting.

Last but not least, I would like to thank you sincerely for your co-operation and for kindly agreeing to take part in this study.

I look forward to meeting you on at

Yours sincerely,

Elena P. Antonacopoulou

Dear

Subject: The way individual managers learn and adapt and the contribution of training towards this process.

I am a researcher, working in collaboration with Warwick Business School at the University of Warwick for my Doctorate.

Bank X have kindly offered me the opportunity to develop my research and provide feedback that will reinforce how training and development initiatives are provided and supported in the future.

As the title of the project explains, I am interested in exploring the way individual managers in the retail banking sector respond to organisational changes and the role training and development activities play as means of support provided by the organisation.

The intention of the study is to analyse the training provided to managers in the bank, to investigate the way individual managers learn in the retail banking sector and to explore the extent to which managers benefit from the use of the different learning opportunities provided to them.

The data collection process, involves a series of semi-structured interviews with managers directly involved in the design and provision of learning opportunities as well as managers who are undergoing training (i.e. individual managers). The objective is to gain an understanding of the factors that assist or hinder learning experiences being retained and implemented in the work place.

Our meeting which is expected to last one and a half hours, will aim to discuss in detail, issues of individual managers' learning and the current organisational policies and practices with particular attention to aspects of training, learning, self and career development in relation to the changes experienced within your organisation.

Enclosed please find a short questionnaire on the training methods you may have experienced. I would be grateful if you could complete this questionnaire prior to our meeting, so that we can discuss it there and then.

Last but not least, I would like to thank you sincerely for your co-operation and for kindly agreeing to take part in this study.

I look forward to meeting you on at

Yours sincerely,

Elena P. Antonacopoulou

Dear

Subject: The way individual managers learn and adapt and the contribution of training towards this process.

Further to my letter of, I am now writing to you, to make the necessary arrangements for the follow up interview as part of the data collection process for the above study.

I am now in the process of organising and setting up the interviews with all managers interviewed during The date set aside for the follow-up interviews with managers in your region is

In order to minimise time and costs, the interview will be arranged to take place in a common venue, e.g. the regional area office nearest to where you are located.

The interview is expected to take approximately one and a half hours to complete, though as you may recall from the first interview the duration depends also on how much each interviewee wishes to elaborate upon the issues explored.

I trust these arrangements meet with your approval. Should you anticipate any difficulties if the interview is organised in this way and in the date specified, please do not hesitate to contact me as soon as possible so that alternative possibilities may be explored. It is my intention to avoid causing any major disruptions to your work schedule or inconveniencing you in any way.

Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely

Elena P. Antonacopoulou.

Dear

Subject: The way individual managers learn and adapt and the contribution of training towards this process.

Further to my letter of, I am writing to inform you of the progress made to the research to-date and to invite you to provide additional information which will enable me to present a more holistic picture of bank X in my PhD thesis.

During the last few months, the first phase of the analysis of the data collected across all participating organisation has been completed. This included the transcription and initial collation of information from each of the three main stages of the research. The second phase of the analysis will commence shortly and will include the collation of data across all stages of the research. This is a critical process which will lead to a written case-study for each organisation. The case study will review and analyse the main characteristics of the bank, its main policies and practices in relation to education and training of managers and will concentrate on the views expressed by managers regarding the relationships between the key process addressed in this study.

Great emphasis is placed in ensuring that the findings of this study represent an accurate picture of Bank X. It is therefore, very crucial that any recent developments and changes within Bank X are incorporated in the analysis. Strategic and operational changes, as well as specific training and development initiatives extended to managers are issues important to consider. I would also welcome any additional information you may be willing to provide and would be obliged if you could devote some time to respond to the short questionnaire enclosed.

This information will enable me to reach testable conclusions and to ensure that when data is at a later stage collated across organisations, Bank X's distinctive characteristics are communicated effectively.

Your commitment to this study so far has been greatly appreciated and your input has played a considerable role to the success of the project so far. Thank you in advance for taking the time to provide the additional information requested.

I look forward to your response and in the meantime I wish you all the best.

Yours sincerely

Elena P. Antonacopoulou

APPENDIX TWO



Phase Two of Data Collection - Interviews With Training Providers

A: INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS - INFORMATION ON THE INTERVIEWEES' BACKGROUND TO THE JOB AND THEIR CURRENT POSITION.

1. Would you please, describe the job that you do?
2. For how many years have you held this post?
3. For how many years have you worked for your present company?
4. What training and educational background do you bring to this job?

B: INFORMATION ON THE IMPORTANCE ATTACHED TO MANAGEMENT TRAINING IN THE ORGANISATION AND HOW THIS IS REFLECTED ON THE OVERALL APPROACH FOLLOWED.

5. What is the structure of the training department?
6. Is there a separate management training department? What is the structure of the department?
7. What is the overall training budget? What proportion of that figure is currently devoted to management training activities?
8. What factors determine or affect how big this amount should be? Please list the five most important factors from your experience in the organisation.
9. Who holds the training budget and who gives approval for new courses?
10. What is the background of people in the department?
11. What use of outside consultants is made for training in your organisation?
12. What are the numbers of people in the Bank attending courses in a year? How is that broken down between men and women in relation to the total population of each?

13. What proportion of the above figures represents men and women in managerial positions respectively?
14. Are the training opportunities (type of courses) provided to Women managers the same to those provided to their male counterparts? If YES then: What determines the suitability of a training course for both categories? If NO then: What factors affect the company's/your decision to provide different type of courses?
15. If you were to describe the training extended to managers within your organisation, how would you initially define it and what objectives would you list?
16. What is your personal perception of the importance of management training? Is your perception the result of your own background or is this the result of the philosophy of the organisation?
17. How do you see management training, contributing to the total value of your company's human assets? Could you please be specific.
18. What particular areas are most heavily invested in and why?
19. In preparing a training programme, what steps are followed. What does each step aim to achieve?
20. How are a) individual's training needs identified?
b) organisational strategic (departmental) needs identified?
21. Is the identification of management training needs the sole responsibility of the training department?
22. What role do individual managers as (training consumers), play? Is there space for suggestions from the individuals and how do these affect the training that is actually delivered?
23. Do individual managers take personal responsibility for their development and progress? What importance does the organisation attach to this?
24. Is training perceived by individuals in the organisation, as an opportunity for learning? What is the importance attached by individuals to learning through training?
25. Is training related to any motivational or reward aspects of human resource management?
26. What training methods do you particularly make use of?
27. Are these (training methods) the result of a dominant organisational philosophy and style, or simply a matter of preference?
28. Which of these methods would you consider as being more effective and why?

C: INFORMATION GATHERING ON ISSUES OF THE EVALUATION OF MANAGEMENT TRAINING AND THE UTILISATION OF RESULTS.

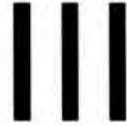
29. What do you understand by the term 'evaluation'. Could you please give your working definition.
30. What do you think evaluation should be able to do? List the three most important aspects.
31. How do you evaluate training?
32. What are the criteria set and who is undertaking it?
33. Are there any reports produced as a result of the evaluation? What form do these take, and to whose attention are they brought forward?
34. What form of feedback is given to individuals after the completion of a training programme?
35. How long after the completion of the training is this done? Please explain.

36. How is knowledge acquired from attendance to a training programme determined?
37. How do you expect the learning that has taken place to benefit the organisation?
38. What actions are taken resulting from the evaluation of training? (Utilisation of results - Filing for future reference, Discussion for immediate action/recommendations, Discussion but no action).
39. In your experience, have changes in existing training products, recommended by evaluation results, been implemented? If no, what factors would you regard as standing in its way?
40. Is there sufficient confidence in the reality/validity of results to stimulate action? If YES then: How do you explain this confidence? If No then: Why not?
41. In which direction does the chain of confidence flow? (reluctance to Evaluation - lack of confidence - lack of action).

D: GENERAL QUESTIONS ABOUT CHANGE AND THE IMPLICATIONS ON TRAINING.

42. The last 10 years have been ones of dramatic change for the Banking industry. Which are the major ones that you would list? How do (did) these changes affect(ed) your organisation?
43. How flexible is your organisation, when faced with change? Please justify your answer.
44. What factors would you consider assist in faster and easier adaptation?
45. What have been the effects on Managers in the Bank of the changes you have mentioned?
46. How have managers tended to react to these changes?
47. Please think of a recent major change introduced in the Bank and describe the role of training in the process. (before/during/after)
48. If you were to make a comparison of the training undertaken in the past, would you suggest that the training currently undertaken has increased, decreased, or remained the same, in terms of the amount and type of training provided? Please explain and justify.
49. The competitive environment which has long been part of the sector, is currently putting banks to the test. You as a training/learning Provider, how do you believe your organisation can be helped to overcome the problem(s)? Please indicate future policies with specific reference to future skill/knowledge requirements you would expect being vital for Managers to possess.

APPENDIX THREE



Phase Three of Data Collection - Interviews with Individual Managers

A. GENERAL BACKGROUND QUESTIONS

NAME : _____

1. In which division/function is your present position and what level do you represent?
2. For how many years have you held this post?
3. How many management post (including your present post) have you held in this bank?
4. How many years have you worked in this bank?
5. In your work career to-date, how many years of management experience do you have?
6. What academic and professional qualifications do you bring to this job?
7. Have you gained these qualifications, since working for the bank?

B. INFORMATION GATHERING ON CURRENT KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING ABILITY.

8. How useful do you find your current academic and professional knowledge in relation to the present job that you have to perform? Is there a HIGH - LOW relationship?
9. Does your present job utilise your skills? Are your current skills in excess of, or below job's demands?
10. Please describe some of the core skills you consider essential in the current job that you hold.
11. How important do you consider Management skills, and how would you rate them in relation to the technical skills your job involves?
12. How do you think people (in general) learn?
13. What are the two most important influencing factors/elements you would list, to explain the way individual managers learn better?

14. What significance do you attach to the personal capacity to learn, in comparison to the organisational context in which that learning takes place? Please distinguish the effects of each.
15. How would you rate the one against the other, in terms of importance and effect to the learning that is acquired?

C. INFORMATION GATHERING ON THE IMPORTANCE ATTACHED TO UPDATING AND LEARNING.

16. How important do you perceive learning in relation a) to you job now and b) to the way you expect it to change in the future?
17. Could you please give examples of the best/ideal learning experiences you came across so far, emphasising the factors that you feel have helped you most?
18. Did these learning experiences affected your capacity to learn? How?
19. What organisational and/or personal factors would you consider as obstacles to your learning?

D. INFORMATION ON THE ORGANISATION'S POLICY/PRACTICE ON INDIVIDUAL'S LEARNING AS VIEWED BY THE INDIVIDUALS.

20. What is the policy of your organisation in relation to continuing/further education for its managers? Please describe the current system in operation.
21. What in your opinion, have been the major influences on management training and development in your organisation?
22. Do you perceive the current training system to be a participative approach?
23. What do you think training should be able to do?
24. Do you perceive training as an opportunity for learning? Why?
25. How important do you rate attendance on courses outside the organisation?
26. What importance to you attach to the content of the training programme and the method employed for the delivery of the material? Why?
27. What importance do you attach on aspects of training such as: the venue, the facilities, the equipment, the food etc. and why?
28. Do you provide and/or receive feedback, during and after completion of a training programme? In what forms?
29. Do you always utilise the knowledge acquired from your attendance to a training programme on return to the working environment? Please use an example to illustrate this.
30. From the list of teaching and learning methods that you have completed, you have been asked to indicated among other things, the two methods that have been the most effective? Could you please explain: f) What made them so effective?¹
You have also identified two methods which did not contribute to your learning and development. h) Could you please identify the factors that made them so ineffective?

¹Note: Question No. 30 refers to the form forwarded to managers with the letter sent prior to the meeting.

31. Do you feel that the training provided by your organisation, is adequate to meet all your learning needs? If NOT then: Which additional areas need to be developed?
32. Do you have any suggestions to make, on how to improve it?
33. Did you share these suggestions with anyone directly involved with training provision?
34. Does this have any effect on how motivated you are and hence on your level of commitment?
35. Do you see attendance on a training programme (of any nature and type), as an opportunity that is likely to lead to promotion or other forms of reward? Why?
36. Do you feel that the organisation encourages you to learn and be creative?

E SELF-DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

37. To what extent is your personal decision to undertake further education, influenced by the policy of the organisation?
38. Does the organisation encourage you to take personal responsibility for your development and progress?
39. Did you tend to take responsibility for your career development to date, as a matter of course?
40. What updating activities do you regularly undertake, with your present and future work in mind?
41. Do you have any immediate learning goals and any practical plans to fulfil them?
42. What knowledge/skills and experience do you consider essential in order to achieve this goal?
43. What do you hope to be doing in 3-5 years time?
44. Have you shared these plans with anyone at a more senior level in the organisation either informally or as part of the performance appraisal system?
45. How do you expect these plans to affect your progression through the hierarchical ladder?
46. What are some of the organisational criteria that having fulfilled them will enable you to achieve a sought promotion?
47. What does the whole issue of competency - competence profiling mean to you? What do you understand of the term(s) initially, and how do you see them affecting you?
48. What role do you think "Self-awareness" plays in an individual's development and learning? (On what do you base your answer?)

F. GENERAL QUESTIONS ABOUT CHANGE AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

49. Which major changes would you list, over the period you have been with the bank?
50. How have these changes affected your organisation and you as an individual?
51. Have you felt any uneasiness about the changes that have taken place? Why?
52. Has this feeling now: completely disappeared / slightly diminished / still the same / increased; How do you explain this?
53. What are some general core skills you would consider essential for managers in the Banking sector to possess in order to survive the future challenges?

EXPERIENCES OF TRAINING METHODS AND THEIR IMPACT ON LEARNING

Please answer the following set of questions, and fill the table below with an (*), to indicate the answer that corresponds to each question for all 20 teaching and learning methods examined below.

- a) Have you experienced all these forms of training?
- b) Which of these have been available to you in the past 3 years?
- c) Which of these have you found the most useful?
- d) Which of these have you made available to yourself?
- e) From those made available to you please, identify two methods which have been most effective in your learning, and have significantly contributed to your personal professional development.
- f) Which other two methods would you name for not contributing to your learning and development?

TRAINING METHODS	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)
1. LECTURE						
2. PROGRAMMED INSTRUCTION						
3. CASE-STUDY						
4. T-GROUP/SENSITIVITY TRAINING						
5. SIMULATIONS						
6. MANAGEMENT GAMES / STRUCTURED EXERCISES						
7. ROLE PLAYING						
8. PROJECT ASSIGNMENTS						
9. COMPUTER-BASED LEARNING / INTERACTIVE VIDEO						
10. DISCUSSIONS / SEMINARS (FORMAL/INFORMAL)						
11. SECONDMENT						
12. JOB ROTATION						
13. OUT-DOOR TRAINING						
14. APPRENTICESHIP / JOB INSTRUCTION						
15. COACHING / COUNSELLING						
16. ACTION LEARNING						
17. OPEN / DISTANCE LEARNING						
18. EDUCATIONAL LEAVE						
19. ATTENDANCE AT PROFESSIONAL SOCIETY MEETINGS						
20. READING BOOKS: SELF OR COMPANY DIRECTED						

APPENDIX FOUR

IV

Phase Four of Data Collection - Follow-up Interviews With Individual Managers

A: QUESTIONS TO EXAMINE ABILITY TO RECALL AND THE EFFECT OF THE INITIAL MEETING.

1. Which of those, were the most prominent for you? Why?
2. Did you spend any time thinking over these issues after our meeting? If yes: What was the outcome of this rethinking process? Did you arrive at any conclusions? Did you experience any changes in your attitude towards these issues as a result of this reconsideration process? If no: Why didn't you reconsider them?
3. Did you experience any organisational and/or personal developments or changes, during the last six months, that you would like to talk about?
4. Would you consider any of these changes as momentous to your future career within this organisation?

B: QUESTIONS TO EXAMINE PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

During our last meeting there was reference to your immediate learning goals.

Short Description of Goal: _____

Proposed action: _____

5. Do you recall what were the goals?
6. Do you recall what actions you proposed to undertake in order to fulfil these goals?

1. THE INTERVIEWEE'S DESCRIPTION MATCHES INITIAL STATEMENT.	
2. THE INTERVIEWEE'S DESCRIPTION DOES NOT MATCH INITIAL STATEMENT.	
3. THE INTERVIEWEE CAN NOT PROVIDE A DESCRIPTION AT ALL (DOES NOT RECALL INITIAL STATEMENT).	
4. THE INTERVIEWEE DID NOT HAVE ANY IMMEDIATE LEARNING GOALS AT THE TIME.	
5. OTHER REASONS/RESPONSES.	



1. THE INTERVIEWEE'S DESCRIPTION MATCHES INITIAL STATEMENT.

7. Have these goals been fully met?

A. THE INITIAL GOAL(S) HAVE BEEN FULFILLED.	
B. STILL IN THE PROCESS OF FULFILLING THE INITIAL GOAL(S).	
C. THE INITIAL GOAL(S) HAVE NOT BEEN FULFILLED (ABANDONED).	



2. THE INTERVIEWEE'S DESCRIPTION DOES NOT MATCH INITIAL STATEMENT.

7. The information generated from the transcription of the first interview, suggests that your immediate learning goal(s) were (was) to _____. How far from this goal do you think you are? Have you fulfilled this goal?

A. THE INITIAL GOAL(S) HAVE BEEN FULFILLED.	
B. STILL IN THE PROCESS OF FULFILLING THE INITIAL GOAL(S).	
C. THE INITIAL GOAL(S) HAVE NOT BEEN FULFILLED (ABANDONED).	

8. How long ago did you fulfil this goal?
 9. Is this why your present description does not match the initial statement recorded during our first meeting? Why?



3. THE INTERVIEWEE CAN NOT PROVIDE A DESCRIPTION AT ALL (DOES NOT RECALL INITIAL STATEMENT).

7. The information generated from the transcription of the first interview, suggests that your immediate learning goal(s) were (was) to _____. How far from this goal do you think you are? Have you fulfilled this goal?

<p>A. THE INITIAL GOAL(S) HAVE BEEN FULFILLED.</p>	
<p>B. STILL IN THE PROCESS OF FULFILLING THE INITIAL GOAL(S).</p>	
<p>C. THE INITIAL GOAL(S) HAVE NOT BEEN FULFILLED (ABANDONED).</p>	

- 8. How long ago did you fulfil this goal?
- 9. Is this why you could not recall this goal?



A. THE INITIAL GOAL HAS BEEN FULFILLED

10. Could you please describe the activities you included in the process of fulfilling these goals?
11. What factors influenced your choice of activities?
12. What benefits both personal and organisational, did you anticipate from the fulfilment of this goal?
13. Have you enjoyed these benefits and are you fully satisfied with the results achieved?
14. How would you rate your present level of motivation in relation to the way you felt before fulfilling this goal? Why?
15. Did the completion of this learning task, have any effect on you perception about the importance of learning and/or attitude towards future opportunities for learning?
16. Did this subsequently affected your personality as a Manager/Learner in terms of the learning style you employ? Why? How?
17. Did anyone else recognise such changes and provided you with some form of feedback? If yes: Who and in what way?
18. What factors influenced your decision to set these goals in the first instance?
19. Did these goals set out to provide you with the knowledge and skills, that would assist your future career development, or were they an essential requirement in your present position?
20. How do you intent to utilise the knowledge acquired in your present position and how do you expect this knowledge to form part of your personal investment in the future?
21. Were these goals complementary and supplementary to what the organisation already provided you?
22. How did you manage to fit these goals within your everyday working load? Have you been assisted by any means and/or anyone in particular? By whom and how?
23. For how long, do you think the acquired knowledge and skills is going to enable you to cope with the changing demands of your position and working environment?
24. When do you think it is most likely that you will need additional (new) knowledge and skills, in order to be remain informed and up-to-date?
25. Did any additional learning goals emerged during the process of fulfilling the initial goals? If yes which were these goals?
26. Did you pursue their fulfilment yet? How? If yes: How? If no: How do you plan to pursue their fulfilment?
27. What areas do you feel you would benefit from, if you were systematically being kept up-to-date?
28. Do you have any long-term (for the next five years) learning goals and any practical plans to fulfil them?
29. What factors would you consider as vital prerequisites for the achievement of your future learning goals?

B. STILL IN THE PROCESS OF FULFILLING INITIAL GOAL(S)

10. How long do you think you still need before you complete this learning task?
11. Are you pleased with the progress achieved to-date?
12. Have you been faced with any unanticipated difficulties so far? If yes: What kind of difficulties?
13. With what speed do you expect to be able to proceed towards the fulfilment of this goal? Why?
14. Could you please describe the activities you included so far as part of the process of fulfilling these goals?
15. What factors influenced your choice of activities?
16. What benefits both personal and organisational, do you anticipate from the fulfilment of this goal?
17. Have you enjoyed any of the benefits yet? What are these specifically? Are you fully satisfied with the results achieved so far?
18. How would you rate your present level of motivation in relation to the way you felt before embarking on the fulfilment of this goal?
19. Have you noticed any changes either in your perception about the importance of learning and/or your attitude towards future opportunities for learning, since embarking on this learning task?
20. Did this subsequently affected your personality as a Manager/Learner in terms of the learning style you employ? Why? How?
21. Did anyone else recognise such changes and provided you with some form of feedback? If yes: Who and in what way?
22. What factors influenced your decision to set these goals in the first instance?
23. Are these learning goals going to provide you with the knowledge and skills, that you anticipate to assist your future career development, or are they an essential requirement in your present position?
24. Have you thought how the acquired knowledge and skills is going to be utilised in your present position and how could it possibly form part of your personal investment in the future?
25. Are these goals complementary and supplementary to what the organisation already provides you?
26. How do you manage to fit these goals within your everyday working load? Have you been assisted by any means and/or anyone in particular so far? By whom and how?
27. For how long, do you think the acquired knowledge and skills is going to enable you to cope with the changing demands of your position and working environment?
28. When do you think it is most likely that you will need additional (new) knowledge and skills, in order to remain informed and up-to-date?
29. Did any additional learning goals emerged during the process of fulfilling the initial goals? If yes which were these goals?
30. Did you pursue their fulfilment yet? If yes: How? If no: How do you plan to pursue their fulfilment?
31. What areas do you feel you would benefit from systematically being kept up-to-date?

32. Do you have any long-term (for the next five years) learning goals and any practical plans to fulfil them?
33. What factors would you consider as vital prerequisites for the achievement of your future learning goals?

C. THE INITIAL GOAL(S) HAVE NOT BEEN FULFILLED (ABANDONED)

10. What inhibited you from fulfilling these goals?
11. Did anyone in particular played a role towards this?
12. What do you plan to do about the initial goal. Do you intent to fulfil it as soon as you are given the opportunity to do so? Why? If yes: Do you intend to take the actions you initially proposed, or do you feel they ought to be reconsidered?
13. What benefits both personal and organisational, did you anticipate from the fulfilment of this goal?
14. How would you rate your present level of motivation in relation to the way you felt when you initially set this learning task as your immediate goal?
15. Have you noticed any changes either in your perception about the importance of learning and/or your attitude towards future opportunities for learning as a result of this change in direction?
16. Did this subsequently affected your personality as a Manager/Learner in terms of the learning style you employ? Why? How?
17. Did anyone else recognise such changes and provided you with some form of feedback? If yes: Who and in what way?
18. What factors influenced your decision to set these goals in the first instance?
19. Did these goals set out to provide you with the knowledge and skill that would have assisted your future career development, or were they an essential requirement in your present position?
20. How do you intend to bridge this knowledge and skills gab?
21. Were these goals complementary and supplementary to what the organisation already provided you?
22. For how long, do you think your current knowledge and skills is going to enable you to cope with the changing demands of your position and working environment?
23. When do you think it is most likely that you will need additional (new) knowledge and skills, in order to be kept up-to-date?
24. Did any additional learning goals emerge over this period of six months?
25. Did you pursue their fulfilment yet? If yes: How? If no: How do you plan to pursue their fulfilment?
26. What areas do you feel you would benefit from, if you were systematically being kept up-to-date?
27. Do you have any long-term (for the next five years) learning goals and any practical plans to fulfil them?
28. What factors would you consider as vital prerequisites for the achievement of your future learning goals?

4. THE INTERVIEWEE DID NOT HAVE ANY IMMEDIATE LEARNING GOALS AT THE TIME.

7. Looking back at that particular time period, could you please explain why didn't you have any immediate learning goals at the time?

A. THE INITIAL GOAL(S) HAVE BEEN FULFILLED.	
B. STILL IN THE PROCESS OF FULFILLING THE INITIAL GOAL(S).	
C. THE INITIAL GOAL(S) HAVE NOT BEEN FULFILLED (ABANDONED).	

8. Were there any specific personal and/or organisational factors which inhibited you from being proactive?
9. What actions would you propose to take, in order to overcome this lack of pro-activity? Did any learning goals emerge during the course of the last six months?
- 9a. If yes: Which are these goals? Did you pursue their fulfilment yet?
 If yes: How far from their fulfilment are you?
 If no: Do you have any plans for fulfilling them in the near future?
- 9b. If no: How would you explain this?

I. PURSUED THE FULFILMENT OF THE GOAL(S) AND COMPLETED THE TASK.	
II. PURSUED THE FULFILMENT OF THE GOAL(S) BUT HAS NOT COMPLETED THE TASK.	
III. DID NOT PURSUE THE FULFILMENT OF THE GOAL(S), BUT HAS PLANS TO DO SO IN THE NEAR FUTURE.	
IV. DID NOT PURSUE THE FULFILMENT OF THE GOAL(S), AND DOES NOT HAVE ANY PLANS TOWARDS THIS END.	

10. If you were to compare your level of motivation six months ago, and now. How would you rate your level of motivation then and how would you rate it now. Do you feel that your level of motivation changed? Why?
11. Have you noticed any changes either in your perception about the importance of learning and/or your attitude towards future opportunities for learning, in relation to the way you felt six months ago?
12. Did this subsequently affected your personality as a Manager/Learner in terms of the learning style you employ? Why? How?
13. Did anyone else recognise such changes and provided you with some form of feedback? If yes: Who and in what way?
14. Do you think that the present knowledge and skills you possess, will enable you to cope, with the changing demands of your position and working environment? Why?
15. When do you think it is most likely that you will need additional (new) knowledge and skills, in order to be kept up-to-date?
16. What areas do you feel you would benefit from, if you were systematically being kept up-to-date?
17. Do you have any long-term (for the next five years) learning goals and any practical plans to fulfil them?
18. What factors would you consider as vital prerequisites for the achievement of your future learning goals?

I. PURSUED THE FULFILMENT OF THE GOAL(S) AND COMPLETED THE TASK.

10. Could you please describe the activities you included in the process of fulfilling these goals?
11. What factors influenced your choice of activities?
12. What benefits both personal and organisational, did you anticipate from the fulfilment of this goal?
13. Have you enjoyed these benefits and are you fully satisfied with the results achieved?
14. How would you rate your present level of motivation in relation to the way you felt before fulfilling this goal? Why?
15. Did the completion of this learning task, have any effect on your perception about the importance of learning and/or attitude towards future opportunities for learning?
16. Did this subsequently affected your personality as a Manager/Learner in terms of the learning style you employ? Why? How?
17. Did anyone else recognise such changes and provided you with some form of feedback? If yes: Who and in what way?
18. What factors influenced your decision to set these goals in the first instance?
19. Did these goals set out to provide you with the knowledge and skills, that would assist your future career development, or were they an essential requirement in your present position?
20. How do you intent to utilise the knowledge acquired in your present position and how do you expect this knowledge to form part of your personal investment in the future?
21. Were these goals complementary and supplementary to what the organisation already provided you?
22. How did you manage to fit these goals within your everyday working load? Have you been assisted by any means and/or anyone in particular? By whom and how?
23. For how long, do you think the acquired knowledge and skills is going to enable you to cope with the changing demands of your position and working environment?
24. When do you think it is most likely that you will need additional (new) knowledge and skills, in order to be remain informed and up-to-date?
25. What areas do you feel you would benefit from, if you were systematically being kept up-to-date?
26. Do you have any long-term (for the next five years) learning goals and any practical plans to fulfil them?
27. What factors would you consider as vital prerequisites for the achievement of your future learning goals?

II. PURSUED THE FULFILMENT OF THE GOAL(S) BUT HAS NOT COMPLETED THE TASK.

10. How long do you think you still need before you complete this learning task?
11. Are you pleased with the progress achieved to-date?
12. Have you been faced with any unanticipated difficulties so far? If yes: What kind of difficulties?
13. With what speed do you expect to be able to proceed towards the fulfilment of this goal? Why?
14. Could you please describe the activities you included so far as part of the process of fulfilling these goals?
15. What factors influenced your choice of activities?
16. What benefits both personal and organisational, do you anticipate from the fulfilment of this goal?
17. Have you enjoyed any of the benefits yet? What are these specifically? Are you fully satisfied with the results achieved so far?
18. How would you rate your present level of motivation in relation to the way you felt before embarking on the fulfilment of this goal?
19. Have you noticed any changes either in your perception about the importance of learning and/or your attitude towards future opportunities for learning, since embarking on this learning task?
20. Did this subsequently affected your personality as a Manager/Learner in terms of the learning style you employ? Why? How?
21. Did anyone else recognise such changes and provided you with some form of feedback? If yes: Who and in what way?
22. What factors influenced your decision to set these goals in the first instance?
23. Are these learning goals going to provide you with the knowledge and skills, that you anticipate to assist your future career development, or are they an essential requirement in your present position?
24. Have you thought how the acquired knowledge and skills is going to be utilised in your present position and how could it possibly form part of your personal investment in the future?
25. Are these goals complementary and supplementary to what the organisation already provides you?
26. How do you manage to fit these goals within your everyday working load? Have you been assisted by any means and/or anyone in particular so far? By whom and how?
27. For how long, do you think the acquired knowledge and skills is going to enable you to cope with the changing demands of your position and working environment?
28. When do you think it is most likely that you will need additional (new) knowledge and skills, in order to remain informed and up-to-date?
29. What areas do you feel you would benefit from systematically being kept up-to-date?
30. Do you have any long-term (for the next five years) learning goals and any practical plans to fulfil them?
31. What factors would you consider as vital prerequisites for the achievement of your future learning goals?

III. DID NOT PURSUE THE FULFILMENT OF THE GOAL(S), BUT HAS PLANS TO DO SO IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

10. How do you plan to pursue their fulfilment?
11. What would be some of the activities you intend to include in the process of fulfilling these goals?
12. What factors are likely to influence your choice of activities?
13. What benefits both personal and organisational, do you anticipate from the fulfilment of this goal?
14. How would you rate your present level of motivation in relation to the way you felt before setting this goal?
15. Have you noticed any changes either in your perception about the importance of learning and/or your attitude towards future opportunities for learning, since this learning task emerged?
16. Did this subsequently affected your personality as a Manager/Learner in terms of the learning style you employ? Why? How?
17. Did anyone else recognise such changes and provided you with some form of feedback? If yes: Who and in what way?
18. What factors influenced your decision to set these goals in the first instance?
19. Are these learning goals going to provide you with the knowledge and skills, that you anticipate to assist your future career development, or are they an essential requirement in your present position?
20. Have you thought how the acquired knowledge and skills is going to be utilised in your present position and how could it possibly form part of your personal investment in the future?
21. Are these goals complementary and supplementary to what the organisation already provides you?
22. When do you think it is most likely that new learning goals might emerge?
23. What would you expect to be the major trigger of this need?
24. What areas do you feel you would benefit from systematically being kept up-to-date?
25. Do you have any long-term (for the next five years) learning goals and any practical plans to fulfil them?
26. What factors would you consider as vital prerequisites for the achievement of your future learning goals?

IV. DID NOT PURSUE THE FULFILMENT OF THE GOAL(S), AND DOES NOT HAVE ANY PLANS TOWARDS THIS END.

10. What personal and/or organisational factors inhibit you from pursuing the fulfilment of these goals more actively?
11. What do you intend to do about it? Why?
12. How would you rate your present level of motivation in relation to the way you felt when you initially set this learning task as your immediate goal?
13. Have you noticed any changes either in your perception about the importance of learning and/or your attitude towards future opportunities for learning as a result of this change in direction?
14. Did this subsequently affected your personality as a Manager/Learner in terms of the learning style you employ? Why? How?
15. Did anyone else recognise such changes and provided you with some form of feedback? If yes: Who and in what way?
16. What factors influenced your decision to set these goals in the first instance?
17. Did these goals set out to provide you with the knowledge and skill that would have assisted your future career development, or were they an essential requirement in your present position?
18. How do you intend to bridge this knowledge and skills gap?
19. Were these goals complementary and supplementary to what the organisation already provided you?
20. For how long, do you think your current knowledge and skills is going to enable you to cope with the changing demands of your position and working environment?
21. When do you think it is most likely that you will need additional (new) knowledge and skills, in order to be kept up-to-date?
22. What areas do you feel you would benefit from, if you were systematically being kept up-to-date?
23. Do you have any long-term (for the next five years) learning goals and any practical plans to fulfil them?
24. What factors would you consider as vital prerequisites for the achievement of your future learning goals?

C: QUESTIONS ABOUT THE FUTURE DIRECTION OF MANAGEMENT TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

33. What do you see is the role of management training in the bank?
34. What do you see as the contribution of training programmes to organisational change?
35. Have your views on that changed over the last six months? Why?
36. What in your view, should be the ultimate purpose of any training and development activity directed to managers during periods of change?
37. Do you believe that a re-conciliation of organisational and personal learning needs can be achieved? Why? If yes: How? If no: Why not?
38. What in your opinion should be the future direction of any management training and development effort, if it is going to be effective in a changing world? What forms should it take and what should be its outcome?
39. Which three most important factors/behaviours would you regard as essential for a learning environment to be created? How could these factors be created and reinforced?
40. What role do you see yourself playing, towards the achievement of this state?
41. What position/attitude would you like to see this organisation to take towards this end?

D: QUESTIONS ABOUT THE FUTURE OF BANKS AND BANKING: TOWARDS THE 21ST CENTURY

42. How do you see the future of banking and the place of your skills in it?
43. Do you foresee any major changes for the banking industry in the years to come?
44. Is your expectation of the changes to be faced the same as what you would actually prefer to see changed? Why? If no: What would be the changes you would have preferred to see in place?
45. How do you think this organisation has got to transform itself if it is going to be able to cope with the changing environment?
46. What specific factors/elements do you believe are more likely to assist the organisation to respond and adapt to change faster and easier?
47. If you were to envisage the bank of the 21st century, how would you describe it?
48. How would you picture the bank manager (banker) of the 21st century? How do you imagine (s)he will look like?

APPENDIX FIVE

**Phase Five of Data Collection -
Follow-up Questionnaire Sent to
Individual Managers**

Name:.....

Title:.....

Organisation:.....

A. Change

Have you experienced any organisational changes over the last few months? If so please describe them as briefly as possible indicating how you were affected.

.....
.....

Any other observations or feelings about present or future changes

.....
.....

B. Training

What is the present management training policy of your organisation? How in your opinion is this evident in the training courses or other training activities you have participated over the last few months?

.....
.....

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References and Bibliography

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